

ORIGIN OF OUR MINING LAWS.

Precedents Established by Miners Formed the Basis.

The mining laws of the United States did not have their origin in legislative halls, or in committee rooms of congress. The first gold mining of any importance that attracted much attention was in California, more than a half century ago. The Argonauts of '49 had no precedents, of which they had knowledge, to guide and govern them. They knew but little, if anything, about mining codes of other countries. So in their cabins on the banks of the American river, they convened and in their crude way organized a mining district and enacted a code of mining laws. They defined the size of a claim, prescribed rules for its location and workings; established a miners' court and so laid the foundation of what has grown into an extensive system. As the placers were worked out and the gold-bearing quartz leads were discovered, the genius of the frontier miner as a law maker was found equal to the emergency.

The history of the early legislature has never been written, and yet it is fraught with intense interest. Those rugged adventurers had left homes, kindred and comforts of life. Between them and the scenes of birth and childhood stretched hundreds of miles, mostly an arid, unoccupied waste. They had passed perils untold to reach this Eldorado land. Then they found themselves homeless; the dark mountains stood about them like God's wardens, and the music of the winds, as it played among the pines, doubtless seemed like voices of dear ones watching and waiting far away. We do not wonder that in these strange and weird conditions Bret Harte could find expression for his inimitable stories, so realistic and full of the pathos of mining life.

When congress entered upon mining legislation, it did not turn to England, France or Spain for precedents, but to the rules and regulations devised and adopted by the miners of the Pacific coast. And it is interesting to note these statutes enacted by congress were first constructed by men who had lived in the mines, among the miners who had handled the pick and shovel and who were familiar with all their provisions as they had been enacted in the miners' meetings, where they knew and recognized no higher law, and the courts have ever followed closely the purpose and intent of these first law-makers. So that there is scarcely a prospector who does not understand what he must do in locating and holding a mining claim, and what his rights are under the law. Location on the apex, following the vein on its dip, bounded by the end lines extended down vertically, etc., all these provisions were formulated by the miners. In all our jurisprudence there is no law or code of laws that have originated so directly from the people as our mining laws.

But few traces of the cabins of mining camps are found on American river today. Railways, villages and commerce have swept them all away, but the work and wise provision done and enacted in those almost forgotten places and days live in our statutes, decisions of our courts and in the deeds and doings of miners all over our wide domain.—Black Hills Mining Review.

Great Activity at Mineral.

H. C. Stratton, of Portland, manager of a number of mines at Mineral, was in town this week on his way home from a trip to his company's properties. From him we learn that work on an extensive

scale will soon be commenced at Mineral. The company's sawmill at Monroe creek was started this week, and twelve or fifteen men are now employed in building a wagon road from the sawmill to the mines. As soon as the new smelter plant, which was ordered from Denver recently, is put in place, a large force of men will be employed to get out ore, and Mineral will again become a lively mining camp. There is not an idle man in Mineral who wants work.—Huntington Herald.

Location Notice and Warning.

Here is a location certificate set up on a discovery in the vicinity of Grand Encampment, Wyoming. It is entirely legal also, which is not always to be said of the prospectors' effort in this direction: "We found it and we claim it by right of finding it. It's our'n. It's 750 feet in every direction except southwest and northeast, and there it's 300 feet on each side of this writin.' It's called the Bay Horse and we claim even the spurs, and we don't want no body to be jumpin' on the Bay Horse—that's what these trees is around here for and we've got the same piece of rope we had down in old Missouri."—Exchange.

Portland Developing Cracker Creek Claims.

The Sumpter Consolidated Mining company of Portland, owning four claims on Cracker creek, has commenced development work within the past two weeks. Various values from different prospect holes run from a trace to \$9.94. D. F. Richards is in charge of the work and is hopeful of opening up a mine in what is said to be a good property, according to surface indications.

Rocky Mountain Scenery By Day Light.

Day light stop over at Niagara Falls. Through first-class tourist sleeper from Pacific Coast weekly for Chicago, Boston, New York and other eastern points via Rio Grande Western (Great Salt Lake Route), Denver & Rio Grande, C. R. I. & P. and Illinois Central to Chicago, connecting in the Union Depot with Michigan Central's similar car for points east. For full particulars call on or address,

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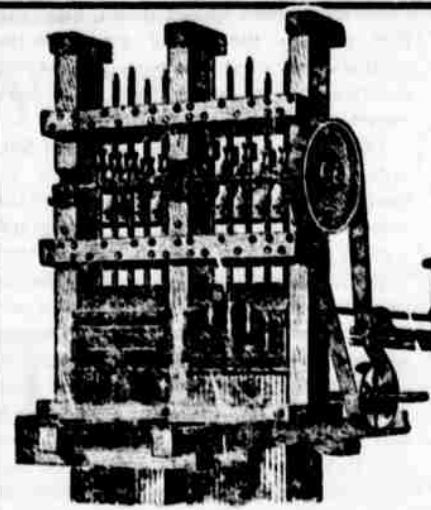
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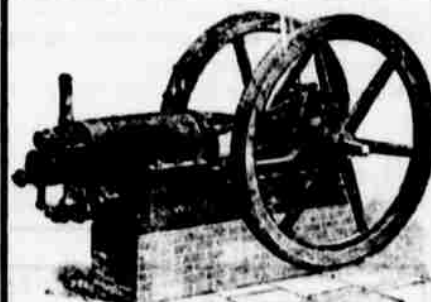
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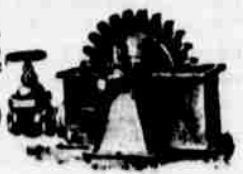


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