

Kirwin 24 karat Key Dates in History

Saving Kirwin has been a cooperative effort...

Stabilization and restoration of the historic buildings in the Kirwin Mining District has been a cooperative effort between the Shoshone National Forest, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Abandoned Mine Lands Division of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and numerous volunteers from Wyoming and across the country.

Major funding, engineering and other services have been provided by the Abandoned Mine Lands Division without whose cooperation and support these important restoration projects would not have been accomplished.



1870

The first gold prospecting expedition entered the Wood River area, led by a man named Kuyendall. The area was under an Indian Treaty at the time, and soldiers from Fort Bowman broke up the camp and made the prospectors leave the Big Horn Basin. One of the prospectors was killed by Indians, probably a member of the Crow Tribe.

1881

Henry Schnitzel prospected the area.

1885

William Kirwin and Harry Adams prospected the area and found gold.

1891

The Wood River Mining District was formed, and several claims were staked.

1894

The Shoshone River Mining Company was formed by a New York capitalist with C.L. Tewksbury as manager.



1897

The first ore shipment was transported on mules.

1899

The Galena Ridge Mining Corporation was formed by Henry Schnitzel, T.J. Greer, P.W. Gates and Ernest May. The four men purchased land along the Wood River and organized the Antlers Land and Cattle Company which they used as a base for their mining operations.

1902

Exploration was well established at Kirwin.

1904

The Shoshone Mining and Development Company of Kirwin was incorporated.

There were more than 200 people and 38 buildings in Kirwin. These included a hotel, a boarding house, two general stores, a sawmill, a post office, a headquarters building, cabins and meat storage sheds. But there were no saloons, brothels or even a cemetery. A stagecoach ran from Meeteetse to Kirwin on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday and ran from Kirwin to Meeteetse on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

1904 to 1906

The Shoshone Mining and Development Company, Galena Ridge Mining Company and Wyoming Mining Company did extensive development of mines in the area investing between \$1 and \$4 million.

1904 to 1907

1905

A miner named William Chubb was killed by a premature explosion in the Bryan Mine.

1907

On February 5th, after nine days of heavy snowfall, a massive avalanche roared down Brown Mountain. It engulfed Tewksbury's store and home and swept them into the Wood River killing three people, Mr and Mrs. Charley Brunell and John Reynolds. Later that spring most residents left Kirwin.

1907 to 1931

Henry Schnitzel acquired control of most of the land - 3,300 acres including 144 patented mining claims.

1914

C.L. Tewksbury closed his mine. He continued to come to Kirwin every summer to operate his store for sheepmen in the area until 1922.

1917

R.J. Chapman tried to reorganize the Wood River Mining District and revitalize mining operations. World War I was raging and metal prices had risen, but his efforts were not successful.

1922

The first automobile came to Kirwin - a Dodge driven by Mr. Winkley of Dubois, Wyoming.

1925

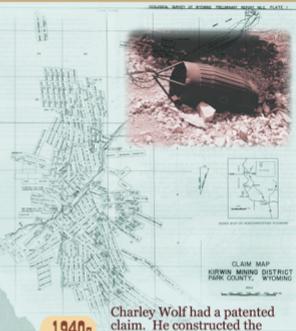
Henry Schnitzel tried to promote mining in the area again, but to no avail.

1931

Carl Durrud purchased Schnitzel's holdings from his widow. He built the Double D Dude Ranch six miles below Kirwin.

1934

Amelia Earhart visited the Double D Dude Ranch and asked Carl Durrud to build her a cabin near Kirwin. It was never finished as she disappeared on her attempted round-the-world flight.



1940s

Charley Wolf had a patented claim. He constructed the Wolf Mine shaft house and dug a vertical shaft.

1959

Duke Wilson, from Sonora, Texas, purchased the Kirwin properties from Carl Durrud.

1962

The American Metals Climax (AMAX) Mining Company purchased Kirwin from Duke Wilson. AMAX conducted extensive operations in the area and mapped a rich deposit of copper under Spar Mountain. Plans to mine were dropped after copper prices fell and startup expenses for the operation became too high.

1992

The Richard King Mellon Foundation and Conservation Fund purchased Kirwin from AMAX and donated it to the public. The Shoshone National Forest assumed management of the area.

1999

Stabilization and restoration of the historic buildings in the Kirwin Mining District begins.

