

## FIRE AT THE SNOW CREEK

Fire at the Snow Creek mine at noon yesterday destroyed the boarding house, assay office, manager's quarters, store house and adjoining buildings. The stamp mill, 200 feet distant, caught fire, but was saved by the heroic efforts of a bucket brigade.

The blaze originated from a defective flue in the room of Bookkeeper Kilmer, on the top story of the main boarding house building. The alarm was given just as the mill whistle blew for noon. The big log building was soon completely enveloped in flames, so that the volunteer fire brigade was forced to content itself with efforts to save the contents of the group of burning buildings. A telephone message to Greenhorn City brought help. Manager Fred D. Smith lost all of his personal effects and Mrs. Smith saved but very little of her belongings. Valuable mine maps in the office room were destroyed, together with all of the mine supplies, such as tools, candles, steel, fuse, etc., in the top floor of a 3-story building adjoining the boarding house.

When the mill caught fire, from flying sparks, all efforts were concentrated upon saving that structure. The mill for the past month has been running 12-hour shift on Psyche ore. Yesterday morning a double shift was employed for the first time.

The burned buildings were covered by practically no insurance and the loss will total \$6,000.

Manager Smith will at once rebuild. Already workmen are erecting a temporary boarding house, which will be completed by tomorrow night. Pending the provision of a new bunk house for the men, they will find quarters at Greenhorn, so that there will be no cessation of operations at the mine.

The crosscut from the Snow Creek shaft is being driven by contract, and the work will proceed uninterrupted. The Psyche and Diadem, which are being operated by the Snow Creek company, will also continue.

Consulting Engineer W. W. Elmer left for the mine on this morning's train, carrying an outfit of clothing for Manager Smith, who lost everything except the suit of corduroys he wore.

Mrs. Smith and child arrived this afternoon to remain until a new building is provided for her accommodation.

Most of the Snow Creek, Psyche and Diadem maps were fortunately in the Sumpter office of Consulting Engineer Elmer.

Late reports state that Manager Smith was slightly burned, by working too near the flames, and that among things saved was the fire extinguisher.

Mike Carney, master mechanic, while fighting fire, dropped \$500 in paper money from his pocket and it was burned.

### I. X. L. Shut Down.

Pending the purchase of heavier pumps, orders for which have been placed by General Manager Fred T. Kelly, the I. X. L. mine, in the Greenhorn district, is shut down.

Fine printing at the Miner office.

## HORROR IN OLD MINE

Postmaster Frank Jewett was in a reminiscent mood this morning, and while waiting for the train, told a Miner reporter of the time he worked in the old Virtue mine, under the Grayson regime—worked in every part of the property from a collar to sump, from the 860-foot pump station to the apex of the mill, in almost every stope and drift.

"I was wheeling out a car of ore when Jim Maddox was instantly killed in an explosion 100 feet away," said Mr. Jewett. "Maddox and John Higgins were shift mates. Maddox lost his candle stick in a muck heap, and rigged up a 'crab' with wire to hold the candle. He and Higgins went into the powder magazine under ground and were making wet cartridges, when Maddox's crab fell on the floor of the chamber, igniting some loose powder, dropped by powder monkeys in making wet cartridges, which are formed by digging out the end of a stick of powder and inserting a cap. Maddox and Higgins made superhuman efforts to put out the burning powder, but when some loose caps began to go off they gave it up and ran—Maddox toward the face of the drift and Higgins toward the shaft. Maddox, hoping to lessen the force of the explosion which he knew was coming, picked up a 50-pound box of powder when he started but dropped it before he had gone very far, not desiring to be caught with such a deadly load when the concussion came. When it did come, Higgins was lifted up and hurled 50 feet, lighting on his hands and knees. Marvelously enough, no bones were broken, and after covering his head with his jacket to keep the deadly powder fumes out of his lungs, he managed to crawl to safety. His heart stopped beating twice before he was brought to the surface, but he is alive and kicking today.

"As I said before, I was wheeling a car when the explosion occurred, and the first thing I knew the car was blown off the track and I was knocked galley-west and crooked. It seemed that every drop of water in the mine was gathered up by the blast and whipping stingingly into my face.

"We found Maddox hanging head down by one trouser leg from a spike in the timbered drift, 10 feet from the powder chamber. Every bone in his body was broken. When I helped lay him out that night, his arms and legs were like limber ropes from broken bones.

"The accident was the fault of the foreman, who had the reputation of being a sort of slave driver. Maddox and Higgins were working in the face, and after putting in a round of holes, were called off by the foreman to clean out the track in the main drift, in preparation for a visit from the owner, George W. Grayson, the following morning. He ordered the boys to hurry up and get back and fire their round before going off shift.

It was while cleaning out the track that Maddox dropped his candlestick and after searching for a few minutes was ordered by the foreman to rig up his crab. Had Maddox been given time to go up above for a new candle-

stick, he would probably be alive today.

"A hoo-doo followed Jimmy Higgins' shift mates. Just before Maddox was killed, Higgins and a partner were putting in a heavy stull, using long poles for kids. One of the poles dropped, end-on, and went clear through the breast of Higgins' pal. Back in Leadville, while timbering a stope, the roof gave way and crushed a shift-mate of Jimmy's to death. I always fought shy of working on Jimmy Higgins' shift."

## GEOLOGY OF CENTRAL OREGON

A region that is new to both geologists and topographers is described by Prof. Israel C. Russell in a preliminary report on the geology and water resources of central Oregon, recently published by the United States geological survey. No description of the physical features, water resources, or geology of this region is in print, and the only map that Prof. Russell found available for use during his reconnaissance, which took place in the summer of 1903, was a map of the state of Oregon, drawn to a scale of 12 miles to the inch, published by the general land office.

The route followed by Prof. Russell and his assistants led from Burns, Oregon, westward through the western part of Harney county, by way of Prineville and Sisters, thence southward through the northwest portion of Klamath county to Fort Klamath, and thence westward across the Cascade mountains to Medford in Jackson county.

The region examined includes the extreme northern part of the Great Basin (an area of about 210,000 square miles, situated principally in Oregon, Nevada, Utah and southeastern California, from which no streams flow to the ocean) and a part of the drainage area of Des Chutes river and its principal tributary, Crooked river, which joins it from the east.

The relief of the surface in central Oregon presents well marked contrasts, ranging from nearly level, featureless desert valleys, where the general elevation is about 4000 feet, to the rugged, snow-clad summits of the Cascade mountains, the loftiest of which, Mount Jefferson, reaches a height of about 10,350, feet.

The most extensive tract of nearly level land is situated in the geographic center of the state and is in part named on the maps of the Great Sandy desert. This region, termed "sandy," on account of the thick sheet of pumiceous sand and dust that covers large portions of it, extends from the south central part of Crook county southeastward, across the northeastern portion of Lake county and far into Harney county. Its length is about 150 miles and its width from 30 to 50 miles. So nearly uniform is the surface that one might drive throughout its length without meeting any greater obstruction than the rigid sagebrush—so arid is there—without finding a single watering place for men or animals.

The valleys between the mountains, buttes and hills are in general level floored, owing in part to the deposit of alluvium brought from the uplands by streams, but mainly to the extensive lava flows and the wide distribution of frag-

mental material blown out of volcanoes in the condition of gravel and dust. Sheets of basalt which have invaded the valleys and given them level floors occur widely throughout the central part of the state, and in many localities form the present surface. These lava sheets range in thickness from 80 to 100 feet up to probably several hundred feet.

Few localities of the continental portion of the United States present to view a greater extent of mountains or offer for study a more interesting assemblage of topographic forms than may be beheld from the summit of any one of the many isolated volcanic cones and craters that rise from the sage brush valleys and broad desert plains of central Oregon. From these elevations, the distribution of the trees of the region may also be well observed.

The dark forest mantle which clothes the entire Cascade range, with the exception of its higher spires and more lofty craters, may be seen descending their eastern slopes and extending far out on the lower and less rugged country adjacent to their well defined base, ending in an irregular line in the shadeless valleys.

Prof. Russell describes the main features of the region in detail, by counties. His report, which is listed as bulletin No. 252, is illustrated with 24 plates. It is among the survey's free publications and may be obtained on application to the director of the United States geological survey, Washington, D. C.

## GRANT COUNTY SHEEP KING A GLOBE-TROTTER

G. S. L. Smith, the sheep king of Grant county, passed through Sumpter yesterday en route to England. With his luggage was a gigantic traveling bag, decorated with foreign labels from St. Petersburg, Moscow, Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, Switzerland, Italy, India, Australia and New Zealand. Mr. Smith and his brothers own innumerable sheep, which range in Grant, Harney and Malheur counties. He is a very wealthy man and has circumnavigated the globe twice. He enjoys an opportunity this year to contract his entire 1905 wool clip at 17 cents, but is holding for a higher figure, which he believes inevitable.

"Gus" Smith, as he is familiarly known throughout the interior, left eastern Oregon six years ago for South Africa and served with distinction through the Boer war. He comes from an old English family.

### Has Unbounded Faith.

S. D. Foss, of Chicago, the new president of the Standard mine, in an interview with a Pendleton newspaperman, says that he has unbounded faith in the Sumpter district. The eastern Oregon gold fields, however, have been given somewhat of a lack eye in eastern investment centers, he says, by unprincipled promoters who have buncoed people by exploiting properties of little worth.

### All Ready for Sluicing.

Frank O. Bucknum, joint owner with Frank Muzzy of the rich Marshall group of mines, near Tipton, came in from the property yesterday, having passed Muzzy, who went out that way on a visit. Mr. Bucknum reports everything in readiness at the Marshall for active sluicing operations as soon as the weather will permit.