History of Silver City, Idaho

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A History Of

SILVER CITY, IDAHO

by

Betty Byrig

B. A. Washington State College, 1947

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts.

Approved:

Paul C. Phillips
Chairman of Board of Examiners

W. P. Clark
Dean of Graduate School
INTRODUCTION

In the lofty crags of the Owyhee Mountains\(^1\), at an elevation of 6300 feet, Silver City lies wedged between two towering peaks - War Eagle on the east and Florida on the west\(^2\). These sparsely timbered mountains dominate the entire southwestern Idaho region, their steep slopes offering a sharp contrast to the undulating sage brush plain which gradually rises to meet them. This country of mountain and desert, bordered by the Snake River on the north, Oregon on the west, and Nevada on the south, is Owyhee county, created by the first Territorial Legislature of Idaho, in 1863.

Prior to 1811 no white man is known to have trod this district, its semi-barren wilderness being the exclusive domain of a few scattered Snake tribes, who maintained a wretched existence on fish, ants, and locusts\(^3\). The Astorian overland expedition, in 1811, headed by Wilson Price Hunt, was the first to pass through.

1. These mountains are located at the northern perimeter of the Great Basin and lie at 39° longitude and 41° latitude.
2. "From the summit of War Eagle mountain on a clear summer morning, with the aid of a telescope one can see the Teton Range in Wyoming, the southwestern corner of Montana, the Wasatch Range in Utah, and glimpses within the state lines of Nevada, California, and Oregon.

Owyhee County, Press of the Owyhee Avalanche, Silver City, 1899, p. 13.
this uncharted land. Later on, the mountain streams - Owyhee River and its tributaries - were trapped by men in the service of Astor's Pacific Fur Company, the Northwest Company and Hudson's Bay Company. The name Owyhee was first given to the river draining this area, its origin being traced to the death of two Hawaiians who were massacred by Snake Indians on this unnamed stream in 1819. As a tribute to them, their fellow-trappers in the service of the Northwest Company named it Owyhee.

Many hardy fur hunters such as Donald McKenzie, Alexander Ross, and Peter Skene Ogden traversed these hills and streams in quest of the prized beaver skin, unaware that the country over which they passed contained far greater riches than this - in gold and silver. This discovery remained for the persistent prospector of another era - the mining frontier.
CHAPTER I

PAY DIRT

The mountain crags of Owyhee first felt the stroke of the miner's pick in 1863, when a party of twenty-nine men, led by Michael Jordan, staked out claims on Jordan Creek. Historians hold conflicting opinions as to the original intent of the prospective "lucky 29". One view is that fragments of a tale of a legendary mine called "Blue Bucket Diggings" had drifted into Placerville in the Boise Basin, and inspired these men to start across the Snake River plain to search for the fabulous diggings.\(^1\) Another story is that the party was not in search of new gold deposits but, under the leadership of Michael Jordan, were seeking a shorter route from Boise Basin to the Winnemucca country and incidentally discovered rich gold placers.\(^2\)

The most authentic account of the Jordan party appears to be given by H. B. Maize, a contemporary. Jordan was farming near Boise river, and with several other men had followed a marauding band of Indians deep into

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2. Letter from Fred Richards to Betty Derig, January 20, 1949. Fred Richards is a resident of Payette, Idaho who has collected Silver City data from numerous old timers and who, through the Payette Kiwanis Club, is promoting Silver City as a state park and tourist attraction.
the mountains. During the expedition, he noticed favorable indications of gold and upon returning to Placerville, organized a prospecting party to verify his opinion with pick and shovel.

On May 18, 1862, the party of twenty-nine men, their sixty horses and mules laden with provisions and equipment, turned southward from Placerville toward the desolate Owyhee country. Following the south side of the Snake River, they crossed a stream which they named Reynolds Creek, "in honor of the laziest man in the company." At this creek they camped one day and, as the formation of the country indicated a large river to the west, it was in the direction of this supposed watercourse that they turned their steps. Before striking the river, however, they came upon another of its tributaries which they called Jordan creek, a tribute to Michael Jordan, leader of the group. They agreed to camp along this creek, and "Dr. Rudd, a verdant emigrant, not waiting to unpack his mule, took up his shovel and scooping up some of the loose gravel on the bank of the creek, panned it out and obtained about a hundred colors. In ten minutes, every man with pan

3. H. B. Maise, Early Events in Idaho, Ms, Bancroft Library. (Microfilm in possession of Betty Detig.) Hereafter all references to this manuscript will read Maise, Ms., op. cit. Maise came to Idaho in the spring of 1862, prospecting along Salmon River and in the Boise Basin. In June, a month after the Jordan placers were discovered Maise went to Owyhee, only to find that the original discoverers had "hogged everything available." Leaving Owyhee, he prospected in Eastern Oregon several months, and hearing of the discovery of silver on Jordan creek, he returned and wintered there.
and shovel (except the lazy man) was busy digging and panning." Upon their return to the campsite about an hour later, each man had favorable prospects to exhibit. During the following ten days, they prospected the area, staked claims and made mining laws which allowed each man "A discovery claim of three hundred feet, a location claim of the same size, and in addition, three hundred feet for a friend." As supplies were running low the party returned to Placerville where news of the discovery spread rapidly, causing "a kind of special insanity, lasting for two days, during which 2,500 men forsook Boise for the new diggings." As the placers were limited, a great many were disappointed because Jordan and the other twenty-eight men had claimed all the valuable areas for themselves "hog'em style." Some of the newcomers hardly got off their horses, but "cursed the country, the camp and the party that found it; they returned to Placerville throwing the report broadcast, wherever they went that Jordan Creek was a d-d humbug." The result was that

men who had started for the new diggings with stocks of goods and other supplies necessary to successful mining turned back. Without this equipment, many miners who had valuable claims were prevented from working them to advantage. In spite of these difficulties, O. H. Purdy relates that as winter approached, "hardly a man was in camp but had enough to settle all of his bills and from $300 to $1000 besides."  

To provide protection from marauding Indians, and to satisfy social inclinations, the miners gravitated toward a central location - a location known as Booneville, the first camp on Jordan Creek. The new settlement was crowded between rugged hills and, as the site was not conducive to the growth of a large community, Ruby City was established two miles down the creek. Ruby-tinted ore found in the silver-bearing quartz ledges which were discovered in July, 1863, suggested the name for this short-lived mining camp.

During the first winter, Ruby City and Booneville each grew to about two hundred and fifty people, and an additional five hundred miners were scattered throughout the district. Upon the organization of Idaho Territory

10. Ibid.
11. Named for Jos. Boone, a member of the discovery party.
in 1863, and the subsequent formation of Owyhee County, Ruby City was named the county seat.

The following year, William Dewey, with a group of Ruby City malcontents, moved a mile farther up Jordan Creek and established a rival camp. A few weeks later, when spectacular silver quartz lodes were uncovered nearby, this camp was christened Silver City - a name destined to become famous on the Pacific coast, and well known in mining circles throughout the United States and England. While Silver City flourished on the permanence of deep quartz mining, Ruby City, dependent on elusive gold placers for an existence, did not long survive. By 1866 Silver City had triumphed, had absorbed Ruby City's population and had become the county seat.

The quartz veins carrying the silver ore that was to make the Silver City district famous were first discovered on War Eagle Mountain, in the gulches of the tributaries of Jordan Creek, in July, 1863. Whiskey Gulch, the first

16. Leading citizens of both town advocated “consolidating Ruby and Silver under one name, and that name to be the county seat, the consummation of which will more certainly satisfy a majority, harmonize only apparently conflicting interests and insure the general prosperity and average good of all.” Owyhee Avalanche, December 30, 1865, p. 3.
ledge located, was uncovered by R. H. Wade, one of the original twenty-nine, and a few days later the Oro Fino and the Morning Star were discovered by A. J. Sands and Svale Nelson. 17

Neither the Morning Star nor the Oro Fino were worked until the year following their discovery when they were purchased by the firm of Moore and Fugus. 18 On visiting the Oro Fino in 1865, the editors of the Owyhee Avalanche found it a well-defined ledge containing fine gold, in some places visible to the naked eye. The shaft was down 180 feet and a tunnel following the course of the ledge about 600 feet connected with the shaft. "In following the tunnel we found a well-marked ledge and found men engaged in taking out the quartz in a chasm extending something over one hundred feet in length, by about four feet in depth, removing no dirt but simply taking out the quartz between the casings." 19

If we are to believe contemporary newspaper accounts, the Oro Fino was indeed a fabulously rich mine. The Oregon Daily Times stated that, "A chemical analysis of that taken from the Oro Fino shows a valuation of $22,000 per ton, with the proportion of $3,000 per ton in silver." This

18. Ibid.
19. Owyhee Avalanche, August 19, 1865.
analysis was undoubtedly of a small sample of ore as other assays and later production do not bear out these figures. Oro Fino ore assayed in New York, November 8, 1864 contained "Gold to the value of $2015.24 and silver to the value of $425.03 per ton." Although this mine was worked during 1864, production figures do not appear until a year later. During 1865 and 1866, $1,500,000 worth of ore was taken from a block of ground lying between the surface and first level 100 feet down. Elliott, in his History of Idaho, says that in six years, (presumably 1864 - 1870), "the Oro Fino produced $2,756,128 ... without the aid of steam hoisting works or any considerable expenditure of capital." 21

The Morning Star, unlike the Oro Fino, carried ore that was predominately silver. A sample of surface ore assayed in New York, November 8, 1864 contained "Gold to the value of $1015.19 and silver to the value of $2,216.39 per ton." 22 Some of the metal taken from this mine during the same year and shipped by the Moore & Fergus Company to California received considerable attention from a correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin: "A few days since, the largest pile of the precious metals my eyes ever beheld came from the Owyhee country ... The metal rates as silver,

though some of it contains sufficient gold to be valued at $12 per ounce. There was in all 1,100 pounds of that stuff. Seeing those great silver bars piled upon one another in the form of wild turkey pens or log cabins, on the floor of the banking-house of Ladd & Tilton, made this metal, hitherto considered and denominated precious, appear as common as pig-iron."23

The Morning Star was worked until 1868 but apparently belied early expectations. Figures for its yearly production are not available but before being dismantled it is reported to have produced "an estimated one million dollars."24

Although it was generally believed that the Oro Fino and Morning Star were paying a substantial dividend, the firm of Moore and Fugus failed, after two years of operation. This company was heavily indebted to workmen and creditors, and C. E. Tilton of New York held a mortgage of $36,000 on the mines and adjacent buildings.25 By an arrangement with the creditors, workmen took the mines, paid off the debts, and continued production under the name of Oro Fino and Morning Star Mining Company.

25. Boise Territorial Statesman, November 18, 1866.
The Home Ticket Lode, discovered in 1865 by James Donovan, was another noted claim. A sample of ore taken at a depth of eighteen feet assayed $8,707.61 silver to the ton and $489.12 of gold, "nearly $1,000 more than the richest assay ever made of the celebrated Gould & Curry of Washoe notoriety."[26]

Two mines figuring prominently in Silver City history were the Ida Elmore and Golden Chariot. Prior to 1868 the Ida Elmore had produced around $600,000. As records during the early years are scanty, the whole production is not definitely known but "probably exceeds by a considerable amount the sum given above."[27] The Golden Chariot, fifteen feet south of the Ida Elmore, on the same pay shoot, is estimated to have produced $2,000,000 within ten years.[25]

Both these mines were placed on the lists of the San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board in January, 1869, and during the subsequent five years were substantial producers.

Probably one of the most spectacular strikes ever made on War Eagle Mountain was the Poorman mine. Discovered

28. Ibid., p. 149. In 1869 Golden Chariot ore was yielding from $125 to $200 per ton. In December, 1868, the yield was $190 per ton, and in January, $154. Owyhee Avalanche, April 6, 1869. The same article reports production since autumn, 1867 to be $1,000,000. Total production to 1873 was $1,714,325.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>$134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>$236,824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lindgren, Ibid.
in 1863, this mine did much toward making Silver City famous, the early returns suggesting something of Alladin and his magic lamp. Ore taken from it was "a silver chloride richly impregnated with gold, easily worked and tinted crimson which gave it the name of Ruby Silver." First class rock assayed from $4,000 to $5,000 per ton and fifteen tons shipped to Newark, New Jersey, smelting works brought a total of $75,000. Much of its product was so rich that it was carted several hundred miles in wagons and then shipped by rail and water to Europe for reduction. Two thousand tons of second and third class rock yielded $546,691.59 and tailings went over $70 to the ton. As the ore came from the mine it sold for $4 an ounce which was said to be much below its real value. The most remarkable yield of the Poorman was a block of Ruby silver forming a solid mass of 500 pounds. Its surface showed "approximately the angles and planes of a crystal, which was one of the most remarkable occurrences of this mineral known." Exhibited at the Paris Exposition in 1867, this block of silver received considerable attention and was awarded a special gold medal.

31. French, op. cit., p. 27.
33. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 30
34. Hawley, op. cit., p. 487.
35. Lindgren, op. cit., p. 142.
36. Hawley, op. cit., p. 487.
A reprint from the Carson Nevada Appeal describes the Poorman ore as containing horn silver in great abundance. "This horn silver runs through the ledge in streaks about the sixteenth of an inch thick, and these layers have the malleability and consistency of moistened horn and can be whittled out of the rock with a pen knife. Mr. Wasson submitted a piece of this horn silver to the action of fire from a blow-pipe, and its speedy melting disclosed pure and beautiful silver, free from any base metals. If this is an average specimen of the Poorman, and if the other pieces of quartz are of a sort which is plenty in Idaho the Poorman is the richest lode we know."37 With characteristic spirit the enthusiastic editor of the Avalanche answered, "Six months from the time the above was penned, you Comstock-struck Nevaadaites will treat Owyhee with respect at all times at least, and be fully convinced that the 'specimens' are an 'average,' and 'of a sort which is plenty.'"38

Unique among the mines of Owyhee, financial statements of the Poorman were made public. In 1867, the amount of ore crushed, the value of bullion produced and the financial condition of the New York and Owyhee Company were shown in the Annual Report of W. D. Walbridge,

37. Owyhee Avalanche, January 13, 1865, quoting from the Carson Nevada Appeal.
38. Ibid.
Special Agent, "as made to the trustees of the Company at their late annual meeting in this city." From July 19 to November 1, 1867 the tons of ore crushed were 2,382-3/4; yielding 305,215.69 ounces of bullion, valued at $536,691.59. The average yield of all rock reduced was $229.45 per ton and the entire cost for mining and milling $66.07 per ton.40

The early success of the Poorman was not constant in later years, production dropping to $11,740 in 1872, with an average yield per ton of $12.76. In September, 1873 it was incorporated in San Francisco under the name of Poorman Gold and Silver Mining Company, with a capital stock of $5,000,000 and was placed on the San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board in June, 1874. During its entire career, 1865 - 1875, the Poorman produced about $4,000,000, and was "for its size, perhaps the richest deposit of silver ores ever discovered."41

39. Owyhee Avalanche, June 22, 1867.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Mill</th>
<th>Tons of Ore</th>
<th>Ounces Bullion</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Y. &amp; Owyhee</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>147,960.17</td>
<td>$255,683.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Y. &amp; Oro Pino</td>
<td>771 1/5</td>
<td>116,763.91</td>
<td>203,586.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainsworth</td>
<td>362 1/2</td>
<td>35,178.52</td>
<td>62,222.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>369 1/4</td>
<td>7,325.39</td>
<td>25,230.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,382 3/4</td>
<td>305,215.69</td>
<td>$536,691.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40. Owyhee Avalanche, June 22, 1867
Many other mines contributed to the total wealth of Silver City during its heyday. Those specifically mentioned are some of the most outstanding, and serve as examples to illustrate some of the opinions "outsiders" held for this remote mining center. During 1870 to 1874 many of the more prominent mines, in addition to the Ida Elmore, Golden Chariot and Poorman were incorporated under the laws of California, and "bulled" and "beared" on the San Francisco Stock Market. These included the Mahogany, South Chariot, Minnesota, Empire and Red Jacket. Mines owned and operated locally included the Belle Fock, Bismarck, Illinois Central, Skookum, Chipmunk, Peck and Porter, and Red Mountain. 

From 1863 to 1869 the Silver City mines yielded an aggregate sum of approximately $1,500,000 yearly, but in the succeeding four years production declined considerably and Silver City felt the pinch of depression. During 1870, 1871 and 1872, some of the mines received favorable attention at San Francisco and through incorporation were given sufficient capital to expand operations. This expansion, together

42. Ibid.
43. The South Chariot Mining Company was incorporated in July, 1871, with capital stock of $2,000,000 in shares of $100 each, "to work gold and silver lodes in the county of Owyhee."
The Mahogany was incorporated in 1870, and in July, 1871 capital stock was raised from $600,000 to $1,000,000, divided into 10,000 shares at $100 each.
The Empire was incorporated January, 1872, with capital stock of $2,500,000 divided into 25,000 shares.
Taken from the Owyhee Avalanche, July 22, 1871, July 29, 1871 and February 10, 1872.
with rich strikes which were made at lower depths in the
golden Chariot, South Chariot and Empire mines brought the
1873 production to $1,002,267.00. 44

Despite the apparent richness of the mines, the San
Francisco Mining and Scientific Press gloomily predicted
that "the management of the Owyhee mines has been so
notoriously corrupt that no one expects to receive a dollar
from that section of the country, unless as in the case of
the Mahogany last year, a dividend were to be declared, in
order that a heavy assessment might be levied the following
week." 45 During the next year, however, mining prospects
continued favorable and the San Francisco Stock Report struck
a brighter note: "The mines of Owyhee are presenting those
prospects that will redeem them in the minds of those that
invested in them several years since.... Those working the
mines are meeting with the most flattering indications....
Large returns will be made from Owyhee.... The greater
portion of the stock dealing community is disappointed at
the results that have accompanied the prospecting of most
of the mines of the Comstock and has turned the mines of
operators to other districts." 46

44. See table of Production, appendix B.
45. Owyhee Avalanche, March 39, 1873. The only mines
paying dividends were the Golden Chariot, Ida Elmore
and Mahogany, and the latest of these were paid October
24, 1873, February 8, 1870 and August 5, 1872 respec-
tively. See Rossiter W. Raymond, Mineral Resources of
the Rocky Mountains, 8th Annual Report of the U. S.
Geologic Survey, Government Printing Office, Washington,
1877, p. 467.
46. Owyhee Avalanche, May 23, 1874.
The editors of the *Avalanche* were jubilant at the indications of prosperity in Owyhee, predicting that the Golden Chariot and South Chariot "can furnish enough ore to keep busy every stamp in town... More mills will be needed... a good many miners will be needed and the army of woodshoppers, teamsters, coalburners, etc. will also call for strong reinforcements. The good times we have been waiting for are dawning upon us... Hurrah! for old Owyhee at last."  

A month later, the Owyhee stocks on the San Francisco Exchange Board tumbled due to assessments on the Golden Chariot, "found necessary on account of heavy expenditures in the matter of purchasing a mill," and assessments on the Ida Elmore and Silver Cord.  

This did not seem particularly disturbing, however, as the mines looked as promising as ever, and the *Avalanche*, with characteristic optimism, declared that, "The general prosperity of our camp will not materially suffer from the present depression of the stock market."  

This prediction was valid for the remainder of 1874, as total production stood at $900,000, only a slight drop over the previous year.

47. *Owyhee Avalanche*, June 27, 1874.
49. *Owyhee Avalanche*, August 8, 1874.
During 1875 the picture changed. The Bank of California suspended payment in August, and repercussions were felt in Silver City to the extent that mining activity was all but prostrated within a few weeks. Production for 1875 hit an all-time low of $225,000. In addition to overcapitalization, and the fever of speculation, there was evidence that the collapse of Owyhee mining was in part due to gross mismanagement, and heavy defalcation. "This condition of affairs was not the fault of the mines but of the people who manipulated the stocks."51

Almost simultaneous with the bank failure George M. Finney, with two other secretaries, absconded with funds belonging to three Owyhee companies, dealing the area an additional blow. Another factor probably contributing to the cessation of mining activity was the decline in the price of silver during these crucial years. The value of a fine ounce of silver, at average quotation, dropped from $1.278 in 1874 to $1.245 in 1875 and $1.156 in 1876. The prospect of further depression in the silver market very likely tended to discourage investors from making any great outlay of capital for silver mining.

50. See table of Production, appendix B.
52. Raymond, op. cit., pps. 205, 223. Raymond lists the Mahogany, Poorman and Silver Cord; Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 38, names the Poorman, Oro Fino and Mahogany.
53. See table showing the price of silver, appendix C.
The Golden Chariot, one of the most prominent mines continued meager production until June, 1876. At that time, two months had elapsed without a pay day and when officials of the company had quietly removed some of the most valuable Golden Chariot property, the miners, becoming suspicious, decided to take action. "About midnight, Friday, June 30, 1876, one hundred men comprised of the Golden Chariot employees assembled and proceeded to the office of the company, located near the mill, and conducted superintendent W. A. Baldwin to a house at Fairview, placed him under guard informing him that he would not be released unless assurance was given that the employees were given their just due." About a month later, when the San Francisco officials ascertained the miners that their pay would be forthcoming, Mr. Baldwin was released and allowed to go to San Francisco. Upon his return, the miners were paid as promised and operations were temporarily resumed.54

Miners at the Empire did not meet with equal good fortune. The men stopped work in February, 1876, as the company was unable to pay the $80,000 due them for wages. Ross Carter, the Superintendent, soon afterward left for San Francisco to persuade the board of trustees to pay the indebtedness. About ten days later there was much rejoicing when the Avalanche announced that Carter was returning from San Francisco with the necessary funds to pay the workers.

54. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 27.
On the day of Carter's arrival, Hill, editor of the Avalanche, accompanied by a band of musicians, went to Wagontown, ten miles below Silver City, to meet him. About a hundred miners were also present, and "when the stage arrived there was a handshaking; then the whole crowd went into a saloon where dancing and drinking was kept up for a long time." Finally Hill, who had large bills for assessment notices against the Empire, interviewed Carter, asking how he arranged to bring $80,000 without even having a trunk along. The superintendent admitted that he hadn't a cent with which to pay the indebtedness, that all his private money was gone, and nothing remained at the company's San Francisco office. The miners returned, disconsolate, to Silver City and, with no work in sight, they, like hundreds of others, abandoned the old camp for more prosperous localities.

Silver City, dependent entirely upon mining for its existence, was almost deserted except by those who had faith in its future and were willing to wait until the confidence of investors in legitimate mining was restored. The population gradually dwindled until in 1880 only 800 persons remained.

Between 1875 and 1889 little mining of importance was carried on. Some assessment work and surface mining

55. Idaho Territorial Statesman, February 22, 1876.  
56. Ibid.  
continued but the yield was small. The greatest progress
was made by William H. Dewey who had been identified with
Silver City from its earliest moments and had been con-
tinuously engaged in mine promoting and operating. After
the crash of 1875 Dewey focused his attention upon the
undeveloped mineral wealth of Florida Mountain and here,
in 1879, he opened the Black Jack and Empire State mines
which were to begin a new era in Owyhee mining.58

Dewey induced outside capital to invest in his Black
Jack vein and, in 1879, incorporated it for $10,000,000.59
apparently the incorporation was not successful as the
mine later "reverted to him" and in 1889 he disposed of
both the Black Jack and Empire State mines to the Idaho
and Pittsburg Mining and Milling Company.60 In addition
to the Dewey interests this company also purchased four
adjoining claims, the Phillips, Sullivan, Belfast and
Independence.61 Work was immediately begun, driving

58. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 36.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. This is the only available account of the Dewey
transactions and it does not explain who invested in
the mine nor why it later reverted to Dewey.
The Black Jack and Empire are reported to have produced
$1,000,000 during the previous ten years of comparative
inactivity.
Idaho Daily Statesman, January 1, 1890, p. 29. (State-
hood edition)
61. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 35. The Idaho and Pittsburg
Mining and Milling Company was incorporated in 1889
under the laws of Kentucky and was composed largely of
Pennsylvania stockholders, the main offices being
located in Pittsburgh. Officers of the company were
John Irwin Jr., President; Edwin Findley, Vice President;
James McKay, Treasurer; and Lloyd Little, Secretary,
all of whom resided in Pittsburgh.
tunnels below the lowest previous workings, erecting new mills and providing employment for hopeful miners.\textsuperscript{62}

With these mines in full operation, the total yield for Silver City began to mount. Production for 1880 reached 13571,256, an increase of more than $400,000 over the previous year, and the highest figure reached since 1874. Output for 1890 almost doubled that of 1889, reaching the earlier yearly average of over $1,000,000.\textsuperscript{63}

The success of the Black Jack lode attracted considerable attention in mining circles, and subsequently capital poured into Silver City from eastern United States and London so that by 1895 seven major groups of mines were in operation. During this period, ledges located in the same area were consolidated under one company, making possible more efficient and economical operation than was feasible when a number of companies worked a network of adjacent tunnels.

\textsuperscript{62} Lindren, op. cit., p. 116. The largest mill was equipped with twenty 1,150-pound stamps and the ore crusher had a capacity of about 15 tons per hour.

\textsuperscript{63} Lindren, op. cit., p. 116. Worked steadily during the preceding nine years, this group of mines produced a total of $370,000 in silver and $430,000 in gold, bringing the total production of the Black Jack lode to $2,900,000.
Although some of the old mines on War Eagle Mountain such as the Morning Star and Poorman were profitably worked after 1890, the greater portion of production came from claims on which little or no development had been done.

One of the most important lodes developed during this period was the Trade Dollar. This mine was discovered in 1871 on the southern slope of Florida Mountain but did not prove successful until twenty years later when William H. Dewey and his son E. H. Dewey formed the Florida Mountain Mining and Milling Company which purchased the Trade Dollar together with ten other claims located on the same vein.64 This company had at its head one of the greatest mining men in the State, William H. Dewey, and had one of the largest and best equipped mills on the Pacific coast.65

64. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 38. These claims were the James G. Blaine, Black Bart, Jumbo, Colorado, Caroline, Pluto, South Pluto, South Blaine and the Pluto millsites.

65. Ibid. The Trade Dollar Mining and Milling Company was incorporated in 1891 under the laws of Kentucky, and the officers were J. M. Guffey, president; A. W. Mellon, Vice President; and T. B. MoKaig, Treasurer.
Immediately upon organization, the company commenced vigorous development and "with a progressive policy and liberal working capital it opened one of the best paying properties on the Pacific coast." The payroll showed an average of one hundred men regularly employed and, in 1897, "paid larger dividends than any one mine in Cripple Creek." Production for this year amounted to $735,000 with a profit of $420,000.66

Foreman for the Trade Dollar Company was Joseph H. Hutchinson to whom much credit was given for the steady and economical operation of the company. In politics he was a silver man and was secretary of the first national Bimetalllic Convention held in Chicago, 1895, and was Secretary of the Bimetalllic Union formed in Salt Lake, 1895.67

The Cumberland Gold Mine, on the eastern side of War Eagle Mountain, was owned by James Shaw and in 1897 operated under bond by Sonneman and Branscombe of Spokane. This mine was situated in the mineral zone containing the once famous Oro Fino Ida Elmore

66. Lindgren, op. cit., p. 140
67. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 38
and Golden Chariot veins and was a southern extension of the Oro Fino. Although the Cumberland was the second quartz mine discovered in Owyhee County it was not an early success. In 1884, a 110-foot shaft was sunk "but on account of the large amount of trouble from the placer miners, and the depth demanding a power hoisting plant, work was stopped, and the shaft quickly filled to the collar with the debris washed down the canyon."68

Sonneman and Branscombe equipped the property with improvements necessary for extensive work in 1897, and in spite of the expense involved in hauling and milling and a large loss in tailings, they averaged a clean-up of over $100 per ton.69 The ore was quartz, carrying 80 per cent gold and 20 per cent silver.

Superintendent for the Cumberland Gold Mining Company was Stanley Easton, a graduate of the University of California and a man of wide mining experience.

The well known Poorman mine and twenty other idle claims on the same vein system were purchased by the Poorman Gold Mines, Ltd., a London syndicate, in 1888.

68. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 35.
69. Ibid.
During the ensuing nine years thousands of dollars were spent in an effort to put the property on a paying basis but mismanagement and poor judgment on the part of its managers prevented the company from realizing any profit. In 1896, management was entrusted to Richard H. Britt and Frederick Irwin under whose direction production apparently increased as the Report of the Director of the Mint, 1899, lists the Poorman group among the leading mines of Owyhee. This appears to have been only a temporary condition however, as no further mention of it is made in other reports.

In 1895, the Morning Star Mining and Milling Company acquired the Morning Star vein including the Revenue, Nellie, Subpector, Ontario, Lewis and Morning Star Surplus all of which had been idle for several years. Difficulties between the promoters and purchasers caused operations to be suspended a year later, but, convinced of the value of its holdings, the company induced Dave Adams of Silver City to become general manager of the property and renew work in January, 1898. The following year the Morning

70. Ibid.
71. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 40.
Star is listed in the Report of the Director of the Mint as a leading mine in Owyhee but is subsequently dropped from the records, indicating either no further production, or a yield too meagre to merit attention.

Rich ore found at DeLamar, seven miles east of Silver City, was the last strike made in that area. Although this lode, known as the Wilson claim, was discovered before 1888, no development work was carried on until it was purchased by Captain DeLamar in that year. He erected a mill, hotel, and other necessary buildings, and in 1891 disposed of the property to the DeLamar Mining Company, a London syndicate, for $1,700,000. With a conservative financial policy, and modern mining equipment, this company operated successfully for many years. Most of the ore extracted from this vein was gold, yielding about $500,000 annually. From 1889 to 1899 it produced $5,000,000.72

In 1898, the important producing mines were the Trade Dollar, Black Jack, Poorman, Cumberland and Morning Star.73 Seven years later the only active mines were the Trade Dollar and DeLamar, which operated steadily until 1910 when the known ore bodies became exhausted.74

72. Lindgren, op. cit., p. 110.
73. Ibid.
CHAPTER II

GUN FIGHTS AND HARD WORDS

Inextricably bound to early mining developments were the attendant feuds and claim-jumping among mine owners and prospectors. Disputes between company management and disgruntled laborers also frequently held the limelight, although these were executed with somewhat less temerity than the more reckless altercations among mine owners.

One of the earliest and most notorious mining disputes occurred in 1865, involving the ownership of the Foorman mine. The Foorman, first discovered by Hays and Ray, was being worked by these partners and although the ore was good it was not sensational. Before much development was done, Charles C. Peck located a rich bed of ore about 1000 feet from the Hays and Ray vein. Covering the results of his prospecting, Peck quietly investigated the boundaries of their claim, finding that

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it included the location of his rich find. Peck then attempted to buy the mine, but as the price was prohibitive he finally told Hays and Ray of his rich strike and was subsequently taken into partnership with them. 2

Within a short time, a party of prospectors uncovered fabulously rich ore in proximity to the Hays and Ray mine and upon investigation found that their ledge intersected the property of Hays and Ray. 3 Put Bradford, a capitalist from Portland, Oregon happened to be in town at this time, and the prospectors, knowing him to be always willing to take a chance on any scheme promising big returns, showed him samples of the ore, which upon being assayed proved to carry "approximately 90% silver and enough gold to make the value equal to pure silver." 4 The discoverers of this ore shoot ostensibly claimed their discovery to be a vein running at an acute angle across the ledge owned by Hays, Ray and Peck, and in partnership with Bradford, they immediately began mining operations. Bradford hired men to work at night, taking ore from the rich area

3. Ibid.
4. W. J. McConnell to G. J. Brozman, April 14, 1918, in Idaho Historical Society Library, Boise, Idaho
where the two ledges intersected and before the owners of the ground discovered this nocturnal intrusion, $250,000 worth of ore had been removed. Hays, Ray and Peck were adamant in maintaining that the Poorman (so named to create sympathy for the prospectors who "discovered" it), was a continuation of their ledge, so the struggle for possession of the property began, involving much litigation as well as extra-legal proceedings.

Bradford and party erected and manned a miniature fort, Baker, to hold the ground from any attempt of Hays, Ray and Peck to gain possession while the latter prepared to force their way in. After a visit to the disputed claim the Avalanche described the hostile miners as presenting "a scene not unlike a small army hastily throwing up entrenchments, preparatory to an engagement. About eight hundred feet south of the discovery of the Poorman, is the discovery shaft of what has been known for some time as the Hays and Ray ledge. We left the two parties about thirty feet apart, with shotguns in the background."7

5. Ibid. Also in Maize Ms., op. cit., p. 6.
7. Owyhee Avalanche, September 30, 1885.
At this point the New York and Owyhee Gold and Silver Mining Company apparently obtained an interest in the Hays and Ray and Peck claim, and brought an injunction against the interlopers.

Before active warfare commenced, the District Court convened at Silver City, and after a hearing Judge Kelly issued an injunction barring both parties from working either lode within a radius of 90 feet of the disputed point, where the veins supposedly intersected. Outside this radius, both companies were allowed to develop their respective claims. It was expected that as a result of this development, by the next term of court, definite evidence could be presented showing ownership of this ore. "At least one million dollars were in the balance dependent upon the final decision."

Both sides in the controversy resorted to underhanded methods to win a decision in their favor. The Portland faction had the judges redistricted so that Judge Kelly was replaced by Judge Smith whom they suspected to be

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8. This dealing is very obscure. At the time of the court hearing, the New York Company defended the original Hays, Ray, and Peck claim. It is likely that these men did not have sufficient capital to bring suit against Bradford & Co. and, to protect their claim, sold an interest to the New York Company. W. J. McConnell was Deputy U. S. Marshall and "in attendance upon court in Owyhee....when the first resort was had to the court." He says that the ground in question was already "located and owned" by the New York Co. McConnell to Brosnan, op. cit.

9. Ibid.

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more susceptible to influence, and the New York Company brought pressure to bear in Washington, causing the removal of Judge Smith and the appointment of Judge Cummings. "It was even planned to murder Kelly after he sustained the first injunction and I [McConnel] was requested to go to Owyhee County and escort him back to Boise." 10

While the Poorman case was being heard, news arrived that a party of thirty-five men about seventy miles south of Silver City had been surrounded by Piute Indians and that unless help was sent at once none would escape. A general alarm was sounded, and "in a few minutes every man in camp including the judge and members of the bar were on the street, the first impression being that the Indians were about to attack the town." 11

A meeting was immediately called to organize a volunteer rescue group, and the Judge adjourned court for ten days to permit volunteers to join the group.

During the ten day recess the suit was settled, "the real owners, the New York Company retaining 2/3ds, giving

10. Ibid.
11. McConnell to Brosman, op. cit.
the Portland men 1/3d so that immediate mining might be
begun and litigation avoided."12

During the winter of 1867-68 a dispute arose between
the Ida Elmore and Golden Chariot Mining Companies in
regard to the boundaries of their claims. Compromise and
litigation failing to settle the dispute, both parties
ultimately resorted to force to protect their interests.
On March 25, 1868, the Golden Chariot gang stormed the
works of their opponents, and during the ensuing two-day
skirmish, John C. Holgate, an owner in the Golden Chariot,
and Frank Meyer of the Ida Elmore contingent were fatally
wounded and a number of casualties were listed.13

When news of the battle reached Boise City, Governor
Ballard and Chief Justice McBride immediately set out for
Silver City, and the Governor dispatched a squad of U. S.
caVALry from Fort Boise to the scene of hostilities,
determined to use force, if necessary, in bringing the
dispute to a speedy conclusion. Upon arriving in Silver,

12. Ibid. Also in Maine Ms., op. cit., p. 7. Bancroft
says, "The prospect of endless litigation over the
prize induced both companies to sell, Hoyts and Hay
and the later prospectors, one to Iruf Bradford and
the other to C. C. Robbins, both of Portland, who
worked the mine jointly, taking out nearly $2,000,000,
after which they sold to a New York company."
Bancroft, op. cit., p. 432.
the Governor issued a proclamation commanding both parties
to disperse peaceably, and, in a speech to the townspeople,
entreated the citizens to "return to their homes ---
avoiding all assemblages in public places, and contributing
all they can in quieting the public mind."\textsuperscript{14} He warned
that "the law will prevail....I have the power to enforce
order, and shall not hesitate to use it but have confidence
that you will be able to keep it yourselves. Stand by the
officers and the law, discouraging all harsh language or
other conduct calculated to stir up strife among contending
parties."\textsuperscript{15}

After five days of comparative quiet, violence again
resulted in tragedy. On the evening of April 1, an Ida
Elmore sympathizer, Sam Lockhart, was seated in front of
the stage office at the Idaho Hotel when Marion More, of
the More and Foger Company, accompanied by Jack Fisher
and several others from the Golden Chariot appeared.
A violent quarrel arose. Several shots were fired, one
of them wounding More who staggered about fifty yards to
the door of the Oriental restaurant into which he was

\textsuperscript{14} Owyhee Avalanche, March 28, 1868.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
carried and promptly given medical attention. Although everything possible was done to save his life he died within a few hours. 16

More was well known in Idaho as a member of the More and Fugis Mining and Stamping Firm and his death was universally regretted. The Masonic fraternity conveyed his body to Idaho City where it was interred. According to local legend this funeral procession was the longest ever seen in Idaho. "When the hearse pulled up beside the open grave, the last vehicle in the line had not yet reached the Hot Springs, three miles down More's Creek Road." 17

During the exchange of shots, Lookhart was wounded in the left arm, and several weeks later had Dr. Clinton Wagner of Boise City amputate it for a reputed "fee of $2,500 in gold." Apparently the quality of the surgery was not commensurate with the fee because Lookhart died two months later, relatively unnoticed. 18 Subsequent to the affray several arrests were made, "but proceedings

were afterwards squashed, and peace and quietness again reigned in Silver City. “19

Although subsequently no claims were as notoriously disputed as the Poorman or Golden Chariot, there were minor claim-jumping feats involving less money and fewer contestants. In October, 1877, when an altercation at the Illinois Central resulted in murder, the editor of the Avalanche reflected local sentiment: “The jumping business must be put an end to. We have heard it abroad frequently that there is no law in this place; that men can violate the rights of others and do as they please... every man having anything at stake here must use his efforts to have such illegal acts branded with the odium they merit.”20

Excitement again ran high when in December, 1878, a miner’s committee was called upon to investigate a claim dispute on Florida Mountain between W. B. Knott and W. Hubbs versus W. W. Hastings and the Palmer Brothers. Knott had several months previously located and recorded a claim, the Booneville, which he and Hubbs had worked, allegedly meeting all the requirements of law. The

19. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 27.  
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Palmer Brothers and W. W. Hastings claimed the ledge as an extension of the Black Jack Mine, having it recorded as such. One night when Knott and Hubbs were away from the mine, the Palmers with several others took possession of the claim and barricaded the premises. 21

At the request of the citizens of Silver City a committee of thirteen miners was selected to investigate the disputed claim and settle the existing trouble. After hearing both sides of the question, and making a survey of the disputed property, the committee ballot resulted in twelve votes for Hubbs and Knott with one doubtful. 22 Although the Palmers and Hastings maintained that the committee was packed with Knott and Hubbs sympathizers the decision was reluctantly accepted.

With the exception of these occasional property disputes, lawlessness in Silver City was not rampant. In a community where deep quartz mining required heavy expenditures of capital, and a permanent population, the transient, lawless element, was relatively inconspicuous.

Disagreements between miners and management developed almost as early as did the feuds among mine owners, the miners first asserting themselves in 1867.

22. Ibid.
when they formed the Miners League of Owyhee. The immediate cause for organization was an effort to raise wages from $5.00 to $5.50 per day and to put labor on a contract basis. The constitution stated that wages must be "$3.50 per day in gold coin or its equivalent in greenbacks, with board, or $5.50 per day without board.... for a days work of ten hours or less." Provisions were also made for the appointment of committees to "attend to the wants of any member of the League who may be taken sick and need help," and in the event of a member's death the constitution provided that "the League shall be called together to bury him in such a manner as will reflect credit upon the league."23

Eighty-seven miners signed the constitution on October 4, 1867, and the following day completely surprised their employers by stopping work without notice. "No time was afforded to refuse or comply with the demands before work in the mines abruptly closed."24 Whether from naivety in matters of negotiation or from disunity within the League, the strike met with general failure. The contract system was wholly ignored, and within a week

23. Owyhee Avalanche, October 5, 1867.
24. Ibid., October 12, 1867.
the strikers were at work, only a few of them receiving
the specified fifty-cent increase.

The Avalanche records no further dissatisfaction
among the miners until 1872, when they struck in protest
against foreman Jewell of the Mahogany Mine who was
charged with abusing the miners and attempting to cut
their wages. The Union publically announced, "We are
oppressed with slavery and bad rule since Mr. Jewell has
entered this camp ... and we will unite ourselves to
drive this nuisance to Winnemucca and never to return no
more to this camp under penalty of death." Some three
hundred armed miners met on the evening of March 20, and
notified Jewell to leave before 7 o'clock the following
morning. Sheriff Stevens came to the scene of trouble
at the Mahogany and there he was insulted by the mob who
threatened to "hang the foreman and burn the works." In
the meantime Superintendent Coe of the Mahogany
dispatched forty armed men and two howitzers to defend
the mine. A battle between Coe's forces and the miners
was expected, but finally to avoid bloodshed the matter
was peaceably settled in favor of the strikers. Mr. Jewell
returned to town, and Russ Carter was placed in charge of
the mine.  

25. Owyhee Avalanche, April 20, 1872.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
A year later, in February, 1873, when "some 65 to 100 whites" were "unemployed and destitute of means," the miners again struck in protest against competing Chinese labor. The Union informed company superintendents that no work would be performed "until all the Chinamen are discharged or as many of them as will make room for all the white men willing to work." An anonymous San Francisco stockholder was reported as saying, "I would rather see the water flow out of the shaft for the next six months than assent to the demands of the miners union." Many miners not affiliated with the Union struck in sympathy with their fellows, and mining activity so completely ceased that the company superintendents finally complied with their demands.

During the ensuing years mining reached a low ebb in Silver City and it is likely that the Union became inactive. With the revival of mining activity in the eighteen-nineties, however, it was almost inevitable that the miners would again unite. On August 8, 1896, the Silver City Union Number 66 of the Western Federation

28. Ibid., March 1, 1873.
of Miners was organized. During the next two years it earned a respected position in the community and was "ever ready to preserve the harmony which exists between the large mining companies and their employees." 30 A Miners hospital was opened in October, 1897, and by 1898 the union had paid over $6,000 in benefits to members and their families. 31 This Union, being affiliated with the Western Federation, was undoubtedly stronger and enjoyed considerable more prestige than its early predecessor. The respect and power of the entire Federation as well as the Silver City branch was destroyed, however, during the subsequent investigation of the murder of Idaho's Governor Steunenberg in 1905. 32 This investigation, together with the final collapse of mining in Owyhee, ended the comparatively long history of unionism in Silver City.

30. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 45.
31. Ibid.
Chapter III

GOLD AND NAS

After the rich Boise Basin gold placers were discovered in 1862, and the Owyhee quartz uncovered the following year, the problem of establishing connections between this isolated inland area and the outside was a challenge to farseeing and ambitious men.

Most of the miners who poured into this area from California and Oregon came via the Columbia River, taking passage on steamers to Umatilla or Wallula, Oregon, and completing the remaining three hundred miles on foot or hired transportation. William Ish and John Hailey, two enterprising Idaho pioneers, established the first saddle train from Umatilla to Placerville in the Boise Basin in April, 1863.¹ The saddle trains usually consisted of about twenty animals, of which four were used for packing provisions and cooking utensils, one for the man in charge, and the remainder for the passengers.² Although the pack

¹ French, op. cit., p. 405.
² At the beginning of the season the fare was $50 but before the season was over it had been reduced to $30. Ibid., p. 405.
trains were slow and freight charges high, the business was lucrative as the mines were rich and the miners always eager for additional provisions and mail from "outside." By June 1, Ish and Hailey had replaced their saddle trains with stages, making the trip from Umatilla to Placerville, a distance of 285 miles, in four days. During the same year, George Thomas and J. S. Ruckle of Walla Walla built a road over the Blue mountains and offered stage service from Wallula via Walla Walla to Placerville.

Ben Holliday, famed for his Overland Stages, entered the competition for Southern Idaho freighting and passenger service in 1864, and secured contracts for carrying mail from Salt Lake to Walla Walla via Fort Hall and Boise. After Holliday sold his stage outfit in 1865, express mail was brought into Southern Idaho by Wells Fargo from San Francisco over the Columbia River route. An item in the Owyhee Avalanche reports "The Columbia River is frozen up, and dates by that route are forty days old ... if it were possible to overcome the icy obstacles this company would do it."3

4. Owyhee Avalanche, January 27, 1866.
The Oregon Steamship and Navigation Company held a virtual monopoly on travel to Southern Idaho during the first year of the gold rush. Passengers and freight were steamed up the Columbia to landings at Umatilla and Wallula, Oregon, and there left to travel the remainder of the journey by land. As this was, at the time, the only practical route to the gold fields the O. S. N. Company carried an enormous volume of business and was able to charge all the traffic could bear. "It was the most unfeeling and grasping monopoly in existence, and charged the most exorbitant rates and fares and swindled everybody they could by over-charging for short-freights and caused a powerful reaction in the minds of business men and shippers in the territory." 5

The general feeling among Southern Idaho businessmen and Californians interested in the Idaho trade was that freight could be brought in direct from California faster and cheaper than they could from Portland.

5. J. S. Butler, Life and Times in Idaho, 1893, in Bancroft Library. (Microfilm in possession of Betty Derig.) The Steamer Okanogan paid the entire cost of herself on the first trip to Lewiston, so high were the rates. Passage from Portland was $60, and meals were $1 apiece. The charge for each miner's shovel shipped was $1.00.

By 1864, two express lines were established between Booneville and Sacramento which made the trip in about three weeks. Westerfield and Cutter ran an express from Star City, Nevada, to Jordan Creek, "furnishing news only nine days old," and the Chico and Idaho Saddle Train Company plied between Chico and Owyhee.6 The first to link Owyhee with the main centers of traffic in the Territory were William H. Dewey, Michael Jordan and Silas Skinner, who built a toll road between Silver City and Boise during the fall of 1864. This road superseded the old miners' trail, and over it Barnes and Yates ran a tri-weekly stage.7

By 1865 the southern routes were heavily lined with freight bound for Southern Idaho,8 the main routes being from Chico, Sacramento, and Red Bluff. The teamsters and merchants "all along the Sacramento River" were in brisk competition for Idaho freighting,

7. Maize, Ms, op. cit., p. 3.
8. M. O. Streshly brought through 16 ox teams each loaded with between five and six thousand pounds ... about 35 thousand pounds of flour and 45,000 of barley ... from Chico. Owyhee Avalanche, Sept. 25, 1865.
and the citizens of Sacramento subscribed a bonus of $5,000 to be given the first freight train to carry one hundred tons of merchandise by way of the Truckee route to Owyhee. 9

One of the first to run stages over the southern route was Hill Beachy, a veteran stage manager from Lewiston, who in the spring of 1865 bought the Barnes and Yates Boise-Silver City line. In partnership with Henry Greathouse, Sam Kelly and John Hailey, he stocked a route from Silver City to Star City, Nevada. As this route was much shorter than the Columbia River route, "the mails and freight became transferred to it and left the O. S. W. Co. comparatively in the cold ... this Express and Stage Company made enormous profits on much less rates than those of the O. S. W. Co." 10 Bannock and Piute Indians, a constant source of trouble, soon "stold (sic) nearly all the horses and ran off with the station keepers," 11 and for several months the route was abandoned.

9. In Owyhee Avalanche, April 7, 1866, reprinted from Sacramento Union, March 17, 1866.
In February, 1865, Captain John Mullan bought an interest in the Idaho and Chico Saddle Train Company and replaced the saddle trains with stages. He received a contract from the government and an appropriation from Congress of $75,000 per year to carry mail and freight from Chico to Silver City for a period of four years. After building a wagon road, securing horses, coaches and drivers, he appealed to General McDowell at San Francisco for military protection against the Indians. McDowell immediately responded with "eight companies of troops ... Governor Gibbs of Oregon also contributed two companies."

By August, stages were running on a schedule of three through stages a week, making the trip to Silver City in four to five days. According to an item in the Owyhee Avalanche "Captain Mullan arrived in Silver City yesterday with the first through stage from Sacramento River, bringing a full load of through

12. The original owners of this company were Pierce and Francis. Owyhee Avalanche, August 26, 1865.
14. Ibid.
the offer, incorporated the California and Idaho
miners, quicker to see the advantages to be derived from
Trench free from Songaema to the Chico Landing. It
the California Northern company ordered to carry
California, and further west the territory from Portland,
In an effort to encourage trade with Northern

have no intention of doing so, the
mail contract never carried a branch of mail and
mail in strict to because "the part of the mail that took the
November. In December, 1866 it operated on no
important interest whether brought the mail or
according to the Arkansas, the mail came through with
off the road and carry the mail through on horseback.
and in October, Mullin was forced to take the stages
surrounded completely from attacks by the Injuns

state of these precautions, the stage stations
than to the high points of our territory, if in
nothing should be left undone to protect the community
escort for the return trip, and assured him that
passengers, General McRae will Gave Capt. Mullin en
Stage and Fast Freight Company and prepared to reopen the Chico route. Silver City and Boise men secured drivers, money and horses, and Mullan raised money and coaches in New York and California with which to stock it. Thirty wagons and several coaches were advertised to start from Chico, and on July 7, the Avalanche reported the Chico and Idaho stage "in successful operation and the road lined with heavy freight and travel." The first coach covered the route in three days and five hours.

This company was responsible for carrying mail, the contract having been let to L. T. Williamson, Mullan's brother-in-law, and deliveries apparently were made on schedule for several months but in January, 1867, two weeks had passed "with but one Chico mail," and as time elapsed mail deliveries

18. This company was incorporated in California to "run a line of coaches from Chico, California to Boise, Idaho via Susanville and Ruby City. Capital stock $25,000 divided into 250 shares of $100 each. Trustees are John Mullan, John T. Shaff and Geo. H. Crosby." Ibid., May 26, 1866.

19. Ibid., July 7, 1866.

20. "He Mullan in another's name has secured the mail contract from Susanville. It may just as well be understood now that he will never carry a sackful ... Won't someone present him with a keg of nitro glycerin labeled whiskey?" Ibid.

became less frequent. In April, the Silver City Postmaster received word that the mail contract "let the Mullan crowd" had been discontinued and a new one awarded F. P. Benjamin to carry mail weekly from Chico. A few days later, the Chico Courant reported that "the entire effects" of the California and Idaho Stage Company were to be disposed of at auction. "James Mack loaned the old bulk (Mullan) several thousand, securing himself by Mortgage, but with the mail contract discontinued decided to sell out."

Although freighters continued to use the Chico and Red Bluff road increasing attention was given the Truckee and Humboldt River Route. In a bid for Southern Idaho trade, E. B. Crocker, construction manager for the Central Pacific Railroad Company, announced, "We are passing the first 150 tons of goods for Idaho over our railroad free to give it a start." He indicated that the Chico route was not

22. Ibid. April 20, 1867. "It is a most excellent news that Capt. John Mullan, late of the U. S. Army has finally received at headquarters a check in his bilking career. He has been a successful cheat upon the government for many years, and so long as he could succeed in humbuging (sic) the Washington authorities he cared nothing for the public he was paid to but did not serve." Owyhee Avalanche, May 30, 1857.
23. Reprinted in Owyhee Avalanche, April 27, 1867.
the best, and said, "if your merchants and mill owners will only order their freight sent by the Pacific railroad they will get it quicker, cheaper and in better order than any other way." 24

Hill Beachy, who had previously made one unsuccessful attempt at opening the Humboldt route, again put his stages on the road. This line ran via Humboldt, Nevada, connecting with the Pioneer Stages at Hunter's Station on the Truckee which met the Central Pacific Railroad then at Cisco. 25 Although Beachy's stage stations were often harassed by Indians, and stock frequently stolen, he kept the route open and stages running on schedule. In July, 1867, after the citizens of Owyhee petitioned Congress, asking for establishment of daily mail service from Boise via Owyhee to Hunter's Station, the contract was awarded Hill Beachy. 26 In a tribute to his indomitable energy in establishing and maintaining reliable communications over the southern route the Avalanche stated, "No people could be more unanimous

24. Owyhee Avalanche, May 26, 1866. The Avalanche, convinced Crocker was afraid of competition from the Chico route was quick to answer, "A more thorough run of pioyume jealousy never emanated from the pen of a toll road man."
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., July 20, 1867.
in according proper credit for meritorious service performed than are the citizens of Idaho regarding the Railroad Stage Line."\(^{27}\)

Wells, Fargo and Company opened an office in Silver City July 22, 1866 and during the first month, two hundred and five pounds of bullion, valued at \$14,371.31, and gold dust and bars amounting to \$13,372.80 had been shipped.\(^{28}\) John Hailey, an Idaho pioneer described the method of shipping: "This bullion was usually run into large bars weighing about one hundred pounds apiece and shipped through Wells, Fargo and Co's express via Boise City, Umatilla to Portland and on to San Francisco. Each bar was put into a strong, leather grip which fitted snug and buckled up tight. We had to have iron bars put the full length of the coaches on the under side of the bed to save these bullion bars from breaking through. We have no

\(^{27}\) Ibid., April 13, 1867.
\(^{28}\) Owyhee Avalanche, May 12, 1866.
record of the amount hauled on the stages but it came quite often in lots of from eight hundred to sixteen hundred pounds. 29

Freight shipped from San Francisco via the Columbia River to Boise Basin and Silver City ordinarily arrived in forty days, but during the winter when the river was frozen the time was often doubled. 30 To speed the freighting business B. M. DuReill and Company, a Silver City firm, put a Fast Freight Line into operation in 1866, to carry freight in minimum time from Umatilla to Silver City and other Southern Idaho points. This company was scheduled to run stages from Umatilla to the Oregon Steamship Company's landings at Olds Ferry,

29. John Hailey, History of Idaho, op. cit., p. 140. Wells Fargo shipment for 1867 totaled $104,000. In December, they shipped "1 1/2 ton Bullion valued at $110,000." Owyhee Avalanche, December 28, 1867. During 1870, Wells Fargo and Co. shipped between $20,000 and $50,000 in bullion from Silver City. Owyhee Avalanche, October 1, 1870. The total yearly amount shipped was $806,074.49. During the first six months of 1871 the Wells Fargo office reported a shipment of $18,307.97 in gold dust, and $588,638.98 in bullion. Owyhee Avalanche, July 8, 1871. Total shipments for the year 1871 were $45,128.38 in dust, and $936,234.37 in bullion. "This amount exceeds treasure shipments for 1870 by $175,228." Owyhee Avalanche, Jan. 6, 1872. During the week ending August 8, 1873 the Avalanche records, "This week Wells Fargo and Co. shipped 19 bars of bullion valued at $46,935. There was a total of $147,655 shipped during July, considerably ahead of any monthly shipment from this camp since 1871."

on the Snake River, where passengers and freight were transferred to the Steamer Shoshone which navigated the Snake to the Owyhee landing, from which the DuReill line ran direct to Silver City, Boise and other Idaho cities. The average distance traveled per day was fifty miles and the time for the entire trip seven days. Speaking disparagingly of John Mullan's Silver City - Chico line, the *Avalanche* printed, a bit prematurely, "This is no Mullan affair but one that is doing what they advertise." The Fast Freight did not long make good its advertisement. Because of the difficulty of navigating Snake River the business soon collapsed. On its second voyage the Shoshone was unable to steam past the mouth of the Bruneau River - a point between Olds Ferry and the Owyhee landing. Neither was the venture a success financially. The cost involved in loading and unloading passengers and freight was more than the straight haul by stage.33

After the completion of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads in 1869, the problem of

31. About 50 miles from the Owyhee landing.
32. Owyhee Avalanche, May 12, 1866.
freight and passenger service to Silver City was greatly reduced. The terminus of Hill Beachy's stages was transferred to Elko, Nevada which was only thirty-five hours from Silver City. Hailey and Lookwood operated a line from Kelton, Utah, to Silver City and Tom Early established a route between Winnemucca and Silver City. In 1870 the Northwest Stage Company became proprietor of these lines as well as most of the others serving Southern Idaho and maintained a monopoly for many years.

The types of stagecoaches used in this area from 1862 to 1875 were "mud" wagons and Concord coaches, which were first brought in by Wells Fargo. The coaches were imposing affairs, holding from sixteen to eighteen people, and drawn by fine horses, but were used chiefly for advertisements. Passengers were started off at the main stations "in a superb Concord" but "once on the road away from the town or city, they were unceremoniously hustled into a "mud wagon" and put through to their destination." One of these was driven by John Early from Boise to Silver City from 1869 to 1873.

34. Hawley, op. cit., p. 124.
35. Ibid.
36. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 82.
37. Ibid.
A familiar sight along the stage road to Silver City was piles of pine poles which lay undisturbed during the summer months, and "when the snow began to fall, the stage managers would place these poles on end in the snow to serve as guides for the drivers, and along this pole-marked road the coaches passed." During the severest part of the winter the stages were not used ten miles north or southwest of Silver City, passengers and mails being transferred to sleighs to complete the journey. According to an old timer of Silver City, "The beaten road, or grade, for sleighs or wagons over the snow was as hard as a floor, but one inch to the wrong side and horses and man would disappear in the soft snow. I have frequently seen a horse drop off a grade, and it was a circus to get the beast back to the surface." As the number of freight and stage lines multiplied and as the railroad advanced closer to Idaho mining centers the rates decreased considerably. During the years when the Oregon Steam Navigation Company enjoyed a monopoly of transporting freight

38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
and travellers bound for southern Idaho it charged
"the enormous rate of $400 per ton according to weight
or $1.00 per ton per mile." Transporting goods from
the O. S. N. Company's landings cost an additional
sixteen to twenty cents per pound. Passenger service
from Portland to Lewiston was $60 (and presumably
about the same to Umatilla and Wallula) and from
Umatilla to Boise Basin, an additional $30. In 1866,
passenger fare from Chico to Silver City was $60 and
the time consumed in travel was usually four days. A
traveller going from Sacramento to Portland would save
at least $30 and nearly a week's time by going direct
from California to Owyhee. The same was true of freight.
An item in the Avalanche, September 29, 1866, reports,
"We have freight bills received in Silver City via
Portland ... freight shipped from San Francisco August 2,
59 days old, and non receiv'd. It is a 12 1/2 ton
amount and cost the shipper 16 1/2 $ lb. From San

40. "An article measuring a ton, but not actually
weighing over 200 pounds would cost on the Columbia
or Snake Rivers from Portland to Lewiston, 400
miles, $40.00 or at the enormous rate of $400 per
ton, according to weight, or $1.00 per ton per
mile." Irene Lincoln Fappleton, "Oregon's First
Monopoly, The O. S. N. Company." Oregon Historical

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Francisco via Sacramento the same firm received goods at twelve cents.\textsuperscript{42} From Chico, Red Bluffs, or Sacramento slow freight came through in thirty days at eleven and twelve cents per pound.\textsuperscript{43} By 1871 freights from Winnemucca and Kelton were down to ten cents per pound and in that year Wells Fargo Express reduced its express rates from twenty-five cents to sixteen cents per pound.\textsuperscript{44}

These rates generally remained constant until 1878 when the Oregon Shortline Railroad, connecting the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific, was completed.\textsuperscript{45} Although the Railroad bypassed Silver City by fifty miles\textsuperscript{46} transportation was no longer a major problem.

\textsuperscript{42} Cuyhee Avalanche, September 29, 1866.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., May 12, 1866.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., October 28, 1871.
\textsuperscript{46} The nearest station was at Nampa, Idaho, 50 miles distant.
Chapter IV

"IO. THE POOR INDIAN"

Until after the Bannack War in 1873 citizens of Silver City who ventured beyond the camp were constantly endangered by marauding Indians. Stage coaches, isolated miners, and outlying ranches were so frequently the target of Indian depredations during 1865 that United States troops were stationed along the main travelled routes for their protection.1 Indians were particularly annoying on Hill Beachy's stage line between Silver City and Virginia City, Nevada, and Major Marshall, commandant of Fort Boise, often sent an escort of troops over the most dangerous portions of the road.2 Notwithstanding this protection, the Indian menace continued and the citizens of Silver City found "great cause for

1. Owyhee Avalanche, August 26, 1865.
   Bancroft says that "Beachy had 60 horses stolen; 100 other horses, and 150 cattle were stolen from Owyhee....They attacked a saddle train on Jordan Creek in April, capturing part of the animals." Bancroft, op. cit., p. 433.
2. Hawley, op. cit., p. 441.
fault-finding and aggravation in this military protection programme. Determined to protect themselves, Michael Jordan and a band of twenty volunteers started in pursuit of a marauding group of Piutes, which they found at the head of a canyon fifty miles from Silver City. During the skirmish that followed, Jordan was killed. Hosea Eastman and George Berry were wounded, and the others retreated in disorder to Silver City, pursued by the Indians for fourteen miles. Within twenty-four hours, 140 mounted men with 40 pack animals started from Silver City toward the Indian encampment. Riding all night, they arrived at the battleground in the morning, finding the "charred and mutilated" body of Jordan. They pitched camp there for the remainder of the day and the night, and early the next morning, took the trail of the Indians, finding them camped near the headwaters of the Owyhee river. The battle began that afternoon, during which time several Indians were killed, the remainder retreating to a nearby cave. Although a few escaped, most of them were routed and

3. Owyhee Avalanche, Nov. 13, 1865.
"Every day or two we hear of fresh depredations being committed by the Indians, rendering both life and property insecure. Indian thefts are so common we find it inconvenient to chronicle them all." Owyhee Avalanche, August 26, 1865.
killed. Thirty-five enemy dead were counted, and the miners lost two men, James S. Fogle and Robert Carroll. W. J. Hill, later editor of the Owyhee Avalanche, was wounded.

After burying their dead, the miners returned to Silver City. Colonel Maury of Fort Boise subsequently stationed "100 men and four howitzers" at an encampment on Jordan Creek for the duration of the summer to protect settlers from further Indian attacks. With the return of the troops to Fort Boise in the fall, however Indian raids again became frequent.

4. Maize, Ms., op. cit., p. 5. Maize was one of the miner's party. The exact date is uncertain. Maize says that Indian troubles started in 1864, but does not give the date of this battle. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 15, contains a similar story — "A band of volunteers was organized in Silver City and started in pursuit of the Indians; and after a detour of about 200 miles, overtook them at the mouth of the Bruneau river, and in the engagement sent twenty bucks to the happy hunting ground." As this book does not give evidence of any other major skirmish with the Indians until 1878, it is likely that this is a part of the same story to which Maize refers. Bancroft also mentions this fight. "The rancho of Michael Jordan was attacked in July, Jordan soon after losing his life. A force of 134 men was raised, which overtook the Indians in a fortified canyon, and killed 36, two white men being killed and two wounded." Bancroft, op. cit., p. 432. Again no date is given, but it probably occurred in 1865, and may be the story to which McConnell refers when the Poorman case was being heard.

5. Ibid.
On February 17, 1866, the Challenge Saloon was the scene of a "war meeting" when the citizens of Silver and Ruby Cities met to formulate plans for an "Indian hunting" party to avenge many recent murders and thefts by the Indians. R. Miller called the meeting to order. R. Tregaskis was elected president, and C. G. Whitcome, secretary. A Committee of five was appointed to collect money and provisions, another Committee of five, to requisition arms, and a Committee of twenty-five to collect horses for the proposed expedition. Three men were appointed to select twenty-five others to go on the expedition. To encourage volunteers, a price was put on every scalp brought in. "All of those who can fit themselves out shall receive a nominal sum for all scalps that they may bring in and all who cannot fit themselves out shall be fitted out by this Committee and when they bring in scalps it shall be deducted out. For every buck scalp shall be paid 100 dollars, and every squaw scalp fifty dollars and twenty-five for everything in the shape of an Indian under ten years of age."  

7. Ibid.
During the following week enthusiasm for the expedition appears to have waned as the thirty armed volunteers were unable to secure the horses necessary for transportation, the stockmen having "secreted their animals." Undaunted, the volunteers proceeded to Camp Lyon on foot, hoping to receive aid there, and should this effort fail, were instructed to "store your supplies and return to town. We can stand Indian raids as long as the stockmen of this country." Upon arriving at Camp Lyon they found that Indians had stolen most of the cavalry horses and that no aid could be given them. However, they campaigned on foot for two weeks but, meeting with little success, returned to Silver City.

In the meantime the citizens of Boise equipped a company of Indian fighters for Owyhee, subscribing goods to the amount of $2,150. The volunteers immediately started for the Indian country but were out only a few days when they received a message from Governor Lyon warning them not to molest the Indians as he was negotiating a treaty of peace with them. The volunteers

8. Owyhee Avalanche, February 24, 1866.
9. Ibid., March 17, 1866. The Avalanche advocated ridding the country "not only of the Indians but their infernal protectors."
returned to Boise and disbanded, later learning that the proposed treaty did not materialize.

Within a few days, however, Major Marshall of the 14th Infantry arrived at Fort Boise to replace Captain Walker, and ordered thirty men from the Boise post and twenty-five 1st Oregon Cavalry from Camp Lyon to scout and destroy Indian camps. Marshall was astonished that "the Territory of Idaho, that has produced nearly 20 millions of bullion during the last year should be left with three hundred square miles of hostile Indian country to contend with and but a mere handful of men for service." Major Marshall and his troops headed toward the Forks of the Owyhee where they found the Indians five hundred strong, with "250 armed warriors and 1,000 head of horses." This news caused considerable excitement in Silver City and, as the result of several town meetings, sufficient equipment and rations were raised to keep over thirty armed men in the field for a month's time. On July 23, thirty-two volunteers left Silver City under the command of Isaac Jennings, an experienced

10. Ibid., March 31, 1866.
11. Owyhee Avalanche, March 31, 1866.
12. Ibid., June 2, 1866.
13. Ibid., June 25, 1866.
Indian scout. A few days later, a messenger arrived in Silver City, at 2 a.m., bringing news that the volunteers were surrounded by 250 Indian warriors and that unless help arrived immediately all would perish at the hands of the Indians. Six hours later, two hundred mounted men with five day's provisions hurried to aid the Jennings party.\(^{14}\)

With this substantial relief the volunteers were saved, and the Indians routed, their organization reduced to small roving bands. The volunteers as well as troops from Camp Lyon and Camp McDermitt remained in the field several weeks scouting for Indians while sixty mounted infantrymen patrolled the streets of Silver City, guarding it from sudden attack.\(^{15}\)

This Indian campaign, which lasted until early fall, succeeded in inflicting severe losses on the Indians.

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., July 7, 1866.

"Could Congress have been here last week and seen 300 men armed, mounted, and put into the field inside of six hours with $4,000 worth of provisions and on the subsequent day $4,000 more in grub added to the commissary, and have seen the spirit manifested, we think surely they would embrace the first opportunity to vote men and means to exterminate the savages of Idaho." ... We are certainly not overestimating in asserting that in the direct loss of time, property and money to Owyhee county in the last six months is fully $200,000." ... No matter who kills an Indian we consider all such friends of Owyhee. Go in boys, and may fortune favor you all in the killing business." Ibid., July 14, 1866.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., July 14, 1866.
but it by no means exterminated them. Throughout the following spring and summer their murderous raids and thefts continued, but with less frequency than during the previous year. Troops from Camp Lyon were constantly in the field but were no match for the crafty Indians who were scattered throughout a large territory, and who moved swiftly and in small groups. Silver City men organized a Home Guard in June, 1867, and although they were reported to have killed about fifty Indians during the following two months, the red men would not be driven from the vicinity of Silver City. Almost every night signal fires were seen on the mountains a short distance from town.

No attempt was made to attack the town but danger lurked in narrow mountain passes for unprotected riders and stages. A typical example is related in the Owyhee Avalanche. "Again it is our painful duty to record another Indian outrage and murder similar to those that for the last four or five years have

16. Owyhee Avalanche, August 3, 1867. We may soon expect to hear of the Throne of Grace being besieged with orisons and supplications for "Lo! the Poor Indian" by our Eastern countrymen who are totally ignorant of his fiendish character." Ibid., October 5, 1867.

17. Ibid., Oct. 19, 1867.
been of such frequent occurrence in our midst. Last Saturday afternoon ... a small band of Indians numbering from five to eight, attacked a party of four men who were riding along in a wagon between the Sheep Ranch and Inskip's ... Three or four of the bloodthirsty fiends fired from the rocks not more than five yards distant..." Fearing that the Indians might attack the stage, which was expected in a short time, the Eastman party hurried to Inskip's Ranch to inform the soldiers stationed there. They immediately started for the pass, but arrived too late to prevent the stage from being attacked. The driver and three passengers had been killed, and the stage was a smouldering ruin.18

The most vigorous campaign against the Indians and the one which met with greatest success was an expedition led by Major General George Crook, Commander of the 23rd U. S. Infantry of Fort Boise.19 With a company composed of two hundred well-equipped troops and volunteers he pursued the Indians of Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon so relentlessly

19. Ibid., January 5, 1867.
during the winter of 1867 and spring of 1868 that in
July of the latter year he was able to conclude a
treaty with them. The Avalanche reported General Crook
"making peace with the principal bands of hostile
Indians infesting the vicinity of Malheur River, Castle
Rock, Owyhee and Steins Mt., under their principal
Chief Wee-Ah-Wee-Wa at Camp Harney, where it was
mutually agreed that they return to their own country
and establish their headquarters at Castle Rock,
unmolested."20

Both Indians and Whites were urged to abide
scrupulously by the settlement, and the following years
of peace testifies to the commendable conduct of both
groups. On at least one occasion, "half a dozen
Indian bucks perambulated out streets ... the first
time the noble red men have ever ventured into town.21
Three years later a company of more than one hundred
Shoshones and Snakes camped unmolested near Silver
City. "Everybody" in the town had been to the Indian
camp and were favorably impressed with their "merry
dances" and "sprightly appearance."22

20. Ibid., July 28, 1868.
21. Ibid., July 8, 1871.
22. Ibid., July 24, 1875.
No further trouble with Indians is recorded until in May, 1878, the Bannocks left Fort Hall reservation to gather roots on Camas Prairie which by treaty they claimed equally with the United States. Finding that swine and cattle had destroyed a large portion of the roots they began to threaten the settlers, ordering them to leave. A messenger arrived from Cow Creek with a letter to Sheriff Hays from ranchers Con Shea, S. G. Gillson and John Stode, saying that 150 Bannocks camped in that vicinity were killing stock and threatening settlers. This word was relayed to Governor Brayman in Boise, who with Major Collins and Lt. Pitcher of Fort Boise hastened to Silver to learn the extent of Indian troubles, and to aid in suppressing any possible outbreak. When they arrived, however, the possibility of an immediate war with the Bannocks had been quelled.

A week later conditions were changed considerably. The country was full of roving, hostile Indians, and excitement ran high. Chief Buffalo Horn with a band of eighty Bannock warriors had crossed Snake River at Glenns Ferry and proceeded toward Silver City, killing several settlers along the way.

As soon as this news reached Silver, a public meeting was held at Champion hall and a group of thirty-five volunteers under the leadership of J. B. Harper was at once organized for the protection of the town. In the meantime the Bannocks had bypassed Silver City and headed toward South Mountain fifty miles distant where the volunteers with two flute guides encountered them June 8.

The Indians ambushed the miners, attacking furiously and overwhelming them. Many were thrown from their horses, which, "not accustomed to being under fire reared and plunged wildly." Being

outnumbered more than two to one, the loosely organized company was forced to retreat. Early in the fray two men were killed, Chris Struesler and 0. H. Purdy. The "Gallant Purdy" who was thrown from his horse, and "riddled with bullets", was credited with killing Chief Buffalo Horn. The remainder of the party spent the night at a nearby ranch and, the next morning, found that the Indians had fled to Oregon. This volunteer action was the first united stand against the Bannocks, and it was several days before General O. C. Howard and Colonel Bernard consolidated their troops and took the trail of the Indians, pursuing them across the Oregon border. There, bands of Umatillas and Piutes joined the Bannocks who continued plundering and killing as far north as the Columbia River. Numbering almost 2,000, their raids became so widespread over the thinly populated

25. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 25.
27. Ibid. O. C. Howard, My Life and Experiences among our Hostile Indians, A. D. Worthington and Co., Hartford, Conn., 1907, says that Piute Joe, one of the Indian guides, claims to have killed Buffalo Horn. P. 387.
country that the several cavalry divisions in the
field could never make a unified stand against them. 28
After several skirmishes over a period of two months
the Indians lost their leaders, their organization
crumbled, and they dispersed into small roving
groups. Many surrendered, some made their way
back to their former homes, and others were captured.
By August 10, "600 souls were in the hands of the
commander of the Department in Oregon." 29

During the campaign, the anxiety of Indian
warfare was apparent in Silver City. Terrorized
settlers from rural areas had streamed into town
for protection against the Bannock warriors. All
communication with Winnemucca and California had
ceased. Mails had been destroyed by the "savages"
and business was prostrate. 30 Animosity toward
the Indians pervaded the town. Revenge was wanted
for the deaths and devastation left in the wake
of the Bannock raids - revenge in the way of an
eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth with no
quarter given. General Howard, however, entertained

28. For a complete account of the story see Ross,
op. cit., pp. 70-190.
30. Owyhee Avalanche, June 15, 1878.
no such plans. He considered the Indians prisoners of war, and would not "do such a dastardly thing as to kill prisoners of war." It was his desire to provide "food, shelter, and permanent peace" for the Indians and to "allay the wild fears of the ranch people and settlers.""31

Realizing the attitude the people held toward his policy, Howard hesitated to ride through Silver City on his return from Stein's Mountain, Oregon. Upon reaching Jordan Valley with two companies of cavalry, the General inquired whether the Bruneau region could be reached by some other route than Silver City, which he spoke of in "terms not very complimentary."32 He was advised to make a detour towards Florida Mountain which he did with a portion of his staff. When he reached the Blackjack Mine, however, he was informed that Silver was unavoidable on his route. Consequently, he rode through town without stopping. Toward evening, "Mr. Regan, Graham and Hunt and a number of other citizens" went to see the General who had camped five miles from town, and induced

32. Owyhee Avalanche, August 10, 1878.
him to come into Silver. After remaining about an hour, "he hurriedly departed for Boise in a private conveyance. His command followed the next morning."33

This rather uncourteous welcome for a general who had recently helped win a major Indian campaign was explained in the Avalanche. "He would have been received here with enthusiasm if his campaign...had been characterized by vigor and energy. Our people believe these hostiles should be wiped out...They insist that General Howard's humanitarian ideas as practiced in his treatment of the Indian question are all wrong...The same kind of treatment that they have extended to their victims should be meted out to them...General Howard is not the man for the emergency."34

Howard's policy prevailed and the Indians were protected by U. S. troops until they could be transferred to reservations. Some of them returned to Fort Hall, others were sent to Camp Howard and Camp Coeur d'Alene.35 During the preceding fifteen years

33. Owyhee Avalanche, August 10, 1878.
34. Ibid.
they had made transportation to and from Silver City all but impossible. They had been a constant threat to the life and property of isolated ranchers, miners, and travellers, but now they were powerless, and the settlers free to live unmolested.
Chapter V

HILLIONAIRE SOCIETY

Unlike many early mining camps, the growth of Silver City was not phenomenal. During the first two years of its existence it vied with Ruby City for the population of miners the gold placers had attracted and only gradually acquired a substantial community based on quartz mining. In January, 1865, a visitor from Boise described Silver City as "a town of about 45 houses, (the number of inhabitants is hard to ascertain, as many of them are working in tunnels and shafts, or are otherwise invisible day and night)." As new quartz ledges were discovered, and the demand for men and supplies increased, Silver City flourished and assumed an air of permanence.

She attracted fortune hunters in considerable numbers from other states and territories, and many residents and business firms of Ruby City abandoned the older camp in favor of its more prosperous rival. Among these were the Idaho Hotel and the Owyhee Avalanche. With the acquisition of the Idaho in 1865, Silver City

I. Idaho World, Boise, Idaho, July 8, 1865.

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gained prestige as well as a valuable business asset. Hosea Eastman, owner of this palatial establishment, had it moved in sections by ox-team and reassembled on Washington Street in Silver City. A visitor from Boise later described the Idaho as "an elegant frame building quite as large as any in Idaho." A second blow to Ruby City and boon to Silver was the removal of the press of the Owyhee Avalanche in April, 1866. This paper, one of the liveliest Territorial exchanges, was of invaluable aid to Silver City as a mining journal, always keeping the progress of the mines before the public.

Silver City so completely outstripped Ruby City in mining and business opportunities that it became the commercial center of Owyhee and, in 1866, was named the county seat. Popular accounts credit Silver City with a population of 10,000 at the peak of mining activity, but the actual number of residents seems never to have exceeded 3,000 persons.

E. Idaho World, July 8, 1865.
3. The Idaho Encyclopedia, op. cit., says that Silver City "so completely annihilated its rival the exact location of Ruby City is not known today." P. 250.
4. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 15. The total population of War Eagle Mountain and the surrounding valleys for which Silver City was the commercial center may have numbered 10,000 but not the town itself.
of the leading business establishments may be indicative of the volume of trade carried on in Owyhee. In December, 1871, the Avalanche lists, "10 general merchandise stores, 4 hotels, 6 saloons, 1 Brewery, 2 furniture and cabinet makers, 2 meat markets, 2 stationery stores, 2 music stores, 1 stove and tinware, 2 assay offices, 1 notary public, 4 lawyers, 1 doctor, 1 drug store, 1 stable, 1 photo shop, 1 bank (Wells Fargo), 1 laundry, 1 shoeshop, 1 bakery, 1 jewelry."5

Although the half dozen saloons in town offered a standard form of diversion to some of the townsmen, considerable attention was focused upon civic affairs, particularly school, church, and community life. A grammar school was opened in the spring of 1865 under the superintendancy of J. A. Chittenden and, by November, $2,000 had been subscribed for a schoolhouse.6 By 1867, two schools were in operation, one in the schoolhouse, the other in the Assay Office; and a subscription was being raised for one large building.7 Much of the community

5. Owyhee Avalanche, December 14, 1871.
6. Owyhee Avalanche, September 9, 1865.
7. Ibid., May 30, 1867.
life was centered in the school which was often the
scene of musical programs, "spell downs" and "socials."
The success of the early day school in Silver seems
to have been due not only to the cooperative attitude
of the public but also in a large measure to the
labor of the first two schoolmasters, J. A. Chittenden
and Gilbert Butler. These men took a genuine interest
in the young "scholars" and endeavored to keep the
community conscious of the activities and needs of
the school.

The growth of the church and Sunday school
closely paralleled that of the grammar school. In
the spring of 1865, J. A. Chittenden opened a
"Sabbath School" which for several months met in
the schoolhouse before moving to a new location
"next door north of V. Blackinger's on Washington
Street." A "Union Church and School Society" was
organized in October, 1865, but apparently did not
own its own building until a year later when the

8. Chittenden was also in charge of the Assay Office,
and was later appointed the first Territorial
Superintendent of Public Inst. Donaldson,
op. cit., p. 140.
Avalanche announced completion of the "Community Church." At this time the congregation was apparently large enough to support a full-time minister as it was announced that the Reverend Mr. Case was "devoting his entire time to the ministry." The first church representing a specific faith was a Catholic one, erected by Father Mesple in July, 1868, and "dedicated to the Glory of God, under the patronage of St. Andrew." Episcopal services were held irregularly from 1867 to 1877, although a church was not erected until 1890. The well-known Bishop Tuttle made

10. Ibid., February 10, 1865.
11. Ibid., March 3, 1866.
12. Owyhee Avalanche, July 7, 1866. Fred Richards, op. cit. says "the early day Catholic church was opposite the Idaho Hotel on Jordan Street near the Chinese laundry.
13. Letter from Fred Richards to Betty Derig, January 20, 1949. Mr. Richards has obtained information about early Episcopal services in Silver from Bishop Rhea of Boise. He says that the record of the building and dedication of the building seems to be missing but that it was erected in 1898 or 1899 and that Rev. David Jones was the resident pastor. Prior to the erection of the church, services were held by:

1867, 1868, 1871 Rev. Miller
1875, 1876 Rev. Thos. E. Dickey
1880, 1882 Rev. Frederick W. Crook
1870 Rev. H. L. Poote
1872, 1874 Rev. J. P. Lytton
1873 Bishop Tuttle
1877 Rev. Wm. Ballard

Mr. Richards says, "Bishop Rhea (Episcopal) informs me that Bishop Barzwell sold it (the church) to Bishop Kelley (Catholic) several years ago for $25.00. The bell went to the Episcopal church in Placerville, and the seats are in St. Michael's Chapel in Boise."
periodic visits to Silver City during the years 1872 to 1877 and was always well received. On one such occasion the Avalanche reported, "Services were held morning and evening on Sunday at Jones Hall. On both occasions the Bishop discoursed eloquently and his sermon elicited marked attention at the hands of a large audience. The Bishop's visits are always a source of pleasure to our people and there is general regret that such a long time elapses between them." 14

Although school and church functions contributed to the social life of Silver City they by no means held a monopoly. Every holiday called for a full-scale celebration, while music, dramatics, and dancing thrived the year round. Local amateur groups frequently provided entertainment although professional troupers also were billed. 15 The Owyhee Choir, the

15. Some of these early entertainers were: "Mr. John Kelly, the Natural Vocalist and Violinist and his pupil the Indian prodigy." Owyhee Avalanche, September 3, 1865. "Apollo Troupe of Minstrels", Ibid., October 5, 1867; "Henry Wilkinson's Combination Troupe presenting Hamlet", Ibid., October 5, 1867; "McGinley Concert and Variety Troupe", July 7, 1868; and "Pixley Sisters Dramatic Troupe", who were welcomed "with probably the largest audience that ever assembled in Owyhee." Ibid., July 22, 1871.
War Eagle Minstrel, Dramatic and Acrobatic Association, the Poorman Glee Club, Kings Band, the Owyhee Quadrille Band and the Silver City Lyceum were some of the active local groups.  

Fraternal organizations thrived almost from the beginning in Silver City, the Masons and Fenians being active from 1865, and the I.O.O.F. from 1869. In addition to performing the fraternal rites and duties these groups were credited with sponsoring some of the most gala affairs held in Silver City. Dances were particularly popular during the long winter season, and those given regularly every Wednesday.

15. The Owyhee Choir was active by 1867, the others, before July, 1869.
17. A Masonic Lodge of Instruction was formed October, 1865, and the Fenian Brothers organized August, 1865. Owyhee Avalanche, August 19, and October 21, 1865.
18. On one occasion, February 22, 1870, the Avalanche described a joint Mason-Odd Fellow ball as "the most brilliant and fashionable party ever assembled in Silver...the ladies were dressed in a variety of styles, all costly and becoming. Some of the pretty innocents looked like doll's heads stuck into a bundle of dimity and lace, but they made sad havoc of susceptible old bachelors. The reception rooms and hall were brilliantly lighted. Surfeited with the pleasure of the dance, the assemblage dispersed at 5 o'clock in the morning."
night by the Silver City Dancing Club were "the most enjoyable parties ever held in Owyhee." The Owyhee Quadrille Band frequently held dances, with tickets priced at "only $5 in greenbacks." Sometimes parties were given as "benefits", the proceeds going to the school, injured miners, widows, orphans, and at least in one case the "ladies and gents of Silver" assisted by the brass band gave a charity concert for "the benefit of the poor."

St. Patrick's Day and the Fourth of July were traditional times of celebration. In announcing the St. Patrick dance in 1872 the Avalanche promised "there will be excellent music, the hall will be splendidly decorated with pictures, mirrors, flags and evergreens.....'On with the dance, let joy be unconfined' is the motto."

The Fourth of July probably called forth more revelry than any other day. For many years it was traditional to start the festivities at dawn with a 21-gun salute, and a dynamite blast from "Cannon Rock" high atop Florida Mountain. A typical day is that

20. Ibid., February 2, 1867.
22. Ibid., March 16, 1872.
of July 4, 1871. Captain J. A. Borland gave the
signal to commence the day's activities by "causing
a twelve-pounder to belch forth a national salute at
sunrise." As soon as the town began to bustle with
activity the brass band escorted miners from out-
lying mills into town while citizens gathered in
the streets, finding the best vantage point from
which to view the program of the day. This was begun
by the "soul stirring air of Hail Columbia", played
by the brass band, after which Chairman Purdy
introduced C. M. Hays who read the Declaration of
Independence "in magnifiscent (sic) style." Several
selections by the band followed, and finally "Old
Hill", the orator of the day, was called upon, and
"spouted for about half an hour." 23

With the conclusion of the program, the cele-
brants picnicked and enjoyed an afternoon of games,
visiting, and firecrackers. At dark there was "a
brilliant display of rockets and other fireworks," and to complete the day, a dance, "a splendid affair,"
was given by the Quadrille Band. "Altogether the

23. Ibid., July 7, 1871.
glorious Fourth passed off in a highly satisfactory manner ... no fights and no bad cases of drunks although considerable money was spent and a large quantity of fire water consumed.\textsuperscript{24}

Horse-racing was a popular sport, and provided an opportunity for the citizenry of Silver City and Owyhee County to gather together. Betting was not usually high, and a man's word was considered as good as his bond, it being exceptional to see written agreements or money transferred into the hands of a mediatory party.\textsuperscript{25} Outstanding in the racing business was "Silver Walker", a Negro barber who owned a string of half-breed racers which he circuited throughout southwestern Idaho. "Always neatly dressed and genteel in manner," he was taken as an equal by all.\textsuperscript{26}

Although severe winters made skiing and snow-shoeing somewhat necessary, often they were considered sport. During the winter of 1865, the "Owyhee boys" extended a challenge to the Territory to compete in a snow-shoe match, "to run a given distance for a sum

\textsuperscript{24} Owyhee Avalanche, July 7, 1871.
\textsuperscript{25} Interview with M. Ned Williams, April 10, 1949. Mr. Williams is an old timer of Silver City now residing in Boise.
\textsuperscript{26} Donaldson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 25.
of $1,000 or $2,000." Apparently the boys were in top shape as they were reported to have run from the top of Florida Mountain to Ruby City - a distance of about one and one-half miles - in 28 seconds.27

The population of Silver City appears to have been a mixed one, composed of the Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, and a few persons of Jewish descent. The most conspicuous foreign element, however, was the Chinese, of whom Silver City absorbed a substantial number. At the height of mining activity, in 1874, they numbered at least 700, and boasted a thriving Chinatown separated from Silver City proper by only a narrow street - Dead Man's Alley.28 Here were a Masonic temple,29 two Joss

27. Owyhee Avalanche, December 30, 1865.
28. Interview with Williams, op. cit.
29. Fern Coble Trull, Master's Thesis, "A History of the Chinese in Idaho." Washington State College, 1941, describe the Masonic temple as "a large one-story building, unpainted and in 1936 it was empty. At the end of the large room was an altar over which was a picture of their god or patron. Dusty red hangings draped the altar. On the wall was a board about eight feet long and a foot wide with Chinese characters which suggested that it was a roll of members. Painted cloth hangings and small lanterns graced the walls. Originally it had had big five-sided lanterns with painted silk panels and carved teak wood frames...In the lean-to kitchen was a brick Dutch oven with a tin top and a large metal bowl for cooking." p. 70. She also says that Chinese Masons were found in every Idaho town populated by the early Chinese, but that only Placerville, Lewiston, Boise, Pierce City and Silver City had temples. "Apparently the only one standing today is the one on Jordan Creek in Silver City." Ibid., p. 70.

She also describes one of the Joss houses. "Originally the building had been painted red with black stripes, but the Chinese did not like that, so it was painted blue with white stripes. Over and around the entrance were signs painted gold or red. Inside, to the left, was an altar with tin pans of ashes and dirt for the incense sticks. In the center of the room was an arch with gold Chinese characters. Banners were hung on poles. Red valances with gold lettering and gold fringe are now on the floor covered with dirt. The interior was smoked from the incense." p. 114.
houses, four stores, three or four restaurants, two
laundries, two lotteries, five gambling establishments
and many warehouses. These Orientals were generally
reliable and were respected by the townspeople. L. A.
York, native of Silver City, states, "A Chinese
merchant's word was as good as his bond."

The Silver City Chinese belonged to one of
several companies which had headquarters in San Fran-
cisco. A yearly fee paid to his company insured
each man that an agent would protect him if arrested,
care for him if ill, and give him a Chinese burial,
that is, transport his bones to China. Nearly all
the bodies of Chinese buried in Silver were eventually
disinterred and shipped to San Francisco for reshipment
to China.

These people were very industrious and found a
number of occupations open to them, one of the most

30. Interview with L. A. York, April 10, 1949. Mr.
York is a native of Silver City and one time pub-
lisher of the Owyhee Avalanche. He is now
residing in Boise and is president of the Symms-
York printing company.

31. Trull, op. cit., p. 127. These companies were
called Tongs, and they were secret organizations.
Usually Chinese of one dialect and from the same
section of China would belong to the same tongs.
32. Interview with York, op. cit.
lucrative being mining. Many of them reworked the tailings left by quartz reduction mills, and repanned gold placers white men had abandoned for richer fields. Others became water carriers. The only water system in Silver City until after 1885 was kept intact largely by energetic Chinamen who packed water from mountain springs to the homes and business establishments where it was deposited in wooden barrels, at least one of which was owned by every family. The Chinaman, shouldering a yoke from which two five-gallon cans swung, delivered one load of 10 gallons to each of his patrons daily, "with an extra turn on Monday, which was washday." For this service he was rewarded with fifty cents per day.

In 1885 water was piped to the War Eagle Hotel in a 4-inch iron pipe fed by an accumulation of springs on War Eagle Mountain. "This pipe fed a large wooden tank and the tank fed the town." After this first pipeline was laid many homes and business establishments had water piped in, but during the winter when the springs feeding the pipeline froze, the town again relied on Chinese water carriers.

33. Interview with Elisha Lewis, April 10, 1949. Mr. Lewis is a native of Silver City, now living in Boise.
34. Interview with Williams, op. cit.
Some of the Silver City elite employed Chinese servants, who "were very devoted and loyal to the families they worked for." The prevailing wage for such service was $40 per month. Contracting to cut wood for residents and gambling houses were other common occupations in which the orientals engaged.

The Chinese were fond of celebrations and often broke the monotony of their rigorous lives with parties and special feasting. Two of the favorite festivities were the New Year and funerals although they also gave parties at Christmas time and presented Chinese gifts to their white friends. A prerequisite to any celebrating during the New Year season was the payment of debts. An elaborate religious ceremony was then in order, and many of the celebrants would hold open house, serve native refreshments, and perhaps shoot off a few firecrackers. Upon one occasion the Avalanche reports the Celestials giving added life to Silver, "shooting off firecrackers, and having their own peculiar fun, with plenty to eat, drink and smoke."

35. Interview with York, op. cit.
36. Interview with York, OP. CIT.
37. Trull, OP. Cit., p. 78.
38. Owyhee Avalanche, February 17, 1877.
L. A. York recalled the funeral of Song Lee, a well known merchant, as one of the most colorful Chinese celebrations held in Silver. Before the deceased was laid to rest in the Chinese cemetery, a hog, roasted with various delicacies, was served to a multitude of jovial Chinese and American friends. After much revelry a funeral procession proceeded to the cemetery to the tune of "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" played by an American band hired for the occasion. A Chinese band consisting of a beer keg drum, piccolo and symbols beat out a wailing oriental tune, while the would-be mourners whistled heartily, scattering red strips of paper along the trail to frighten any devils that might be lurking about. Edibles were buried with the departed Celestial to insure happy festivities upon his meeting with his ancestors. As the body was lowered into the grave, the band obliged with another tune, "Down Went McGinty."

Although the Chinese and white population did not usually mingle socially, there was a general feeling of cordiality between them except for a few

39. Interview with York, op. cit.
years when adverse economic conditions gave rise to a
resentment against Orientals. For several years after
the mining crash of 1875 when Silver was in the throes
of depression and widespread unemployment there was
evidence of bitterness toward the Chinese.40 The
vociferous Avalanche took up the cudgel against the
"heathens" on more than one occasion. "Under the
present treaty with China that country could ... throw
upon our shores millions of these infamous heathens,
who would have it in their power, by their system of
cheap labor to cause endless misery, suffering and
destitution among our own kinsmen. The influence of
their demoniacal, atheistical and demoralized habits
of life has already had its influence for the worse
upon the youth ... and the contagion is still spreading."41 Again, when the Bannock War was in the offering
the Avalanche suggested pitting the Chinese against
the Indians because, "they have something at stake
and their loss would not be seriously felt. While
our sympathies in such a contest would incline to the
side of the Celestial on account of his being the

40. Ibid.
41. Owyhee Avalanche, May 19, 1877.
least of the two evils, people generally, we think, could bear the loss on either side with a certain degree of composure. Neither the Indian nor the Chinaman should have been allowed to live in the same country with white people. 42

For the most part, the Chinese were accepted as a portion of the community and were generally respected. There were no anti-Chinese riots and no consideration of driving them from town as was done in other localities throughout Idaho. 43 Probably the most drastic action with which the Chinese had to cope was that of young pranksters who delighted in having their fun at the expense of John Chinaman.

During the winter time a favorite trick for boys was to dig pits, cover them with light cardboard and a sprinkling of snow, then provoke a Chinaman to chase them down the trail. The boys easily avoided the trap, but usually the unsuspecting Chinese would fall and they would proceed to heap snow upon him. 44 "No Chinese

42. Owyhee Avalanche, June 23, 1878.
44. Interview with Williams, op. cit. Also in Trull, op. cit., p. 193.
was ever safe from snowballs in the winter, or rotten eggs and rotten tomatoes in the summer.\textsuperscript{45}

At the time of the Pocomum War soldiers who were sent from Boise to keep order brought a howitzer with them which they left on a hill opposite Chinatown. Two mischievous boys surrendered to the temptation, and on the Fourth of July, "put a pound of black powder in a flannel sack, tamped it with gravel, and fired the gun."\textsuperscript{46} The charge destroyed parts of two shacks, yielding about twenty very startled Chinamen.

The lives of these people here were not easy, and many of them looked forward to saving enough money to be able to return to China where their family and friends were and where they wished to die. A few brought their wives with them, and were satisfied to remain in this country. Mr. York says that some of these families and their descendants live in Boise Valley today and are very prosperous and respected people.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{45} Trull, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{46} Trull, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{47} Many of the Chinese could not write English, and in preparing to return to China, Mr. York often filled out their customs papers for them.
Chapter VI

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The history of Silver City was a comparatively long and turbulent one. Its fortunes, forever at the caprice of elusive gold and silver, rose and receded like the tides. With the cessation of corporate mining operations in 1910, the old town began its fatal decline, falling into decay as the populace abandoned their homes for more prosperous locations. Only a handful of people remained during the following twenty years; a few hopefully prospected, but most depended for a livelihood upon the business centered in the county offices. In 1935 when this vital source of income was removed to Murphy, (a small but easily accessible village) Silver City felt its death blow. Already half abandoned, it now became completely deserted save for perhaps half a dozen expectant prospectors who lived alone among

1. Interview with Williams, op. cit. Many of the old families settled in towns along the Snake river valley, and some of the present business establishments in these towns were built with fortunes acquired in Silver City.
the silent hills and vacant buildings, a testimony to earlier times when the camp pulsed with a life peculiar to the era of the mining frontier.

Many of the old timers of Silver City, and the few who still spend their summers prospecting there, are confident the camp will boom again, and surpass even its balmiest days. They say that the surface has only been scratched, and stubbornly cling to their property in the hope that one day large scale mining operations will again flourish and infuse new life into the onetime metropolis of Owyhee.

Whether Silver City ever approaches its former heyday in the field of mining is problematic, nevertheless, the old ghost town is awakening. The decrepit buildings still stairstep up and down the hills, beaten brown by decades of mountain weather, and the ancient wooden sidewalks groan at the touch of a step, but one by one the rustle houses are coming to life again, and smoke rolls from long idle chimneys. A new and curious interest in Silver City has been aroused. Many old timers have returned to open summer homes, and during 1949, 5000 visitors drove in to see the town, even though no tourist
accommodations were available. Two stores are now open for business at least part of the summer - Shorty Hawes' antique shop, selling treasured relics of the past, and the Idaho Hotel Bar, again offering "Silver City's best."

Renewed interest in the old mining camp is due, at least in part, to the Idaho Cattlemen's Association which staged a full-scale convention in Silver two years ago, with a record crowd of well over two thousand people. Out of the celebration came a new appreciation for this historic spot and the conviction that it should be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Immediately following the cattlemen's convention, the Payette Kiwanis Club began a Silver City project, which included placing historical identification plaques on each building. The second and perhaps more ambitious portion of their project is that of inducing the state legislature to name Silver City a State Park. This plan has a two-fold purpose, that of providing advertisement with regard to the growing tourist business, and of preserving what still remains of the old ghost town. There has been considerable agitation concerning this plan, but as yet no real accomplishment has been made except to stimulate interest in the tangible bit of history that is Silver City.
Appendix A

OWYHEE AVALANCHE

Throughout the history of Silver City, with its triumphs and failures, the press of the Owyhee Avalanche probably consistently contributed more in the way of public service than any other single factor. This journal, primarily an authority on mines, was a valuable asset to the Territory as well as to Silver City.¹ During the years of depression following the financial crash of 1875, it did much to keep the resources of Idaho before the public, and to prevent the abandonment of Silver City by attracting the attention of mining men who were able to stage a revival. It also earned the reputation of one of the best territorial exchanges, "brimful of the latest news, local items, and other articles of interest to the general reader."²

J. L. Hardin and the Wasson Brothers established the Owyhee Avalanche in August, 1865 and two years

¹ Bancroft, op. cit., p. 559.
² Bozeman Courier, in Owyhee Avalanche, April 26, 1879.
later, sold to W. J. Hill and H. W. Millard who, on
November, 1868, sold the concern to John McGinigle.
Hill and Millard repurchased the paper February 19,
1870, consolidating it with the Tidal Wave (a paper
which had been in existence a year or more under
the management of the Butler Brothers). 3 A few
weeks after this transaction, Hill became sole
proprietor of the business, and continued to edit
and publish the paper for several years as a weekly,
and in October, 1874, he established the first
daily paper in the territory, which existed for more
than a year and a half.

An indefatigable worker, "Old Hill", who was
then about thirty years old, was reputed to be the
livest newspaper man on the Pacific coast," publish-
ing a daily paper 210 miles away from any railroad
and "making a complete success of it." 4 After the
telegraph line was built from Winnemucca to Silver
City, Hill paid three hundred dollars a month for
the telegraph news for his paper.

3. Owyhee Avalanche, August 24, 1878. Also in
Butler, Ms., op. cit., p. 3.
4. Nerved Express, in Owyhee Avalanche, May 15,
1875.
Prior to his newspaper career, Hill participated in volunteer Indian fighting, having been with the party which pursued the killers of Michael Jordan in 1865. He built the first livery stable in Silver the same year, packing in hay from Jordan Valley on mules to sell to the quartz haulers for $300 a ton. The Winnemucca Silver State described Old Hill as "A six-footer, about 30 years of age, who has fought, bled and died half a dozen times fighting Indians on the Owyhee, and a more genial and whole-souled pioneer does not exist in the States or Territories of the Union."

In April, 1876, Hill leased the Avalanche to Major J. S. Hay, who a year later purchased it, and continued publication in the same dynamic manner as his predecessor, "using his clear brain and able pen to good purpose by publishing the leading paper in the Territory." Editor Hay, in 1879, published a story containing the history of the Avalanche, in

5. Owyhee County, op. cit., p. 15.
6. In Owyhee Avalanche, May 7, 1875.
7. Bozeman Courier, in Owyhee Avalanche, April 26, 1879.
which he maintained that during the previous two years (1877-79) four-fifths of the income from the paper came from outside Owyhee County.

Hay sold the business to Guy Newcomb and Dave Adams in 1880, whose partnership continued until May 20, 1882, when Adams disposed of his interest to C. M. Hays who became sole proprietor seven months later.

A pioneer of Silver City, Hays had been locally prominent for many years, holding the offices of Deputy County Recorder, and Deputy District Clerk in 1865 and 1866 respectively, and from 1870 to 1880 he acted as stage agent, first for Hill Beachy's line and then for the Northwest Stage Company. As Republican nominee for Sheriff in 1874 he participated in one of the hottest campaigns in the history of Owyhee County. As the Republicans were in the minority, the support of many Democrats was necessary to his election. Money was spent lavishly on both sides. All the mining companies operating at that time on War Eagle Mountain except one were against Hays, but to offset them were timber men, of whom

8. Owyhee Avalanche, August 24, 1878.
John Catlow, Col. W. H. Dewey and William Summervick, espoused the Republican cause. Hays carried every precinct in the county but one, and the opposing candidate lost an estimated $10,000 betting on his own election.  

After publishing the *Avalanche* eight years, Hay leased it to John Lamb and L. A. York, who continued its publication until the spring of 1892, when Lamb retired and York became owner and editor. Under the editorship of Mr. York, in 1898, the press of the *Avalanche* published *Owyhee County, A Historical, Descriptive, and Commercial Directory*. The "Owyhee Bluebook", as it is now commonly called, has become a collector's item, containing much valuable mining information and biography which otherwise would be lost. It is the only history of Owyhee County and much subsequent printed matter about Silver City and southwestern Idaho has used this book as primary source.

As Silver City declined during the early 1900's the *Avalanche* presses stopped rolling, and at a Sheriff's auction in 1932, the complete files were sold to the Wisconsin Historical Association.  

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9. *Owyhee County*, op. cit., p. 35.  
10. Interview with Mrs. Gertrude McDevitt, Idaho State Historian, April 10, 1949.
### APPENDIX D

**Production of Gold and Silver, Owyhee County, Idaho**

1863 - 1899

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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</tr>
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<td>1868</td>
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<td>750,000</td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
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</table>

**Total**  | **$6,477,665** | **$3,088,065** | **$9,565,730**

Separate records for gold production and silver production were not kept until 1880.


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APPENDIX C

Price of Silver in London, Per Ounce British Standard (1.987), and the Equivalent in the United States Gold Coin of an Ounce 1,000 Fine, Taken at the Average Price.

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<th>Value of a Fine Ounce at Average Quotation</th>
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Adapted from the Report of the Director of the Mint, 1889
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