

2530 0013

(247)
Item 26

Location Number: NY 017

Location: Jefferson
Coordinates: 38°43' / 116°58' T10N R45E S13
Elevation: 7400'
Map Sources: USGS Jefferson Quadrangle; Nevada Map Atlas; Toiyabe National Forest Map
References: Paher; Carlson; Mordy; Angel; Personal Communication with R. J. Fitzwater; Site Investigation 7/28/77
Photographs: KR64-JMC#2: 24-25; PlusX-JW#T6: OA-16
Status: Potential National Register Site

Jefferson is a 20-acre site that covers the north- and south-facing slopes of Jefferson Canyon on the west side of the Toquima Range. Jefferson Creek runs the length of the canyon floor and drains toward Big Smoky Valley. Pinon pines, willows, elms, and low-growing vegetation line the banks of the creek.

Silver was discovered at Jefferson in 1866 and production began in 1871. A two-part town had developed by 1874. The lower town contained the mine sites and two stamp mills. The upper town, to the east, supported stores, blacksmith shops, a livery stable, offices, restaurants, sawmills, hotels, an express office, and other such enterprises. By 1881, when the mines were exhausted, Jefferson had been abandoned. Subsequent mining operations proved to be unsuccessful, and the town was completely abandoned by the 1930s.

There are approximately 25 structures in various states of ruin at Jefferson. Twenty percent of the structures are wood-frame; 80% are rubble rock. Free-standing footings, piers, slabs, and walls up to 4 feet in height are all that remain of some structures; others are in fair condition and support good roofs.

Several ruins are situated on the north-facing slope of the canyon. There are remnants of a 40' x 28' x 60' high stamp mill, framed with 12" x 12" timbers. The foundation consists of 3-foot-diameter concrete piers that are 4 feet high. Associated with the stamp mill is a 15-foot-long by 6-foot-diameter horizontally mounted metal furnace that is faced on the exterior with mortared rock.

Other structures include a 25' x 15' ruin with a low-rise wooden roof. Its 11-foot-high walls are constructed of rock and mortar. The structure has been washed with a mud application to smooth the walls. A 50' x 50' x 15 foot high wood-frame ruin with a sagging roof is in a deteriorated condition. Scattered ruins of concrete walls, foundations, and dugouts dot the slope. One 40' x 15' x 12 foot high rock ruin has 12-inch-thick mortared walls. Another, with only the east wall standing, is 50' x 40' x 16 feet high; its walls are 24 inches thick.

On the south-facing slope there is a 35' x 20' x 15 foot high wood-frame structure with a stone chimney and a medium-rise wood-frame roof with corrugated-metal roofing. A 30' x 20' x 12 foot high rock structure with the south elevation constructed of adobe is abutted to a retaining wall. Scattered rock ruins and dugout structures also appear on this slope.

At another part of the site, there is a 25' x 12' wood-frame and rock building. Its long axis is east-west. The structure is 8-1/2 feet high at the eave line of a high-pitched gabled roof and rises another 7 feet to a 12-inch-diameter log ridgepole. Peeled logs are used for the rafters, which have 1" x 6" and 1" x 12" sheathing covered with wood shingles. The gabled area on the west elevation is finished on the exterior with vertical board-and-batten siding. The walls are 19 inches thick; headers consist of 6" x 6" railroad ties and 2" x 6" hand-hewn logs. The interior surfaces of the walls are partially plastered, the flooring is 1" x 6" tongue-and-groove hardwood. A partition divides the structure into two rooms joined by a door. One room is 14' x 13'; the other is 13' x 9-1/2'. Another door leads to a 15' x 4' x 10-1/2-foot-high rubble-rock dugout addition with a dirt floor. A stovepipe, 4 inches in diameter, extends 8 feet above the roof level. Fenestration in the north, east, and west elevations is 20%, 5%, and 20%, respectively. A rubble-rock retaining wall supports the southwest corner of the structure. The wall is 16 feet long and 7 feet high and varies in width from 14 to 28 inches.

Typical ruins of structures at Jefferson are shown in the following photographs.

