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MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN GOLD BULLION BARS BROUGHT DOWN OVER LONELY MOUNTAIN ROADS*

FROM MINE TO BANK VAULT, THE ROUTE OF THE CLEANUPS
FROM BAKER COUNTY MINES IS LINED WITH CONSTANT DANGER OF HOLDUPS

And Yet, Oddly Enough, There Has Never Been a Bullion Robbery in the History of the Camp--
How Mine Operators Resort to Strategy to Throw Possible Robbers Off the Scent--A Fake Holdup
Frustrated--Conspiracy to Rob Frank Baillie, of the Columbia Mine Cleanup--The Historical
Godfrey and Tabor Robbery.

Quietly, unostentatiously, mysteriously--as befits the labor of toting around thirty
thousand plunks d'or in the shape of gold bullion bars fresh from the stamp batteries and
retort, General Manager Emil Melzer, of the celebrated North Pole mine, on Cracker Creek,
came down from the Upper Camp last week, and alighting from the Sumpter Valley train, en-
tered a waiting cab and was driven straight to a local bank, the doors of which had been
left unlocked long past the regular closing hour, in pursuance it is believed to a tele-
graphic request from Sumpter. Dismissing the cab at the back entrance, Mr. Melzer, assisted
by a bank official, lugged a Gladstone traveling bag through the door, and the incident, so
far as the general public was concerned, was closed.

When Mr. Melzer and the heavy traveling bag boarded the train at Sumpter, it required
the services of two men to lift the mysterious grip to the car platform.

\$30,000 IN GOLD

Obviously the grip weighed from 75 to 80 pounds, maybe 90. Estimating gold at 16 ounces
to the pound, \$20 to the ounce, the grip contained from \$24,000 to \$30,000 of yellow bars.

It may not have contained gold at all. It may have held a broken casting from the
North Pole's stamp battery. It may have been weighted with iron filings. Some one else
on the same train with Mr. Melzer may have carried an inoffensive looking gunny sack,
weighted with the real North Pole cleanup. Melzer's heavy grip may have been the rankest
kind of bluff to divert attention from the fact that the following day the cleanup would
come down in the care of maybe a trusted employe of the mill, disguised. The presumption
is strong, however, that Mr. Melzer's weighty traveling bag contained the cleanup from
the North Pole mine.

RESORT TO STRATEGY

Eastern Oregon mine operators are compelled to resort to all sorts of strategy in
getting their cleanups to Baker City banks. The most elaborate secrecy is maintained by
mill men and mine officials in the matter of when the cleanup is made. News of such an

* The Evening Herald, Baker City, Oregon, vol. 4, April 19, 1904.

event, if it leaked out, would give someone a tip that shortly thereafter the gold would be toted down from the hills and it would be an easy matter to lay in wait at some turn in the road and perpetrate a robbery. It is usually the practice to send the Superintendent down from the mine, entrusted with a heavy grip, in the display of whose weight he is purposely indifferent. Perhaps on the day following, another mine employe, with another grip, equally heavy, displayed the same ostentatiousness, comes down from the mine, and drives to the bank. Next day, or a couple of days thereafter, still another grip is sent down, and maybe it is tipped off to the newspapers that the cleanup has been deposited. And then, some dark night, another grip carried by perhaps the General Manager of the mine, is taken secretly from the mine to the nearest bank, and thereafter the procession of heavy grips ceases.

BIG CLEANUPS

When it is remembered that the monthly cleanups from such mines as the North Pole, Columbia, and Bonanza, range from \$15,000 to \$100,000. it can readily be seen that extraordinary care must be exercised to prevent loss of the gold bricks.

A CLEAN RECORD

It is a matter for wonderment that Baker County mine operators have not been robbed of their cleanups. And yet the history of the camp is free from such a record. Whether this due to the absence of bold robbers in this region, or whether it is due to the astuteness of the mine operators, is an open question.

RED BOY HOLDUP

The nearest approach to a bullion robbery in Baker County was three years ago, when Godfrey & Tabor, of the Red Boy mine, were held up by three masked men near the summit of the divide between Granite and Sumpter. They were ordered to stand and deliver. They did so. Upon their arrival at Sumpter they telegraphed to the Sheriff's office in Baker City, and followed on the train. At the Sumpter Valley depot Mr. Godfrey told a reporter for the Herald that he had been robbed. Asked if the highwaymen had secured the July cleanup, which was known to have been about ready for deposit at that time, he refused to state positively whether they did or did not.

WILD RUMORS

All sorts of rumors immediately became current. One report was to the effect that the three highwaymen had secured \$25,000 worth of gold bullion and had buried it somewhere in Buck Gulch, while they escaped to Idaho and hid themselves in the Thunder Mountain country. Another report was that one of the bullion bars had been chipped up with a cold chisel and run through the Pyx mill, the amalgam being sold in Baker City by one of the men implicated in the robbery. After the sensation had died away, Godfrey and Tabor both asserted emphatically that the bullion had been carried at the time of the robbery in a buggy, driven by Godfrey's brother, which had preceded their own rig by a couple of hours and that the only loss suffered at the hands of the robbers was a gold watch and about \$200 in coin.

TRUTH NEVER TOLD

There were arrests and confessions and sensational rumors of one of the men turning State's evidence and giving the whole thing away, but the thing soon died out and it has never been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the general reading public whether Godfrey and Tabor lost the bullion or not.

A BIG ROLL

One of the biggest cleanups ever known in the history of the Baker County mines was brought down one time two years ago from the famous Bonanza mine at Geiser. Not a soul knew of the treasure shipment, outside of one or two mine officials and two Deputy Sheriffs

who were sent from Baker City to guard General Manager Thatcher while making the lonely trip from the mine to the railway at Sumpter. The amount of gold carried at that time was \$102,000. Frequently at later dates Mr. Thatcher, guarded by officers of the law, brought down cleanups worth from \$50,000 to \$80,000.

ANGEL UNAWARES

One time a prominent professional man of Baker City was visiting at the Bonanza mine, the guest of the General Manager. When he was ready to return home he was asked to grant a favor to the management-- to carry a grip to Baker City and hand it over to the cashier of a local bank. "It contains papers of value," explained the Manager. The commission was executed, and not until the Baker City man, in company with an employe of the mine sent along by the Manager, arrived at the bank did he learn that the grip full of "valuable papers," contained about \$80,000 in yellow gold bars.

ROBBERS FOILED

One time about four years ago a conspiracy was hatched up in Bourne to rob General Manager Frank Baillie, of the Columbia mine cleanup. Merely by accident Mr. Baillie heard of the conspiracy while in the outhouse in the rear of the Bourne hotel. One of the men in the conspiracy was an employe of the Columbia stamp mill. The cleanup was made in regular form and the amalgam retorted. Heavily armed, the General Manager with a weighty grip, drove to Sumpter from the mine, but the weighty grip contained nothing more valuable than a stamp die. The bullion was safely locked in the office safe at the mine and remained there for a month, while a procession of men with heavy grips was sent almost daily down the canyon to Sumpter. Finally the bullion was taken by one of the men and safely landed in the bank at Baker City. It was worth about \$50,000, and would have been a neat haul.

LONELY ROADS

Nearly all of the big producing mines of Baker County are located in isolated places in the Blue Mountains, accessible only by stage. The string of big mines along Cracker Creek, the E. & E., North Pole, Columbia, Tabor Fraction, Golconda, and others, are connected with the outer world by a road winding down a deep and narrow canyon. The road itself is merely a sort of tunnel among the pine trees. It is an ideal location for a holdup. But oddly enough, not a single robbery has occurred along this road.

A FAKE HOLDUP

One time, during the halcyon years of the operation of the Golconda mine, under the old English regime, Superintendent Frank Stickney was the victim of a practical joke, hatched up by a lot of chaps in Sumpter, at the head of whom were Phil Nebergall, well known in Baker City, and Malcolm Thornton, at that time Superintendent of the Sumpter electric light plant, owned then by W. L. Vinson, of Baker City. A spectacular holdup was planned and carried out faithfully. Thornton's part in the game was to stand behind a tree and when Stickney drove by to step out and yell "Hands Up." He spoke his piece well, but what happened wasn't in the play at all. Stickney was in the buggy with a grip full of gold bars between his feet and a Winchester rifle across his knees. An employe of the mine was acting as driver. When Thornton, masked and armed with a crooked stick shaped like a shotgun, stepped out from the shade of a tree and shouted "Hands Up," Stickney opened fire and there was a scattering among amateur holdups as never was. No one was hit by the flying bullets from Stickney's gun, and to this day it is asserted that he knew all about the joke and fired in the air. This is given weight by the fact, that Stickney, who is an old member of the Multnomah Athletic Club, was a dead shot with a rifle.

BIG TREASURE

Before the Geisers sold the Bonanza mine to the Standard Company for \$500,000, Albert Geiser is said to have brought down over the 20-mile road between the mine and Sumpter, a grand total of a million and a quarter dollars worth of gold bullion.

The only authentic record of bullion robbery in Baker County is vouched for by J. Nat Hudson, the Nestor of mining camp journalism, who one time edited the Sumpter News, now the Blue Mountain American. Hudson says that a Chinaman placer miner once picked up a \$17,000 nugget in Gimlet Gulch or Three-Cent Gulch, somewhere in that neighborhood, just as a couple of white men happened along. The Chinaman was promptly relieved of his burden, and the slab of gold, which Hudson asserts was as big as a side of bacon, was chizzled into three pieces and packed to Salt Lake. Hudson has the reputation of being an elaborate fish liar, but the truth of the \$17,000 nugget story is vouched for by other old timers.

Robberies of sluices in old times were almost an every day occurrence, and the practice in some parts of the district is still kept up--at least wherever Chinamen operate. Miners consider it no sin to steal from a pigtail, excusing themselves on the ground that the gold does the Chinaman no good anyway, because he ships it off to China and lives on rice and chop suey while here.

(Copy of the Baker Evening Herald by courtesy of Paul Van Arsdale, Baker.)

PACIFIC STONEWARE COMPANY TESTS PERLITE AS GLAZE

Perlite as a substitute for feldspar in a ceramic glaze on stoneware jars has been tested by the Pacific Stoneware Company, Portland, and first tests have shown the substitute to be very satisfactory. The perlite was supplied by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Perlite does not give a dead-white colored glaze, but rather has a faint yellowish tinge due to the small amount of iron present. In addition to the advantage of a lower first cost, perlite would require only one firing in this work whereas the feldspar glaze requires two firings.

The Department will publish a report in September 1950 giving the results of experimental work by the Department on use of volcanic glass in ceramic glazes.

OREGON MINING NOTES

Fire destroyed the shaft and some surface equipment of the Oregon King mine near Ashwood in Jefferson County on the night of August 2, 1950. Rehabilitation work underground had been started; the origin of the fire is not known.

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An expanded development program has been planned for the Buffalo mine, eastern Grant County, Oregon. A long tunnel will be driven to explore the veins at depth.

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The Baker Dredging Company has sold its 9-cubic foot Sumpter Valley dredge to the Powder River Dredging Company, a new corporation. The dredge will work new ground in the lower end of Sumpter Valley.

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Kenneth Watkins, Disston, has leased the Champion mine and mill, Bohemia district, Lane County, Oregon, and has about 20 men employed. A shipment of concentrates has been made to the Tacoma Smelter.

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Dave Zambeth and son are working a hydraulic mine on Little Pine Creek east of John Day, Grant County, Oregon.

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The Jay Gould mine at Greenhorn, Baker County, has been purchased by H. G. Burnham, Fairview; Earl Stanley, Gresham; and Walter Brown, Baker. A small mill has been installed and a development program started under the supervision of Fred Wickham, Baker.

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The Porter and Company $4\frac{1}{2}$ -cu. ft Yuba dredge is being moved from the headwaters of Olive Creek to new ground on Crane Creek in the Granite district, Grant County, Oregon.

THE DISCOVERY OF AN ADDITIONAL SAMS VALLEY, OREGON, METEORITE*
(ECN = + 1229,425)

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In the summer of 1949, while engaged on a collecting expedition in southern Oregon, I visited the Jacksonville Museum in the hope that I might obtain some information regarding the exact location of the Sams Valley, Jackson County, meteoritic fall. I was unable to secure any information regarding the exact location other than what was to be obtained from the ECN (equatorial coordinate number) = + 1230,424, taken from "A Catalog of the Meteoritic Falls of the 11 Western States," by Dr. Frederick C. Leonard and Miss Dorothy H. Alley, which appeared in C.M.S., 4, 58-65; P.A., 55, 381-8, 1947. That ECN would place the location of the find somewhere in the middle of Sams Valley.

While looking over the collections of the Jacksonville Museum, I asked the keeper, Mr. J. B. Noble, whether the Museum had any meteorites in its collections. He showed me a large specimen labeled meteorite, which, on examination, proved to be an oddly shaped specimen of weathered diorite that had been covered with orange shellac in order to give it something of the appearance of a meteorite! While I was engaged in this examination, my mother was carefully examining the mineral collection, in which she located 3 specimens bearing a card labeled meteorites. On first examination, 2 of the 3 specimens proved to be magnetite. The third appeared to be a meteorite. With the cooperation of Mr. H. A. Berntson, the local machinist, I removed a slice, which I polished and etched. The Widmanstatten pattern proved to be that of a medium octahedrite (Om). I took the meteorite to the local store, where I found that it weighed approximately 2 lb., $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. = 1028 gm. The overall dimensions of the specimen are 12.5 x 4.5 x 4 cm.

On the completion of this work, I set out to locate, as nearly as possible, the exact location of the Sams Valley find. The great majority of the people in the area either were newcomers or had never heard of any meteorites there. After a long and careful search, I happened, by good fortune, to locate the property of Mr. Frank B. Payne, of 524 Evelyn Avenue, Albany 6, California. He was then visiting his nephew, Mr. Andrew Payne, who now resides on the family property. Mr. Frank Payne, at the time I met him, was showing some friends the places where he and his father had mined. He was most kind in relating the history of his father's discovery, which at the time was considered to be of little importance and was therefore never reported. One day while Mr. Payne's father, Mr. W. M. Payne, was engaged in panning in a small gulch on his property, he found, in the bottom of his pan, a piece of heavy material that, when washed off and rubbed with a file, appeared to be iron; a little farther up the gulch he encountered the specimen now in the Jacksonville Museum. At a short distance still farther up he came upon an even larger specimen; this specimen he gave to a friend, by the name of Edward Cooper, whom I have been unable to locate.

The sample that I removed from the original meteorite in the Jacksonville Museum I compared with a known specimen from Sams Valley in the collection of Dr. J. Hugh Pruett of Eugene, Oregon. Both he and Dr. Kunz of the Department of Chemistry of the University of Oregon agreed with me in that Dr. Pruett's specimen and the sample from the Jacksonville Museum were from the same fall. We forwarded the 2 specimens to Dr. Frederick C. Leonard of the Department of Astronomy of the University of California, Los Angeles, for further examination. Both Dr. Leonard and Dr. Joseph Murdoch of the Department of Geology of that institution examined the specimens, and Dr. Leonard reported that, in their opinion, the 2 meteorites are members of the same fall. These statements, in addition to my observations

* Abstracted from the Contributions of The Meteoritical Society, Popular Astronomy, vol. LVIII, no. 5, May 1950.

and Mr. Payne's testimony, leave little doubt that the Sams Valley fall was a multiple fall or a shower; until the weather improves, however, search for more individual meteorites will have to be postponed.

Mr. Payne, in my presence, named the gulch "Meteorite Gulch." It is located on the Payne property, on a bend of Sams Creek, on the north bank and about 10 feet above the stream, at low-water stage. The gulch runs for several hundred feet up the slope of the hillside, which is now well covered with brush and timber. The specimens were recovered at bedrock, in the bottom of the gulch, which is not more than 10 feet wide at the top and forms a V-shaped trough at the bottom. The exact location is in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 13, T. 35, R. 2-3 W., on the Frank B. Payne property on Sams Creek near Beagle, Jackson County, Oregon, in the Trail quadrangle. The benchmark 1347 marks the corner of sec. 13. The longitude is approximately W. 122° 52' 30", and the latitude N. 42° 31' 46". On the basis of this position, the equatorial coordinate number (ECN) of the fall should be changed from + 1230,424 (as given in Dr. Leonard's "A Catalog of Provisional Coördinate Numbers for the Meteoritic Falls of the World," Univ. of New Mexico Publ. in Meteoritics, No. 1, p. 44, 1946) to +1229,425.

HANNA LEASES OREGON NICKEL

The Hanna Development Company, a subsidiary of the M. A. Hanna Company, has leased the Oregon Nickel Mining Company property on Nickel Mountain near Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon. Research on the metallurgy of the ore is being carried out in Hanna's research laboratory, and development work will depend upon results obtained in the research laboratory.

Early in World War II the Freeport Sulphur Company explored this deposit by means of diamond drilling and developed a large tonnage of low-grade nickel silicate ore. The Nickel Mountain deposit probably contains the largest quantity of nickel in the United States.

NEW BAUXITE DISCOVERY

Bauxite has been found in another area of northwestern Oregon. The occurrence is in sec. 1, T. 9 S., R. 2 E., northeast of Mehama, Marion County. Insufficient development work has been done to indicate possible quantity of reserve. Float samples analyzed in the Department's laboratory gave percentage results on two different types as follows: Low iron type, Al₂O₃, 49.19; Fe₂O₃, 11.83; SiO₂, 6.64; high iron type, Al₂O₃, 31.44; Fe₂O₃, 37.36; SiO₂, 6.42.

NEW POWERS GIVEN BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

A press release from the United States Department of Interior lists actions which now may be taken by the Director and Regional Administrators of the Bureau of Land Management under new authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior. These actions include surveying and resurveying of public land; issuing all types of mineral leases except potash and phosphate; and all matters relating to administration of grazing districts, as well as issuance of leases for grazing on public lands outside grazing districts.

Other major functions delegated to the Director are timber sales, not to exceed 40,000,000 board feet; sales of isolated or disconnected tracts of public land; the issuance of leases for public airports, for parks and recreation purposes; exchanges of land where the value of the selected land does not exceed \$250,000; the issuance of patents for grants of land; and the issuance of leases with option to buy small tracts of land for homesite and business purposes, and the disposal of public lands for homesteading.

In addition to existing functions, Regional Administrators will have a number of new powers including: authority to institute trespass litigation by direct recommendation to the United States Attorney; to make air navigation site withdrawals; restorations under the Federal Power Act; restoration of Reclamation land to location under general mining laws; authority to grant coal permits and licenses and certain types of coal leases; all steps leading to issuance of patents for Federal airports; exchange of land with private individuals; transfer of lands to Alaskan Housing authority; and certain actions relating to mining claims.
