

SILVER PEAK RAILROAD AND ASSOCIATED MINING AREAS, HUMBOLT COUNTY, NEVADA

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INTRODUCTION

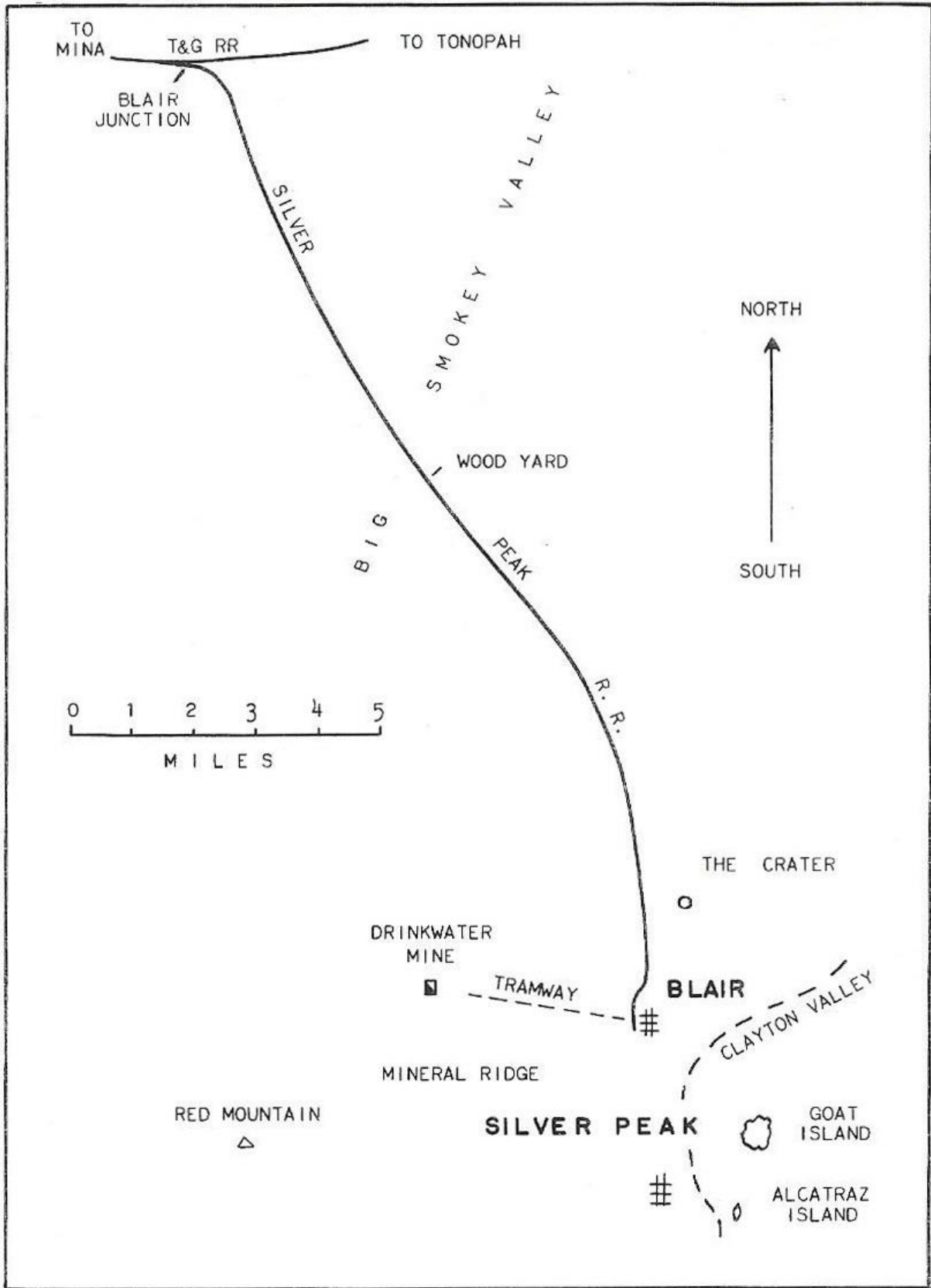
This report is part of a research project that describes the relationships between mines and railroads in the Mojave Desert and southwestern Great Basin of southeastern California and southwestern Nevada. t

The collection can be accessed at
<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/railroads.html>

Italics indicate quotations.

HISTORY

The Silver Peak Railroad (Blair) line was a spur line from the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad that serviced the Silver Peak mining district. **Blair Junction** was about half way between Tonopah and Tonopah Junction in Big Smokey Valley on the southern flank of the Monte Cristo Range. The Silver Peak Railroad Company was organized in 1906 and the line completed to the Tonopah and Goldfields railroad at Blair Junction that same year. The district ceased activity in 1948 following a fire (Myrick, 1963:202-293).

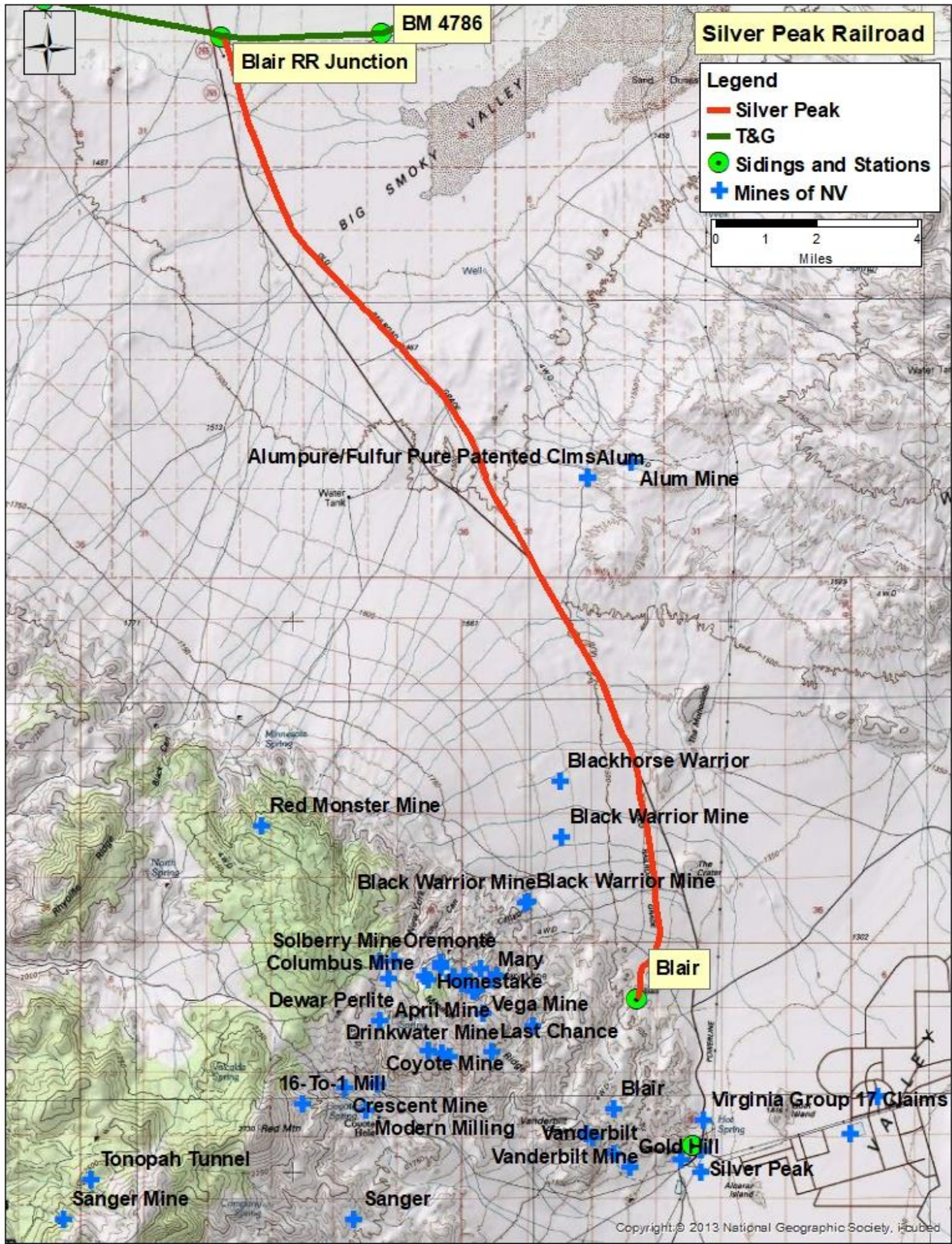


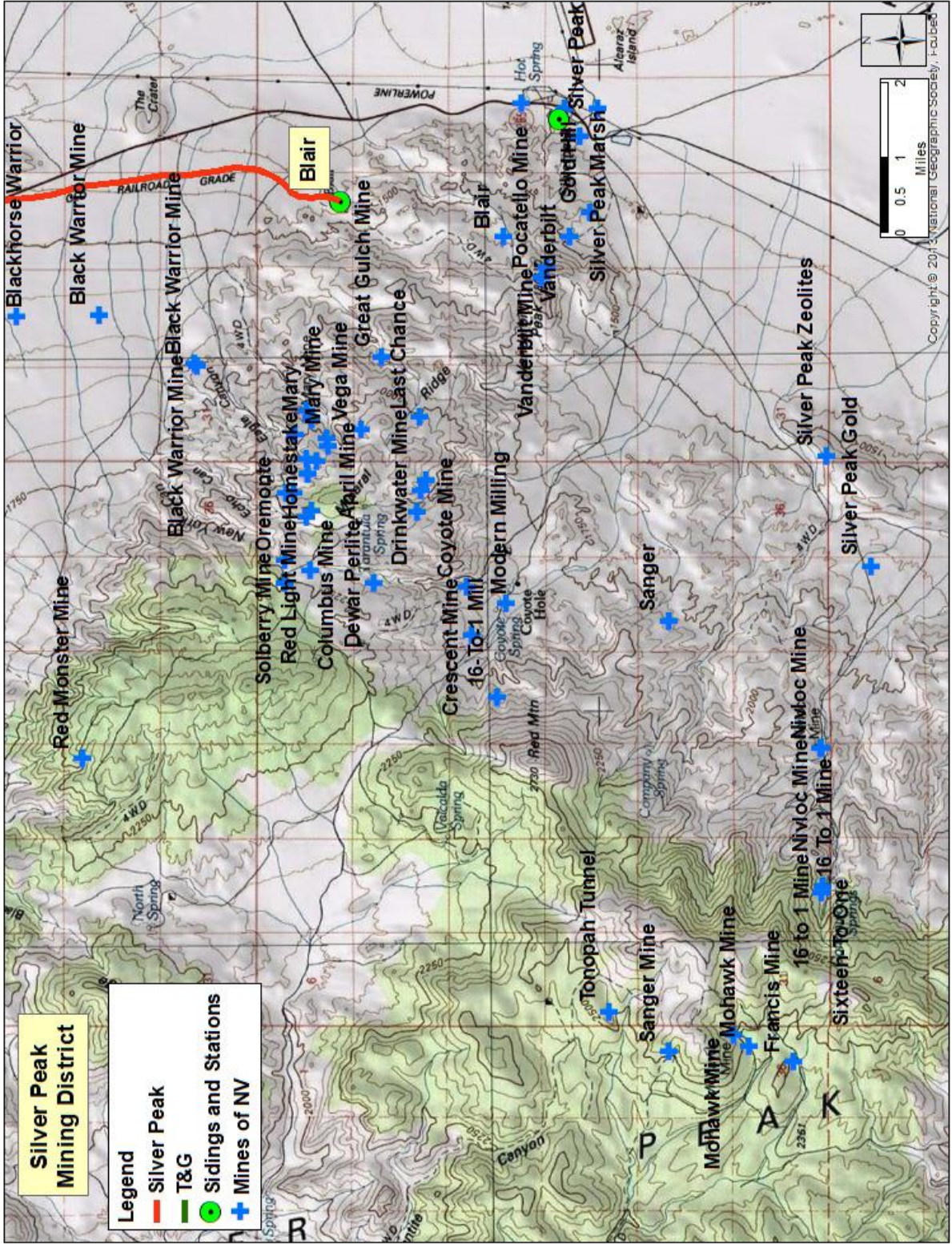
Caption: Map of the Silver Peak Railroad. From Myrick, 1963, p.293.

From Blair Junction, Blair Line went southeast to pass the western edge of the Weepah Mountains and then it went south past The Crater volcano to Blair. Blair was a town that serviced the mines Silver Peak and Mineral Ridge in the northern Silver Peak Range. The towns of Silver Peak and Blair were in the northwestern part of Clayton Valley (Albers and Stewart, 1972; Spurr, 1906, Shamberger, 1976).

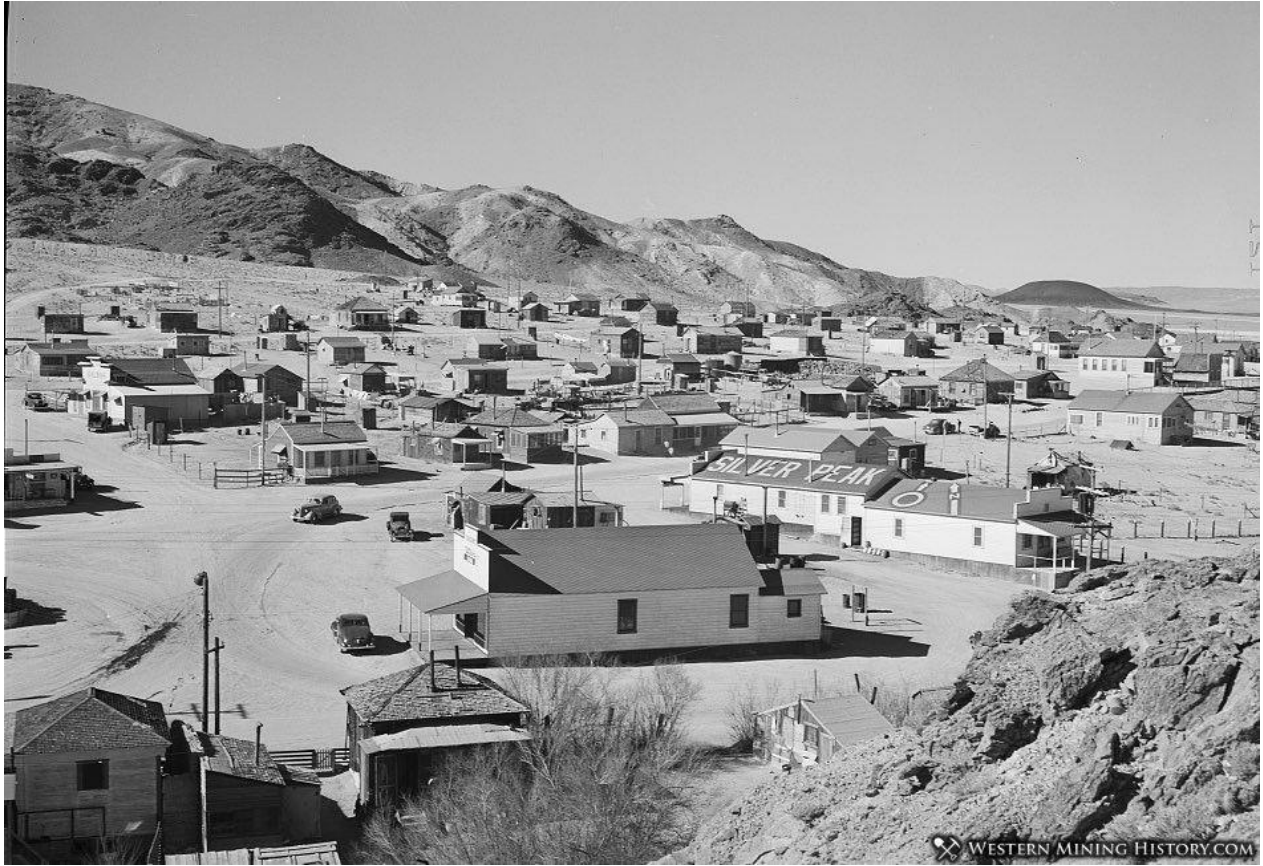
Silver Peak is one of the oldest mining areas in Nevada, discovered in 1863; it produced substantial amounts of silver, gold, and other minerals. The town site was established in 1864 due to a spring that was in the area. A 10 stamp mill was built in 1865 and a 20 stamp mill was built in 1867. However, mining was far from steady in the area as the mines changed ownership and new milling techniques were invented. The ups and downs of the mining industry resulted in a fluctuation in the population as well. In 1948 a fire burned the town of Silver Peak. After that there was little activity until 1966, when the Foote Mineral Company started its lithium extracting operations in nearby Clayton Valley (Emerald County, Nevada, 2023).

These mines in the Blair-Silver Peak area included the 16 to 1, April, Black Warrior Mine, Blair, Columbus Mine, Coyote Mine, Crescent Mine, Crowning Glory Mine, Dewar Perlite, Drinkwater Mine, Esmeralda Prospect, Foote Minerals Gravel Pit, Gold Hill, Golden Eagle Mine, Great Gulch Mine, Homestake, Last Chance, Mary, Mineral Ridge Mine, Modern Milling, Oremonte, Pocatello Mine, Red Light Mine, Silver Peak, Silver Peak Marsh, Solberry Mine, Vanderbilt, Vega Mine, Virginia Group 17 Claims, and Western Soldier Mine. Descriptions of these mines are in NBMG (1990:32), Spurr (1906:24, 36, 63, 73-77), Minobras (1963:16) Keith (1977); Hewett (1956:113), Koschmann and Bergendahl (1968), Albert and Stewart (1972:71), Shamberger (1976), Quade and Tingley (1985), and Lowe and others (1985). Some of the major mines were at elevations of over 7,000 feet while the towns were at 4,300 feet. A tramway 1.5 miles long connected the mines to the ore bins at the foot of the mountains and huge wagons used to haul ore to the mills (Myrick, 1963:292).





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Caption: Silver Peak, Nevada, 1940. From <https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/nevada/silver-peak/> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.



Caption: Silver Peak, Nevada 1940 - note the stamp mill in the left part of the photo.

From <https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/nevada/silver-peak/> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.



Caption: Silver Peak railroad with Blair Baseball Team riding the McKeen Motor Car "Mary" to Tonopah. From Nevada State Railroad Museum

REFERENCES

All references in this report are available at <http://www.greggwilkerson.com/iv-references.html>