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JOB WORK
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LA BUFA MINES.

Properties in Sonora With Great Records of Production, Both in "Antiguo" Days and the Present.

Not long since THE OASIS editor, Mr. Allen T. Bird, of Nogales, while out in the Sahuaripa district of Sonora, looking over a region wonderfully rich in mineral resources, paid a visit to the properties and reduction plant of the Bufa Mining, Milling & Smelting Company, near the towns of Santa Rosa and San Nicolas, in the rich and famous district mentioned.

During a number of years Mr. Bird had been conversant with the big mine called "La Bufa," having frequently seen long trains of pack mules arrive at Torres station, on the line of the Sonora Railway, laden with rich ores from that famous mine, which ores had been transported 150 miles in that way, stood 600 miles rail transportation to the reduction plant at El Paso, and then yielded very handsome returns. Beside that he enjoyed a personal acquaintance with the lucky owners of the property, and was cognizant of the handsome monthly income they were deriving from its production. Added to this, the information given by those familiar with the former history of Sonora, under the Spanish regime, that "La Bufa" was a richly productive property, more than two centuries ago, together with accounts gleaned here, and there of other richly productive mines in the same vicinity, made keen the desire of the editor to visit and see for himself that of which he had heard so much. While there he spent several days in the vicinity, making a thorough examination of the properties, their methods of working, geological character of the region, etc.

These properties, to be herein described, are situated about half a day's ride beyond the Yaqui river, at the crossing near La Barranca coal field. They are in the immediate vicinity of La Trinidad, one of the greatest and richest mines in Mexico, whose output has mounted up into the millions. To the southwest a day's ride are the rich mines at La Dura, now, and many years past successfully and profitably operated by Mr. F. A. Hartman, of Los Angeles, California. Eastward another day's ride are the famous Mulatos gold mines, recently purchased for one million dollars gold by a strong Pennsylvania corporation. And northward about the same distance are the Cieneguita mines, recently bought by a company of Phoenix capitalists, who

have instituted development work upon an extensive scale.

ANTIGUA MINES.

Like La Bufa, Prieta and other mines owned by the Bufa Mining, Milling & Smelting Company, all of these properties are *antiguas*, i. e.: were worked by the early Spaniards and their descendants through 200 and 250 years of Spanish occupation.

Many of the rich mines of the region were worked by the Spaniards right up to the time of Mexican Independence, in 1821. Everything goes to show that the Spaniards had in Sonora a very extensive and populous colony. Little towns scattered through the mountains are surrounded by th-

were sent to Florida. Then peace was assured Sonora, and there set in a rehabilitation of her abandoned mining industry.

FORMER METHODS CRUDE.

Aside from the Indian troubles, another reason for abandonment by the Spaniards of rich mines with great bodies of high grade ores, lay in the fact that their methods were crude and limited in their application. The sciences of metallurgy and chemistry were in their infancy; only ores most easily worked could be successfully treated, and millions of tons of high grade rock were left uncovered, standing in the stopes, or thrown over the dumps, experience having taught that their values could not

principal work has been done at La Bufa. They sank a shaft 300 feet deep to get below the *antigua* workings, into the sulphide ores which the *antiguos* could not reduce. Within sixty days after striking that ore they had taken out and shipped sufficient that the net product from the smelter returns repaid to them all the money expended in prospecting and development, and in the following sixty days sufficient ore was extracted to pay the purchase price of the property. Their later operations in the Santa Rosa group returned results equally gratifying.

SMELTER RETURNS.

The following smelter returns from a few carloads of ore shipped to the Consolidated Kansas City Smelting & Refining Company, at El Paso, Texas, will give an idea of the quality of their ores:

One shipment of 33,876 pounds yielded a net value of \$131.26 per ton, and a total value of \$2,223.28; another of 60,260 pounds, yielded, net, \$148.66 per ton, total, \$4,479.12; a third, of 80,552 pounds, netted \$160.18, per ton, total \$6,451.30. These shipments were from La Bufa.

From the Santa Rosa a shipment of 20,246 pounds of ore netted \$125.35 per ton, a total return of \$1,268.91.

The smelter certificates for the above enumerated shipments, and many more can be shown, and the figures can be verified from the

books of the reduction works at El Paso. Only the first grade ores were shipped. The second grade were jigged at the mine, and the product transported to the mill at Santa Rosa, which was bought by the owners, and there concentrated or treated by lixiviation, according to the character of the ore. In that way, in the prosecution of 6,000 feet of development work upon La Bufa alone there was taken out sufficient ore to pay all the cost of extraction, transportation and reduction and yielded \$175,000 in dividends. And the work done has exposed, ready for extraction and stoping, ores of the value of

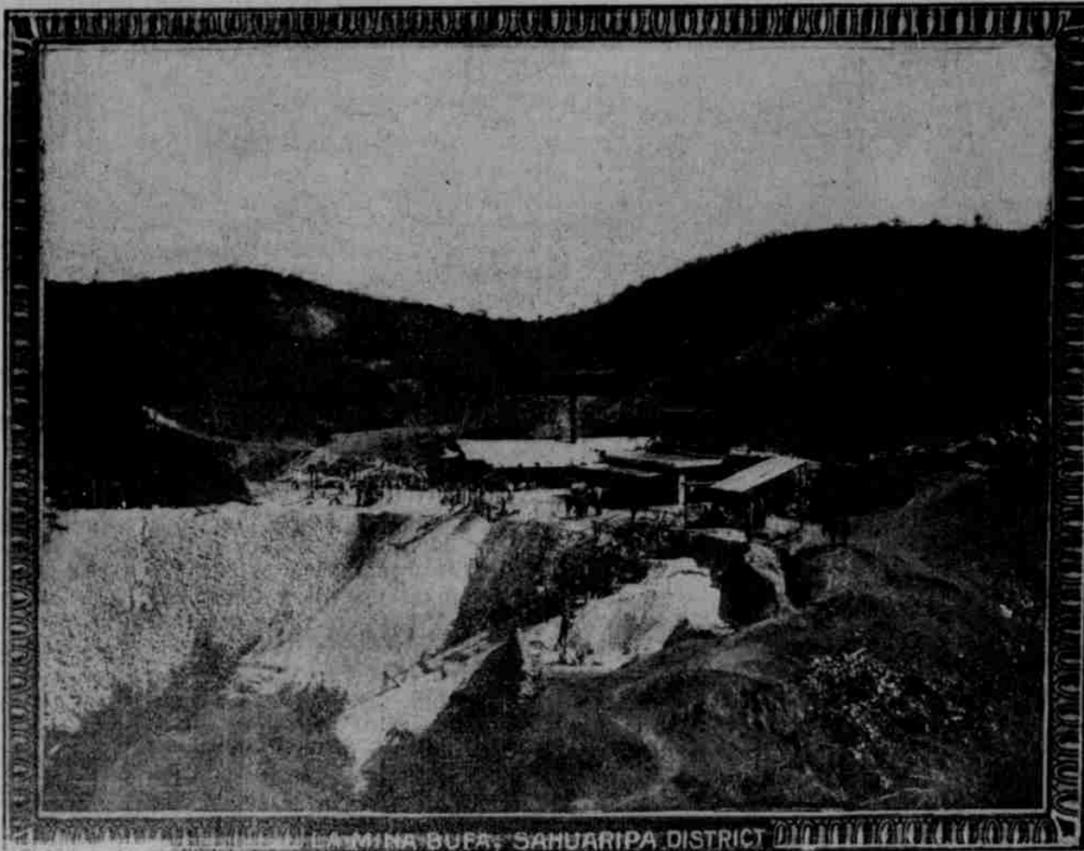
ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

And upon the dump of La Bufa mine there is today ready for milling and shipping ores which will approximate \$125,000 in value.

The development work upon the Santa Rosa group approximates 3000 feet, and the value of the ore in sight is about \$100,000, while up to the present time \$125,000 worth has been extracted, and returns to that amount rendered.

FORMATION.

The region bears all indications of richness and permanence. The



LA BUFA, SAHUARIPA DISTRICT

ruins of habitations, which show they were cities of goodly size, the old ruined churches were certainly built for congregations much larger, the extensive workings of their mines show that large numbers of miners and other laborers were employed, and the records of vast treasure transmitted each year to the City of Mexico, all go to show there was a boundless and unremitting activity through a long period of time. Order was preserved and the region carefully policed by the military forces of the King of Spain. With the war for independence the troops were withdrawn and the region left unprotected. In 1825 there was a great Apache uprising, and for more than fifty years the region was continually harassed and harried by the red devils. All business came to a standstill. Many prosperous camps were completely obliterated, and those which did survive that terrible time dwindled to but shadows of their former importance.

In 1884 the joint operations of the American and Mexican soldiery finally ran to earth and received the surrender of the last predatory band of Apaches, and they

be extracted. Modern machinery and scientific methods of ore extraction have changed all that, and the ores the old *antiguos* passed in their search for those they could reduce, have enriched many a modern miner operating with improved machinery and scientific processes.

Among those who went into Sonora with the new wave of enterprise that followed from the north and spread all over the state, were Davis Richardson and his three brothers—Frank, W. E., and L. E. Richardson. With a long experience in mining and milling in Colorado and New Mexico, they were just the kind of men needed, and they found there a rich and virgin field open to them. Occupied at in the service of some of the early companies operating there, they proved themselves valuable men wherever placed. But they kept casting about for openings to operate upon their own account, and did more or less prospecting through the country. Their attention had been called to La Bufa group of mines, and in 1896 they acquired that property, which they set about developing. Later they purchased the Santa Rosa group, but their