

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

FEB 25 1994

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name CHINESE CEMETERY

other names/site number CHINESE CEMETERY, WARREN MINING DISTRICT

2. Location

street & number One-half mile northwest of Warren Wagon Road not for publication
at Bemis Creek

city or town WARREN vicinity

state IDAHO code ID county IDAHO code 049 zip code 83671

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Evan J. DeStor 2/9/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Federal Preservation Officer Forest Service
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 3/10/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Paul R. Lungren Date of Action 3/29/94

CHINESE CEMETERY
Name of Property

IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Chinese Sites in the Warren Mining District

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY (CEMETERY)

FUNERARY (BURIALS, GRAVES)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation

walls

roof

other WOOD (Fence)

METAL (Dragon Memorial)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Summary

The .30-acre rectangular-shaped parcel, located near Warren, Idaho, containing the Chinese Cemetery is owned and maintained by the United States Forest Service, Payette National Forest, McCall, Idaho. In addition to the 29 burial slots (graves), the property consists of two (2) contributing components; a mortuary and an old trail. Two other non-contributing elements are also present; a memorial and a recently constructed fence. The setting has remained essentially unchanged (Maps A and B).

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ASIAN ETHNIC HERITAGE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1870 - 1920

Significant Dates

1887

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

CHINESE

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

USDA FOREST SERVICE

PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST
MCCALL DISTRICT

CHINESE CEMETERY
Name of Property

IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .30 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	1
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6	0	3	1	5	0
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5	0	1	3	8	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

4

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 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title JOHN F. ELLIOTT/HISTORIAN

organization ELLIOTT RESEARCH ASSOCIATES date NOVEMBER 1993

street & number P.O. BOX 728 telephone 209/561-4843

city or town THREE RIVERS state CA zip code 93271

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST, McCALL DISTRICT

street & number 106 PARK STREET telephone 208/634-0750

city or town McCALL state ID zip code 83638

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Name of Property CHINESE CEMETERY
County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

General Characteristics

The Chinese Cemetery is situated at 5,920 feet above mean sea level on a slope overlooking Warren Creek. The property occupies a knoll with soil of decomposed granite. Vegetation includes native grasses, immature fir trees, and lodgepole pines with an aspen understory. The surrounding landscape is a mixed conifer forest. The nearest water source is Warren Creek. Precipitation, mostly in the form of snow, averages more than 25 inches annually.

The arrangement of the burial slots (graves) appears to be in a parallel northeast to southwest orientation. The majority are concentrated in the vicinity of the mortuary. The mortuary may have been more centrally located during the early years of the use of the site as a burial ground. A primary consideration in site selection was its location above areas being hydraulically mined.

The site contains a general scatter of artifacts associated with the cemetery. Prominent among these are metal items, i.e. barrel hoops, and various sized food containers including a number of solder-top cans. Other food related items include ceramic fragments of celadon ware, indicating the presence of tea cups and rice bowls. Several green wine bottle, beverage, and non-diagnostic glass fragments are extant. One leather boot sole and a number of wooden coffin remains are also present at the site.

The artifacts and oral tradition indicate that the site experienced cemetery related activity intermittently from 1870-1920. The locale was used primarily for burials between 1870-1900. One Warren resident, Frank Shieffer, is believed to have witnessed exhumation ceremonies in the 1930s.

There is evidence that the graves once contained markers, though no examples are known to have survived. According to local tradition, the wood markers contained nameplates affixed with square nails. The nameplates facilitated identification so the remains could be shipped to the Chinese homeland.

In recent years, a memorial and fence have been added to the property. The setting and surrounding forest landscape have remained essentially unchanged since ca. 1900.

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County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Property Components

Mortuary (contributor)

This component is an excavated area measuring 9 x 6 feet and is approximately four feet in depth. There are several lodgepole pines growing along the edge(s) of the feature indicating that the excavation has not been disturbed during the past 50 years.

It appears that the area was used for the temporary storage of bodies when the ground was too frozen to excavate the traditional grave. This interpretation is based upon the testimony of oral informants and the observation of USFS investigators. There are, however, no architectural remains associated with the feature (Map B). The mortuary is a contributing component of the cemetery as it was a vital practice in the burial customs of the overseas Chinese.

Trail (contributor)

This component is a narrow dirt foot path, approximately three feet in width, which winds up and across a steep hill until it reaches the southwest corner of the cemetery area. The trail traverses two ditches constructed to facilitate early mining activity.

The trail is a contributing element of the cemetery property, being present during the period of significance (1870-1920). It has remained in use after the abandonment of nearby mining claims and furnishes access to the cemetery site (Map B).

Memorial (non-contributor)

This component consists of a metal dragon suspended from an inverted L-shaped steel pipe frame mounted eight feet above ground level. The dragon, which is painted red, measures four feet (from head to tail) by 2.5 feet.

The dragon memorial was erected in 1984 by local informant Herb McDowell to commemorate the Chinese Cemetery as part of the heritage of Warren. The memorial is a non-contributing element of the cemetery property as it was not present during the period of significance (1870-1920).

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County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Fence (non-contributor)

This component consists of a roughly rectangular-shaped "jack leg" fence. The lodgepole pine fence was constructed in 1993 by USFS personnel to delineate the cemetery. It was constructed with a buck and rail technique; the poles are fastened with spikes and there are no post holes. The fence affords a measure of security; the area is posted with warnings related to the damaging of cultural resources and the desecration of burials. The fence is a non-contributing component of the cemetery property as it was not present during the period of significance (1870-1920).

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Section number 8 Page 1 Name of Property CHINESE CEMETERY
County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Summary

The Chinese Cemetery property qualifies for NR listing under Criterion A, being associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history. The site is an important vestige of the Chinese ethnic heritage and social history of the Warren Mining District. It is the first Chinese Cemetery to be documented as part of a Multiple Property Submission (90000893) in the State of Idaho.

Historic Context

After the onset of the California Gold Rush of 1848, thousands of Chinese immigrants arrived by ship on the West Coast of the United States. They came seeking fortunes in the gold fields, railroad camps, fish canneries, and later, the great agricultural ranches of the southwest. Determined to retain their cultural identity, the Chinese were but sojourners in a foreign land, to return one day with untold wealth (O'Brien Reed 1989).

These Chinese immigrants were primarily from six districts of the Kwangtung Province (Lee 1978:22). The seemingly endless wave of immigrants soon journeyed beyond California arriving in Idaho during the 1860s. As the Chinese ventured to the Idaho wilderness, so, too, came the "Six Companies," clan societies to provide housing, protection, and to mediate disputes among those from one district or another (Chen 1982:27).

The Warren Mining District was organized in 1862 following the discovery of rich placers near Warren Creek. For a time, exclusionary laws prohibited Chinese from working claims in the Warren district. Warren experienced a boom for several years but most of the "free gold" was exhausted by 1868 (O'Brien Reed 1989).

In 1869, Warren miners voted to open the district to the Chinese. Although Chinese miners were unable to purchase land, they were permitted to buy claims or lease the rights to placer operations. From 1870-1900, at least five Chinese mining companies monopolized the gravel placers of Warren. The labor intensive companies often worked the ground of a single claim two or three times over (Reddy 1993:3).

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County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Contextual History (cont.)

Although the population of Warren fluctuated seasonally, Chinese were the dominant ethnicity outnumbering all other groups combined. Estimates of Chinese population during the years 1870-1900 range from 600-1,200 (Reddy 1993). Of this population, the majority were traditional adult male sojourner households. The social and cultural composition of the Warren district was markedly influenced by the Chinese (O'Brien Reed 1989).

The declining population after 1900 signaled the end of the Chinese occupation of the Warren Mining District. The dates 1870 to 1920 correspond with population shifts in Chinatowns throughout the west (ibid.).

The mobile character of Chinese sojourners is evident in the historical record of the Warren Mining District. Most Warren Chinese emigrated to the U.S. in the 1860s or 1870s. The anti-Chinese legislation of the 1880s curtailed new immigration. Many Chinese either returned home or died in their alien land. Soon after 1920, the Chinese virtually disappeared from census records (Reddy 1993:12).

One Warren resident, Frank Sheiffer, reportedly witnessed an exhumation in the 1930s (Sheiffer 1987). Exhumation was an important burial practice among overseas Chinese and has been documented at several Idaho cemeteries. In Pierce, Idaho the Chinese began leaving about 1912. The last Chinese bones were exhumed in 1927 for shipment to China (Elsensohn 1979:32).

When a Chinaman died, the body was in most cases, eventually shipped back to China. Relatives would take up the bones and boil them before they were sent off on their long journey. The Chinese believed that when the flesh decomposed the devil was driven out. It was customary for them to leave dishes of food on the graves, and also numerous small confetti-like papers with small holes in them, the idea being that through, these the devil could not get to the body of the deceased, but would become confused if he attempted to find his way among all the supposed obstructions [Elsensohn 1979:46].

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County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Applying Criterion A

The Chinese Cemetery meets Criterion A within the context of the district because it dates from the historic period, it relates to the district's significance, and it retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The property is an important remnant of the cultural heritage of the region.

The site was used exclusively during the period of significance (1870-1920) for the burial of Chinese. The year 1887 is significant in that the "feeding of the dead" at Warren camp was widely reported.

On September 2, 1887, the Free Press tells us "the Chinese in Warren camp had a grand festival last Sunday, the occasion being the feeding of the dead. Several hogs and chickens were barbecued and taken to the burying ground and then brought back to make repast for the living" [Elsensohn 1979:79].

A total of 29 burial slots have been documented as a part of the Chinese Cemetery (Map B). Herb McDowell, a local informant who erected the cemetery memorial, stated that the following 35 Chinese individuals are known to have been buried at the site:

Ah Batt, Ah Tolk, Foak Sing, Ah Fay, Ah Joi, Ling Sing, Ah Kaw, Little Doc, Ah Bowk, Ah Loo, Ling Yu, Ah Bing, Ah Lye, Hi Lee, Fy Sing, Ah Chung, Chow Lee, Fut Say, Ah Fong, Ho Muth, Ah Farling, Ah Soon, Quinn Lee, Ah Suen, Ah Hi, Lee Dick, Lee Mon, Lay Foed, Wong Goon, He Ely, Ah Chow, Fong Sing, Young Chung, Yayun Cao, Chang Yu.

[Note: Ah is not a name but used as an indefinite pronoun meaning "this one is" or "that one is."]

There are several local stories which mention that a Chinese woman and perhaps one or two other individuals were never exhumed. It is believed that these are the only remaining burials at the site.

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Section number 9 Page 1 Name of Property CHINESE CEMETERY
County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

REFERENCES CITED

- Bennett, Lee
1987 IMACS Site Form, FS R-4 2300-2. Ms. on file,
Forest Supervisor's office, Payette National
Forest, McCall.
- Chen, Jack
1982 The Chinese of America. Harper and Row,
San Francisco.
- Elsensohn, Sister M. Alfreda
1979 Idaho Chinese Lore. Benedictine Sisters,
Cottonwood, Idaho.
- Lee, Ruth Hum
1978 The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities
in the Rocky Mountain Region. PhD dissertation,
University of Chicago, 1947. Reprinted, Arno
Press, New York.
- Reddy, Sheila D.
1993 The Chinese Pioneer In Idaho: An Overview.
Heritage program, Payette National Forest,
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- Reed, Kate O'Brien
1989 Chinese Sites in the Warren Mining District.
National Register of Historic Places,
MPS 90000893.
- Sheiffer, Frank
1987 Payette National Forest Historic 1680 Files.
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County and State IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO

Verbal Boundary Description

See Map B.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the extent of the cemetery and a segment of the associated trail.

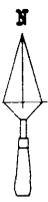
Chinese Cemetery.

10IH1818 PY-874
7/21/93

Payette National Forest, Idaho
Warren Mining District

SCALE 1" = 10 Meters
Contour Interval One Meter

MAP B



Site Boundary 

