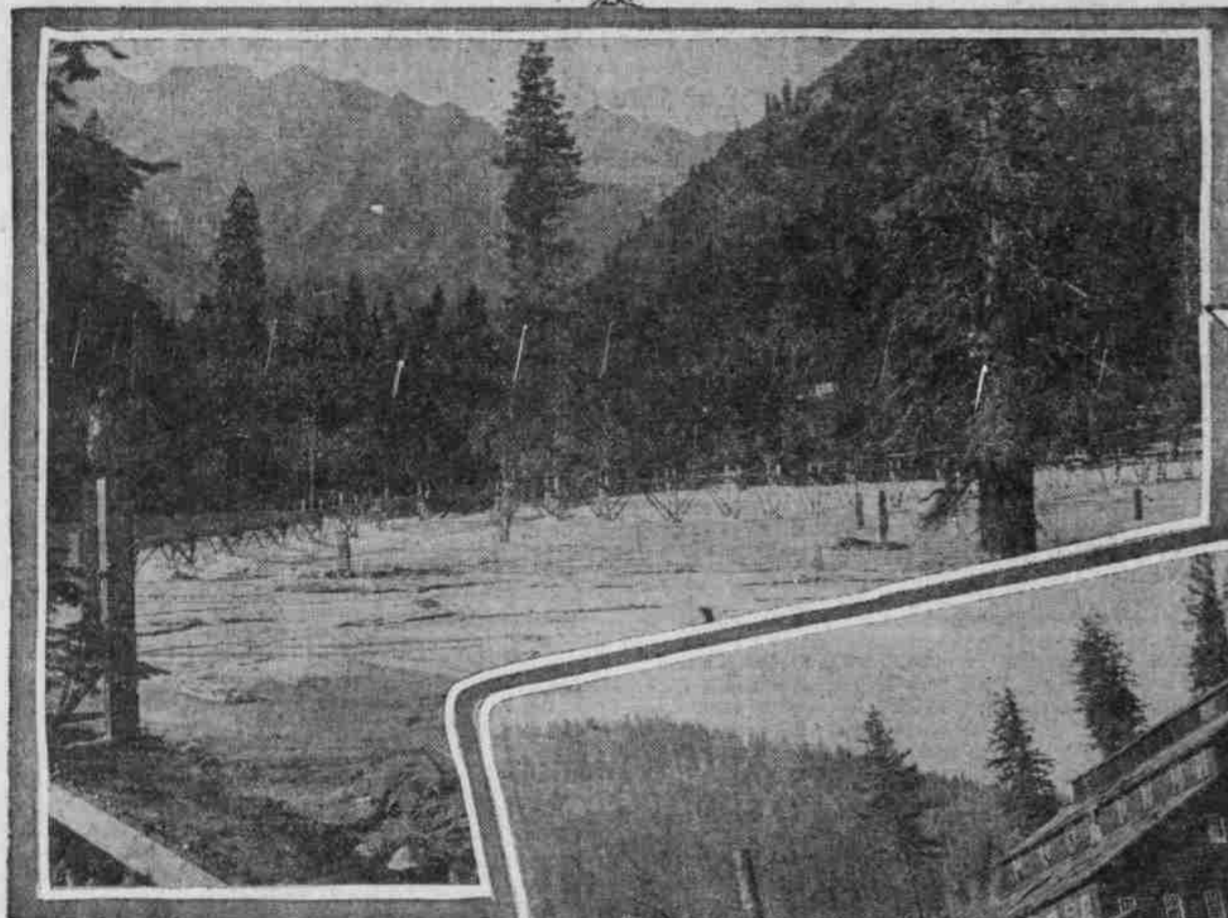
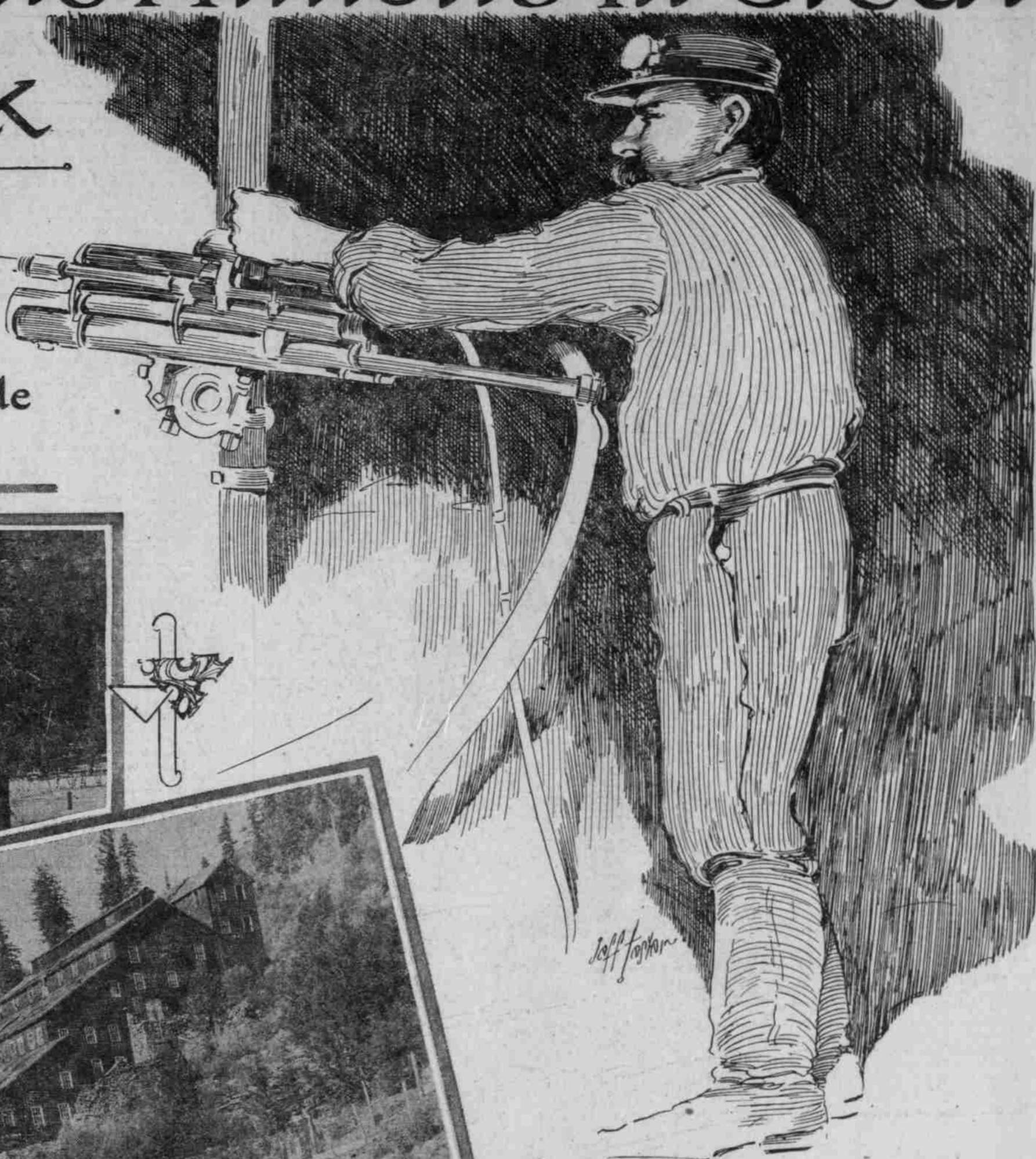


# Mining Means Millions In Great Comeback

## Oregon Properties Taking New Lease on Life After Dormant Decade



"Slam" Dam containing million in values.

BY DEWITT HARRY.

SOMEHOW the majority of Oregonians think of their state as agricultural, lumbering, fishing and scenic in assets. They never waste a thought on the mining possibilities. Portland is not a mining community, like Spokane, Wash. Little of the wealth here comes from mining, but Oregon is exceptionally rich in mineral deposits. Too few people know of this part of the state's activities or of the many rich and productive mines that have, in past years, brought wealth to their owners and are even yet being operated.

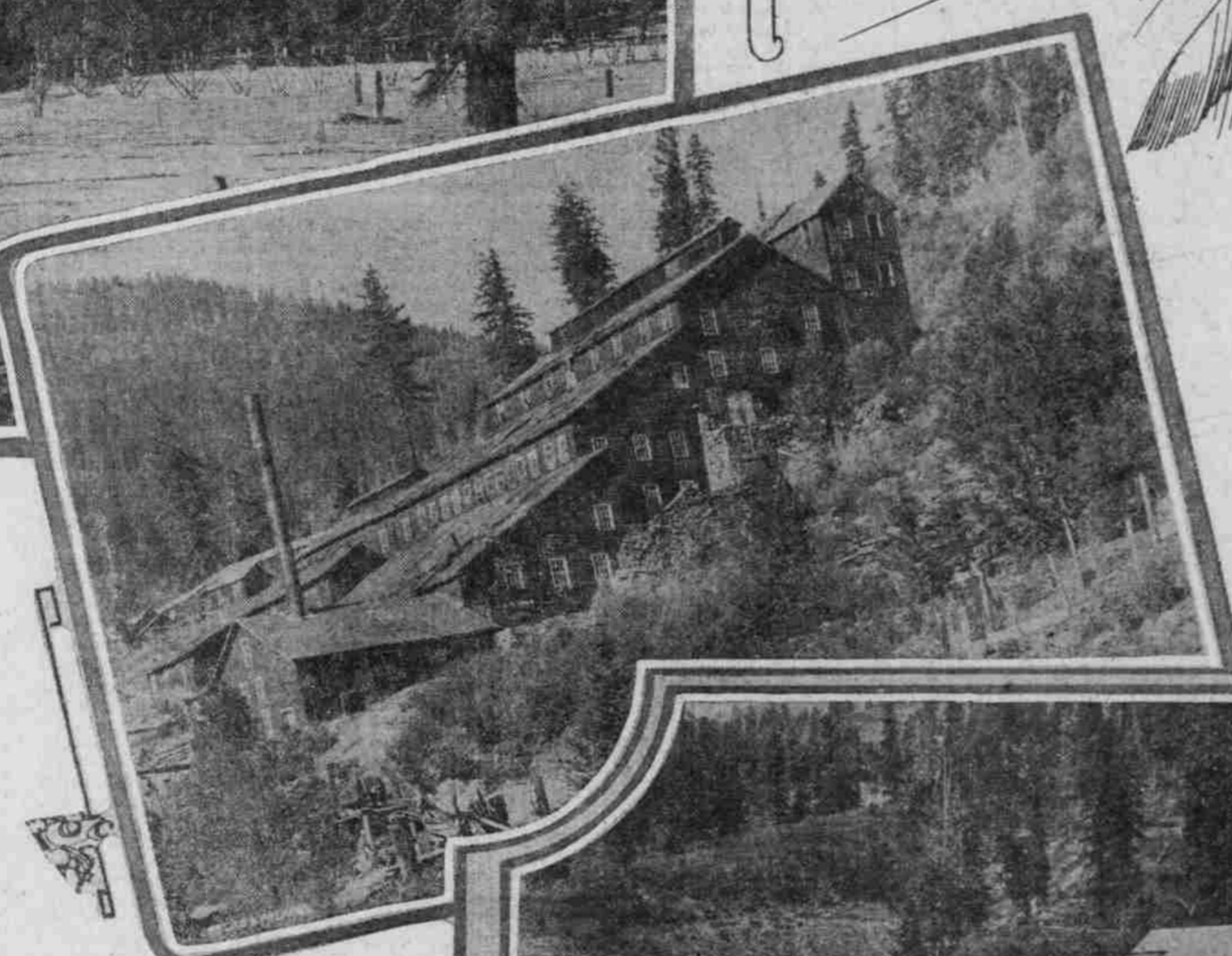
The eastern Oregon mining section has produced, since its discovery in 1862, about a quarter of a billion dollars. Since the world war there has been little activity in this region, but indications are that renewed interest in mining is about due. Already there are signs of the new lease of life. Oregon's greatest reliance is on her precious metals, and during the hard, practical days of the war it was the commercial metals that were sought. Gold, of a standard value, did not rise as did copper, lead and other materials necessary in the manufacture of munitions and in the successful waging of a terrific series of campaigns all over the globe. The result was that gold mining suffered and is suffering yet, for while operation costs have multiplied the price to be had for gold is the same.

### Gold Gains: Mines Profit.

Now the purchasing power of the gold ounce is necessary, with the result that the outlook for gold mining is on the mend. Improved conditions have strengthened the hopes of those interested in other kinds of metalliferous mining. At the present time there is a renewed vim being shown in Oregon mines and frequent reports are being received of new development planned, works started and actual production resumed. With the eastern Oregon field admittedly the state's "best bet" when it comes to mining and with an uninterrupted output dating almost from civil war days to 1914, this seems to assure a great deal of activity in this region in the very near future.

While this is perhaps essentially a gold and silver-bearing country, it does not mean that other metals are not found in this area, which extends about 130 miles in a southwesterly direction from the Snake river, which forms the eastern boundary of the state, to the vicinity of Canyon City in Grant county. This mineral belt, if it may be called such, is more than 40 miles in width, and while the greater portion of it is embraced in Baker county, it extends into Grant county, Malheur and Union, with also some showing in Willowa county.

Gold and silver are the metals which have been generally prospected for and



E. & E. mine at Bourne.

mined, but this does not by any means cover all the minerals that have been mined. During the war a very large tonnage of chromite was shipped from this part of Oregon, as one of the war metals needed most by our government. From one mine, the Iron Dike, on Snake river, the production of copper has reached in excess of 1,000,000 pounds a year. In fact, the list of metals found in this large mineral belt reads almost like a glossary.

Like most of the metal-mining sections of the United States, eastern Oregon has suffered from the depression that has been general in mining. This has been through no fault of the district or from the lack of opportunity, but to the high costs of operating and the fact that investments in mining have been held up awaiting the return to normalcy. That this time is approaching, and there will be a consequent increase in mining activity in eastern Oregon, it seems assured. Many things indicate this. Those who have continued the development and operation of mining ventures can usually point to accomplishments that are encouraging. Some notable discoveries, pointing to the opening of huge ore deposits that should mean long life to the mines, were made.

### Baker's Production Large.

Baker is one of the most diversified counties in Oregon. It produces gold (lode and placer), silver, lead and copper. It also produced some of the more rare and much wanted metals during the war period.

Since the discovery of gold on Powder river in 1862, Baker district is officially credited with a total mineral production of \$125,000,000. This may include somewhat more territory than Baker county covers. Even in 1920, that district produced 85 per cent of the state of Oregon's gold and silver and 100 per



Cornucopia Mines company combines two mines underground.

cent of its copper. During that year the principal producing sections were: Cornucopia, gold and silver; Homestead, copper; Sumpter-Cracker Creek, gold, silver and lead; Granite, gold and silver; Greenhorn, silver and gold; Rock Creek, silver.

Although large herds of whites passed through the country in the Oregon migrations between 1843 and subsequent to the gold discoveries of California in 1849, it was not until 1862 that the first placer discoveries were made on what is now known as the Powder river, a stream which meanders down from the Blue mountains and takes its way through the town of Baker.

The original discoveries were followed by quick extension of the placer activity, which extended over into Burnt river country and into the John Day section.

The remains of early placer operations can still be seen along both streams, while on the Burnt river work

with primitive methods is still continued at a few points by holders of ground who are satisfied with the comparatively meager returns. On the Powder river the placer miners have been succeeded by dredges. There are two of these plants operating in the vicinity of Sumpter. One belongs to the big Hammon dredging interests of California, and the other is owned by a local concern, which bought the plant from the Hammon people. They have literally chewed the valley bottom up into a ridged mass of gravel and boulders, so that what was previously an extended area of meadow or farm land has come to look as desolate as the Sahara desert. The dredged strip ranges from a quarter to a half mile in width and is probably ten miles long. The dredges are apparently near the end of their tether. The lower one, it is understood, is to be dismantled soon and moved by the Hammon interests to a new location in southern Idaho. The operations have been extended over

a long period. It is reported that dredge operations averaged \$1000 net per dredge daily at that time.

It was inevitable that lode mining activity should follow on the heels of the placer excitement. Most of the mineral occurrences were found in and around the precipitous Blue mountains, with things going at full swing even prior to Pritchard's initial discovery in the Coeur d'Alenes. Attention was paid chiefly at first to the possibilities of the free milling gold ores. These were found close to the surface, and readily worked, some with primitive stamp mills brought in on the backs of mules. Modes of transportation germane to a period when railroads were unknown. It was not until 1884 that the Oregon Short Line wound its long way up from Ogden and joined with the O. R. & N. (now the O.-W. R. R. & N.) at Huntington, on the Snake river. Thereafter was shipped a considerable tonnage of ores or concentrates, carrying values in silver and copper as well as in gold, and which, by reason of complexity,

yielded little of value when subjected to treatment by stamp mills.

As depth was attained on some of the larger earlier producers, milling appeared to become more and more of a problem. There yet remain in many properties large tonnages of low grade material, which prove refractory even to flotation. Better success has been achieved with modern methods at one property than at others, although values may run about the same. There has been the usual amount of bad management, inefficiency and mistakes, but in this respect the district has been no more unfortunate than many another. "Wildcatting" has been frequently indulged in by promoters, with resultant detriment to the country. Many of the principal mines are several miles from railway transportation and, added to the costs of hauling to a railway track, have a long haul by rail to a smelter, whether it be at Salt Lake, East Helena, Bradley or Tacoma. Consequently only the best grades of ore and concentrates can be shipped at a profit. The lower grade stuff must perforce remain in the mine or on the dump.

The Bay Horse mine on the Snake river, about ten miles north of Huntington, is a notable instance of the discovery of an exceptionally large ore deposit. This is more truly the re-discovery of an old prospect, one apparently of which the original discoverers or owners little dreamed the extent. It is owned and being developed by the United States Metals company, with offices in this city. J. A. Gyllenberg of Baker is president of the United States Metals company.

### Mine Romance Found.

The Bay Horse mine, which is a silver property, the values being almost entirely in that metal, was discovered and operated to some extent more than 30 years ago. Waldemar Lindgren, the noted geologist, in his report made for the U. S. G. S., in 1910, mentioned among a number of claims on the Snake river, "the Bay Horse, which stands credited with a small silver production in 1891." With the great decline in the price of silver which followed shortly after, the Bay Horse was closed, the claim was patented and it was then forgotten, to such an extent that it was with difficulty that the location of the old workings were later found.

It remained for P. H. Miller, present superintendent of the mine, to rediscover it. From the field notes of the mineral survey and through conversation with an old prospector who lived on the river, he

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