

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Mexico	
COUNTY: Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: *historic*
White Oaks District

AND/OR HISTORIC: /

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
12 miles northeast of Carrizozo, New Mexico; reached by State Road 349

CITY OR TOWN:
White Oaks

STATE New Mexico	CODE 30	COUNTY: Lincoln	CODE 027
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments: A few old homes are occupied though most of the town is deserted.
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Various

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

New Mexico

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
County Clerk's Office, Lincoln County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 338

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Carrizozo New Mexico 88301 30

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
New Mexico Cultural Properties Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1969** Federal State County Local

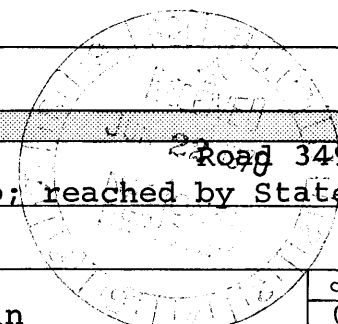
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Planning Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
State Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Santa Fe New Mexico 87501 30

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **New Mexico**

COUNTY: **Lincoln**

ENTRY NUMBER: **70-9-30-8008**

DATE: **9/1/80**

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The ghost town of White Oaks is situated in a narrow valley some 6,600 feet above sea level at the foot of Baxter Mountain, on which are located the important mines of the town's prosperous period. These mines were sunk into the depths of the mountain at locations from four to seven hundred feet above the settlement and about a mile and one-half from it. Baxter's precipitous slopes and the winding trails up them give the visitor a good idea of the hardships involved in moving the heavy mining machinery to the excavations. Several huge boilers were dragged into place by mule in the early days but are no longer there, since they were taken for scrap metal during World War II.

During White Oaks' heyday, a good number of houses spread along the valley, replacing the earlier scatter of tents and reflecting the steady and profitable activity up in the mines. In addition, stamp mills and the necessary buildings for mining and processing were constructed, as were a sawmill, two banks, three churches, an opera house, a large brick schoolhouse, eight to ten casinos, and many stores.

As the population dwindled in the early years of the 20th century, log and frame houses were torn down for fuel, so that today most of the remaining structures are of brick or stone. These include the schoolhouse, the shell of the Exchange Bank, the impressive stone Hoyle house, as well as several smaller buildings. Old mills and mine shafts may also be seen in the immediate vicinity, and the Cedarvale cemetery, with many historic gravestones, remains unvandalized and well maintained.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

5. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) *1879*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Mining</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The White Oaks mining district was a circumscribed area, since nearly all of the mine sites were located on the eastern slopes of Baxter Mountain. Nevertheless, the district yielded enough gold and other ores to give it a significant place in the annals of 19th century mining. It is reported that Mexican miners worked small gold placers around the foot of the mountain some years before the first lode discovery, and that cowboys exploring the mountain's lower gullies also found placer gold as early as 1850. It was not until 1879, however, that the rich lodes were located. Accounts of the discovery of the richest of these differ, but it appears that it was made by three miners, George Wilson, George Baxter, and Jack Winters, who were prospecting on the slopes of Baxter Mountain. They were joined by John Wilson, a recent escapee from a Texas jail, who was working with them when they stumbled on an outcrop which led to the development of the North Homestake Mine. Having little desire to linger for long in one spot, John Wilson sold his claim to the others in return for \$40.00, a pony, and a bottle of whiskey. Jack Winters and George Wilson worked the two sections of the claim, the North and South Homestake, until 1880, at which time it was purchased by a company in St. Louis, and the first stamp mill was erected in a gulch below the town. By 1904 these two mines alone had produced over \$1,000,000 in gold.

Other mines located in the district were the Old Abe, Little Mack, Yellow Jacket, Ferro, Comstock, Rip van Winkle, Lady Godiva, and Boston Boy. The Old Abe, richest of the mines, was discovered during 1879-1880, but its largest vein was not uncovered until 1890. By 1904, this mine had yielded some \$900,000 worth of gold. It reached a depth of 1,375 feet, and was said to be the deepest dry shaft in the United States.

Although the nearest supply point was some 200 miles north at Las Vegas, and provisions had to be hauled in by mule train, the town grew rapidly, and by 1880 the hastily erected tents were giving way to substantial buildings of stone and brick. In fact, the population grew rapidly to 4,000, and White Oaks

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Anderson, George B., History of New Mexico, Pacific States Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1907
 Howard, E. Viet, Metalliferous Occurrences in New Mexico, State Planning Office, Santa Fe, 1967
 Jones, Fayette A., Old Mining Camps of New Mexico, 1854-1904, Stagecoach Press, Santa Fe, 1964
 Keleher, William A., Violence in Lincoln County, 1869-1881, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1957
New Mexico Historic Sites, State Planning Office, Santa Fe, 1967

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	N LATITUDE		W LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	33°	45'	47"	105°	46'	16"			
NE	33°	45'	47"	105°	44'	27"			
SE	33°	44'	19"	105°	44'	27"			
SW	33°	44'	19"	105°	46'	16"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1,822.5**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Samuel Larcombe, Planning Technician

ORGANIZATION:
State Planning Office

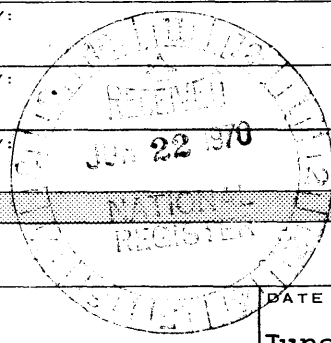
STREET AND NUMBER:
State Capitol

CITY OR TOWN:
Santa Fe

STATE:
New Mexico 87501

DATE:
June 5, 1970

CODE:
30



12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Sheila S. [Signature]*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date June 17, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ann [Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date SEP 4 1970

ATTEST:

William J. [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date JUL 27 1970

NO
 UTM
 CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE New Mexico	
COUNTY Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.9.30.0008	DATE 9/4

(Number all entries) WHITE OAKS DISTRICT

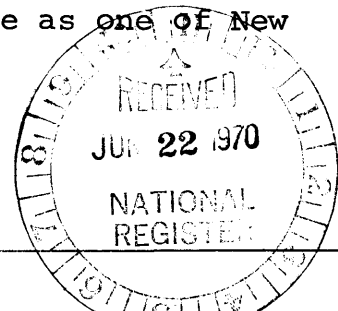
8. (continued)

seemed destined for permanent prosperity. The school, churches, banks, four newspapers, bars, and bawdy houses all pointed to permanence, and the proposed construction of a north-south railroad line through the town seemed to be a certainty. Confident of continued growth, local businessmen demanded high prices for property, but the expected railroad went through Carrizozo instead, and White Oaks was left with only stage connections. The effects of this bypass were not immediate, but by 1904 the previous level of ore production had fallen off, the population was declining, and White Oaks' days of vigor were coming to an end. By 1936 only 150 inhabitants remained, and by 1967 just seven families were left.

The era of prosperity in White Oaks lasted for about twenty-five years. In addition to the glamorous and coveted gold, Baxter Mountain and its surroundings produced iron and tungsten, as well as some silver, lead, and copper. Coal and marble discoveries near by seemed promising at first, but high transportation costs discouraged their exploitation. During this quarter of a century, the value of ore production mounted to \$2,860,000, with another \$140,000 worth of metals taken out between 1904 and 1933. Some revival of mining activity seems likely in the near future for the recovery of tungsten.

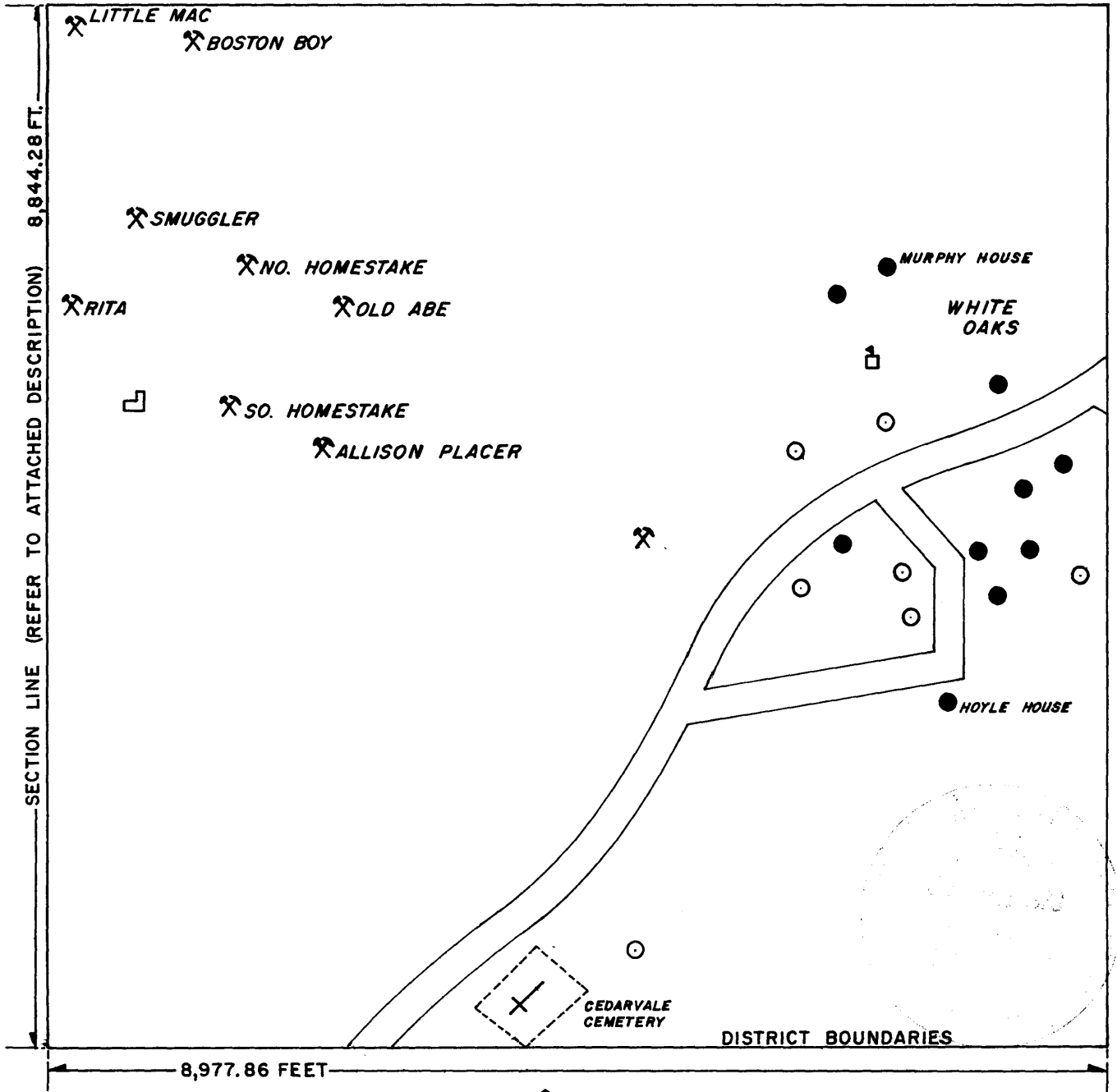
Early in its active period White Oaks acquired a reputation as the liveliest town in the Territory of New Mexico, and by 1895 it was recognized as the mercantile center of the Territory's entire southeastern portion. Residents of White Oaks included such well-known New Mexicans as the first statehood governor, William McDonald, Susan McSween, a prominent Territorial ranching figure, Judge Andrew Hudspeth, the Territory's first United States Marshal, and H. B. Fergusson, a pioneer Democratic leader and legislator. Outlaws such as William Bonney also were in and out, and the day the Kid made his historic escape from the Lincoln jail, County Sheriff Pat Garrett was in White Oaks on business.

The remains of this temporarily successful and important town stand as eloquent reminders of one of the state's most important periods: the mining days of the 1880's and '90's. Certainly White Oaks was among the best-known and most productive centers of that period, and helped maintain Lincoln County's fame as one of New Mexico's truly exciting areas.

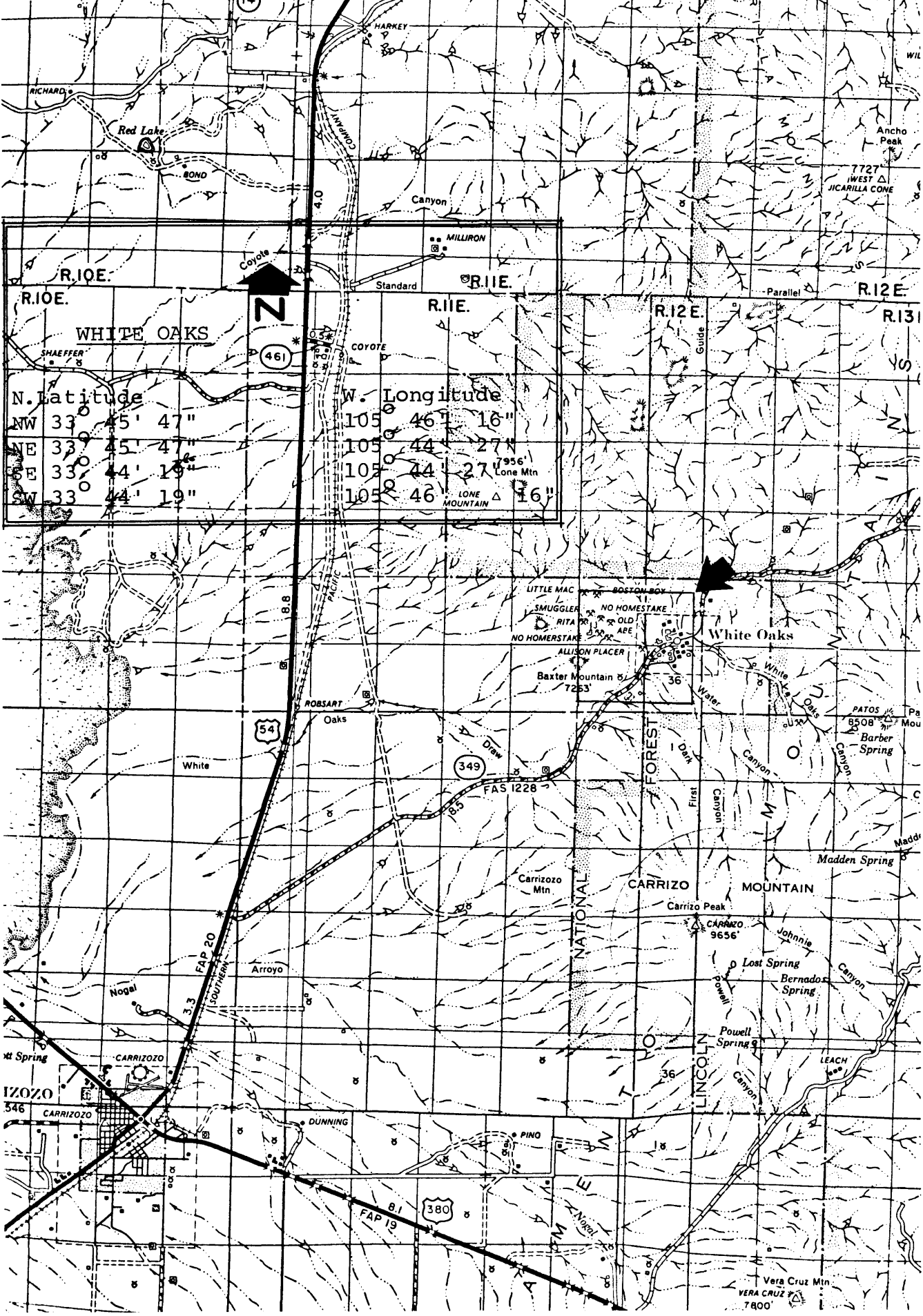


DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES, WHITE OAKS HISTORIC DISTRICT

The boundaries of the White Oaks Historic District are as follows: Beginning in the Southwest corner on the line running between Sections 26 and 25 and Sections 35 and 36 in Township 6 South, Range 11 East, at a point lying due west of the southernmost tip of the Cedarvale Cemetery; thence due east 8,977.86 feet to the Southeast corner; thence due north 8,844.28 feet to the Northeast corner; thence due west 8,977.86 feet to the Northwest corner, which lies on the line running between Sections 26 and 25 and Sections 35 and 36 in Township 6 South, Range 11 East; thence due south 8,844.28 feet to the point of beginning.



SCALE: 1" = 1340.0 FEET
 STATE PLANNING OFFICE
 SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
New Mexico	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70-9-30-0008	9/8

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON:		White Oaks District	
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
12 miles northeast of Carrizozo, New Mexico; reached by State			
CITY OR TOWN: Highway 349			
White Oaks			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
New Mexico	30	Lincoln	027
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
New Mexico State Highway Department			
SCALE: 1 inch = 2 miles			
DATE: 1961			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET owner of property ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

Mr. Carl E. Dotson
United Minerals Corporation
P.O. Box 115
Socorro, N.M. 87801

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Approximately 1¼ miles west-northwest of the middle of town is the center of the mining area which covers roughly one square mile. The North Homestake and the South Homestake, the first rich hardrock claims located in the White Oaks camp in 1879, are situated on opposite sides of an east-west gulch. On the south slope is the South Homestake where a glory hole, approximately 100 feet square, was excavated to a depth of 70 feet in the ore body known as "The Devil's Kitchen". Beneath the glory hole is a U-shaped tunnel driven into the hillside from two entrances. At the middle of the U, a room was excavated for a hoist, sheave, compressor, and other equipment used to work a 600-foot shaft with levels at 50 and 75-foot intervals. All of this equipment was destroyed by fire in 1891. The shaft was also ruined and a new one was sunk from a point above the glory hole to a depth of 700 feet. The headframe, hoist house, and some of the hoist machinery at this shaft are still in place. A subdivision of the South Homestake called the North Shaft is also visible as well as an ore bin and waste dump which received material from the South Homestake operation. The first mill began trial operation in 1892 and was designed and built by a locomotive engineer named Hodgman. It worked so poorly that a new mill was constructed three years later utilizing only a part of the original facility. According to Morris Parker's White Oaks, the second mill featured a gyratory crusher, four batteries of stamps with five 850-pound stamps in each, inside amalgamation, silver-plated copper plates, and two Frue vanners (concentrators). This operation averaged 85% recovery of the assay content of ores. Fire destroyed this mill in 1925. In 1893, a cyanide plant was installed at the South Homestake consisting of six wooden tanks with 22-foot diameters and four-foot staves, sump tank measuring 16 feet by 6 feet, precipitation box for zinc shavings, small rotary pump, and gasoline engine. This plant is no longer standing, but the South Homestake still has the most impressive appearance in the White Oaks mining camp.

The North Homestake, located across the gulch from the South Homestake, utilized two shafts to exploit two ore veins about 400 feet apart. The 35-ton capacity mill featured a crusher and two Huntington amalgamation plates. The remains of the operation include a dilapidated machine house containing a hoisting drum with wire cable and an Ingersoll-Rand Imperial Type 10 compressor.

Across the primitive road, which runs east of the Homestake mines to other mines in the area, is the best known of the White Oaks operation, the Old Abe. First located in 1879, it did little beyond the minimum required assessment work for eleven years. It was work done in 1890 which led to the discovery of White Oak's richest ore vein which happened to occur at a point deemed most easily worked. One worker was William Watson who owned one-third interest in the mine and agreed to perform the assessment work paid for by the other owners. Watson in turn

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

hired his nephew, Watson Hoyle, for wages and one-fourth of his one-third share in the Old Abe. This arrangement eventually resulted in the building of the pretentious Hoyle House which still stands in the town of White Oaks.

The Old Abe Mine began major production in 1890. Two mills were leased which processed about 50 tons per day yielding profits of \$1000 to \$2000 per day. A major setback occurred in 1894 due to the explosion of a kerosene lamp in the hoist house. In this disastrous fire, eleven of the twenty men working underground managed to escape, but the others were killed by asphyxiation or burns. Shortly afterwards, mining experts were brought in to upgrade the operations. Improvements included enlarging the shaft and installing a larger hoist, guides, and a cage. The main shaft reached a depth of over 1375 feet and is believed to be the deepest dry shaft in existence. The engineers also installed a cyanide plant to treat the tailings from the stamp mill.

Remains of the Old Abe operation include the shell of the hoist house and the headframe which stands in good repair. The only evidence of the cyanide plant is silted-in tanks. Bands which held some wood-stave cyanide tanks together lie near the rusted-out remains of metal tanks.

Directly west of the Old Abe and located on a fractional claim between the North Homestake and the Old Abe is the Rita, a mine which opened in 1883 but was held up in litigation for many years. It is one of the mines in the Lady Godiva group which also includes the Solitaire, Little Nell, Large Hopes, and the Lady Godiva. These claims overlapped in places and the legal confusion caused so many changes in the names and locations of mining activity that it is difficult to identify all of the workings in the area. The Lady Godiva and the Rita were the more productive of this group and the most significant remains today are at the Rita. There is an ore bin which is about to collapse and a board and batten shed with corrugated metal roof containing a boiler, air compressor, and hoist. The structure is in poor condition having been partially dismantled by salvagers who tore down the Rita headframe and another structure near the shaft.

Several other mines in the White Oaks District have noteworthy remains. At the Smuggler, located northwest of the North Homestake, is a well-preserved ore bin with some track for the ore cars. One can clearly see how cars were tracked from the mine to the point where they were emptied into the bin for delivery to wagons below if they contained ore or onto a dump at the end of the track if they contained waste material. Another relic at the Smuggler is the steam driven hoist machinery which lies beneath the ruins of a collapsed wooden shed.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

Across the ridge to the north of the other mines are the Boston Boy and the Little Mac. At the Little Mac is a small metal hoist house containing a combustion engine driven Gardner Denver compressor and a small winch. The Boston Boy has a deteriorated ore bin.

One other distinctive mining relic in the White Oaks District is a deteriorated wooden whim or lass over one of the auxiliary shafts near the dividing line of the North and South Homestakes called the Jewelry Shop. This primitive hand-operated device illustrates the difficult and dangerous nature of early day hard-rock mining techniques.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

Mining techniques employed at White Oaks were demonstrative of innovations in the industry which occurred in the late 1880's and 1890's. Ore milling practices underwent profound changes during this time and the major producers at White Oaks adapted quickly. The development of the cyanide process completely revolutionized milling. First applied commercially in New Zealand in 1889 and in the United States in 1892, the process came to New Mexico in 1893 when Morris Parker built a cyanide plant to treat the tailings at the South Homestake. In 1894, a second cyanide plant began operation at the North Homestake. The success of these operations caused the owners of the Old Abe to install a similar facility. The only remains of these operations are parts of tanks near the Old Abe mine.

The South Homestake stamp mill featured inside amalgamation, a technique also developed in the early 1890's. This procedure simplified the milling operation by adding amalgamation mercury to the ore where it was being wet-stamped instead of in a separate step. Another state of the art element of the South Homestake mill was the use of the Frue vanner, an invention of William B. Frue. This device consisted of a rubber conveyor belt with jets to gently force water across the ore as it moved along the slightly tilted belt. A shaking mechanism was attached to the frame and gangue or waste material that had to be handled farther along in the milling process.

Evolution of hoisting and safety equipment were also evident at White Oaks. Improvements to the Old Abe mine in 1895 included the installation of a safety cage. The standard hoisting box which moved along vertical guides was the industry's initial replacement for the simple bucket for the transport of ore, workmen, and sometimes water, but it was deemed unsatisfactory in three ways. It was incapable of raising water (not a problem at the Old Abe); it was not enclosed and men or objects could fall out and down the shaft; and downward movement in the shaft could be halted only by the hoist operator on the surface. Enclosing the box with wire mesh and adding a brake removed many of the objections to the cage. Addition of this device to the Old Abe was another noteworthy step in the development of mining technology at White Oaks. All that remains on the surface of the Old Abe operation is the headframe, collar, empty hoist house, dump, tailing, and parts of tanks.

The relics remaining at White Oaks provide examples of the nature of a frontier mining camp. The South Homestake and the Old Abe were by far the most important mines. There were other successful operations of short duration and many more attempts which were halted by litigation or low ore tenor. Prospects, shafts, headframes, steam powered machinery, foundations, ore bins, tailings, and remnants of cyanide tanks have survived the growth and decline of the town which resulted from the mining activity. These attributes of the White Oaks District deserve recognition along with the original values which led to its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliographical Ref. ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 6

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- Interview, Owen Simpson, White Oaks, New Mexico to Wendell Bell and Don Abbe, September 16, 1978.
- Interview, Carl Dotson, White Oaks, New Mexico to Wendell Bell and T. Lindsay Baker, October 16, 1978.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Form Prepared By ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 7

Wendell Bell, Research Associate
History of Engineering Program
Texas Tech University
P.O. Box 4089
Lubbock, Texas 79409

January 28, 1979
(806) 742-3591