

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _____ Page _____

=====

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

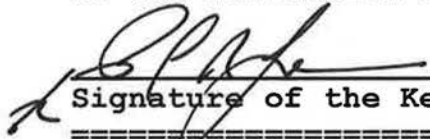
NRIS Reference Number: 16000522 Date Listed: 08/16/2016

Providence Townsite
Property Name

San Bernardino CA
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

8/16/2016

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Resource Count:

The Resource Count is revised to re-categorize the 47 contributing building to 47 contributing sites (total 53 contributing sites). [Ruins of historic buildings and structures are most appropriately categorized as sites -- *NR Bulletin 16A, page 15*]

Description:

The Rock Graffiti identified in Section 7, p. 29, does not include as contributing features the prehistoric rock art, as those are outside the period of significance for the townsite. (Presumably that resource has been recorded elsewhere and given its own separate contextual evaluation.)

Significance:

The Areas of Significance are revised to read: *Archeology-Historic/Non-Aboriginal; Commerce, Exploration/Settlement, Industry and Architecture.*
[Archaeology should be as closely defined as possible based on the standardized language provided in the NR Bulletins. Transportation appears to reflect a historic function rather than an important theme or area of importance, and is deleted. The archaeological potential of the limited transportation infrastructure features is not directly supported. Industry - while the townsite features do not directly represent industrial production or processes, they nevertheless reflect the essential physical infrastructure that developed in support of the mining industry in California.

These clarifications were confirmed with the NPS FPO & CA SHPO offices.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

JUL - 1 2016

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Providence Townsite

Other names/site number: Providence

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. Location

Street & number: 10.7 miles off Essex Road

City or town: Essex State: California County: San Bernardino

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

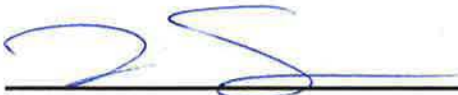

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C X D

 <hr/> Jenan Saunders/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	<u>4/28/16</u> <hr/> Date
California State Office of Historic Preservation <hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
 <hr/> Joy Beasley, Federal Preservation Officer	<u>4/30/2016</u> <hr/> Date
Park Programs and National Heritage Areas, National Park Service <hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

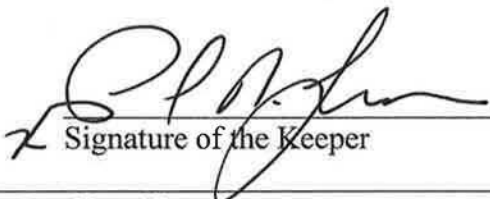
Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

8/14/2016
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>47</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>6</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>70</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC single dwelling = house, rockshelter

DOMESTIC multiple dwelling = duplex

DOMESTIC camp = mining camp

COMMERCE/TRADE restaurant = cookhouse

TRANSPORTATION road-related = dirt roads

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION processing site = mine and mill

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE park = national park

RECREATION outdoor recreation = campground, ghost town

VACANT/NOT IN USE

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: earth, stone, adobe, concrete, metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Providence Townsite is located in the vicinity of 7,162-foot Edgar Peak high in the Providence Mountains in eastern San Bernardino County. Providence is mostly within the boundaries of, and managed by, Mojave National Preserve, a unit of the National Park Service. The 81-acre site sits at the base of steep cliffs and peaks, at the top of an alluvial fan overlooking Fenner Valley. The townsite is clustered near the defunct Bonanza King Mine, one of the great silver mines of the nineteenth century. It is composed of 47 stone buildings in various states of ruin—most of which include intact lower walls, six sites, and seventeen structures. Of particular interest is the intact nature of the village as a whole, despite the ruined state of the individual buildings, with most known original buildings represented as well as a network of roads and trails. The buildings were constructed of three types of local stone, including examples of buildings made of carved blocks of soft volcanic tuff. While all but two individual buildings or structures are in a state of ruin, as a district Providence Townsite possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Practically all of the buildings and structures dating from the period of significance remain in place and are further connected by the town's original road and trail system.

Narrative Description¹

The Bonanza King Mine, located in the Providence Mountains in the south-central part of Mojave National Preserve, was one of the richest silver mines in California history. The mine and mill produced large amounts of bullion from 1880 to 1885 and the mine was worked

¹ All of the information presented here is condensed from the document: Dewey Livingston, *Condition Assessment and Treatment Plan, Providence Townsite* (Barstow: Mojave National Preserve, 2012).

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

sporadically into the 1920s. Mine owners and miners developed a town named Providence adjacent to the mine. Providence thrived during the boom times at the mine, with a post office, voting precinct, and population of hundreds. The town's fortunes mirrored that of the mine, and by the 1920s Providence was abandoned. Its unique and near-complete array of stone cabins (habitations) and commercial buildings remain as ruins in a relatively isolated part of the Preserve near Providence Mountains State Recreation Area (Mitchell Caverns) and the 7IL Ranch.

Providence is located at an elevation of about 4,200 feet in the central portion of the eastern slope of the Providence Mountains, within Mojave National Preserve in eastern San Bernardino County. A federally designated wilderness area boundary is immediately adjacent to Providence and the privately owned Bonanza King Mine property on the west and north sides. A little over two miles to the south of Providence is the combined Mitchell Caverns State Natural Preserve/Providence Mountains State Recreation Area, and two miles farther is Foshay Pass, the only breach in the range other than the much more challenging Macedonia Canyon pass at the extreme north end.

There are no towns of significant size within 60 miles of Providence. Settlements of Essex, Fenner, and Goffs (towns on this section of the Southern Pacific Railroad were named alphabetically) are now fading outposts on old Route 66. Needles (population 4,844) is 67 miles by road, and Barstow (population 22,639) is 128 miles from Providence. San Bernardino, the county seat, is 204 miles away by road.

Setting, Geology and Vegetation Overview

The boomtown of Providence, born of a rich silver strike in 1880, enjoyed a fine location that benefited its hard-working occupants. The residents of Providence escaped the worst of the desert heat at a pleasant elevation that also afforded views, shelter, and easy proximity to the mine workings. The location also supplied plenty of building material, although of only one type: stone. The lack of nearby construction-grade timber forced the early residents to build almost entirely from the stones found underfoot. Only after a good road and rail connection was established could Providence see much building in wood, and yet such edifices as one usually finds in a ghost town of this period still proved to be the exception.

The site of Providence overlooks a vast 709 square mile basin called Fenner Valley that is surrounded by the Marble and Providence Mountains, the Clipper Mountains, the Providence and New York Mountains, the Piute and Old Woman Mountains, and the Ship and Old Woman Mountains. The townsite is literally perched at the edge of the steep and scenic slopes of Edgar Peak and its neighbors, offering a 100-mile view towards Blythe and Arizona. To the north and east is the lower Whiskey Valley, location of the 7IL Ranch headquarters, and portions of Wild Horse Mesa.

The town was never platted, subdivided, or claimed as homestead land. It sits on public land, administered since its inception by the General Land Office, the Bureau of Land Management, and since 1994, the National Park Service as a feature within Mojave National Preserve. The

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

adjacent (and defunct) Bonanza King Mine remains in private ownership. Providence sits at the dramatic shoulder of the Providence Range, with nearby limestone peaks attaining 6,000-7,000 feet. The highest of these is Edgar Peak (7,162 feet), the landmark that looms over Providence from about two miles southwest. Deep canyons are cut into the range and have, for centuries, deposited erosional materials downward into the Fenner Valley, creating a series of huge alluvial fans. The town was built on a comparatively small limestone alluvial deposit flowing out of what has been called Bonanza King Canyon. This sloping plain flowed around two of the many volcanic rhyolytic hills that protruded from the canyon's detritus, and these steep slopes comprise part of Providence. Accordingly, the cabins built on the alluvium are almost exclusively limestone and the cabins on the hills are of rhyolite. In the wash that flows east from Providence there are examples of the two types only 30 feet away from each other.

Geologically, Providence has two distinct neighborhoods: the blue-gray limestone flats and the red-brown rhyolite hills. On the rhyolite hillside at northeast Providence, miners found an outcrop of rhyolitic volcanic tuff, a light-colored soft stone that could be easily quarried and used for construction. Examples of tuff as a building material are found around the world and even in ancient times. The most prominent building at Providence was constructed of tuff blocks, and these were also used in construction at the mine. While tuff buildings can be very stable and solid, they must be maintained: tuff will "melt" with wind and rain exposure, and so there are many examples of deteriorated tuff blocks at Providence and the Bonanza King Mine.

The site of Providence features a rich variety of high desert plants. Similar to Mitchell Caverns two miles south, the Bonanza King Mine area attracted prominent botanists including Philip A. Munz, Willis Linn Jepson, and Mary Beal, and still draws not only mining buffs but also naturalists and nature photographers.

The most common plant seen is creosote bush (*Larrea tridentate*), with a similar-sized bush called catclaw (*Acacia greggii*) also numerous. Mojave yucca (*Yucca shidigera*) is scattered throughout the upper elevations of Providence, and various species of sage including Great basin Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentate*) can be found. The most prolific small flowering plant noted is fall-blooming desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), found growing inside many of the ruins and especially vibrant in the canyon behind Providence. Cacti present include buckhorn cholla cactus (*Opuntia acanthocarpa*), pancake-pear cactus (*Opuntia chlorotica*), California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*) and cotton-top cactus (*Echinocactus polycephalus*). Grasses supply forage for cattle from the nearby 7IL ranch, an operation whose predecessors date to the 1880s. Among the founders and early residents of Providence are key players in the formation of the Rock Springs Land & Cattle Company that controlled over a million acres in the area into the 1920s.

Vegetation at Providence is for the most part benign in relation to historic resources, but there are examples of creosote, catclaw and yucca plants causing damage to structural stability of rock walls and retaining walls. For the most part, the small plants like sage and sunflower show negligible impact.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Physical Layout of Providence

Providence is located on an alluvial fan and has no absolutely level ground except for that which was created by residents. A majority of the buildings were constructed as partial dugouts, in which the builder excavated a flat surface resulting in cut banks, usually reinforced by stone, and fill areas. The sloping nature of the land provided a natural hierarchy wherein the company's overseer could live and work at the upper elevations with a good view of both the mine and the town; the commercial area sat centrally, and the workers lived in huts scattered around the edges in three or four "neighborhoods." Although no events have been found in the historical record, the town was vulnerable to flash flooding from the canyon behind.

The configuration of the townsite appears to be influenced by a combination of intentional design and vernacular influences: streets laid out in parallel fashion but with no known formal house lots or municipal infrastructure. Although the precision of the grid has softened with time, it is obvious that the town fathers intended to create a town center, and they placed the administrative headquarters at the terminus of the roads into town. The orientation of the town also seems to take into account the pattern of flows from the canyon behind.

Visitors enter Providence from the east on a narrow dirt road. In terms of magnetic bearings, the road runs almost precisely east-west. As the road enters Providence it splits and soon two roads parallel each other. This section might be considered the "downtown" commercial area, with the cookhouse the major remaining building. At least two, and possibly three, short roadways form cross streets. These two main parallel roads continue up to the hill to a point where they rejoin just below the superintendent's residence. The three or four "blocks" formed by this grid contained six leveled areas of greater extent than seen in other sections of Providence except for the superintendent's residence.

The largest residential neighborhood was created south and east of the gridded blocks. While the pattern of the 16 known buildings in this section generally follow the road layout and most buildings were oriented cardinally, the "rows" tend to follow the small washes and drainages on that slope, no doubt a practical solution. There are no visible roadways here, although traces of connecting trails can occasionally be seen. One roadway continues from the downtown grid and heads south/southwest, possibly to other mines in the area. This road forms the western edge of the south neighborhood. Perhaps curiously, no building remains have been located west of this road.

Down by the cookhouse, a major road splits off towards the northwest, following the toe of the slope and directly to the Bonanza King Mine. This no doubt represents the first roadway to the mine, prior to the development of Providence. The south side of the roadway consists largely of drainage and undeveloped areas, and two old roads that split off towards the west and northwest. Facing the north side of the road is a large filled and leveled area opposite the cookhouse; the junction to the tuff quarry road; and a row of houses towards the western end of the road.

Another distinct "neighborhood" hugs the hillside up the tuff quarry road and below it in the wash, forming the northern side of Providence town. This area is composed of rhyolite rock, and

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

all the buildings are constructed of rhyolite. The only pattern evident here, because of steep and rocky hillside and cliffs, is a ragged linear following of road and/or wash.

The zone northwest of “downtown” was sparsely settled, probably because of the many washes that thread through the area. The north part of this zone, which lies between the town and the mine, hosted two livery stables, with corrals.

What could be called West Providence is dominated by the superintendent’s residence located on a leveled area, practically a knoll, overlooking Providence and the valley below. All roads lead to this site, including a direct roadway to the mine workings. Five habitations are found in the cliffs northwest of the residence, all constructed of rhyolite, and two additional sites are found farther up the wash. An old wagon road is evident ascending the wash and canyon that is now designated wilderness. An isolated and well-built two-room limestone cabin lies southwest of the superintendent’s residence, and far up the canyon are the remains of a limestone cabin.

Descriptions of Individual Resources

The remains of Providence include ruins of 47 buildings, six sites, and seventeen structures. Most are numbered as a Feature according to the initial survey done by NPS archeologists in 2004-2005. There are occasional gaps in numbering, a result of revisions made after that initial fieldwork. More recent additions to the inventory, made in 2011, are not numbered (roads and trails). The following paragraphs provide descriptive information about each feature, and some generalization here will help keep the descriptions brief.

All of the buildings listed here are now in ruin, yet the majority retains enough standing wall fabric to show the dimensions and layout of the original building. Extant rubble provides an idea of wall heights, although the extent of removal or erosion is not known. With two exceptions, no building retains its roof, nor its doors and windows, although entryways are usually visible. Roof materials ranged from wood frame and corrugated metal to canvas. Floors were, for the most part, dirt or rubble. In a few instances it appears that a wood floor may have been utilized, and three buildings show poured concrete floors. Vegetation is present, as noted, and only in a few instances do plants cause negative impacts on the buildings and structures.

The buildings, if evaluated individually as standing buildings, do not possess integrity due to their mostly fallen state; however, they possess integrity as ruins. More importantly, the district as a whole possesses integrity as an intact complex of foundations and ruins that exhibit the layout, patterns, and feel of the original town.

The site is not a purely archeological one; most of the buildings retain portions of walls and a majority of the resources are above ground. Archeological potential is rich, with the immediate surroundings of most buildings covered by tumble from the former upper walls and/or gravel deposits from floods, and vegetation; also some areas are revealed by natural erosion or illegal excavation. Evidence of privies could indicate a larger number than those now known, and a “town dump” has yet to be located.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

01 Cookhouse (Contributing Building)

The cookhouse is the most substantial building at Providence, and despite being largely ruined, best evokes the mining camp days and short-lived prominence of the town. It has been photographed often in the past seven decades, and these pictures show a physical decline as first roof, then windows, then walls disappear. The building consists of three partial walls in the front room, a largely intact storehouse at the rear, and remnant walls of the kitchen and lean-to.

In its prime, the cookhouse would have been a social center of the town, and was literally placed in the center of Providence with its front door facing exactly magnetic north. It consisted of a large dining room facing the main street of town, a kitchen, and two storerooms. A smaller, related building lay to the east, known to be the commissary. The cookhouse had a long gable roof with vented attic space over the dining room and kitchen, and short eaves; the rear storehouse had a flat roof (eventually concrete) and a shed-roofed lean-to was added on the west. Early photos showed cables or rods acting as tie-downs for the roof, attaching the walls to every fourth rafter, as desert winds could easily rip such a roof away from the walls.

One of the most interesting aspects of this building is its construction. Skilled masons carefully built the dining room from blocks cut from volcanic tuff quarried at a site within view of the building. The soft tuff could reportedly be cut into blocks with a saw. The builders constructed well-crafted eighteen-inch-thick block walls in courses utilizing a soft adobe mortar and two-inch-thick plank lintels over doors and windows. In the rear, a storehouse was built of a mix of rhyolite blocks—that were harder to cut, tuff, and limestone; this building is even more finely crafted than the dining room. An infill addition, creating a kitchen, was not constructed as skillfully, and materials included a mix of tuff, rhyolite, and limestone. It appears that these walls were not made by the craftsmen who built the original buildings. The kitchen featured a stone chimney that at least in later years was extended with a long sheet metal stove pipe.

The stone-and-mortar interior walls of the dining room were whitewashed while the interior of the kitchen received a coat of stucco that was then whitewashed. It is possible that the entire exterior of the cookhouse had been whitewashed.

No historical record has yet been uncovered that provides information on this building before the 1930s—there is no extant building record, and photographs taken during the heyday of Providence have yet to be discovered. This dearth of data leaves us presuming that the original building was constructed early in the boom years—1881 to 1883—and only investigations of its physical remnant can provide clues into its history.

Inspection shows that the four-room cookhouse began as a single building, or two separate buildings joined later by additional walls to form a central room and a lean-to on the west. The favored assumption is that the front (dining room) and rear (storehouse) rooms were built first, at a distance of about 12 feet apart. At some point, the kitchen was created by constructing two walls to join the original structures and extending the gable dining room roof on the south. Possibly at this time, the lean-to was constructed. Evidence of this chronology includes the physically obvious wall additions attached to the dining room and storehouse, and a 1947

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

photograph showing two roof structures butted together in the gable roof that stretched from the north façade to the storehouse.

At an unknown point in time, two doors in the dining room, one on the east and the other on the west, were converted to windows by filling in the lower part of the opening. Also at an unknown date, a cement floor was poured in the dining room and kitchen, as well as cement-slab porches with steps on the north and east sides. Upon close inspection, one can see where the cement has been poured up against the tuff walls, rather than having the wall material standing on a slab. This discovery leads the author to believe that there is no concrete foundation under the tuff walls. Also, a cement roof was poured atop a pipe-and-corrugated-metal roof structure on the storehouse; this eventually collapsed. It is likely that these improvements were made by the Los Angeles capitalists who resurrected the Bonanza King Mine in the early 1900s. Similar cement work was also done at the superintendent's residence (Feature 44).

The historical record of the cookhouse consists only of photographs and artifacts found on site; of the latter, square-cut and wire nails, remnant lintel and door frame, and ceramic debris can be located. A photograph taken in the late 1930s of the northwest corner of the building shows a corrugated metal roof and an old (wavery glass, thin muntins) six-over-six double-hung window. The next extant photo was taken in 1940 (**Figure 1**) and shows the façade with the west window missing and the east apparently intact. Overall, the building appears to be in fair condition at that time, with intact roof and walls, although the columns flanking the front door appear to be cracked and weakened.

By 1947, when Harold and Lucile Weight visited Providence and took many photographs (**Figure 2**), the cookhouse remained standing, with obvious damage to the roof (only the rafters remained) and all window sash missing.

The next available photos of the cookhouse were taken in 1960. By this time, the roof structure and all window sash and doors were entirely gone. The walls were already deteriorating and the kitchen was wide open on the east. Interior and exterior views of the north façade showed failure at the corners and imminent collapse. The cement roof on the storehouse remained intact, as did the tall chimney.

Photographs taken in 1962, 1965, and 1966 show the building nearly unchanged from 1960. In 1971 and 1972 the north façade appeared to be close to failure—the wall tops were eroding and cracks in both corners seemed to be increasing in size. By 1984, the next series of photographs taken by BLM mining historian Larry Vredenburgh show the front wall entirely collapsed and much deterioration on the remaining walls. By this date the east wall of the kitchen was entirely gone and the cement roof on the storehouse had collapsed. In the 1990s a large portion of the dining room's east wall collapsed, and a flood event had deposited a foot or more of gravel at the front porch. The building has changed little since the early 2000s. In the dining room since 2004, some stones have fallen and the south door frame and lintel were removed.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The Cookhouse, the most substantial structural remains in Providence, is a four-room building situated in a central location of Providence, sandwiched between the two main town arteries and facing north onto the former main road to the Bonanza King Mine. Its building site was excavated out of an average 15% slope.

The four rooms appear to have been built at different times and show varying construction methods, materials and quality. For this reason, the description here will be divided into the following sections: Room 1, the front dining room; Room 2, the kitchen; Room 3, the storeroom; and Room 4, the lean-to. Each room, in turn, will be described according to individual wall (north, east, south and west) and will also include floor, and if applicable, roof.

Room 1: Dining Room

This rectangular room measures 21 by 30 feet on the exterior. The extant masonry walls are 18 inches thick and vary in height (due to areas of collapse) from two to 117 inches. The room has a smooth concrete floor, added after the walls were constructed, and is about 50% obscured by sand and rocks.

The cookhouse walls are constructed from sawn blocks of soft cemented volcanic rhyolitic tuff quarried nearby. The blocks are of varying sizes, the largest being about 12 inches tall by 24 inches wide. The blocks were laid in coursed ashlar style by skilled masons, with largest blocks in the lower courses (foundation blocks may have been up to 18 inches in height) and smaller blocks towards the tops of the walls. While the walls have the solid appearance of full 18-inch-thick blocks comprising the walls, mostly they are doubled, thinner 8-to-9-inch-thick blocks with mortar filling the interior void; full-thickness blocks (18 inches) were occasionally used as keystones to give the entire wall structural stability. Unfortunately, this method has led to the destruction of much wall fabric and provides the major threat to the remaining walls.

The blocks are cemented with an adobe-type mortar that appears to be comprised of a mix of rhyolite-based dirt and possibly limestone sand collected at or near the site. The mortar crumbles to the touch and does not appear to contain any cement. The interior walls were whitewashed, which protected the mortar; where the whitewash has disappeared, the mortar has tended to erode due to wind and rain. The remaining whitewash material is largely stained brown from eroding mortar. Graffiti is found on most wall surfaces, some of which is carved deeply into the whitewash and soft tuff.

There may not be any foundation structure other than heavy tuff blocks laid in a shallow excavation. This is evidenced by the fact that the concrete floor was poured at a later time than the construction of the walls. The visible base courses are deteriorating due to rising dampness, another indication that the soft and easily erodible base tuff blocks are laying on bare ground. However, the remaining walls appear to be level and solid, with no indications of settling over the past 130 years.

The builders of the cookhouse employed full-dimension 2-inch-thick lumber for lintels over both doors and windows. Two of these lintels remain in place, both on the west wall, showing side-

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

by-side 12- and 6-inch widths to attain the full 18-inch thickness of the wall opening. Another lintel has been removed and is being used as an impromptu bench. Only one remnant doorframe part remains in place, on the south door. It is a full dimension two-by-four that was, apparently later, sheathed in sheet metal affixed with small wire nails.

The walls of the dining room are in various stages of collapse. Portions range in height from two to 117 inches. The west wall is the most intact yet is vulnerable to collapse

The porch on the north end of the room is a three-inch-thick poured concrete surface on a foundation of cemented rubble. It spans the width of the façade and measures 21 feet five inches by six feet. The porch slab is broken at the edges and shows cracks in at least three locations. Erosion from the adjacent roadways has deposited dirt and gravel against the porch, burying much of what was once a step up to the building entrance.

As a whole, the dining room is a key feature of the cookhouse and is in poor condition. Major concerns include unstable wall remnants, deteriorated wall tops, and the leaning west wall.

Room 2: Kitchen

This room was added to the dining room at an unknown date. It shares a wall with the dining room to the north, part of its south wall with the storeroom (also thought to have been constructed earlier), and its west wall with the lean-to. The fact that the dining room and storeroom walls have fared better than the added kitchen walls indicates that the kitchen builders were far less skilled than their predecessors. The kitchen once had a wood frame gable roof with attic space, all of which is gone, and has a poured concrete floor. A chimney and an additional flue are built into the south wall. The kitchen is about five feet wider than the adjacent dining room. It measures 24 feet seven inches by 19 feet seven inches on the interior. The walls are up to 20 inches thick.

The walls were once coated with a sand-cement stucco, much of which has delaminated, and whitewash. The floor is covered in rubble and dirt, exposing only about 25% of the concrete floor surface and precluding investigation of the meeting of wall and floor. A stove pipe, scraps of sheet metal, burnt wood, water pipe, broken dishes and glass, and cans litter the floor. The kitchen walls are deteriorating rapidly, and its space is more defined by the adjacent room walls that are in better condition.

The porch on the east end of the kitchen is a three-inch-thick poured concrete surface on a foundation of cemented rubble. It spans the width of the kitchen's east façade and measures 23 feet three inches by six feet four inches. Two concrete steps, 47 inches wide, lead down to the cutoff road east of the cookhouse. The porch slab is broken at the edges and shows cracks in at least four locations. Erosion has undercut the east edge of the porch and steps.

Room 3: Storeroom

This is thought to have been a storeroom, although it may have been originally constructed for another purpose. A doorway leads into the kitchen that was later attached to the north wall of the

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

storeroom, providing easy access for cooks and workers. The room measures 14 feet one inch by 16 feet five inches on the exterior. It was constructed of finely cut rhyolite and tuff blocks, and well-selected limestone with adobe mortar. The walls are 26 inches thick, indicating an original use that required a small and sturdy building. The east wall features small openings close to ground level, likely for ventilation or draining. Two wide openings at the top of the east and west walls were probably framed windows.

The room had a flat roof, comprised of four-inch concrete slab laid atop a structure of water pipe rafters and corrugated sheet metal. This roof, no doubt added later, collapsed around 1980, leaving about six large pieces inside the room. The room is also filled with rocks and other rubble and is not accessible. The room is heavy and appears solid, but at least three cracks show structural failure, partly caused by the weight of the collapsed concrete roof.

Room 4: Lean-to

This was most likely a storeroom for the kitchen. It was a dugout shed-roofed room constructed off the west wall of the kitchen and the southwest corner of the dining room. The walls are constructed largely of tuff blocks and limestone with adobe mortar, and were apparently stuccoed with the same material as the kitchen. Two doorways (east and north walls) and one window (north wall) allowed access and light to the room. The room measures almost 12 feet square. The floor is largely filled with dirt and rocks, with sheet metal parts and an old bedspring. There is sign of small animal activity, and an unidentified vine plant is growing in the northwest corner.

02 Commissary (Contributing Building)

This partially dugout building, located immediately east of the cookhouse dining room (Feature 01). Oral tradition has termed it a commissary, or storehouse for the adjacent cookhouse. A 1940 photograph of the south façade shows that the building had originally been smaller and was approximately doubled in size. The photo shows a gable roof sheathed with planks and the remains of corrugated sheet metal. A later photograph proved that the gable ends were wood frame rather than masonry, and another window faced east. A double-hung window and a doorway faced south. The walls of the eastern part of the building were poorly constructed and were failing by the time the picture was taken. A 1947 photograph shows the north façade with one doorway and two windows, a sagging roofline, and confirms the doubled building. By 1960 the commissary was beginning to ruin, with entire roof fallen in and rapidly deteriorating walls. One of two photographs taken that year shows window framing intact on the east and north sides, and the south wall almost completely collapsed; the destroyed roof framing and window frames were taken away after these photographs were taken. One of these photos reveals that this masonry building, an annex to the cookhouse, was built with less concern for even courses and fine craftsmanship than its neighbor. Also, the photo reveals erosion of the tuff blocks in the bottom courses, similar to the problems at the cookhouse. A 1962 photo shows roof structure gone and the visible north and east walls intact. A circa 1963 photo shows the walls deteriorating rapidly with crumbling wall tops and building corners. By 1966 only portions of the east and north walls stood. Ten years later only a portion of the east wall remained standing, window

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

frame intact. When Larry Vredenburg photographed the building in 1984, it was in total ruin, with less invasive vegetation than at the time of nomination.

The commissary was a rectangular building constructed of ashlar-laid sawn tuff blocks cut from a nearby quarry and a small quantity of native rhyolite and limestone. As of 2011, all four walls have fallen, leaving short and eroding stub walls. The most substantial wall section remaining is on the west end of the south wall, including a cement window sill and 55-inch-tall section of wall. The section shows semi-skillfully constructed walls of 18-inch thickness laid with sand/cement mortar; adobe mortar is evident in other parts of the building, leading to speculation that later cement work was done.

The room measures 22 by about 12 feet on the interior. The apparent entrance door was west of center in the north-facing wall. This north wall is "melting," with tuff being a highly erosive material, and leaving a mound. The east wall has an 18-inch tall section standing and is very deteriorated. The south wall is mostly gone except for the aforementioned section 55 inches tall with partial window opening. Only a few courses of the west wall, the dugout section, remain. A number of creosote bushes are growing in the remains of walls, including a very large bush in the west dugout wall ruin.

04 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping and general living. It is located in the southeastern section of Providence, between Features 24 and 5. It is a complex 6-room dwelling partially dug into the slope. It features three large rooms, one small room, and two small side enclosures. There is an entry on the north wall, and a possible entry on the south. The walls are skillfully laid with limestone rubble. Most lower wall portions are intact giving a good sense of the original construction, but much wall structure has tumbled. Directly east of the building is a high mound, likely the spoils of the excavation. A can dump is located in a drainage south of the building, raising the possibility that this was an alternate food serving facility.

The walls are 16 to 30 inches thick. Room A (front, north), the largest, measures 12 by 16 feet on the interior; Room B is 12 by 13 feet; Room C is 8 by 9 feet. Two smaller rooms may have been use for storage: the smallest measures 3 by 6 feet, the other 56 inches wide and about 10 feet long with an open end. A large area on the northeast corner may have been an open area sheltered from the wind. Overall the building measures approximately 26 by 32 feet. A small amount of vegetation is growing inside the building, the largest being a catclaw in the east side.

05 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southeastern section of Providence, between Features 4 and 6. It is a long building measuring about 14 by 36 feet, with rubble dry-laid walls built of limestone with a handful of rhyolite stones. Its three rooms are in line, with an obvious entrance on the north end facing the main road. The central room may have had one open side (east). The walls are largely tumbled, however the south wall remains about 50 inches high and shows the best example of the original

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

construction. The north portion of the east wall also is prominent. The north end abuts a small drainage that is likely active in storms and could cause erosion of this end of the building.

The north room measures 6 by 14 inches on the interior; the center room approximately 8 by 8 feet; the south room 5 feet 8 inches by 10 feet. Walls vary in thickness from 20 to 30 inches wide and 14 to 50 inches high. A creosote bush is growing in the front room with minor impact.

06 Wall or Habitation Terrace (Contributing Structure)

This structure is located in the southeastern section of Providence, near an abandoned roadway and Feature 5. The long and wide dry-laid masonry wall, with doglegs at its opposite ends, is set in a drainage and adjacent to an excavated level area. Part of the structure is comprised of a double limestone wall with rubble fill in center. With little tumble evident, it may have originally been a low wall or terrace adjoining a wood frame building, or the majority of stones have been hauled away. It is approximately 50 feet long and 46 inches thick, with height varying between grade and 36 inches. The adjacent excavated area measures about 30 feet round.

07 Habitation or Shelter (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southeastern section of Providence, near an abandoned roadway. It is a leveled area with the rubble of two walls at a corner; no evidence of a once more complete building can be found. The extant west and south walls may have acted as a wind shelter, or the north and east wall materials have been hauled away. The existing limestone walls have well defined bases indicating a thickness of about 24 inches, and are one to 2.5 feet in height. The building was located in a shallow bowl that drains to the east.

08 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, next to Feature 9; it is the easternmost building known in Providence. The remains of this dugout dwelling in a side hill open to a wash. It is not known whether the cut walls had been reinforced; no evidence remains. The cut bank, in unstable and steep soil, has been failing and filling the excavation. A small portion of rubble rhyolite stone wall remains marking the south wall and a portion of the west wall. A possible small enclosure is found in the drainage immediately southwest of the excavation.

09 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, next to Feature 8. The partial dugout room is located on a steep bank adjacent to a small wash and partially utilizes natural outcrop for enclosure. The rectangular room's dry-laid rhyolite stone walls were constructed with moderate skill and are largely intact. The rear (north) wall features a set back fireplace and partial chimney. An entrance opening is obvious. The room measures approximately 10 by 12 feet with walls 18 inches thick and ranging from 26 to 70 inches high.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

10 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence. The room was dug out deeply into a bank at the edge of a drainage and below the main road into Providence. Because of the skilled masonry construction and dugout design, it is largely intact except for roof and wall tops. The three dugout walls are lined with limestone blocks carefully chosen to make a relatively smooth wall with no mortar, although dirt mortar may have been used and has since washed away. The walls are reasonably plumb and appear to be solid. Two or three stones have been pushed or pulled out of the rear (south) wall leaving open holes. The freestanding front (north) wall, comprising some very large stones and including a doorway, has largely collapsed.

The interior of the room measures 10 feet square. The front, freestanding walls are 30 inches thick, with a centered 40-inch doorway opening, and range from one to 5 feet high. The dugout retaining walls range from four to more than five feet in height and are 15-20 inches thick. The east wall is backfilled to create a berm about five feet thick. At the northwest corner of the building at the wash is an almost circular area of rocks, purpose unknown.

11 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located at the foot of a steep cliff in the northeastern section of Providence, next to Feature 12. It is a rectangular room with two leveled areas to the west. It is well constructed of rhyolite blocks incorporating a natural cliff feature in the north wall. A protruding column on the west wall, with smoke stains, appears to be a fireplace. The walls, about 24 inches thick, have largely tumbled. The room measures roughly 12 by 13 feet, with remaining walls from two to five feet high. To the west is a dug out, leveled area with extension of a rock wall, indicating a second room.

12 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, adjacent to Feature 11. This is a rectangular room with a small enclosure attached to its north side is located at the foot of a steep hillside. It is well-constructed of rhyolite blocks in a partial dugout. The rear (north) wall has an almost smooth facing, with one-third to one-half of the top tumbled. The east wall has mostly collapsed but shows evidence of a chimney. The south wall, with 32-inch doorway opening, has mostly collapsed. There is only a remnant of the west wall. The room measures 10 by 15 feet, with walls 22 inches thick and one to six feet high. A small dugout room at the rear, on the west end of the north side, measures four by six feet with walls about 2½ feet high.

13 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, directly east of Feature 14 and near the tuff quarry. The building appears to have been a two-room cabin. It was constructed on a steep rhyolite cliff utilizing a sheer outcrop as the rear (north) wall. The almost square interior measures about 10 by 10 feet at its largest dimension. The east rhyolite rubble wall has partly fallen and yet is the most intact, ranging from 50 to 66 inches tall. The west wall is mostly fallen but stands almost

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

three feet tall where it meets the outcrop. The front (south) wall, also largely fallen, is about 30 inches wide and ranges from 12 to 32 inches tall; there is indication of a doorway about three feet wide. A possible second room is attached to the west side and consists of a leveled area with scant rocks forming what may have been a wall.

14 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, directly west of Feature 13. The half-dugout is mostly collapsed. Erosion from the bank behind is filling the once-leveled floor with rocks and dirt. The room measures about 9 feet by 90 inches, with an indication of a door entry facing south. The remaining rhyolite walls range from one to four feet in height. A can dump sits at the front doorway area.

15 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeast section of Providence, across the wash from the cookhouse at the toe of a fill section of the tuff quarry road. This is a curious two-level building. The upper/back (north) walls are back filled with road fill. The outline of the building is visible but most walls have tumbled. The rhyolite walls appear to have been laid with low level of skill. The lower level is mostly a tumble of rocks that probably comprised high walls. A path leads to an upper level with backfilled walls creating a level area. The building measured approximately 20 by 20 feet, with remaining walls ranging from one to three feet high.

16 Tuff Quarry (Contributing Site)

The builders of a handful of the buildings at Providence, and foundations at the mine and mill, used volcanic rhyolitic tuff quarried from this site, giving the settlement its distinctive quality that is virtually always mentioned in articles and evaluations. The most prominent buildings, including the cookhouse and mill foundations, were constructed almost entirely from tuff. This almost white excavated outcrop is visible from many locations in Providence. It appears that the quarry was in use from circa 1881 to 1906.

A narrow roadway leads eastward from upper Providence a short distance to the quarry, a large excavation in a steep hillside with a resulting level area that may have been used for cutting the blocks. The quarry excavation measures roughly 35 feet wide and is of a similar depth; the larger, rear cut is about 30 feet high. The cut includes both a sheer face and a sloping face of softer materials. Cut marks are visible on the quarry face; eroded blocks and piles of eroding tuff "sand" are found at the edges of the quarry floor. The sloping floor is now littered with gravel and rocks.

18 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, directly adjacent to the tuff quarry road and one of a cluster of four habitations. The small dugout enclosure was constructed with comparatively low skill. The tops of walls have collapsed; the once-level floor now slopes with dirt and rocks. The

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

doorway entry, now blocked by a boulder, is evident with large corner blocks defining the opening. The irregular, rectangular rhyolite building measures roughly 80 by 87-128 inches with remnant walls 20 inches thick and one to five feet tall.

19 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small irregularly shaped enclosure, perched above the tuff quarry road and the uppermost in a cluster of four habitations, was constructed with low-level skill and imaginative design. The builder utilized an overhanging rhyolite outcrop on a steep location above Feature 21 to create a small sleeping room. The curving west wall was formed by filling gaps in the natural formation, and the east wall with laid rhyolite stones and minimal excavation. The front (south) wall is mostly gone, although an entryway is discernable. An 8-foot sheer outcrop of rhyolite forms the rear wall. The remaining walls range from one to four feet high. The interior measures 50 to 80 inches wide and 80 to 100 inches deep. A once-level area adjacent on the east side, with a retaining wall about three feet high, is filling with materials from the slope above. A trail is evident from the lower buildings.

20 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located on a steep slope in the northeastern section of Providence, above the tuff quarry road and one of a cluster of four habitations. A square floor plan provided a small sleeping room. The half-dugout building was constructed with some skill, with random courses of rhyolite and fair face quality. The back (north), dugout wall is largely intact, ranging from 64 to 74 inches high. The west and south (front) walls are mostly collapsed, while the east wall is about one-half gone but structurally intact, showing the workmanship with its 20-inch thick construction. Large boulders anchor the southwest and southeast corners. An approximately 30-inch-wide entryway is visible on the south wall. The interior measures 10 by 10 feet, with walls ranging from one to six feet high.

21 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, immediately west of Feature 18 and faces the abandoned tuff quarry road, being part of a cluster of four habitations. More of an excavation than building, only one wall remnant provides clues to the original configuration of this small habitation. The building is a half-dugout approximately 16 by 21 feet. One rhyolite rock wall (east) remains, of substantial construction with little masonry skill; the wall ranges between 21 and 32 inches wide and 2.5 and 4.5 feet tall. The rear of the room is a cut bank, possibly once faced with rock, and nothing of the west and south walls remain although some remnant stones may indicate wall locations. A substantial amount of gravel and rocks have partially filled the interior floor.

22 Habitation Site (Contributing Site)

This site is located in the northeastern section of Providence, north of the wash. It is an excavated, leveled area that may have once been occupied by a small building. A barely discernable line of rocks can be seen on the south side and very vaguely on the east side; boulders are piled up on the upper northwest corner. Historic debris is scattered on the level area,

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

including corrugated sheet metal, cans, and metal pieces. A concentration of debris can be found at a rock pile directly north of the level area.

23 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small limestone building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping, or possibly a storehouse. It is located in the northeastern section of Providence, below the older main road into Providence and a short distance from the cookhouse. It is a deeply excavated dugout dwelling that faces the wash; the builders constructed stone “wing” retaining walls apparently to protect the room from flood-caused erosion. The masonry work shows some skill, although the room’s retaining walls are failing and a front (north) wall is nonexistent. The room measures 11½ by 14 feet with retaining walls ranging from 2.5 to 3 feet high. Exacerbated by bush growth, the walls are failing on both south corners and in central locations on the east and west walls, allowing dirt, rocks, and a very large boulder to partially fill the once-level floor. The east wing wall is failing, with much gravel deposit having passed through the gap. There are dozens of old cans scattered out the front of the building.

24 Wall (Contributing Structure)

This linear limestone wall feature may have been constructed to deflect water flows away from roads and other buildings. It is located in the southern section of Providence, at the east end of a row of three habitations. It is unclear whether the wall was originally constructed with two vertical faces or, as it stands now, one vertical face with a sloping rubble/tumble back. If the former, the wall would have been about four feet thick, which would imply an intentionally heavy deflective wall structure. A 4x4 wood post, apparently burnt off, is imbedded in the east end. No other such posts were located. The wall is approximately 45 feet long, four feet wide, and from 1.6 to 3.6 feet high. There is a break near the west end, and a concentration of charcoal near the east end.

25 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, in a row between Features 24 and 29. This small limestone and rhyolite building was constructed with moderate masonry skill, including good cornerstones on the NW and NE corners. The east and south interior walls show even facing; the north and west walls have tumbled. The approximate interior dimensions are eight by seven feet, with walls 20-22 inches thick and 1.5 to 3 feet high.

26 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, set apart from its neighbors. Although initially appearing to be a two-room cabin, this building is actually two side-by-side rooms with about two feet of space between them, partially filled with rubble. A fair level of craftsmanship was used, and the builder employed small cobbles in the wall construction more than typically seen in surrounding buildings. The two rooms are offset by about 16 inches. The east room measures about 9 by 14 feet, with 20-inch-thick limestone walls ranging from 1.2 to 3.2 feet high. An entryway is evident facing south, with a possible alternate entryway on the north wall. The west room

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

measures 12 by 14.5 feet, with limestone walls 20 inches thick and ranging from 1.5 to almost three feet high. A 24-inch-wide entryway at the eastern side of the south wall faces south. The walls of both buildings are tumbled both inward and outward. Rubble partially fills the gap between the two buildings.

Across a minor drainage is a probable privy hole, comprised of a rock-lined hole, with extensive outward tumble or intentional rubble, about 45 inches square and three feet deep. The drainage passes within five feet of the cabin ruin.

28 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, set off from Features 24, 25, and 29. The well-constructed small habitation shows evidence of skilled masonry. It is a partial dugout with an entry facing east. The interior measures 11 feet square, with limestone walls 20-22 inches thick and averaging two to three feet high. The walls have mostly tumbled outward. A possible privy site is found in close proximity across a small drainage to the south.

29 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, in a row between 25 and 31. The limestone walls of this square stone building have largely tumbled, which does not allow an accurate measurement of its interior dimensions. It would appear that the interior was not much larger than six feet square. The wall rubble ranges from less than a foot to two feet high.

31 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near the main road and cookhouse. Dug into the ground, the limestone walls of this small building are almost entirely tumbled outward, leaving the impression of a circle; only the north wall shows a true or possibly straight line. The floor space is filled with dirt and rocks. The pile of rubble is 15-18 feet in diameter and from 1.4 to 2.4 feet high.

33 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near features 28 and 35. The long, rectangular room measures 12 by 18 feet, with limestone walls 24 inches thick and one to two feet high. The walls are mostly tumbled, both inward and outward. Small sage bushes grow in the interior and pose no structural threat.

35 Habitation or Commercial Building (Contributing Building)

This small building is located in the southern section of Providence, between Features 33 and 37. This small building is well constructed to the extent that it has been thought to possibly be a company building, and is almost identical to its neighbor to the west, Feature 37. It can be seen in three photographs, dated 1940 (**Figure 3**), 1947, and 1960, showing a low gable roof and a lone door opening with a heavy timber lintel, facing north, and a window facing east. The roof

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

rafters appear to be logs or poles, but the roofing material cannot be identified. The rear of the building appears to have been collapsing in the 1947 photo. The building remained standing until 1960, after which it was mostly destroyed.

The skillful craftsmanship shows in the plumb limestone walls utilizing thoughtfully chosen stones to produce even wall faces. The building had been whitewashed on the exterior. The room measures 10 by 13 feet on the interior, with walls 20 inches thick and up to 3.4 feet high. No entryway is obvious, although a low spot near the southwest corner may indicate one; this is the area of most wall failure, in addition to the north wall. A large pit located about ten feet off the southwest corner of the building is about five feet deep and ten feet round. Another, smaller rock-lined pit to the west may mark the site of a privy.

37 Commercial building (Contributing Building)

This small building stands out for its fine craftsmanship, whitewash finish, and concrete floor. It has been suggested to have been the Providence post office (1882-1892) but no evidence has been found of its specific use. This building is clearly seen in two photographs taken in 1940 and 1947. They show a low gable roof, white exterior and single doorway facing north. The 1940 photograph (**Figure 3**), taken from a closer vantage point, shows more north façade detail (wood lintel and frame, panel door, timber under the gable) and reveals two windows facing east. The foundation masonry courses are well defined, and the roof appears to be sheathed in sheet metal. The 1947 photo shows that there were no openings on the west side. The building stood intact as late as 1947; by 1960 it was a ruin.

The stonemason laid walls plumb and smooth with well-chosen limestone blocks forming a double wall with adobe mortar and interior pebble infill. Although mostly rubble-laid, parts of the wall structure shows ashlar courses. A 32-inch-wide doorway faced north. The room has a smooth concrete floor mostly obscured by dirt and rocks. The building had been whitewashed inside and out. The interior measures 11 feet by 20 feet 4 inches. The walls are a uniform 20 inches thick and from 30 to 68 inches high above the concrete floor. Most of the east wall has tumbled both inward and outward, and much of the west wall has also. The southeast corner is entirely rubble.

39 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is the southernmost building known in Providence. Located in a relatively remote location, this rectangular limestone rock building was poorly built and since mostly collapsed. The south wall is the most intact, at 24 inches thick and up to 2.5-3 feet high. The other three walls have collapsed into rubble piles. The room measures about 20 by 24 feet on the interior. The once-level floor is filled with dirt and rock, and vegetation, including two creosote bushes and three Mojave yuccas are growing within the building.

40 Habitation or Storeroom (Contributing Building)

This is a dugout building with three sides backfilled to create what may have been a mostly buried storeroom or habitation. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near at the

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

west end of the line formed by Features 33, 35, 37, and 40. A 1947 photograph shows this building from a distance, with walls rising above the grade of the surrounding berm. The limestone walls may have been about six feet high originally. Retaining walls were laid with moderate skill, resulting in relatively flat facing. The room measures about ten feet square, with interior walls about 20 inches thick and ranging from 3.5 to 4.5 feet high. Low wing walls (8 feet length on east, 10 feet on west) face the drainage stream in front of the building. The rear (south) wall collapsed resulting in filling of interior with rubble and dirt. The front (north) wall collapsed, mostly outward. A mature creosote bush at the southeast corner may cause structural deterioration; younger creosotes are growing in the west berm. Large desert sunflower plants are growing in the interior.

41 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near the junction of the main road and south road. The partial dugout building was built with moderate skill. The north and west walls are dug out, the south partially backfilled, and the east freestanding. A 24-inch entryway is discernable on the east wall. The room measures 8 by 9 feet. The limestone walls average 18-20 inches thick and range from 25 to 50 inches high. There is a curved pile of rocks at the southeast corner that may have been part of a trail/stair structure. A group of Mojave yuccas on the west wall near the northwest corner may cause structural deterioration. The building is largely surrounded by a thicket of creosote and catclaw bushes.

42 Habitation or Saloon (Contributing Building)

It is unknown whether this building was a habitation used for sleeping or a commercial building. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near Features 41 and 43 and immediately adjacent to the south road. The larger size and the presence of an adjacent glass dump raises the possibility it was one of the saloons serving Providence. Only low wall remnants remain of the irregular rectangular room. Lack of an obvious entry may indicate the presence of a raised wood floor; possibly, the remaining structure is the rock foundation of a wood frame building. The room measures about 14-16 feet by 29 feet, with mostly tumbled thick limestone walls ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 feet in height. A bottle dump, much broken up, is located near the southeast corner of the building.

43 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the southern section of Providence, near Feature 42 and the south road. It is a partial dugout with some limestone-reinforced backfill creating a mound or berm that surrounds the room. The interior walls were laid with some skill, although failures on south and west walls have resulted in additional materials filling the room. The room measures 10 by 12 feet on the interior, while the surrounding rubble berm is four to five feet wide. The walls range from 28 to 54 inches high. There is a 24-inch-wide entryway visible. The walls are mostly tumbled. A large catclaw bush growing at the southwest corner covers part of the building and does not appear to be having a negative effect.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

44A Office/Superintendent's Building (Contributing Building)

This group of buildings (listed here as 44A, B, C and D) is the focal point for overnight visitors to Providence. It provides the only man-made shelter in the vicinity and is popular with campers. Over the years visitors have repaired the building and made alterations; they have installed a built-in table, a good wood stove, and have worked to prevent wind damage to the roof. Unknown persons also, apparently inadvertently, imported low levels of toxic materials to the site in the form of small plastic bags of mine tailings that contain chemicals and/or toxic minerals. The site has been pinpointed as a problem area and may be slated for remediation that could result in the destruction of the entire building.

The earliest historical reference to a building on this site is the 1883 mineral survey of the Bonanza King Mine, which refers to a building here as the "Company's large office." It is not known what that building was; it may have been the dugout room that remains. At an unknown date, a wood frame residence was constructed on the site. This author suggests that the wood frame house was built circa 1901-1906, a period when the Bonanza King Mine was reopened by Charles E. Ussher and much capital investment and development work was done at the mine. The amount of concrete used as a floor/foundation for the frame house (and also poured at the cookhouse [Feature 01] at Providence) leads one to believe that such heavy construction activity was focused on a modernization of the mine and office rather than original work from the early 1880s. Photographs of the house, of which at least six exist, show a style more contemporary with turn-of-the-century Los Angeles suburban architecture. It had a long gable roof with a transverse gabled wing making an L shape; the inside of the ell served as a porch. One photograph of an unidentified interior taken in 1960 is thought to be this building; it shows a fireplace and deteriorating lath and plaster walls. Local rancher Howard Blair, interviewed on October 19, 2011, recalled: "I think there was two fireplaces, if I'm not mistaken. I believe there was like a living room, and then I think there was three bedrooms for the different people that worked there. There was kind of a kitchen, but it wasn't too much of a kitchen." The frame house was apparently not physically connected with the dugout but set about six to ten feet in front. Photographs show the house deteriorating over the years; by the 1970s it was gone, with only the cement slab remaining.

While active, the Bonanza King Mine employed a series of what are variously termed superintendents, foremen, or managers. This site, with its prominent location at the top of Providence, was apparently the location of the on-site manager of the mine during the periods 1880-92, 1901-06, and possibly 1917-20 and later in the 1920s. It has been reported that a caretaker named Joe Spencer, a veteran local miner, lived here in the 1920s. Photographs indicate that by the 1940s the house had been abandoned for some years.

Located at the upper elevations of Providence in a setting that overlooks the town, mine, and valley below, the compound is comprised of four buildings and structures: a large dugout shelter; a small dugout room; a concrete slab; and what is thought to be a stone-lined privy pit. The wood frame house that once stood here was removed circa 1975.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

A 2003 survey of mining-related contamination at the Bonanza King Mine has found seven locations with toxic materials within the superintendent's compound. While the levels of toxicity are not considered a threat to occasional users, eventual removal may have an adverse impact on the buildings and structures.

The main room or former office appears to have been a substantial dugout building, possibly the "office" depicted on the 1883 map. A wood frame building may have been attached at the front, with this building a back room or storage room. The later frame building was not attached to this building.

The room is comprised of three dugout walls faced with mostly rubble limestone, with a short freestanding wall partially enclosing the wide front opening. The rear, longest wall is 22.5 feet long and on average six and a half feet high, while the west wall is 16.5 feet long and the east wall 15.5, resulting in a room roughly 22 by 16. The wall ends at the front of the room, facing northeast, feature mortared, ashlar-laid columns of tuff blocks and other materials; it is evident that repointing with cement was done later. The walls are loose at the tops and have been repaired with little skill, especially in the vicinity of the east corner where window openings have been "repaired" or created by visitors. The east wall is partly faced with sheets of rusted sheet metal held in place by two-by-four posts. Reclaimed rusty corrugated sheet metal also forms a barrier behind the wood stove in the southeast corner. The rear and west walls are intact and probably unstable. The floor is dirt.

The entire floor space is covered by a sloping sheet metal roof. The structural support for this roof is a haphazard collection of new and used lumber with improvised connections. A large 8x8" beam, evidently a remnant of the mine or original to this location, spans the tops of the two front masonry columns that frame the 15.5-foot wide northeast opening. Sometime after 1984, five short sections of two-by-four were nailed vertically to the front of this beam, reason unknown. This long beam appears to be original to the building, or added in the historic period. A second beam spans much of the center of the room; it is a 6x6 timber, supplemented with a shorter 6x6 at the center of weight bearing, all supported in the center by an 8x8 post set on a 18-inch square concrete pier, at the west end by a 6x6 post, and at the east by an 8x8 post that forms part of an improvised shelf/table structure. The posts are sistered at the connections with the beam with 2x4s and 2x6s. At the rear wall, another heavy beam rests atop the wall. A motley assortment of rafters placed on the three beams support the sheet metal roof. These are not continuous and include 2x6s, 2x8s, and other dimensions of scavenged lumber. The east side of the room features a lightly sloping shed roof with a 4x4 beam held by four 4x4 posts standing against the stone wall facing, and 2x4 rafters laid flat. The roofing material is salvaged sheet metal pieces and plywood sheets placed in a random yet largely effective manner, attached by nails to the rafters and further stabilized by gravel and rocks. There are countless holes in the sheet metal.

During the 1990s and 2000s unknown people made the room habitable to campers and hunters. The room is outfitted with a barrel wood stove with stovepipe exiting the roof in the southeastern corner, a large built-in plywood table at the center, a small plywood table in the northeastern

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

corner, and a shelf/table unit built between two support posts. Two window units have been loosely placed in openings at the northeastern corner.

Outside the building at the east support column, visitor/workers installed an outdoor fireplace with large stovepipe and have created a rock-lined trail leading up to the back of the building. Another rock-lined trail between the large room and the smokehouse leads to a similar destination.

Overall, the large room is in fair to poor condition. All of the salvaged wood posts, beams and rafters are old and deteriorated, and appear in most cases to withstand the weight of the roof. The roof requires ongoing maintenance, informal as it may be. The masonry work appears relatively stable and could fail in sections at any time.

44B Smokehouse and Wall (Contributing Building)

This small rock-and-cement-lined dugout shows signs of having been used as a smokehouse. It could also have been used as a cold storage room and a meat locker. The builders excavated a slope to form three full sides of the room, facing the excavation with limestone and rhyolite boulders and some tuff blocks and coating those with stucco. The interior measures 74 inches wide and 112 inches deep.

The west wall, which includes a small number of tuff blocks, extends northeasterly to form a long retaining wall. A portion of the north end of the west interior wall has failed, dropping ten or more stones into the room. A stone has fallen from the back wall and small animals appear to be in residence and possibly causing damage. A wood-framed square smoke hole or stove pipe outlet, now blocked with debris, is in the upper back wall next to the log beam. The east wall has a solid and wide limestone block exterior face and inside features a recessed area; this portion is failing at the top, allowing dirt debris into the room. Some adobe mortar shows in the room although much has eroded. The room was once plastered with sand-cement and much of that material has detached from the stone walls. Graffiti has been scratched into the southwest corner, where dark soot provides evidence of use as a smokehouse. The floor is dirt.

The room has a low gable roof comprised of a hand-hewn log beam 13 inches in diameter imbedded in the back wall and supported at the front by a 7x7" hand-hewn timber (about six feet long) placed on the opposing rock walls. Remnant widow screen shows that the open gable end had been screened for ventilation. An old broken two-by-four acts as a supplementary beam on the east side of the ceiling, and another rests in the west wall providing support for the sheet metal. The roof is made of scrap sheet metal held in place by rocks, gravel, and contaminated mine tailings in deteriorating sample bags. The sheet metal ceiling is blacked with soot and perhaps other materials.

The redwood door frame remains, showing an uneven 45- to 47-inch doorway opening; the door is missing. A bench has been placed inside the room on a pile of rocks, and an improvised lower bench of three boards has been placed on the west wall.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The offset, rising west retaining wall extension may have been constructed later than the smokehouse. It is 64 inches high at the smokehouse and 89 inches high at its north end, and extends nine feet four inches. It is slightly battered, measuring 28 inches thick at the base and 21 inches at the top. The heavy wall was laid in irregular course with mostly limestone blocks and adobe mortar. The upper courses have possibly been rebuilt or added later, evidenced by over-applied cement mortar and poor construction. The top of the wall is ragged. The north end of the wall also shows sloppy repointing. An 8x8 timber is imbedded vertically in the north end of the wall. The exposed part of the outer (west) side of the wall shows some mortar pointing. A low retaining wall extends westerly from the wall end as a retaining wall for the slope behind.

The smokehouse is in fair condition and is without a doubt the most intact historic building remaining at Providence. The presence of contaminated materials is a major concern related to the survival of this important building, and no preservation work can be done until the contamination issue is settled.

44C Concrete Slab (Contributing Structure)

This large concrete slab was evidently the floor and foundation of the superintendent's residence, as seen in older photos. It is largely hidden by dirt and other materials so an accurate measurement is not possible. About 45 feet of the northeast edge is visible. The slab probably spanned about 60 feet in width; with only the front (northeast) edge visible it can only be guessed that the slab is about 30 to 40 feet front to back. The slab was poured onto a rubble base and then surfaced with about an inch of cement. The visible edge of the slab shows mortared stone retaining walls ranging from less than a foot to three feet high. A set of two concrete stairs near the northern end of the front span steps down to what may have been a driveway.

The slab has been used in past years as a gathering place and camp site and is largely covered in dirt, gravel and rocks, with fire pits, scrap sheet metal and other debris, a barrel, and a large number of deteriorating plastic sample bags of mine tailings that are known to be contaminated. Numerous creosote bushes grow in the soil deposits on the slab. Erosion is undercutting the slab across much of the northeastern edge, and breakage is evident all along the exposed edge. The slab is in poor condition.

44D Privy Pit (Contributing Structure)

Behind the large dugout to the southwest is a hand-dug hole lined with limestone boulders. While giving the appearance of a rock-lined well, it is probably a privy pit. Well-constructed of dry-laid limestone, with a small number of rhyolite boulders, the pit is about five feet square and six feet deep. Some of the upper courses (northeast and southwest) have failed, spilling dirt and rocks into the pit. Contaminated material has been located at the pit, and so any preservation actions should be put on hold until that issue has been resolved. The pit is in poor condition, given the contamination problem.

45 Habitation or Commercial Building (Contributing Building)

This building, the highest and farthest west of the "downtown" row of possibly commercial buildings, is seen in a 1947 photograph of Providence taken from the mine site. The photographs

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

shows an abandoned square building with a collapsing flat or shed roof held in place by boulders, with approximately six-foot-tall walls and a narrow doorway facing north. A circle of stones is visible at the northeast corner of the building. A distinct trail to the mine is also visible.

It is a partial dugout building with mortared mixed-rock walls. The building faces a leveled area that is scattered with broken glass, possibly an indication this was a saloon. The 12 to 20-inch-thick walls were laid with skill with flat faces using an attractive mix of local stone, including uncut tuff; in some areas the mortar was laid on thick. The room measures 15 feet square on the interior, with a doorway approximately four feet wide visible in the east wall. The remaining walls range from one to four feet high. The front (east) wall has entirely tumbled outward and the south wall is almost entirely tumbled. The west and north walls, although broken down in height, contain full lengths of intact wall, showing the construction and mortar well. A catclaw bush is growing in the east wall, north end. The floor is obscured by dirt and rocks; a remnant of flat concrete is found downslope from the building. At the northeast corner of the building is the near-round "donut" pile of rocks, visible in the 1947 photograph, too close to be an outhouse. Its use or original configuration is unknown.

46 Habitation or Commercial Building (Contributing Building)

The original nature of this dugout building is not known. Photographs taken in 1947 and 1960 show a small wood frame board-and-batten building with lean-to on the rear placed within the confines of the dugout. It does not appear that the dugout building was part of a large building but rather a retaining wall for a large leveled area used for commercial purposes, or a cellar backing a building. For instance, this could have been the site of the store. Immediately to the south, on the same leveled area, is another, smaller dugout that may have been a related residence site; a 1960 photograph shows a collapsed wood frame building there.

The three-sided sloping dugout is comprised of heavily constructed retaining walls, the south and west built of tuff blocks and the north, limestone. The tuff walls are ashlar-laid while the north wall is rubble-built and appears to also act as a retaining wall for the adjacent former main road. The room is about 32 feet wide and 18 feet deep. The walls may have been six feet high; at the time of nomination their height ranges from one to four feet. At the center of the rear (west) wall is a failure resulting in a slide into the room. The tuff blocks are eroding badly. A riveted 16-inch chimney pipe, almost six feet tall and seen in a 1960 photograph as part of the building, lays in the southwest corner of the room. The building faces a large leveled area, approximately 80 by 40 feet, that stretched between the two main roads and was possibly a drive-through. The 1960 photograph reveals that two to three courses of the visible section of the rear tuff wall have disappeared.

47 Habitation or Commercial Site (Contributing Site)

This site is located in the central section of Providence, immediately south of Feature 46. The original nature of this dugout feature is not known. It is likely the remains of an excavation for a large leveled area used for commercial or operational purposes. It may have been a residence site related to the adjacent commercial (or operational) building. Immediately to the north, on the same leveled area, is a larger dugout that enclosed another wood frame building. A photograph

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

taken in 1947 shows a small wood frame building adjacent to this dugout, and a 1960 photograph shows a collapsed wood frame building with corrugated metal roof here.

The three-sided sloping cut has no discernable remains of a building. The cut faces a large leveled area, approximately 80 by 40 feet, that stretched between the two main roads and was possibly a drive-through.

48 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the central section of Providence, immediately north of Feature 45. This is a remnant of a dugout habitation, with limestone walls tumbled to the extent that it is difficult to discern the exact size or shape. The room was roughly seven feet round or square.

48B Leveled Area (Contributing Site)

Directly north of Feature 48 is an unreinforced dugout area, probably a leveled floor. It is unknown if a building had once been located here. The level area measures about 15 by 20 feet. A large creosote bush grows in the south wall, causing failure.

51 Horse Corral (Contributing Structure)

Horses were used at the Bonanza King Mine and Providence for travel, labor, and hauling. Local resident John Domingo kept horses here and at his ranch two miles away. This may have been Domingo's corral, for at least part of its time of use. The corral is depicted on the 1883 mineral survey map, and is shown in a photo taken circa 1930, after abandonment. A portion of the corral also appears in a 1947 photograph of Providence. It is not known how high the walls were or whether a wood fence structure was in place during the active period.

The corral is comprised of a substantial limestone rock wall enclosure that spans an active drainage wash. It was probably placed here to exploit the physical characteristics of the site, including the drainage depression and a north bank that provided the height of a natural barrier. Roughly circular in shape, the moderately well laid enclosure measures approximately 55 feet at its widest and 35 feet at its narrowest. The remaining walls are one to three feet thick and from one to 3.5 feet high. There are no identifiable entry points or wood remains. The northeastern part of the corral has mostly tumbled, while most of the remaining wall is intact and obviously lower in height, with various degrees of failure. The west side of the corral, where the wash enters, was constructed in a tangent, as if to form a barrier or dam, and the adjacent north side is backfilled whether by design or from storm-related gravel deposits. More than three feet of gravel has built up in the south/southeast interior of the enclosure. Numerous creosote and catclaw bushes are impacting the structure of the wall and growing within the enclosure, additionally with barrel cactus, cholla, desert sunflower, and sage.

56 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This remarkably intact cabin is located about .65 miles up Bonanza King Canyon from Providence, within designated federal wilderness, at an altitude of about 4,600 feet. Its preservation is likely due to its isolation, and despite the fact that it is located in the direct path of

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

a wash. The cabin's use and reason for such distance from the town is unknown. This location would have been ideal for a woodchopper, with its proximity to the only timber within miles of Providence.

The odd-shaped building is constructed from limestone found in the wash and dug into a rubble slope, also utilizing a large boulder as part of its wall. All of the sturdily constructed walls are intact up to 50 inches high and 18 to 20 inches thick. There is a small fireplace with flat stone lintel. The room measures roughly 7-8 feet wide and 10 feet deep. A distinct doorway opening is found on the south side.

57 Rock Graffiti (Contributing Site)

Located up the canyon from Providence and not a structural feature for evaluation in this document, this location is of interest to anthropologists. It features historic graffiti and prehistoric rock art. The historic section includes three sets of figures chipped into the limestone wall: J. FOLGER / 1885 / SEP. 2., and in a nearby location, H. OD. A resident in 1884 was named Peter Olger, so might the inscription possibly be J. P. Olger? Other historic inscriptions might be found with further investigation.

58 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping and general living. It is located in the far western section of Providence, not close to any other building. The small two-room building stands out for its remote and private location and better-than-average craftsmanship. The setting and style leads a visitor to speculate that this may have been a home to a married couple, or at least it was built with architectural aesthetics in mind. It is the only habitation located that has intact window openings. A foot trail that leads to the cabin from the canyon road remains viable, and the prominent entrance pathway, created by removing rocks from a natural deposit, is notable. While many of the walls have tumbled, the isolation of this building no doubt added to its protection.

The building is comprised of two rooms. The east room, measuring about 6 by 8 feet on the interior, is largely tumbled with little evidence of craftsmanship; it may have been added later. The west room shows fine craftsmanship. The stonemason constructed dry-laid walls plumb and smooth with well-chosen limestone blocks. Although mostly rubble-laid, parts of the walls' structure shows ashlar courses, and in places the surface is chinked with small rocks and shards. A twisted wire, purpose unknown, spans the south wall having been built into the masonry: did it hold up curtains? A small fireplace was built into the west wall utilizing a flat stone as lintel; its opening is 12 inches wide and 20 inches high, and about 12 inches deep. The northeast wall is mostly tumbled.

The most striking feature is the pair of two small windows on the mostly intact southeast wall. The matching, side-by-side window openings offer a view into the Fenner Valley. The openings measure 12 inches wide and 18 inches high and are located 24 inches from the partially filled floor. Large stone lintels remain in place.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The interior of the main room measures 7 feet by 12 feet. The walls are a uniform 24 inches thick, except for the southeast wall that is 20 inches thick and from 30 to 60 inches high above the floor.

Dense vegetation has encroached on the building and does not appear to pose a threat. A large creosote bush is growing at the west end of the main room, and a large catclaw and some Mojave yuccas are found in the east end of the north room. Desert sunflower and other plants choke the entry pathway.

59 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This feature is located in the cliffs on the western edge of Providence, one of the grouping of 59, 60, and 61. It appears that a miner made use of a test adit for a home, by adding rock walls to extend a room out onto the rubble pile. The construction is relatively poor. The building consists of an excavation into a steep hillside about 24 feet in length, of which about eight feet is underground. The builder extended the probable roof line with two parallel rows of rhyolite rocks, poorly laid and without mortar. The resulting narrow room ranges from six to eight feet wide. The sloping floor could be a result of erosion from the hillside above. The entrance to the building is on a leveled rubble pile. Both side walls incorporate natural outcrops. The north wall is more substantial, measuring about 80 inches long and three feet high, averaging 28 inches thick. The south wall is loosely laid on top of a natural rock outcrop, and is failing.

60 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This feature is located in the cliffs on the western edge of Providence, one of the grouping of 59, 60, and 61. This feature was renumbered as 60 to eliminate a duplicate 59 from the 2005 survey. The small room was constructed against a curving sheer wall of limestone and is comprised of two rhyolite and limestone walls in an L shape with a 30-inch entry opening facing southeast. The building is of fair craftsmanship utilizing dirt for mortar. The north wall is high and intact, about 11 feet long, 5-6 feet high and 24 inches thick; the east wall is about 8 feet long, 20 inches thick. There is a bulge at the wall corner where it sits on a natural rock outcrop. The walls and cliff form a room about 7 feet by 7-8 feet.

61 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This feature is located in the cliffs on the western edge of Providence, one of the grouping of 59, 60, and 61. A "Cabin" in this location was identified in the 1883 mineral survey map of the Bonanza King Mine; on that map the cabin was located on the boundary line of the claim. The small room was constructed against a curving outcrop of limestone and is comprised of two rhyolite and limestone walls in an ell, forming a pie shape, with a 24-inch entry opening facing southeast. The building is of fair craftsmanship utilizing dirt for mortar. The north wall is high and intact, about 13 feet long, 3-4 feet high and 20 inches thick; the west wall is less than 8 feet long, from 18 to 40 inches high and 24 inches thick. The walls and cliff form a room about 11 feet long by 6 to 5 feet wide. There is a wall failure on the interior of the north wall.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

65 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located at the entry to the canyon on the western edge of Providence, overlooking the wash, and being the easternmost of the pair 65 and 66. The small room was constructed as a half-dugout on a moderate slope, with loosely laid limestone rocks forming three walls. The room measures 7 feet wide by 10 feet deep, with 20-24 inch thick walls ranging from two to almost three feet high. The rear (north) wall has failed, allowing debris to enter the room.

66 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This feature is located at the entry to the canyon on the western edge of Providence, overlooking the wash. It is the westernmost of the pair 65 and 66, and excepting the newly recorded "woodchopper's cabin" deep within the canyon, the westernmost building in Providence. The small dugout area on a slope shows no sign of structural remnant. The excavation is about six feet wide and eight to ten feet deep, with sides ranging from three to six feet high. Creosote bushes are growing in the west bank of the excavation.

67 Habitation [private property] (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the western section of Providence, near Feature 68 and the west road to the mine shaft. It is located at the edge of a wash under the cliffs, north of the grouping of 59, 60, and 61. It is not on Mojave National Preserve property. The small room was constructed against a high outcrop of limestone and is comprised of three well laid limestone walls set against the sheer cliff face; a front wall has collapsed and the tops of the remaining walls have tumbled. The room is an irregular rectangle measuring approximately 10 feet deep by 5.5 to 8 feet wide. The singular west wall has a vertical face inside and a battered wall on the exterior, and includes some very large boulders at its anchor end. It is partly collapsed at the point it meets the outcrop, leading to some infusion of rocks and gravel. The north and east walls form an ell and are solidly constructed. The east wall makes a slight curve inward, resulting in an imperfect rectangle; it is narrower than the others and partially backfilled.

68 Habitation [private property] (Contributing Building)

This small building was most likely a habitation used for sleeping. It is located in the western section of Providence, near Feature 67 and the west road to the mine shaft. It is located adjacent to a prospect excavation about six feet in elevation above a wash on the western edge of Providence, east of the grouping of 59, 60, and 61. It is not on Mojave National Preserve property. The very small shelter, suitable for only one sleeping man, was excavated into an outcrop of limestone and also constructed of rhyolite. The room is comprised of a backfilled stone wall with a dogleg at the front, and excavated rock outcrop forming the rear and west sides. The front wall is comprised of roughly piled large rocks and an entrance gap.

67 Habitation or Commercial Building (Contributing Building)

This is actually the ruin of two, side-by-side buildings, one of a row of four or five in this location adjacent to the mine workings. These buildings were next to a boarding house, located immediately to the northwest and documented in the 1883 mineral survey map, and may have

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

had a similar use, or possibly as housing for more important employees, or could have been a commercial buildings such as a store. The mortared masonry buildings were more substantial than the typical miners' dwellings found around Providence.

They were prominent and much-photographed buildings during the ghost town days of the 1940s through 1970s. Desert naturalist Mary Beal took a clear photograph in early May 1937 (**Figure 4**), showing the two buildings side by side in fair condition. Two photographs taken in 1947 shows intact stone walls with much-deteriorated roof structures; by 1960, the entire roof of the west building was gone and only framing remained of the east. A photo taken in 1972 shows all the buildings in the row mostly demolished. It appears that the demolition was intentional rather than an unassisted collapse. The condition of the west ruin and s pile of debris pushed against the southeast corner of the east building implies earth moving by heavy equipment in the area.

Old photos show two stone-walled buildings with gable shake roofs and wood walls filling the gable end. Judging by the door height in the east building, the walls were probably no higher than six feet tall. The buildings appear to have been mirror-image in design with a door and a window facing the street, and were offset against the roadway.

The buildings were relatively well constructed using rhyolite and adobe mortar; whitewash is evident on the interior walls. All walls are failed, and the front wall is entirely gone. The most intact remaining wall is the east wall, and it is being pushed over by a massive, tree-sized catclaw bush. The east building appears to have been 12 feet wide by 16 feet deep, and was partially dug out into the hillside. The remaining walls are from 2.5 to five feet tall, and 24 inches thick. The rear wall is tumbled and west wall is collapsed into a pile of rocks. A dugout area in the back measures about 10 by 12 feet, and is being filled by erosion from the soft hillside. Very little remains of the west building, mostly piles of stone with a rear wall remnant measuring five feet high and 24 inches thick. A large portion of concrete slab opens the possibility of a concrete floor.

70 Habitation or Commercial Building (Contributing Building)

This building is located in the northern section of Providence, near the chemical pile, Feature 75. It was one of a row of four or five features in this key location adjacent to the mine workings. These buildings were next to a boarding house, located immediately to the northwest and documented in the 1883 mineral survey map, and may have had a similar use, or possibly as housing for more important employees, or could have been a commercial buildings such as a store. The mortared masonry buildings in the row were more substantial than the typical miners' dwellings found around Providence, and this shows the largest floor area of the remaining ruins in the row.

These were prominent and much-photographed buildings during the ghost town days of the 1940s through 1970s. A photograph taken in 1947 shows intact stone walls and a complete roof structure; by 1960, the entire roof and much of the walls had collapsed. A photo taken in 1972 shows all the buildings in the row mostly demolished.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The old photos showed a stone walled building with gable shake roof and wood walls filling the gable end; it was close to twice as long, deep into the hillside, than its neighbors. Judging by the door height the walls were probably no higher than six feet tall. The building had a door and a window facing the street, and a window is visible as of 1947 on the northeast wall.

The building was a relatively well-constructed partial dugout using rhyolite with adobe and/or sand/cement mortar; whitewash is evident on the interior and exterior walls. All walls have tumbled, and the rear wall and much of the east wall are entirely gone. Sections of the west wall remain, showing the aforementioned window. The most intact remaining wall is the east part of the front (southwest) wall, standing almost six feet tall and clearly showing a 36-inch doorway. The room measured 14 feet wide by about 20 deep, with walls 24 inches thick and from 1.5 to six feet tall. The excavation at the rear is eroding and depositing material into the former building. Part of the west wall was constructed against a cut bank of rhyolite stone and is failing with a slide. In places, cement mortar has been pointed over previously whitewashed stones, circumstances not known. There is a formerly leveled area immediately east of the building.

72 Habitation (Contributing Building)

This building was the easternmost in a row of five buildings close to the Bonanza King Mine; it was separated from the others by a pile of chemicals that originally had a wood frame building in front of it. A photograph taken in 1947 shows nothing remaining. The site was dug out from a steep hillside and the building was probably about nine feet wide and up to 14 feet deep into the hillside. Only three remnants of the rhyolite walls remain. The most substantial (west) wall shows two remaining sections, the largest about five feet long and 2.5 feet high and the other just over one foot high. A small amount of rubble marks the east wall, with no remains of the front or rear walls.

73 Post and Cable (Contributing Structure)

Located near the mine property at the corner of the mine road between Providence and the lower mine workings, the tall sturdy post with heavy cable attached may have been the termination of a cable tram system that hauled rock to the dump pile. It shows in older photos, and no account of its use has been found. The post is a 12x12 redwood timber eleven feet high, appears to have had a previous use, and is leaning precipitously. A 3/4-inch cable is attached near the top with a large eyebolt. One end is frayed and the other disappears into the ground, no doubt with some form of buried deadhead; about twelve feet of the cable remain. The old post is mostly sound and shows rot at soil contact.

75 Chemical Pile (Contributing Site)

The white pile of weathered powder is not a building or structure, however it has been in existence since prior to 1937 and should be discussed. Photographs taken in 1937 and 1940 show the pile in place, with a wood frame building directly in front of it (to the southwest). The building, seen most clearly in 1940 photographs, is set on a slope and has a gable roof, front porch, three doorways, and three window openings. It would appear to be a bunkhouse with three small rooms. It is so close to the chemical pile that it throws a shadow across the pile in mid-afternoon light. By 1947 the building was a ruin; nothing remains.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The contents of the chemical pile are largely harmless calcium carbonate, although an earlier sample taken and analyzed contained slightly elevated levels of cadmium, antimony, and zinc.² Sampling in the vicinity showed low levels of contaminants directly below the pile, and higher levels at a location down the road and closer to Feature 1. The pile may have to eventually be removed, an action that will require the excavation and removal of much soil in the vicinity, especially in the areas below the pile where chemicals have drained and collected.

76 Chimney Pipe (Contributing Structure)

A trail from the corner of the mine road between Providence and the lower mine workings leads to this curious feature. It is a tall steel pipe standing erect, partly buried in a sloping cut in the steep hillside, facing the mine workings. It could be the remains of a boiler, a vent, or a chimney; its use is unknown at this time. The pipe is set in concrete. It is about 10 feet four inches tall and 16 inches in diameter, and leans slightly to the southwest. The pipe is comprised of two sections, the shorter bottom section of riveted pipe and the upper possibly iron. It has been shot full of holes. Erosion reveals an empty space below.

77 Buried Ties (Noncontributing Structure)

Located on one of the old Providence town roads, this is a small excavation showing two parallel railroad ties mostly buried. Its use and origin is unknown.

Roads and Trails

Providence's interior circulation routes from the 1880s and 1900s appear to remain intact or at least visible. The road system at Providence consists of unmaintained dirt roads averaging eight feet wide. One serves as the only entrance directly to Providence from the east, while another enters from the north after passing through the mill site below the mines. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are required for a trip into Providence and the mine. The road system developed after silver had been discovered in 1880. The primary access in the 1880s was similar to the southern road in use today, although some variations are visible, probably made due to washouts. The north road through the mill area extends downhill past Bonanza King Well to the 7IL Ranch, former site of the mill 1883-1885, and also branches south to meet the main road to Providence.

For the purpose of this study, the roads have been given labels (**Site Map 2**) that are not authoritative.

Main Road (Contributing Structure)

From the east, this graveled road leads directly into Providence and veers left below the cookhouse to parallel the former main road. It terminates at the superintendent's compound. This road is in fair condition, with encroaching vegetation and some rough portions.

² *Draft Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, Bonanza King, Copper Glint, and Death Valley Mines and Mills, San Bernardino County, California.* Rancho Cordova: Tetra Tech EM, October 2011.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Mine Road (Contributing Structure)

This was the main road between the mine and the superintendent's house and office. It is still in use, and in fair condition.

Road to Mill and Ranch (Contributing Structure)

This road skirts the mine area and descends northeastward to the mill, Bonanza King Well, and back to the Providence entry road in the valley below. It is in poor condition.

Old Mine Road (Contributing Structure)

This was no doubt the original road to the mine from Mojave and Fenner. For nomination purposes, the road starts where the main road veers left below the cookhouse. This is the road that the cookhouse faced in its heyday. The old mine road skirts a hillside and passes the ruins of old buildings until it meets the mine road at the summit. The road is in poor condition, and remains used occasionally. It is washed out in places, with drainage problems damaging the road in flood events. Toxic materials have been identified on this road below the chemical pile and near the cookhouse.

Old Main Road (Contributing Structure)

This appears to have been the main road through town to the superintendent's house and office. It is unused, blocked by vegetation and in poor condition, especially at its lower (east) end.

Old Town Road (Contributing Structure)

This was an alternate route to the superintendent's house and office. It shows a portion of raised roadway through a wash with stone retaining walls. It is unused, blocked by vegetation and in poor condition, especially at its lower (east) end where it has entirely washed out.

Quarry Road (Contributing Structure)

Constructed to provide access to the tuff quarry, this road is blocked at its beginning by erosion and vegetation and farther up by a dirt pile. It is about 500 feet in length and up to 13 feet wide. The roadway is intact and is in poor condition.

Old Road to Fenner (Contributing Structure)

A portion of the original road has been bypassed below Providence to the east. The main road eventually regains the old track. It is unpassable and washed out in places. Farther down in the valley, the Fenner-Providence Wagon Road remains in use as a ranch road.

Old Wagon Road (Contributing Structure)

Remains of an old road can be found adjacent to the wash into Bonanza King Canyon. The first section of this road, leaving the superintendent's compound, is passable up to where it is terminated at wilderness boundary. The old road can be followed about a quarter mile up the canyon.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Road to South Mines (Noncontributing Structure)

Date of construction unknown, this road was in place in the 1950s. It apparently was constructed to access mines south of Providence.

Old Road (Noncontributing Structure)

An unidentified road track, inaccessible because of vegetation, heads southeast from below the cookhouse and ends or has been obliterated by natural forces.

Trails (Three Contributing Structures)

Trails have been identified in Providence. Most circulation routes around town have disappeared from erosion, and cow trails are hard to discern from old foot trails. Three trails have been located and marked on Site Map 2: trail to Feature 58 in west Providence (Contributing Structure); trail to the chimney pipe (Feature 76) in the north (Contributing Structure); and trail in Providence, seen in early pictures as a short cut from the mine to the commercial section (Contributing Structure). Some sections of trail are barely discernable in the vicinity of Features 31, 35, and 37.

Integrity

Providence Townsite possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The location has not changed and access is only easier because of modern vehicles. The design of the townsite is intact and evident, with practically all of the buildings and structures dating from the period of significance remaining in place and connected by the town's original road and trail system. The setting, like the location, has changed very little in the past 100 years, with some minor twentieth century improvements occasionally visible on the private land where the mine is located; the surrounding mountainous and desert landscape is virtually the same as in Providence's heyday. Original materials remain in place, despite the general state of ruin, offering adequate insight into the original forms of the buildings. These remains also indicate workmanship, levels of which varied throughout the townsite from skilled masonry construction to crude dry-laid shelters. Although the townsite consists of ruins, the site with its intact layout and location retains a feeling of isolation, activity, rugged lifestyle, and sense of community, while the association with the creation and activities at Providence in its heyday is, despite the site's long abandonment, evident as one walks its former streets with the mine and mountains looming above and the busy scattering of habitations remaining visible and accessible. Providence Townsite is an excellent and rare example of a short-lived nineteenth century mining boom town that exhibits most original resources and is entirely clear in its layout.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Providence Townsite
Name of Property _____

San Bernardino, California
County and State _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

D: ARCHAEOLOGY _____

A: COMMERCE _____

A: SETTLEMENT _____

A: TRANSPORTATION _____

C: ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1880-1892 _____

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown _____

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Providence Townsite is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Settlement, Commerce, and Transportation at the local level of significance for its association with southern California settlement and the mining industry. It is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance as an example of a distinctive building style utilizing local stone that shows varying designs and skills. It is also eligible under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology at the local level of significance for its potential to yield important information through archeological investigation and further study. It can be seen that the occupants of Providence were engaged in activities that created features or durable remains in sufficient quantity for archeological analysis, and evidence shows that archeological remains have survived. Property types and research themes applicable to Providence include commercial and domestic behavior (through building remains and potential archeology), and to a lesser extent, infrastructure development (roads) and industry (mine-related building remains, smithy sites). The period of significance is 1880 to 1892, reflecting the dates that the physical design of the town was created, built, revitalized, and then largely abandoned.³

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Overview

Providence was founded following the discovery of a rich lode of silver in 1880, to soon be developed as the Bonanza King Mine and other nearby mines. A post office and voting precinct were established, and commerce was active as Providence also acted as a supply center for mines in the region. The town boasted a population of up to 300, with hotels, saloons, blacksmiths, businessmen, and mine workers. The new town thrived until 1885, hung on until around 1893, then lay largely abandoned despite occasional optimistic reopenings of the mine and continual working of nearby claims. By the 1920s only one person lived at Providence, and soon he too was gone. The empty town remained largely intact until the 1940s when for various reasons the town's commercial buildings and stone cabins began to crumble more rapidly. The post-war boom in automobile travel, exploration of desert "ghost towns" and treasure hunting put Providence on the map again but—unlike some mining towns that were revitalized through increased visitation—this trend caused more damage to the place than decades of abandonment had.

Providence played an important role in San Bernardino County history as the home townsite hosting owners, workers, and affiliated tradesmen at one of the two highly productive silver mines of its period—the Bonanza King Mine that rivaled or even surpassed the Calico mines in output during certain years—and as one of the few substantial "boom towns" that encouraged an

³ California Department of Transportation, *A Historical Context and Archeological Research Design for Townsite Properties in California* (Sacramento: Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, 2010), 115-116.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

influx of prospectors and settlers to the Mojave Desert region. Activity in Providence influenced the establishment of Needles, in a more convenient location on the Colorado River and the new rail line. It was certainly the most important town in the Providence Mountains/Fenner Valley area during the years 1882-1892. A high percentage of features from the period of significance remain, and although virtually all are in ruin, these features collectively and individually illustrate vividly the layout and nature of the town. While Providence has been impacted by treasure hunters and vandals, not to mention the ravages of time, its material remains are significant enough to reveal much about the town and its inhabitants.

The history of Providence parallels that of many western mining boomtowns of the late nineteenth century—rapid rise, short life, gradual demise—and this small village also stands out for two reasons: the nature of its construction, and the longevity of its near-complete physical layout, the latter directly tied to the former. The builders of Providence used stone as a primary material in the erection of buildings and habitations, and while virtually all of these are in various states of ruin, the extant remains clearly show the layout of the town, the nature of the dwellings, and offer insights into the lifestyle of the residents.

Archaeological Potential at Providence Townsite

Providence Townsite has and continues to provide a snapshot treasure trove of artifacts speaking directly to Victorian ideals in the way of possessions and lifeways defined by such in a remote desert outpost. In search of the promises of riches to be attained, many of this period did their best to attend this remote location and comfort themselves with “things from home.” As well, industry of the 1800s is reflected by the organization of the townsite itself, with geographical representation of various buildings and structures defining business district, managerial housing locations, company workers, and other professions. The formal nature of construction, including technique and finish, help define rank and structure inherent in the sociopolitical hierarchy of a stratified society as Providence undoubtedly was. Concrete foundations, the application of concrete, plaster and whitewashing separate the residences and business of those in control from the less formal structures defined by dry laid stone coursing and low walls that were the residences of the mine workers. The layout of these buildings and structures is intact and artifactually can describe the settlement pattern inherent in status of various citizenry distributed throughout the townsite footprint. A small scale Marxist Archaeological study could be achieved through the examination and ranking of artifactual types, quality, abundance, and location in proximity to various structures.

Context: Mining in the East Mojave Desert⁴

A number of researchers have produced histories of mining in the Mojave Desert that provide a basis for cultural resources studies within Mojave National Preserve. In 2007 the Preserve approved a document prepared by Heidi Koenig of the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University entitled *Mining History of Mojave National Preserve*. While noting that mining history in the East Mojave Desert and San Bernardino County is much broader than the confines of the Preserve, Koenig developed a four-phase framework for mining history in

⁴ This entire section is derived from: Livingston, Dewey, *Condition Assessment and Treatment Plan, Providence Townsite* (Barstow: Mojave National Preserve, 2012).

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Mojave National Preserve: Silver Mining in Mojave National Preserve, 1863-1893; Golden Years of Mining in Mojave National Preserve, 1893-1929; Great Depression Mining in Mojave National Preserve, 1929-1941; and Mining in Mojave National Preserve during World War II and beyond, 1941-present. The history of Providence falls largely within the first historic context, and touches upon the second. After the 1920s, the town's historical context lies more closely with topics such as recreation and conservation of public lands. Documents outlining historic contexts for townsites and mining properties, produced by the California Department of Transportation, also provided background for this nomination.⁵

For most of the nineteenth century, eastern San Bernardino County and the Mojave Desert experienced only marginal growth of towns, largely because of the region's lack of a sustainable supply of water for irrigation. However, a large number of the region's towns were founded at a mining site rather than a potential farm. The Providence Mountains lay in the path of many early travelers who followed old Indian trails through Foshay Pass in the south and the Mid Hills in the north. Westward travelers passed near Providence, and did not settle for lack of water and forage. Establishment of settlements along railroad lines did not occur until the mid-1880s, and those tended to be the more permanent towns and eventual cities.

Not until the 1860s, concurrent with the great discoveries in Nevada, did prospectors find favorable signs of silver ore in the Mojave Desert, in Macedonia Canyon in the northern area of the Providence Range. The Rock Spring Mining District was formed in April of 1863 and experienced a decade's worth of activity. A camp of stone cabins and tents was established and named Providence City. Confrontations with local Indians, one of which resulted in the death of a miner, disrupted mining activities. This is not the Providence subject to this nomination, and its remains are largely gone. Meanwhile, a larger silver discovery occurred in the eastern Clark Mountains in 1869, which led to the creation of the first mining town in the East Mojave, called Ivanpah. The mines here thrived throughout the 1870s. By the end of the decade, the controlling company experienced financial problems and Ivanpah's fortunes waned.⁶

Many Ivanpah miners and prospectors wandered through the nearby mountains in search of the next bonanza, and so Ivanpah's misfortune can be directly tied to the discovery of silver in the eastern Providence Mountains in 1880. As the richest silver strike yet seen in California, the find set off a frenzy that surpassed that of Ivanpah and drained that town of its inhabitants. The Bonanza King Mine and others in the vicinity would produce record amounts of bullion over the following decade and contribute to the economies of both the county and the state.

⁵ California Department of Transportation, *A Historical Context and Archeological Research Design for Mining Properties in California* (Sacramento: Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, 2008); *Townsite Properties in California*, 2010.

⁶ Koenig, *Mining History*, 25-31; Gary L. Shumway, Larry Vredenburg, and Russell Hartill, *Desert Fever: An Overview of Mining in the California Desert Conservation Area* (Desert Planning Staff, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, February 1980), 92-93.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The Providence Mines

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported a discovery of “very rich” mines in the Providence Mountains in July 1872, and later a man named W. T. Williams claimed to have found the ledge in 1873. However, not until late 1879 or early 1880 did two Ivanpah miners named George Goreman and Patrick Dwyre locate a rich vein in a limestone cliff perched about 4,200 feet in elevation above the Fenner Valley, at that time a largely uninhabited swath of desert expanse in the eastern shadow of the Providence Mountains. The duo filed a claim and showed silver-bearing ore assaying from \$640 to \$5,000 per ton. This discovery started a rush that established an all-new Providence town and changed the face of the eastern Mojave Desert. Within a short time miners swarmed over the rugged Providence Mountains and its neighboring ranges and found not only silver, but also gold and other valuable metals.⁷

Goreman and Dwyre’s discovery started the charge to the Providence Mountains. Their find quickly attracted miners from Ivanpah and beyond. Soon a San Bernardino paper predicted “a boom for that place as soon as specimens are shown here.”⁸

The Bonanza King Mine and Providence lay in San Bernardino County, established in 1853 and the largest county in California and the country. Most mining activity occurred in the remarkably productive eastern part of the county, which produced large volumes of gold, silver, copper and iron. With the county seat in then-rural San Bernardino on the western edge of the county, the residents of the east county were isolated until the completion of a railroad in 1883 provided direct and rapid connections to cities and ports.⁹

In April 1880, the Trojan Mining District was created south of the former Rock Spring District, since divided into three districts. While many mines were opened in the new district, it was the Bonanza King Mine that yielded the richest and largest amounts of ore and led to the establishment of Providence. A newspaper reported in July that ore would be shipped to Ivanpah for processing. Two other Ivanpah men, Andrew (Andy) McFarlane and Charles (Charley) A. Hassan, also became involved in the mine. McFarlane (circa 1830-May 23, 1905) was part of a prominent Mojave Desert mining family, while little is known of Hassan (also spelled Hassen and Hasson). McFarlane apparently went elsewhere, although he remained prominent in desert mining ventures, and Hassan did not have the financial resources to develop the mine. In the spring of 1881, he entered a partnership with local capitalists J. D. Boyer and H. L. Drew, and soon Jonas B. Osborne bought into the mine.¹⁰

Jonas B. Osborne was long involved with the silver-bearing Gunsight Mine and others in Resting Spring District at Tecopa, near Death Valley. Osborne had been a mine superintendent in Eureka, Nevada, and came to Resting Spring in 1875, where he co-founded the Los Angeles

⁷ *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 3, 1872; *Desert Fever*, 93; *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 1886.

⁸ *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 7, 1880; *San Bernardino Daily Times*, May 8 and 12, 1880.

⁹ *Desert Fever*, 76. The mine’s name is not unique, which can cause confusion during research: other Bonanza King Mines were located in Calico, Carrville (Trinity County) and Allegheny, California; Pershing Co. Nevada; Carson, Colorado; and Bossburg, Washington.

¹⁰ *Desert Fever*, 93-94.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Mining and Smelting Company. Noted by historian Richard Lingenfelter as “an inept superintendent” who might “fill his own pockets at the expense of those less wise,” Osborne is nonetheless credited with later successful ventures and the establishment of the town of Tecopa in 1879 that featured “a large stone hotel, several adobe stores and saloons and... a commodious new house for Superintendent Osborne and his wife.” When silver was discovered at Providence, Osborne turned his attention to the Bonanza King Mine that he bought into, and according to Lingenfelter, “where he became quite an operator, working some sharp deals with a number of mines during the latter years of the nineteenth century.” Osborne eventually returned to Tecopa where his mine became the largest metal mine in the Death Valley area. Late in life he co-founded the Death Valley Salt Company.¹¹

Harvey Linford (H. L.) Drew was active at Providence before moving to San Bernardino, where he was considered “one of the most prominent, wealthy and substantial men” in that city. Besides his interest in the Bonanza King Mine, he operated a general merchandise store and acted as the postmaster for 14 months in 1882-1883. Just before his death in 1906, Drew partnered with old friend Osborne in the Tecopa Consolidated Mining Company, which made Osborne rich and added to the already-sizeable Drew estate. Nothing is known about the fourth owner, Boyer, other than that he was a New York-based capitalist and a San Bernardino businessman.¹²

Drew and Osborne have been credited with opening the mine and proving its potential, although scant information has been uncovered about the period between May 1880 and early 1882. There is no doubt that during this period the town of Providence was founded, and it also coincides with the discoveries and development at the more heavily acclaimed Calico, near Barstow. However, much was going on at the Bonanza King Mine: in June of 1881 Drew traveled to San Francisco to purchase machinery for the mill.¹³ In September of 1881 the *Los Angeles Herald* noted that the Providence Mountains were “attracting a great deal of attention not only from the citizens of these two counties, but from mining men and operators elsewhere....”¹⁴

Daniel B. Gillette, a mining engineer who at some point made an agreement to operate the mine for the partners, would figure prominently in Providence and the mining operations there. The owners reportedly considered selling the mines, perhaps to Gillette, but their fortunes changed in the form of new discoveries and talk of a sale ceased. A major new strike at that time, or in early 1882, brought new attention to the Providence Mountains and Bonanza King Mine when a six-foot vein was struck that assayed from \$100 to \$1,200 per ton. Expanded development was hindered by lack of capital, but not for long. The Bonanza King Mine would have new owners

¹¹ Lingenfelter, Richard E., *Death Valley & The Amargosa: A Land of Illusion* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986), 135, 137-142, 398.

¹² San Bernardino *Daily Times-Index*, June 11, 1901; Frickstad, Walter N., *A Century of California Post Offices, 1848 to 1954* (Oakland: A Philatelic Research Society Publication, 1955), 144; Lingenfelter, *Death Valley*, 355-356, *Desert Fever*, 94.

¹³ *San Bernardino Valley Index*, June 17, 1881.

¹⁴ *Los Angeles Herald*, September 22, 1881, reprinted in *Mining and Scientific Press*, October 22, 1881.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

who would develop it into the richest silver mine in the state and then, in a puzzling turn, walk away from it.¹⁵

Creation of the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company

It appears that the four partners in the Bonanza King Mine and others in the vicinity were unable to get much work done, probably due to lack of adequate capital, and less than three months after their discovery of an additional rich silver vein, they relented and sold the property. On March 13, 1882, Osborne, Hassan, Drew and Boyer sold the Bonanza King Mine and other mines and water assets to Thomas Ewing of San Francisco, for \$425,002. San Bernardino and Los Angeles newspapers labeled the transaction “An Important Mining Sale.”¹⁶

Thomas Ewing, the new owner of record of the mines at Providence, would lead the operation into a historic level of success and then eventual ruin, and even after that would resurface mysteriously and then disappear altogether. He was born in Ohio in 1837 and came to California at the age of 20 to start a mercantile in the Sacramento Valley supply center of Marysville. In the subsequent decade he operated stores in Nevada and Oregon, and along the way took an interest in mining. Beginning in the late 1860s he traveled the west to study mining opportunities. Ewing must have made money during this time, because by 1877 he was a major stockholder as well as superintendent and general manager of the Murchie Gold and Silver Mining Company in Nevada City. After two years there he moved on to Colorado where, in 1880 he and Wilson W. Waddingham, noted as “a wealthy capitalist of New York,” purchased a controlling interest in a profitable mine. He and Waddingham have been portrayed as “hard-driving but unscrupulous promoters” who swindled the mine owners in Colorado.¹⁷

It appears that Ewing was an agent for other parties, including his Colorado partner Waddingham, for on April 27, 1882, a Certificate of Incorporation for the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company was applied for in New York by Wilson Waddingham, Raymond Jenkins and Clarence R. West of New York (it was not filed in San Bernardino County until August 22). “The objects for which the said company is to be formed,” states the certificate, “are the purchase of mines and the working of the same in the extraction of the gold and silver and other metals therein contained, and the reduction and refining of the same.” The trustees designated a capital stock of two million dollars, offering 200,000 shares at \$10 each. The term of the existence of the company was to be fifty years. Waddingham, Jenkins, West, and J. D. Boyer, all of New York, served as trustees, as did J. B. Osborne of California, one of the former owners of the mine. The certificate stated that the principal part of the business was located in New York, with “some part” in San Bernardino. As can be seen, Osborne and Boyer continued to have an interest in the mines.¹⁸

¹⁵ *San Bernardino Valley Index*, copied in the *Los Angeles Herald*, January 17, 1882.

¹⁶ *Deeds*, Book 29, 79-88, SBCA. One later account set the cost of the Bonanza King Mine at \$200,000: Crossman, James H., “San Bernardino County, Its Mineral and Other Resources, Number XXIV,” *Mining and Scientific Press*, January 3, 1891, 2; *Los Angeles Herald*, March 16, 1882, picked up from the *San Bernardino Times*.

¹⁷ *History of Arkansas Valley, Colorado* (1881), 400-403; *Calico Print*, May 24, 1885; Hensher, Alan, “Providence” in *Guide to the East Mojave Heritage Trail, Rocky Ridge to Fenner*. Tales of the Mojave Road Number 15 (Norco, CA: Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, 1989), 276.

¹⁸ Articles of Incorporation, SBCA [#13732 at CSA], File: 64 Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Co. 1994-205/64.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The infusion of cash by New York investors created a new scene at the Bonanza King. Development started in earnest with no expense spared. Newspapers noted “a genuine ‘mining boom’ is setting in towards the Providence mines.” The owners shipped hoisting works of 1,000 feet sinking capacity and contracted Prescott & Co. to build a 15 stamp mill. The mine had reportedly yielded over \$50,000 net proceeds in ore shipments to San Francisco.

The Bonanza King was not the only busy mine in the Providence area. Other claims in the district were being worked with optimistic fervor by their owners, including Richard Gorman and Patrick Dwyre (Belle McGilroy mine), Barrett & Terris, Ransom “Percy” Kerr, W. A. Thompson, J. B. Cook, John Reid, and others.¹⁹ Such activity required workers, and workers required housing, food, hardware and other goods, hotels, saloons—in short, they required a town.

Settlement: The Founding of Providence

There is no doubt that the first developers of the Bonanza King Mine had established an active camp adjacent to the mine, and it must have been a small and haphazard settlement. The March 1882 deed to Ewing includes the reference to “the Mine on which the buildings of the parties of the first part are situated near the above named mines,” that likely refers to the incipient town of Providence.²⁰ Perhaps the best clue towards establishing a date of the town founding can be found the next month within an article by W. B. De Forest announcing that “Grading, road-making, lime and charcoal burning, wood and timber cutting, give employment to a large number of men, and the daily arrivals are numerous. A town is soon to be laid out.”²¹

Indeed, the camp before the new owners arrived was of some substance. This news item from January 1882 indicated the existence of a mercantile in Providence: “Two large prairie schooners belonging to Jess Taylor were loaded this morning at the depot with provisions for the store of H. L. Drew, at the Providence Mountain mines.” This item advises that Drew, an owner of the mine, also operated a store there before a town was “laid out.” Still, the camp apparently had no formal name.²²

The origin of the town’s name is clear—it is located in the Providence Mountains—and the concept of caring guidance provided by God was a popular one during the period of desert exploration when the town was founded. Erwin G. Gudde, in his essential *California Place Names*, speculated that the name for the mountain range, used as early as 1857, was “probably applied by early travelers and immigrants because they found numerous springs on the range,

¹⁹ *Los Angeles Herald*, April 29, 1882.

²⁰ *Deeds*, Book 29, 79-88, SBCA.

²¹ *Los Angeles Herald*, April 29, 1882.

²² *San Bernardino Valley Index*, January 28, 1882.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

which is situated between desert valleys.” There are other examples of short-lived towns named Providence elsewhere in California and beyond.²³

The date of June 5, 1882, can be used as the formal founding of Providence, for that is the day on which a United States Post Office was established under that name. Mine manager Daniel B. Gillette was appointed postmaster, and on October 10, Gillette resigned and co-owner and merchant Drew took over the post. For close to a full decade the five postmasters at Providence would handle mail and parcels through a great period of population and prosperity to a moment of sudden stillness, and then witness the inevitable boomtown decline as miners left town for the opportunities elsewhere.²⁴

No records have been located that show any formal design of the town called Providence. No survey plats were filed, no property claimed under any of the available procedures through the federal General Land Office; in fact, the town itself did not, with one known exception, appear on a map of San Bernardino County (although the Bonanza King Mine did, and does, appear on most maps). Also, no early photographs have been located that depict the town in its heyday.²⁵ It is only the physical record that remains that paints a picture of Providence in the 1880s.

Despite the lack of contemporary evidence, the archeological record clearly shows that the founders of Providence laid out the town in a somewhat formal manner. A wagon road approached the camp and mines from the valley below, following a near-perfect east-west (on magnetic north) tangent. Upon entry into the townsite, the road branched to form two parallel streets that defined the downtown. The road to the mine branched off at an angle, following the toe of a slope, and from that roadway another town road appeared on the left. The three main roadways in town all terminated at the mine headquarters, composed of the office and superintendent’s residence, located at the top of the hill, that offered a panoramic view of the town, mine, and valley below. A spectacular range of steep mountains rising over 7,000 feet acted as a backdrop for the entire scene.²⁶

The parallel roadways below mine headquarters, names unknown, were punctuated by cross streets, forming a four-block “downtown” with businesses and dwellings on the outer edges as well. While the uses of most of the buildings are not known, research shows that the town featured all the businesses needed for a thriving small city: a post office, a store, saloons, hotels, and boarding houses, eating facilities, assay offices, perhaps even a bank. What business occupied which building remains lost to history, although piles of broken glass adjacent to a few ruined buildings imply drinking establishments.

²³ Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969, 256. A camp called Providence City appeared near Rock Spring during a boom there in 1863, and fabled Death Valley miner “Shorty” Harris founded a town he christened Providence in 1905, that was soon renamed Harrisburg.

²⁴ Walter N. Frickstad, *A Century of California Post Offices, 1848 to 1954* (Oakland: A Philatelic Research Society Publication, 1955), 144.

²⁵ In more than 30 years the three major scholars on the subject (Hensher, Vredenburgh, and Casebier), and the nomination’s researcher have not located any pictorial image of Providence pre-dating the 1920s.

²⁶ These descriptions are based on field surveys made in 2005-2005 and October 2011.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Architecture: Making Do With Available Materials

With little timber available and long shipping distances, the builders of Providence relied on the most readily available local materials: stone. The town straddled a meeting place of two geological formations, where the gray-blue limestone Providence Mountains were interrupted on their lower slopes by red-brown volcanic hills of rhyolite, called extrusives. The majority of Providence sits on an alluvial fan that is composed of limestone rocks of great variety in size and shape. If carefully chosen and laid by a skilled mason, these could result in a substantial and solid dwelling without breaking, splitting, or cutting. The rhyolite, which could break into jagged and irregular stones, was not as perfect a building material and still provided convenient materials for small habitations. The rhyolite tended to be found on steep hillsides and so the “cliff” neighborhoods on the north and west outskirts of Providence are built of red-brown rhyolite, while the central area is composed of limestone buildings.

Providence rose as a community of mostly stone buildings, and it is that fact that makes it particularly interesting and long-lasting. This was no classic western town composed of rows of false fronts facing a wide main street. It is apparent that the smaller stone habitations featured walls up to about six feet in height, with flat or low-gabled roofs of poles and canvas, or in some cases sheet metal. Wind often ripped through the town and so roofs had to be held in place with cables, rope, or large rocks. Some of the more substantial buildings had gable wood frame roofs. While every building required a door or doorway, it appears that most did not have windows.

The variety seen in craftsmanship indicates that miners likely either built their own small dwellings or hired a mason. John A. Carroll, age 35, was listed in the 1884 voting rolls as a mason. Most remaining ruins show a relatively poor dry-laid construction; however, a number of buildings show an adobe-like mortar that produced a building more stable and airtight, the latter important during the cold winters at 4,200 feet. A handful of buildings featured small fireplaces, and many more probably had small woodstoves made of cans.

Another local building material is especially interesting. On one of the lower blocks of Providence stood a substantially built cookhouse/dining hall. It was evidently operated by the mining company for the benefit of the workers, who were charged \$7 per week for board as of 1885. Although the largest building known in the town, a shift system would have been needed to accommodate the hundreds of hungry miners during peak periods.

Skilled masons constructed the dining hall portion of the building from blocks of almost white volcanic tuff. Tuff is a soft volcanic stone that is easily quarried and shaped, and has been used around the world for centuries as a building material. An outcrop of tuff had been located in the rhyolite hill overlooking Providence and was quarried for many uses, including foundations for mine machinery, retaining walls, and buildings. It appears that tuff was used only for important buildings at Providence; no small dwelling built of tuff has been located.

With this convenient material Providence masons produced an attractive dining hall, with kitchen and storeroom of mixed materials including local limestone and rhyolite. A commissary next door to the cookhouse was also built of tuff, and the soft blocks, now deteriorated by

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California

County and State

weather, have been found in a commercial site up the road from the cookhouse. Coats of whitewash inside and out protected the tuff from erosion and produced a clean and bright appearance.

A few wood frame buildings have been identified in photographs as late as 1965, and none of these survive. It is not known how many wood frame buildings were in place during the active years at Providence; existing evidence shows few.

Commerce in Providence

Providence grew into a real boomtown in 1882 as the population swelled. That year, thirty-six registered voters appeared in the San Bernardino County Great Register, and there were no doubt many more people in residence. Although the petition for a post office claimed “a mining camp of 300” as the population in the spring of 1882, that number may have been inflated. Thirty-six registered Providence residents included fourteen miners, two engineers, five teamsters, six carpenters, one mason and one laborer, one bookkeeper, two mill-wrights, a machinist, a wheelwright, and two farmers. There is no doubt that, as the year progressed, the population increased. By 1884 there were 81 registered voters, still a low number in light of the activity at the mine. Most accounts that year place the population at around 250. It is possible that a majority of the laborers were not eligible to vote.²⁷

The 1882 edition of *McKenney's Pacific Coast Directory* quoted the population of Providence as 300 and named the population leaders. The list shows the makings of a real town, including a number of mining offices, mining professionals, hotels, livery stables, stores, saloons, builders and tradesmen.²⁸

The Bonanza King and its neighboring mines, “turning out a steady stream of bullion,” thrived between 1882 and 1885, and Providence thrived as well. By October of 1883, reports like this appeared in southern California newspapers: “A sample of the numerous needs of a mining camp and the trade it brings to a city for supplies, we may mention that more than forty different orders came to Los Angeles yesterday for supplies to this single camp, which employs seventy men in carrying on its work.”²⁹

In August of 1883 United States Deputy Mineral Surveyor R. H. Stretch conducted a mineral survey of the Bonanza King Mine and produced a map, the only detailed depiction of the area at that time. While the map outlines the mine property rather than the town, it includes various details in proximity to the boundary. The map depicts three roads, a boarding house, two stables, an office, and a cabin. The field notes accompanying the map provides more detail, noting the

²⁷ *Great Registers of San Bernardino County*, 1882 and 1884, CSL; *Mining and Scientific Press*, August 9, 1884.

²⁸ *McKenney's Pacific Coast Directory for 1883-4*. (San Francisco and Oakland: L.M. McKenney & Co., Publishers, 1882). Some redundant listings have been removed.

²⁹ *Los Angeles Herald*, March 17 and October 21, 1883.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

“Company’s large office,” a “stone cabin,” and a “Stable and corral;” the notes also mention surface improvements, including “hoisting works, blacksmith shop, ore dumps, road etc.”³⁰

Providence and its mines regularly appeared in newspapers around the state, mostly reporting on the riches of the mine and also occasionally noting events in the town. Most mining camps of size attracted a newspaper publisher. The major source of news about Providence appeared in the *Calico Print*, a short-lived newspaper that was often quoted in *The Mining and Scientific Press*. In March of 1883 *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, in reporting news of Providence, quoted a source called *The Providence Times*. No record of a town newspaper has been confirmed.³¹

Transportation: Access to a Remote Site

Transportation to and from Providence proved a challenge in the early years, and the mine owners and residents were fortunate to soon find relief. A major drawback to pioneer mining in the eastern Providence Mountains had been the isolation of the site, that required hauling ore by wagon over the mountains to Ivanpah and even farther, and a long haul to San Bernardino for supplies. The increased activity at the Bonanza King Mine and its neighbors heightened the need for efficient transportation, and as operations intensified, plans for a southern transcontinental rail route fortuitously called for tracks passing within view of the mine and new town. “The railroad will pass close enough to the camp,” a *Los Angeles Herald* reporter wrote in early 1882, “to be convenient for getting supplies and for shipping ore, if it is desired to ship away.” It would be the Southern Pacific Railroad that would succeed in laying track through the Fenner Valley.³²

The Atlantic & Pacific Railroad Company competed directly with the mighty Southern Pacific Railroad that was also attempting to utilize the connections between Texas and southern California. As the two firms raced to survey and build lines across the desert, it was finally determined that the SP would succeed in constructing the Mojave route and the A&P would operate it. News of the coming rail line excited the residents of the area, as word spread among the camps and in newspapers: “A camp of surveyors of the SP cut-off to the A&P are now operating in the immediate neighborhood of Providence.”³³ The news also energized prospectors who had a vast area yet untouched by pick and shovel. *The Engineering and Mining Journal* in 1882 reported, “The extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad, now building to connect at Needles with the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, is likely to open up a new and valuable mineral field in this district.”³⁴

³⁰ Survey No. 2130, *Plat of the claim of the Bonanza King Con. M’gn Co. upon the Bonanza King Quartz Mine, Trojan Mining District, San Bernardino County, California* and “Exhibit C, Field Notes of the Survey of the Bonanza King Mine” August 4-8, 1883 by R.H. Stretch, copies at MOJA headquarters. Surveyed by R. H. Stretch, US Deputy Mineral Surveyor, August 1883.

³¹ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 17, 1883, 151. The *Providence Times* source might have correctly been the *San Bernardino Times*.

³² *San Bernardino Valley Index*, copied in the *Los Angeles Herald*, January 17, 1882.

³³ *Los Angeles Herald*, April 21, 1882.

³⁴ Myrick, David F. *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1963), 766; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, December 30, 1882, 350.

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California

County and State

However, a railroad isn't built in a day and the miners had to wait. The tracklayers were working eastward from the railhead at Mojave, but the new owners of the Bonanza King Mine were ready to build a major mill. Rather than wait for the tracks to be laid, the company shipped the mill equipment by mule teams from Mojave Station, in the far western Mojave Desert. "Even while the railroad was building to the mines with a prospect of reaching them in a short time," a mining expert wrote, "yet they considered that the delay of a few weeks in waiting for the railroad would cost more than the extra amount for freight, large as it was, and with genuine mining enterprise hauled all of their machinery over more than two hundred miles of desert, and will have saved the extra cost in a few days' run."³⁵

Providence residents relied on stage services and contracted teamsters with heavy wagons. As the railroad advanced eastward, reportedly laying track at a mile a day, the stage runs became shorter. Regular stages ran from Calico Station (soon to be renamed Daggett) in early 1883, to San Bernardino, Providence Mountain, and the Alvord District.³⁶

In March 1883, *The Engineering and Mining Journal* reported that the railroad had been completed as far as Providence, "reaching an extensive mining country." In naming Providence, the writer meant in proximity to the camp, as the rails had been laid in the valley far below the mountain mines.³⁷

One correspondent rode on the new line, even before it had been completed to the Colorado River, at Needles. As rail historian David Myrick wrote, "he reached the isolated but intriguingly named station of Providence which belied the presence of the promising camp of the same name located 20 miles to the north."³⁸

On the A&P Railroad the depot at Fenner served Providence. A wagon road was built in practically a straight shot about 24 miles to Providence, only interrupted by a few hills near Colton Well. The new rail connection changed lives in the nearby camps and also increased the opportunities at the mines, where now it would be possible to ship lower grade ores for processing and thereby add to profitability. In addition, the railroad company sold water for two to five cents a gallon; Providence lacked adequate water supplies and certainly benefited from this arrangement.³⁹

Providence as a Township and Voting Precinct

With the railroad in place and the mines producing ever-increasing riches, Providence grew in size and also in stature. Local citizens petitioned county supervisors to establish a township and to appoint law officers. In July of 1883, the supervisors named Patrick R. Dwyre as justice of the

³⁵ *The Mining & Scientific Press*, January 27, 1883, 78.

³⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle* item reprinted in *Los Angeles Herald*, January 12, 1883.

³⁷ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 3, 1883, 121.

³⁸ Myrick, *Railroads*, 766.

³⁹ *Los Angeles Herald*, March 16, 1882, picked up from the *San Bernardino Times*; Myrick, *Railroads*, 770; Hensher, "Providence," 276.

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California

County and State

peace. The next year they appointed Frank Monaghan of Needles as justice of the peace and William Larkin as constable.⁴⁰

Elections had been held in Providence as a polling place in 1882, when 69 men cast ballots in November's general election. On September 2, 1884, the Providence Judicial Township was created along with a Providence Voting Precinct. At the same time voting precincts were established in Ivanpah and the new town of Needles, all in time for the upcoming November election. At that time, the *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that the Bonanza King Mine "keeps 100 men at work at good wages, and supports directly or indirectly over 500 persons," most of whom likely resided in Providence. A later description claimed "the town boasted three saloons and all the other accessories of a red-hot mining camp." The polling place was the Lamoureaux Store.⁴¹

Meanwhile, H. L. Drew resigned as postmaster on December 13, 1883, and Matthias D. Howell was appointed to replace him. Howell served six months and was replaced on June 27, 1884, by James B. Cook, a Providence stalwart who remained in the post for six years. James Beatty Cook, a Canadian born around 1843, had come to Providence from the Ivanpah mines. He wore many hats in Providence, operating as of 1882 the Treasury Mining Company as Cook & Thompson, serving on the voting precinct board and as postmaster, running Cook's Store in 1886-87, and also working as a miner. Cook's Well, south of Providence, may have been named for him. Cook was one of the longest residents of Providence, staying there from approximately 1882 to 1890. He was last accounted for in Victor Township in 1894.⁴²

The Heyday of the Bonanza King Mine

The sale of the mine to Ewing and company in 1882 led to an outpouring of capital into the mining and milling operation. Under the direction of Daniel Gillette, who was once extolled as "one of the most competent mine managers in the West," a ten-stamp mill was manufactured in San Francisco at the Union Foundry of Prescott, Scott & Co., and in May a hoisting works sat in Los Angeles awaiting shipment to Providence. Gillette hired J. B. White to erect the mill, which was predicted to "yield more bullion to the number of stamps than any mill in the west, owing to the high grade of ore these mines produce." The New York-based Bonanza King syndicate purchased the adjacent Rattler Mine. "Both of these mines will soon be dividend paying properties," claimed the *San Bernardino Index*. "With such a showing in the Providence district, we may soon expect to see that portion of our county rank as the first bullion producing district of California."⁴³

⁴⁰ Supervisors' Minutes, Book D, 21-22.

⁴¹ Supervisors' Minutes, Book D, 96 et seq., 112 et seq., and 130, 148-150, and 161; *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 11, 1884, and *Daily Alta California*, October 22, 1884; *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1901. The Providence Voting Precinct boundaries as defined: "Commencing at the 116th Meridian line where it intersects the 3rd Standard line North—Thence South to Base Line. Thence East to the SW corner of Township 15 East R1N SBM. Thence North to 3rd Standard line—Thence West to place of beginning."

⁴² *Great Registers of San Bernardino County*, 1884, 1886, 1894.

⁴³ *San Bernardino Index*, May 16, 1882 as reprinted in the *Los Angeles Herald* two days later.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The shipment of these major structures and equipment required hauling by mule teams and wagons over primitive desert roads from the nearest railheads, at Mojave and San Bernardino. When the mine owners contracted well-known and experienced Los Angeles teamster Remi Nadeau for the hauling job, it elicited critical comments from the local paper that opined, "This is a clear game of freeze-out as far as San Bernardino is concerned." Despite the complaint, Nadeau delivered wagonloads of mill parts to the mill location in July and assembly commenced.⁴⁴

The owners placed the Bonanza King Mill almost two miles distant from the mines. Milling required a substantial water supply that could only be found in the valley floor below the mine, where a number of wells were available and water could be piped in. Workers leveled a terrace on a low hillside and reinforced it with stone blocks, where the mill works were erected. The mill would employ about 20 people, and so a small community that came to be called Crow Town was established there, with a number of stone dwellings similar to those at Providence. A direct road connected the mill to the mine up the hill, where up to 150 men labored through three shifts. In preparation for the opening of the mill according to the authors of BLM's 1980 study called *Desert Fever*, "some 2,000 tons of ore worth \$230 a ton sat waiting on the dump."

On July 31, 1882, three months after purchasing the Bonanza King and associated mines, around the time the mill machinery had arrived, Ewing sold the mining claims to the Bonanza King, the Orient, the Quarry, and the Cliff mines to the aforementioned Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company of New York, for two million dollars. He also sold, for another two million dollars, the mining claims and water rights of the New York Extension of the Bonanza King Mine, "and all that part of the Rattler Mine lying outside the exterior boundaries of the Bonanza King Mine; also the Cave Springs water rights" to the Trojan Consolidated Mining Company of New York, apparently the same group under a different corporation.⁴⁵

During this period most of the known mines in the area were sold to the Bonanza King group through their manager Daniel Gillette. In May of 1882 Providence miners Richard Gorman and Patrick Dwyre sold their nearby Belle McGilroy mill site and water rights to Gillette for \$5,000, and in September Gillette bought the Clipper mine and mill site located 1½ miles north of Beecher Springs in the upper valley below Providence, as well as the Enterprise Mine from John Reid, another Providence resident and the mine's locator, for \$550. On the same day, Gillette sold the Enterprise and his rights in the Belle McGilroy to the Bonanza King company. Gillette didn't stop there: on May 2, 1883 he sold the Water Jacket Mill site and water rights and the True Fissure Mining Claim, both located in nearby Beecher Canyon, to the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company. Gillette had bought the above from John Cassady of Providence and William Greer four months prior for \$500.⁴⁶

Gillette wasn't the only man at Providence wheeling and dealing for mines in the area: resident miners James B. Cook, S. A. Barrett, W. F. Terris, Marcus Thompson, and H. W. Hudson bought

⁴⁴ *Los Angeles Herald*, May 31, 1882; *Desert Fever*, 94.

⁴⁵ *Deeds*, Book 30, 434 and 436, SBCA.

⁴⁶ *Deeds*, Book 33, 322-328, SBCA.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

from or made agreements in May 1883 with Thomas Ewing for the Mesquite mill site of five acres and water rights about three miles south of the Bonanza King Mine, the Mozart and Lucknow mines, and the Blue Blaze claim. Gorman and Dwyre held interests, through Ewing, in the Peg Leg and Belle McGilroy claims, located one and a half miles south of Bonanza King Mine.⁴⁷

What really appears to have been happening is the moving around of assets between the same characters. For instance, on July 31, 1883, the Trojan Consolidated Mining Co. (Thomas Cole, President, C. W. Arthur, Secretary) of New York sold the mining claims and water rights of the North Extension of the Bonanza King Mine, and “all that part of the ‘Rattler’ Mine lying outside the exterior boundaries of the Bonanza King Mine” to the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company of New York. Cole and Arthur held the same positions for the Bonanza King group, and in November, the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company transferred the ownership of its assets from New York to California.⁴⁸

This occurred shortly after a new group of people incorporated another Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company in San Francisco. Dated November 3, 1883, the Articles of Incorporation of the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company state that it will “locate, buy, sell, acquire, prospect, work, mine, develop and carry on mines, mining claims, mining locations and mining ground in the County of San Bernardino, State of California and elsewhere” and “buy, acquire, use, trade in and sell water and water rights . . . [and] locate, take up, buy, acquire, hold, use, occupy and improve such lands, premises and real estate, as may be necessary and convenient for the purposes above stated.” The five trustees were W. E. Dean, Daniel B. Gillette Jr., D. C. Bates, and Thomas Ewing (all of San Francisco), and A. K. P. Harman of Oakland. Longtime investor J. B. Osborne’s name was crossed out and replaced by Ewing’s. This issue had capital stock of ten million dollars divided into 100,000 shares of the par value of \$100 each. Capital stock actually subscribed was \$5,000, being \$1,000 each from Harman, Gillette, Dean, Ewing and Bates.⁴⁹

Less than ten days after filing for incorporation, on November 14, 1883, the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Co. of New York, (again with Thomas Cole, President, Charles F. Madison, Secretary) transferred the Bonanza King, Rattler, Bonanza King First Extension North, Orient, Quarry, and the Cliff mines or mining claims, and including “the ten stamp quartz mill now being operated in connection with said mines and all the machinery, tools, supplies and other property now at or being used in working or developing said mines,” also the water rights to a number of springs, to Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Co. of California, for one dollar. On the surface, this appears to be merely a reorganization and subtle name change, and warrants further investigation by a legal expert.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Agreements*, Book D, 64-68, SBCA.

⁴⁸ *Deeds*, Book 35, 89 et seq., SBCA.

⁴⁹ Articles of Incorporation #14277 CSA; Articles of Incorporation File: 64 Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Co. 1994-205/64, SBCA.

⁵⁰ *Deeds*, Book 35, 451 et seq., SBCA.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The financial and real estate transactions during this period might make one's head swim. On the ground at the Bonanza King mine and mill the basic work of extracting ore and turning it into silver bullion continued at a rapid pace. Back at the end of December in 1882 the mill was finished and at work, with ample water supplemented by the company's newly purchased Water Jacket Spring. *The Engineering and Mining Journal* reported that the mill had commenced operation on December 21, calling it "the most complete mill ever built in Southern California." The teamsters at Providence now hauled thousands of tons of rich ore from the mines and the dumps down to the mill. On New Year's Day, 1883, the ten-stamp mill began operating full time and within eight days Thomas Ewing announced in a telegram to the press that he had shipped eleven bars of silver bullion worth \$19,000, "certainly a most encouraging starter." Six days later that amount increased to \$32,523 and by the end of the first month, the mill had produced \$61,777.44 worth of bullion, and this was from the lower grade ore screenings that had sat on the dumps.⁵¹

By the first of March the mill was producing 2,000 ounces of bullion per day. As the miners worked deeper into the sides of the Providence Mountains, new strikes at increasing depths brought exclamations of "fine" and "extraordinarily rich" ore. Still early in the first year of operation, one of the owners predicted that, "if no ill luck befalls it, it will give out \$800,000 in 1883."⁵²

The Bonanza King continued to provide additional discoveries as the men went deeper and wider (4,500 feet of excavation as of June 1883), and the surrounding mines, including the Mozart, Lucknow, Trojan, Clipper, Kohinoor, and Belle McGilroy (all owned and operated by Providence residents), also produced well. However, the Bonanza King continued to be the major operation in the Providence Mountains, if not in California. The mill's output totaled \$178,000 during January, February and March 1883. Monthly output was put at \$65,000 to \$70,000, and by mid-year the total yield of bullion from the mine in six months' time was \$301,451.92. "This mine is one of the most complete successes of the age," wrote one mining correspondent. The new fortunes in San Bernardino County, driven by the riches pouring from the Bonanza King Mine, brought notice from around the country. "The prodigious change in a year will astonish the people of California," claimed the *Los Angeles Herald*, "and show that Southern California is the best mining country in the world."⁵³

Thomas Ewing, superintendent of the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company, made regular reports to the mining press about the bullion results from the Bonanza King mine and mill. Appearing quite the showman, Ewing impressed his investors and the public alike. He traveled back and forth from Providence to Los Angeles and San Francisco and often made a "pleasant call" on the local editors to share the latest news and promote his endeavors. Ewing

⁵¹ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, December 30, 1882, 350; January 20, 1883, 33; and January 27, 47; *The Mining & Scientific Press*, January 20, 1883, 78 and February 17, 91.

⁵² *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 3, 1883, 121; *Los Angeles Herald*, March 17, 1883.

⁵³ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 17, 1883, 151 and April 7, 1883, 197; *Los Angeles Herald*, April 7 and 19, May 27 and 30, June 29 and July 4, August 2, 1883. Many of the reports in the *Herald* were reprints picked up from the *Calico Print*.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

especially impressed the editors of *The Mining and Scientific Press* and the *Los Angeles Herald*. “Mr. Ewing is to be congratulated in having the management of one of the finest mining properties on the Pacific Coast,” the latter newspaper wrote. “The Bonanza King mine [sic], in Providence Mountain, is now turning out a steady stream of bullion, most gratifying to all the stockholders, and astonishing to the people of Nevada and Northern California, who so long insisted that there were no good mines in Southern California.”⁵⁴

While exaggeration was a common practice as to the value of mines, it appears clear that, despite the fawning press and southern California boosterism, the Bonanza King was indeed a big news story and Ewing was the perfect voice to spread the word. Indeed, until the strikes at Ivanpah and Providence, the northern California and western Nevada bonanzas had dominated the western mining scene and captivated the rest of the country, and so the notoriety of the Providence mines coupled with the advances in transportation opportunities inspired a boom in the region that put it on the map for good.

By the end of 1883 the Bonanza King Mine at Providence and its ten-stamp mill at Crow Town produced about \$700,000 in silver bullion. The company kept in reserve ore on the dump valued at \$500,000, and the other mines in the area also contributed additional figures to the overall totals. The company reportedly recouped all the operating and mill expenses, paid a dividend of \$16,000, and still ended up with a large surplus. The owners enjoyed a rich 1884 as well. The mine continued to provide more finds of value and the mill worked daily except for occasional mechanical problems. “The lowest working is at the depth of 547 feet, and the appearance of the ore at that depth is improving,” came a report in April. “A 12-foot vein of considerable richness has been discovered in the fourth level back of what was considered the foot-wall of the ore zone.” Even more detail appeared in weekly reports from the mine. In August the company brought in a “full force” of miners from San Francisco to speed the work, pushing the depth to 600 feet by the end of the year while working down to the 8th level in the main shaft. Press reports followed the number of bullion bars being shipped, noting their high value. The company’s stock was listed at the Mining Exchange in Los Angeles and eventually the New York Stock Exchange, and dividends were paid regularly to the investors, by one account \$150,000 by mid-1884 and \$200,000 reported up to late 1885.⁵⁵

Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company appeared in a San Francisco business directory under “Mining Companies, Gold and Silver” in 1884. Dudley C. Bates was listed as the secretary, with offices at 79 Nevada Block. The Bonanza King did not appear in subsequent directories in that city.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Los Angeles Herald*, September 12 and October 21, 1883.

⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Herald*, December 29, 1883; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 15, 204; March 29, 240; April 5, 260; May 10, 355; May 31, 412; July 19, 44; September 20, 198; October 11, November 22, December 6, 1884, 383; and January 10, 1885, 27; *Daily Alta California* May 3, 1884, August 6, 1884 and October 22; *Sacramento Daily Union* August 6, 1884 and October 11, 1884; *The Mining & Scientific Press*, October 25, 1884; Crossman in *Mining and Scientific Press*, January 3, 1891, 2.

⁵⁶ *Langley’s San Francisco Directory 1884-85* (San Francisco: Francis, Valentine & Co., Printers, 1884) 257, 1239.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The following example is a typical account of progress at the mine of the type that appeared in *The Mining & Scientific Press*, a weekly professional journal of goings-on in the mining world that copied news items from smaller papers around the country:

Bonanza King Mine.—*Calico Print*, Oct. 11 [1884]: We have obtained from a reliable source the following brief summary of the results of developments in the Bonanza King mine [sic] of Providence, in this county, about 100 miles east of here. Under the able management of Thomas Ewing, General Superintendent of the mill and mines of the Bonanza King Con. Mining Co., this mine is making a better record than any other silver mine in California. The Bonanza King mine [sic] has been, and is, the greatest mine in San Bernardino County. It has yielded more and finer bullion, been better opened, better worked, and obtained greater results from the ore than any other mine in this great mineral desert. The ore at the deepest opening is as free and as rich as it was at the beginning. The mill has saved an average of the fine assay of pulp over 89 per cent, for all ore crushed. 13,000 tons of ore have been crushed with their ten-stamp mill, and the tailings average less than \$13 to the ton. Nearly \$1,000,000 has been produced from this mine in eighteen months and ten days.⁵⁷

While optimistic reports tended to be the rule in mining reportage, accounts like this may have been relatively accurate in figures and regional sentiment. The fact that a new mine had produced a million dollars in silver was indeed big news in the country, and would only incite further interest in the region from investors, prospectors, manufacturers, merchants, bankers, opportunists, and perhaps, criminals.

The Bonanza King Mill also processed ore from some of the neighboring mines, since it was the only mill of any size in the region. In early 1885 a ten-stamp mill was started up by the Barber Milling Company at Barber Well, north of the Bonanza King mill site at Crow Town. It is not known whether this had any effect on the Bonanza King's business, and it did show that there was enough ore in the vicinity to justify additional mill facilities.⁵⁸

The Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company again reorganized in early 1885. After transferring ownership of the claims and related water rights to Raymond Jenkins of New York, the company was renamed the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining & Milling Company and again placed its business in New York. The directors were Wilson Waddingham, Duncan McGregor and John Pratt and the offering was one million dollars capital stock, 100,000 shares at \$10 each. Trustees included the aforementioned men, residents of New York, and Samuel Kelley and E. Huhn of Providence. In February 1885, Jenkins returned the holdings that had been in his name for six weeks to the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining and Milling Co. of California, for one dollar.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *The Mining & Scientific Press*, October 18, 1884.

⁵⁸ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, December 27, 1884, 431-432 and January 31, 1885, 77; Hensher, "Providence," 276.

⁵⁹ *Deeds*, Book 106, 121 and 125, SBCA; Articles of Incorporation #14906, CSA.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Labor Problems at the Bonanza King Mine

Voter records show that men from all over the continent, and in some cases the world, worked at the mines and lived in the town. Many were seasoned miners who traveled from camp to camp and stayed as long as there was work, which was hard. The Bonanza King Mine attracted hundreds of workers who found employment during a boom time. The favorable news of income from the silver bullion leaving Fenner on the train might have implied that the men were well-paid and taken care of; nonetheless the laborers experienced a growing dissatisfaction with the management.

In the *Calico Print* of February 15, 1885, a group of miners claiming to represent hundreds of others published a long diatribe against mine management. Under the headline DISSATISFIED MINERS, designated writer J. D. Duffy singled out foreman Henry Clay Callahan and shift boss John O'Donnell for practices that led skilled miners to quit in disgust. Noting that "the name and fame of Providence and its aristocratic Bosses are well known through southern California," Duffy complained that Callahan was taking advantage of the miners through a secret partnership in the company store.

As the miners realized the reality of the unfair situation they began "to murmur sounds of discord at their situation, and resolve to change basis of operations to other places of business." Workers claimed that any dissent was silenced and noted the irony that Callahan and O'Donnell had been poor miners only a year before. "It appears that some of the corporations of our time have lost all humane feelings," Duffy wrote, "for the sake of enriching those who are already masters of the situation and trample on all rights of decent labor...." He pointed out that the "boarding Boss" had been instructed to deny any food to an arriving hungry man unless paid in advance or guaranteed by an employee. Duffy and his fellow miners expressed hope that by publicizing their complaints that situations could improve in all the mining camps.

Notably, the writers revealed that the expense to reach the lower levels of the shaft was becoming prohibitive and that the mine was being worked out: "the old quota of miners are at work and it is all they can do to keep the mill in operation." The Bonanza King management was shopping for nearby mines not already in their control and yet rumors in Providence raised fears of wage reduction. At the time of the public letter, mine workers were paid three and a half dollars a day. It appears that the management promptly laid off workers at the mine and mill, despite the fact that the ore bodies on the lower levels had "never looked better."⁶⁰

One month later the owners of the Bonanza King mine and mill shut down operations and laid off most workers. As reported in the *Calico Print*, "The reason given by the officers of the company is that bullion is so very low, that they would leave it in the mine for a time, when the silver would not depreciate in value." While it is true that silver prices had dropped, it was only

⁶⁰*Calico Print*, February 15 and March 22, 1885. One wonders if Callahan is the same man later noted in a reliable mining journal: "The most complete report ever made upon the geological and mineralogical conditions of the Providence mountains was that of Mr. C. J. Callahan, whose opinion and advice is taken by leading mining men everywhere. He is now consulting engineer of the British-American syndicate of London." (*The Mining World*, February 10, 1906, 225-226.)

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

by four cents an ounce. The rumor of a wage reduction reappeared, and soon an advertisement appeared in the paper seeking 20 miners to be paid wages of three dollars a day.⁶¹

Within days the mine started up with fifteen workers; “Men are arriving daily by Young’s daily line of stages from Fenner to this place,” reported the *Print*. Soon the number of workers rose to thirty and the company expressed a goal of 100 miners at the three dollar wage. The company president and some of the owners spent time at Providence to work out expansion plans, and they reportedly claimed that low prices for bullion caused the shutdown and wage reduction. With good ore prospects remaining to be mined and plenty on hand already to be milled, the company was poised to return to its past glory. However, the mill remained idle for some time until enough ore could be stockpiled to justify the expense.⁶²

By the middle of April, 40 men worked the mine hoisting from 12 to 16 tons of ore a day, and the mill remained idle. The neighboring Kerr, Belle McGilroy, and Mozart groups of mines continued to be worked. However, rumors about problems among the mine’s owners began to surface. One report published in May 1885 stated that Ewing had sold the mine to a pair of Arizona businessmen who then bonded the property to a French mining engineer for \$100,000. “The intention,” stated an article in *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, “is to dispose of the property in France.” That rumor proved false. Later reports spoke of “internal dissention” among the stockholders, despite increasing dividends.⁶³

Also in May, mine superintendent Kelley claimed that the mill would start up and promised “a constant output of bullion for years to come.” Co-owner Wilson Waddingham, the wealthy New York capitalist, made a personal visit to Providence to look after his mining interests. “He has taken a deep interest in mining matters on this coast and is ready to invest in properties having a good showing,” reported the *Print*. As workers pushed the main shaft deeper, they continued to find more veins of silver. Providence teamster William Callahan commenced hauling between the mine and mill as the mill was being put into working order. Miners arriving were put to work immediately, and residents looked forward to hearing “the glad sound of the stamps” again.⁶⁴

The mill “started up in full blast” around June 10, 1885. The company had advertised for 35 skilled miners under the same terms as had been offered in March: three dollars a day for labor, seven dollars a week for board. This was good news for Providence, and within a month the mill was processing 24 tons of ore daily and had shipped 24 bars of bullion. The mining papers made due note of the revitalization and projected a brilliant future for Providence and the mining

⁶¹ *Calico Print*, March 15 and 22, 1885.

⁶² *Calico Print*, March 14 and 27, 1885; *Daily Alta California*, March 27, 1885; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, March 28, 214 and April 4, 1885, 231.

⁶³ *The Mining & Scientific Press*, April 18, 1885; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, May 9, 1885, 320; *Los Angeles Times*, January 26, 1908.

⁶⁴ *Calico Print*, May 24 and June 7 and 14, 1885; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, June 6, 1885, 392.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

business of San Bernardino County. “There are at present but few people in the district outside the employees of this company,” wrote an expert in an 1885 book about California mining.⁶⁵

The euphoria was short-lived. Seven weeks after work began anew, word came to Daggett that on July 31st the Bonanza King Mill had burned to the ground. The news spread and sent a shock through Providence and the mines in the vicinity. The mill, believed to have cost \$100,000 to build, was reportedly insured for a quarter of that.⁶⁶

Waddingham returned to Providence and announced his intentions for “the erection of a larger and finer mill than the other,” one that could be constructed at a savings because of improved and cheaper transportation. In print at least, all were optimistic that the mine and camp would rise to its previous glory, especially because of the good signs from neighboring mines. However, as one mining writer pointed out, “The destruction of the mill, it is said, has entailed a serious loss upon the company.” It would also be a loss to the residents of Providence. “On an early resumption of active operations at this mine,” one expert wrote, “the very life of the camp, and indeed, of the entire district, is wholly dependent.”⁶⁷

The fire resulted in a full shutdown of the mining operations of the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining and Milling Company. Newspapers speculated on what would follow, especially since there was a great deal of valuable ore waiting to be processed. All kept watch with the confidence that the mill would be rebuilt and Providence would again thrive. The mine did reopen for a time in early 1886 and eventually put 25 men back to work, but this soon ended. Meanwhile, Waddingham went east, and then moved to Ontario, California where he bought a business block. What became of Thomas Ewing is not known; he didn’t resurface for almost 20 years, as the respected head of the Western Mining Association.⁶⁸

Providence Begins a Decline

Before the fire, Providence was at its heyday, with active businesses and residents numbering in the hundreds. There were two general stores, and three boarding houses offered transient housing. Meal service could be bought at the company cookhouse for seven dollars per week. Luke Hamilton ran a saloon (there were three; the company, however, would fire anyone found drunk), and Jacob Gardiner was the butcher. Two blacksmiths, Edward LeCount and William J. Hamilton, kept the town and mine in repair, as did wheelwright James B. White. James B. Cook ran the post office, and various men did their duty at the Providence voting precinct. Young’s daily stage brought people to and from the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad depot at Fenner, charging four dollars for the ride up and three for the return. Local ranchers and farmers provided food to the camp, and despite the labor unrest, Providence appeared to be a good place to live and do

⁶⁵ *Calico Print*, June 14 and 21, July 19, 1885; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, June 20, 428 and July 4, 1885, 9; *The Mining & Scientific Press*, July 25, 1885; *Gold Mines and Mining in California; A New Gold Era Dawning on the State* (San Francisco: George Spaulding & Co., 1885), 285.

⁶⁶ *Daily Alta California*, August 3, 1885; *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1885; *The Mining and Scientific Press*, August 15, 1885; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, August 22, 1885, 132.

⁶⁷ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, September 5, 1885, 168; *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 3, 1885; *Gold Mines and Mining*, 285.

⁶⁸ *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, October 3, 1885, 244; note from Alan Hensher, February 9, 2012.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

business. With the destruction of the silver mill, Providence was down and not out, although one correspondent complained that the place was “very dull.” The other mines in the vicinity kept up operations and hauled their ore elsewhere.⁶⁹

One subject missing from the historical record is the presence of women at Providence. No official record has been located that names a single woman who lived there. Before women had the vote, they did not appear in registers or most directories. Booming desert mining camps rarely attracted families until the camps had been settled for some time, and while it is certainly possible that the mine superintendent had a wife and even a family, no record of their family life has been uncovered. It is likely that prostitutes resided in or near the town, and even the speculative accounts about life in Providence have yet to broach that subject.

A glimpse of life in Providence can be found in the Great Register, the record of voters in local communities. The 1884 Great Register listed 81 voters, most of whom were miners, and included people like bookkeeper William Bowers, machinist Abraham Stricken Bush, and stonemason John A. Carroll. Packers Jesus Maria Cadena and Juan Canes probably worked alongside teamsters John Baker, Francis Cruse, J. P. Ewing, John Gallin, Lemon A. Pickler, Frank Wilson and long-time resident Gilbert R. Sepulveda. The large number of teamsters illustrate the amount of activity at Providence, hauling ore, equipment, supplies, water and food between the mines, the town, and the depot 24 miles away.⁷⁰

After the fire and initial decline, the number of voters in and around Providence was decimated: from 81 in 1884 to 15 in 1886. However, the town continued to survive in its truncated state. Providence was connected with a telegraph or telephone line (operator Patrick Dugan), and Edward LeCount hung on as town blacksmith, as did miner/farmer John Van Winkle, who left his name on a small mountain range at the southern end of the Providence Mountains. Teamster John (often called Juan) Domingo showed up around that time and became a fixture in the area for the rest of his life. Domingo hauled ore and materials through the following busy periods, and waited out the slow times at his ranch adjacent to the burned out mill at Crow Town, taking care of his horses and keeping up with his many friends in the area.⁷¹

Providence lay nearly dormant for the rest of 1885. Prospectors continued to search the mountains for metal and the place saw some optimistic activity at the beginning of 1886. One writer said the “liveliest mining camp in the State . . . has had an interval of lethargy,” and when a nearby gold strike started a rush of over 300 men, the *Los Angeles Times* predicted, “a big boom doubtless awaits Providence.” The Bonanza King owners had done nothing since the fire yet still some held out hope for a new mill; after all, wasn’t a fortune in silver still sitting unprocessed on the dump? A year after the fire and despite its idleness, the Bonanza King was still listed among 14 most profitable mines in the West. In fact, even into 1887 the public

⁶⁹ *Calico Print*, June 7, 1885; *Great Register of San Bernardino County*, 1884; Hensher, “Providence,” 276 and 278; *Daily Alta California*, January 18, 1886.

⁷⁰ *Great Register of San Bernardino County*, 1884.

⁷¹ *Great Register of San Bernardino County*, 1884. The Register listed Dugan as a “Tel. Operator,” leaving a question to which term was correct.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

remained curious about what was to become of the Bonanza King Mine. “The owners are all rich men,” wrote the *Times*, “and they are likely waiting until silver becomes a fixed standard.” The *Calico Print* kept an informal correspondent there into 1886, and so little happened that the press fell silent for a time.⁷² Other promising strikes in the desert invoked the name of the former “king” of mines: for instance, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a new mine near Needles “promises to rival the Bonanza King.” Interest in making a fortune never waned, and newcomers were assured that all facilities for making a working life in Providence were available.⁷³

The residents of a shrunken Providence continued working and fulfilling their civic duties. The post office and voting precinct remained active. The Great Register that year listed only 15 residents that included nine miners, a teamster and a packer, machinist C. C. Quinn and blacksmith Edward LeCount, and the telegraph operator. The November 1886 election brought out those voters, but as Providence’s fortunes waned, the Needles precinct had grown to 53 registered voters, and as part of Providence Judicial Township, took more of the votes away. The local man lost to Needles businessman J. H. West for Justice of the Peace, and Providence’s James Collins lost by 35 votes to Frank C. Pitt for constable. Needles formed a school district, something that Providence had once attempted (no documentation has been found for that move). In the April 1887 election Providence’s 15 voters cast their ballots at Cook’s Store, overseen by judges J. B. Cook and G. M. Barber, and inspector P. R. Joyce. November 1888 saw only 13 voters.⁷⁴

As the decade progressed, the mill remained idle. Activity continued in the mines surrounding the Bonanza King. Ransom Kerr and James Patton’s five-stamp mill processed “some high-grade ore” in early 1888, and the *The Mining & Scientific Press* published this note from the Providence Mining Camp:

The old Bonanza King Company still lets its property lie idle, although their mines never showed more ore in sight than at present. They have also a large lot of rich tailings ready to be put into bullion. Whether it is the freezing out of the small fry or the depreciation of bullion that causes the continued delay in commencing operations, the writer knoweth not. Several other important properties there are also lying idle.⁷⁵

On June 28, 1890, James B. Cook resigned as Providence postmaster after six years’ service—and apparently soon left town—and was replaced by Christopher Charles Quinn. The town’s voter numbers rose by one to sixteen and in 1890 ballots were cast in the post office rather than Cook’s store. The die was cast: the town of Needles continued to grow and new ore discoveries elsewhere led to an exodus. By June 1891 the number of voters at Providence shrank to nine, and

⁷² *Los Angeles Times*, January 15 and March 4, 1886; *Daily Alta California*, January 18, 1886; *Calico Print*, January 31, 1886.

⁷³ *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1886 and January 25, 1887; *Daily Alta California*, August 22, 1886; *Los Angeles Herald*, May 6, 1886.

⁷⁴ Supervisors’ Minutes, Book D, 428; Book E, 15, 30, 41, 66, 288, and 332; Book F, 284 and 312, SBCA. Other precinct workers in the later 1880s included J. P. Van Winkle, James Wilworth, James K. Patton, L.A. Blackburn, Patrick R. Dwyre, John Steidel, James McCormick, C.C. Quinn, and Edward Le Count.

⁷⁵ *The Mining & Scientific Press*, March 3, 1888.

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California

County and State

the voting precinct was soon abolished. The final straw was the closure of the Providence post office on May 3, 1892; mail would now go to Needles, some 65 miles away.⁷⁶

In the intervening years, the original Trojan Mining District, usually called Providence Mining District, had been divided into three: the Trojan, the Gold Belt and the Arrow Districts. The Trojan District was considered the most important of the three because of the Bonanza King's various properties, despite the lull in active mining and milling.⁷⁷

Other mines of note in the Trojan District included the Cashier, on the southerly extremity of the district (owned by L. Walcott); the Trojan Mine (Turner & Dwyre); the Mineral Paint Mine and the Mozart Mine (J. B. Cook and others); the Belle McGilroy Mine (Gorman & Dwyre); the Bonanza Prince and Bonanza Queen mines, and the General Custer, a gold mine (C. C. Quinn); the Pitman Mine (E. Hahn and others); and the Perseverance Company's claims (owned in Pennsylvania).

The two other districts were also under the commercial purview of Providence. In the Gold Belt Mining District, formed in 1886 upon the discovery of gold-bearing ore by Wett and Steidel, included the Toughnut and the Greyhound (Wett & Domingo) and the Salazar (Salazar and Cordovo). The Arrow District, in the south part of the Providence range, was formed in 1878. "Gold is the predominating metal," wrote Crossman in 1891. "The mine first located is known as the Domingo" (no doubt after the local resident teamster John Domingo). Other mines in the Arrow District included La Prieta (John N. Domingo); the Golden Queen (Joyce & Kean); the Hidden Hill and the Red Cloud (Patrick N. Kean); and the Tip Top and the Pass mines (Richard Gorman).

A commercial San Bernardino County directory provided the last known listing of the population of a waning Providence, naming 17 residents and their occupations as of 1893. A directory published in 1898 did not include Providence.⁷⁸

Vanderbilt and the Final Depletion of Providence

Providence lost its status as a town with the closing of the post office in June 1892. The key event that led to the town's demise was the discovery of gold at Vanderbilt Springs in the New York Mountains northeast of Providence. A Piute Indian named Robert Black showed up at the assay office in Providence in late January of 1891. With positive results, he enlisted the aid of Providence resident Montillion Murray Beatty to legally locate the claim. Many men of Providence, including Richard C. Hall, J. P. Taggart, James K. Patton and Samuel King, heard of the discovery and quickly headed north to make their own claims. The discoveries proved valuable enough that the Vanderbilt Mining District was legally organized on March 21, 1891. In an uncommon circumstance, the new district did not attract a boom, although owners of the famed Comstock Lode, John L. Mackay, J. L. Flood, and William S. Lyle invested in one group.

⁷⁶ Supervisors' Minutes, Book F, 470, SBCA.

⁷⁷ Crossman, James H., "San Bernardino County, Its Mineral and Other Resources, Number XXIV," in *Mining and Scientific Press*, January 3, 1891, 2.

⁷⁸ Milliken's *San Bernardino County Directory 1893-'4-'5* ([San Bernardino] James Millikan, [1893]), 289.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Not until J. P. Taggart found a rich vein in the fall of 1892 did a rush commence, and a new mining camp called Vanderbilt appeared just as rapidly as the ten-year-old town of Providence was emptied. Vanderbilt grew into a full-fledged town, with mostly wood buildings instead of stone, and took not only people from Providence but its polling place; the voting precinct was changed from Providence to Vanderbilt in 1893.⁷⁹

Vanderbilt was not the only point of activity in the area. In 1894 pioneer Providence resident Patrick Dwyre and his friend James Walker made a “rich strike” some 11 miles southwest of Providence, leading a group of Needles men to stake out a townsite they called Gladstone. In reporting the event, the *Los Angeles Times* referred to “the old town of Providence,” surely a comment on that community’s fade from glory. By 1896 the Randsburg-area mines in the west Mojave had opened and towns were established there; it appeared that Providence’s days were over.⁸⁰

Although area miners experienced a slowdown and many left, mining activity did not stop in the Providence Mountains. Lower silver prices meant lower profits, but men kept working and optimism continued to be the language of desert mining, especially as more gold was uncovered. “The old Trojan district,” reported *The Mining and Scientific Press* in April 1897, “is evidently entering upon a prosperous era.” Quoting the cost to ship ore from the Providence mines to the railroad at \$10 a ton, the report noted that silver ores sold for about \$100 a ton and “some as high as \$400 or \$500,” resulting in profits. A ten-stamp mill, presumably the one at Barber Spring, continued in operation. Businessmen began to plan construction of a smelter at Needles that would surely boost the mining output of the surrounding mountains.⁸¹

In the meantime the long-lost owners of the Bonanza King Mine and its associated Providence properties fell into arrears with the tax collector. On July 10, 1893, the Bonanza King, Rattler, Bonanza King First Extension North, and other mines were sold to the state for delinquent taxes. In 1897, prominent Needles resident J. H. West paid the \$218.94 in estimated tax in 1897 and got the mines at a Sheriff’s sale. He soon sold a half-interest to long-time Needles associates Frank Monaghan and Dan Murphy, both of whom had intimate knowledge of Providence, having both served in law capacities in the Providence township. It is not known whether the partners

⁷⁹ Hensher, *Abandoned Settlements*, 3; Lewis, Fred E., “Vanderbilt Mining District,” *The Mining and Scientific Press*, December 8, 1894, 357; Supervisors’ Minutes, Book G, 366, Book H, 150, 306. Curiously, liquor licenses were granted to two individuals in Providence in March, 1893, and they may have actually been located in Vanderbilt, which lay within Providence Township.

⁸⁰ *The Mining and Scientific Press*, March 10, 1894, 157, and April 3, 1897, 286; *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1894.

⁸¹ *Mining and Scientific Press*, April 17, 1897, 326 and August 26, 1899, 233; *San Francisco Call*, November 28, 1897. The *Call* reported: “There are now eight mills running 215 stamps in [San Bernardino] county, as follows: Vanderbilt, 45; Barstow, 10; Victor, 10; Oro Grande, 5; Calico, 80; Holcomb Valley, 25; Virginia Dale, 30; Providence Mountain, 10.” The *Los Angeles Times* reported after the fact that some time after the Bonanza King mill fire a small five-stamp mill was installed by temporary claimants; if true, it is possible that West and his associates accomplished this. The mill was sold around 1900 and moved to the nearby Columbia mine (*Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1901).

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

did any work at the mine, but they did pursue the construction of the 100-ton custom smelter at Needles, constructed in 1900.⁸²

Resurrection of the Bonanza King Mine, 1901-1907

The new century brought progress on many fronts. A new rail line connecting Los Angeles with Salt Lake City would skirt the western side of the Providence Mountains, spurring development, while motor trucks and automobiles rapidly replaced the venerable mule team and freight wagon.

The Bonanza King Mine, never forgotten, again experienced serious investment and capital-enhanced activity.

The San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railway improved the access to the mining districts west, south, and north of Providence. During the planning stages in 1901-1905, many news reporters joined countless prospectors in exploring the area anew. George L. Berg of Los Angeles, a prospector and police officer, visited the idle Bonanza King Mine in early 1901 and described Providence and its last resident:

The deserted village with its vacant stone houses, now has a lonely and uncanny appearance. One suggestive thing that attracted our attention was about five wagonloads of empty beer bottles, which showed the kind of civilization which once flourished in that out-of-the-way mountain nook.

LONE INHABITANT

The only inhabitant of the lonely place for some years has been old John Domingo, one of the noted characters of the Mojave Desert. Old John has been a stage driver and teamster in the desert for forty years. Since the closing of the Bonanza King, he has lived all alone in the deserted village, save for the company of his horses, a flock of chickens and several immense tomcats which are his almost constant companions.

Domingo used to haul the bullion from the Bonanza King mine [sic] to the railroad at Fenner. Many and many wagonloads of silver and gold bars, to say nothing of tons of ore, have been transported by him.

“Domingo still has his big ore wagons in storage at deserted Crow City,” Berg reported, “where he is patiently waiting for the working of the Bonanza King to be resumed.”⁸³

Title to the mine had reportedly been in litigation after the tax sale. West, Monaghan, and Murphy prevailed, and in December of 1900 they sold it to Dr. Charles E. Ussher of Philadelphia. As told in a lengthy news article about Ussher and the mine, he came across the mine while on his way to Nome, Alaska, in search for investment opportunities. He returned to Philadelphia, gathered some wealthy friends, and organized the Silver Queen Mining and

⁸² *Deeds*, Book 209, 27; Book 244, 184; Book 247, 46, SBCA; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, February 17, 1900, 207; June 23, 747; August 11, 167; and December 29, 1900, 767.

⁸³ *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1901.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Reduction Company. The new corporation planned to reopen the Bonanza King Mine and construct a mill “with all the modern improvements.”⁸⁴

Dr. Ussher personally directed the improvements at the site, including development of a reliable water supply for the operation of reduction works. His men drilled a 240-foot well “with 40 feet of water in the hole.” By February, Ussher’s men were at work building the mill and concentrators.⁸⁵ Much of the old mining operation was still in place and in reasonable condition.⁸⁶

A year later there was little progress, with the water source remaining the major problem. Peter Kehl of Los Angeles purchased the tailings of the old mill down by Crow Town, hauling the worked-over spoils to Fenner and then by rail to smelters.⁸⁷

Dr. Ussher looked to Los Angeles businessmen for his next investors. On April 20, 1905, he filed Articles of Incorporation for the Bonanza King Development Company, based in Los Angeles. The principals were C. W. Caddagan, president; E. W. Merchant, J. H. Montay, J. F. Moses, Frederick J. Heid, William K. Krips, and William A. Eckerly. The group capitalized the corporation at three million dollars. Caddagan also had purchased the nearby Belle McGilroy group of mines. A year later, probably because of a further need for capital, a slightly different group of men incorporated the Trojan Mining Company, that then leased the mine from the development company. Ussher served as secretary and treasurer while J. H. Montay bought in and became president.⁸⁸

In 1906 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Bonanza King Mine would rise again, with this headline: “Angelenos Installing Machinery to Get Riches Left by Owners in the Ground and on Dumps.” Under superintendent E. J. DeLano, Elliot & Drescher of Prescott, Arizona erected a ten-stamp mill and an expanded crew began processing ore off the dumps, with the intent to resume mining as well. Distillate engines manufactured in Los Angeles provided power to the mill and pumping station, although not for the steam-powered hoist.⁸⁹

A. M. Rockwell replaced DeLano and supervised 75 men in operation of the mine and mill. It can be presumed that all these men, if the figure is accurate, lived at Providence. Evidence suggests that the 1906 improvements at Providence included pouring concrete floors and repairing walls and windows in the cookhouse and possibly building a wood frame superintendent’s residence on the site of an older office and possibly residence. Kelso, on the newly opened Salt Lake railroad, became the shipping point for the Bonanza King Mine and others in the Providence Mountains.

⁸⁴ One unreliable report claimed that litigation ensued after “the principal stockholder became insane” (*Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1906). *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1901.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1901.

⁸⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1902; *The Mining World*, February 10, 1906, 225-226.

⁸⁸ Articles of Incorporation #42688 and 45458, CSL; *Deeds*, Book 368, 239.

⁸⁹ *The Mining World*, August 4 and October 13, 1906; *Mining and Scientific Press*, August 4, 1906, 130 and February 3, 1906, 77.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

In a repeat of past events, less than a year after resuming work the mine and mill were closed, according to the *American Mining Review*, “pending the adjustment of the internal affairs of the company.” Plenty of good ore sat waiting for resumption of milling, and nothing happened. The men were laid off and Providence was once again quiet.⁹⁰

The new mill had reportedly treated about 150,000 tons of ore but a shortage of water plagued the operation. Peter Kehl, who had been working the piles down at Crow Town, went to work up by the mine extracting silver through a cyanide process, netting \$7 per ton in silver. The investors had reportedly put \$40,000 into the operation; it is not known whether they left with any profit.⁹¹

It was a curious moment for Thomas Ewing, the most prominent of the Bonanza King entrepreneurs, to resurface at Providence in 1907 or 1908. Ewing had been in the news here and there around the turn of the century. As of March 8, 1899, he owned the Homestake and Sheep Trail mines in Arizona and Nevada, and served as president of the Southwest Miners’ Association for a number of years in the early 1900s. Now known as Col. Ewing, he was called “one of the most prominent figures in the mining circles of the Southwest.” He engineered mining deals and kept up on the latest booms. For instance, in 1901 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “Col.” Ewing sold the Leland Group of mines in Arizona for half a million dollars. He was also sued, in 1902, for breach of contract and withholding a commission over a mine sale in Arizona. He returned to the Providence Mountains in 1907 when he promoted a mine sale there. Ewing showed up at his old office at Providence and set up a camp; what he was doing there has not been ascertained, but records show a voting precinct at “Ewing’s Camp” and “Ewing’s Office” at Providence in May through November of 1908. The voter rolls shot up from two in May (probably Ewing and John Domingo, listed as officials) to twelve in November election. Nothing was heard from Ewing after that.⁹²

After about three years of quiet, interest arose in the Bonanza King again in 1911, most of which was reported in the *Barstow Printer*. Los Angeles businessmen traveled to Providence to inspect the property, raising “talk of starting the old Bonanza King mine [sic].” The following year Dr. Ussher returned with six miners for “some preliminary work.” An employee named W. M. Graham was hurt in the mine, and the Barstow newspaper exclaimed that the mine was “still pounding away.” In early 1913 Dr. R. L. Burcham made some improvements at the mine and mill, and soon a group of “eastern parties” sent out engineers from New York to inspect the mine. In fact, 1913 proved to be a big year for Providence and the Bonanza King Mine, as not only was there activity and interest from new investors, but San Bernardino County improved roads in the area. Fenner merchant Sid Dennis did much of the hauling between mill and railroad. Increased activity was noted in the eastern Providence Mountains, including a vanadium

⁹⁰ *American Mining Review*, August 17, 1907, 10, 17.

⁹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 26, 1908.

⁹² *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1899, February 14, July 9 and 11, September 27, 1901, August 31, September 5, 1902; *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, September 20, 1902; *American Mining Review*, October 12, 1907, 18; Supervisors Minutes, May 11, Sept 17 and October 6, 1908; Hensher, in *Old Ores*, 33-34.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

mine near the Domingo ranch opened by a Mr. Beureclow. John Domingo remained a presence at Providence and at Crow Town, acting as guide and chauffeur to prospectors and engineers interested in the desert country. It is evident that during this period Providence was occupied by perhaps a dozen people.⁹³

At the end of 1913 a mining engineer named Steele took an option on the Bonanza King Mine and others in the vicinity with Charles Holbrook. He transported about two tons of samples to San Francisco. At the same time a man who claimed to hold a mortgage on the Bonanza King mine and mill announced plans “to dismantle the mill and ship same to Los Angeles.”⁹⁴

Local miner Joe Spencer bought into the neighboring Perseverance mine, and more activity was occurring at the Hidden Hill and Pilot mines, south of Providence. A new operating group called Holbrook, McGuire and Cohn, operating out of the Crocker Building in San Francisco, hired three men to help them work the Bonanza King. By the end of February 1914 the number of workers rose and the road between Fenner and the mine was busy with automobiles and trucks. In March the ten-stamp mill had been temporarily started up, a new road to the mine was constructed, and “five carloads of mill machinery” awaited delivery to the mine at Fenner.⁹⁵

April found the Bonanza King employing ten men and a deputy sheriff. Steele, representing Holbrook, McGuire and Cohn, hired Tim Lyons and others, bringing the workforce at the mine to “the standard the company hopes to maintain.” The mill produced ore concentrates that were sacked and sent daily to Fenner in trucks.

Still, the Bonanza King lacked adequate water to operate the mill to desired capacity. The owners contemplated another well or a pipeline from Beecher Canyon’s reliable springs. All was well in the mine itself, equipped with a new hoist. On June 6, 1914, miners struck a body of high-grade silver ore on the 500-foot level, proving to many old miners that the Bonanza King still had potential.⁹⁶

In Providence, the owners operated a company store “for the accommodation of their employees,” who numbered 22 by June. It is likely that John Domingo supplied fresh produce to the miners. A well-equipped assay office and laboratory was located near the mine workings. The mine foreman was Mr. Keys, while Mr. Hill managed the hoisting works and Mr. Schenk took charge of the office. Auto truck driver Chris Anderson made two daily trips to the station.⁹⁷

⁹³ *Barstow Printer*, July 14 and 21, 1911, November 1 and 22, 1912, January 10, May 2, July 11, August 8 and September 26, 1913. Mr. Beureclow, spelled Barricklow in a later news item, was noted as the community’s “only pensioner.” He left his name at Bearclaw Well near the 7IL Ranch. Burcham may have been Rose Burcham, part-owner of the Yellow Aster Mine at Randsburg.

⁹⁴ *Barstow Printer*, December 5, 1913, January 2, 1914.

⁹⁵ *Barstow Printer*, January 16, February 6, 13 and 27, March 13, 1914; *Report XV of the State Mineralogist*, December 1917, 827.

⁹⁶ *Barstow Printer*, April 10 and 17, May 8, and June 12, 1914.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

On November 30, 1914, the owners filed Articles of Incorporation in Nevada for the Bonanza King Consolidated Mining Company. Charles H. Holbrook Jr. acted as president; William L. McGuire of San Francisco, secretary; and as trustees William H. Schmalle, C. McCullough and R. C. Burnett. However, soon a series of transactions resulted in the mining properties falling under the ownership of a pair of Massachusetts woolen mill owners and their partner.⁹⁸

It is not known how and why the owners of South Acton Woolen Mills, manufacturers of a byproduct of wool called shoddy, came to be interested in ownership of a California desert mine. Owners Frederick and William Rawitser joined with a person or persons named Hall, possibly the Hall Brothers Company, a cooperage in Acton, Massachusetts.⁹⁹ Providence scholar Alan Hensher wrote that after the change in ownership, the new company “reopened several shafts, as far as 800 feet, and was taking out very rich ore.”¹⁰⁰

The *Barstow Printer* reported in November that the Bonanza King mine and mill were operating non-stop with 30 men at work. “E. H. Tracy, superintendent,” they wrote, “has a well-organized force under J. F. Guerney, foreman of the mill, and Walter Schinnle in charge of transportation.”

The mill processed between forty and fifty tons of ore per day to produce high grade concentrates and precipitates, as well as high grade ore. Two company trucks made daily trips to Fenner and back. To the benefit of workers and residents, Tracy installed an electric lighting plant and water service. “There are five families now in camp, thus giving a more charming appearance to the surroundings.”¹⁰¹

Some details of the activity in 1918 were revealed in letters found many years later in the mine office: a small operation struggling with labor and hauling capacity, nonetheless staffed and running. It is presumed that the men lived in some of the older buildings in Providence.¹⁰²

The end of World War I resulted in a drop in silver prices, to \$1.01. Operations at the mine were suspended in June of 1920.¹⁰³ A year later, Daggett resident and deputy county assessor Dix Van Dyke visited the abandoned town:

We later spent a night at the old town of Providence on the east side of the mountain. This was a town before the Santa Fe was built and freight was hauled from Mojave. Many of the old houses were still good. Some were made from tufa [sic], volcanic ash quarried from a neighboring hill and sawed into blocks. Others were made of stone laid in dirt mortar and the stones so well laid that that the houses were still standing.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Articles of Incorporation #78948, CSA.

⁹⁹ *A Directory of Massachusetts Manufacturers* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1913), 85, 100.

¹⁰⁰ Hensher, in *Old Ores*, 34.

¹⁰¹ *Barstow Printer*, November 5, 1915.

¹⁰² Don Meadows Papers, MS-R001 Series 1 Box 93, UC Irvine Special Collections.

¹⁰³ Hensher in *Old Ores*, 34; *Report XVII of the State Mineralogist*, January 1921, 360-361.

¹⁰⁴ *Barstow Printer*, June 21, 1921.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

The Bonanza King Mine would again lure mining men. In December 1922 the *Barstow Printer* reported that the mine would open after a period of litigation. Consulting engineer J. Ralph McNery worked on overhauling the 100-ton oil flotation plant, and planned to open the mine and mill within months. This apparently never occurred.¹⁰⁵

In 1923 the Massachusetts owners leased their claims to the Bonanza King Consolidated Mines Company. Shortly thereafter, mimeographed letters were prepared in a fundraising scheme. The Bonanza King Consolidated Mines and Reduction Works had been organized in Las Vegas, Nevada, in March of 1923. The officers were O. B. Bachman, President and Treasurer; Wade Hampton Williams, Vice President; and A. E. Kinney, Secretary. Williams was an entrepreneur known for his discovery in 1919 and subsequent success at the California Rand Mine in the western Mojave and may have been brought into this venture for his name. The letter to potential investors noted the success of "Hamp" Williams and his "strong following" of people looking for profits: "The 'Big Silver' was not the first profitable mine he ever discovered, nor the last," it stated, "and he believes the 'Bonanza Consolidation' will be the greatest." The group sought investors "of moderate means" who were urged to "Get in with successful substantial men in a growing enterprise." Williams "does not hesitate to state that he believes the 'Bonanza King Consolidated' will be a bigger, richer combination of mines than the 'Big Silver.'" The senders enclosed a subscription blank. It is doubtful that the group had any success, although in 1924 the State Mining Bureau reported that six men were at work and one car of ore had been extracted. In 1925 *The Mining Review* reported that the Bonanza King Mine was in "in regular operation," owned by the Bonanza King Mines Company, of Los Angeles, with Dr. O. B. Bachman as manager.¹⁰⁶

It appears that the mine closed down for good in 1925. Historian Alan Hensher found evidence that while "several brief revivals occurred into the 1930s," as far as is known, the mine wasn't opened again until the 1970s. Providence became a true ghost town, although it didn't come under the public eye much until the 1960s.¹⁰⁷

Providence as a Ghost Town

Joe Spencer, a longtime miner in the Providence Mountains and elsewhere in the desert, acted as caretaker for the mine owners up to 1937, living in "the long rock cookhouse." No specific accounts have surfaced about Providence in the 1930s, although it was visited by at least three parties who studied plants (Willis L. Jepson and Mary Beal) and insects (Don Meadows), or merely took photographs of the abandoned town. Providence began its real descent into ruin in the 1940s and deterioration accelerated in the 1960s, '70s and '80s.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Barstow Printer*, December 28, 1922.

¹⁰⁶ Wright et al, "Mines and Mineral Deposits of San Bernardino County, California." *California Journal of Mines and Geology*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January-April 1953, 137-138; *The Mining Review*, November 30, 1925, 11; Don Meadows Papers, MS-R001 Series 1 Box 93, UC Irvine Special Collections. Rubber stamp imprints on the letter read: "Bonanza King Mine/Fenner, Cal."

¹⁰⁷ Hensher, "Providence," 283.

¹⁰⁸ Papierski, Betty (Pettit), *Flat Tires & Coffee Fires* (Essex, CA: Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, 1993), 35; Don Meadows Papers, MS-R001 Series 1 Box 93, UC Irvine Special Collections; Jepson Correspondence Volume XL, 1937 A-G, Jepson Field Books Volume 57, and Mary Beal files at Jepson Herbarium Archives, UC

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Dix Van Dyke of Daggett published a series of auto tour descriptions in the *Barstow Printer-Review* in the late 1930s. Writing about Providence, Van Dyke noted that the buildings were “all well preserved” and claimed that many roofs had been clad in whisky barrel staves “which made a wonderful and useful roof.” Van Dyke also reported that a caretaker had been in residence until 1937.¹⁰⁹

An unidentified photographer visited Providence and took pictures of some of the buildings in the late 1930s, probably 1939. The photographs are the only documentation available from that period, showing some unique details that aid understanding of the buildings; copies are archived at the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association at Goffs.

What appears to be the first widespread publicity about the “ghost town” at Providence originated with a visit by Aaron Dudley and photographer Alvin Fickewirth in 1940. Fickeworth took a series of clear photographs of the “virtually intact” buildings and landscape at Providence, many of which have been helpful to this report. The following year the two men published an article in *Westways* magazine, the first piece known to promote travel to the town and mine. The writers provided many details about Providence—that they called “one of the Mojave Desert’s most secluded ghost towns” and “the best preserved ghost town in the West”—and the mine. They noted “homes, garages, stores, offices...a mecca for exploring ghost town fans....”¹¹⁰

Although exaggerating some of the facts about the mine and fictionalizing life in the town, the writers were the first to popularize the place. They mentioned standing on the veranda of the superintendent’s “cottage” and noted the “doorless, skeleton-like houses...constructed unlike any others in the desert.” They repeated the observation that many of the houses were roofed with barrel staves. The article was published in the magazine, the official organ of the Automobile Club of Southern California, in November of 1941. An expected onslaught of tourists responding to the article would have been interrupted by the country’s entry into World War II.

During World War II Providence lay within the boundaries of General George Patton’s Desert Training Center, a huge tract of desert land in California and Arizona that was seized and used for ground exercises. Although on the far northwestern edge of the training zone, no documentation has been uncovered that shows activity at Providence. However, the son of photographer Fickewirth heard that Patton’s tank troops used Providence for target practice and that signs had been posted in the vicinity of Mitchell Caverns warning visitors about unexploded ordnance. While this has yet to be confirmed through documentation or physical evidence (exploded or unexploded ordnance has not been observed by archeologists during surveys at

Berkeley; Jepson, Willis Linn, *A Manual of the Flowering Plants of California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1923), 236.

¹⁰⁹ Barstow Printer-Review, July 28, 1938.

¹¹⁰ Dudley, Aaron and Alvin Fickewirth, “Ghost Town of the Mojave,” *Westways*, Vol. 33 No. 11, November 1941, 22-23.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Providence), the claim if true could explain the almost uniform tumbled nature of the stone habitations.¹¹¹

Harold O. and Lucile Weight, publishers of *Desert* magazine and active desert explorers and scholars, visited and photographed Providence in May of 1947. Weight's fine photographs are highly detailed and capture the last days of an almost intact cookhouse and other buildings. His view of Providence from the Bonanza King Mine provides one of the only historical overviews of the town that has been found. Lucile Weight posed for a number of photographs, including views inside the kitchen of the cookhouse and appearing to knock on the door.¹¹²

California's Division of Mines kept tabs on the Bonanza King Mine and published an update on the idle mine in 1953, listing its owners as South Acton Woolen Co. and Rawitser Estate, South Acton, Massachusetts. The previous generation had bought the mine in 1914. There was apparently no mining activity from the late 1920s into the 1960s or 1970s.¹¹³

While the restrictions of World War II halted most travel to Providence, inspired by the 1941 *Westways* article, the western public took an interest in the desert and especially ghost towns beginning in the 1950s. The *San Bernardino Sun-Telegram* published a lengthy article by L. Burr Belden for the benefit of "those who like to poke around ghost towns" in March 1960. Featuring many photographs by N. Curtis Armstrong, the article recounted Providence history and encouraged visitation to the site, claiming that Providence could "be reached with safety by a modern passenger car." This irked the only neighbor, local rancher Howard Blair who was, according to local historian Arda Haenszel who spoke with him at the time, "mad at Belden because the tourists attracted by the article had been tearing up the roads he had to maintain, and getting stuck all over in the sand, expecting him to rescue them, apparently mostly at his expense."¹¹⁴

With the 1960s came a flood of articles about Providence, all encouraging city people to undertake adventures in the desert, where unlimited interesting artifacts were available for the taking. *Desert Magazine* published a number of articles about or mentioning Providence beginning in 1960. Two months after Belden's article appeared in the *Sun-Telegram*, Harold O. Weight wrote an article that featured a photo of Providence with no text about the place. An article entitled "Providence, U.S.A.," by Barbara Peterson appeared in April 1965. Peterson had been directed to Providence by rangers at Mitchell Caverns and wrote that Providence was "frequented today only by bottle hunters and ghost town chasers." She erroneously claimed a historic population of 5,000 citizens, and that some of the houses there were "originally shipped from England to provide refinement to the rough camp." An article in 1968 encouraged fossil

¹¹¹ See George W. Howard, "The Desert Training Center/ California-Arizona Maneuver Area" in *Journal of Arizona History*, 26 (Autumn, 1985), 273-94; telephone interview with John Fickewirth, November 10, 2011. An undated (circa 1980) BLM report claimed that the 10-stamp mill was "scavenged for the war effort."

¹¹² Photographs in collection of Mojave Desert Cultural and Heritage Association at Goffs.

¹¹³ *California Journal of Mines and Geology*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January-April 1953, 101-102; No. 2, 72-73.

¹¹⁴ Belden, L. Burr, "Old Ghost Town Easy to Reach, Fun to Explore" in *San Bernardino Sun-Telegram*, March 20, 1960; Arda M. Haenszel to Ruth Musser, BLM, May 15, 1983.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

hunting in the canyon behind Providence, and a 1970 piece entitled “Weekend Treasure Hunting” encouraged people to bring screens and hunt for artifacts in an area that included “Providence Ghost Town” on its accompanying map.¹¹⁵

“White Ghost of the Mountains,” an illustrated 1971 *Desert Magazine* article, featured detailed directions for finding Providence. The writer extolled the area for its “inexhaustible interest for every known species of four-wheeled desert rat,” and provided detailed directions to Providence and the mine. “Whether prowling through the buildings of Providence,” wrote B. W. Browne, “exploring the ruins of the Bonanza and Silver King mines, or watching your campfire flicker under silent moonlit cliffs, a visit to the white-walled ghost of the Providence Mountains is a trip you will long remember.” Rockhound Mary Frances Strong, author of a book called *Desert Gem Trails*, wrote an article in 1973 that encouraged “ghost town buffs” to visit the former “sizeable town” in search of “some interesting memorabilia.”¹¹⁶

Providence appeared in a number of ghost town guides, often in small publications, although in one case, published by *Sunset Magazine*. In 1966 Alvin L. Abbott featured Providence in his self-published *California Ghost Town Trails*. Abbott included three good pictures of features there while they were still standing. A book aimed at “bottle collectors and relic hunters” by Robert Neil Johnson appeared in 1967 and has been reprinted since. Johnson’s *California-Nevada Ghost Town Atlas* provided a map and noted, “Several rock bldgs still standing.” In 1971 the publishers of *Sunset Magazine* printed William Carter’s *Ghost Towns of the West* that included photographs in the second edition. Mickey Broman’s popular *California Ghost Town Trails* included a photo and map to the site. Tucson author Philip Varney’s *Southern California’s Best Ghost Towns: A Practical Guide* included a drawing and map, two photos and a short description of Providence, noting “walls, foundations, mining remains in a memorable setting.” He also recommended it for mountain biking.¹¹⁷

A more respectful approach was taken by Alan Hensher and Larry Vredenburgh, both of whom had researched Providence as scholars. Their *Ghost Towns of the Upper Mojave Desert*, published in a number of editions culminating in *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert, A Concise and Illustrated Guide* (1991), drew upon Vredenburgh’s work as a BLM researcher (he was an author of *Desert Fever*, a groundbreaking report providing historic context to desert mining

¹¹⁵ *Desert Magazine*: May 1960, Volume 23, Number 5, 8-11; February 1965, Volume 28, Number 2, 17-18, 33; April 1965, Volume 28, Number 4, 6-7; March 1968, Volume 31, Number 3, 10-11; February 1970, Volume 34, Number 2, 10-11.

¹¹⁶ *Desert Magazine*, June 1971, Volume 34, Number 6, 20-21 and October 1973, Volume 36, Number 10, 28-33.

¹¹⁷ Abbott, A. L. *California Ghost Town Trails* (Anaheim: Abbott & Abbott, 1966), 7-11; Johnson, Robert Neil, *California-Nevada Ghost Town Atlas* (Susanville: Cy Johnson & Son, 1967, second edition 1974), 45; Carter, William, *Ghost Towns of the West* (Menlo Park: Lane Magazine & Book Company, 1971), 15 and 61; Broman, Mickey, *California Ghost Town Trails* (Baldwin Park: Gem Guides Book Company, 1985, previous editions 1978, 1981), 72-73; Varney, Philip. *Southern California’s Best Ghost Towns: A Practical Guide* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 50, 58-59, 125.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

history) and Hensher's thorough research. Hensher also published a number of articles about Providence.¹¹⁸

These articles and books brought visitors to Providence. Most were respectful of the resources and no doubt many stole building materials, took artifacts, dug in bottle dumps and privy pits, and some vandalized the ruins. A writer in 1973 described seeing "an open pit that had been carefully excavated by bottle hunters, and judging from the glass I saw scattered on the ground, they had done very well for themselves." The Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club, established in 1966, still lists Bonanza King Mine as a site for bottle hunters on their website. Arda Haenszel described Providence as once a "hippie haven" where she and a friend "felt definitely menaced by them as they watched us, guns in hand," she wrote later. "We beat a quick retreat...."¹¹⁹

At the same time, others became occasional caretakers of the place. A group or groups developed an attractive campsite at the superintendent's compound. The Sierra Club and other groups have offered mountain-climbing trips out of Providence. Internet posts seen in 2011-2012 show a small, concerned group of people concerned about deterioration: "I have been observing for decades the collapse and dissolution of the structures at the Bonanza King Mine," wrote a blogger called Yaochi. Another, posting at ghosttownexplorers.com wrote, "The walls of this building are quickly disappearing due to vandals stealing the cut stone blocks." A paranormal site notes the ghostly quality at the mine.¹²⁰

Providence Mountains State Recreation Area rangers at nearby Mitchell Caverns routinely directed those who asked to Providence, and rancher Howard Blair, who for more than 50 years has lived within view of the mine said, "if something come out in the *L. A. Times*, they'd have that road dusted all the time." The mine and town are described in a commercial guide to Mojave National Preserve; the author erroneously states that "it takes a strenuous rock-climbing adventure" to reach the site.¹²¹

Much changed at Providence in the years following World War II. By 1960 the last of the small stone habitations tumbled or were vandalized. Between 1960 and 1980, all remaining wood frame buildings, including the superintendent's residence, and wood components on other stone buildings disappeared. The commissary collapsed and the cookhouse experienced severe

¹¹⁸ Alan Hensher and Larry Vredenburgh, *Ghost Towns of the Upper Mojave Desert* (Los Angeles: Private printing, 1987 [3rd edition]), and *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert, A Concise and Illustrated Guide* (Los Angeles: California Classics Books, 1991). See also: Hensher, Alan. "Providence" in *Guide to the East Mojave Heritage Trail, Rocky Ridge to Fenner, Tales of the Mojave Road Number 15* (Norco, CA: Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, 1989); Hensher, Alan, "Providence," in *Quarterly of City of San Bernardino History and Pioneer Society*, VII:4, Oct-Dec 1985; and Hensher, Alan, "The Historical Mining Towns of the Eastern Mojave Desert," in *Old Ores, Mining History in the Eastern Mojave Desert*, Robert E. Reynolds editor, California State University, Desert Studies Consortium and LSA Associates, Inc. 2005, 22-27.

¹¹⁹ Unidentified photocopy of 1973 article, SBL; Arda M. Haenszel to Ruth Musser, BLM, May 15, 1983.

¹²⁰ See lahbc.org; *Sierra Club Wilderness Training Committee Newsletter*, Winter 2004, 4; climber.org; desert-vision.livejournal.com; ghosttownexplorers.com. Accessed August 2011.

¹²¹ Rae, Cheri and John McKinney, *Mojave National Preserve: A Visitor's Guide* (Santa Barbara: Olympus Press, 1999), 177.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

structural alterations. Many of the stone blocks that had been carefully laid are nowhere to be found, indicating that the useable stones were hauled off. Two buildings at the mine—probably on public lands—were destroyed by heavy equipment, apparently during a short-lived renewed mining operation in the late 1970s. The old boarding house and part of the stone building next to it also fell at that time.

The land on which Providence sits was for decades under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In 1980, the BLM created the East Mojave National Scenic Area in order to protect natural and cultural resources while also allowing mining, ranching and other public uses to continue. In 1994, creation of the Mojave National Preserve resulted in further protection of the lands, including a wilderness area that borders Providence and the mine on the west. The Bonanza King Mine has remained in private ownership with the exception of the east claim that was transferred to the park service.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Abbott, A. L. *California Ghost Town Trails*. Anaheim: Abbott & Abbott, 1966.

Broman, Mickey, revision by Russ Leadabrand. *California Ghost Town Trails*. Baldwin Park: Gem Guides Book Company, 1985 (previous editions 1978, 1981).

Brown, John Jr., and James Boyd. *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*. Volume I. Chicago: Western Historical Association, Lewis Publishing Company, 1922.

Bushnell, Arthur M. *San Bernardino County Directory 1898*. Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., 1898.

California Department of Transportation. *A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Mining Properties in California*. Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA. 2008.

_____. *A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Townsite Properties in California*. Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA. [circa 2008].

California Journal of Mines and Geology. Vol. 39, No. 4, October 1943. Tucker, W. B., and R. J. Sampson. "Mineral Resources of San Bernardino County." San Francisco: State Division of Mines, [1943].

California State Mining Bureau. *Map and Register of Mines and Minerals, San Bernardino County, California*. State Mining Bureau, Data collected 1902. Lewis E. Aubury, State Mineralogist. With map.

California State Mineralogist Reports:

Third Annual Report of the State Mineralogist, 1883.

Fourth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist, 1884.

Fifth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist, 1885.

Eighth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist, 1888.

Ninth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist for the year ending December 1, 1889.

Sacramento: California State Mining Bureau, 1890. Crossman, James H. "San Bernardino County."

Tenth Report of the State Mineralogist, 1890.

Twelfth Report of the State Mineralogist, 1894.

Thirteenth Report of the State Mineralogist for the Two Years Ending September 15, 1896. Sacramento: California State Mining Bureau, 1896.

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California

County and State

Report XV of the State Mineralogist, 1915-16 Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1919.

Report XVII of the State Mineralogist, 1921. Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1921.

Report XX of the State Mineralogist. Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1924. "Los Angeles Field Division." W.B. Tucker.

Report XXVI of the State Mineralogist, Vol. 26 No. 3, July 1930. Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1930.

Report XXVII of the State Mineralogist, Vol. 27 No. 3, July 1931. Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1930.

Carter, William. *Ghost Towns of the West*. Menlo Park: Lane Magazine & Book Company, 1971.

Descriptive Review of San Bernardino County and Particularly San Bernardino City. Trade & Commerce Publ. Co., 1892.

Desert Magazine, May 1960, February & April 1965, March 1968, February 1970, June 1971, October 1973, September 1974.

Dudley, Aaron and Alvin Fickewirth. "Ghosts of the Mojave," in *Westways Magazine*, November 1941, Vol 33, pp. 22-23.

Elliott, Wallace W. *History of San Bernardino County California with Illustrations* [1883]. Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1965 (reprint).

Frickstad, Walter N. *A Century of California Post Offices, 1848 to 1954* (Oakland: A Philatelic Research Society Publication, 1955).

Garrett, Lewis. *San Bernardino County Place Names*. Self-published, August 1966.

Gold Mines and Mining in California; A New Gold Era Dawning on the State. San Francisco; George Spaulding & Co., 1885.

Great Registers of San Bernardino County, 1881-1905.

Hale, Edson T. *County of San Bernardino, California*. 1888, publisher unknown.

Hensher, Alan. "Providence." In *Guide to the East Mojave Heritage Trail, Rocky Ridge to Fenner*. Tales of the Mojave Road Number 15. Dennis G. Casebier and the Friends of the Mojave Road. Norco, CA: Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, 1989.

_____. "Providence," in *Quarterly of City of San Bernardino History and Pioneer Society*, VII:4, October-December, 1985.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

_____. "The Historical Mining Towns of the Eastern Mojave Desert" in *Old Ores, Mining History in the Eastern Mojave Desert*, Robert E. Reynolds editor. California State University, Desert Studies Consortium and LSA Associates, Inc. 2005, pages 22-27.

Hensher, Alan and Larry Vredenburg. *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert, A Concise and Illustrated Guide*. Los Angeles: California Classics Books, 1991.

Hensher, Alan and Larry Vredenburg. *Ghost Towns of the Upper Mojave Desert*. Los Angeles: Private printing, 1987 (3rd edition).

Ingersoll, L. A. *Ingersoll's Century Annals of San Bernardino County California, 1769 to 1904* (Los Angeles: L. A. Ingersoll, 1904).

Johnson, Robert Neil. *California-Nevada Ghost Town Atlas*. Susanville: Cy Johnson & Son, 1967, second edition 1974 (8th edition).

Koenig, Heidi. *Mining History of Mojave National Preserve*. Rohnert Park: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University, June 2007.

Langley's San Francisco Directory 1884-85. San Francisco: Francis, Valentine & Co., Printers, 1884.

Livingston, Dewey. *Condition Assessment and Treatment Plan, Providence Townsite*. Barstow: Mojave National Preserve, 2012.

_____. *Landscape Inventory and Assessment 7IL Ranch*. Barstow: Mojave National Preserve, 2005.

Lorey, Frank III. "History of Mining Providence Mountains." *California Geology*. February 1985.

Lower Colorado River and Desert Study: Cima Dome, Salton Sea, Whipple Mts., Pichaco, Mitchell Caverns. California Div. of Beaches and Parks, February 1966.

McIntosh, Flagg & Walker's San Bernardino City and County Directory. San Bernardino: Flagg & Walker, 1889.

McKenney's Pacific Coast Directory for 1883-4. San Francisco and Oakland: L.M. McKenney & Co., Publishers, 1882.

Miller, Donald C. *Ghost Towns of California*. Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 19??.

Milliken's San Bernardino County Directory 1893-'4-'5. [San Bernardino] James Millikan, [1893].

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Myrick, David F. *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California: The Southern Roads* (Berkeley; Howell-North Books, 1963).

Nadeau, Remi. *Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of California*. Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1965.

_____. *The Silver Seekers: They Tamed California's Last Frontier*. Santa Barbara: Crest Publishers, 1999.

Oakland Museum of California. *Silver in the Golden State*. 1986.

Papierski, Betty (Pettit). *Flat Tires & Coffee Fires*. Tales of the Mojave Road #20. Essex, CA: Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company, 1993.

Rae, Cheri and John McKinney. *Mojave National Preserve: A Visitor's Guide*. Santa Barbara: Olympus Press, 1999.

San Bernardino City & County Directory, 1887.

Shumway, Gary L., Larry Vredenburg and Russell Hartill. *Desert Fever: An Overview of Mining in the California Desert Conservation Area*. Desert Planning Staff, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, February 1980.

Strong, Mary Frances. *Desert Gem Trails*. Mentone, CA: Gembooks, 1966.

The Mining & Scientific Press, 1880-1894.

United States Geological Survey. Water-Supply Paper 224. *Some Desert Watering Places in Southeastern California and Western Nevada*. Walter C. Mendenhall. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909.

_____. Water-Supply Paper 490-B. *Routes to Desert Watering Places in the Mohave Desert Region, California*. David G. Thompson. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921.

_____. Water-Supply Paper 578. *The Mohave Desert Region California*. David G. Thompson. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929.

USGS Bulletin 507. *The Mining Districts of the Western United States*. James. M. Hill. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912.

USGS Bulletin 1712-D. *Mineral Resources of the Providence Mountains Wilderness Study Area, SB County, CA*. 1988.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Varney, Philip. *Southern California's Best Ghost Towns: A Practical Guide*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Vredenburgh, Larry, Gary L. Shumway, and Russell D. Hartill. *Desert Fever: An Overview of Mining in the California Desert*. Canoga Park: Living West Press, [nd].

White's *Business Directory of San Bernardino County For 1886*. San Bernardino: Mac. D. White, 1886.

Wright, Lauren A., and Richard M. Stewart, Thomas E. Gay and George C. Hazenbush, "Mines & Mineral Deposits of San Bernardino County, California" *California Journal of Mines & Geology*, Vol. 49 (1 & 2), January-April 1953.

Newspapers

Calico Print, Los Angeles Times, San Bernardino Daily Times, San Bernardino Valley Index, Sacramento Daily Union, San Bernardino Weekly Times, San Francisco Call, San Francisco Chronicle.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency (State Archives)
- Federal agency (National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve)
- Local government (San Bernardino County Recorders Office)
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 81.056 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.986721 Longitude: -115.514526
2. Latitude: 34.982041 Longitude: -115.507509
3. Latitude: 34.981581 Longitude: -115.505811
4. Latitude: 34.981907 Longitude: -115.505334
5. Latitude: 34.981024 Longitude: -115.501797
6. Latitude: 34.988447 Longitude: -115.502647
7. Latitude: 34.980053 Longitude: -115.508928
8. Latitude: 34.980470 Longitude: -115.508816
9. Latitude: 34.985383 Longitude: -115.515903

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is an altered rectangle with a narrow rectangle extending northwesterly from the west edge of the larger rectangle that allows inclusion of two isolated features up the canyon from the townsite and locations for potential archeological discoveries in the wash, comprising 81.056 acres in total. 12.755 acres of private land (part of the old Bonanza King Mine) are included within the boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The corners of the 81-acre area are placed so as to include all resources noted in the nomination as well as adjacent land that may contain archeological resources related to the town of Providence.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dewey Livingston
organization: (contractor for Mojave National Preserve)
street & number: PO Box 296
city or town: Inverness state: CA zip code: 94937
e-mail dlive@svn.net
telephone: (415) 669-7706
date: October 2012; Revised January 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	Providence Townsite
City or Vicinity:	Essex vicinity
County:	San Bernardino County
State:	California
Name of Photographer:	Dewey Livingston
Date of Photographs:	October 2011
Location of Original Digital Files:	2701 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311

1 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0001

View of townsite, camera facing east

2 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0002

View of townsite, camera facing southwest, Feature (Fe) 01 cookhouse at left

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

3 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0003
Fe 01 Cookhouse, camera facing south

4 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0004
Fe 01 Cookhouse, camera facing east

5 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0005
Fe 01 Cookhouse, detail of west wall, camera facing west

6 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0006
Fe 04 Habitation, camera facing southwest

7 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0007
Fe 10 Habitation, camera facing south

8 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0008
Fe 16 Tuff Quarry, camera facing north

9 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0009
Fe 19 Habitation, camera facing southwest

10 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0010
Fe 37 Commercial Building, camera facing southwest

11 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0011
Fe 42 Habitation or Saloon, camera facing northwest

12 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0012
Fe 44 Superintendent's Compound main room, camera facing southwest

13 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0013
Fe 44 Superintendent's Compound smokehouse, camera facing southwest

14 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0014
Fe 51 Horse Corral, camera facing northwest

15 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0015
Fe 56 Habitation, camera facing east

16 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0016
Fe 58 Habitation, camera facing north

17 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0017
Fe 61 Habitation, camera facing southwest

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

18 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0018
Fe 70 Habitation, camera facing southwest

19 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0019
Fe 57 Rock graffiti, camera facing east

20 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0020
Old town road, camera facing southwest

21 of 21. CA_San Bernardino County_Providence Townsite_0021
Tuff quarry road, camera facing west

Index of Figures: Historic Photographs

Figure 1:

Historical photograph taken 1940: Cookhouse Feature 01, right; Commissary Feature 02, left.
From *Westways* magazine.

Figure 2:

Historical photograph taken 1947: view of Providence to southeast from mine.
Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association.

Figure 3:

Historical photograph taken 1940: Feature 35, left; Feature 37, right, view to
south/southwest. © John Fickewirth.

Figure 4:

Historical photograph taken 1937: view of upper buildings (Features 67, 70, 72).
UC Berkeley Jepson Herbarium Photo Collection.

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.460 et seq.).

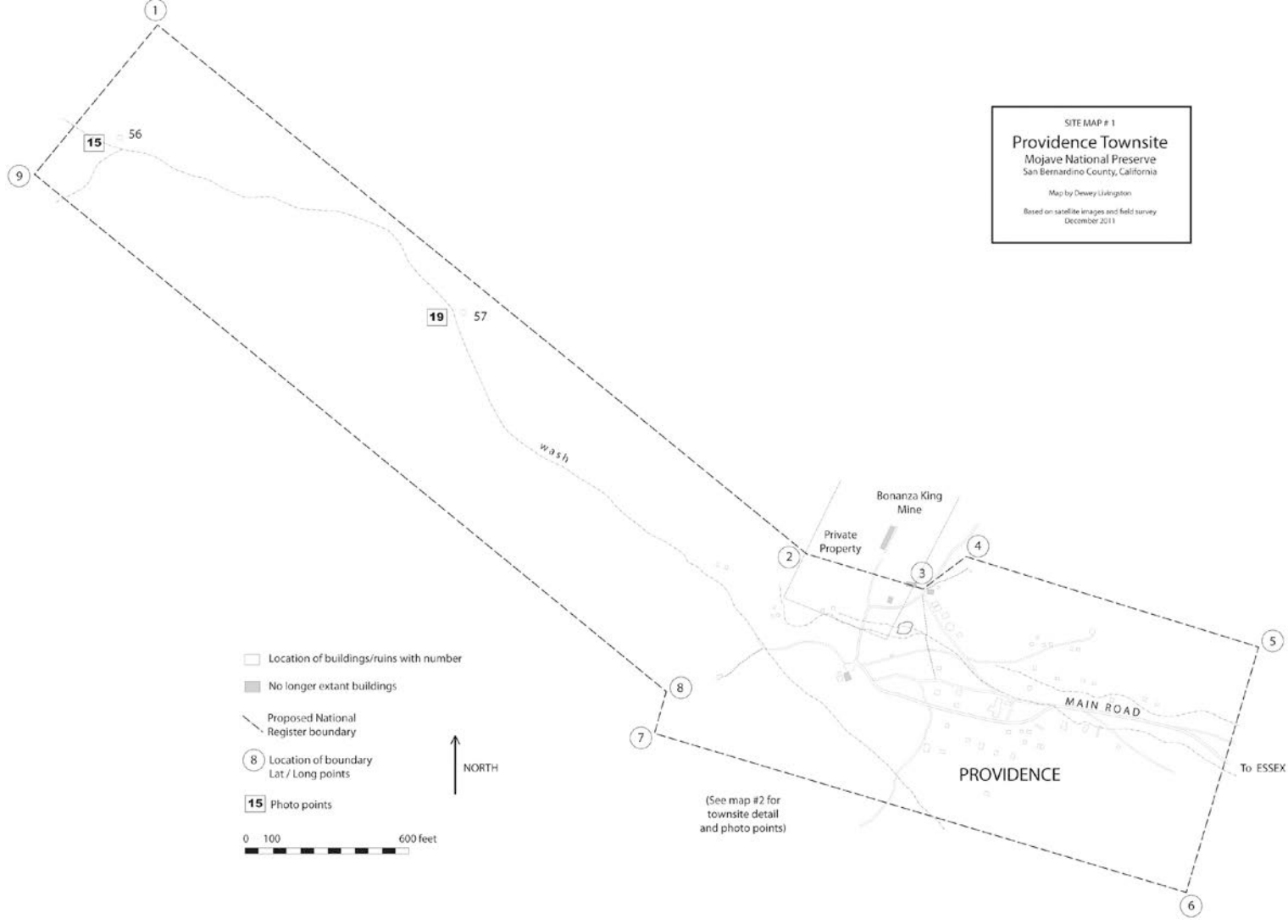
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Providence Townsite

Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

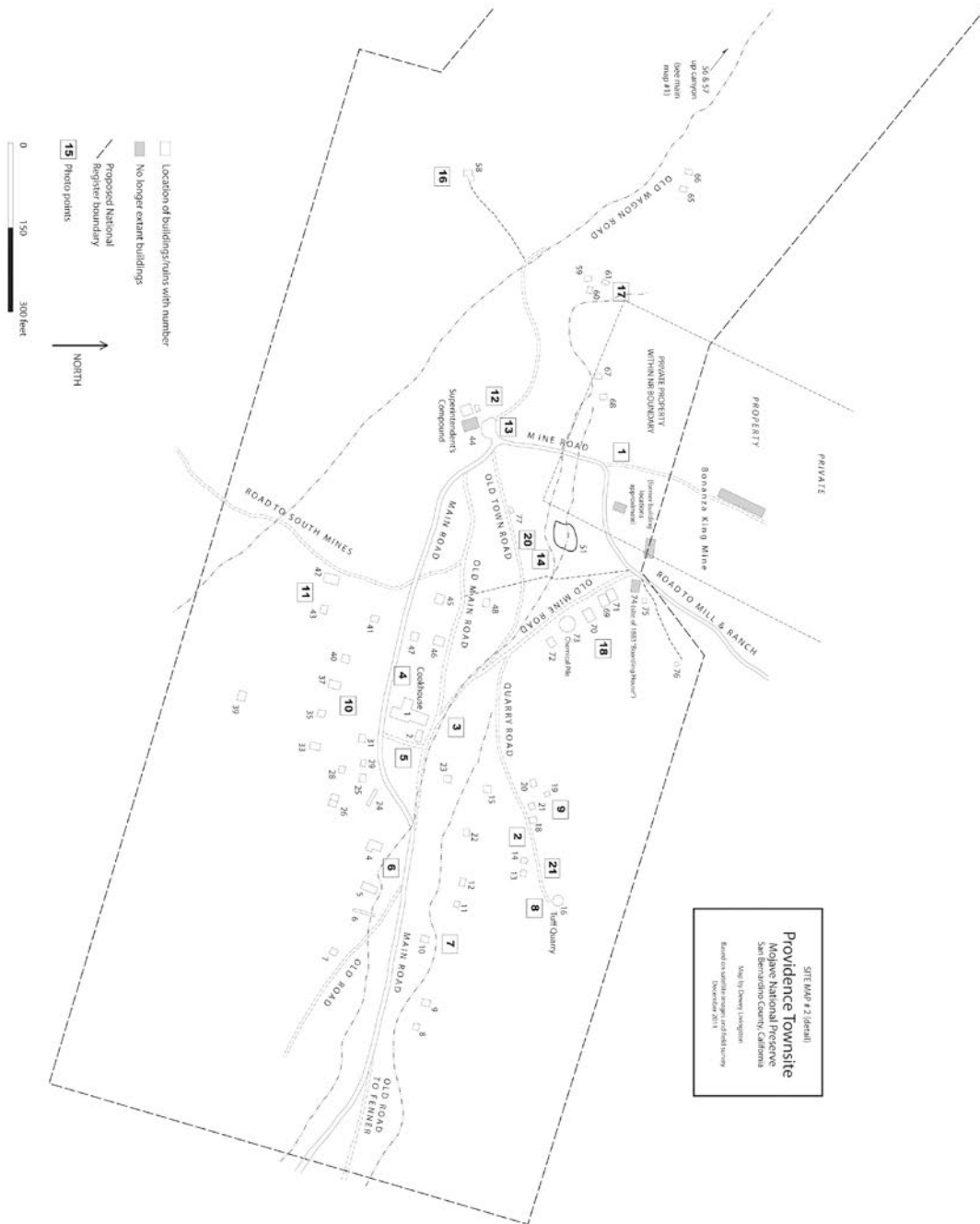
Site Map 1



Providence Townsite
 Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
 County and State

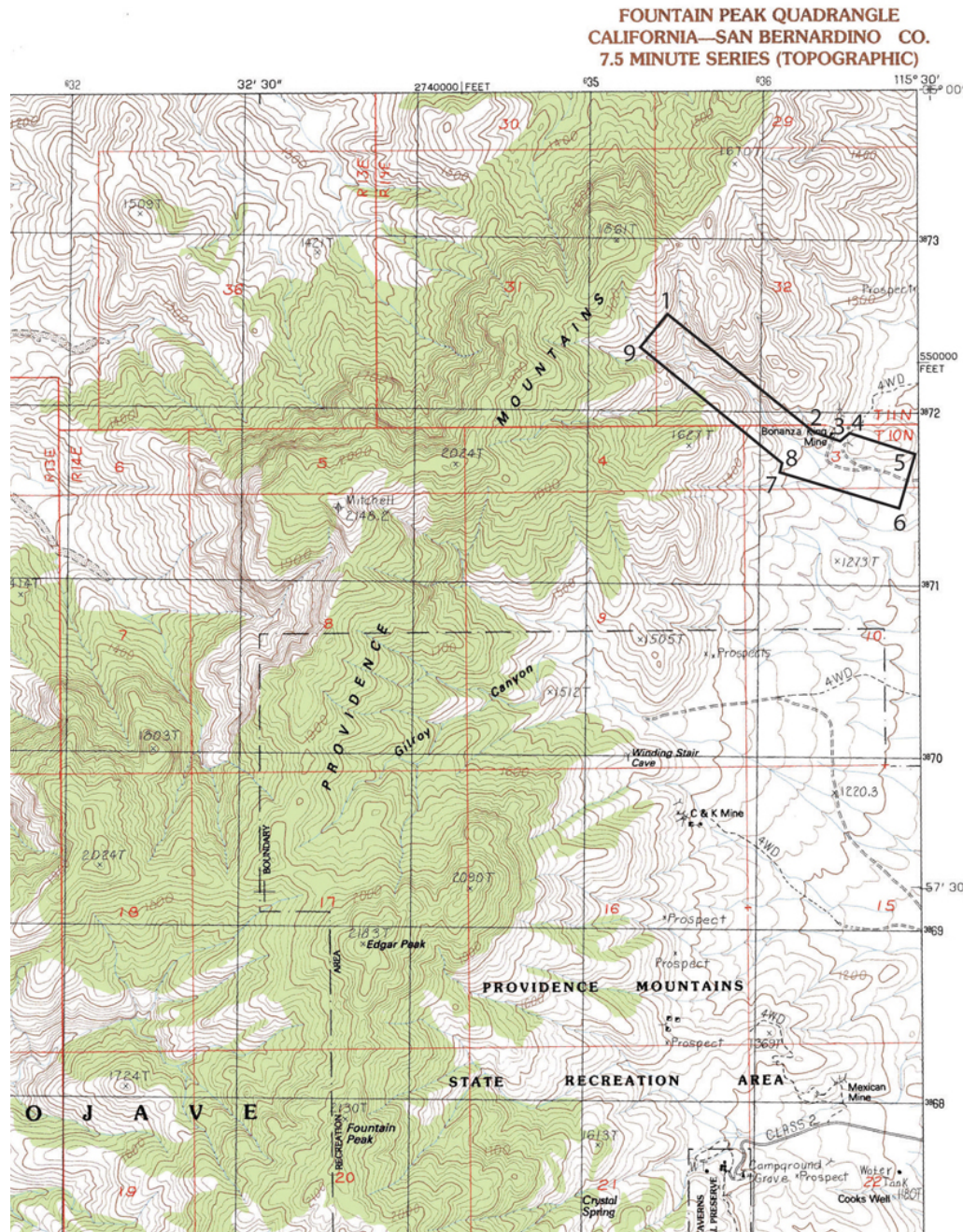
Site Map 2 (detail)



Providence Townsite
 Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
 County and State

Topographic Map



- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.902877 | Longitude: -115.514044 |
| 2. Latitude: 34.981766 | Longitude: -115.507272 |
| 3. Latitude: 34.981433 | Longitude: -115.505869 |
| 4. Latitude: 34.981713 | Longitude: -115.505377 |
| 5. Latitude: 34.980938 | Longitude: -115.501875 |
| 6. Latitude: 34.978447 | Longitude: -115.502647 |
| 7. Latitude: 34.980052 | Longitude: -115.598927 |
| 8. Latitude: 34.980469 | Longitude: -115.508816 |
| 9. Latitude: 34.984972 | Longitude: -115.515405 |

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Figure 1



Historical photograph taken 1940: Feature 01 Cookhouse, right; Feature 02 Commissary, left.
From *Westways* magazine.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Figure 2



Historical photograph taken 1947: view of Providence to southeast from mine.
Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Figure 3



Historical photograph taken 1940: Feature 35, left; Feature 37, right, view to south/southwest.
© John Fickewirth.

Providence Townsite
Name of Property

San Bernardino, California
County and State

Figure 4



Historical photograph taken 1937: view of upper buildings (Features 67, 70, 72).
UC Berkeley Jepson Herbarium Photo Collection.







































TOLSTOY

1885

SEP 24





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Providence Townsite

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, San Bernardino

DATE RECEIVED: 7/01/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/26/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/10/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/16/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000522

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Providence Site is locally significant under National Register Criteria A, C and D in the areas of Archaeology-Historic/Non-Aboriginal, Commerce, Exploration/Settlement, Industry, and Architecture. Established between 1880 and 1892, Providence served as the residential and commercial townsite supporting the Bonanza King silver mine in the East Mojave Desert. The 81-acre site features ruins and artifacts directly associated with the living conditions and adaptive building techniques of late-nineteenth century miners in the isolated mountain areas of San Bernardino County. Given the fact that little historic mapping was completed for the site, archeology is in a unique position to reveal details regarding the quality of life and diversity of experiences within the period of significance identified for the Providence Townsite, including the reported development of 4 distinct neighborhoods. Since the presence of women at Providence is among the topics underrepresented in the historic record, the systematic investigation of stratified archeological deposits could expect to speak directly to identifying the presence of women--and perhaps women of varied social classes--at Providence. The study of archeological deposits such as privies, middens, and can and bottle dumps may contain data that could be highly informative regarding matters of health, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, as well as provide insights into the consumption of alcohol and other items one might expect to be present. Finally, there are a host of health-related questions to which archeological investigation could profitably be deployed. Of particular note here is the Chemical Pile whose investigation could reveal the potential health consequences of this material on individuals residing in the nearby potential bunkhouse as compared to other townsite areas.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criteria A C & D

REVIEWER Paul Husignao / Julie Bernstein DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN / ARCHAEOLOGIST

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 8/16/2016

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**Providence Townsite
Essex (vicinity), San Bernardino County
Staff Report**

Providence Townsite is located in the vicinity of 7,162-foot Edgar Peak high in the Providence Mountains in eastern San Bernardino County. Providence is mostly within the boundaries of, and managed by, Mojave National Preserve, a unit of the National Park Service. The 81-acre district sits at the base of steep cliffs and peaks, at the top of an alluvial fan overlooking Fenner Valley. The townsite is clustered near the defunct Bonanza King Mine, one of the great silver mines of the nineteenth century. The district is composed of 47 stone buildings in various states of ruin—most of which include intact lower walls, six sites, and seventeen structures. Of particular interest is the intact nature of the village as a whole, despite the ruined state of the individual buildings, with most known original buildings represented as well as a network of roads and trails. The buildings were constructed of three types of local stone, including examples of buildings made of carved blocks of soft volcanic tuff. While all but two individual buildings or structures are in a state of ruin, overall the Providence site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Practically all of the buildings and structures dating from the period of significance remain in place and are further connected by the town's original road and trail system.

Providence Townsite is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Settlement, Commerce, and Transportation at the local level of significance for its association with southern California settlement and the mining industry. It is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance as an example of a distinctive building style utilizing local stone that shows varying designs and skills. It is also eligible under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology at the local level of significance for its potential to yield important information through archeological investigation and further study. It can be seen that the occupants of Providence were engaged in activities that created features or durable remains in sufficient quantity for archeological analysis, and evidence shows that archeological remains have survived. Property types and research themes applicable to Providence include commercial and domestic behavior (through building remains and potential archeology), and to a lesser extent, infrastructure development (roads) and industry (mine-related building remains, smithy sites). The period of significance is 1880 to 1892, reflecting the dates that the physical design of the town was created, built, revitalized, and then largely abandoned.

The property is nominated on behalf of Mojave National Preserve, a unit of the National Park Service. Approximately thirteen acres of private land (part of the old Bonanza King Mine) are included within the boundary, resulting in a concurrent nomination to be reviewed by the State Historical Resources Commission, and certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer as well as the National Park Service Federal Preservation Officer. No letters have been received to date. Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine that Providence Townsite meets National Register Criteria A, C, and D at the local level of significance with a period of significance 1880 to 1892. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing on the National Register.

Amy H. Crain
State Historian II
March 22, 2016

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



April 28, 2016

Joy Beasley, Federal Preservation Officer
Deputy Associate Director
Park Programs and National Heritage Areas
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street NW, Room 804
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Providence Townsite
San Bernardino County, California
National Register of Historic Places Nomination**

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the PROVIDENCE TOWNSITE to the National Register of Historic Places. On April 18, 2016 in San Francisco, California, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criteria A, C, and D with a period of significance 1880 to 1892.

Providence Townsite is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Settlement, Commerce, and Transportation for its association with southern California settlement and the mining industry. It is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of a distinctive building style utilizing local stone that shows varying designs and skills. It is also eligible under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology for its potential to yield important information through archeological investigation and further study.

The property is nominated on behalf of Mojave National Preserve, a unit of the National Park Service. Approximately thirteen acres of private land (part of the old Bonanza King Mine) are included within the boundary, resulting in a concurrent nomination. The cover page has been adapted for both of our signatures as certifying officials. The nomination has been prepared for digital submission to the Keeper of the National Register, in accordance with the guidance published in May 2013. Disk 1 of 2 contains the nomination in pdf format and Disk 2 of 2 contains the photographs as tif files.

Following your review and certification, please include the first sentence of this letter in your transmittal letter to the Keeper. The enclosed signature pages and our transmittal letters are the only printed pages that need to accompany the two disks to the Keeper. If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Amy Crain of my staff at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenan Saunders", written over a horizontal line.

Jenan Saunders
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



April 28, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Subject: **Providence Townsite
San Bernardino County, California a
National Register of Historic Places Nomination**

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the PROVIDENCE TOWNSITE to the National Register of Historic Places. On April 18, 2016 in San Francisco, California, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criteria A, C, and D with a period of significance 1880 to 1892.

Providence Townsite is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Settlement, Commerce, and Transportation for its association with southern California settlement and the mining industry. It is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of a distinctive building style utilizing local stone that shows varying designs and skills. It is also eligible under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology for its potential to yield important information through archeological investigation and further study.

The property is nominated on behalf of Mojave National Preserve, a unit of the National Park Service. Approximately thirteen acres of private land (part of the old Bonanza King Mine) are included within the boundary, resulting in a concurrent nomination certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the National Park Service Federal Preservation Officer. No letters have been received.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Amy Crain of my staff at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jenan Saunders".

Jenan Saunders
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RECEIVED 2280

JUL -1 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

June 28, 2016

Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service *Jay Beasley*

Subject: National Register Nomination for Providence Townsite, Mojave National Preserve, San Bernardino, CA

I am forwarding the National Register nomination for the Providence Townsite, located in Mojave National Preserve, in California. The document is being submitted as a concurrent nomination, as approximately 13 acres of the nominated boundary are in private ownership. The State Historic Preservation Office has followed all procedures for Concurrent State and Federal nominations, found in National Register Regulations section 60.10. The Park History Program has reviewed the nomination and found the property eligible at the local level of significance under Criteria A, C, and D. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Spradley-Kurowski at 202-354-2266, or kelly_spradley-kurowski@nps.gov.