

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Washington
COUNTY: Kittitas
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE OCT 15 1974

HB
 E 470300
 2-10 W 5035

1. NAME

COMMON:
Liberty Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
both sides of Williams Creek Wagon Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Liberty

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
#4 - Honorable Mike McCormack

STATE: Washington CODE: 53 COUNTY: Kittitas CODE: 037

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 type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Multiple, U. S. Forest Service & Private

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Kittitas County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Ellensburg Washington 53

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

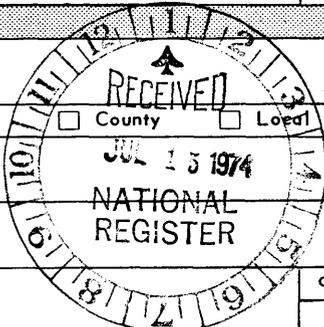
TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Geographically, Liberty is located in an area of great natural beauty. The town is set in one of the folds of the high Cascade Range and thick pine forests cover the mountains that surround the little community. Williams Creek, about eight feet wide as it flows behind the town, runs through the valley, a force in its own right before it joins with the larger Swauk down the mountainside. Almost like the creek running through the valley, the town with its weathered board homes seems to belong where it is, coexisting with the pines and blending into the surrounding landscape.

The numbers of the following listed buildings correspond to the numbers indicated on the attached map of the Liberty Historic District.

#1 -- Hotel and Boarding House: A two story frame building constructed of rough sawed lumber, with board and batten exterior. During the 1930's a garage was attached to the house using the same material and construction. A front porch and a shingled roof was also added. In 1939 the home was wired for electricity and plumbing was installed in about 1950. This building was constructed as a hotel and boarding house in the 1890's. In 1897 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Needham bought the building from Thomas F. Meaghers and operated the hotel for several years. The building is presently used as a residence.

#2 -- Grocery Store: A one story frame building constructed of rough sawed lumber with board exterior and with 2"x2" "joists" in the roof structure. It was operated as a grocery store in the 1890's. Ben Killson bought the building as a grocery store in 1901 and later made it into a home until his death. A kitchen was added to the building in 1910. Sometime in the 1940's the shake roof was covered with tin. It was wired for electricity and plumbing was installed in 1969. It is now used as a private residence.

#3 -- Butcher Shop: A one story frame building constructed of rough sawed lumber with board and batten exterior. Roof framing consists of 1"x6" horizontal purlins running parallel to the ridge and spaced at intervals down the gable. They lie flat against the end walls with shakes nailed directly between the purlins. The last row of shakes is doubled and overhangs the sidewalls unsupported. There are no other structural members apparent in the roof. A false front was removed and a front porch and two back rooms were added in 1920's. The building was wired for electricity in 1944. Plumbing was installed in the kitchen in 1944, replacing an old pitcher pump. One small bedroom was converted to a bathroom and plumbing was installed in 1971. A shake roof was replaced on the original front section in 1967. The building was erected in 1894 by Thomas F. Meaghers and operated as a meat market by M. M. Calhoon in 1897. It is now used as a residence.

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#7 Description (1)
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#4 -- Log House: A one story building constructed of logs. The front section of 20' by 20' was moved to this location in 1944 from the old Liberty Mine. The building is believed to have been built by miners in the 1890's. A 20' by 20' addition of log construction was added to the building in 1967. The house was wired for electricity in 1944. Kitchen and bathroom plumbing was installed in 1969.

#5 -- Stage Office: An original one room wood frame building, constructed of rough sawed lumber, with board and batten exterior and a shake roof. Roof supports is provided by a system similar to that described under building #3, although the purlins here are 3" poles. Some repair work was done on the roof in 1970. The building was used as a stage and livery stable office in the 1890's. It is presently being used as a rock shop.

#6 -- Livery Stable: The old livery barn is completely pole framed with rough sawed lumber siding and a shake roof. The building was remodeled in the 1930's. The roof was reshaked in 1973.

#7 -- A one story frame building constructed of rough sawed lumber with board and batten exterior. The roof structure is 2"x2" joists and the original shakes were replaced by tar paper in the 1940's. It was wired for electricity in 1939 and water was piped into the kitchen in the 1940's. This was formerly the home of Gus Siegel, an early day miner.

#8 -- A one story wood frame house constructed of rough sawed lumber with board and batten exterior. This house was originally larger, but sometime in the early 1900's part of it was torn down. It was wired for electricity in 1939. The building was erected by Thomas F. Meaghers (founder of the town of Meaghersville) in the late 1880's and used as his family residence.

#9 -- Post Office and Grocery Store: The house was built by George F. Caldwell about 1910 by moving in two buildings from the local area. Over the years three additional parts were added, two by moving in local buildings and one by building and extension on the front. The parts of the house made by moving in local buildings are of board and batten construction using rough sawed lumber from the local mill. The extension to the front and back porch are constructed of sawed siding. The last major addition was made in 1928 and the room added was used as a post office and general store until 1935. Mrs. Caldwell was the daughter of Lillian Ford Johnson who had a general store next door from 1912 until it burned in 1927. The family were storekeepers in Liberty for 23 years. Mrs. Caldwell lived in the house for 45 years until her death in 1955. Electricity was added to the house in 1939. Water came from a pitcher pump in the kitchen and in the summer, from a tank on the hillside supplied by the town water ditch behind the house. An inside bathroom was added in 1972. Extensive restoration work is presently being done.

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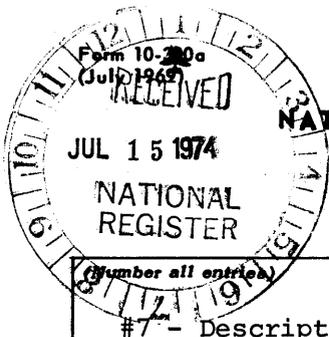
#7 - Description (2)
Liberty Historic District

#10 -- Berkley House: Originally built as the Assay Office sometime prior to 1895, it was later converted to a residence. It is a single story structure with vertical board and batten siding and a steep tar paper gable roof. Porches run across the front and rear faces of the rectangular structure. Apparently some Victorian carpentry has been removed.

#11 -- A one room cabin with squared log walls, dovetail corners and a roof assembly similar to buildings #3 and #5 although here the purlins are 9" poles. Presently there are three shake roofs applied one over the other with intermediate nailer boards above the purlins. Research has not uncovered the original builder of this cabin, but it was occupied by A. F. York in 1897. York was a Kittitas County Surveyor and an early day Swauk District miner.

#12 -- William Elliott Home: One story frame house of rough sawed lumber with board and batten exterior. It was wired for electricity in 1939. Water was piped from a spring to the kitchen in earlier years. The date this house was built is not known, but it was the home of William Elliot, who came to the area in 1884. A one room outbuilding close to this house has vertical sapling on pole walls, (similar to board and batten).





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#7 - Description
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Secondary List of Structures - Liberty District

- A. A two story wood frame house, with composition siding, built in 1949. Wired for electricity in 1949. Plumbing consists of water piped from a well to a pitcher pump in the kitchen.
- B. A two room wood structure, with board and batten exterior, moved into the townsite from a nearby logging camp in 1936. The composition roof is presently being replaced by shakes. It has not been wired for electricity, and there is no plumbing.
- C. One room wooden structure built in 1960. No improvements.
- D. There is no record as to when this house was built, but a Mr. Ed Lovendosky lived in it from the late 1920's to the early 1930's. He says, the house was old when he moved into it. While living there he added a pole framed porch. It is a one story wood frame house, with board and batten exterior covered by rolled composition siding. It was wired for electricity in 1939, but has no plumbing.
- E. The post office and general store, that sat on this site was destroyed by fire in 1916. They were replaced by two buildings, that were moved to a neighboring site and joined to form one structure. This is a one story wood frame building, with recent 10" clapboard siding and some large aluminum windows. It was wired for electricity in 1939 and plumbing was installed in 1972. In 1973 a small room was added to the back of the structure, to be used for a bathroom and storage area.
- F. This one story wood frame house, with board and batten exterior, was built by Adolph Bloomquist in 1910, at the request of pioneer miner Amos Jordin. It was built to replace Mr. Jordin's house, that was destroyed by fire.
- G. This house was originally part of the Burkley estate and was built in 1947. It is a two room wood frame structure, with board and batten exterior and a composition roof. There is no plumbing, but electricity was installed in 1947.

Mrs. Adrian Burkley was the former Annie Jordin, sister Amos Jordin.

- H. The former residence of pioneer miner Billy Anderson. Bought and remodeled by Clarence Jordin in 1950. It is a one story wood frame building, with composition siding and roofing. Wired for electricity and plumbing installed in 1950.

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" 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) **1873 - present**

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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <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

Gold mining towns have been notoriously ephemeral; they are "here today and gone tomorrow." However, the Swauk Mining District, originally organized in 1873 -- of which Liberty is the center -- is still in existence today. Although gold was discovered in several places in Washington during the territorial period, the town of Liberty is the only old-style gold mining town in the state of Washington that has survived. In 1973 the residents of Liberty, which was formerly named William's Creek and later Meaghersville, celebrated their centennial.

Although the Swauk Mining District dates from 1873, gold was actually first found there in 1868 by a party of inexperienced miners. Following one of the many Indian trails in the direction of Blewett Pass, they camped for lunch in the Swauk Area. One of the miners, Benton Goodwin, tried panning for gold in the creek and found some yellow particles. But the party thought that it was fool's gold and packed their bags, jokingly naming the spot Discovery Bar. Thus, the gold bearing streams of the Swauk were passed by until five years later when the Goodwin brothers, now more experienced, and three other miners decided to return to Discovery Bar for a second look. This time they found not only yellow particles but also nuggets. Although the small party of miners tried to keep Discovery Bar a secret, in about two weeks news reached the outside world, it is said by way of the Indians, and in a very short time hundreds of miners had arrived. Before the end of the year, the Swauk Mining District had come into existence, and from then to the present there has been continuous settlement and mining activity.

Successful strikes have kept interest in Liberty alive over the years. In 1891 Torkell Tweet struck gold in such quantities the Ellensburg Capital announced that the Mother Lode had at last been found. In 1932 Ollie Jordin hit pay dirt, some 70 to 80,000 dollars worth. And in 1959 Clarence Jordin struck a vein of gold on his Ace of Diamonds-Flag Mountain claim which yielded between 35 and 40,000 dollars. Today the Liberty miners still work their claims, searching for the big pocket they all believe is yet to be found.

Throughout the history of Liberty there have been two types of miners: the miner-gambler and the miner-settler. The miner-gambler has been the more numerous throughout the history of the entire West, but the

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Haberlin, John F. Northwest Mineral Journal, 1:1, February, 1954.

Hodges, L. K., editor. Mining in Eastern and Central Washington, p. 67, facsimile reproduction, The Shorey Book Store, Seattle, Washington 1970.

Jordan, Josee. You're at Liberty Here -- Mines and Miners of the Swauk, p. 29, Franklin Press, Yakima, Washington, 1967.

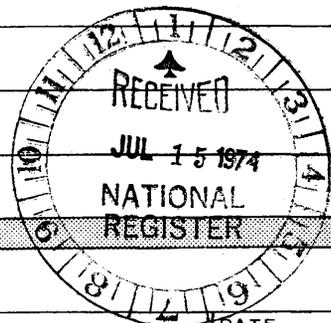
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	47° 15' 20"	120° 40' 06"				
NE	47° 15' 20"	120° 39' 39"				
SE	47° 15' 10"	120° 39' 39"				
SW	47° 15' 10"	120° 40' 06"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 23

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Ralph Fackler

ORGANIZATION _____ DATE: **Feb. 10, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER: _____

CITY OR TOWN: **Liberty** STATE: **Washington** CODE: **53**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

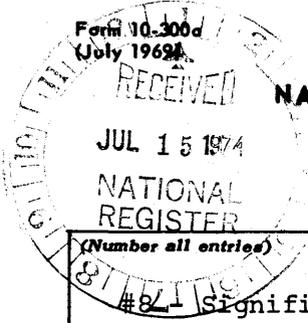
As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.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

National State Local

Name Charles H. Odegaard
Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission
Date July 10, 1974

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Date 10/15/74
ATTEST:
Keeper of The National Register
Date 10-11-74



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#8 - Significance (1)
Liberty Historic District

miner-settler has been the more important in Liberty, for he stayed on and kept the community alive. Although the population of Liberty today is small, 39, it has fluctuated greatly in the past, reaching at one time an established population of 400. It is the miner who made Liberty his home that accounts for the survival of the living heritage that today is Liberty.

Reconstruction of what Liberty was like in its boom days is not difficult because so many of the descendents of the first Liberty families -- the Meaghers, Virdens, Jordins, and Needhams -- still live in or near Liberty. Other miners and their descendents -- the Alley brothers, Jake Kirsch, and a second generation of Jordins -- still continue their quest for gold. Also, many Kittitas Valley residents are descendents of early Ellensburg and Cle Elum families who invested in, participated in, and closely followed the mining operations in Liberty. Many volumes of public records and private papers are also still available and they tell the stories of meetings, elections, school children, and big strikes to those eager to research the colorful history of a frontier mining town.

Purely from the nature of its gold mining, the Liberty area is of both national and international significance. Very few areas produce gold in different forms in the same region. Generally gold is found in either nuggets or flakes. Around Liberty, miners find nuggets, flakes, and a third type of gold, wire gold. According to John F. Haberlin, "There are only a few places in the world which have produced such material in such small quantity that very few people have had the pleasure of seeing a good specimen. This material can be wires interwoven in a ball, it can be like a 'woven cloth,' a 'fir-like sprig,' a 'snow-flake'." Haberlin wrote his article before the most unusual specimen was uncovered, a pre-historic fish whose bones had been replaced by wire gold to form a fossil. Recognition of the rarity of Liberty wire gold has already been given. In the 1890's this type of gold was displayed at the Chicago World's Fair, and there is a permanent collection of Liberty wire gold at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Any area in which gold is found is interesting to the geologist for the why behind the presence of gold in a certain area has always been a puzzle to mankind. The different varieties of gold found in the Swauk area and the differences in places in which the gold is found -- in streams, in pockets in the earth, and in veins in the quartz intrusions of the Cascades -- have caused the miners to use a variety of mining techniques. Placer, pocket, and hard rock mining methods are used, side by side, in Liberty, one of the few areas where this can be said to be true.

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#8 - Significance (2)
Liberty Historic District

The town of Liberty retains an unusual collection of minimal buildings constructed primarily for shelter purposes. Within a single, definite district these clearly exhibit several remarkably diverse building methods used by early miners and by supporting businesses in response to the difficulties of wilderness construction. The houses remain as evidence of the independence and ingenuity possessed by these people.

Over the past 100 years the miners who settled in Liberty have struggled with a variety of outside interests that have sought to gain control of the individual claims or destroy the natural beauty of the area, and the history and significance of the town. Currently the town is engaged in another struggle. This time the challenger is the United States Forest Service which many fear intends to terminate the existence of Liberty as an old style mining town along with the heritage which the people think their mining and they themselves represent. The people of Liberty and many others in Kittitas County believe that the demise of the town would be a mistake. For them, Liberty has the potential for playing a key role in representing the way of life of the mining era to future generations of Americans.

