

# Gold Gulch a gold mine of history

BY MARY KORBULIC  
Of the Weekly Staff

GOLD HILL — LaRue Morris, proprietor of Gold Gulch, speaks as if he's letting his guests in on a secret.

"To this day, the good things about gold miners are ignored," he says, holding the side of a gnarled hand to his mouth.

He leans forward, his western hat tilted at a rakish angle, his sheriff's badge glinting in the sun.

"You see, during this state's centennial in 1959, gold miners got no credit. In the write-up about the centennial, it only said miners were a boisterous and rowdy group. It didn't say anything about all the good they'd done. And, since my father was a mining engineer, I didn't appreciate that too much."

LaRue's father, John W. Morris, was the engineer and owner of the Millionaire Mine on the Hidden Valley Ranch, between Gold Hill and Central Point. And LaRue and his brother Earl, 75, have important jobs, too.

The brothers are collectors and custodians of local logging and mining history. Without help from historical societies or government, they're diligently preserving a slice of western America that's gone the way of the gold pan.

"This is a hobby to us," LaRue says, leading visitors past outdoor displays of a gold stamp mill, a drag saw, and a logging arch with 10-foot-high wheels. "We just like passing the knowledge to younger generations."

On this sunny afternoon, three tourists have trickled off the freeway, and taken the time to locate Gold Gulch — which isn't easy.

Says LaRue with a chuckle: "Our biggest problem is, no one knows how to find us."

Here's how. Get off I-5 at the Gold Hill ramp, and take old Oregon 199 over Blackwell Hill to Tolo Road. Turn right on Tolo Road, and cross the freeway, then follow the red-and-white signs to Gold Gulch. Park in the gravel lot, and prepare for a unique experience.

It begins with LaRue. Although his slender shoulders are hunched, he practically dances a jig through his imaginary town.

With excited, almost passionate talk, he leads the way from the old

where visitors can pan their own gold.

LaRue and his brother first came to the ranch in 1946, when their father purchased it. The Millionaire Mine, now filled with water, is just one of the mining areas on the 900-acre spread.

He and Earl built their make-believe town on a corner of Hidden Valley Ranch for the state's 1959 centennial. It's centered on an original mining site and a couple of original buildings.

The two added a few more buildings, adhering religiously to old-time construction styles. The result is an authentic-looking western town, with every building a museum of early mining and logging days.

The only incongruous thing is a modern travel trailer in which LaRue sleeps during the three months of each year when Gold Gulch is open.

"If I didn't stay here, the vandalism could be pretty bad," he says. "People come right down off the freeway."

For the other nine months of the year, the town is dismantled, and stored elsewhere on the ranch.

"When it comes right down to it, there's a lot of work connected with this place," LaRue says.

And, soon, there may be more. Within the next couple of years, the brothers plan to add three to four miles of railroad track on which to run their three locomotives.

"We brought two five-ton locomotives and one eight-ton one 'ack from Lead, S.D.," LaRue says. "Must be about 15 years ago now."

When the tracks are completed, visitors will be able to ride the locomotives for free.

Commercialism is conspicuously absent from Gold Gulch. There are no souvenir stands, no hot dogs, and no salt-water taffy. About the only way to spend money is to buy a soft drink, an ice-cream bar, or a quart of Hidden Valley Ranch honey. Admission is \$1 for adults and 50 cents for kids.







### All that glitters

LaRue Morris demonstrating to a pair of visitors from California how

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It begins with LaRue. Although his slender shoulders are hunched, he practically dances a jig through his imaginary town.

With excited, almost passionate talk, he leads the way from the old newspaper office to the assay office, and from there to the hanging tree, the first chainsaw, and the spring

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400 ft. deep shaft at the Millionaire mine in Sect. 31 & 36, Township 36S, Range 2 & 3 west. Mine had 4000 ft. of tunnels and 3 shafts 400 ft., 262 ft. & 200 ft. Mine closed in 1922 with production figures unknown. Tunnels are now caved in & shafts nearly full of water. courtesy Earl Morris Photo by Linda Genaw

G.H.H.S. #410

MILLIONAIRE MINE (gold)

Gold Hill area

Owner: Rogue River Development Co., John W. Morris, Route 2, LaGrange, Illinois.

Location:  $W\frac{1}{2}$  sec. 31, and  $SW\frac{1}{4}$   $SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $NW\frac{1}{4}$   $SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}$   $NW\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 30, T. 36 S., R. 2 W., and  $E\frac{1}{2}$  sec. 36, T. 36 S., R. 3 W.

Area: 720 acres of patented homestead and mining claims.

History: Parks & Swartley (16:153) are quoted as follows:

"The Millionaire Mine, 4 miles east of Gold Hill, is in  $SW\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 30, T. 36 S., R. 2 W., on nearly level ground, at an elevation of 1730 feet, as measured by aneroid barometer. It is opened by 2 vertical shafts, the deeper one said to be 400 feet deep, with levels opened a short distance each way at each 100 feet. The vein strikes E. and dips about  $60^{\circ}$  N.; there are 3 veins reported to be nearly parallel, all 4 containing quartz with pyrite and rare galena and chalcopyrite. Two more veins are said to strike north and dip east; these contain calcite, quartz, pyrite and a mineral resembling sylvanite. The country rock consists of dark argillite with bands of andesitic material. The other shaft (called the Johnson) is probably on the same vein; it is 120 feet deep and has a crosscut to the vein at a depth of 30 feet. Here the vein contains 2 to 3 feet of quartz with some fault gouge and a little manganese. It strikes S.  $72^{\circ}$  E. and dips  $85^{\circ}$  N., but it is stepped north going down so as to give a smaller apparent dip (about  $60^{\circ}$ ). About 600 feet along the strike of the formation (N.  $20^{\circ}$  E.) there is a small outcrop of limestone and an old kiln. A fragment of limestone was found on the Johnson shaft dump. The Siskiyou tonalite outcrops about a mile to the northward, and may extend under this region.

"The Millionaire mine is owned by the McKeen National Bank, of Terre Haute, Ind. It is equipped with a mill which has never been operated, although substantially complete and in good condition. The mill has 2 Nissen 1500-pound stamps with circular discharge and 2 10-foot amalgamating plates; it has a rock crusher and a Standard concentrating table. The mine has been idle for several years."

Since the above report, the mine was purchased by a Mr. McKeen, about 1920. Work was started east of the Millionaire shafts. A shaft was sunk and a crosscut driven to connect with the old workings. McKeen died and the property was sold to a Mr. Haberly. Work was discontinued in the early 1920's. About 1938 the mine was pumped out and a careful examination was made. Mr. Morris acquired the property shortly thereafter. The property is inactive (1941).

Development: 4000 feet of drifts and crosscuts; 3 shafts, respectively 400 feet deep, 262 feet deep, and one incline 200 feet deep, all of which intersect the 200-foot level. All workings are under water.

Geology: According to Wells:39 and Wells:40 the principal country rock is metavolcanic with some metasediment on the west. Rock on the mine dumps indicates metavolcanic material that is badly sheared, and cut by quartz veins. The metavolcanics and quartz are, in places, impregnated with some sulphides. Three small limestone lenses are noted. One is in the  $SE\frac{1}{4}$   $SW\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 31 and appears to be about 600 feet long (width undetermined). Another, about 150 feet long, is just north of the newer mill, trends N.  $30^{\circ}$  E. and appears to be narrow. It is reported that the same lens was cut by underground workings 150 feet below. The third limestone outcrop is in the  $SW\frac{1}{4}$   $SW\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 36 where it is exposed on a hillside about 250 feet above the valley. It appears to trend N.  $30^{\circ}$  E., and to be 100 feet wide. No length is indicated as it is concealed by dense brush. Reports indicate a high  $CaCO_3$  content. Insufficient work has been done on the limestone to permit any estimate of tonnage.

Equipment: An 18" by 16" compound compressor; an electric hoist; water reservoir 70 ft. by 70 ft. by 10 ft. Power is brought to the property over a 1-mile power line. There are 7 buildings, most of them 2 to 4 room cabins.

Reference: Parks & Swartley, 16:153 (quoted)

Inferant: J. W. Morris; A. A. Lewis; R.C.T.

Report by: R.C.T., November 28, 1940 and November 18, 1941.



Owner: Rogue River Development Co., John W. Morris, Route 2, LaGrange, Illinois.

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MCTIMMONS PLACER

Gold Hill area

Location: sec. 19, T. 33 S., R. 4 W.

"James Petticore, Grave Creek, has applied for two second feet of water from Mud Springs, tributary to Grave Creek and two second feet from Cold Springs, tributary to Quinnes Creek, in Josephine County, for mining purposes."

(Mining & Contracting Review, December 21, 1937)

MCTIMMONS PROSPECT (gold)

Gold Hill area

Owner: Mr. McTimmons.

Location: sec. 19, T. 33 S., R. 4 W.

General: It is reported that this prospect has been worked by McTimmons and associates during summer months. A shaft 45 feet deep has been sunk. Ore is said to average 1.5 ozs. gold to the ton. Equipment consists of a 16-ton ball mill, a concentrating table, and a small compressor.

Informant: Don Woolfolk, March 19, 1940.

MEDFORD REDUCING & REFINING COMPANY

Gold Hill area

see War Eagle Mine

MILLIONAIRE MINE (gold)

Gold Hill area

Owner: Rogue River Development Co., John W. Morris, Route 2, LaGrange, Illinois.

Location: W $\frac{1}{2}$  sec. 31, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 30, T. 36 S., R. 2 W., and E $\frac{1}{2}$  sec. 36, T. 36 S., R. 3 W.

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MINERAL MINES, INC.  
see War Eagle Mine

Gold Hill area

MOSSER PLACER  
see Last Chance Group

Gold Hill area

MOUNTAIN KING MINE (quicksilver)

Gold Hill area

Owner: Western Mineral Products Co., J. W. Deemy, president, Box 228, Vancouver, Washington.

Location: In sec. 36, T. 34 S., R. 3 W., on Ramsey Creek, a tributary of Evans Creek. The property may be reached via Crater Lake Hwy. from Gold Hill (State 234), thence 7 miles up Sam's Creek, of which 2 miles is private road which is impassable in wet weather.

Area: 920 acres.

gamey fighters of the Rogue, ranging in weight from 5 to 8 pounds, were taken by him in an afternoon's fishing at Dowden Falls on Tuesday.

Mrs. George L. McClellan and grand-daughter, Miss Linwood Blakely, departed Tuesday afternoon for San Francisco, where they will remain for a number of weeks as guests of friends and relatives. Enroute they will stop at Berkeley, Calif., to visit with Fred McClellan, who is now located there.

The planing mill has been in operation during the past week, preparing for the manufacture of fruit boxes, for which Manager Moore has many large advance orders from Sams Valley growers and other parts of the valley. The Gold Hill fruit boxes have a well deserved reputation for substantial and honest construction, and the demand for the local mill's output will greatly exceed the supply.

Miss Johnny Glenn departed for Hayden, Arizona, on Wednesday afternoon, accompanying her sister, Mrs. W.A. Smith, who has been a guest at the Dietrich home during the past month. Miss Glenn has been one of the most popular members of the younger set during her several years residence in this city, and the announcement that she will make her home elsewhere is received with regret.

J.L. Hammersly arrived on Saturday from Portland, and is spending the present week visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George R. Hammersly, and renewing his acquaintance with all. Mr. Hammersly, who was formerly associated with the Gold Hill bank, and a prominent member of the Jackson County bar, is now deputy district attorney of Multnomah County. His brother, Tom Hammersly, who also spent several days in the city, and who is a detective sergeant of Portland, returned to that city, on Tuesday evening.

E.J. Davidson, of Murphy, was in this city Monday as the guest of his brother, Jay Davidson, while transacting business connected with his mining property on the Applegate.

The "Eagle" mine, three miles south of this city and adjoining the noted "Millionaire", a portion of the Braden estate, has been leased for a twelve-month period by Messrs. E.R. Barter and H. Gummow. Both shaft and tunnel are at present flooded and may not be worked until an engine and pump have been installed. The partners declare themselves to be after pockets, for which the mine has an established reputation, but if milling ore of sufficient worth is encountered in their investigation of the vein, they will ship it to the nearest smelter for treatment.

With the passing of Isaac Wright another of the old guards of Jackson County pioneer days has crossed the last divide. For many years past Mr. Wright had been an invalid, and the summons which relieved him of suffering in his seventy-eighth year was not unexpected. He passed away at his home in Rogueriver on Monday of this week, funeral services being conducted at the residence and the remains conveyed to Medford, where he was laid to rest in the I.O.O.F. cemetery. For a number of years, "Uncle Ike" as he was familiarly known, was a resident and business man of Gold Hill, removing about ten years since to Klamath Falls and later to Rogueriver. J.W. Hayes, Nort Eddings, and Mrs. J.H. Beeman, of this city, attended the last rites at the Medford cemetery.

The delegation to Klamath Falls and Jack Morrill's alfalfa ranch returned on Saturday evening last after passing the greater part of the week as guests of Mr. Morrill in an auto tour through Klamath County. At upper Klamath Lake the party ventured forth upon the deep to test the far famed fighting qualities of the big



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E.J. Davidson, of Murphy, was in this city Monday as the guest of his brother, Jay Davidson, while transacting business connected with his mining property on the Applegate.

The "Eagle" mine, three miles south of this city and adjoining the noted "Millionaire", a portion of the Braden estate, has been leased for a twelve-month period by Messrs. E.R. Barter and H. Gummow. Both shaft and tunnel are at present flooded and may not be worked until an engine and pump have been installed. The partners declare themselves to be after pockets, for which the mine has an established reputation, but if milling ore of sufficient worth is encountered in their investigation of the vein, they will ship it to the nearest smelter for treatment.

With the passing of Isaac Wright another of the old guards of Jackson County pioneer days has crossed the last divide. For many years past Mr. Wright had been an invalid, and the summons which relieved him of suffering in his seventy-eighth year was not unexpected. He passed away at his home in Rogueriver on Monday of this week, funeral services being conducted at the residence and the remains conveyed to Medford, where he was laid to rest in the I.O.O.F. cemetery. For a number of years, "Uncle Ike" as he was familiarly known, was a resident and business man of Gold Hill, removing about ten years since to Klamath Falls and later to Rogueriver. J.W. Hayes, Nort Eddings, and Mrs. J.H. Beeman, of this city, attended the last rites at the Medford cemetery.

The delegation to Klamath Falls and Jack Morrill's alfalfa ranch returned on Saturday evening last after passing the greater part of the week as guests of Mr. Morrill in an auto tour through Klamath County. At upper Klamath Lake the party ventured forth upon the deep to test the far famed fighting qualities of the bi



hideous with their caterwauling. Mr. Henry, with his wife, listened to the calls of the animals as they approached close to the dwelling, and at length the former stepped out into the back yard, revolver in hand. Evidently his guests were of the feline family, for there were no dead beasts in the Henry backyard the next morning, nor could the expedition which set out with dogs to trail the animal down succeed in locating the nightly disturbers of the peace that customarily [unreadable] the Dekum addition. While this was Mr. Henry's first experience with the beast, other residents of that quarter have reported, at various times during the past month, hearing the night time cries and calls of some beast or beasts in the hills and gulches beyond. Those who have heard the cries and are familiar with the harmony a cougar makes when about his nocturnal business, declare that beyond question the animals are nothing less than a pair of mountain lions, driven down from the hills to forage the chicken-yard and hog-pasture.

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#### Local News Notes

Dave Avery, station agent at Tolo, visited with his mother, Mrs. Mae Avery on Wednesday.

W.V. Birdseye and wife of Rogue river were in this city on business between trains Wednesday.

John H. Scholten and H.D. Pearson, of Hornbrook, Calif., arrived on Wednesday, and will remain for some time prospecting in this vicinity.

Isreal Cox a highly respected pioneer resident of Sams Valley, is seriously ill at the home of his son, east of this city. Dr. C.H. Smith is in attendance.

Interior improvements, which include the installation of a cozy big fireplace, have been practically completed at the H.D. Reed cottage by T.N. Anderson, who has charge of the work.

Horace Pelton, A.E. Kellogg, J.U. Smith, and F.L. Caldwell went to Medford yesterday, where they appeared before Referee Newman in the Caldwell bankruptcy proceedings.

W.R. McKeene, principal owner of the Millionaire mine in the Blackwell, and well known to many in this city and vicinity, died at his home in Terra Haute, Indiana on Tuesday of the present week, after an illness which has lasted over four years. Six years ago Mr. McKeene paid his last visit to Gold Hill in the interest of his business connection in this locality. In addition to his connection with various mining properties near this city, Mr. Keene was a stockholder and director in Oregon Water & Power company, of Gold Hill. Mr. Keene was 83 years of age and for many years has been a prominent figure in eastern financial and political circles.

None but a few minor alterations and improvements remain to complete the spacious new residence just opposite the school building, and which will shortly be occupied by R.H. Moore and family. The residence, which is a two story structure, was designed and constructed with a view to both convenience and beauty, and undoubtedly enjoys both. It is perfectly appointed and commands a fine view of the valley and mountain to the south. Mr. Moore is to be congratulated upon the impulse which added this home to the long list of Gold Hill's fine residences.

Cecil A. Townsend, of Ashland, was in this city on Thursday looking over the local mining situation. with reference



Millions  
mine



INDIANA OREGON MINING Co. Gold Hill, Oregon

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