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A TRIP TO BOHEMIA

A General Review of the Camp Made by Well Known Mining Man.

ALL DRAWBACKS OVERCOME

He Speaks Well of the District, and of the Properties with which He Came in Contact.

By G. H. Westley, Jr.

This mining district lies about 35 miles east of the pretty little town of Cottage Grove, on the line of Southern Pacific railroad, about 143 miles south of Portland, and was first worked about 25 years ago. It has been worked intermittently since then, suffering from its isolated condition and difficulties of transportation; but at the present time it is undergoing a thorough rehabilitation, and it was thought that a sketch of the present conditions might be of interest to your readers. The reason for its slow development, and future prospects will become apparent in the course of the narrative. We left Cottage Grove on the 10th of September by the Oregon and Southeastern railroad, a short line which is being built to give outlet to the magnificent forests of the Calapooia mountains, and to develop the mineral veins of the Bohemia District. It is now constructed and in operation to the so called Red Bridge across Row river (pronounced as though the word represented a fight) and about a mile beyond, where it is held up waiting for the steel bridge across the same river; though it is partially graded beyond, and the additional ten miles beyond the bridge to the mouth of Champion creek will probably be in operation before winter.

Sharp's creek joins the Row river just above the Red Bridge and the road will probably be built up the valley of this stream, during 1904, as the timber prospects are equally good, and the main wagon road to the mines follows this route.

At the Red Bridge we took the Bohemia stage about 10 a. m. and dined at Benson's, after a ride of twelve miles through well timbered bottoms, over a fairly good road, some portions of which were excellent, and only about three miles unpleasantly muddy. To this point railroad building would be practically child's play, the total rise being about 1,000 feet or less. At Benson's, Sharp's creek is joined by Fairview creek, coming in from the northeast, and the wagon road begins to climb at the rate of 500 to 600 feet to the mile, up the slope to the back bone on the north side of Sharp creek. This is really a first class road-bed, outside of the grade. The country rock is an Audesitic porphyry, more or less decomposed on the surface, and furnishes the quartz and clay necessary to a good band for the macadam. In countries like this, which are so thickly covered with forests and underbrush, these graded roads are of the greatest assistance to the geological student, and attention was soon directed to the numerous zones of kaolinization, in which, in all probability, by solfataric action, the grey andesites had assumed all shades from white, through yellows and browns, to dark blackish limonite. These oxidized bands, with their associated bluish "bird's eye porphyry" could not fail to attract the notice of old Comstock miners, reminding them, as they must, of old Fort Homestead, and Sutro Tunnel. As we gained altitude, we could see on the ridge to the south, numerous yellow dumps, contrasting strongly with the blackish green of the fir forest, and indicating the thoroughness with which the prospector has ransacked their recesses. But little vacant ground indeed, can be found in an area of many square miles, so numerous are the altered zones, each of which is sufficiently mineralized to form the basis of a valid location.

At Benson's we found surveyors busy at work on U. S. patents for the Golden Rule property, and half way up the mountain near the Glenwood Mining Co's property, Stocks and Harlow are putting in a small saw mill for the use of their mine nearer the summit, where water is scarce as well as timber. Not far beyond Glenwood, we looked into the tunnel of the Jones location, supposed to be on the continuation of the Musick vein. This tunnel is now on an altered porphyry, with considerable carious iron stained quartz and is typical. Before leaving, the rain had begun to fall and we were glad about 6 p. m. to leave the stage at an altitude of about 5075 feet, and hasten down the trail for shelter at the Hiawatha cabin, about 1000 feet below, on the north side of the backbone, which we had been ascending. We were none too soon, as something like four inches of rain fell during the night. As this was really the first heavy rain of the autumn, we saw the streams at their lowest and were able to estimate their size during the rest of the season.

The stage driver told us that in winter, the road was not available for freight teams beyond Glenwood (altitude 4050 ft.) and here was an explanation of the slow progress of development, as practically all the early work was at greater altitudes, where the timber mantle of the hills was thinner and the surface rock more visible. As a matter of fact, all the first mines opened had to depend on snow shoes for communication with the outside world for some five months in the year.

The next day was so rainy, that it was devoted to the inspection of several openings on the Hiawatha group of claims near the cabin, and taking first lessons in the vein structure of the camp.

The weather still remaining unsettled, we continued these investigations to the adjacent claims on the north, and down the canyon some half a mile to the mouth of Fairview creek, at an altitude of about 3500 feet, below where there is an admirable mill site, only some three miles from Benson's and the main wagon road.

All over this section, the same andesitic rocks occur, the oxidized zones in which the ore is found being characterized by a porphyry, with a bluish ground mass, and numerous milk white feldspars. From this type the paste gradually loses color until it becomes white and the feldspars are no longer visible. At one point only, was there any variation from this type, and that was on a claim some 900 feet north of the cabin. At this point a tunnel, some 22 feet long had been run on a brecciated vein, which cut a bed of soft volcanic ash (?) made up of layers, from one to two or three inches thick, ranging in color from white to deep reddish brown, with a dip of about 10 deg. to the east, so that the wall of the drift looks like a series of bands of red and white cedar. It was, however, impossible to ascertain the extent or thickness of these deposits. The breccia was well cemented with iron oxides.

On the following day, the weather being improved, we examined the openings on the several veins above the cabin, and regained the road at an altitude of about 5075 feet. After making due allowance for barometrical changes, the bed of Hiawatha creek shows a slope of nearly 28 deg. and the adjacent hillsides of 30 deg. to 35 deg. Following the windings of the road backwards and forwards up the ridge, we first passed the Adjax crosscut some 200 feet below us, (said to be 300ft. long); then the old Stocks and Harlow 5-stamp mill and then the old workings of the Vesuvius mine. All these old workings, which have produced exceptionally rich ore from their shallow adits, lie above the road to the right, in a comparatively open country, and have suffered from lack of water and timber, as well as from the deep winter snows. Efforts are now being made to reopen the Stocks & Harlow, and Vesuvius claims, as the result of recent work and developments in the Musick mine, and the infusion of new life into the camp, by the advent of capital in sufficient volume to neutralize many of the difficulties hitherto surrounding it, by carrying out development on a liberal scale.

Passing over the saddle, which connects Bohemia Mountain with Fairview Mountain, at an altitude of about 4500 feet, with Mt. Fairview and its U. S. Signal Station on our left, we looked down into the basin of Musick mine, whose waters drain into the Pacific Ocean by way of the Umpqua river, while those we have been following find their way into the Willamette. On our right Bohemia Mountain rises to an additional height of 1000 feet, in a succession of bluffs, the various lava flows being very clearly brought out by the alternating bands of recent snow on the intervening benches. Like most of the neighboring summits, the top is comparatively level, the rock layers at its eastern end being nearly horizontal, gradually rising towards the west at an angle of about 10 deg.

The Musick mine lies just at the foot of the bluffs, at an altitude of about 5200 feet above sea level, or some 300 feet below the road at the summit of the backbone, and from 400 to 500 feet below the point where the lode crosses the same saddle. While not the point of original discovery of ore in the camp, history for many years centered round this location, and here it may be well to go back to the original discovery of the Knott claim on Grouse Mountain about 1870 (now patented) and the erection about 1872 of a 5-stamp mill, which, after taking out a considerable amount of free gold, was abandoned. The old claim is now being reopened. Not much more appears to have been done until the Musick mine was located about 1890, followed by the Annie, on which Dr. Oglesby put a 5-stamp mill. From the Anne mine, and other locations the Noonday Company was formed, a 20-stamp built, and 3000 feet of tramway installed; but I am informed that a watchman has been in charge for four years, while the mine has been shut down; first on account of litigation over the product of the mine, and later because of trouble between the co-owners.

The Helena No. 1 mine, discovered in 1897, has had a similar record. After building a 5-stamp mill and increasing it to ten, and shipping considerable free gold, as well as high grade base ore, litigation followed over adjacent claims.

The Champion mine with 10 stamps has also had its litigation over ore and consequent periods of idleness.

The Musick, so far as I could learn, has escaped this curse, although it has had a checkered career and several owners. It was early supplied with a ten stamp mill in which one large "shoot" of free milling gold ore was worked out above the available tunnel. It was then sold to Mr. Cook, who pushed the tunnel ahead, found another similar ore shoot, worked out the same and sold it to the Musick Mining and Milling Company, which repeated the process and then sold to the Oregon Securities Co., the present owners. This organization has consolidated all the holdings of the Musick, Champion and Helena No. 1 Companies, and acquired such adjacent ground as seemed desirable to secure immunity and reduce the cost of development and working. We shall again refer to this combination when we pass their present operations.

Quite a cluster of buildings has gathered round the mine and mill, including a store and postoffice. In the absence of the superintendent, Mr. Mathews, I was indebted to Mr. Peterson, the foreman, for a general idea of the workings. The mine is opened by a long crosscut, from which the drift on the vein has a length of about 1000 feet. This No. 6 level has a depth below the surface at the western end, of about 400 feet, but has not yet reached the ore body exposed in the end of No. 4 level, but both faces are said to look better than at any previous stage of the mine's history. All these workings show both free milling and base ore, but no effort has been made to work anything but the former, as the situation of the mine and the transportation facilities preclude the handling of the latter at a profit. It has therefore been left in the mine, except a small quantity on the dump which is heavily mineralized with iron pyrite, galena and chalcopyrite. Assays are said to range from $10 to $180 per ton. The recent purchase of the Royal group of claims, to the east, will enable the company to gain depth in future tunnels by drifts on the lode without resorting to expensive crosscuts.

Leaving the Musick mine after lunch, we followed a good trail on nearly a dead level, with the Anaconda mine above us to the left, and the Musick saw mill road meandering down the valley to the right, until we reached the summit of the saddle connecting Fairview with Grouse Mountain at an altitude of about 5200 feet. To our right, 1000 feet below, lies the Mountain Lily, Humming Bird and other locations, and we caught glimpses of a fine road being built by Mr. Hard to connect his mines in the valley with the Musick road. Grouse Mountain, on which the first discovery of gold was made, and on which Mr. Ingham, of Eugene, has extensive holdings, lay in front of us, and to the left we could look down the basin of Champion creek. From this point on the north bank of the creek, we could look over the Champion, Reed & Fletcher, Helena, Nemo and Grizzly veins, all parallel; and on the other side of the Anaconda, Peterson & Kluckey, North Fairview, LeRoy, Crystal Consolidated, Kelsey, and Champion Basin lodes, with the Broadway mine just below our feet.

Leaving the road, which climbs again and follows the backbone on the north side of Champion creek, and is known as the Noonday road, we drop down the hill, for a distance of some 300 yards, and strike the new Champion road at the big tunnel of the Oregon Securities Company, passing on the way, the big yellow dump of the old Champion mine and the dismantled tramway.

This tunnel is 8 feet wide and 7 feet high in the clear, timbered with an arched top, and is being pushed through the ridge to give access to the Musick mine, at 240 feet below the present working tunnel of the latter, the tunnel and mine being connected on the eastern side by a trolly line. Estimated length about 1800 feet. From the mouth of the tunnel, a grade for a trolly line to the Helena No. 1 is completed, except the track, and a road bed from the tunnel to the mill in the valley below was nearing completion. At the site of the old Champion 10-stamp mill (elevation about 4000) the 30 stamps of the Musick, Champion and Helena No. 1 mines have been assembled, and are now being erected under one roof. Five miles below, a water power of 150 feet head, with two turbines has been installed at an altitude of about 2000 feet, and the poles are in place for electric transmission of power to the mill. The end of the broad guage steam road is about one mile below the power plant, and it is intended to connect the railroad and mill by a trolly line.

When completed this plant will solve many of the difficulties which have occurred in working the mines of the group, but it will leave the base ores practically untouched, and it would seem that these will be the ultimate dependence of the camp.

We spent the night with Mr. Graham at the LeRoy mine (altitude about 4000) which is opened just where the solsd rock outcrops disappear under a thick bed of cemented conglomerates, which fills the bed of the creek and is probably of glacial origin. The dimensions of the dump would indicate about 1000 feet of underground work, most of it done outside of the vein. This policy was adopted, so I am told, to avoid the accumulation of ore on the dump, to be rehandled latter on. A compact steam plant furnishes air to the drills. The ore on the dump is practically unoxidized, though the gauge is thoroughly decomposed, or rather metamorphosed, and carries galena with iron pyrites. The Helena No. 1 lies just across the creek.

The morning opened fine and found us on the road after an early breakfast. A short distance below the LeRoy, on the north side of the creek, the Grizziy Companp have a 400 foot tunnel, on a well defined lode carrying galena, iron pyrite and a little chalcopyrite. The ore is well mineralized, and is said to carry fair values in the precious metals and to be continuous the entire length of the development work. As at the LeRoy mine, the Grizzly is opened on the top of the conglomerates, but it is said to outcrop in the bed of the creek, which has cut through the gravel deposits at this point.

From the LeRoy mine to the Champion-Musick power plant, is a distance of about 5 miles, or 6 miles to the "Warehouse" at the railroad terminus, 26 miles from Cottage Grove. We passed in succession the cabins on outcrops of the Kelsey mine, the Mitchell cabin and the outcrop of the Champion Basin Co., all of them pyrite; as well as a fair sized creek called Golden Courier. When we had dropped to an altitude of about 2900 feet a rough inscription on an old stump above the road, recalled a traged of early days, for here on June 1st, 1894, was found the d ad body of Mr. Downing, who had been lost in the snow storms of the previous spring. His old snow shoes still stand beside the stump, and his companion's body was found about the same time higoer up the creek.

A little more than half way to the Warehouse, the Noonday road unites with the Champion road, at the bridge across the creek, at its junction with Brass creek, which retains this name until the junction of Long creek, after which it is known as Row river.

About 500 feet beyond the bridge the Sunrise mine is building a road to their property on the mountain to the south; and beyond this a short distance the diverting dam of the power plant is in the creek bed to the right.

Before reaching the Noonday road the main follows, for some distrnce, along the base of high andesitic bluffs, in which the bedding is very strongly marked, while much of the freshly broken rock shows thorough impregnation with iron pyrite and occasional evidence of vein formation. Outside of this, and the luxurlant forest growth, there is nothing worthy of special notice. The same may be said of the 11 miles from the Warehouse to the present terminus of the railroad, which is through flat timbered bottom land and benches. Work is in active progress on this section, and the line will probably reach the Warehouse before Christmas.

Though it was not possible to make any very detailed examination of individual properties in this trip of about 30 miles through the district, certain prominent features of vein structure were so conspicuous, that they could not ovoid attracting attention. The sources of the andestic flows, were not traced up, though certain peculiar pinnacles, like those on Elephant Mountain, are very suggestive. The dykes which nave cut the country on general northwest and southeast lines, show a tendency to radiate from several centers, and it is quite likely that there have been several periods of movement and vein formation. The veins follow the lines of the dykes and in some cases are evidently made by replacement, but thep show many bands of brecciation, and these bands probably furnish the bulk of the free milling ore. Indeed these bands forcibly remind one of the drawings of ore from the Camp Bird mine in Colorado. The included fragments of porphry have been cemented together, sometimes with comb quartz and again with chalcedony, in which there are specks of iron pyrite and sometimes free gold, with concentration of the pyrite round the included fragments of country rock. At a later date, many of these fragments have been dissolved out and more or less completely filled with chalcedony often

Mining News Continued on Last Page

QUICKSILVER ON THE MARKET

An Excellent Article on Cinnabar Mining, its Value in in the Commercial and Scientific World.

BLACKBUTTE QUICKSILVER MINE

W. B. Dennis Displays his Thorough Knowledge of Quicksilver Mining and the Market in the Following Article.

The heavy purple-red sand which settled in their sluice-boxes, clogged the riffles and interferred with amalgamation, was a source of great annoyance. When it became known that the "red sand" was cinnabar, the ore of mercury, that necessary metal for which the miners of the then isolated district were paying upwards of two dollars per pound, several attempts were made to recover the mercury by distillation in common gold retorts, and more than one instance is reported of miners who were thus able to distill sufficent mercury for their own use. In operations of the present day many gravel miners of Southern Oregon find cinnabar in their riffles, although no attempt is being made to save it.

About thirty-five years ago cinnabar was discovered near the head of Little Applegate river on the northwest slope of Siskiyou peak, in the southern part of Jackson county. In 1871 a man by the name of Mullen constructed a crude furnace and attempted, in a primitive way, to reduce the surface ores. For a short period he succeeded in supplying the local demand of the placer miners, but the escape of mercurial fumes from his rudely constructed furnace soon salivated his men, and the project was abandoned. In 1899 these claims were re-located, and in 1901 the property was acquired by a Montana company, which has since done considerable development work, resulting in the opening up of a promising property. Other claims have been located in the same locality, and are being developed.

The cinnabar of this district occurs in very fine crystals saturating a gangue of granular calcite; the viens have nearly a north and south strike and dip at an angle of about 48 degrees west. They lie in near proximity to the granite on the east. The footwall is a much decomposed arcose sandstone; the hanging wall is a dark massive serpentine passing over into carbonaceous shales and slates a short distance from the veins. The shales are serpentinoid. Some of the veins of the district have a comparatively thin casing on the hanging-wall, consisting of dark colored crushed country rock familiarly known among the Mexican miners of California as alta. In general the geological structure of the district differs in but few particulars from the conditions found at many of the quicksilver mines of California.

Further northward cinnabar is again encountered in the region of Evans creek, a tributary of the Rogue river, about twenty miles northeast of the town of Gold Hill, a station on the Oregon and California Railroad. Croppings of cinnabar appear at intervals for a distance of some six miles stretching from the Meadows to Ramsey Canon the belt appears to be about three-quarters of a mile wide. Within this belt four prospects have been opened to some extent; two of these make a fair showing, but sufficient work has been done to demonstrate the extent of the deposits.

Continued Next Week.

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