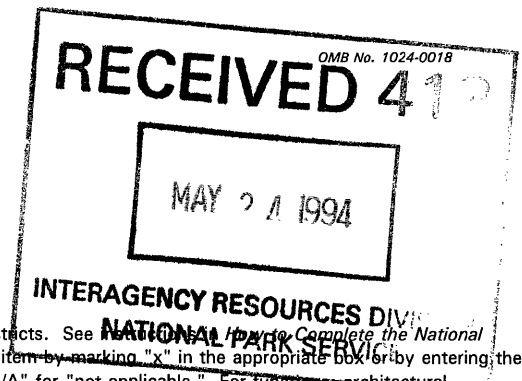


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 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 any 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 Spokane & International Railroad Construction Camp
other names/site number "Chinese Ovens" site (10-BY-372), also IHSI 21-15699

2. Location

street & number East of Highway 95 along the S. & I.R. (two miles south of Canadian border n/a not for publication
X vicinity
City or town Eastport vicinity
state Idaho code ID county Boundary code 021 zip code 83805

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 17 May 94
Signature of certifying official Date
John R. Hill, State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
X entered in the National Register. Edson H Beall 6.23.94
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:) Entered in the National Register

[Signature] for
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Property Name S. & I.R. Construction Camp

County and State Boundary County, Idaho

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>6</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____ No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

n/a

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: railroad construction camp

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: Vacant/abandoned Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation WOOD (collapsed log bldgs.)

walls STONE (ovens)

roof WOOD (collapsed log bldg.)

other _____

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

Property Name S. & I.R. Construction Camp

County and State Boundary County

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.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C 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.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>ARCHAEOLOGY (Historic - NonAboriginal)</u>	<u>1905-1906</u>	<u>1905</u>
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u>ETHNIC HERITAGE/Italian</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

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

Property Name S. & I.R. Construction Camp

County and State Boundary County, Idaho

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
___ 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:
X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. one acre

UTM References

1 1/1 5/6/0/7/6/0 5/4/2/3/7/9/0 3 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
2 / / / / / / / / / / 4 / / / / / / / / / /

___ 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 Priscilla Wegars/Research Associate (Lauren McCroskey, technical assistant)
organization Laboratory of Anthropology date 12/17/93
street & number University of Idaho telephone (208) 885-7075
city or town Moscow state Idaho zip code 83844

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

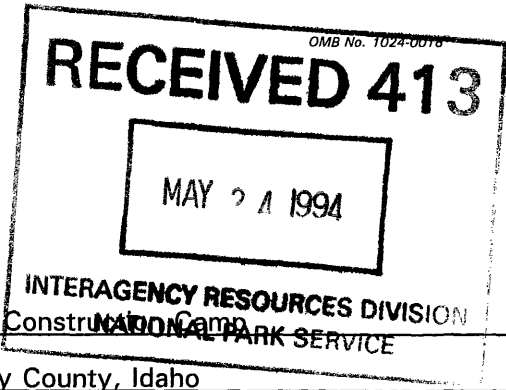
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Name of Property S. & I.R. Construction Camp

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The nominated site, located in extreme north Idaho near the Canadian border, is situated on a steep, wooded hillside overlooking the Moyie River. Directly below, the former Spokane and International Railroad (now Burlington Northern Railroad) follows the river channel through a narrow mountain valley. The railroad campsite includes both standing structures (stone bread ovens), as well as archaeological features consisting of building depressions, log wall remnants, and associated dumping areas. The site includes a total of three stone ovens (one collapsed), three building depressions with horizontal log wall remnants, and two domestic dumping areas. These properties cluster in four distinct locations in a roughly linear arrangement, parallel with the former Spokane and International Railroad below.

Site A (northern-most) consists of an el-shaped foundation depression and the stone remains of an associated, collapsed stone oven. The original dimensions of the stone oven cannot be determined due to the collapsed and dispersed nature of the structure. The foundation depression contains approximately five courses of horizontal logs at the northeast corner. The logs are unpeeled larch and fir, four to eight inches in diameter, with no visible chinking. Saddle notching with axe marks is evident. Log ends were saw cut straight across or to a chisel point; in some cases individual logs have been saw cut and axe finished. The exterior surfaces of some logs were burned at some time, however, this event apparently did not destroy the building.

Materials found on the ground indicate that the roof may have been constructed of pole rafters and purlins, perhaps with flat boards laid across. The structure's original dimensions cannot be determined, due to the lack of definition of the southwest side of the building depression. Three large cans which probably contained blasting power were found nearby.

Site B is the location of a well-preserved oven. The circular structure has a domed profile measuring two meters in diameter and 1.2 meters high. An opening measuring forty-seven centimeters wide by fifty-four centimeters high is oriented to the northeast. No other openings are present. The oven is constructed of random coursed shale slabs. Clay mortar, sometimes used on prototype stone ovens documented elsewhere, is not evident.

No other features associated with this oven have survived, although several level areas of the ground adjacent to the oven suggest the former locations of tent platforms so commonly associated with railroad camps of this type. An oval-shaped dumping area measuring roughly ten by twenty meters occurs beside the oven. Hole-in-cap cans, blasting powder cans, a cooking pot, and a coffee pot are among objects observed on the surface.

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Site C lacks an oven. The only observable feature on this site is the remains of a horizontal-log building. Dimensions of the slightly rectangular structure are 2.3 meters north/south; 2.7 meters east/west, with a narrow, sixty-centimeter-wide doorway located in the west side of the north wall. In front of this doorway is an area that has been dug out of the adjoining bank measuring roughly 2.0 meters north/south and 2.7 meters east/west. Surviving construction is of unpeeled larch, fir, and pine logs six inches in diameter. Five courses of logs remain at the southwest corner. Log ends have been sawn into chisel points; saddle-shaped, axe hewn notching is evident.

The structure appears to have had a pole roof consisting of logs four to seven inches in diameter. Because of the building's relatively small size and distance from the ovens and implied habitation areas, it is believed to have been used for storage, perhaps of explosives. This speculation is supported by the lack of an adjacent domestic dumping area, and the presence of two blasting powder cans, hole-in-cap cans, and a lard pail, nearby.

Site D consists of a square-shaped building depression with horizontal-log wall remnants and an intact stone oven. The cabin measures roughly 4.5 meters north/south and 4.6 meters east/west. Preservation is best at the northwest corner, which still displays five horizontal courses of logs. Unpeeled larch and fir logs measuring five to seven inches in diameter exhibit saddle notching with a slight "v" configuration. No chinking is present. Most logs are sawn straight across the ends, but at least one log was axe cut.

A door opening, measuring one meter wide, is located in the center of the north wall. The east side of the door opening displays a five centimeter diameter pole incorporated as a door jamb. This is attached to the log ends with wire nails. A small dump roughly five meters in diameter is located off the northeast corner of the cabin. Several hole-in-cap food cans and five blasting powder cans were observed on the surface.

An intact stone oven is located 3.5 meters from the northwest corner of the cabin depression. Built of random coursed shale slabs, the oven is a circular, dome-shaped structure approximately ninety-four centimeters high and features an east-facing opening thirty-five centimeters high. The opening tapers toward the top, measuring forty-two centimeters at the base and twenty-nine centimeters at the top. The oven's diameter measures two meters across. A center opening, believed to be original, occurs in the top of the structure. No clay mortar is present in the stonework.

Before abandonment and decline, the site was best characterized as a temporary railroad camp. The site no longer conveys this former role, due to the ruined nature of the buildings, however, the intact bread ovens and undisturbed archaeological materials that remain are significant.

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The archaeological integrity of the entire site has not been compromised. Due to the site's remote and difficult accessibility, its obscurity among second-growth evergreen and deciduous trees, and the stewardship of its current owners, the former camp has remained undisturbed since its abandonment early in the century.

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The former railroad camp merits nomination under multiple areas of significance at the state level. Historical associations with ethnic heritage and architectural/engineering values observed in the extant oven structures, and the potential contributions of in-situ information about the railroad's construction and those who built it, are represented in this undisturbed site. As a structural type, the stone bread ovens embody the characteristics of an Old World tradition as transplanted during an important railroad building effort that linked Spokane, Washington -- through northern Idaho -- with the Canadian border. The design of the ovens also suggests the ethnicity of the oven builders -- Italians who were employed in the construction of the railroad.

Grading and construction of the Spokane and International Railroad (S. & I.R.) through this mountainous area began in 1905, with operation beginning on November 1, 1906. Spokane-based railroad entrepreneur D. C. Corbin was the sponsor. By 1907 the line was touted as "The New Scenic Short Line," providing service from Spokane, Washington to British Columbia, Canada. Now a freight-only service of the Burlington Northern Railroad, the line extends from Spokane to Kingsgate, B.C./Eastport, Idaho -- a distance of 139 miles.

Although railroad building in the West was completed at the hands of multiple Euroamerican nationalities, suggestion of a strong Italian contribution to the building of the S. & I.R., and to the nominated campsite, is compelling. Contracts for specified portions of the route were let to various contractors (*Bonnors Ferry Herald* 1905, 14(49):1; 15(1):1; 15(7):1). Some of the contractors for the railroad employed Italians in unspecified numbers. Of the 1,200 laborers hired by September 1905, "a majority" were Scandinavians and Italians. These, together with Japanese, were said to be replacing the Irish. Other nationalities represented were Austrians and "Scotch" (*Spokesman-Review* 1905, 23(100):9). Typical period accounts which document the ethnicity of laborers were often unflattering. One entitled "Railroad Camp Sunday Scenes," noted that:

The fellows in the Italian Camp had been supplied with liquor and some of them were intoxicated. When a camera was produced they came running from all directions to have their pictures taken The different nationalities did not mix in the conversation and in the lounging groups The Italians and the Japanese were more distant than any of the others Each of these nationalities is proud of his race, and seems to think he is better than the other fellows The Italians are said to be of the belief that no railroad could be built without their assistance (*Spokesman-Review* 1905, 23(101):Pt. 4,1).

A number of Italians in the area worked for a "veteran Italian railroad contractor," Mike Lungo, making railroad ties. Lungo ran a camp with a hotel, store, and stable some 17 miles north of Bonnors Ferry (*Spokesman-Review* 1905, 23(99):14). It was reported that he:

has made and lost fortunes in railroad contracting. He has worked Italian crews from Mexico to British Columbia. Mr. Lungo speaks broken English, and is ... quick witted He carried on a mercantile and hotel business as side issues to his railroad contracting (*Spokesman-Review*, 1905, 23(101):Pt.4,1).

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Other newspaper accounts were effusive about labor relations, documenting a "Wild Riot in a Corbin Camp" where Italians reportedly engaged in "a pitched battle ... at Hastings's grading camp, on the Moyie [River] near the International line" (*Spokesman-Review* 1905, 23(195):2 and *Bonnors Ferry Herald* 1905, 15(26):1). These and other geographical references suggest that the newsworthy camp was the site of the nominated property. For example, an earlier article noted that Hastings and Dignan had the contract for the eight miles extending south from the Canadian border and that they had a camp of 100 men (*Spokesman-Review* 1905, 23(99):14).

The considerable presence of Italian railroad crews in this area provides convincing evidence regarding the ethnic origins of the stone bread ovens which remain on the campsite. Although many ethnic groups made and used rock ovens, those found on early twentieth-century railroad-related sites throughout the West are more likely to have been built by Italians simply because that ethnic group constituted the majority of railroad laborers in the United States at that time. Generally measuring some one to two meters in height and one to three meters in diameter, rock ovens are found frequently on railroad construction camp sites and also in mining regions. They are commonly believed to have been used for baking bread.

Sometimes referred to as "Chinese ovens," this folkloric misnomer is largely without foundation. No Chinese artifacts have been found in definite association with the initial construction of any of these ovens in the United States. Although such associations apparently exist in both Canada and Australia, domed rock ovens in California and elsewhere have been repeatedly ascribed to Italians, Greeks, or Hispanic peoples in both railroad and placer mining areas. Interestingly, domed stone ovens are not, in fact, a part of Chinese culture. One authority noted that "the art of baking is not well understood by the Chinese."

Investigations into the Old World typology of stone ovens has proved essential to the case of the Moyie River ovens. The history of outdoor ovens is a lengthy one, dating back as far as Neolithic times in Central and Eastern Europe (Frierman 1983:227). Frierman, for example, identifies three types of freestanding ovens with different antecedents, one of which is a rectangular, barrel-vaulted half-round oven of Roman origins, such as the folk ovens of isolated rural Italy, and also "known in both Anglo and Latin America." Rural Italy's masonry ovens have also been extensively described by both Frierman and Paul Scheuermeier. One type occurring in Middle and Southern Italy is normally made of brick or dry-laid field stone -- not unlike those found at the nominated site, and also along the Northern Pacific Railroad line through Montana.

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A careful reading of portions of Paul Scheuermeier's definitive works on peasant labor in Italy (Scheuermeier 1943, 1956) reveals that some outdoor bake ovens were half-round barrel-vaulted ones, while others could be domed. While oven shapes in Italy appear to vary according to the region, it is clear that Italians were knowledgeable about the domed style of oven construction exhibited at the S. & I.R. campsite. A fairly consistent pattern of oven types has, in fact, been observed in areas of the United States where there was a documented Italian labor force.

Rossillon (1984:54,103), for example, tentatively identified Italians as the builders of the rock ovens found on the line of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's Lake City branch at Marion, Colorado. Aside from circumstantial evidence associating these ovens with Italian workers, no artifacts or other archaeological evidence has been identified. However, at Shoshone Wells in Nevada's Cortez Mining District, diagnostic artifacts as well as written accounts link outdoor earth ovens with Italians who are known to have occupied the site. At New Melones' Angels Creek mining area in California, census records and oral histories collected from Italian American informants, as well as an examination of similar ovens known to have been constructed in more recent times by Italian Americans, support the ethnic affiliation of rock ovens present on the site.

Other ethnic groups are also known to have constructed similar ovens at railroad construction sites in the west. Greek laborers who worked along the Southern Pacific Railroad in Oregon, for example, are known to have built outdoor stone ovens. Closer to the Moyie River camp, in eastern Washington state, Italian laborers who helped build the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroad near Cheney, Washington, are known to have built the Italian Rock Ovens which have already received National Register designation. Italian crews working on the Northern Pacific Railroad through Washington state are also known to have constructed ovens along the tracks, using basalt.

Evidence that Italians were responsible for the ovens found in the nominated site may lie solely in the characteristics of the structures themselves and in the consistency of reports about the Italian workforce in the area. It is certain that Italian laborers were employed in large numbers and that they constituted a highly visible presence in the immediate area. The Chinese attribution often attached to these and similar ovens may be dismissed almost entirely. Local historian Paul Flinn believes there is "no indication that the ovens were built by Chinese railroad workers;" he has never come across any references in old issues of the *Bonnors Ferry Herald* to indicate that Chinese railroad workers ever worked in Boundary County (*Bonnors Ferry Herald* 1987:1), or that they were (or were not) employed by the Spokane and International Railroad (Paul Flinn 1987, pers. comm.).

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Attribution of the true ethnic origins of stone ovens in the railroad camp site remains somewhat speculative. Nonetheless, as a property type, the ovens are tangible and significant structures with definable characteristics and valid ethnic associations. The site's greatest significance, however, remains in the ground. The well-preserved, subsurface materials associated with the ovens and building depressions have great potential to validate current speculations on the topic of outdoor bread ovens. This archaeological information may also greatly enhance the limited information currently available about railroad construction camps and about the lives of those who built the Spokane and International Railroad through northern Idaho.

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_____. "Libby-Troy Highway Improvement Project Supplemental Report [F 1-1(18)14] Archaeological Test Excavations." Missoula, Montana: Heritage Research Center, 1986. On file at the Montana Department of Highways, Helena.

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*Wegars, Priscilla. "Who's Been Workin' on the Railroad?: An Examination of the Construction, Distribution, and Ethnic Origins of Domed Rock Ovens on Railroad-Related Sites." Historical Archaeology, 25(1): pp. 37-65, 1991. (Much of the nomination is based on this article.)

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_____. "Domed Rock Structures in the West and Elsewhere: Exploding the
"Chinese Oven" Myth." (Manuscript on file at the Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of
Anthropology, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, 1987.)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated site lies within the SW quarter of the NW quarter of the SE quarter of the SW quarter of Section 23, Township 65N, Range 2E.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The site boundary has been drawn to include only the four principal clusters of historic resources.



Construction Camp Boundary

1" = approx. 27'

① photo. angle

