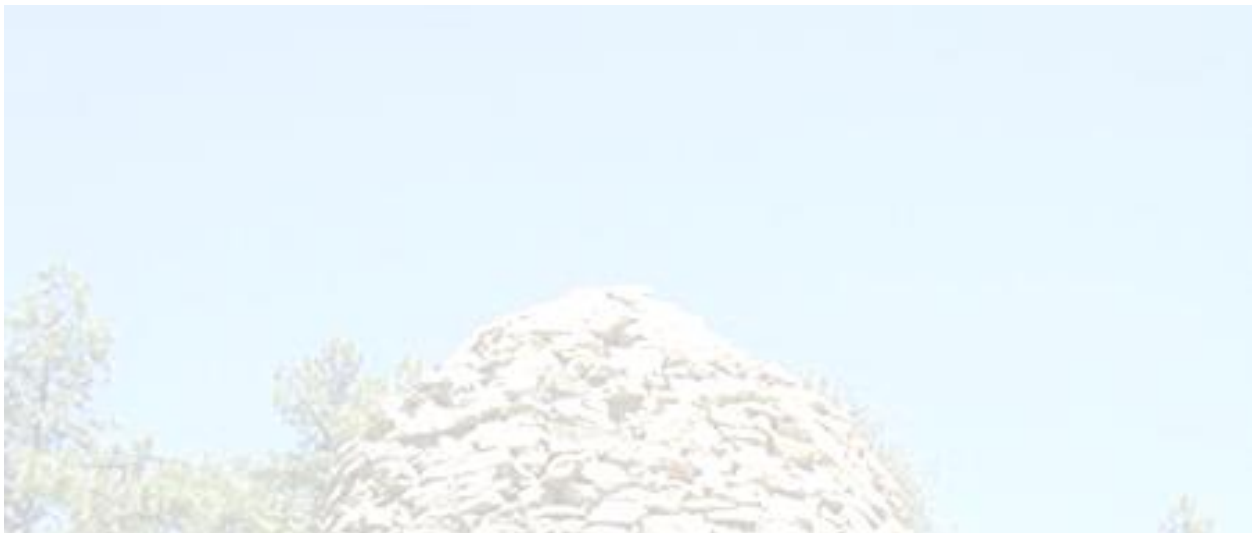


## **THE WALKER CHARCOAL KILN**

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places





This kiln was constructed around 1880 by Jake and Joe Carmichals to convert oak wood into charcoal for use at the nearby smelters. The surrounding forest was cut so heavily for charcoal and mine props in the late 1880's that it is just now becoming productive again.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



## The WALKER CHARCOAL KILN

### USING OAK TO MAKE SILVER

Jake and Joe Carmichael built this kiln around 1880 to convert oak wood into charcoal, which gives about twice the heat of unprocessed wood. The charcoal was used in nearby smelters as a chemical-reducing agent to extract silver from its ore.

A ramp leading to a hole at the top rear provided access for the oak to be loaded into the kiln; the resulting charcoal was removed through the door on the front side. Firing the kiln to make charcoal was a delicate operation. Skilled "colliers" had to ensure the wood did not burn too fast or too slow, and internal gases had to be controlled to prevent explosions. The best colliers could get approximately 40 bushels of charcoal from a cord of wood.



### A RARE REMINDER OF AN HISTORIC ERA

The charcoal produced here was an important contributor to hard rock mining in the Walker area, which was one of the earliest and most productive precious metal districts in the history of Arizona. This kiln is the only surviving charcoal kiln in the area, and one of the oldest remaining mining monuments in Yavapai County. In recognition of its importance, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

### The Boom and Bust of Walker

Now home to summer cabins, Walker was once a boom town sustained for nearly 80 years by both gold and silver mining. As many as 3,000 people were reported to have lived here at its peak. It could brag of liveryies, restaurants, hotels, barber shops, a dairy, an ice house, a jail, and about seven saloons. Mining in the Walker area began to decline in 1893 when silver became demonetized and the government no longer stabilized the price. Almost all of Arizona's silver mines closed at this time, and silver was no longer the "King of Arizona Mining."

PRESCOTT National Forest



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