

# Mines and Mining.

## READS LIKE NOVEL

THE SPECKLED TROUT HAS HAD MANY UPS AND DOWNS.

IT WAS AN ORE PRODUCER

Butte Men Worked the Property Under Lease—It is Claimed That Manager Frisbee Was Too Extravagant.

Among the quartz mines in the early history of the Flint Creek district none were more promising than the Speckled Trout, says the Phillipsburg Mail. The history of this property reads like a romance. Being among the first discovered ledges in this vicinity, the marvelous riches of its ores near the surface attracted the attention of mining men in the early sixties. In 1870 Cole Sanders secured possession of the property from Charles Frost and Dan and Sandy Brown, the owners and original locators. The purchase covered the Speckled Trout lode claim, embracing 11 locations of 200 feet each. The amount paid was \$15,000. In 1870 the Imperial Gold and Silver Mining company, composed of New York capitalists, was incorporated. Cole Sanders was elected trustee and operations were commenced for the reduction of the Trout ores by the smelting process. A stack was built and lead ores for fluxing were purchased, but after a trial it was found that this process would not do and the company suspended operations. Over the ruins of the Imperial arose a small five-stamp mill, fitted with pans, settlers and reverberatory furnaces. Phil M. Sanders was in charge and under his management the only prosperity ever enjoyed by the Trout was experienced.

**New Mill Built.**  
During the existence of this plant a portion of the Trout claim was relocated by Sanders and named the Providentia. It being satisfactorily determined that the process adaptable to the base ores of Trout hill was treatment by fire chlorination and the workings by the reverberatory process remunerative, it was deemed important to work the mine and treat the ores on a more extensive scale. To this end, in 1874, the Northwest company was organized, the five stamp mill was torn down, contracts for the machinery of a complete 10-stamp mill let to a Helena firm, contracts for construction made with Architect Thomas Fisher,

and under the supervision of Col. J. A. Vial, the Northwest mill was completed and started to work. The result was satisfactory. The process of chlorination was by the Bruckner system. Milling was perfected through one 10-foot California pan, two one-ton Vanhey pans and one five-ton Purvine pan. Two California settlers completed the amalgamating department.

**Only the Stack Remains.**  
A lonely stack about 50 feet high and surrounded by broken masonry and a large excavation filled with debris is all that remains of what was in its day the largest dry crushing reduction works in the country. The management of the Northwest company in 1875 passed out of the hands of Vial and a gentleman named Mills took charge. Mills conducted the affairs of the company to the close sometime in the spring of 1876. The failure left a large indebtedness and liens to a considerable amount were filed against the property. Among the largest creditors of the company was the firm of Caplice & Smith, at that time merchants of Phillipsburg. In the fall of 1877, largely through the efforts of John Caplice of Butte, a reorganization was perfected under the name of the Northwestern Mining company. This company replaced the Northwest, assumed its liabilities and once again the ores of the Speckled Trout came to the surface and the roar of the ponderous stamps of the old mill made the canyon resound with its echoes. Frank Frisbee was placed in charge as the general manager. Everything seemed to indicate a season of prosperity, but it was not to be.

**Alleged Mismanagement.**  
Frisbee let extravagant wood contracts, built unnecessary roads, and otherwise conducted the affairs of his charge in a manner that was everything but economical, and as a result the end came in 1879, and under process of law all of the company's property passed by sheriff's sale into the possession of Caplice & Smith. For a number of years the Trout was worked under a lease by James Patten, who made considerable money. In 1884 the holding works of the Trout were consumed by fire, the shaft timbers were burned down for a short distance beneath the surface, and since that day no improvement of any kind was made upon the plant of the old Northwest company until in 1896 when William J. Johnston of Butte secured a lease on the mine. Frank Grimes, who was also interested with Mr. Johnston in the lease, had charge of the operations. The machinery and hoisting plant from the San Francisco Consolidated was moved and erected over the Trout shaft. Johnston and Grimes took out and shipped considerable ore, but after a time they suspended

operations and gave up the lease. Since that time nothing of interest has transpired in connection with this property and the mine has remained shut down.

## FROM THUNDER MOUNTAIN.

J. T. Johnson Says the District Will Be Greatest in the West.

J. T. Johnson, an old prospector, arrived in Spokane Saturday from the Thunder Mountain district, where he spent the past summer, says the Spokesman-Review. He left yesterday for Logansport, Ind., to visit his old home. He came West in the fall of 1848, when 10 years old. The trip, he says, was made on the transport Ohio, around Cape Horn, in company with 1046 other passengers, who were seeking their fortunes in the California gold diggings. "Since then," said he, "I have been in every mining camp in the West. I herded mules on the site of Spokane before a single cabin was built. "I came out of the Thunder Mountain district on snowshoes and arrived at Siltco, Idaho, Friday. I was about a week making the trip. While I make no pretense of knowing what is hidden in the ground, if surface showings are to be counted, Thunder Mountain will develop into the greatest mining camp in the West. It will surpass Cripple Creek or California in their palmy days. It would be absolutely foolish to go into the district before spring. The snow is so deep that but little prospecting could be done, and the country is absolutely destitute of provisions.

## Best Route Via Elk City.

"I would recommend the route via Elk City, which is more exposed to the wind. The wind packs the snow so that traveling over it is not so laborious. The middle of April will be early enough to make the trip, and even then snowshoes will have to be used. This is my first trip East in many years. My principal object is to interest capital in the development of claims I have located. I have been many years seeking my fortune, but I believe I have found it at last."

The old prospector is a prospector of a type seldom seen now. His face is so tanned by sun and wind that at first glance he would be mistaken for a mulatto. His face is slightly pock marked and he has but one eye with which he can see. His entire worldly possessions in the way of wearing apparel consisted of high top boots, corduroy pantaloons and coat, flannel shirt and a tattered felt hat. He carried a long staff and a small bundle done up in a sack which had once contained flour.

## ITS SOURCE EXPOSED.

Caleb Rhodes Had a Snap on a Utah Indian Reservation.

"Money-rock," as the Indians call gold-bearing quartz, is the prize for which the seekers of a mineral lease on the Uintah reservation are striving, says the Salt Lake Herald. Information came from the reservation country yesterday that at least the secret of Caleb Rhodes of Price as to the location of the rich gold deposits on the reservation, had been discovered, and that the Florence Mining company was in possession of the information.

The syndicate of republican politicians and others, headed by Postmaster General Henry C. Payne, has been secretive as to the real object of the quest. It has been given out that deposits of asphaltum and of copper were in view. Now it is stated beyond a doubt that the deposits of gold have been discovered, and that they are of great richness.

The story of Caleb Rhodes, the Price ranchman, is well known. For years he has slipped clandestinely to the reservation and has returned laden with gold. Sometimes he had brought in sacks of quartz which was plastered with gold. Sometimes he has broken the rock and washed out the metal, bringing in the native gold.

Too many people have seen the gold and the quartz to doubt its existence, and many a plot has been laid to learn the secret of whence it came. All have failed, however, until now.

The information from the reservation is that with the aid of some of the Indians, the location of the gold deposits was learned, and that now the syndicate has the information. The lease calls for 640 acres of land, and if this is located all, or nearly all, on rich gold-bearing veins or deposits, it is difficult to conceive the enormous amount of wealth which it represents.

## A MAMMOTH VEIN.

Treasure Hill in Madison County to Be Developed.

S. R. Beebe, who came to Virginia City in 1877 and located the Treasure Hill mine on Mill gulch, a tributary of Granite creek, was in the city yesterday, says the Alder Gulch Times. The mine was patented in 1886 by F. J. P. Pascoe of Salt Lake City and Mr. Beebe. It is a mammoth vein of ore, carrying gold, silver and galena. Assays have given as high as 300 ounces silver; 40 gold, and 40 per cent lead, while the lower grades show up a valuation of about \$45 to \$60 per ton at the East Helena smelter. Mr. Beebe was here for the purpose of laying in a winter stock of supplies where-with to develop the property. He has erected buildings and will prosecute work on the mine until next spring when active shipment of ore will begin.

## MINING IN OLD MEXICO.

Vast Quantities of the Metal Produced Years Ago.

Silver was for ages the staple mineral product of Mexico. The only reason we can assign for this in times prior to its use as a medium of currency is its inherent beauty and permanency and the actual abundance of the metal. Viewing it as we instinctively do now, in the light of its pecuniary value, it is not surprising if some of the old stories related of the old silver mines sound rather too like fairy tales for unhesitating acceptance. Yet having myself seen, within the last two years, silver ores carrying 6000 to 7000 ounces per ton shipped out to smelters in England, and others containing 1100 ounces in silver and 81 ounces to the ton in gold, I am not prepared to disbelieve in the globe of solid native silver the size of a man's head, said to have been taken from a cavity in the celebrated mines of Batopilas. It need hardly be added, perhaps, that ores like these do not lie around in the mountains to be had for the seeking by the first prospector who comes along—nor even by one in 50. But that

they exist, and that there may be such yet unexplored, is beyond question.

It is told in Chihuahua that the cathedral of that city, constructed at a cost of about \$200,000, was built entirely out of a church tax of three cents per pound weight of silver extracted from the Santa Eulalia mine alone. In a village church in one of the most poverty-stricken hamlets in the south of Mexico I have seen an altar covered with embossed silver plates 18 inches square and one-fourth to one-half an inch in thickness. The renowned church of Guadalupe, near the City of Mexico, is said to contain, in the form of altar fittings, candelabra and sacred vessels of various kinds, no less than 37 tons of solid silver—the result of votive offerings in the course of its history. I have no reason to doubt this either.

The owner of another great mine in Sinaloa, on the occasion of a wedding in his family some 40 or 50 years ago, is stated to have paved the pathway from the church door to the bride's dwelling with bars of silver, laid close. Modern love of display is often a subject of severe criticism; but it can scarcely devise a wider extravagance than the technical records of mining left in the earth by those bygone diggers of wealth.

The extremely precipitous characters of both the eastern and western Sierra Madre, or Mother lode, indicates the presence of the deep-seated fissures and mineral-bearing veins which they contain.

During a visit of mine to the little town of Copala, in Sinaloa, a previously unknown chamber was discovered in one of the old mines which had been opened, and on the floor of it an interesting find of antique tools was made. At some former period it must have been under water, but by some means or other it had become drained and was now perfectly dry. Among the tools found were some of the above mentioned hammer picks, gads and bars. The latter were tied in a bundle and all were deeply encrusted with a conglomerate of rust and gravel, as one may see an anchor which has lain for years at the bottom of the sea. They were of a different type to any now used, and prior to the introduction of explosives, were no doubt as serviceable as anything that could be devised—in fact, the pick would have been a handy tool at any time.

It may be argued that these tools were of Spanish origin, but considering that the Spaniards can hardly have commenced mining in remote western districts immediately on their occupation of the country from the gulf side, nor for many years afterward (if indeed they ever did so at all), the evidences are against it. The concretion on the tools indicated a long period of submersion in water, after which another considerable interval must have elapsed before the chamber was completely dried out. It was to my mind, more like another evidence of the Asiatic origin of the west coast population, and of importation of their arts from the trans-Pacific continent. If so, the implements (if not of native manufacture) may have hailed from Japan, China, or the Malay archipelago—like so many of the customs and tribal languages of the western Mexican Indians. It would lead us into too engrossing a subject were we to try and trace back these productions (as they must some day be traced)—not to Europe, but to India, Persia and Egypt.

Among the practical lessons of history, however, it is a wholesome one which teaches us to beware of the fascinations of the extreme antiquity craze, and the too frequent pitfalls besetting it. "Bill Stumps, His Mark," was a monumental warning; and even in Mexico one may profit by recalling it occasionally. Those who have purchased "Aztec idols" and other curios in or near the towns have frequently acquired this lesson.

The knowledge possessed by the ancient American miners as to the treatment of ores furnishes collateral evidence on the point just mentioned, showing that the derivation of these arts is not likely to have been from the European side. It is known, of course that they were practiced long before the Spanish invasion; and it will be remembered that in those times the treatment must have been a necessary accompaniment of the mining. It is hardly conceivable that they had any facilities for trading their ores to purchasers at a distance, and reduction must have been effected at or not far from the mines.

Their chemical knowledge, though in all probability empirical, must have been the result of considerable study at some period. I have described above the elementary process for the extraction of gold; but that of silver indicated a much more elaborate attainment, as shown by the ancient patio process—the principle of which still forms the basis of the silver extraction. It was in use until quite recent times (if, indeed, it is not at this moment) and would even hold its own in modern treatment, were it not that the handling of a single charge, so to call it, occupies from 40 to 50 days. Of course, the charge is a big one; a circular stratum of pulp a foot thick, and perhaps 50 feet in diameter, into which the quicksilver has to be intimately incorporated. But the time sense was never a strong characteristic of the Mexicans; it is not so yet, and in early days probably much less so. So that whether they got out their bullion in six days or six weeks was not a matter of much moment. Yet, excepting for this one hindrance, the patio process is as efficient a saving treatment as any that has ever been devised.

Formerly the trading in of the "quick" on the patio was done by bare-footed boys, their limbs to be danger from paralysis of the lower limbs by absorption of the mercury. Latterly it was accomplished more quickly and effectually, and less cruelly, by a string of 8 or 10 mules hitched abreast from a central stake to the circumference of the circle—in which arrangement it strikes one that the unlucky mule nearest the stage must have a giddy time of it.—Mines and Metals.

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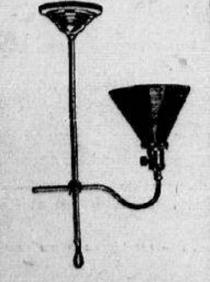
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