

Nestled in the southeastern corner of Lake Pend Oreille sits a ghost town. Lakeview, once a large metropolis was like many others in the west, a gold and Silver rush town. Once a home to thousands, this mountain side village sits lonely and quiet in today's world. The one main street slides down the hill toward the lake. Clustered on both sides are a combination of old small houses mixed with some ancient mobile homes. One such home on the north side of the street used to be a one room school house, still with double front doors. Up the shore a little way is the Portland Cement Plant. One of two that operated adjacent to Lakeview.

The harbor, which is in the mouth of Gold Creek is about one-half mile below town. The old resort, once a bustling café and bar is now a private residence. A few homes are semi-occupied by summer weekenders, and out-of-town vacationers. On a Sunday afternoon, not a soul was stirring. There are by rough count, about fifty dwellings in town. A few modern homes are being built apparently as hideaways. One such new log home is being built on a knoll just above the lake. Spectacular views are available, but the original town wasn't built for tourists. Miners, prospectors and the accompanying gamblers, shady ladies and the sort were the only residents. There are some quaint homes dating to the past. One such place is a Victorian home built by the Webers, owners of the Weber mines. They operated their own steamer for transportation to and from Lakeview. Many University professors, including WSC president Dr. Enoch Bryan vacationed there, and is still in use by his family.

Tom Musson, resident of Granite Creek for many years now lives in Bayview, but travels to Lakeview and Granite on a regular basis. He said, "I swamped my boat up at the mine a little north of Lakeview in mid-winter. This was in the seventies. I walked up the beach to the Lakeview resort, then owned by John & Carol Bruno. They took me in, fed me, gave me a gallon jug of wine and gave me the use of a cabin." "There was a real character, Mary Lou Weber, who owned one of the old mines. She would winter in Mexico, then spend her Summers at the bar in the resort." Musson rides his snowmobile up over the pass to Lakeview, quite often in the winter. He swears by the Yak Burgers at the Happy Hermit.

Two miles south of Lakeview, sits a restaurant and motel. The Happy Hermit, owned and operated by Ron Utz and his son, Roger, operates year around. The Happy Hermit burned down about three years ago and was rebuilt in the same location. They provide meals, drinks and gas for those that are short or have come in by snowmobile. According to Ron, "we don't make any money on gas sales. At most, we sell 2 or 3 gallons at a time for snowmobiles. After hauling it up over the 4000 foot pass to get there and store it for months it's about break even." Their specialty is Yak Burgers. Meat is purchased from a Yak farm near Bayview. Utz, a great fan of Yak explained that of "beef, chicken, pork and even bison, yak has the lowest fat content." We can attest to the burger as very good.

Supplies are hard to come by since this area is snow bound for six months a year. During the winter, access is by snowmobile over 20 miles of primitive road that stretches from Silverwood and Bunco road, FS road 332 and 278. The only other way in is to drive south from Clark Fork up over high country on FS road 332 or along the shoreline on FS

road 278. Ron said, "I can't bring pop over in my pickup during the coldest part of the year because the cans freeze and explode." Driving over the highest part of the route, which is about 4500 feet above sea level, or 2500 feet above the lake, one finds sheer cliffs, panoramas that include the water tower at Farragut. When you reach the summit, a road branches off toward the North fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Many old logging and mine access roads branch off without good signage, making the trek an adventure in dead reckoning navigation.

Therein lies the problem that Lakeview has. Seasonal access only. Twenty seven miles from Bayview, which is located just five miles away by water. By land, it takes more than an hour at an average speed of 20mph. Several played out mines dot the mountains behind Lakeview and up to the old town of Chloride. In it's heyday, Lakeview had two large hotels. The Swastika and the Lakeview Hotel. Most will wonder about the name, "Swastika," but this was 1911, way before Nazi Germany started using it as a symbol. Originally, it was a Greek good luck charm. The Swastika was a destination Resort, much like Glacier, Yellowstone and Banff. Owned and operated by the Swastika Mining Company, guests arrived in Hope by rail then to Lakeview by steamer. The last mine, "The Conjecture," ceased operations in 1962.. According to Ron at the Happy Hermit, "only 6 to 9 people are year around residents, depending on how many are in jail." For cell phone visitors, those that boat over to the dock can call the Happy Hermit for a ride up to the café. 222-7669. Phones on the east side of the lake are provided by a private phone company serving the area from the Happy Hermit, north to Granite Creek and Kilroy.. Emergency transportation is usually provided by John Thaxter in the mail boat, as well as emergency provisions delivered. Steve DeHart, now a resident of Kodiak, Alaska once lived in Lakeview. He tells of his son Craig's birth. "My wife started into labor in 1984. George Johnson, then Mailboat carrier, ferried two midwives over to supervise the birth."