

Probate Clerk

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LUNA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

A Serial Story of Its History, People, Stock, Mining and Commercial Industries, Railway Facilities and Educational Advantages.

Part I.

Chapter 5.

MINING INTERESTS.

The Cook's Peak District.

While this is not considered essentially a mining region, yet there are two districts, one to the north and one to the south of Deming, which are of more than ordinary interest not only for the amount and value of the ore taken from them, but also for the natural curiosities to be found in them. It is the former of these that we aim to describe in this article. Cook's Peak is a lone mountain, or rather a small range of mountains, rising from the open plain about 20 miles north of Deming. This little range runs from the southeast toward the northwest, and the highest point or peak, rises rather south of the center of the range. The mineral belt is a strip about a mile in width extending from the base of the mountain on the east side over the top at the north of the peak to a point about 8 miles away at the base on the west. This district is exclusively a lead camp lying for the most part in a lime formation, these ores carry small quantities of silver and a trace of gold.

The first discovery of minerals in this district was in 1880, when two hardy adventurers who had traveled over a large portion of the great Rocky Mountain country hunting for a fortune, defied the hostile Indians who were then quite troublesome here and began work at the very summit of the ridge a short distance to the north of the peak. These men, Lon Irington and Ed Orr by name, made a rich strike at the grass roots and located a number of claims which they called the Montezuma mine. These properties have been owned and worked by various parties and, while the workings are not deep they cover a large extent of ground and have produced immense quantities of ore. The mineral here is found in pockets in the lime and in working out these pockets a large number of shafts have been sunk, reaching perhaps a hundred in number.

Aside from the mineral value taken from these mines they have an unusual interest for explorers and curiosity seekers on account of the many natural peculiarities they possess. All through these workings caverns of various sizes have been found many of them filled with the quaintest and most beautiful chrysal formations. Many hundred pounds of these chrysal specimens have been shipped east and sold at good prices but the rarest and most beautiful of these was only viewed by a few who opened up the room where it lay hidden by the Creator. The following description of this wonderful piece of nature's handy work was given by Mr. William Cotton, who discovered it, to a friend and by him to the writer; He said: "We were sinking on a narrow stringer when we broke through into a broad open room perhaps 50 feet across and 12 feet high, extending from the floor and roof were hundreds of spikes of the most exquisitely pure white rock ground and figured by some power more perfect and delicate than the hand of the most expert sculptor and in the center, as though it were the last dream of the gods, was a perfect tree rising from the floor of the cavern and extending to the roof, with limbs and foliage of the purest milky white and penciled as delicately as the fern and thrown over this, like a lovely bride, was a veil of the finest gossamer web; but so delicate was this child of the cavern that it could not stand the rude jostle of human work and the first view of it was the only one, after which it vanished like the mist. The first blast that was exploded after the room was opened crumbled it to dust and only the memory of it remains as no description can convey an idea of its beauty."

But to return to our story of the mines. The rush to the camp after the first discovery was not great like it usually is in such cases as the fear of Indians and the low price of lead at the time deterred any but the most venture some from going there; however, a few hardy miners staked their faith on the future of the district and took up claims in the vicinity of this find. In 1887 another big strike was made by Teal and Poe adjoining the Montezuma on the east and a little lower down the mountain. This strike brought more people into the camp and claims were staked out on all sides both on the mineral belt and off of it and prospect holes were dug by hundreds during the next few years many of them opening up good mineral deposits. The ores on the east side of the mountain were more easy of access at that time, so the most important work was done on that side of the range.

Following the Teal and Poe strike was that of the El Paso company some distance down the mountain. William Keith who worked them is said to have reaped big rewards for his labor. A. P. Taylor located several large claims which brought good profits. Clark and Cotton had some properties which proved valuable. While large quantities of rich ore have been taken from all these claims the development on any of

been worked much for some years on account of the difficulty in handling a large flow of water which was encountered. Surrounding this are several claims which have been worked in a small way and will no doubt prove valuable with further development.

As we leave this side of the mountain and take up the mines on the west slope we will only treat of those that have been producers or had considerable development work done on them. Just beyond the summit, following the mineral belt in a northerly direction, is what is known as the Dr. Miller mine which has been worked for about 15 years by various parties and has produced large amounts of good ore. As we descend the mountain in the same direction we come to the White Oaks group, owned by Dennis Peoples, considerable development work has been done on these claims and they are considered among the valuable properties of the district, farther to the northeast we find the claim of Ed Orr; this claim carries more gold than any other in the camp, shipments often giving returns of \$5.00 in gold. Near these properties on each side are many other claims which have been worked to a small extent and have yielded some good mineral values.

Returning to the Dr. Miller mine we find, in a southwesterly direction, the H. C. Tuckwood group of claims, which have had a large amount of work done on them; these properties were originally located by Peter Strey who earned a reputation for nerve by being the only miner who stayed in the camp the entire time during the Indian scares from 81 to 82. It was told of him that during these years he would take his rifle into the drift where he was working and at the first sound of



Office and Residence of Judge Field.

them never reached any considerable depth. U. E. McDaniels was also one of the early locators who met with considerable success and is still in the camp and has some valuable holdings.

The property which is being most extensively worked at the present time is the Cleveland owned by the Nagle brothers.

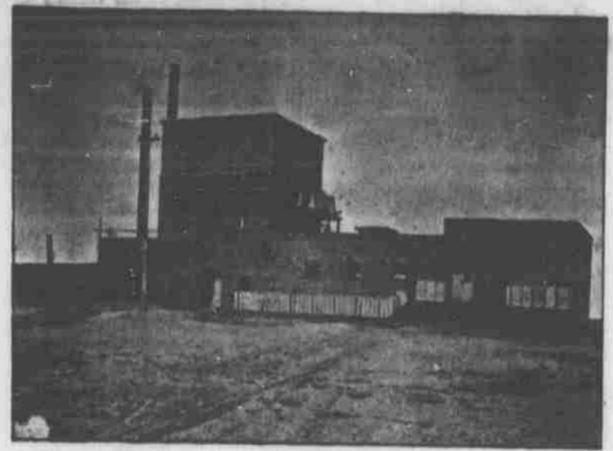
At the eastern base of the mountain about three miles from the old Montezuma, more generally known as the old lead mines, is the Graphic mine which was located some 20 years ago by A. P. Taylor.

This property is in a porphyry and is the richest in silver of any mine in the district, some ore having been taken from it which ran as high as 1,500 ounces to the ton. This mine was sold by Mr. Taylor to Walter Hadley, who is said to have taken thousands of dollars worth of high grade ore out of it. Afterwards it was leased to J. B. Gilchrist who did the last work on the main opening putting it down to the depth of 625 feet, the greatest depth yet attained in the camp. The property also has the distinction of having the most machinery of any mine on the east side of the mountain, being equipped with a hoist, pumps and concentrator for treating the ores but it has not

any one approaching, he would blow out his light and seize the rifle and ask who is that? when assured by the voice of a neighboring miner he would say: "Alright, I thought it might be an Indian."

Finally tiring of the lonely life in the mines, and having enough of this world's goods to make him comfortable for life, he sold out and went back to Minnesota to spend his old age in ease. Following the mineral belt farther down in the same direction we have a large group of mines owned by the Faywood Lead Co., these properties have probably produced more than any group of claims on the west side of the mountain, and considerable machinery has been installed by the company, among which is a fine large dry concentrating mill. J. P. Onstott was the original locator of these properties and worked them on an intelligent practical plan up to the time he sold out to the Faywood Co., thus demonstrating the real value of the holding.

Below this group are several holdings which were sold by Tyrill brothers that have been good producers. Besides those which we have made special mention of, there are many other good claims owned by poor people who only do the annual assessment work on them



The Deming Ice and Electric Plant.

but, when capital can be interested in the district and transportation secured they will doubtless be heard from. This is, and always has been, practically a poor man's camp: the ore being near the surface and of a clean quality many men of small means have worked here and made good stakes from the proceeds of their labor. One old miner who has known the camp said to the writer: "I believe Cook's Peak is the best camp today, and always has been for a poor man, of any in the southwest and it is only a question of time when capital and railway facilities will make it one of the largest producers in the country."

Part II.

Judge Seaman Field was born in Jefferson county New York, in 1829, and at the age of 18 he moved to New Orleans, and later from there to Texas. At the beginning of the civil war he enlisted in the confederate cavalry serving to the close of the war, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the war he went to New York again where he engaged in business for about ten years, again coming to Texas and from there to New Mexico he settled in Deming in 1883 since which time he has been prominent in public life, and nearly always held some important office. At the present time he is a member of the board of regents of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, chairman of the village trustees and chairman of the executive committee of the Adelphi Club of this city, and late brigadier general of the New Mexico brigade, Confederate Veterans.

He is now at the head of the insurance agency of Field and son, which is probably one of the best equipped and best managed insurance offices in the territory.

The Deming Ice and Electric Co.

While, as yet, Deming has not done much in a manufacturing line, the location, as regards railroads, mining camps etc., make this a natural point for such enterprises and we may confidently look for a number of important plants to be erected during the next few years. The way has been paved, and the start made by three of our enterprising citizens, Messrs. C. Reihls, H. M. Stecker and J. W. Pennewill, who have bound themselves together as a company under the name of the Deming Ice & Electric Co., and built the Deming Ice factory and Electric light plant. This institution was built in June last year and has been improved and enlarged until it now has a capacity of 15 tons of ice per day: while the business in the electric light department of the work has grown so that they have had to install a new dynamo of twice the capacity of the one used at the start, they have a light capacity now of 2,500 lights. They operate as a branch of the business here, the Silver City Beer and Ice Co., handling only at wholesale, and a branch at Hanover, it supplies the camps of Hanover and Santa Rita.

The plant is conveniently located on the north side of the railroad tracks near the big freight depot and has a spur track running to the door for convenience in unloading supplies and icing cars for the railway company. The company have in view, for the coming year extensive improvements consisting of the construction of a large Auditorium and swimming pool to be sup-

plied with the waste water from the condensers in the ice plant, which is discharged at just the right temperature for this purpose, and furnishes a supply to keep fresh water running through the pool all the time. On the remainder of the ground owned by the company, grass, shrubs and trees will be started and a pleasant park installed, the water from the swimming pool being used for irrigating and beautifying the grounds, and it will only be a few years until the Deming Ice Works will be one of the most delightful spots in this region.

County Commissioners.

Last Saturday evening a special meeting of the board of county commissioners was called for the purpose of notifying the railway companies in the county to place fire guards along the lines of their road, in accordance with section 3904 of the compiled laws of 1897. Those present were W. C. Wallis, chairman; W. M. Taylor commissioner and B. Y. McKeyes clerk. Notices were prepared and certified copies served on the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway company, the Southern Pacific railway company, and the El Paso & Southwestern railway company. This action was necessary in order that any persons in the county who might be injured by fire started by the railway trains could have legal action against the company for damages. It is evident that the board of commissioners do not intend to let anything go undone which will benefit or protect the interests of the people of the county.

A Fence Wanted.

There is considerable complaint being made about the amount of stock that is being killed by the Santa Fe railroad on account of their track not being fenced. One man who has a fine herd of beef cattle some miles east of town has lost several head this spring, notwithstanding the fact that he has hired a man at \$30.00 per month for the last three months to ride the track and drive the cattle off. This is a serious loss as the company never pay anywhere near the value of such animals and the delay of getting the claims allowed nearly eats up the amounts paid when they are finally adjusted. There is a law requiring the companies to fence their tracks and in addition to this we understand several cattlemen in this county have offered to build the fence on the part of the line crossing their range if the company will furnish the material. With the conditions as they are something should be done to compel the companies to furnish better protection to the stock interests of the region traversed by their roads.



Catholic Church Mexican Town.

Birthday party.

On Thursday evening last grandma Allard reached her fifty-eighth birthday, and was reminded of the fact, by a surprise got up by her neighbors, who took possession of the Allard home and for a couple of hours made the good old lady forget that age was coming on. Mrs. Allard was the recipient of several handsome birthday gifts.