

DENEMORE MINING DISTRICT

FAST FACTS

DISTRICT a.k.a.:

Big Elk or Saltese.

LOCATION:

All the streams that drain the eastern slopes of the Bitterroot Mountains, west of deBorgia.

DATE DISCOVERED:

1890s.

DISCOVERED BY:

Unknown.

PRINCIPAL MINES:

The 'Agnes', the 'Amazon-Dixie', the 'Monitor', the 'St. Lawrence', the 'Switchback' and the 'Taft'.

CAMPS AND TOWNS:

Taft, post office: 1907 – 1913. Silver City, no post office, renamed; Saltese, post office: 1892 – 1983.

REMAINS:

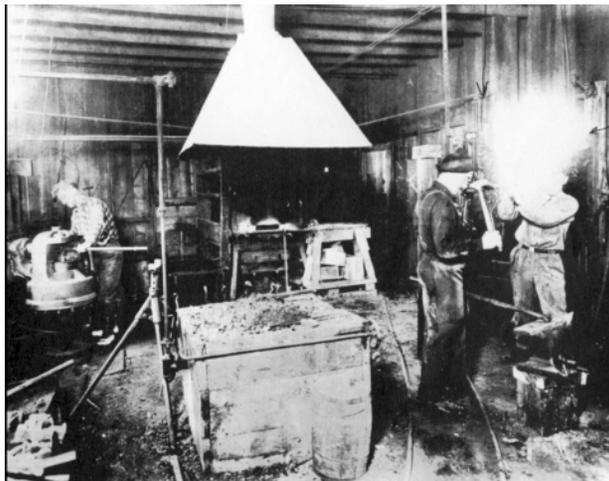
Nothing at Taft, possible mine buildings in the surrounding hills.

The Denemora Mining District encompasses all the streams that drain the eastern slopes of the Bitterroot Mountains to the St. Regis River, west of the town of deBorgia.



TAFT, ca 1908. NOTE THE BEER BARRELS IN FRONT OF THE SALOON.

(Mineral County Historical Society collection)



THE BLACKSMITHS AT THE 'AMAZON-DIXIE' MINE
(Mineral County Historical Society collection)

Some placer mining was done in the region as early as the 1860s and thereafter travelers along the Mullan Road tried their luck on any stream that took their fancy, but results did not excite prospectors and no stampede to the district occurred.

In 1908, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was constructing a line along the St. Regis River valley and had reached the small settlement of Taft. From here an 8,750 foot tunnel was to be bored through the Bitterroots to Idaho and since time was of the essence, hundreds, some say as many as two thousand, miners poured into the town. English, Irish, Welsh, Italian, Slavic and a host of other nationalities flocked to the railhead and for a period the town was

known as the wickedest city in America. It lived up to its reputation, for in a four year span it registered 44 deaths and it was estimated that the little cemetery eventually contained 72 unmarked graves. With the completion of the tunnel the crowds of miners left and the town became positively sedate. Until the fire of 1910 wiped it out. Part of it was rebuilt, only to suffer the indignity of being knocked down to become the base of I-90 in 1962.

Although not spectacular, lode mining was carried out at numerous locations throughout the district, with the 'Monitor' and nearby 'Switchback' on Silver Creek being two of the biggest. The Mining World of July 11th 1908 reported "Work will be resumed on the property of the 'Monitor' mine, under option to H. F. Samuels. It is worked through a shaft and has produced \$270,000 worth of ore." Later that year it advised its readers "Fourteen claims, adjoining the 'Monitor' are being developed by a tunnel 800 feet deep which has tapped the main vein, cross cutting 16 ft. of sulphide ore assaying 29% copper. Five men have been working on the property for the past two years." Despite the forest fire of 1910 which wiped out the surface structures of both mines, they appeared to be back in operation by 1913, when the Mining and Engineering World magazine said "a vein explored 1,000 feet has revealed high grade copper and good gold value."

Production from the 'Monitor' and a few other mines in the district continued, on and off, until the 1930s.



THE SNOW GOT DEEP IN TAFT IN FEBRUARY 1908
(Virginia Weisel Johnson collection)