

**An Archaeological Investigation of the Bower Cabin Site,  
Nevada Test Site, Nye County, Nevada**

by

**Harold Drollinger**

**Colleen M. Beck and Harold Drollinger  
Principal Investigators**

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## ABSTRACT

This report presents an archaeological study of the historic Bower Cabin site (26NY8806) located at the northern edge of the Nevada Test Site in southern Nevada. Fieldwork was conducted by the Desert Research Institute for the U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office during the spring of 2001. The Bower Cabin site is a mining camp with associated mines dating to the early part of the twentieth century and identified with the Oak Spring mining district of Nye County. It consists of habitation features, activity areas, and mines and mining features. B.M. Bower, a novelist of popular Western stories, and her family lived at the site during the 1920s and operated the El Picacho mining company. While living there, she wrote 11 of her many novels in a literary career that spanned nearly forty years. She was posthumously inducted into the Western Writers of American Hall of Fame in 1994.

The purpose of this archaeological study was to characterize the site through field recording and artifact analysis and provide a historical context. Habitation and mining features were mapped and described and associated artifact scatters for the habitation features were inventoried and plotted. Habitation features include two standing structures, a portion of a wall for a third structure, the foundation for a fourth, and two dirt platforms used to support several small structures now gone. Near these features are the remnants of a probable outhouse. In the mine area are four mines and a rock structure. One of the mines is a shaft and the others are adits. Immediately surrounding them are small prospects. A graded access road connects the mines and the habitation area. Also present at the site is a location monument with writing, a number of rock cairn location monuments, two benchmarks, isolated prospects, tree stumps cut with a metal axe, and two glass concentrations consisting of broken wine bottles. Prehistoric use of the site consists of only a few widely-dispersed artifacts in and around the habitation area. None were observed in the mine area.

The Bower Cabin site (26NY8806) is recommended to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under criteria a, b, and d of 36 CFR Part 60.4. Criterion a refers to a thematic association with a person of literature, that is, a novelist or writer, and in this case a place where a writer of western fiction novels, B.M. Bower, lived and worked. Criterion b refers to B.M. Bower as an important person in our history because of the impact of her writing on our society. Criterion d refers to important information related to our history that a site can provide. The Bower Cabin site represents one of the many smaller mining operations in the region and has yielded historic and archaeological information about settlement, site structure, and subsistence practices for the 1920s.

Because the site is recommended to be eligible to the NRHP, certain measures need to be taken to protect its integrity. Although there are no foreseeable impacts, other than natural processes, DRI recommends the site be incorporated into the NTS cultural resources monitoring program to be checked on a regular basis for disturbances. Future projects in the immediate area need to take into consideration any adverse effects they may have on the site. Another recommendation is to provide signage on the site, or at the site boundary, that describes the history and significance of the site.