

Placer County Mines, 1873

Promise of a Good Water Season—Yield of Old Claims at Forest Hill. [Written for the Press.]

So far, the present has proved one of the best winters for water we have ever had in this neighborhood; the rain, though a little tardy having been copious, and falling at such a steady but moderate rate, and at such intervals as produced the greatest possible amount of good. Should the balance of the season bring the additional quantity usual, the ditches will be kept in good supply till a late period next summer, insuring for the mining interest a great prosperity the coming year.

As is generally well known, we have at this place one of the most prolific of our old river channels, Forest Hill having been for many years one of the most

Productive Mining Districts

In the State—it being estimated that within half a mile of the town as much as twelve or fourteen million dollars have been taken out. Commencing in '51, the district during the next ten years saw its most prosperous days, beginning to decline about the time of the Fraser River excitement. Prior to this many of the drift claims here had yielded enormous quantities of gold. The Dardanelle, for example, had turned out \$2,000,000: The Jenny Lind, over a million; the New Jersey, \$850,000; the Deidesheimer, \$650,000; the Independence, \$450,000; the Fast and Norwood, the Rough and Ready, the Gore, the Snyder and the Maine, each \$250,000 ; and many other claims from \$50,000 to \$200,000 each; and yet, owing to the careless man I even reckless manner in which these claims were worked,—causing extensive caves, whereby much of the best ground was covered up,—but few of them were more than partially exhausted, while fully one-half of the gold contained in the gravel was lost through the imperfect modes adopted in washing and working it. Many exceedingly rich spots were met with in this channel. The New Jersey Company took out \$850,000 from an area 500 ft. long by 400 wide; the Gore, \$250,000 from a space 100 by 200 feet; the Independence, \$10,000 from an area of 20 feet square, and the Snyder \$40,000 from a basin only 380 feet in diameter, with many other noteworthy examples of success.

Relocation of Old Cairns.

But all this occurred at a time when the miners expected to make large wages, when they did not well understand how this sort of work should be done, and when the methods for saving the gold were wasteful and defective, wherefore, having worked out the richer and more accessible portions of their claims, they were easily lured away by the discoveries that from time to time elsewhere occurred during the next ten or twelve years. Latterly many of these men have been returning to their places of resort, and we now find them looking about for means to put these once forsaken claims in working shape, or for parties to buy them, for it is found that a number of them must be aggregated and worked under one ownership, by which plan alone they can be operated with profit. As this requires time and capital not much has yet been accomplished in this neighborhood. Nevertheless, we have here the properties for many large and successful operations and have already made a beginning. Last summer a number of San Francisco capitalists commenced the business of securing titles to some of the best claims here, with a view to consolidating them and working them on a large scale. In a few instances this has already been effected, though in most of these cases there has occurred such delay, through the difficulty encountered in securing so many different titles, that it will require some months yet to consummate the business. It being evident, however, that the old plan of working these claims will no longer do, there is little question but more of these proposed enterprises will be carried out the coming summer, and something of its former prosperity be restored to this long-neglected neighborhood, Of the few already organized and under way. the most promising is that of

The Great Blue Gravel Range or Powell Co.

Now operating on this channel a few miles below here at Todd's Valley. To this place the old river bed is clearly traced, not only by unmistakable surface indications but also by several rich claims opened up at various intermediate points along it, the first of these being the once famous Dardanelle ground, one mile below here, and another the Spring Garden ranch, half way between that and the Powell claim. This latter covers an area of great extent, nearly two miles of the old channel lying within its boundaries. The largest of the old company's claims in this vicinity, even from which so much gold was taken, were small compared with this. The Dardanelle had a frontage of 1,000 feet; the New Jersey 650 feet; and the Jenny Lind 450 feet; while the Gore claim had barely 100. But the running of an expensive tunnel to open each of these small claims when it should have served for working a large extent of ground was the great mistake of the early day, and one that is now happily being avoided through the system of aggregation before mentioned.

The plan of utilizing such of these old tunnels as had been run on unavailable levels is also coming more into vogue. Where found too low for convenient working, or too high for drainage the practice of raising a shaft to the stratum of pay gravel in the first case, or sinking an incline in the other, is now very often adopted; recourse to these, especially where there is not a large amount of lifting to be done, being found more economical than the construction of a new tunnel. As affording means for prospecting grounds, and sometimes also for permanent working purposes, this mode of procedure is often advisable.

In the exploration of the Powell claim it has with good judgment been adopted. A tunnel was here carried in some years ago for a distance of 750 feet, at which point the old river channel was reached, but on a level too high to afford drainage. From the inner extremity of this tunnel an incline shaft was sunk on the vein rock to a depth of fifty or sixty feet, when the water so increased that the company, being without machinery for pumping, were compelled to suspend work without machinery for pumping, were compelled to suspend work.

Pay Dirt at Last.

Lately operations on this claim have been resumed, but instead of starting a new tunnel on a lower grade an extensive chamber has been excavated at the head of this incline, 750 feet in from the mouth of the tunnel, in which an engine, with boiler and pumping gear, all new and powerful, have been placed; a shaft having been carried over a hundred feet to the surface to answer the purpose of a chimney. The incline having been sunk a further distance of 60 feet, is now below the heavy river boulders that immediately overlie the stratum of auriferous gravel in this old channel, and there can be no doubt but the company will soon be taking out rich pay dirt at this point.

Owing to the unexpected depth of the channel here they have been delayed in reaching its bottom; but this having now been so nearly accomplished the owners are likely to reap a rich harvest as the reward of their perseverance and patience.

Old Miner.

Mining and Scientific Press, V 26, 1/18/1873, p 34

Placer County Mines, 1880

The hydraulic mines around Dutch Flat all have an abundant supply of water and are doing well. The prospecting work going on in the vicinity is giving encouraging results, and several promising claims are being developed. The water supply of the hydraulic mines on the Forest Hill Divide is giving out. The Dardanelles is piping for a few hours daily with 2,000 inches. The other hydraulic mines are doing little or nothing. The Hidden Treasure, at Sunny

South, and the Breese & Wheeler, at Bath are working with a full force of men. The latter is yielding net about \$15,000 monthly. All of the more prominent quartz mines in the county, with the exception of the St. Patrick, at Ophir, which has temporarily shut down, are doing well.

At the Conrad mine on Duncan Hill, the shaft has been sunk to a depth of 100 ft. The ore at this depth is very good. The east drift on the 75-ft. level is in 55 ft. running in high grade ore. A whim has just been put up, and other permanent improvements made. Eighty-five tons of ore taken out in the shaft, and in opening the 75-ft. level has yielded \$4,100, an average of \$48 a ton.

At the Shurtleff mine ore has been stoped out between the two shafts 40 ft. apart and 80 ft. deep, the vein averaging 24 inches in thickness. Thirty-six tons of this rock crushed yielded \$8,500, or an average of \$236 a ton. Fifty tons of equally rich ore are on the dump now. Mr. Shurtleff is having a whim erected, when the shaft will be deepened to about 200 ft. He also contemplates erecting a mill at an early date.

Operations at the Iron mine are being pushed forward rapidly. The furnace is fast being completed, and within 60 days it will probably be in blast. A reservoir of a capacity of 6,000,000 gallons is being constructed to supply the water needed for the hydraulic machinery and boilers.

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 41, 7/24/1880, p. 49

Placer County Quartz Mines, 1883

To The Editor:—Although quartz exists in nearly every portion of Placer county, the majority of the located quartz claims are situated in the Ophir mining district, three miles south of Auburn, the county seat.

Ophir abounds with many claims that have produced gold in large quantities, the majority of which are not at present operated. But few claims in the district have been worked to a 300-foot level. Good paying rock was to be found in many of the mines when they closed down, but, with the increased cost of taking it out, under the directions of kid-gloved superintendents, the returns were not large enough to pay large salaries and heavy running expenses.

The section has often been called a specimen camp. The term hardly does the district justice. While it is true the richest ore runs in chutes depending upon the character of the granite formation, nearly all of the rock will pay a small profit when milled. It would seem as though the fact that the camp is but a mile from a railway station, and therefore easy of access, serves to work against it. Mint receipts show that a vast amount of gold has been taken from the mines of the district. "Distance lends enchantment," and it is the opinion of the writer that if the section was difficult to reach capital would be freely invested. However, the camp shows a change for the better, as is evidenced by the fact that work has recently been resumed at several mines.

Arrangements for work on an extensive scale are being made at the Three Stars mine, recently sold by B. F. Hartley to the Gold and Silver Mining Company of Colorado. Mr. Hartley has been chosen as superintendent. The ledge is one of the most prominent of its kind in the county, from four to eight feet in thickness, and stands in some places as high as 15 feet above the natural surface of the ground. Pipe has been laid for a distance of 5000 feet to convey 60 inches of water, with a fall of over 300 feet, to furnish power to run the machinery. Shafts 1, 2, and 3 are being sunk. When the main shaft has reached a depth of 200 feet, drifts will be run the entire length of the lead, a distance of 3200 feet. The mine will have four Huntington mills of 100 tons capacity, Burleigh drills and an electric plant.

Work on the Hathaway mine has recently been resumed with Wm. Irwin as superintendent. He is working the mine on a lease in company with Martin Jones. They are now at work on the 200-foot level and 16 men are employed. Ten stamps of the 20-Stamp mill are working an average of 18 hours per day. The ore averages \$8 per ton exclusive of the sulphurets and the outlook is encouraging

At the Boulder mine, which will be operated by D. H. Hutcheson and Luke Ferguson, the machinery for the hoisting works has just been put in place. The machinery will be run by water-power and they have just finished laying 2000 feet of nine-inch pipe with a pressure of 270 feet. An eight-stamp mill will be operated with two concentrators. Hundreds of tons of rich ore is in plain view. The present working force of twelve men will soon be increasing.

At the Eclipse mine the mill is running on custom rock. This mine was purchased by Daniel Buck in 1890, who died two months later. He willed it to Dr. Wm. Blankman of San Francisco, the present owner. A superintendent under Mr. Buck took out 100 tons of ore that he estimated would go about \$3 per ton, which remained in the mill. The estate is still in probate, but an order of court was secured by the present superintendent, Ben Hawkins, to crush the 100 tons, which averaged \$27 per ton. W. R. Monahan and Ben Hawkins cleaned up \$1176 in February, 1892, from 30 tons of waste rock which was thrown over the dump. Monahan is still working the waste rock on a percentage.

Adjoining the Eclipse is the Morning Star. The ledge runs from six inches to four feet, but the prevailing width is two feet. The main shaft is down 92 feet, with a drift running west 50 feet. A second shaft 70 feet east has reached a depth of 75 feet. The mine is at present worked by a lease. Mint receipts show results from several crushings as follows: 128 tons, \$7387; 34 tons, \$382.33; 6 tons, Nov. 1, 1893, \$582. The ore on the chute has run from \$6 to \$166 per ton, and has averaged \$57.50. A portion of this mine is situated on land listed by the railroad company as agricultural lands.

Also inside the surface lines of the Morning Star is a part of the famous Good Easter mine, which was a large producer twenty years ago, but it is idle at present. A spur of the lead runs parallel with the Eclipse, and two years ago a connection was made from an Eclipse shaft to a perpendicular shaft on the Good Easter. It was very rich, but neither the owners of the Eclipse or Good Easter were gainers, as the honest miners retained it. The waste dump afterward paid \$100 per ton. This mine is now filled with water.

J. Holbrook has four men at work at his June Bug quartz mine, and the main shaft has reached a depth of 108 feet. The ore looks very promising. About \$75,000 was taken from a shaft 50 feet west some years ago.

J. W. McCullough, superintendent of the Mina Rica quartz mine, is running their ten-stamp mill on custom ore. The mine, which is at present idle, has a 250-foot shaft, with 500-foot tunnel; also levels at 100 and 150 feet.

Wm. Pallow, who now owns the California mine, is working the waste rock on the dump by the arrastra process. The ore yields a steady average of \$6 per ton.

The Bellevue extension on the east, owned by Edward Tremmelling, is being worked only by the owner. The main shaft is 180 feet, with drifts 70 and 80 feet east and west.

The Moore mine, owned by J. W. White, T. M. Tharpe & Son, is being worked by the owners. The ledge runs from 4 to 10 inches in thickness. They have reached a depth of 300 feet on the incline. At the 200-foot level an 80-foot drift is stoped to within 100 feet of the surface. Specimens of the ore are so rich that the owners crush them in a hand mortar, and they have pounded out during the summer more than \$4,000. While your correspondent was on the ground they were engaged pounding specimens which weighed 108 ounces. All quartz aside from specimens has milled about \$100 per ton. In sinking to the

present depth the present owners have taken out over \$40,000. Mrs. T. M. Tharpe has a cabinet of specimens taken from this mine which is valued at \$15 000.

Parallel with the Moore mine may be found the Centennial, Hope and the Conrad, all idle properties, but I understand that San Francisco parties will back mining superintendent

Fred Dependener, who will soon have a force of men at work on the Conrad.

The Green mine owned by F. X. Lavalee, which has produced well in early days, is not being operated at present.

J. Malmberg, who owns the Baltimore quartz mine on Baltimore ravine, has recently sunk a 20-foot shaft. The ore shows free gold and looks very encouraging.

Tharpe & White are opening an old tunnel on the Cox & Denton mine, owned by Mrs. Dr. Crandall, and will work it on a bond. The ledge runs from 18 inches to three feet, and has paid some \$40,000 at former workings.

George J. Morgan, owner of the New Year, Argonaut, Flat Lead and The Wilson, is doing no work on them at present.

N. Maring & Son, who own the Bullion, have a shaft that has reached a depth of 100 feet with a 50foot drift. The ore has milled from \$3 to \$40 per ton, with sulphurets at \$100 to \$300 per ton. They are doing no work on the mine.

Ivan H. Parker.

Penryn, Cal., Dec. 23, 1893.

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 67, 12/30/1893, p. 421

Placer County Mines, 1885

Placer, one of the oldest of the mining counties of the State, has been coming to the front during the last few months with discoveries and developments that are attracting considerable attention among mining men, the more so, perhaps, that the prevailing impression has been not only that Placer county did not contain any mines of consequence, but that it could not. That the great system of buried river channels, blue leads and hydraulic banks that lie on the western slopes of the Sierras, rich in gold from Sierra county on the north, to Tuolumne on the south, either skipped Placer county entirely or were too barren or spotted to justify the investment of capital and working on a large scale. That the great quartz mother lodes and systems, well-defined, permanent and rich in the precious metals in Nevada and Sierra counties northward and Amador and Calaveras to the south, did not exist in Placer county: instead only shallow, narrow veins, perhaps containing an occasional rich pocket, but no great milling properties that could be worked with certainty of return to a thousand and more feet in depth. That these views are incorrect is now appearing by the irrefutable logic of accomplished facts that cannot be set aside by mere theories, arising from the failures of mismanaged mining enterprises ten years since. The placers of this county, that is, the deep buried blue gravel leads, form a very intricate system, the unity of which over large areas is just beginning to be understood by the miners. Without going into a detailed description of this blue lead system of gravels, it is sufficient to say that the workings of 30 years have practically left untouched the main great gold bearing channel, to which most of those known and worked already are only tributaries. This great channel was first struck about four years since in the Mountain Gate mine at Damascus, found to be very rich, but only workable under great disadvantages. It was next found four miles to the south in the Turkey Hill mine two miles from Michigan Bluff, the gravel rich in gold, but mined under great difficulties. The third strike and the most important is that in the Mayflower mine at Forest Hill. In this mine the prospecting work had been directed for this channel, and its discovery was not the result of accident as in the two former noted instances, but of science, faith, persistence, and not

less than these, money. The mining in this mine is very expensive, but the gravel found is wonderfully rich in gold: so much so that the monthly yield of gold since the last of May, when the strike was made, has averaged over \$50,000. Within the last few days a fourth strike has been made in the Excelsior mine a mile and a half south of the Mayflower; how extensive sufficient developments have not yet been made to determine. These four discoveries have practically outlined the course of the channel for 15 miles, a greater continuous extent of unworked placer mining ground having every indication of extreme richness than is possessed by any other mining county in the State. The mining claims in the range of this channel have naturally much appreciated in value under these strikes, and in many of them active work is being done toward reaching the gravels of the golden river.

In quartz mining, as in gravel, there is also a revival based on the developments and discoveries of the last few years. Sections of the county in which the ledges have been considered barren of gold have been found to contain some most promising lodes, which are being slowly developed into mines. This is particularly the case with the Last Chance, Bald Mountain and Emigrant Gap region, where several strong veins of high grade ore have been found and opened during the past summer. In the vicinity of Auburn and Ophir also there is an increased activity, based on legitimate grounds—the discovery of large bodies of milling ore in several [of the largest mines. It should be borne in mind in considering the quartz mines of this county, that the work done is hardly more than prospecting; there are only three shafts down to greater depths than 350 feet, and in the one of these three which could have the most influence on the development of a district—the St. Patrick at Ophir—the mismanagement and stock jobbery wrecked the mine and gave the mines of Placer county a setback from which they are just beginning to recover. There is no doubt but that honest management and scientific mining can bring Placer county close to the first in annual gold yield and dividends, instead of the seventh place it at present holds.

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 51, 10/10/1885, p. 244