

The New County Prospers

The silver mines at Cerro Gordo provided a huge impetus to young Inyo County from the very start. Freighter Remi Nadeau used 32 teams to haul 900 tons of bullion to San Pedro in Just one year!

In the early 1870s, these kilns (pictured below) were built to make charcoal needed for the nearby silver smelters. Wood was obtained from nearby Cottonwood Canyon for the kilns. The remnants of these kilns can be seen today just east of Highway 395 about 7 miles north of Cartago.

Cerro Gordo was a big producer of silver up until the end of the 1870s when the great boom soon busted.

In 1909, zinc was discovered to be in abundance at "Fat Hill" and the boom was on again.

A 29,560 foot-long Leschen aerial tramway was constructed to bring down the ore. This system was capable of transporting 16-20 tons of ore per hour to the railroad terminus at Keeler. Cerro Gordo became one of the major producers of high-grade zinc ore in the United States during this second boom period. The mines were worked steadily for zinc until 1915 and then intermittently until 1933.

