Georgetown Canyon Mine

For a period from April, 1906 to October, 1907, 16 association placer mining claims were located on the phosphate deposits of Georgetown Canyon (Table 9, Figure 109). There were three separate groups or associations of locators for those claims. Unpublished records in the BLM show that all but four of the claims were sold by the initial locators to the Utah Fertilizer and Chemical Manufacturing Company (UF&CMC). Four of the claims (Superior Placer, Superior No. 1 Placer, Superior Placer No. 2, and Superior Placer No. 3) were sold by the initial locators to the Southern California Orange Grove Fertilizer Company who in turn sold the claims to UF&CMC just prior to patenting. The Southern California company was the same company that located and patented the phosphate placer claims at the Conda Mine, discussed earlier.

The UF&CMC was incorporated January 29, 1908 specifically to purchase the mining claims at Georgetown Canyon and at other places and develop mines on the phosphate property (Campbell, 1923). The UF&CMC applied for and received patent for all 16 placer mining claims in 1912, 1915, and in 1916. Robert J. Shields of the Salt Lake City law firm of Henderson, Pierce, Critchlow and Barrette was the agent and attorney-in-fact for the UF&CMC. Shields later became the mine manager of the Georgetown Canyon Mine (Campbell, 1921).

The first known report of mining related activity in Georgetown Canyon was in 1909 (Gale and Richards, 1910). On the Superior Extension placer mining claim, the UF&CMC put down two tunnels, each having a southeasterly trend, one being about 125 feet long and the other less than 30 feet long (Richards and Mansfield, 1914) (Figure 110). There was a third tunnel of about 50 feet in length located on the Highland No. Two placer mining claim. Richards and Mansfield (1914) also reported on several other tunnels including two on the Great Producer placer mining claim, one of about 110 feet and one of about 60 feet in length. There were two short tunnels located on the Great Deposit placer mining claim. There was also a short tunnel located in the southeast corner of the Hillside placer mining claim. All of these tunnels along with many shallow pits and trenches located along the outcrop of the phosphate rock were made by the UF&CMC in 1911 to 1912 as part of their placer claim development and assessment work. The heavy snowfall and avalanches of the winter of 1911 delayed opening some of these underground workings until 1912 (Richards and Mansfield, 1914).

Also, in 1909, a tramway was being constructed on the Highland placer claim and a tunnel about 82 feet in length, a shaft 14 feet deep, and several shallow cuts were found. The tramway was located in the southern part of the claim and ran northwest down a shallow gulch toward the Canyon proper. Richards and Mansfield (1914, p. 56) report that the tramway was about 3,000 feet in length and had a vertical drop of about 1,000 feet, but had not been completed as of 1914. No trace of this tramway remains. The mineral survey of 1915 for the Superior, and the Superior Nos. 1, 2, and 3 placers noted several open cuts and tunnels on those claims that were made for development and assessment requirements. All in all, a total of approximately 800 feet of underground development in nine tunnels and two shafts was completed on the 16 placer mining claims held by the UF&CMC. No

Table 9. Patented mining claims of the Georgetown Canyon Mine.

Claim Name	Date of Location	Mineral Survey Number	General Land Office Serial Number (Blackfoot)	Patent Number	Date of Patent
Great Producer Placer [1/]	August 16, 1906	2558	BL-09168	245166	January 29, 1912
Great Deposit Placer [1/]	August 17, 1906	2558	BL-09168	245166	January 29, 1912
Highland Placer [1/]	June 13, 1906	2497	BL-07447	483955	July 26, 1915
Highland No. One Placer [1/]	June 18, 1906	2505	BL-07448	483956	July 26, 1915
Hillside No. 1 Placer [2/]	August 15, 1907	2505	BL-07448	483956	July 26, 1915
Hillside No. 2 Placer [2/]	October 15, 1907	2505	BL-07448	483956	July 26, 1915
Superior Extension Placer [3/]	May 29, 1907	2505	BL-07448	483956	July 26, 1915
Highland No. Two Placer [1/]	June 25, 1906	2564	BL-09167	488040	August 25, 1915
Hillside Placer [2/]	August 15, 1907	2564	BL-09167	488040	August 25, 1915
Highland No. 4 Placer [1/]	April 1, 1906	2778	BL-022726	548595	October 3, 1916
Highland No. 3 Placer [1/]	June 28, 1906	2778	BL-022726	548595	October 3, 1916
Highland No. 5 Placer [1/]	July 2, 1906	2778	BL-022726	548595	October 3, 1916
Superior Placer [3/]	May 9, 1907	2783	BL-022747	548596	October 18, 1916
Superior No. 1 Placer [3/]	May 29, 1907	2783	BL-022747	548596	October 18, 1916
Superior No. 2 Placer [3/]	May 29, 1907	2783	BL-022747	548596	October 18, 1916
Superior No. 3 Placer [3/]	June 29, 1907	2783	BL-022747	548596	October 18, 1916

[1/] Claims located by Louis Fugal, Annie Boren, Oscar Olsen, John Boren, Lizzie Thorne, Stena Van Horne, James Thorne, and Hervy Van Horne.

[2/] Claims located by John A. Widtsoe, Lewis A. Merrill, John A. Macfarlane, Susa Y. Gates, Jacob F. Gates, Leah D. Widtsoe, Osborne Widtsoe, and Nora A. Macfarlane.

[3/] Claims located by Jacob F. Gates, Lewis A. Merrill, John A. Macfarlane, Osborne Widtsoe, Louis Fugal, John A. Widtsoe, Leah D. Widtsoe, and James Thorne.

Note:

The Superior, Superior No. 1, Superior No. 2, and Superior No. 3 placer mining claims were at one time owned by the Southern California Orange Grove Fertilizer Company but were patented by the Utah Fertilizer and Chemical Manufacturing Company. All of the other placer mining claims were located for or were acquired from the original locators and patented by the Utah Fertilizer and Chemical Manufacturing Company.

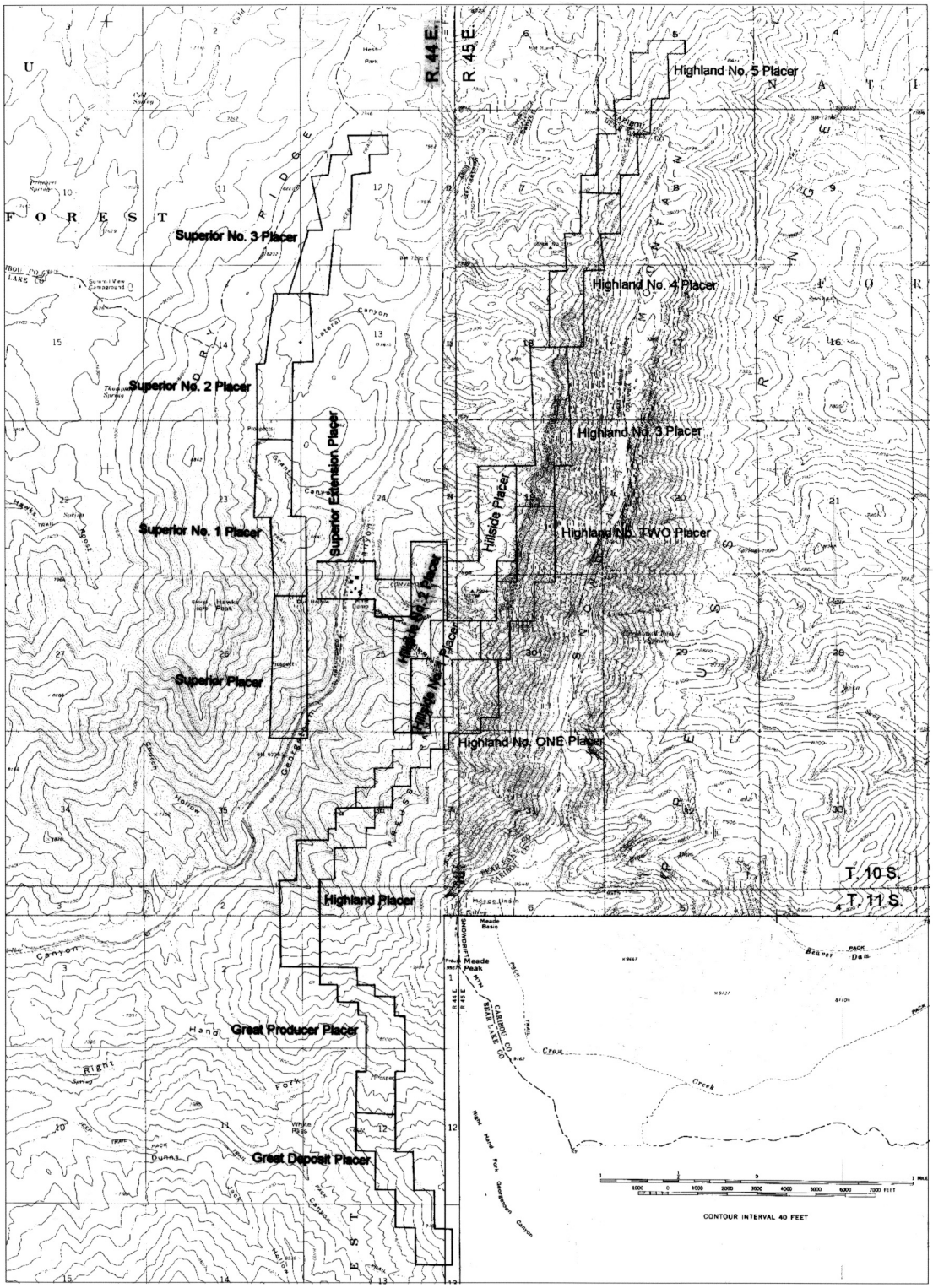


Figure 109. Map showing the location of the patented mining claims of the Georgetown Canyon Mine, Bear Lake and Caribou Counties, Idaho.



Figure 110. View of Tunnel Improvement No. 2, Superior Extension Claim, Georgetown Canyon Mine, October 3, 1916. Photo from the General Land Office Patent Case File No. 548596, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D. C.

production oriented underground mining was ever accomplished by the UF&CMC on these patented placer claims.

In 1916, the UF&CMC under the management of Robert J. Shields started negotiations to bring a railroad spur line up Georgetown Canyon for a distance of about six or seven miles (Bell, 1916). However, the railroad spur was not built until the processing facility was constructed in the Canyon in

1957-1958. In 1919, Bell (1919) reported that the phosphate properties held by the UF&CMC were under negotiations for sale to an unnamed buyer.

In 1928, the UF&CMC sold all of its interests in the 16 patented placer mining claims of Georgetown Canyon to the Stockholders Syndicate of Los Angeles, California (Campbell, 1928). It is of interest to note that the last president of record of the Utah company was a man by the name of F. W. Braun of Los Angeles. At the time of sale and transfer of title of the 16 patented claims, F. W. Braun of Los Angeles was listed as the president of the Stockholders Syndicate.

From its purchase of the 16 patented placer claims in 1928 until 1953, Stockholders Syndicate did only upkeep work on the property with no mining of phosphate ore. In 1953, it was reported that Stockholders did 2,400 feet of tunneling during the year and that the work was done under contract to Centennial Development Company of Eureka, Utah (McDowell, 1953). It was reported that, in 1954, there was 1,350 feet of tunneling, 550 feet of drifting and 300 feet of raises done during the year, with 2 tunnels, the principal one being 3,019 feet long, and a total of 4,600 feet of underground workings (McDowell, 1954). However, throughout all of this spate of underground activity and development, there was no reported production from the mine, and by 1955, the property was again idle.

The 16 patented placer mining claims of Stockholders Syndicate were sold to Central Farmers Fertilizer Company in 1955 (Hansen, 1964). The Central Farmers Fertilizer Company was a large farm co-operative made up of smaller farm co-ops throughout the south, midwest, and northwest United States and southern Canada (Emigh, 1959). The Central Farmers company very soon after acquisition of the property announced that plans were being made to begin a $7.5 million project to construct a processing plant and open a mine in Georgetown Canyon. In fact, construction started on a processing plant with an electric furnace and kiln in the Canyon in 1957 (Figures 111 and 112) (Cressman, 1964) and open pit mining was first reported in June, 1958. The railroad spur that was first conceived in 1916 was finally constructed up the Canyon to the site of the new processing facility in 1957. The facility consisted of a beneficiation plant (Figure 113), 35,000 kw electric furnace, phosphoric acid plant, and fertilizer processing plant, and was completed in May, 1959 (Figures 114 and 115) (Service, 1966). By late 1959, all underground mining had been abandoned and by 1960, the new open pit was approximately 3,000 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 100 feet deep (Fletcher, 1960).

Open pit mining progressed until 1963 (Figure 116) when the pit was reported to be approximately 10,000 feet long, 250 feet wide, and 100 feet deep (Hansen, 1964). A conveyor belt was used to move ore from the open pit to the processing plant (Figure 117 and 118). This conveyor system, unique to western phosphate mining, was located about two miles north of the defunct 1909 tramway mentioned above. The belt, more than 5,000 feet long, was constructed in two stages, and had a cutting bridge at the plant end. The first stage was 3,200 feet long, the second stage was 1,300 feet long, and the cutting bridge was 650 feet long (Figure 119). The vertical fall from the mine grizzly to

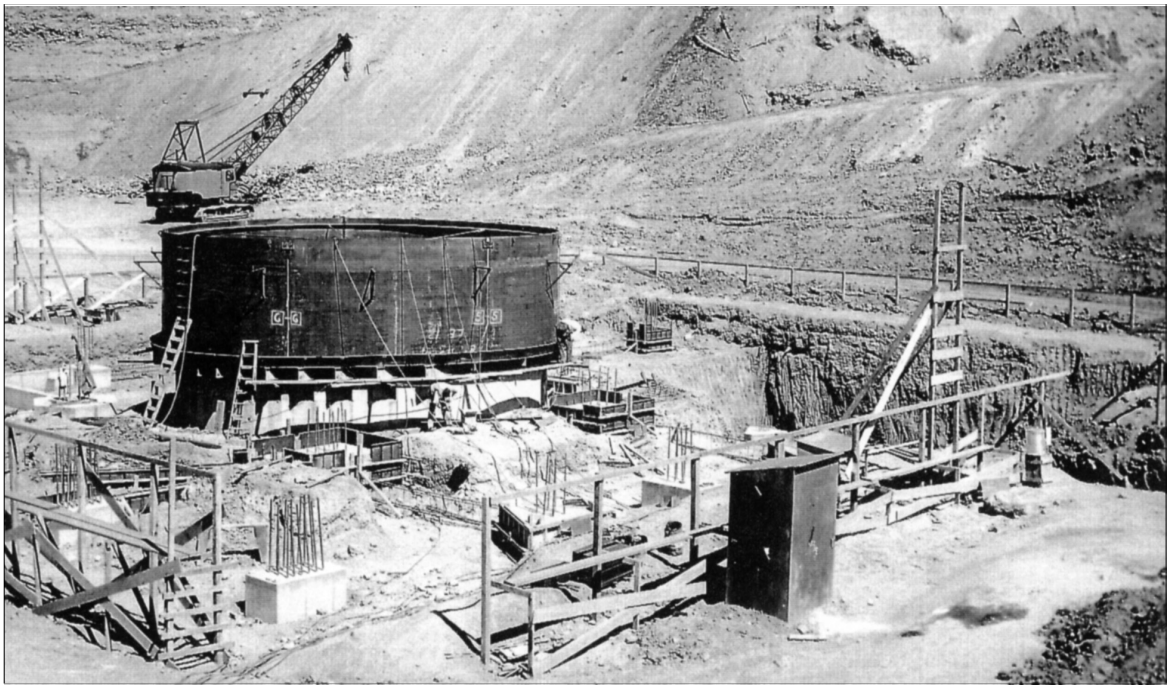


Figure 111. Furnace construction, Georgetown Canyon, 1957. Photo courtesy of the Idaho Geological Survey.



Figure 112. Kiln construction, Georgetown Canyon, 1957. Photo courtesy of the Idaho Geological Survey.

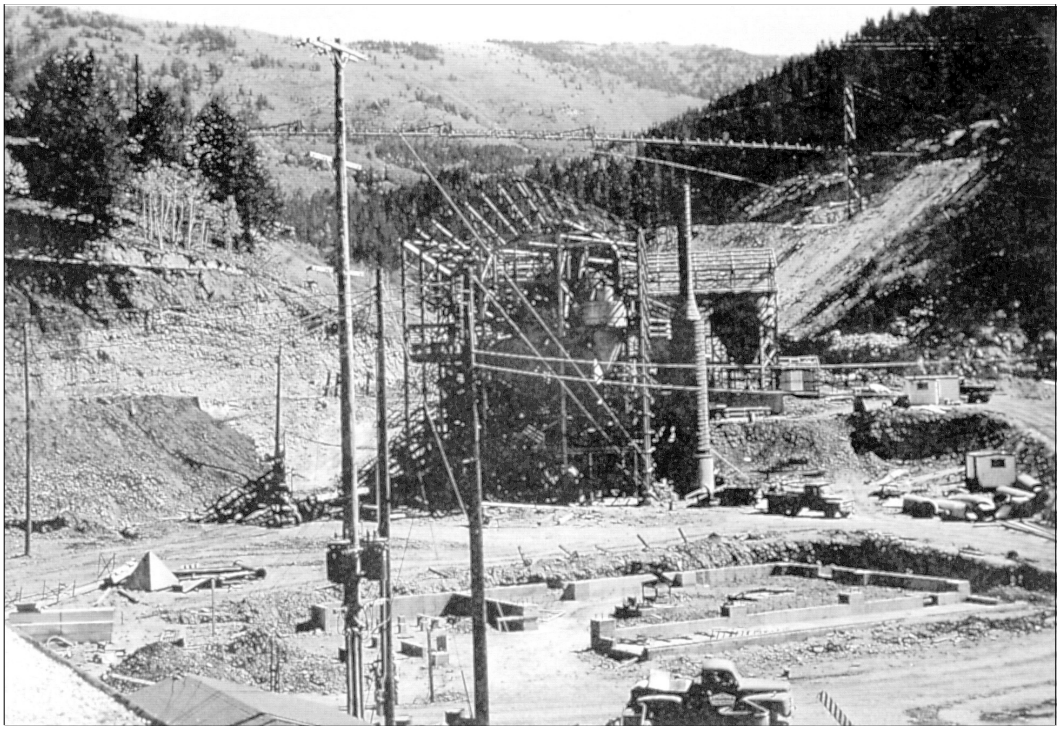


Figure 113. Phosphate rock beneficiation building, Georgetown Canyon, 1958. Photo courtesy of the Idaho Geological Survey.

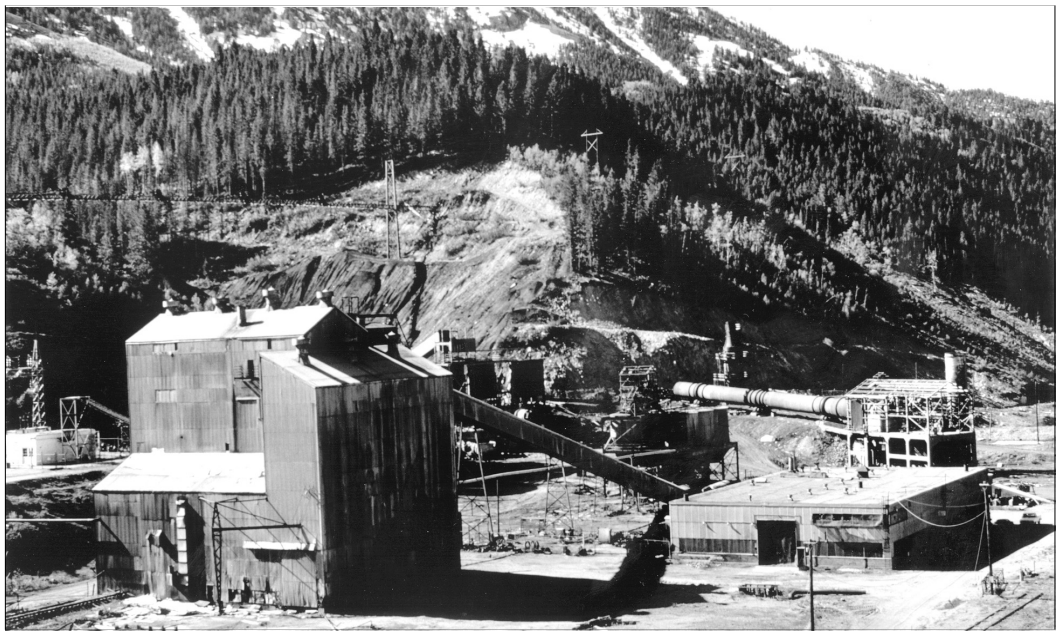


Figure 114. Georgetown Canyon phosphate plant of the Central Farmers Fertilizer Company, June, 1978. Photo by Peter Oberlindacher, BLM.

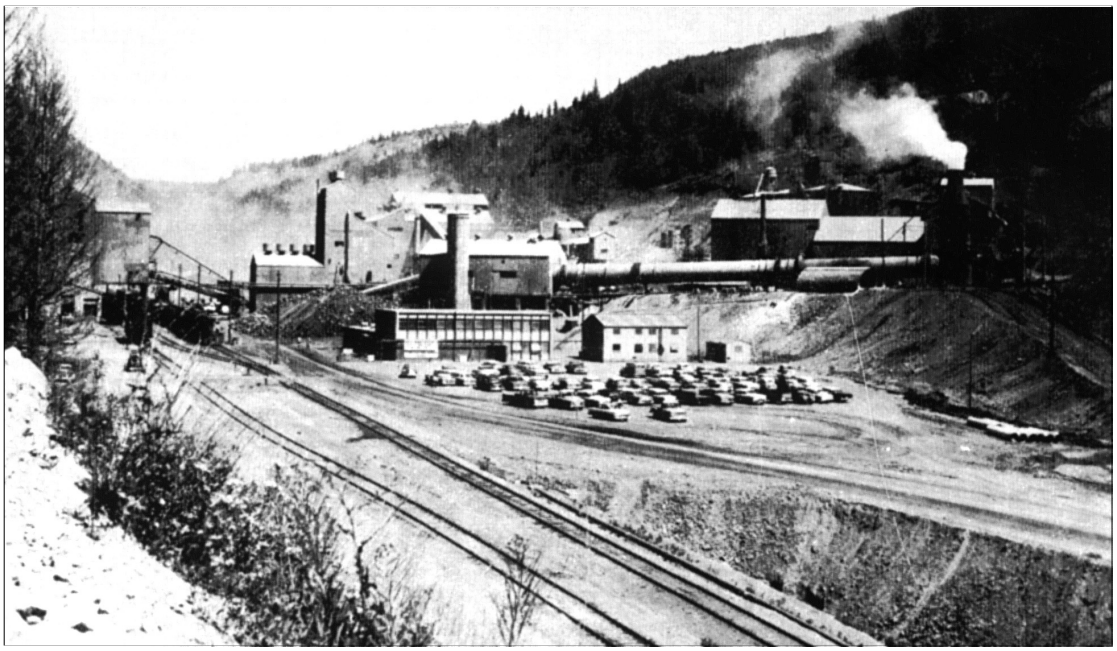


Figure 115. Central Farmers Fertilizer Company plant in Georgetown Canyon, date unknown. Photo from Service, 1967, p. 59.



Figure 116. Georgetown Canyon Mine, date unknown. Photo from Service, 1967, p. 61.

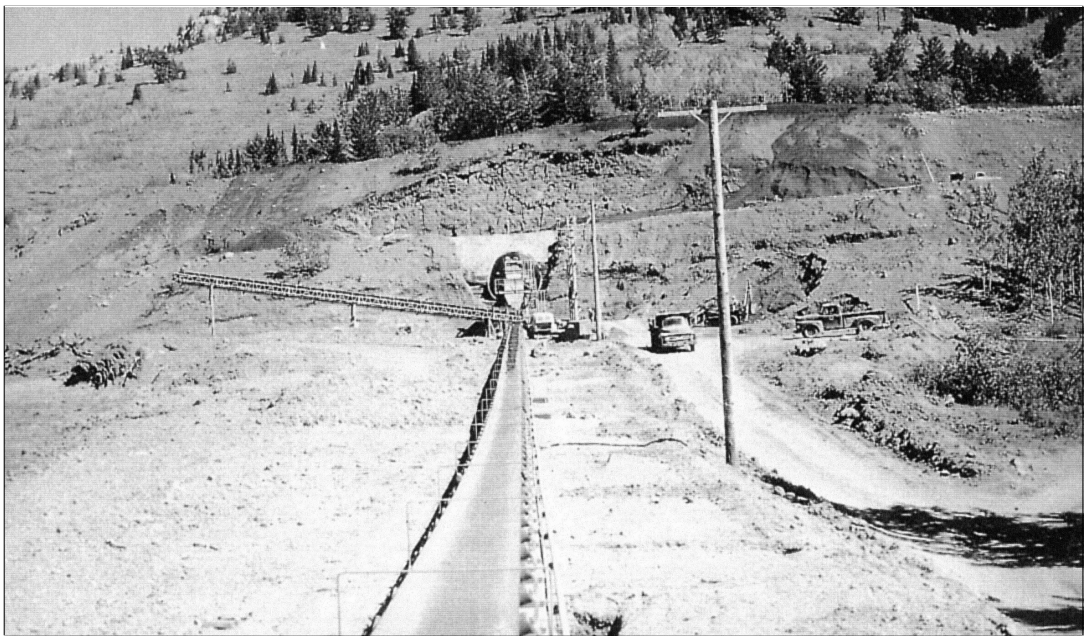


Figure 117. First ore starts down the conveyor belt at Central Farmers Fertilizer Company's Georgetown Canyon Mine, date unknown. Photo courtesy of the Idaho Geological Survey.

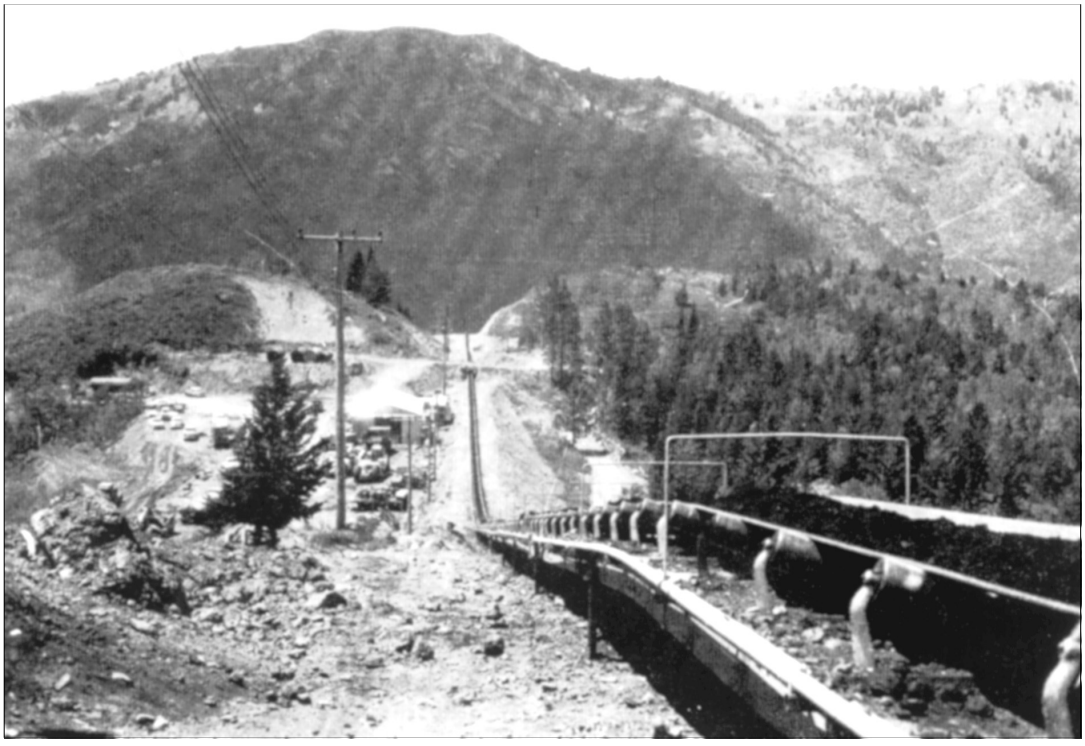


Figure 118. Conveyor belt at Georgetown Canyon Mine, date unknown. Photo from Service, 1967, p. 62.

the cutting bridge (a devise, anchored at one end by the conveyor mechanism, and used to evenly stockpile the mined ore) was about 850 feet (Service, 1966).



Figure 119. Cutting bridge at Central Farmers Fertilizer Company complex, date unknown. Photo from Service, 1967, p. 64.

In 1964, production stopped from the mine. In July, 1964, the El Paso Natural Gas Products Company bought the Georgetown Canyon phosphate properties from the Central Farmers Fertilizer Company (Hansen, 1965) and in October, closed the plant facility and moved parts of it to Conda where the company was building a new phosphate processing plant (Service, 1967).

The Georgetown Canyon Mine has not produced phosphate ore since 1964, however, the mine ownership has changed hands several times since then. In May of 1972, Agricultural Products Corporation (APC) purchased the mine properties from El Paso. Agricultural Products Corporation was a wholly owned subsidiary of Beker Industries Corporation. In 1972, APC was dissolved and all of their property holdings, including the Georgetown Canyon mine were assigned to the parent company, Beker Industries. In January of 1979, Beker Industries Corporation sold 50% of their holdings, including the Georgetown Canyon mine, to Western Co-operative Fertilizer, Ltd., USA and formed the Conda Partnership. In 1987, the Beker Corporation filed for a Chapter 11 bankruptcy and a financial group called Nu-West Industries, Inc. replaced the Beker Corporation in the Conda Partnership. In 1992, Nu-West Industries, Inc. bought out the Western Co-operative Fertilizer, Ltd., and formed a wholly owned subsidiary named Nu-West Mining, Inc. to replace the co-op in Conda Partnership. In 1995, the Conda Partnership was dissolved and all of the mine properties were

assigned to Nu-West Mining, Inc. In October of 1995, Nu-West Industries was acquired by Agrium, Inc., a Canadian firm based in Calgary, Alberta. As of this writing, no name changes have occurred and the mine properties, including Georgetown Canyon mine remain under the ownership of Agrium, U.S.