

### Gold Mining Days— Back In The 80's

(By R. M. Harrison)

From the mining camps of by-gone days, there still lingers an air of mystery, romance and speculation, as it has always been known that the men who followed the life, and played the role of a miner, were of the most hardy, and venturesome characters, and yet while they basked in that fear, reckless, dare-devil passion, that crowded the border of desperation, they still retained the deepest sense of piety, and were quite alive to the ethics of the golden rule, as well as to the law of justice, and while, as a rule, they carried the interpretation of the law on their belts, they meant that it stood for the defense of virtue, and the maintenance of right.

Many an incident, or "happencence," that would be good reading, is still submerged in printer's ink, much of which has already gone into the lockers of oblivion, and unless those who embrace the pen, turn more to the events of the past, and champion the cause of the pioneer, his days, and his nights, his joys, and his sorrows, through which he passed to deliver to posterity its wonderful heritage, will not know from whence it came. If we turn the hands of that persistent old clock back to the early 80's we find that gold mining was still in vogue, and that there was a lot of placer mining going on throughout Oregon, and especially in the southwestern part. In these days there was what the miners called, "stampeders," a class of men that were always on the run from one camp to another, looking for richer diggins, and when one of these "feather-in-the-wind" birds would land in camp, about the first question that the "home guard" would ask, was "where d'ya come from," and whatever place that was Cheyenne, Big Hole, Grizzly Flat, Dead Horse—this would be his name from then on, and so, in those days, the old-timers had rather picturesque nom-de-plumes, like Bitter Root Bill, Sour Dough Ike, Cheyenne Joe, and it was possible to know a pal for weeks and not know what his name really was.

Over in the southern part of Douglas county, Oregon, on Buck Fork creek, was a little mining district, largely placer, and in some places, very rich and throughout the 70's and 80's, it was a gold producer of no mean quality, and as the mining claims were very small in size, it made room for a great many miners to be employed, and among the several different outfits operating was a partnership of three men, one of which had a boy of 12 years. These three men occupied a big old log cabin, at the head of Cox gulch, a romantic abode that had been built in the very early days of the mines, which was widely known as the "palace of the oaks." But the background of the place would suggest that it was more of a hide-out for desperadoes. At that the old place of that day, its broad roof with the big "colonial style" hooded front, the gushing spring that flowed by the door were welcome sights to the weary miners, when they plodded home from the hard day's toil. To identify these three men, we begin with Cherokee John, a real Cherokee by birth, a Baptist minister, tall, straight, dark eyes, jet black hair, frosted at the temples, full beard, sparse but very long, a man of splendid manners who held religious services in the camp whenever occasion presented itself; Akron George, a powerful man of 50 years, with a lot of "stamped" experience, and who had evidently dug a lot of the yellow metal from the dirt. He was very pious, very devoted to Methodism, and talked earnestly to his plate, before eating. The third partner, was "Shellbark" Ben, a tall and powerful man from the state of Missouri, a very devout Baptist, with strong arguments to sustain his belief in that religious organization. Bob, the son of Shellbark, was just a lad of 12, and sort of a handy man around the camp, a sort of a "shock absorber" just to be seen and not heard.

Although the little partnership was represented by three different brands of religion, Campbellite, Methodist, and Baptist, they enjoyed a great deal of tranquility, and to keep things on an even keel, they would each return thanks at the different meals; John would preside at breakfast, George at dinner, and Ben for the supper, and all that Bob had to do, was to "make hay" with the bacon and beans. As a rule, when they had all got settled down, and were busy with the "chop sticks" the presiding patron was supposed to break out with some narrative, spiced with romance or daring thrill, something to break the monotony of an undiversified menu.

It was one fine Sunday about mid-May, 1883, and Akron G. had done a splendid supplication in behalf of what was before us; then sitting upright, he mopped his brow with the old red bandana and launched out

on his story, which is just about as follows: It was back in '49 when a boy chum of mine and I were walking along a street in Akron, Ohio, when we saw a big sign on a board, which said, "go west, young man, and dig gold." I turned to Bill, and said, "Bill let's go west and dig gold," and Bill said "I dare you," and says I, "nut seed."

Well to make a long story short, we go out to California, and took up an old abandoned claim, on Buckhorn Gulch, over in Sutter county, and started sluicing and I reckon that we were about as green as the business as two geese, as the old timers there were poking fun at us right along, but we went ahead just as if we did know, and one day Bill picked up a hunk of stuff and said to me, "What the dickens is this?" I took it and said, "Let's show it to some of the miners, and maybe they will know." So we walked over to an old timer's cabin. When he saw it he let out the darndest whoop you ever heard, and said, "you fools that is gold." Well sir, Bill and I worked that claim out in about three months, and we cleaned up just an ever \$200,000.00 and say, were those old timers mad, to think that us two young fools would strike it so rich right under their noses! Well, we felt that we had our fortunes all made, and the next thing was to get back to Akron, and go into business, so we packed up our belongings and struck out for San Francisco, where we could cash our dust, and catch a steamer going east, around the Horn, and go back home by that route. In a few days we were in "Frisco," with our gold in our gold belts around us, under our shirts, around \$100,000.00 each, waiting for a boat to sail for New York, and we had our tickets, first class, in our pockets and raring to go. We didn't have to wait long, and one fine morning, about May 1st, the old schooner hoisted sail and we were off for home and I tell you that we were mighty glad, for that money was getting kind of heavy from walking around town with it around our bodies, for a week.

We finally got out on the high seas and everything went along fine until we got down along the coast of Chile, a little south of Valparaiso, when one morning the fire whistle blew. The whole stern of the boat was on fire and the captain ordered all hands to go to the bow, and he headed the ship for the shore at full speed. When we were within about a quarter of a mile off shore, he shouted for all hands to leap overboard, as she was sinking.

At this, Bill and I made our way through the crowd and, holding hands, we made the leap and none too soon, as the boat went right down; out from under us. We had to fight like troopers to keep away from the big whirlpool the boat made as she sank but luck was with us and we made it. Finally, about half dead, we made the shore and we had to hustle, too, as there was a swarm of sharks right on our trail and we had to get well back on the beach or they would still have gotten us.

After resting there for a spell and watching those sharks cutting didoes in the water, we figured that we had better look out for some place to stay until we could get another boat for home. Just as we reached the edge of the woods, a band of brigands walked out of the brush and, coming up to us, they never said a word, but just unbuckled our money belts and walked away.

At this point, George had finished his meal and was lighting his pipe, which gave Ben a chance to get in a word and he chimed in with, "George, do you know how much \$100,000 in gold weighs?" "Well," said George, "it's pretty heavy, I know that." "Yes," said Ben, "it weighs just about 500 pounds and I'll say that you are a mighty good swimmer at that." George straightened up and mopped his brow and whiskers, with the old red bandana and said, "By cracky, I believe the weather is getting warmer."

At that, the story lasted through the meal and served as well as a bottle of tobacco sauce, in the matter of candle power. Of course, Ben had to throw a monkey wrench in the rigger and as a result, it is not known if Akron George is still standing on the beach, down there along the Chilean coast or not. It was rather rude of Ben to interrupt George as he stood there in such a perilous position and, too, the story was getting to be more interesting, as it had the reached the point where George would just about have to pick himself and pal up by the bootstraps, to get back home.

The sudden collapse of the narrative was a big shock to little Bob, as he was absorbing, regardless of the high candle power, the ethics of the story, with a big spoon, and the reverend Cherokee John, executed a few strokes at the "chin fringe" and moaned in a deep guttural voice, "Ah . . ." while Ben went on munching at the legumes.

This all happened back in the 80's and the cast of characters were all miners, trail blazers, pioneers,

and meant no harm by what they said, so we will let charity's broad mantle cover their faults, but their virtues we will carve on the everlasting stone.

### Hope For Better Marketing Plan

The present meat marketing situation will be discussed and efforts will be made to formulate a better plan for marketing livestock produced in this county at two meetings which will be held this week under the direction of the County Livestock Marketing Ass'n., it is reported by R. H. Christensen, president of the organization.

The first meeting will be held in the city hall at Coos Bay, this Thursday evening, June 7, at 8:00 and the second meeting will be held in the city hall at Coquille on Friday, June 8, at 1:30 p. m. All producers who are interested in marketing livestock, meat dealers, consumers, and others interested in this problem are urged to attend one of the meetings.

An effort will be made to obtain the facts regarding the amount of livestock ready for market now and which will be ready later during the year, also regarding the situation as it affects meat dealers and consumers. Current reports indicate that we have an adequate supply of meat animals on the farm and a demand for the meat, but it appears that restrictions are preventing slaughter and the normal movement of meat to existing markets, it was stated. This not only is ruinous to the producer, but prevents the production of the largest amount of the best quality meat now badly needed for the war effort. Records will be kept of facts presented at these meetings and will be made available to those who are responsible for present restrictions, the chairman stated.

### Best Spring Fire Season In Years

Giving full credit to Oregon citizens for splendid cooperation in preventing forest fires and an assist to Jupiter Pluvius for providing rain at the right moment, State Forester N. S. Rogers said the state had just finished its best spring fire season in years. Only 772 acres were destroyed in spring fern fires this year up to May 15, Rogers reported, as against 1804 last spring and 25,000 in 1943 for the same period.

"Much of the credit for this remarkably low fire loss belongs to the hundreds of Oregon citizens who actively sponsor Keep Oregon Green fire-prevention work in every county in the state," Forester Rogers acknowledged. "Keep Oregon Green officials have, by a well-conceived educational program, sold the citizens of Oregon on preventing fires, and thus save our great timber resource from wasteful destruction."

Douglas and Lincoln counties reported no spring fires this year, according to the Rogers report. Western Oregon counties reported 476 acres burned and east of the mountains 286 acres went up in fire. There were but 34 man-caused fires this spring and 17 of these were classed as incendiary; one started from railroads, 3 from loggers, 7 from slash and debris blazes, one from campfires and smokers were responsible for four.

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**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed Administrator of the Estate of BEN E. BUSH, Deceased; and that all persons having claims against said estate should present the same, duly verified and with proper vouchers therefor, to me at my law office in the First Nat'l. Bank Bldg., Coquille, Oregon, within six months from the date hereof.  
Dated, May 24, 1945.  
HARRY A. SLACK,  
1915 Administrator of said Estate.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned was on the 8th day of May, 1945, duly appointed by the County Court of Coos County, Oregon, as Administrator of the Estate of R. E. Cameron, deceased, and has qualified as such; and that all persons having claims against the estate of deceased are hereby required to present same, duly verified with proper vouchers attached, to the undersigned at the office of O. C. Sanford, Attorney, in Coquille, Oregon, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice.  
Dated and published first time May 10, 1945.  
G. R. Griffith,  
1915 Administrator

**IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF COOS**  
In the Matter of The Partnership Estate of FRED C. HUDSON and WM. H. BARROW, doing business as BARROW DRUG COMPANY  
Case No. 4120  
**Notice of Final Account**  
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed herein his final account as administrator of the partnership estate of Fred C. Hudson and Wm. H. Barrow, doing business as Barrow Drug Company, and that the above entitled court has set Tuesday, the 26th day of June, 1945, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said date, at the County Court room at Coquille, Oregon, as the time and place for hearing objections to such final account and the settlement of said estate.  
Wm. H. Barrow,  
1915 Administrator.

**NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNT**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the undersigned has filed in the County Court of Coos County, Oregon her Final Report and Account as Executrix of the Estate of Fred C. Hudson Deceased, and that the Court has set Tuesday, June 26th, 1945, at the hour of 10:00 o'clock A. M. of said day at the County Court room in Coquille, Oregon, as the time and place for hearing objections to such final account and the settlement of said estate.  
1915 Laura Hudson, Executrix.

**NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNT**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the undersigned has filed in the County Court of Coos County, Oregon, his Final Report and Account as Executor of the Estate of P. W. Laird, Deceased, and that the Court has set Tuesday, July 3rd, 1945, at the hour of 10:00 o'clock A. M. of said day, at the County Court room in Coquille, Oregon, as the time and place for hearing objections to such final account and the settlement of said estate.  
Frank Heath,  
2015 Executor

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Our forests are a sacred heritage—yours, and all who live here. With this heritage goes the responsibility of preservation. Members of the industry are preventing and fighting fires—and they are growing new trees to replace those harvested. But your help is needed, too! Each of us must act as a good neighbor in preserving our mutual wealth.

**PASS THE WORD ALONG!** Warn all to be extremely careful of fire in the woods. Report every fire the moment you see it; (just call "operator"). These simple neighborly but important acts will **Keep Fire Out!**



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