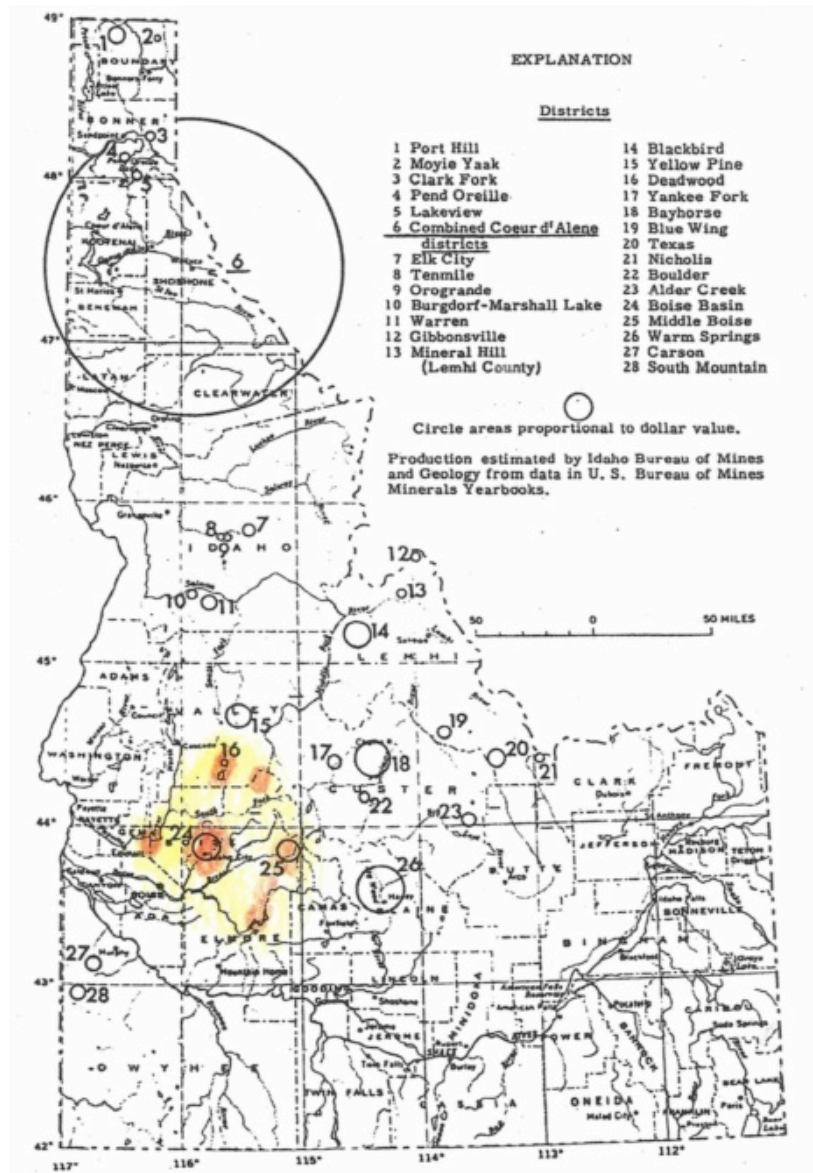


# Southwest Central Idaho



## Minerals & Ores in the case are from Mining Districts:

Boise Basin ● Atlanta ● Rocky Bar ● Banner ● Deadwood  
 Bear Valley ● Pearl ● Boise Ridge ● Neal Districts and Vicinity

This region includes the Boise Basin gold district, Idaho's largest producer of gold, and the scene of the 1862 discovery by George Grimes and his associates that resulted in the first major stampede of gold-seekers to Idaho. This occurred during the American Civil War when the Union was in dire need of gold. Early production was substantial enough that on March 3, 1863, Idaho was created as a new Territory of the United States. In July of that year a military encampment, a new Fort Boise, was established at the edge of the mountains about 30 miles southwest of the gold producing area. The City of Boise grew up adjacent to this encampment and owes its origin to the gold discovery in Boise Basin.

In 1863 many thousands of prospectors, miners, and others who came to Boise Basin spread out in search of gold in the surrounding mountains. Their discoveries led to the establishment of many additional mines and mining districts. Specimens from some of these appear in this display case.

Most of the gold that has been produced in Boise Basin, which amounts to almost 3 million ounces, came from the gravel of placer mines that were located along streams and on benches at many different localities. The gold in the gravels came from veins that occur in many different places in the bedrock of the area. The bedrock is largely granite, or a variety of granite called granodiorite. Rock of this type occurs throughout a very large region in central Idaho and is referred to as the Idaho Batholith.

The batholith is more than 200 miles long (N-S) and up to 80 miles wide (E-W). The rock that makes up the batholith crystallized from a deep-seated magma between about 80 million and 65 million years ago. It has been greatly uplifted and deeply eroded since that time.

Gold has been the mineral of most importance in this part of Idaho but there are also many (small-producer) occurrences of silver, lead, zinc, and copper. Two large low-grade occurrences of disseminated molybdenum and copper have been explored in recent years and may become future producers. Rare earth minerals are also present in some areas.

## **Southwest Central Mining Districts**