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AN INTERESTING LETTER IN THE OREGONIAN

By Wilbur Fisk Brock, Concerning the Growth and Improvements. The Center of a Rich Mining Section.

Gold Hill, November 6.—All the towns of the Rogue River Valley in Southern Oregon have prospered during the last year, but, in proportion to population, Gold Hill shows the greatest growth. During this time Ashland has erected as many new buildings as comprise entire structural landscape of Gold Hill. But Ashland was already so large that the new houses were not noticeable. And Grants Pass, within the last twelve months, has reared half a dozen bricks, any one of which cost as much as the combined improvements of Gold Hill.

Gold Hill does not claim to be a full grown city. It puts on the airs of a healthy little town, and it lives up to all of its professions. It is supported almost wholly by miners. There is not another mining camp in Oregon where trade is so even and so steady. Characteristic of its leading industry, it is an importer and consumer of raw and manufactured products. For every carload of exports there are three of imports.

There is nothing which can be seen from the streets of Gold Hill which shows how the people make their living. The town is situated in the canyon of Rogue River, where the Southern Pacific crosses the stream by that name, and the site is barren of vegetation. Still the stranger sees money circulating freely. In respect to its visible backing, Gold Hill differs from Medford, Jacksonville and Ashland, where horticultural and agricultural wealth is very much in evidence.

The epoch of quartz mining has been ushered in in Southern Oregon. This form of the mining business is as scientific and as cer-

tain of returns as farming. And towns which build up on it become as permanently prosperous as those which depend entirely upon the products of the soil. The placer mines in this locality, which will not be exhausted for several generations, contribute yearly to the gold output. Money which comes directly or indirectly from the quartz ledges is seen in the stores of Gold Hill every day. Bags of placer gold put in an appearance only during and after the wet season. The product of the placers is to this country what the wheat crop is to Eastern Oregon. The quartz gives the every day use of coin, which is provided by cattle to herders of Central and Southern Oregon.

The placer miner, however, differs from the wheat farmer in a matter of habit, which is important to the prosperity of his trading point. When the placer miner has exhausted the year's clean-up he hies himself back to the mountains to dig for more gold. He keeps out of sight and out of hearing until he has again filled his pouches. Then he reappears in town with confidence in his step and hope in his countenance. He inspires everybody about him with the feeling that the country is alright. The stranger who is in the locality catches the infection and goes away advertising the place with more success than a subsidized immigration agent.

The average wheat farmer, on the other hand, after disposing of his crop for European gold, complains for several months of hard times. If anyone in his hearing expresses optimistic views he becomes savage in proving that every thing is going to ruin. The stranger who hears this tirade against farming goes away suspicious of all real estate values in the agricultural districts. The result is a material and spiritual depression in the purely agricultural community.

The hopeful view of affairs, the ambition to dare and to do great things, impulses attendant upon mining enterprises, create an inviting social atmosphere in the towns of Jackson and Josephine counties.

Two rich strikes have been made during the last week in quartz mines, each within two miles of Gold Hill. A chute carrying free gold in large quantities has been tapped in the old Braden mine, and another of the same character has been found in the Blackwell Hills Mining Company. The writer visited the Blackwell mine and in 20 minutes picked out of the ledge, crushed in a mortar, and panned out about \$3 in coarse gold.

The Braden mine is one of the oldest quartz properties in this part of the state. It has yielded thousands in free milling gold. It was recently purchased by Dr. C. R. Ray for \$14,000. The stamp mill at this mine has been run until it is worn out and out of date. The new owner has ordered improved machinery for its modernization.

Being advanced in years and desiring to retire from the activity and anxiety peculiar to the management of a large property, Dr. Braden let his mine and farm go at a low figure. The transaction is a benefit to this locality, as the purchasers are progressive and have means with which to carry on development. While the mill has been shut down until the new machinery is installed, work in the mine goes ahead just the same. There is now enough rich ore on the dump to keep five stamps busy day and night for two months.

The free milling chute, which was struck this week, shows greater depth than any other part of the mine. Dr. Ray believes that he has found the original fissure through which was shot up the large deposit of quartz and yellow metal which has made this mine famous as a producer.

Interested in investments in Southern Oregon with Dr. Ray is his brother, of New York, manufacturer of the Raycycle and promoter of trust corporations. These gentlemen may become an important medium between the undeveloped resources of this country and the idle capital of the Eastern metropolis.

Ivan Humason, well known in Portland, is manager of the Blackwell Hills Mining Company. He is very much elated over the discovery in the 45-foot shaft at the end of their 200-foot tunnel. The mine is in such shape now that work can be done on three pay chutes, all of which go hundreds of dollars to the ton. The quartz in these chutes is so rich that the free gold is in sight when a candle is held up to it.

The property belonged to the Jackson County Land Association up to a few weeks ago. This corporation owns several thousand acres of land in this part of the state, which it has been accumulating for speculative purposes. Graham, the lessee, began work on the ledge without capital and pickled, pounded out and panned out for himself, by the most primitive means, a snug grubstake. In one spot of the pay chute he took \$1800 from two cubic feet of quartz. Supposing that he had accumulated capital enough to buy the mine, Graham covered up his finds and opened negotiations with the agent

of the land company for the purchase of the property. He was disappointed to find that the tract covering his finds had been bonded by Portland parties. Humason took in the ledge and 320 acres of adjacent ground and employed Graham as foreman of the mine. Graham went directly to the rich quartz for the new owners, so that they are in pay weeks before they had hoped to be when they bought the mine.

There are twenty well developed pay chutes on the ledge. By surface excavation these are known to have yielded over \$50,000, the single firm of Beekman & Reames, of Jacksonville, having bought from the early owners and operators of the mine \$40,000 in gold. When the Oro Fino excitement broke out in the 60s this property was abandoned, as were many other good mines in Southern Oregon. The old and primitive arasta employed in separating the values from the ore still stand at the foot of the ledge, as a monument to early endeavor in quartz mining in this region.

The ledge in which the high values occur is narrow, as are all of the quartz veins in this country where free gold is found in quantities. Sometimes it pinches from two feet to four inches in thickness. At the Nye mine where it is said that \$25,000 in ore is blocked out, the miners are picking away at a quartz seam which runs from three to five inches in width. In this section rich pay is encountered at the points of contact between the main ledge or fissure vein and cross stringers. A heavy ledge of bull quartz, which can be traced across the country for several miles, cuts the Blackwell vein at right angles, but the contact fails to produce values such as are found at the intersection of the stringers with the fissure vein.

Humason and his associates are opening up another ledge on a 40 foot tract two miles north of Gold Hill. They have on this property a 14 foot ledge of ore assaying from \$3.25 to \$51 per ton. In doing 100 feet of development they have piled up about 20 tons of millier ore. Fifteen tons of this ore will make one ton of concentrates, a value of \$775.13 in gold and \$3 in silver.

The new five stamp mill of Cheney & Humason was started up this week. After a continuous run of 72 hours it proves to be one of the best plans for saving values which has come into Southern Oregon. The machinery was all manufactured in Portland and is particularly adapted to treating this kind of ore. The mill has about 2000 tons of custom work in sight. It is a boon to the miners of this region, who heretofore have been isolated from a modern mill plant. A number of prospectors have now gone to work on their ledges hoping to mill enough ore as they go along to defray the expenses of development. As many of the prospects in this locality have paid without careful treatment of the ore, it is to be assumed that there are very few which will fail to give returns with milling and scientific treatment. The following prices are named for custom work: for 10 tons, \$5 per ton; for 30 tons, \$3 per ton; for 100 tons or more, \$2 per ton.

For several years Jesse Houck, the flour miller at Gold Hill, has

operated a two stamp quartz mill for the accommodation of prospectors. He put in no concentrator, and consequently there was a loss in low grade ores, but it has been a great convenience to prospectors within a radius of 15 miles.

Both quartz mills are within sight and hearing of Gold Hill, on opposite banks of the Rogue river. Their noise day and night is an inspiration to the little city to promote every mining and manufacturing enterprise.

A brickyard, which is employed to its full capacity to supply local demands, is an industry which has been added to Gold Hill within the last few months. The fine new residence of Mrs. Dekum in the north end of town has started a building boom in that direction. Gold Hill has doubled in business and population since last this hand guided a pencil in making note of its advantages and development.

Dr. James Braden has given Gold Hill a fine power for manufacturing purposes by constructing a conduit two miles long down the south side of Rogue river. The flume and ditch now carries about 2500 inches of water. It furnishes about 60 horse power to the Cheney & Humason quartz mill. It is good for 400 horse power and can be enlarged to supply power for a manufacturing city of 5000 inhabitants. Gold Hill offers the best water power and facilities for manufacturing of any town in Southern Oregon on the Southern Pacific railroad.

The berme of the High Line Ditch Company lines the hills for about twelve miles above Gold Hill, and gives some evidence that the great waterway may be built. This irrigating, mining and transportation scheme is entirely practical. When accomplished, it will be the most extensive canal in the Northwest. It should pay better than any other that has ever been built on the Pacific Coast because of the several profitable uses it will serve. Any one of the purposes named is sufficient to justify construction.

The News Art Department is up-to-date. There is none better in Southern Oregon. Give us a call.

Dr. CHAS. E. MORRILL,
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