

A Transportation History of the Galena Summit in Blaine County, Idaho



Prepared for:



Idaho Transportation Department
3311 W. State Street
Boise, Idaho 83703

Prepared by:

Jennifer Gorman, M.H.P.
Gorman Preservation Associates
Spokane, Washington

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
PRE-CONTACT TRAILS NEAR GALENA SUMMIT	4
FUR TRADERS AND EARLY EXPLORATION	6
SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST	16
MODERN HIGHWAYS	19

Front Page Photo Caption: *Photograph of the Galena Spiral along US-93 in the Sawtooth Mountains.
Date unknown (Idaho State Historical Society).*

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1937 Road Map of Idaho. The yellow dot indicates the location of the Galena Summit along US-93 (now ID-75). (David Rumsey Map Collection).....	3
Figure 2. Sawtooth Mountain range looking east. Date Unknown.	4
Figure 3. 1871 photograph of Sheepeater family taken by William Henry Jackson. (Google Images)	5
Figure 4. 1878 map of Alturas County, Idaho. Note that at this time cartographers did not have adequate information to depict the Sawtooth Mountain Range or Wood River Valley on a map. (David Rumsey Map Collection)	5
Figure 5. Fur traders, circa 1900 (Community Library, Ketchum #F 00043)	6
Figure 6. Postcard of fur trader and his pelts. (Google Images)	8
Figure 7. 1891 Map of the mining districts around Boise, Bayhorse, and later, the Wood River Valley. Red star indicates approximate location of Galena Summit. (David Rumsey Map Collection)	9
Figure 8. Stagecoach along the road that ran through Mountain Home, Rocky Bar, and Atlanta. (Idaho State Historical Society, GR 62-50.14)	10
Figure 9. "One of the remaining buildings from the most recent period of mining activity, Vienna group mines, Smiley Canyon." (Goodwin and Hussey 1965)	10
Figure 10. 1900 USGS Topographic map showing the Alturas Lake Trail, Galena Toll Road and other trails in the Sawtooth Valley mining area near Galena Summit. Circled in red are the towns of Galena, Sawtooth (City), and Vienna. The blue star indicates the Galena Summit. (USGS 1900)	11
Figure 11. Frank Scott's 1882 Map of the mining regions in the Wood River and Upper Salmon and Upper Boise Rivers. Circled in yellow are the towns of Sawtooth City, Vienna, Galena, Atlanta, and Ketchum. (Idaho State Historical Society)	12
Figure 12. Example of a freight wagon, date unknown.	13
Figure 13. Photo of a horse-drawn mail carrier through the Wood River Valley, circa 1925. (Blaine Country History Museum)	14
Figure 14. 1913 map of the trails along the mining camps in the Sawtooth and Big Wood River Valleys. Red dashed line indicates the Galena Toll Road route. The blue star indicates the Galena Summit part of the road. (Umpleby 1913)	15
Figure 15. Big Smokey Ranger Station in the Sawtooth National Forest, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 07557).....	16
Figure 16. Rider crossing a stream in the Big Smokey area, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 07534)	16
Figure 17. Advertisement for travelers to visit Idaho, date unknown. (Blaine County Historical Museum)	17
Figure 18. Forest Service inspection in the Sawtooth National Forest, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F03225).....	18
Figure 19. Postcard of the "Galena Spiral", a hairpin turn along U.S. 93. (ITD Archives, #ISAP2005-23Roads_039).....	19
Figure 20. Photograph of cars driving the unpaved road to Galena Summit, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 00015).....	20
Figure 21. 1937 Rand McNally & Co. road map of US-93 through the Galena Summit. The solid red = hard surface road, the thick dash = semi-surfaced road (apt to be dusty when dry and muddy when wet), and the light dash = graded earth surface. (David Rumsey Map Collection)	21
Figure 22. 1949 Rand McNally & Co. map which shows US-93 paved just past Sun Valley then the road is "improved" until it reaches Galena where it changes to just a graded road through Stanley and beyond. (David Rumsey Map Collection)	21
Figure 23. View from Galena Summit at the Stanley Basin. (Community Library, Ketchum #F 02680)	22
Figure 24. Plowing on Galena Summit in 1953. (ITD Photo Archives, MS281_06366 Box 11 Folder 5)...	23
Figure 25. Traveling on the highway (US-93), circa 1958. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 03948)	23

INTRODUCTION

The Galena Summit is one of the highest highway peaks in Idaho. It is located approximately 30 miles north of Ketchum in Blaine County, Idaho, within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). At approximately 8,700 feet above sea level, the Galena Summit overlooks the Sawtooth Valley and Sawtooth Mountains and has always been a scenic stopping point for explorers, miners, recreationists, and tourists. In the 1960s, the U.S. Forest Service and Federal Highway Administration constructed a motorist stop approximately 3/4-mile north of the summit along Idaho State Highway 75. In 2011, the rest stop was completely demolished and replaced by the U.S. Forest Service. It is now called the Bethune and Frank Church Overlook. Today the rest stop at Galena Summit features a parking area and overlook lined by a manufactured stone wall with interpretive panels for historic and geographic information on the area. This stretch of highway is one of the most scenic in Idaho and is a popular tourist destination for its natural beauty and close vicinity to the resort area of Sun Valley.

The term “Galena Summit” should not be confused with Galena Peak, which is located approximately 5.6 miles northeast of the highway summit, and marks one of the high elevations (although not the highest, which is Ryan Peak) of the Boulder Mountain range.

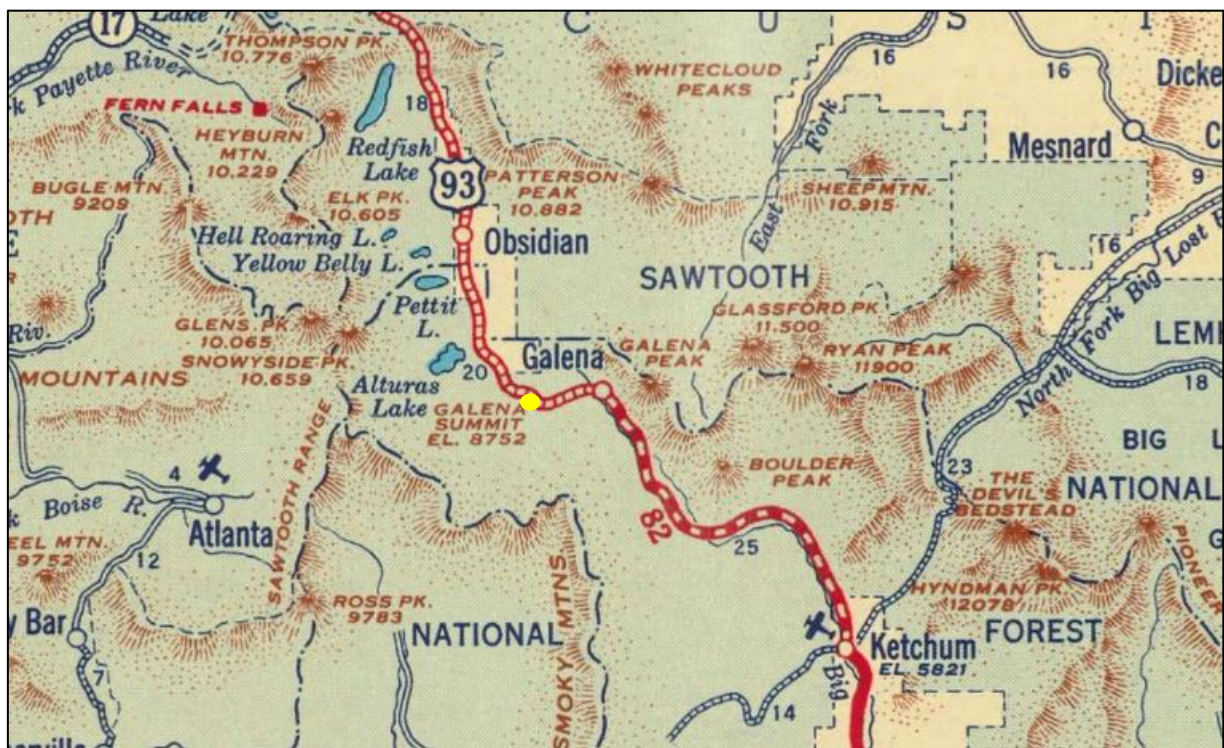


Figure 1. 1937 Road Map of Idaho. The yellow dot indicates the location of the Galena Summit along US-93 (now ID-75). (David Rumsey Map Collection)

PRE-CONTACT TRAILS NEAR GALENA SUMMIT

The earliest Native Americans in central Idaho were part of the Nez Perce and Northern Shoshone. The Northern Shoshone were divided into a number of bands, including the Lemhi Shoshone, located in the Lemhi Valley, and the “Sheepeaters,” who were largely located along the Salmon River and hunted sheep in the Sawtooth Mountain range.¹ The Sheepeaters resided in camps along the Salmon River, in present-day Blaine and Custer Counties. They lived in fishing villages during the winter and fishing season, and hunted and gathered in the upland areas as part of their seasonal migration.²

When European settlers arrived in North America and brought horses, the Lemhi Shoshone adapted to the equestrian lifestyle and their settlement patterns widened, as did their geographical area for hunting, trade, and social organization. However, the Sheepeaters did not widely adopt the use of the horse, and, as such, kept most of their traditional migration patterns, traveling on foot.³ The Sheepeaters were organized in small groups, consisting of two or three families, under the leadership of an older, experienced man. These small groups would move as food supply changed with the seasons. Mountain sheep were an important food source, but the groups also subsisted on salmon, deer, roots, and berries.⁴ In summer months, these smaller units would gather seeds, bulbs, roots, and hunt game along the headwaters of the Salmon River, the East Fork of the Salmon River, the Lost River Range, the Salmon Range, and the Sawtooth Range. In the winter months, these groups would join together. Approximately 30 families gathered at the principal village, Pasasigwana, which was located at a warm spring in the mountains north of present day Clayton.⁵



*Figure 2. Sawtooth Mountain range looking east. Date Unknown.
(Idaho State Historical Society, AERO_00827_1)*

Migration patterns along this region indicate that there were trails throughout the Sawtooth Range. However, very little is written about these pre-contact trails near the Galena Summit. When fur traders arrived at the area as early as the 1820s, they noted the existence of arrows found around the area and wrote about “Indian trails,” indicating the presence of Native Americans, however early maps do not identify Native American trails at or near the Galena Summit. For example, one trail is noted along Smiley Creek:

One Indian trail used in these wanderings cross the Sawtooth Range was by way of the present Smiley Creek. And certainly, there were other frequently used routes over the mountains, to the Wood River drainage, to the South and Middle Forks of the Boise, and to the South Fork of the Payette.⁶



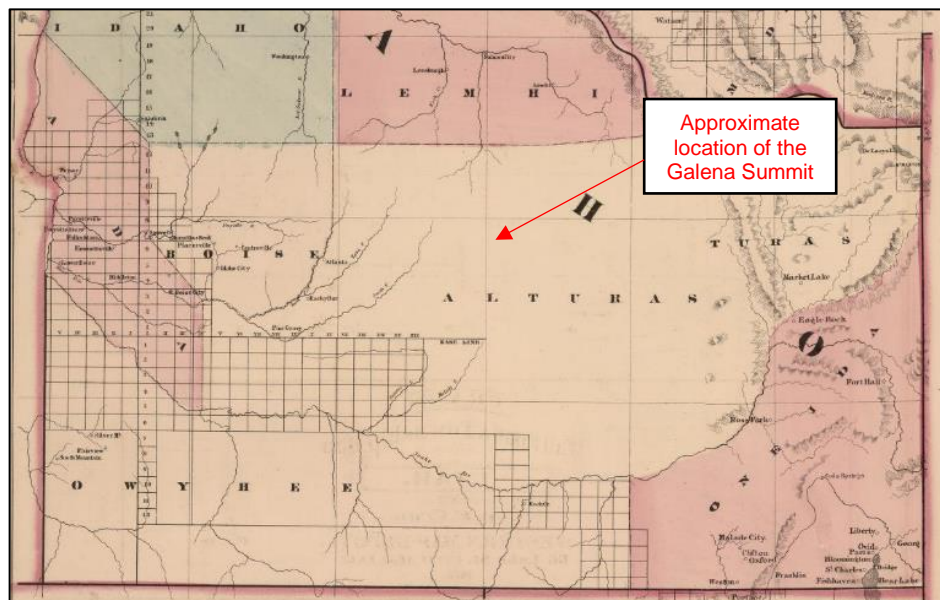
When Montana pioneer and miner, Levi Smiley, first arrived at the area in 1878, it is noted that he used the same trail along the same creek that was eventually named after him.⁷ Shortly thereafter, more mining prospectors arrived at the area and the mountain Shoshone (Sheepeaters) retreated to more remote areas of the Sawtooths, including the area that is now known as the Sawtooth Wilderness Area.⁸

Figure 3. 1871 photograph of Sheepeater family taken by William Henry Jackson. (Google Images)

The same year Levi Smiley arrived to the Sawtooths, the Bannock War, an armed conflict between the Bannock and Paiute against the U.S. government, broke out. The Bannock were a Native American tribe that spoke Northern Paiute and belonged to the Shoshonean branch of the Ut-Aztecan linguistic stock, like the Shoshone. Their shared culture kept peace between the two tribes, but the incoming Euroamerican emigrants threatened Bannock and Shoshone territory. After the Bannock War of 1878, hostilities between the Euroamerican settlers and the Sheepeaters continued until the U.S. military dispatched several detachments of troops to arrest the Shoshoni responsible for allegedly killing multiple ranchers, homesteaders, and miners along the Salmon River.⁹

In 1879, the mountain Shoshone surrendered and were taken to Fort Hall Reservation in southeastern Idaho, near present-day Pocatello and Blackfoot. By 1900, nearly all of the Shoshone and Bannock were removed from their land and placed on the reservation.¹⁰

Figure 4. 1878 map of Alturas County, Idaho. Note that at this time cartographers did not have adequate information to depict the Sawtooth Mountain Range or Wood River Valley on a map. (David Rumsey Map Collection)



FUR TRADERS AND EARLY EXPLORATION

The earliest non-Native travelers through this area were North American fur traders. One of the most prominent fur trading companies in the early part of the 19th century was the North West Company based in Montreal, Canada.

The company sent explorers into the wilderness that became the Pacific Northwest of the United States and western Canada in search of beaver and other pelts, and to set up trading posts to trade with the Native Americans. Alexander MacKenzie's persistence led the North West Company to achieve the first overland route to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. Even still, the Sawtooth Mountain range was largely untraveled for the first two decades of the 19th century. In a 1965 study, U.S. Forest Service historians said of the area:

The jagged peaks and alpine valley of the Sawtooth Range remained untrodden by the European frontiersman who pioneered the first routes of travel across the continent. Shut off on all sides by miles of rugged mountains, by unnavigable rivers, and on the south, by the barren plain of Snake River, this isolated area offered no easy route of through travel. Lewis and Clark in 1805 and 1806 passed far to the north by way of the Clearwater drainage; and the overland Astorians under William Price Hunt in 1810 and 1811 opened the great transcontinental route [the Oregon Trail] to the southward along the Snake River.¹¹

However, the search for beaver and other pelts drove American and British interests to the remote area of Alturas County. As early as 1816, Alexander MacKenzie went on two expeditions with a group through what is now southern Idaho. MacKenzie was in charge of interior trade west of the Rockies and built Fort Nez Perce at the junction of the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers.¹² His first expedition led his men to



Figure 5. Fur traders, circa 1900 (Community Library, Ketchum #F 00043)

the Boise River, where they tried to set up a trading post near the river's mouth, but Native Americans burned the trading post and killed the two men building it. His second expedition in 1820 took him east of present-day Arco to Big Lost River and Little Lost River. From here, MacKenzie and his men headed west and "fell on" Big Wood River.¹³ According to the aforementioned 1965 U.S. Forest Service history of the Sawtooth Mountain area, "By the summer of that year, then, the Boise, the Wood River, Big Lost River, and Little Lost River- all the easier southern approaches to the upper Salmon drainage and the Sawtooth Range- had been pioneered."¹⁴

In 1821, the North West Company merged with its former rival, Hudson's Bay Company. Three years later, a fur trader and explorer for Hudson's Bay Company named Alexander Ross took a group of men back to southern Idaho. This time, the group of trappers followed the Big Wood River north to the Salmon River. It is possible that they came upon the Galena Summit during this expedition, as Alexander Ross wrote of the expedition years later, "No elevated height in this country can present a more interesting prospect than that viewed from the top of Mount Simpson [*Galena Summit*], the west in particular."¹⁵



Figure 6. View from Galena Summit in 1940. (Idaho State Archives, ITD_05125 Drawer 4 Box 1 Folder 101)

The North American fur trading companies were fierce rivals and as such, both dispatched many traders throughout the Pacific Northwest. In his second expedition, Ross came upon a rival American fur trader group and showed them the way through the Snake River region of what is now Idaho. This upset Hudson's Bay Company management, and Ross was removed from the Snake River expeditions and replaced by Peter Skene Odgen. At the time, Hudson's Bay Company had a strict policy to eradicate all beaver in the Snake River region so as to discourage American fur traders from moving northwest to the Company's abundant land holdings rich in beaver pelts in present day British Columbia.¹⁶ By the fall of 1830, both North American fur trading companies wiped out the beaver population in the Snake River region. Exploration continued through the 1830s, although nothing on record indicates fur traders definitively reached all parts of the Sawtooth Range. Few beavers were found in the area, and by 1840 the fur trade was in decline because the value of beaver fur dropped due to the changing fashion trends in Europe from beaver felt hats to silk hats.¹⁷

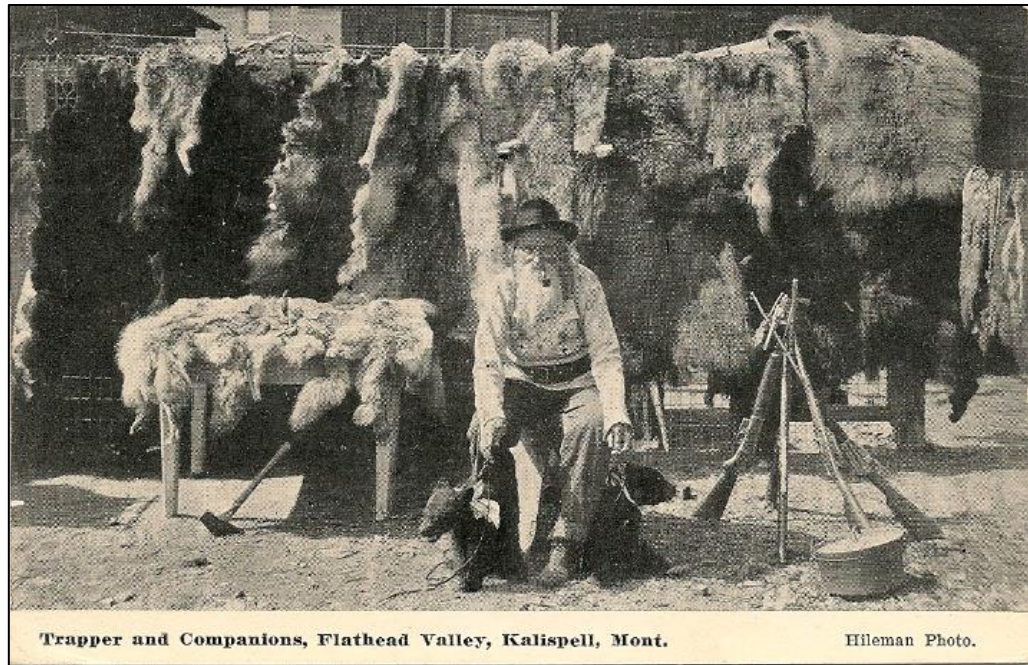


Figure 6. Postcard of fur trader and his pelts. (Google Images)

MINING AND EARLY SETTLEMENT NEAR GALENA SUMMIT

When gold was discovered in 1848 at Sutter Creek in what is today northern California, gold-seekers and pioneers rushed to stake claims in the American west, a largely unknown territory. In 1850, the U.S. government declared California a state. In the following decade, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho were established as U.S. territories. In the Idaho Territory, mining began in 1860 at present-day Pierce in Clearwater County, where Captain E.D. Pierce found gold in Canal Gulch along Oro Fino Creek. In southern Idaho, mining operations began feverishly in the Boise Basin in 1862 and in the Rocky Bar area as early as 1865. North of the Sawtooths, miners were already operating at Bayhorse, Custer, and Yankee Fork by the 1870s. All of these mining regions were linked by early pack trails that led back to Boise, the major trading center and connector to larger stagelines that were important transportation routes before the railroad.

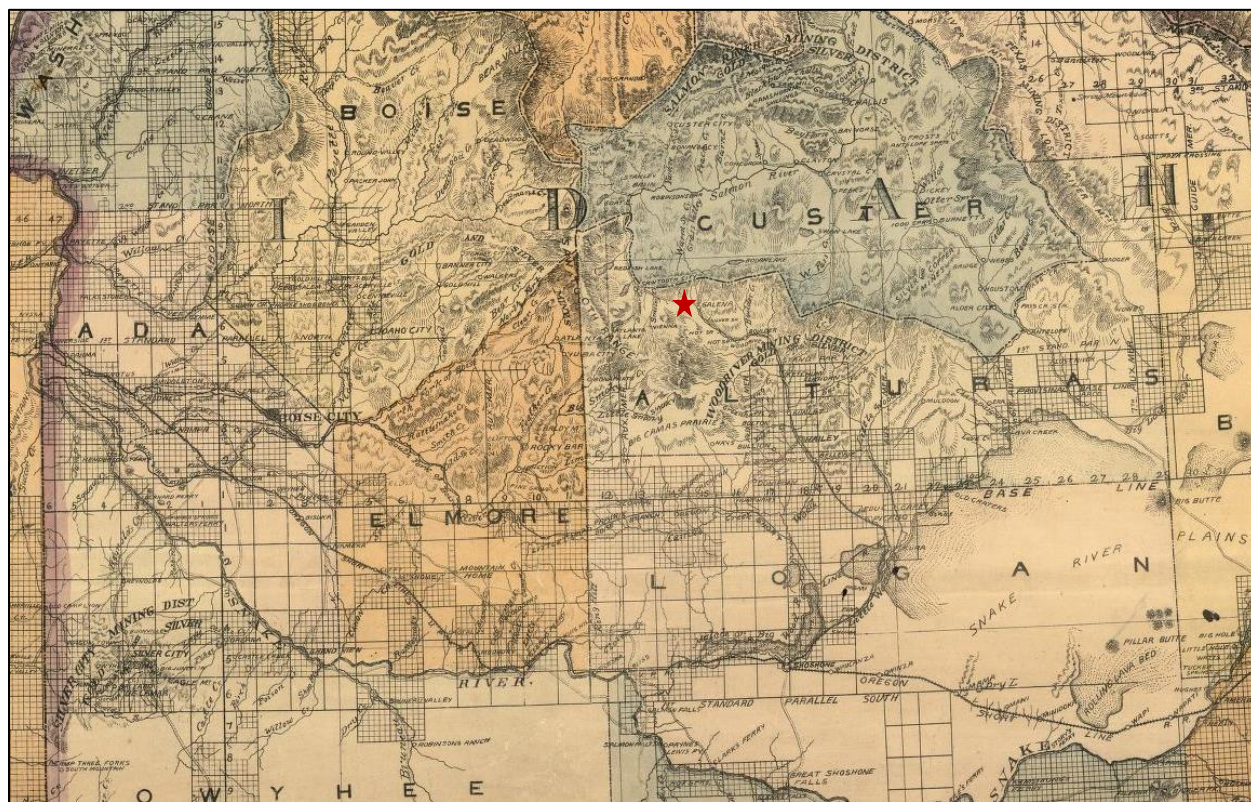


Figure 7. 1891 Map of the mining districts around Boise, Bayhorse, and later, the Wood River Valley. Red star indicates approximate location of Galena Summit. (David Rumsey Map Collection)

SAWTOOTH VALLEY MINING

In 1878, Levi Smiley was headed west from Challis to Boise with a group of men and discovered silver at the headwaters of the Salmon River, at what would become known as Smiley Creek. With the eruption of the Bannock War, the men retreated back to Challis. That fall, Smiley headed back to the headwaters of the Salmon River with T.B. Mulkey. He and Mulkey staked a few pioneer claims and headed out before winter. The following spring, in 1879, Smiley and Mulkey



Figure 8. Stagecoach along the road that ran through Mountain Home, Rocky Bar, and Atlanta. (Idaho State Historical Society, GR 62-50.14)

led an expedition of men who staked claims in Smiley, Beaver, and Eureka canyons. E.M. Miller was on this expedition and is known for discovering the most prominent mine in the area: the Vienna, which the townsite and mining district was named after.¹⁸

By the summer of 1879, more than 120 mining claims were staked, and the new mining town, Sawtooth City, was established in Beaver Canyon.¹⁹ The mineral belt in the Sawtooth Valley was approximately two miles wide and ten miles long. Within months, a rival mining town called Vienna sprang up just south of Sawtooth City. Together these mining camps made up the Sawtooth Valley mining area, located at the headwaters

of the Salmon River. This mining area was linked to the Wood River Valley mines through the main transportation connector: the Galena Toll Road.

Sawtooth City

The Columbia and Beaver Mining Company, a New York-based company, quickly capitalized on the new mining area found along the Sawtooths. The company began extensive development in the area by erecting two mills in Sawtooth City and constructing the Galena Toll Road from Sawtooth City to Ketchum as early as 1879. Sawtooth City was situated in Beaver Gulch, near Pilgrim Mine.²⁰ Other mines based around the town were the Bidwell and Beaver Extension, and the Silver King. At the peak of its mining boom, Sawtooth City boasted, "two small mills, a saw mill, three saloons, two restaurants, a meat market, a general store, Chinese laundry, assay office, and a blacksmith shop."²¹ Its peak population was 600.²²

Vienna

The competitor to Sawtooth City and the Columbia and Beaver Mining Company was the Vienna Consolidated Mining Company, owned by a group of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and Winona, Minnesota investors.²³ This mining company established the Vienna mining district and a town by the same name in Smiley Canyon in June 1879.²⁴ Vienna became the largest mining town at the head of the Salmon River headwaters. At one point, the town had more than 200 buildings including a post office, three general merchandising stores, two meat markets, two livery and feed stables, two hotels, several restaurants, and 14



Plate No. 16. One of the remaining buildings from the most recent period of mining activity, Vienna group mines, Smiley Canyon. N.P.S. Photograph, 1964

Figure 9. "One of the remaining buildings from the most recent period of mining activity, Vienna group mines, Smiley Canyon." (Goodwin and Hussey 1965)

saloons.²⁵ The town also had its own newspaper, the *Vienna Reporter*, which later consolidated with the *Ketchum Keystone*.²⁶

Before the ore could be processed at a closer facility, miners had to pack their ore and travel west to Atlanta. The main trail led over the mountains to Mattingly Creek on the Boise River. Later maps show a trail that leads from Alturas Lake to Mattingly Creek, also known as the Alturas Lake Trail or the Sawtooth Valley-Atlanta Pack Trail, which was too steep for wagons, so men had to pack ore on mules.²⁷ While the Sawtooth Valley mining area was developing, just south of the Galena Summit, the Wood River Valley mining area was also experiencing a mining boom.

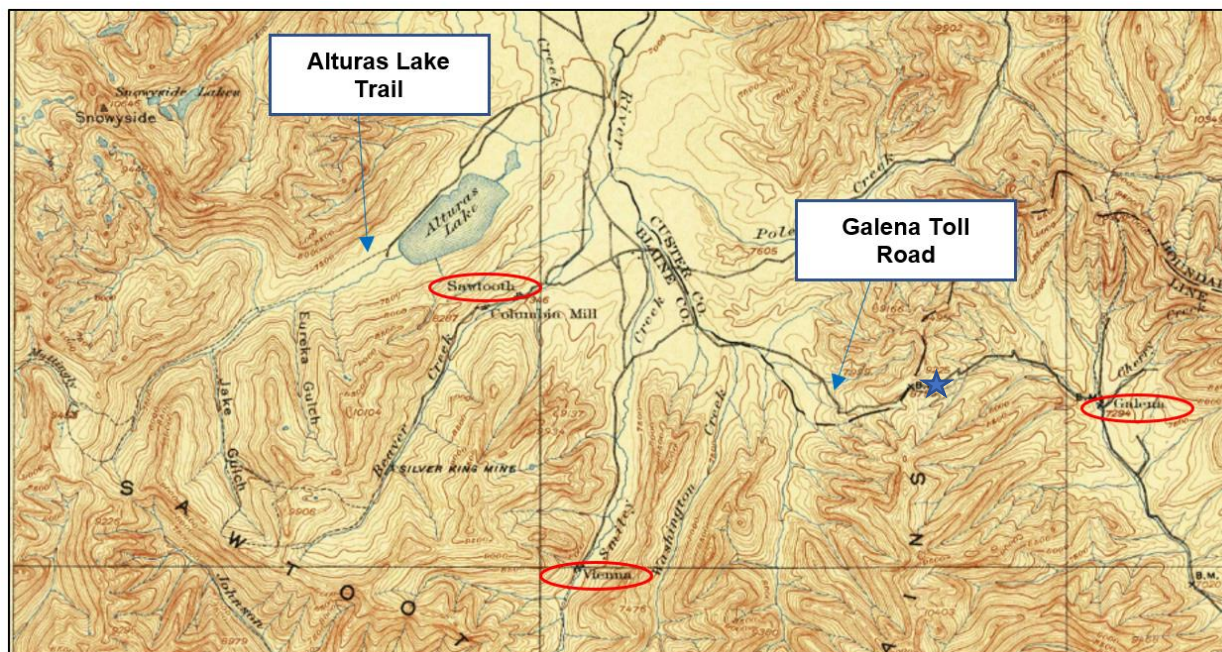


Figure 10. 1900 USGS Topographic map showing the Alturas Lake Trail, Galena Toll Road and other trails in the Sawtooth Valley mining area near Galena Summit. Circled in red are the towns of Galena, Sawtooth (City), and Vienna. The blue star indicates the Galena Summit. (USGS 1900)

WOOD RIVER VALLEY MINING

In 1864, William Callahan, a miner from Pennsylvania, found a lode of galena (lead ore) where Goodale's Cutoff (a northern detour from the Oregon Trail that generally ran along the Snake River in Idaho) met the Big Wood River, just south of what is currently Bellevue. Despite this discovery, it was not until the 1870s when lead ore and silver became more valuable. Advances in technology led to a more efficient way to process these minerals for things such as pipes, bullets, and paint.²⁸ It took 13 years for Callahan to return to the Wood River Valley due to the unsafe conditions for Euroamerican explorers and settlers during the Bannock War.

In 1879, Callahan returned to the Wood River Valley, bringing with him several other miners and prospectors in search of lead and silver. The only way through the Wood River Valley to the mountains was by horse or by foot. The nearest railroad station was in Blackfoot, which the Oregon Short Line operated via a line that ran to Mackay.²⁹ In his *History of Alturas County*, George McLeod writes:

Thus situated, far from the ordinary lines of through travel, only the most daring and hardy adventurers sought these mountain solitudes. The only means of communication was by stage or team, or on horseback, over mountain trails in many instances...But the indomitable spirit of the prospector and the pioneer was not to be deterred by any obstacles, however great.³⁰

The earliest mining claims in the Wood River Valley mining area were filed in 1879 and were located approximately one mile west of Bellevue, in an area known as Broadford (now a ghost town with a gravel and sand business in the area). Broadford was supported by the surrounding mines of Galena (different from the town located north), Queen of the Hills, River View, Renobscot, and Minnie Moore- the latter of which produced more lead and silver than any other mine in the district.³¹ Other mines were located west of Hailey, such as the Mineral Hill Mining District which included the Eureka, Idahoan, Jay Gould, Mayflower, Bullion, and Ophir mines. The small mining towns of Bullion and Gilman were located here along Croy Creek.³²

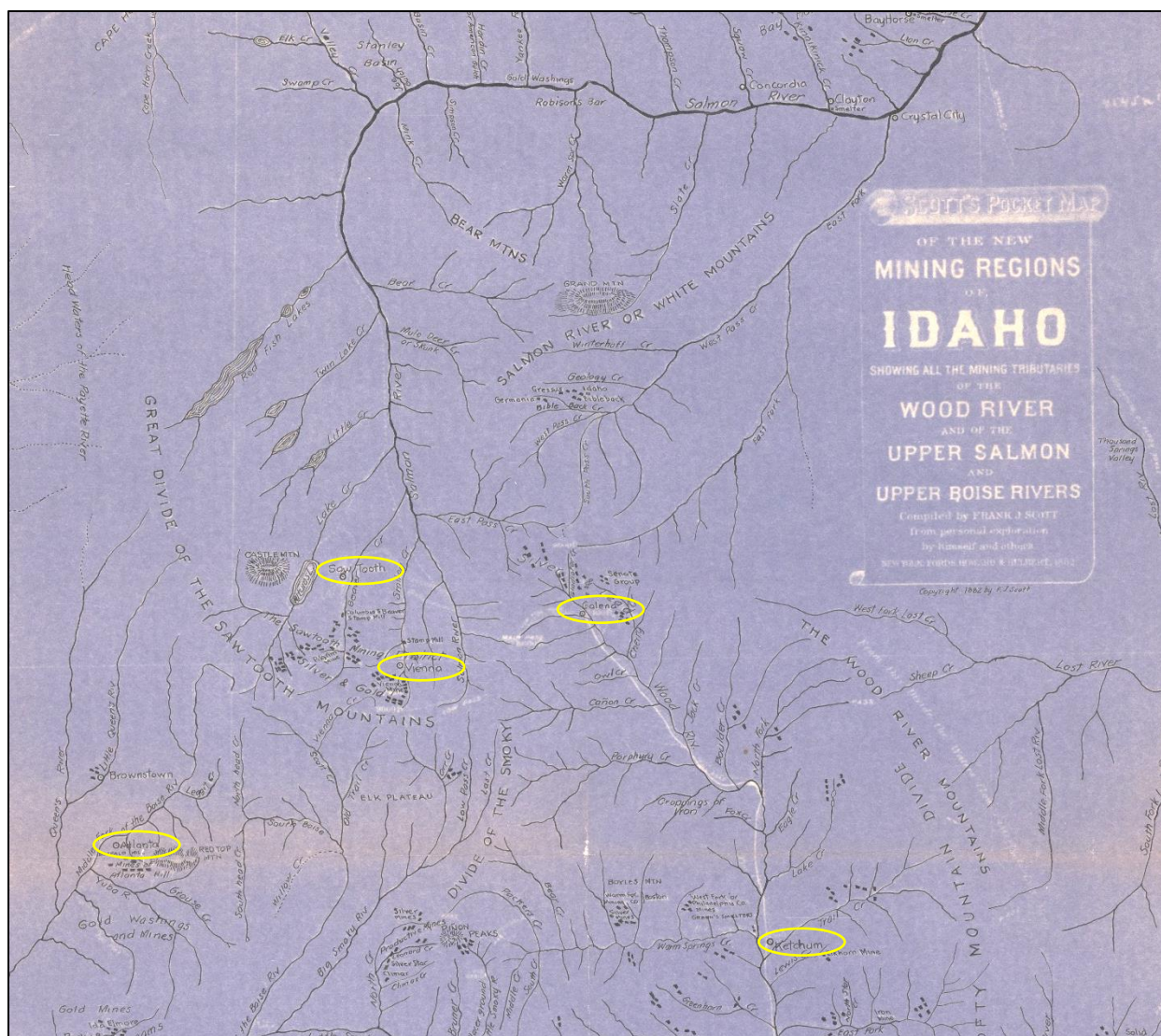


Figure 11. Frank Scott's 1882 Map of the mining regions in the Wood River and Upper Salmon and Upper Boise Rivers. Circled in yellow are the towns of Sawtooth City, Vienna, Galena, Atlanta, and Ketchum. (Idaho State Historical Society)

On the East Fork of Wood River, located east of the Big Wood River and approximately halfway between Ketchum and Hailey, were the North Star and Iron mines. To the west of Ketchum, along Warm Springs Creek, the Warm Springs Mining Company and West Fork- or Philadelphia Company- ran their operations north of the creek. East of Ketchum, mining claims were located along Trail Creek.³³ Between Ketchum and Galena, mining claims were located along Boulder, North Fork, and Lake Creek along the Wood River Mountains, east of the Big Wood River.³⁴

By 1880, the Wood River Valley was swarming with mining operations. The valley's first town was Galena, near the Galena Summit. At its height, the mining town of Galena had about 800 residents. It also boasted a post office, hotel, large general store, several restaurants and saloons, a livery stable, and stage stable.³⁵ Part of its importance as a town was that it was directly along the Galena Toll Road, which was the main corridor from the Sawtooth Valley mines through the Galena Summit to the Wood River Valley mines.

GALENA TOLL ROAD

In 1880, the Columbia and Beaver Mining Company incorporated after the L.D. Cartwright Company of New York purchased the Columbia and Beaver prospects in Beaver Canyon for \$12,000.³⁶ The company quickly began developing the area and was locally headquartered in Sawtooth City. In addition to a ten stamp quartz mill and a sawmill, the company also began constructing a toll road out from Sawtooth City to Ketchum.³⁷



Figure 12. Example of a freight wagon, date unknown.
(Idaho State Historical Society, #572)

Prior to this undertaking, a wagon road had been started by the local mining camps, and the company spent \$10,000 (approximately \$252,742 today) improving more than 13 miles of the existing grade on the route to Galena and extending the road past Galena over the summit.³⁸ The company then moved a sawmill, weighting approximately 15,000 lbs over the summit.³⁹ As the main thoroughfare, this road was used by all the mining camps. A description of the road in 1916 shows how several secondary roads and trails led from this main arterial:

A wagon road branches north from the Hailey-Soldier stage road and leads to Carriatown [southwest of Hailey]. A good road, which forms the main thoroughfare from Hailey and Ketchum to Pierson and Stanley Basin, crosses...along the valleys of Wood and Salmon rivers. It passes through the old smelter town of Galena, and branches from it led to the now abandoned camps of Vienna and Sawtooth to Germania Basin, Alturas Lake, Pettit [sic] Lake, all within the drainage basin of Salmon River. A branch from it also leads up Boulder Creek canyon to the deposits in Boulder Basin.⁴⁰

Travel over the route took about two days. Large trees were cut at the top of the summit and attached to the back of the wagons to help slow down their descent. For years, at the base of each side of the mountain, there were piles of logs remaining.⁴¹ Twenty-four bridges were constructed along the route. These bridges were composed of "merely logs across sleeper logs that paralleled the stream."⁴² These rudimentary bridges were constantly being repaired. Mule

trains would cross over and frequently a mule's leg would drop between the poles and in pulling out the mule, the poles would be displaced.⁴³

To recoup costs and to maintain the road, the Columbia and Beaver Mining Company set up a toll in August 1881. It cost \$1.50 for a wagon and one span of horses, and \$.50 for each additional span. Sheep and pigs were trailed at 5 cents a head.⁴⁴ Although the Idaho Territorial Government passed legislation abolishing toll roads with the County Road Act, the toll at Galena Summit remained active for years, likely due to a lack of enforcement in such a remote area.⁴⁵ In total, the Company spent approximately \$12-15,000 (at most, \$379,113 in today's dollars) developing the route over Galena Summit.⁴⁶ The road was not improved until 1918.⁴⁷

In the early years of the mining boom, the closest smelter was located in either Salt Lake City or Denver, and ore was taken west on a wagon road from the Sawtooth Valley through the mountains to Atlanta. This wagon road was later improved in 1885-1886, making it a single day's journey from Ketchum to Atlanta.⁴⁸ Then ore had to be taken by freight teams to Boise, where they were then taken through the main stagecoach line to the railroad at Kelton, Utah (a distance of 175 miles), and shipped there to Salt Lake City.⁴⁹ After the Galena Toll Road was built, access from the Sawtooth Valley to the Wood River Valley was open. In June 1881, the Wood River Smelting Company built the first smelter at the mouth of Indian Creek, a few miles north of Hailey. In the fall of that year, a larger smelter was built by the Philadelphia Mining and Smelting Company at the mouth of Warm Springs Creek near Ketchum.⁵⁰ By 1882, the railroad had reached Ketchum, and the ore could be shipped directly from the Wood River Valley.

Although the railroad became the main form of transportation in the mid-1880s, tracks could not be laid over the mountains into the Sawtooth Valley. The Galena Toll Road and other trails were still used by horseback or wagon. In addition to moving ore, the road also made it possible to bring supplies and mail over the pass to the mining camps. Winter travel through the Galena Summit was nearly impossible. Mail was traveled from Ketchum to the Sawtooth Valley by snowshoe and dogsled by U.S. Postal carriers.⁵¹ In early spring, travel through the pass was often delayed due to mud and rain. Freight teams would not risk losing their equipment or animals traveling through such treacherous conditions.⁵²



Figure 13. Photo of a horse-drawn mail carrier through the Wood River Valley, circa 1925. (Blaine Country History Museum)

Other trails developed at this time near the Galena Toll Road connected the Sawtooth Valley to other communities. A 1913 description of the Sawtooth area and its roads is described:

The area has few trails and fewer roads. Travel is exceedingly difficult in most parts of it, although bands of sheep roam over it widely. A trail up Boise River branches to the old mining camps of Vienna, Sawtooth, and Carrieton. Washington and Germania basins connect by trail with Clayton on the north and with Galena on the south. A wagon road branches north from the Hailey-Soldier stage road that leads to Carrieton...Carrieton may also be reached by a road, not locally impassable, from Ketchum.⁵³

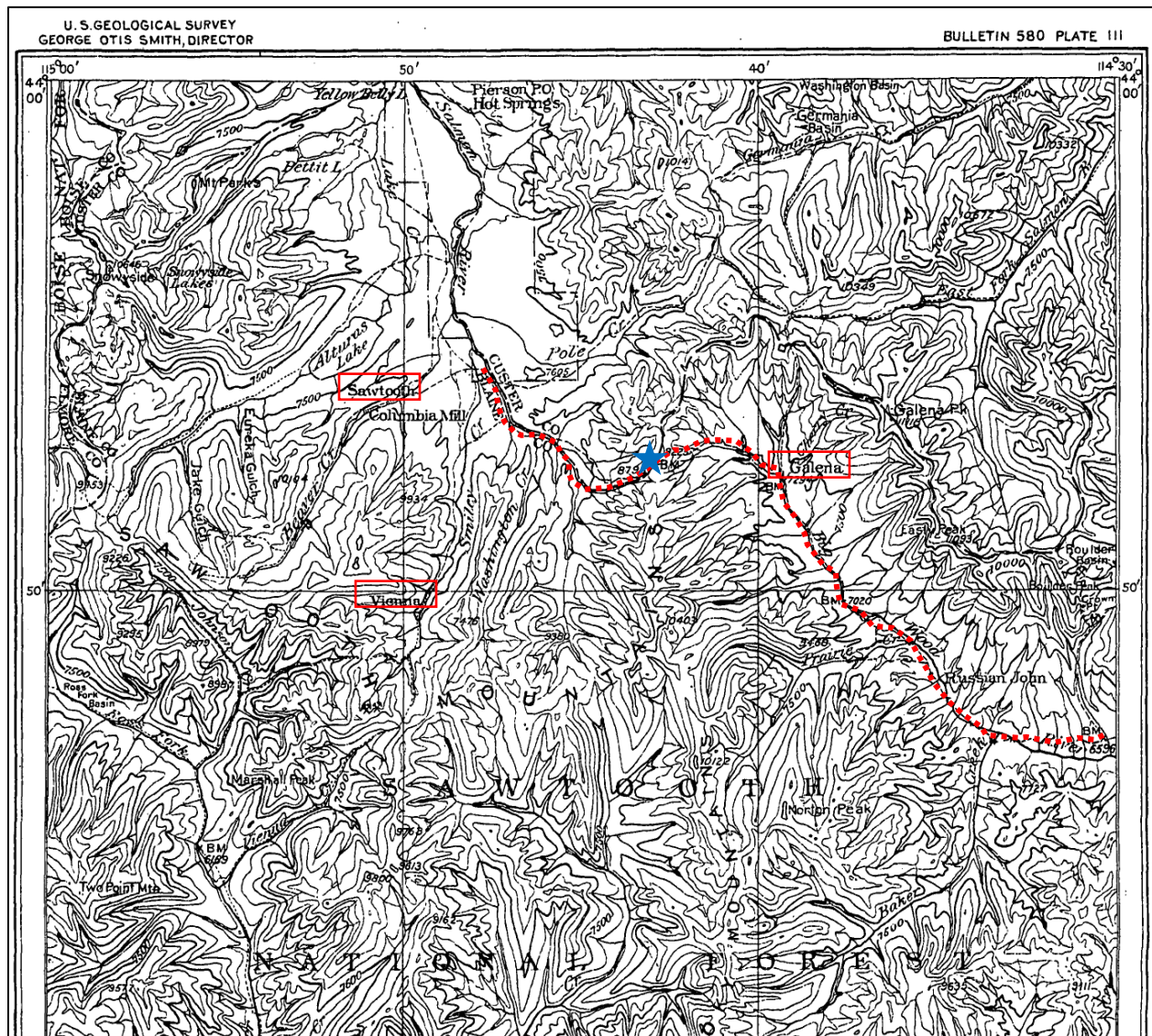


Figure 14. 1913 map of the trails along the mining camps in the Sawtooth and Big Wood River Valleys. Red dashed line indicates the Galena Toll Road route. The blue star indicates the Galena Summit part of the road. (Umpleby 1913)

The mining boom began to decline in the late 1880s. Silver and lead prices declined worldwide.⁵⁴ Near Sawtooth City, the only active mine in 1887 was the Silver King. In 1892, fire swept through the Silver King mine shaft and destroyed most of the mining operation.⁵⁵ In Vienna, the mine and mill were both closed down by 1887. The settlement was razed in 1914.⁵⁶ By the early-twentieth century, most miners had left the region. Today Sawtooth City and Vienna are ghost towns. A small community remains in Galena.

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST

After the decline of mining, the Sawtooth and Wood River Valleys became largely remote again. The population dwindled, and because of its location, few people traveled through the area. On May 29, 1905, the Sawtooth Forest Reserve was created from the public domain by President Theodore Roosevelt. Its original area was 1,947,520 acres. The following year, President Roosevelt added approximately 1.4 million acres to include parts of what are now the Challis, Sawtooth, Salmon, and Boise National Forests.⁵⁷ In 1908, the Sawtooth Forest Reserve was split into the Sawtooth National Forest (East) and Sawtooth National Forest (West). Through two executive orders, President Roosevelt then created Challis National Forest out of portions of the Sawtooth (East), Salmon River, and Lemhi National Forests, and also created Boise National Forest out of Sawtooth National Forest (West). Sawtooth National Forest (East) became the new Sawtooth National Forest.⁵⁸

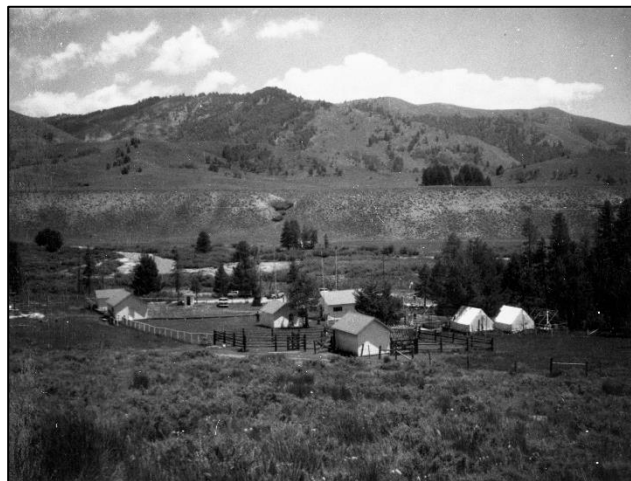


Figure 15. Big Smokey Ranger Station in the Sawtooth National Forest, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 07557)

The first Sawtooth National Forest rangers primarily dealt with sheep herders and cattle grazers, who were the primary users of the forest land until about 1917. At this time, not many people had automobiles, and the Wood River Valley region was largely remote from more popular destinations in southern Idaho.⁵⁹ The early rangers had little funding and a large area of



Figure 16. Rider crossing a stream in the Big Smokey area, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 07534)

responsibility, so rehabilitating the old mining trails and other forest improvements took a long time.⁶⁰ One of the first Forest Service rangers of the Sawtooth National Forest, C.N. Woods, remembers his time in the years after the end of the mining boom in the Sawtooth and Wood River Valleys when he was stationed in the newly-formed Sawtooth National Forest:

I traveled much on the Sawtooth during the six years I was supervisor at Hailey. I spent about two-thirds of each field season in the field on horseback, largely. I never road in an automobile or an airplane over the forest during the six years. Hailey was a town of 1200 to 1500 people in 1908. When I arrived at Hailey in December 1907, there was but one automobile owned in the town. That was a high wheel, hard rubber tire, chain drive, single seat, open car. Since cars were lacking and the roads were poor, but limited recreational use was made of the forest. The Sawtooth is naturally very inviting to campers, fishermen, and to recreationists generally. Fishing at the time in Upper Wood River was very good, as well as in several other streams on the forest. Sage hens were abundant over the open, leveler parts of the forests and through the adjacent country to the south.⁶¹

About a decade after Woods first arrived in the Wood River Valley, more Americans had automobiles and there was a national interest in auto-tourism coinciding with visiting national parks. Tourism through the Sawtooth National Forest may have been boosted when, in 1915, Idaho's U.S. Senator, William Borah, first visited the national forest when it was proposed to be a national park:

Were I able to describe the wonderful scenery within the boundaries of the proposed Sawtooth national park I would say that its stupendous, grand and magnificent panoramic view is like the world turned upside down. We went all through the park and saw a most extraordinary display of scenery. I say most extraordinary for it is certainly so. I have never seen anything like and I doubt very much if many of the residents of this state have...it is the mountains and their peaks piled one upon another that impresses one with its astonishing vastness.⁶²

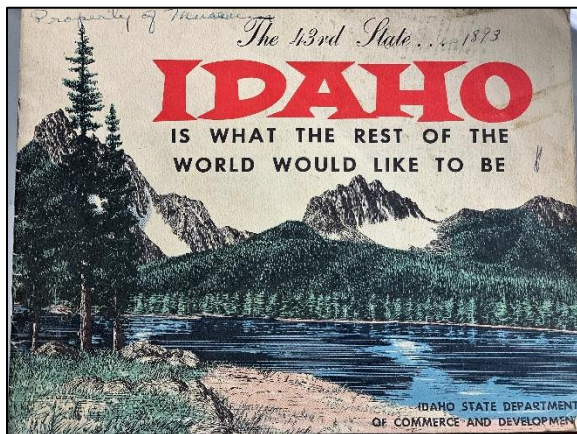


Figure 17. Advertisement for travelers to visit Idaho, date unknown. (Blaine County Historical Museum)

Borah also noted that his trip was by automobile and that the roads were mainly “hard, mountain roads” and that “the worst piece of road we encountered and the most difficult was when going over Galena summit.”⁶³ Since the time when miners would bring their wagons over what is now referred to as the “Galena Summit,” this stretch of roadway has always been problematic for vehicles. The primary reason for this is that at elevation (8,701 feet), it is one of the highest roadway peaks in Idaho (the highest is near Mount Harrison on Forest Road 549 in Cassia County: 9,261 feet).

The national emphasis on appreciating, visiting, and maintaining, and protecting national parks and forests continued through the 1930s and 1940s.

During President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) were dispatched through the New Deal, as a way to put unemployed men to work while providing new infrastructure in public facilities such as national parks and forests.⁶⁴ From 1933 to 1940, the CCC had camps located in Ketchum, Big Smokey, and Redfish Lake- all within the Sawtooth National Forest. The CCC constructed new and rehabilitated older campgrounds, constructed new access roads into recreation areas, built bridges, installed Forest Service telephone lines, and created fire suppression operations in the Sawtooth National Forest.⁶⁵ By 1940, 1,336 miles

of stockmen, mining, and horse trails in the Sawtooth National Forest used by the early settlers were gradually improved by the Forest Service.⁶⁶ These trails were either original mining and/or Native American trails that were improved, or newly-blazed trails to accommodate campgrounds and hiking. Efforts to improve national forests resulted in the razing of abandoned mining towns and buildings, the reuse of trails for forest service activities and access, and creation of infrastructure such as telephone lines and fire suppression operations.



Figure 18. Forest Service inspection in the Sawtooth National Forest, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F03225)

Forest Highway 26

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson passed the Federal Aid Road Act which was the first piece of legislation that enacted federal aid to states in the construction and improvement of their highways. The purpose of this legislation was to construct and maintain public roads used by the U.S. Postal Service. It was also used to support the construction and maintenance of highways that were adjacent to or within a national forest- which were designated by the U.S. Forest Service and maintained by both U.S. Forest Service and local and state entities.⁶⁷ Shortly after the passing of this legislation, the portion of highway that was once known as the Galena Toll Road within the Sawtooth National Forest was designated as Forest Highway 26.

Federal aid to fund the maintenance of this portion of the highway and the trails used by the Forest Service increased the number of trails and secondary roads near the Galena Summit. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the forest lands were used less by miners and more for recreationists. When Sun Valley opened in 1936, the population of the area boomed, and the demand for better a better highway through the Galena Summit increased.

MODERN HIGHWAYS

Between 1918 and 1919, improvements were made to the Galena Toll Road or “Galena Summit Road,” which was designated the “Sawtooth Park Highway” in 1914. The highway traveled from the Nevada state line to Montana state line via Twin Falls, Jerome, Lincoln, Blaine, Custer, and Lemhi Counties.⁶⁸ The stretch of highway that ran through the Sawtooth National Forest was also called Forest Highway 26, and was maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. These improvements made the roadway a two-lane gravel road that cars could drive on, although the highway still had dangerous narrow curves, sharp switchbacks, and steep grades that made it treacherous for travelers.⁶⁹ Some travelers had to drive backwards up the steep grades so that gasoline would not leak out of the tank of the car. As with freight wagon drivers before them, truck drivers had to attach large logs to the back of their vehicles to slow their descent down the grades.⁷⁰

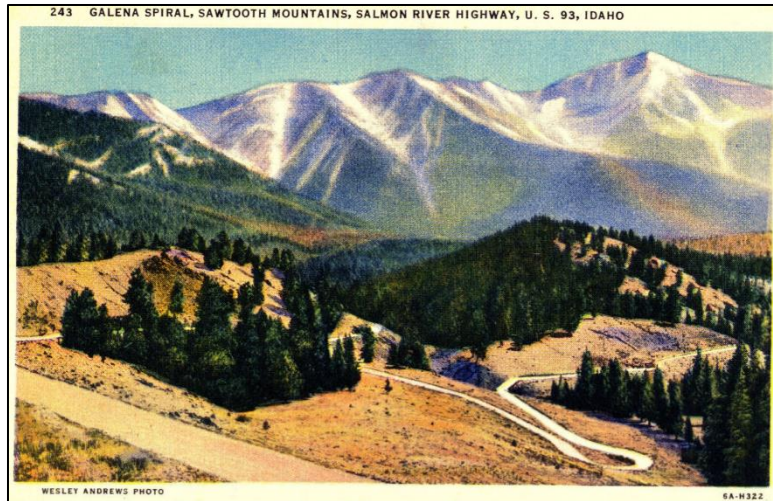


Figure 19. Postcard of the "Galena Spiral", a hairpin turn along U.S. 93. (ITD Archives, #ISAP2005-23Roads_039)

The improvement to the stretch of highway along the Galena Summit was a welcomed event for motorists, despite the somewhat treacherous conditions along the route. A newspaper article in 1921 described the route:

This road over the summit takes the autoist camper to some of the most beautiful spots to be found in America. Trout are to be found in all the sparkling streams and for a camping expedition no better places exist. Nature in all her marvelous beauty abounds over the big hill- greater sights and more entrancing scenery was never pictured. A trip over the big hill into the wilds of nature is more pleasurable than a trip to any of the national parks. Once you visit these spots of nature so enticing are they that the call to return will linger with you always. The road over Galena has only been passable the past two years, and not many people...have traversed it to visit that wonder country on the other side. Those who have, are going again this summer for an outing. The sparkling streams gliding swiftly from off the rugged peaks, the beautiful lakes and lonesome stately pines are calling to them- and they can't resist that call back to nature.⁷¹

The stretch of Sawtooth Park Highway through Galena Summit was mostly traveled during summer months only, and in winter, the non-motorized methods of dogsled, snowshoes, and Alpine skiing were used to transport mail and supplies to people over the pass.⁷² In 1926, the U.S. established a nationwide highway numbering system and the Sawtooth Park Highway was designated U.S. Highway 93 (US-93).

The opening of Sun Valley in 1936 brought more auto-tourists to the area, and the local population and economy boomed. The roadway near the Galena Summit was improved several times since the beginning of the twentieth century: eliminating sharp turns, improving grades, and widening in some places.⁷³



Figure 20. Photograph of cars driving the unpaved road to Galena Summit, date unknown. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 00015)



Figure 21. 1937 Rand McNally & Co. road map of US-93 through the Galena Summit. The solid red = hard surface road, the thick dash = semi-surfaced road (apt to be dusty when dry and muddy when wet), and the light dash = graded earth surface. (David Rumsey Map Collection)

The roadway surface was improved over time with gravel and crushed rock, and oiled in some parts, but most of the highway north, past Ketchum through the Galena Summit, remained graded earth through the 1940s.⁷⁴

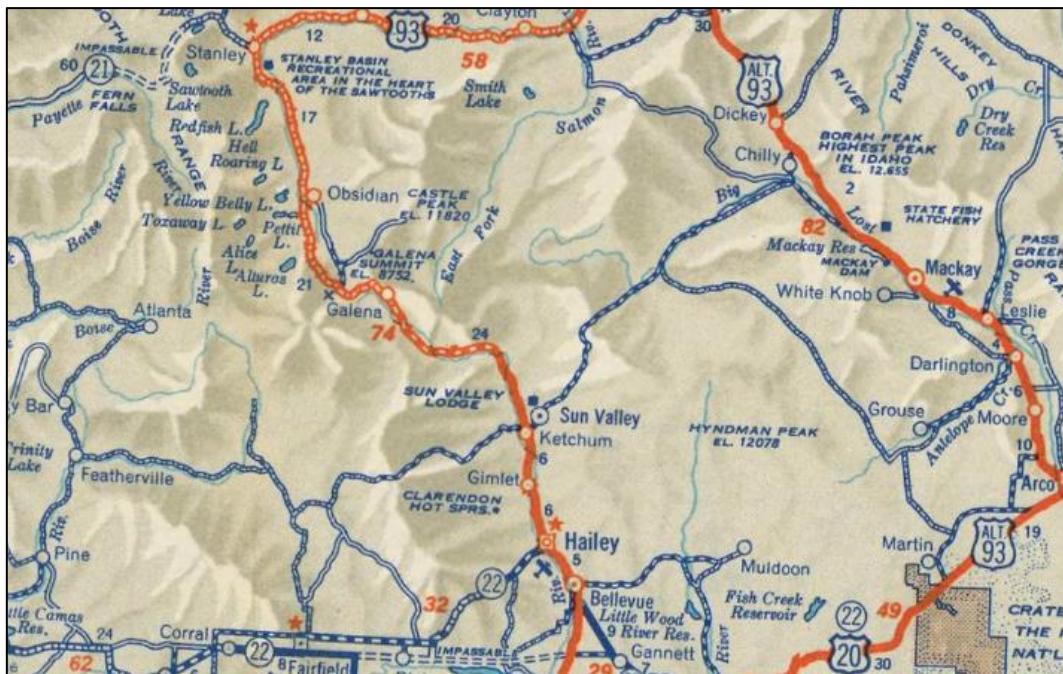


Figure 22. 1949 Rand McNally & Co. map which shows US-93 paved just past Sun Valley then the road is "improved" until it reaches Galena where it changes to just a graded road through Stanley and beyond. (David Rumsey Map Collection)

The roadway through Galena Summit was finally paved in 1955-1956, and in 1966, an overlook was constructed for motorists to stop and get out of their cars, approximately 3/4-mile north of the summit.⁷⁵ Constructed by the U.S. Forest Service, this overlook featured five interpretive panels that viewers could read about the “Headwaters of the Salmon River”; “Chinook Salmon”; “Sawtooth Primitive Area and Mountain Names”; “Sawtooth Fault”; and “National Forest Activities.”⁷⁶ Today these interpretive panels have been updated but the native stone wall surrounding the overlook remains. At the Galena Overlook, the visitor can see the headwaters of the Salmon River, the jagged peaks of the Sawtooth Mountains to the northwest, and the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin.



Figure 23. View from Galena Summit at the Stanley Basin. (Community Library, Ketchum #F 02680)

Two years after the Galena Summit portion of the highway was paved, regular snow removal was available to consider the highway open year-round, although heavy snow can and continues to periodically close the summit. Snow at the Galena Summit and the Wood River Valley has made this area of Idaho a world-class skiing destination. The Sun Valley resort was one of the first resorts in America to bring Alpine skiing into fashion.⁷⁷ In 1938, the first recorded skiers at the Galena Summit were three men from Twin Falls.⁷⁸ At this time, the Sun Valley resort had been open for two years.

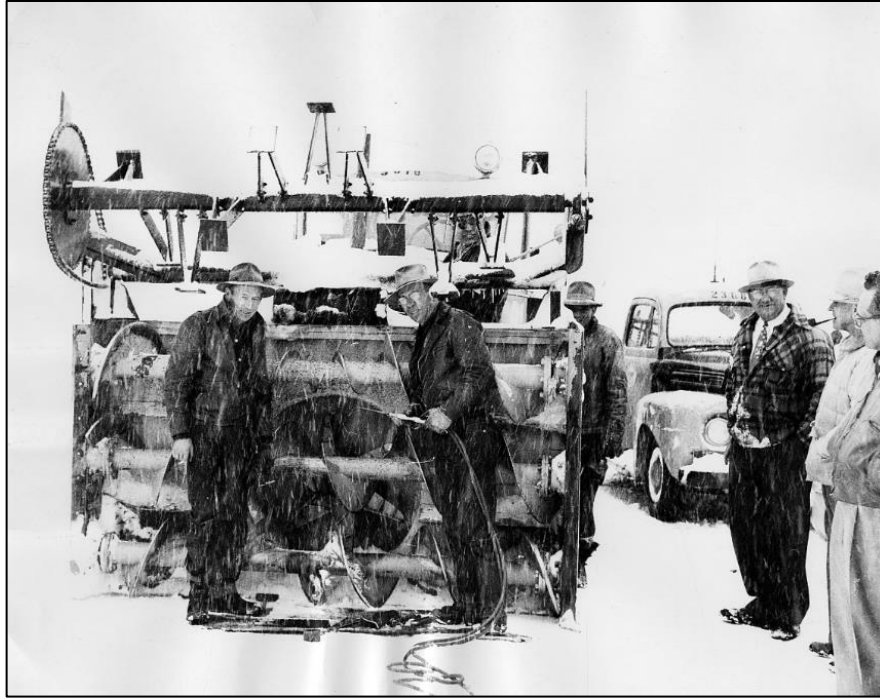


Figure 24. Plowing on Galena Summit in 1953. (ITD Photo Archives, MS281_06366 Box 11 Folder 5)

In 1977, the section of US-93 between Shoshone and Challis was renamed Idaho State Highway 75 (ID-75).⁷⁹ Today, ID-75 is the main highway that leads through the Wood River Valley to the resort area where the towns of Sun Valley, Ketchum, and Hailey are located. Further north, ID-75 takes the traveler through the scenic and historic Galena Summit that overlooks the Sawtooth Valley where Native Americans once inhabited; fur traders once explored; miners and prospectors rushed in with hopes of finding gold, silver, and lead; sheep herders roamed with their flocks; and where U.S. Forest Rangers maintained the natural beauty of the area.

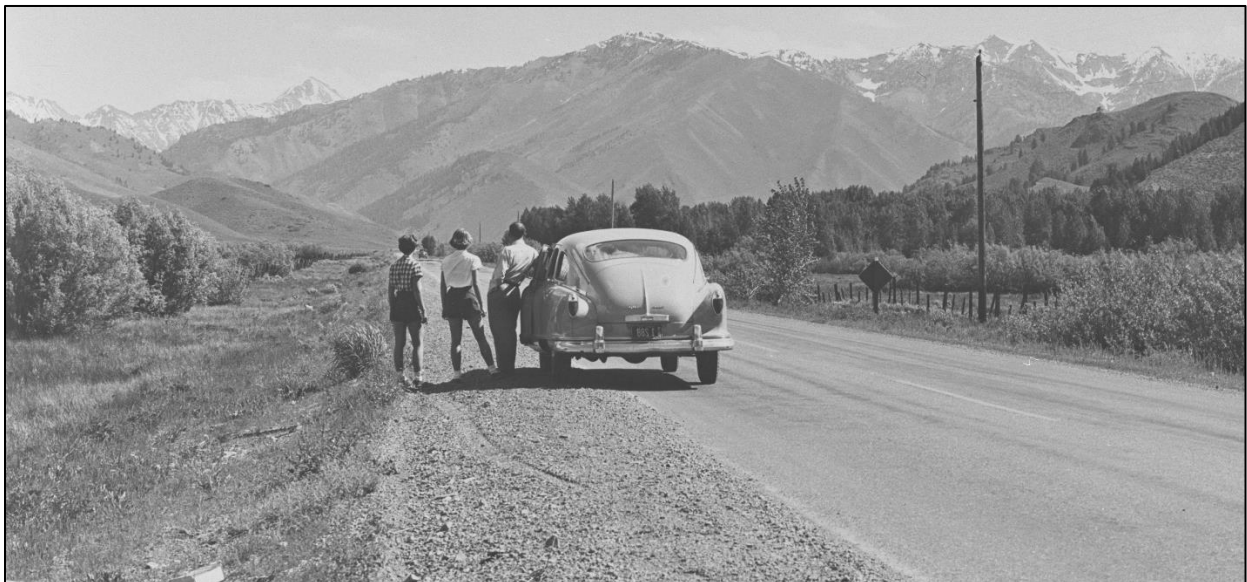


Figure 25. Traveling on the highway (US-93), circa 1958. (Community Library, Ketchum, #F 03948)

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- ¹ Victor O. Goodwin and John A. Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study Idaho* (U.S. Forest Service: Washington, D.C., 1965), 3-4.
- ² Ibid; Robert F. Murphy and Yolanda Murphy, "Northern Shoshone and Bannock," *Great Basin: Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 11 (Smithsonian Institution: Washington, D.C., 1986), 288-289.
- ³ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 9.
- ⁴ Murphy and Murphy, "Northern Shoshone," 288.
- ⁵ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 5.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Nancy Miller, "Mining in the Sawtooths: The Story of Vienna and Sawtooth City," *Idaho Yesterdays*, Boise, Idaho (Spring 1965):11.
- ⁸ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 10.
- ⁹ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 9-10.
- ¹⁰ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 12; Leonard J. Arrington, *History of Idaho, Volume 1* (University of Idaho Press: Moscow, Idaho, 1994), 303-304.
- ¹¹ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 12.
- ¹² Ibid, 13.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 15. Goodwin and Hussey speculate that "Mount Simpson" was likely what is now known as Galena Summit; Hudson's Bay Company, "The North West Company," *Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation* website. <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/acquisitions/the-north-west-company>. Accessed November 9, 2020, page not sourced.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 17.
- ¹⁷ Wendolyn Holland, *Sun Valley: An Extraordinary History* (Idaho Press: Ketchum, Idaho, 1998): 28-32; Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 19-20.
- ¹⁸ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 60; Miller, "Mining," 11; Claudia Taylor Walsworth, "The Sawtooth Park Highway: A Historical Overview," Prepared for the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, July 1998, 1.
- ¹⁹ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 60
- ²⁰ Miller, "Mining," 11; George McLeod, *History of Alturas and Blaine Counties Idaho* (The Hailey Times: Hailey, Idaho, 1950), 27.
- ²¹ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 61
- ²² Ibid.; McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 27.
- ²³ Miller, "Mining," 12.
- ²⁴ McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 27.
- ²⁵ Miller, "Mining," 13; McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 28; Holland, *Sun Valley*, 61.
- ²⁶ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 61.
- ²⁷ Ibid;
- ²⁸ Ibid, 63.
- ²⁹ McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 22.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Frank J. Scott, *Scott's Pocket Map of the New Mining Regions of Idaho Showing all the Mining Tributaries of the Wood River and of the Upper Salmon and Upper Boise Rivers* (Fords, Howard & Gilbert: New York, 1882); McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 28.
- ³³ Scott's Map 1882.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 27-28.
- ³⁶ Nancy Miller, "The Sawtooth & Vienna Mining Districts," *Idaho State Historical Society Reference Series*, Number 207, December 1964.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Peter R. Wyman, *A Ride Through the History of Galena and Bullion*, (Peter Wyman: Spokane, Washington, 2008); Walsworth, "Sawtooth Park Highway," 1.
- ³⁹ Wyman, *History of Galena*, 56.
- ⁴⁰ Joseph B. Umpleby, "Ore Deposits in the Sawtooth Quadrangle, Blaine and Custer Counties, Idaho," USGS Bulletin 580-K. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 223.

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- ⁴¹ Walsworth, "Sawtooth Park Highway," 3.
- ⁴² Wyman, *History of Galena*, 165.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 164.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.; Clark C. Spence, *For Wood River or Bust* (University of Idaho Press: Moscow, Idaho, 1999): 10-12; Idaho Transportation Department, "Idaho's Highway History: 1863-1975" (Idaho Transportation Department: Boise, Idaho, 1985): 23.
- ⁴⁶ Wyman, *History of Galena*, 165.
- ⁴⁷ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 66.
- ⁴⁸ Miller, "Mining," 15.
- ⁴⁹ Hailey, *Alturas*, 268.
- ⁵⁰ Spence, *For Wood River*, 38-40.
- ⁵¹ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 61.
- ⁵² Wyman, *History of Galena*, 165.
- ⁵³ Umpleby, "Sawtooth Quadrangle," 223.
- ⁵⁴ Spence, *For Wood River*, 197.
- ⁵⁵ Miller, "Mining," 16.
- ⁵⁶ Miller, "Mining," 16; Umpleby, "Sawtooth Quadrangle," 225.
- ⁵⁷ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 73.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ U.S. Forest Service, "Historical Information Report: Sawtooth National Forest," *U.S. Forest Service R4 History Collection* (Hailey, Idaho, 1941): 33.
- ⁶⁰ U.S. Forest Service, "Sawtooth National Forest," 37.
- ⁶¹ U.S. Forest Service, "Sawtooth National Forest," 39.
- ⁶² Twin Falls Times, "Borah Favors Sawtooth Park," (Twin Falls, Idaho: July 27, 1915): 1.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Gerald W. Williams, Ph.D, *The USDA Forest Service- The First Century* (ISDA Forest Service: Washington, D.C., 2005): 17.
- ⁶⁵ Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth*, 80.
- ⁶⁶ U.S. Forest Service, "Sawtooth National Forest," 38.
- ⁶⁷ Kit Oldham, "President Woodrow Wilson signs the Federal Aid Road Act on July 11, 1916," HistoryLink.org (February 2, 2005), <https://www.historylink.org/File/7243>, accessed November 25, 2020.
- ⁶⁸ State of Idaho Department of Public Works 1934 Biennial Report (Boise, Idaho): 82-84.
- ⁶⁹ Walsworth, "Sawtooth Park Highway," 3.
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- ⁷¹ "Galena Summit Road Can Be Traversed," *Burley Herald*, Burley, Idaho (June 25, 1921): 2.
- ⁷² Walsworth, "Sawtooth Park Highway," 4; Esther Yarber and Edna McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, (Publishers Press: Salt Lake City, UT, 1976): 11.
- ⁷³ McLeod, *History of Alturas*, 114.
- ⁷⁴ State Highway Commission, *Minute Books (AR24)*, 1919-1950.
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- ⁷⁶ "New Wayside Exhibit to Be Erected At Galena Summit by Forest Service," *Times-News*, Twin Falls, Idaho (May 25, 1966): 38.
- ⁷⁷ Holland, *Sun Valley*, 276.
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