

Gold Fever Fades Despite Spotty Strikes

New Elements Sought as Times Change

(Editor's note: Following is the third and last of a series of stories commemorating the 100th anniversary of the great gold strike of 1845 which left tremendous repercussions in Oregon.)

By Marguerite Wright
Staff Writer, The Statesman

Several times after the turn of the century there were periods of renewed interest in gold. In June, 1911, the year the Oregon state legislature established a bureau of mines, important strikes were made which caused great excitement in Medford. Samples assaying \$2,000 to the ton were brought in and men with pick and shovel could make pocket change with little effort in the hills around Grants Pass.

Ore samples assaying \$33,500 per ton were brought to Eugene from the Blue river district in October, 1911, and one prospector took out \$18 a day in his placer claims but the thin veins of nearly pure gold soon played out.

A year later there was a rush to the New Pine creek area in the Warner mountain range. Scores of claims were staked out and a new town, Branley, was platted.

Roseburg saw a brief revival of the hunting days of '49 in May, 1926, when a tattered prospector and his 80-year-old mother found a pocket of virgin gold at the bottom of an abandoned prospect hole on Silver Peak mountain. While hundreds of hopeful tenderfoots hunted for strikes, the local chamber of commerce warned "sharpers" to stay away from "Old Bill" and his bonanza worth \$250,000.

"No Gold At All"

An embryo city called "Noon-ches" sprang up overnight in 1927 near the McKenzie pass and carpenters got double-time to leave their valley jobs to whip up a business section in the new metropolis. Over 1500 claims were recorded in the area and thousands of people lost their money when the Oregon school of mines at Corvallis said flatly that the ore samples contained absolutely no gold at all.

The next year the ghost town of Winterville, dead 30 years, was brought to life by the reopening of placer deposits in Baker county. Another rush to the Mule creek area in 1929 revived a decaying deserted mining camp there about the same time the Robertson mine at Galice was declared one of the richest known to the world. Gold struck there assayed an incredible \$200,000 to the ton.

Yards Yield Treasure
Jacksonville was in the headlines in 1933 when the town fathers repealed an ordinance to allow gold digging inside the city limits. People were finding treasure in their back yards.

Gold mining was boosted when the gold reserve act of 1934 raised the price to \$35 per fine ounce. Operations in the Oregon King mine were renewed after a 30-year period of idleness since it was found in 1897 by Tom Brown. And the deserted town of Ashland was revived.

In 1938 the Cornucopia celebrated its golden jubilee. Oregon's best gold and silver mine, it was known as the sixth largest lode mine in the United States. Three years later the attack on Pearl Harbor dealt a mortal blow to gold mining. Prospectors and miners, many of whom were not the grizzled old men pictured in western thrillers, climbed out of the tunnels and made an exodus to recruiting offices.

Mines Ordered Closed
In 1942 the government ordered the mines closed to conserve manpower and materials. Equipment was hauled down the mountainsides and, figuratively, the picks and shovels were beaten back into plowshares and P-51s.

The gold mining ban was lifted in June, 1945, but the incentive which made thousands of men endure a hard existence in the lonely gulches and canyons of Oregon



Eastern Oregon mines are among the richest in the state. This stamp mill belongs to the E & E mine near Baker and illustrates why individual operations in digging for pay dirt no longer pay. With gold at a stationary price and necessary capital outlay great, finding a mine is no longer the bonanza it was in the '50s. (Photo courtesy Angelus studio, Baker; Oregon state archives.)

is lacking today. Free gold in surface ledges and pockets is well picked over. Amalgamation and cyanidation to remove gold locked in sulphides, hydraulic machinery and dredges require great capital outlay. Labor and machinery is high priced and the cost of gold remains stationary at \$35 an ounce.

Other Elements Sought

Gold is no longer a magnetic, breathless, lusty, epic word. The United States has more of it stowed away than any other country in the world. Instead, men hunger for other elements: uranium and coal and steel, magnesium and copper and nickel, for lumber, and for homes, cars, ships, planes, guns, bombs, and all the other trappings of civilization.

The Golden Era of the Golden West, celebrated last weekend in centennial activities at Coloma, is almost as lost as the Blue Bucket mine.

Little Women, Play Scheduled for Friday

LEBANON—"Little Women," a play sponsored by the Lebanon high school's girls league for a scholarship fund, will open Friday, January 30, at 8 p.m. in the Lebanon high school auditorium. The production was adapted from Louisa M. Alcott's novel by Arthur Jearue.

Members of the school's girls league comprise the cast: Meg by Jane Joann, Jo—Raye Bevan, Beth—Joan Carlson, Amy—Dixie Lee Fitzwater, Mrs. March—Beverly Carlson, Mr. March—Molly Copeland, Aunt March—Mary Waddell, Hannah Mullet—Charlotte Tampke, Mr. Laurence—Joyce Billings, Laurie—Lillian Plagmann, John Brook—Betty Ann Lindley and Professor Bhaer by Dorothy Schiltz, social economics instructor.

Rehearsals have been under way for four weeks, directed by Mrs. Greame.

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Many Changes Of Ownership By Dallas Folk

DALLAS — Clinton Foster has purchased the interest of his partner, Lee Stillwell, in the Foster & Stillwell store. It will be known as Foster's Home & Supply Co. Foster entered the business following his discharge from the army about two years ago.

Due to ill health, Stillwell has been forced to retire from the business, and while he has not made definite plans, indicated he expects to seek a drier climate, possibly Arizona, where he would establish a home for his family.

Merl McDermitt and his brother, Eldon McDermitt, have purchased Hart's Cleaners and Dryers from Millard Tegkell. Merl McDermitt has been working in the shop for some time and Eldon has been with Foreman's in Salem. Tegkell purchased the business only a few months ago and has not revealed his future plans.



SOLON — Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, California democrat, smiles for the cameraman at Washington.

Fire Destroys Rosedale House

ROSEDALE, Ore., Jan. 27 — The five-room tenant house on the Floyd Bates place, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Peters and their four children, burned to the ground shortly after 10 a.m. today, apparently as a result of a chimney fire.

No one was injured. The house was partially covered by insurance. Furniture and most of the Peters' personal belongings also burned.

The Peters family will reside with the Bates, who said the tenant house would be rebuilt as soon as feasible.

Lebanon Awaits Visit From Harold E. Stassen

LEBANON—Harold E. Stassen, first presidential prospect to visit Lebanon since William Jennings Bryan in 1897, will spend an hour here February 20, according to Portland Young Republican club sources.

Stassen will drive to Lebanon by way of Stayton and Seio en route to Eugene and Salem, the report indicates.

Carl Is Elected Club's President

HUBBARD — Manton Carl was elected president of the Hubbard Commercial club at the annual meeting. Other officers are Clarence Friend, vice president; Verl Cochran, secretary-treasurer.

On a trip to Gerberville, Calif., recently were Bob Evans, Charles and La Verne Vredenburg. They visited the E. J. Hartigs at Thorn, Calif.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Evans are moving to Woodburn to his brother's place. They have been living on the Zehner place.

Mr. and Mrs. Sol Zehner are returning to their home place after living in Oregon City for a time.

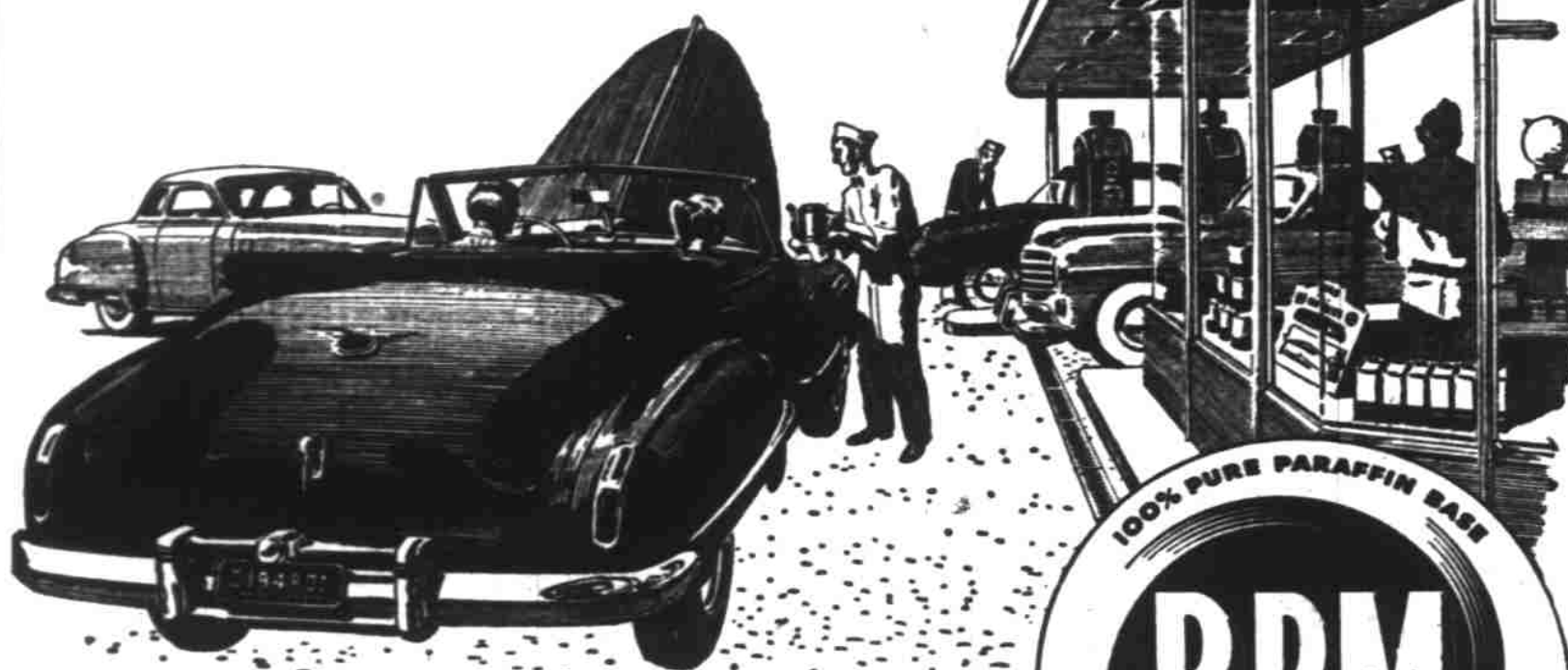
Mr. and Mrs. Duane Hatcher are parents of a daughter born January 19 at the Woodburn hospital.

Revival Services Held In Independence Daily

INDEPENDENCE — Revival services started Jan. 25 at the First Baptist church in charge of Rev. J. L. Haslam, state evangelist of the Oregon Baptist convention. They will continue through February 8.

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Fire Destroys Kreger Home In Cloverdale

CLOVERDALE, Jan. 26 — Fire of unknown origin Sunday afternoon destroyed the Irwin Kreger residence despite valiant efforts of the Turner fire department aided by neighbors who hurried to the scene. The house, a two-story seven-room structure, was located within half a mile of the Cloverdale school.

None of the family was at home when the fire broke out and neighbors put in the call for the fire department. Other buildings including a barn and woodshed were saved as well as much furniture from the first floor. However, because of the strong wind the flames spread rapidly and it was impossible to save anything from the upper floor rooms. Within a matter of minutes the building was enveloped in flames.

Pedee School Budgets Approved by Voters

PEDEE — Sixteen taxpayers approved the budget proposed for union high school district number 1 at the meeting Friday night. Only six attended and approved the grade school budget meeting Thursday night. Both budgets were considerably higher

this year due to improvements to the present building which had been approved by the taxpayers at earlier meetings.

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