

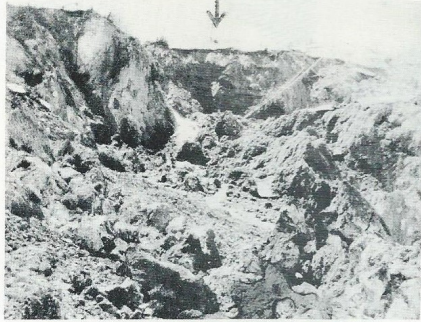
**THUNDER MOUNTAIN
"TOME UP"**

**THE
THUNDER MOUNTAIN
STORY**

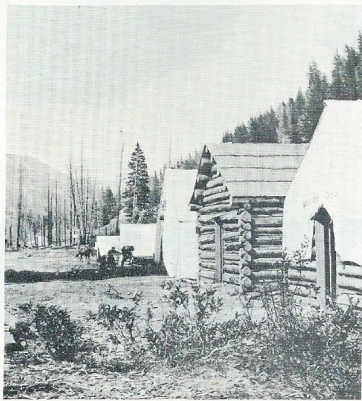


**IDAHO
TERRITORIAL
CENTENNIAL
1863-1963**

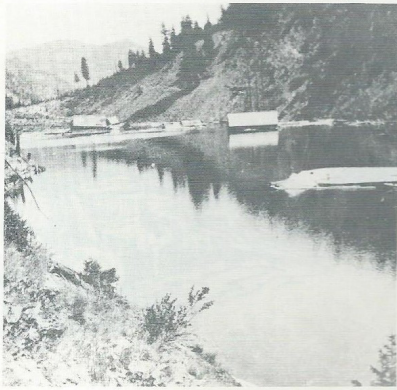
Price \$1.00



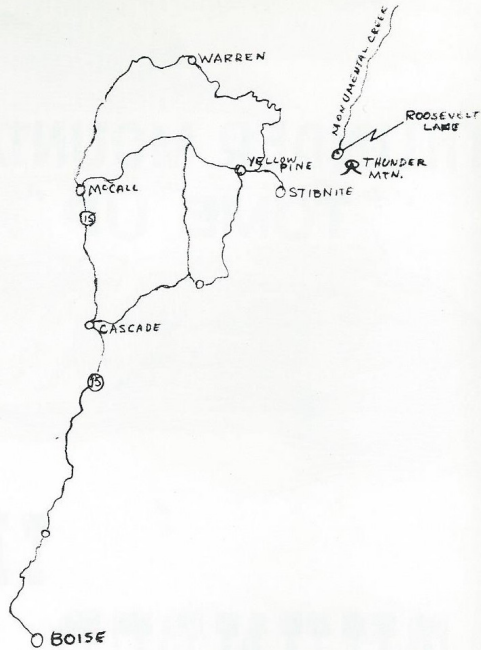
Head of Thunder Mountain earth slide that created the lake that inundated the entire mining camp of Roosevelt. Arrow indicates point where the slide broke off. It was 90 feet deep and 500 feet wide.



Roosevelt under construction, 1902. Note the Mining Recorders office in the right foreground.



Roosevelt Lake, a monument to former President Theodore.



First cabin to be built at Thunder Mountain was erected at Mule Creek by the Caswell Brothers in 1900. Arrow points to cabin.

The Thunder Mountain Story

By EARL WILLSON

The true saga of Thunder Mountain—that weird promontory within the Salmon River range of south central Idaho, has perhaps never been completely told. However, from the best reliable sources, the story is that the isolated mountain got its name from the Indian who, because of superstitious beliefs, gave the area a “wide berth” when certain atmospheric conditions during summer storms, built up unusual violent thunder that echoed and reverberated off the surrounding peaks in such a weird manner as to seem to be emanating from the mountain’s interior. And so vio-

lent are the storms intensity, that even the white man reacts to these unusual manifestations.

The area too, is in a deeply timbered divide separating Monumental, Marble and Mule Creeks, and the



McCall, Idaho — Payette Lakes. A Lick Creek route into Yellow Pine and the Thunder Mountain area. Photo taken some time in the early 1900's.

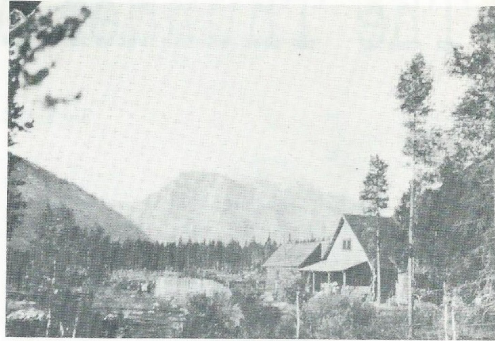
Early day transportation into the back country adjacent to Thunder Mountain is depicted in “Tiny” Roy Bower’s mare, Molly, as she is being fitted with snow shoes before taking off over the deep snow.



Presumably this mule was a member of the Spanish packer’s train when heavy equipment was moved into Thunder Mountain during the gold excitement. Jesus Urquid, the Spanish packer, was better known as “Kosuth”. He and Bill McClure had the largest pack strings in the district and packed in heavy mining equipment including a 1000-foot steel tram cable that took 30 mules. All this was accomplished before a wagon road was constructed.

terrain is in an unstable volcanic flow,—the movement of which is almost imperceptible, but nevertheless enough to be noticeable over long periods. Together with this slight movement of the surrounding terrain, and with the help of overflowing waters from Mule

Creek following a flash flood, the gigantic earth slide of 1908 broke off and slowly crept down the slope until it dammed Monumental Creek below the boom town of Roosevelt.—inundating that hamlet, and eventually creating what we know now as Roosevelt Lake. Roosevelt (named after President Theodore) was a sizeable wilderness metropolis hastily thrown together following the gold boom of 1901. The gold stampede that the Caswell brothers, Ben, Lew and Dan sparked when they discovered gold at the mouth of Monumental Creek and after tracing its source on Thunder Mountain, it was the richer streak of gold



Edwardsburg as it looked in the early 1900's. Looking up Big Creek in the direction of the Belvedere area and Profile District. These historical structures are still standing.



Yellow Pine, the "Shangri-La" of Idaho. On fringe of Thunder Mountain primitive area.

at the headwaters of Mule Creek that eventually set in motion the feverish gold rush, the likes of which has never been seen since. A gold rush of thousands of people from every walk of life. And like most gold rushes of that era, starting in the early spring when the winter's snow pack was thawing and the mountain streams were badly swollen in the back country where only trails penetrated the entire wilderness area.

Today the waters of this remote lake ripple over the roofless remains of a ghost town that has been the habitat of fish and other marine life for 52 years, after housing the short but hectic business and social life of perhaps what was the most isolated mining town in Idaho.

Among the many unusual things that made up the every day life of this wilderness town in those days, was the "cow pack string" of Asa Clark — the sizable



Clark's Cow Pack String enroute to Thunder Mountain to be used for milk during summer and fall. The cows were butchered for the winter meat supply.



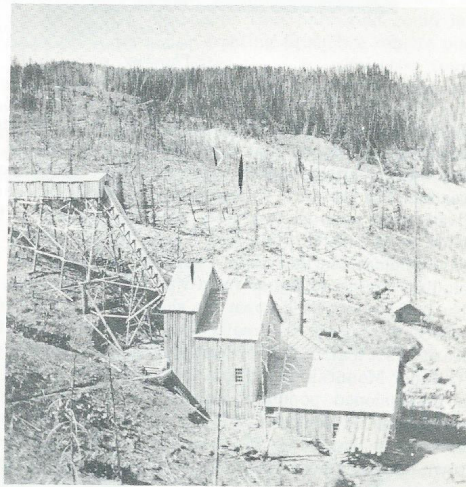
Burgdorf Hot Springs as it looked around the turn of the century. An important stage stop en route out of Lardo and Payette Lake to Warren.

string of milk cows that he packed, fully loaded with supplies, into Roosevelt during the boom, where he milked them in the summer and then butchered them in the fall to feed the miners.

This and the accompanying photo depicting mother Nature's towering monument, after which Monumental Creek derived its name, and the one taken of a pack mule resting while on its way into the remote camp loaded with a 500 pound crankshaft, was among the



Original "Pony" Smead ranch. Built in the 80's this South Fork log house, on the route into Thunder Mountain, was the place where "Pony" Smead and his Indian wife reared a large family and later was owned by the Dustons and Careys. Now the Barkell home.



Dewey Mill at Thunder Mountain in 1903. It is believed that the \$100,000 check paid by Colonel Dewey for the purchase of the property from the Caswell Brothers, was the largest check ever issued in Idaho up to that time.

Note the wake of earth slide to the right background.

unusual even in those days. And, in releasing for publication, the picture of Roosevelt and its submerged townsite which is now the lake, the story of this ghost town is not complete without the accompanying photo which shows the earth slide and where it started.

Many stories have been written about Thunder Mountain, and the sizeable metropolis of Roosevelt.—most of them all too strongly embellished with fiction in an effort to make them more interesting, even though most of these fictional efforts on the part of



Ghost Village of Roosevelt, Thunder Mountain, as it looked before the Flood. Named after the late President Theodore.

authors, destroy the true concept of this historical attraction. A story that if written as such, would be far more attractive and interesting for the average reader. For instance, to represent the hectic but short lived boom town as swarming with inhabitants at the time of the earth slide, and their frantic efforts to save themselves and their household possessions, including barrels of liquor from well stocked saloons, as the earth slide raced down the slope below Mule Creek where it started, is greatly exaggerated to say the least. As a matter of fact Roosevelt and the immediate Thunder Mountain areas was pretty much deserted by a disillusioned populace long before the disastrous earth slide let loose and slowly crept down the slope.—eventually damming Monumental Creek below the town, and as slowly inundating a hamlet that actually was already inhabited by ghosts. Ghosts of unusual characters like those that inhabited all deserted gold boom towns during that era where such monikers as Pick Handle Mike, Brown Gravy Sam, Hotfoot Davis, the Foolhen and the Flying Squirrel were among those many unusual names quite typical of a seething populace that only gold could bring into such an isolated place. A place, that in those days had no telephone nor other means of outside communication. No phonographs or other “canned” music for entertainment. A place where the winter’s snow blanket covered all structures so deep that the only transportation on top was possible by the dog team, skis, snow shoes or perhaps an occasional snow shoes equipped horse. No effort was made to remove the snow, other than from



*An unusual photo *of the partly submerged Thunder Mountain town of Roosevelt showing the debris and snow-mixed water as it rises to the eaves of submerged structures that are now entirely under the waters we now call Roosevelt Lake.*

windows to let in light, or a "shaft" down to the doors. In fact no such machine as a bulldozer or rotary plow was even thought about at that time, and the people just waited for hot sun and long days to clear the

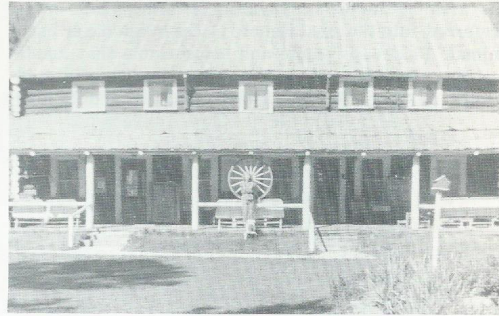


The modern Big Creek Lodge, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Glen Harper, is currently in operation as a reflection of the old pioneer establishments that are still in evidence at Edwardsburg.

roads and trails of this obstacle to conventional travel.

This writer, who viewed the submerged structures of Roosevelt only a short time after the rising waters had reached the eaves, saw a man sitting on a rooftop fishing.—another unusual sight, but no photograph to prove it.

Idaho perhaps has the novel distinction of being the only state in the Union where Mother Nature decreed



Cox Dude Ranch, owned by Lafe and Emma Cox, on Johnson Creek. This resort is on the fringe of the Thunder Mountain Wilderness area.

it her duty to bury a deserted ghost city under a lake of crystal clear, glacial cold water for all time.—A permanent monument of an era where rugged men and women trekked inland over well nigh impassable terrain to build a metropolis that only gold could have been the incentive for erecting in such a remote place.

Idaho has many attractions to offer the tourist within her gates, and especially within the boundaries of Valley County.—much of which is in the so called primitive area, and embraces unusually rugged terrain as well as oddly assorted caves, caverns and many places formerly inhabited by the Indian. Truly a wil-



Knox as it looked at the height of the Thunder Mountain gold excitement. A way station on the long rough road through Cabin Creek summit and thence into the remote district.

derness paradise of well over a million acres where the old as well as the young can now travel deep within the area by motor conveyance of some kind, or if preferred, into the most remote places by saddle or pack animal. Places so remote and inaccessible that man's feet have seldom trod. A primitive paradise of untold wealth in undeveloped resources and rugged beauty



The Monument for which Monumental Creek was named — a natural "Space Needle".

unsurpassed anywhere else in the United States with the possible exception of the Yellowstone National Park.

However, in regards to the immediate Thunder Mountain area, and the submerged hamlet of Roosevelt, where the restless terrain will no doubt bring about radical changes in the topography over the next few decades, with the continual erosion that is slowly filling the lake with silt, may we just visualize the buried remains of this ghost town above which a lush meadow will be the habitat of wild animals, even as it used to be before man's endeavors reached into this remote wilderness and built a town inhabited by hundreds of gold crazed people? This is but one phase of evolution, and the end of the world as we know it.

Thunder Mountain, and the now extinct city of Roosevelt, is but one phase of many interesting changes that has taken place throughout the entire primitive area where, up until the early 1930's, the only mode of transportation was via the saddle or pack animal over a network of crude trails where the far flung inhabitant had to pack in their every necessity of life during the short snow-free season. An area where the mountaineer's cabin and his possessions were never locked against a neighbor who might find it



A restaurant inside one of the many tents that were thrown up on the site where later a boom town mushroomed practically overnight to accommodate the thousands of gold-fevered people that swarmed into the remote Thunder Mountain area.

necessary to seek shelter from emergencies that might arise.—This was the unwritten code of the mountain folk whose hospitality was never abused until the advent of the "outlander" who abused every hospitable privilege of trust, and forced the inhabitant to be suspicious of every traveler and use everything at his command to resist uninvited-encroachment into his



General Mercantile store at Thunder (usually referred to as Thunder City). This store was presumed to have been owned and operated by the Logue family of Long Valley. The store was an important supply center for pack trains en route to the "back country".

world of privacy. Privacy, that currently the primitive areas resident would willingly relinquish to the tourist who would learn that the settler within the area had the same right of strict privacy in his cabin and adjacent territory, as they enjoy on the "outside" where trespassing on their premises would be unthinkable unless done outside the pale of the law.

Thunder Mountain and its closely associated primi-



Cascade, Idaho in 1934. A gateway to the primitive areas of Thunder Mountain, via Warm Lake.

tive areas are reached by a picturesque and pleasant drive out of Boise, Idaho, over highway 15 to Cascade and Payette Lakes.—both of which have interesting recreational areas on the fringes of this vast and awe inspiring wilderness where the Cox Dude Ranch on Johnson Creek, Yellow Pine and Big Creek Lodge currently accommodates the venturesome tourist on the threshold of Valley County's paradise—a reflection of an era when Edwardsburg and adjacent areas were reached only by a network of crude trails.

The Thunder Mountain back country, abounding as it does with elk, big horn mountain sheep, goat and deer amid exceptionally rugged but beautiful terrain where Mother Nature's mountain streams, lakes and rivers are teeming with excellent trout, is truly a paradise for those tourists desiring the services of

numerous packers and guides within the area. And for the traveler who may prefer the attractions on the fringe areas of the Thunder Mountain wilderness, both Cascade Lake and Payette Lake have abundant amusements typical of those beautiful inland bodies of water adjacent to highway 15 out of Boise Idaho.

Officially designated as a territory in 1863, Idaho will celebrate its 100th birthday as a territory in 1963. It's a birthday that will be celebrated more or less over the entire state. This Territorial Centennial will also draw the attention of many others, including travelers to and from the Seattle World's Fair who perhaps may have an opportunity to see Idaho for the first time, and be so impressed with the state's attractions that they will return in 1963.



Warren, Idaho — one time county seat of Idaho County and historical gold camp through which gold-

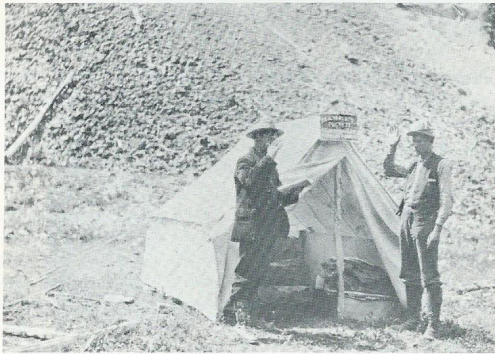
crazed people stampeded into the remote Thunder Mountain area during the boom.



A joint saloon and restaurant doing a rush business while the isolated town of Roosevelt was being constructed to house the many places of business, both good and bad, that was typical of such camps during that era.



Here the rising waters of Monumental Creek are slowly inundating the mining town of Roosevelt, Idaho.



First quarters of the law office of Hawley and Pucket at Roosevelt during the gold boom. The late James Hawley, former governor of Idaho, and Pucket are in the foreground.

Sources of Information and Photographs

- Public Library, Boise, Idaho*
- Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho*
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert McRae, Boise, Idaho*
- Mr. and Mrs. Lafe Cox, Yellow Pine, Idaho*
- Harry Nook, Cascade, Idaho*
- Mrs. Hollie Shipp*
- Pete Peterson, Emmett, Idaho*
- Napier Edwards, Big Creek, Idaho*



"Curley" Brewer, Thunder Mountain mail carrier, out bound from Warren, Idaho, with the mail in 1901, before the remote camp of

Roosevelt had a postoffice and mail service under contract.

The Late "Bill" Timm.---Prospector And Assayer
During the Thunder Mountain Gold Rush



At his cabin in historical
Thunder Mountain

THE OLD PROSPECTOR'S HOME

(By John H. Blake)

Do I love it? Aye, I love it,
As I've not loved afore,
My cabin's bin a restin' place,
Home, an' a hull lot more.
"Home!" did I say? Aye, that's the word
By which it's known to me.
I wouldn't part wi' the dear place
Fur palace by the sea.
I love its logs, its beams, its roof,
The pine boards o' its door,
The strings o' bark, the hard baked earth,
The knot holes in its floor.
Right in that bunk for thirty year
I've nightly laid my head,
I kinder think I couldn't sleep
Sweet in a rich man's bed.
There ain't no rent, ner tax, ner lien
On this ole shack o' mine,
It needs no lock to keep folks out,
All, all are welcome in.
Ye'll guess then, why, oh stranger friend,
I love this dear ol' home;
I couldn't find a richer one
In ary place I'd roam.

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