

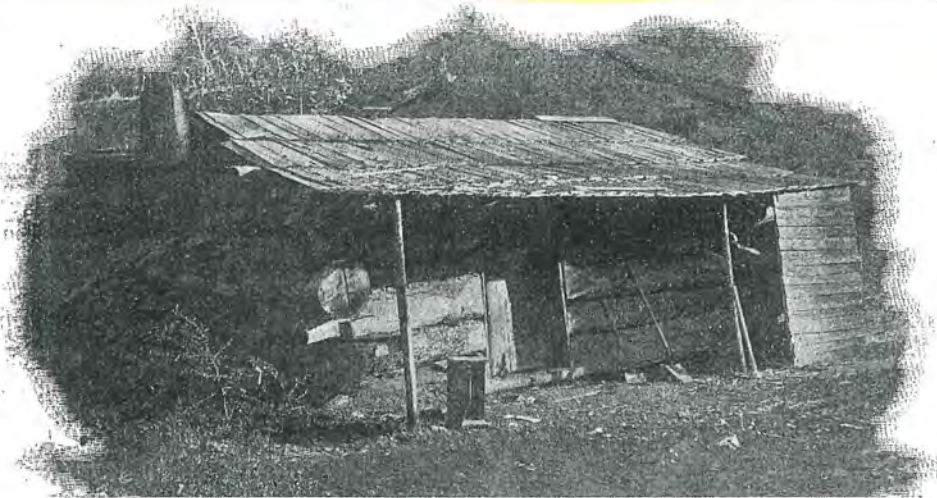
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## The Pioneer Days of Southern Oregon

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The history of the discovery of gold in Oregon is nearly parallel to the story of the mad rush to California in '49. Both teem with interest, and are wild narratives of excited men, nerved and but one ambition—that of finding the royal metal.

In 1849 the vast country lying between the Siskiyou and the Calapooia Hills was comparatively unknown to white man. Along the solitary trail that led into the interior of Oregon from California a lonely traveling train now and then made its weary way, or a solitary hunter or trapper journeyed either to or from Vancouver in search of furs. Bands of Indians, with their wigwam camps, were scattered here and there along the banks of the Rogue, the Illinois and the Applegate. Great herds of deer and elk browsed and fed in the tall grass of the hills and valleys. At night the gray wolf prowled and the ever-hungry coyote awoke the echoes of the sleeping mountains with his doleful, yapping cries.

The panorama suddenly changed. One day it became noised about the California mining camps that "rich diggin's" had been found over the divide in the Oregon country. A rumor in those days was equivalent to an alarm, a command. Within twenty-four hours 600 men were on their way to the new Eldorado. They swarmed over the crags of the Siskiyou in one long and unbroken file. Coming down the north slope the living stream broke and scattered into all parts of the Rogue River Valley. The wild news, distorted, exaggerated, carried on the swift-flying wings of the "wireless telegraph" of those days, reached the Willamette Valley settlements to the north, and the immigrants there dropped their newly-acquired farms and rushed southward, eager to share in the riches of the Oregon bonanza.

### THE FIRST GOLD DISCOVERY.

The first discovery of gold in Oregon was made on Josephine Creek, which is now located in the western part of Josephine county, and which was named in honor of Josephine Rawlins, a young girl who came with her father into the Oregon diggings during the early days. The first discovery was made May 2, 1851. Gold was next found on Canyon Creek, near Josephine Creek, both of which are tributary to the Illinois River. The third discovery was made at Waldo, also on the Illinois, which was called the "sailor diggings," from the fact of the discovery having been made by a band of sailors who heard of the rich gold fields in the Oregon country and deserted their ship at Crescent City and crossed the mountains into the new fields to return later loaded with treasure.

The gold seekers swarmed every creek and gulch in Southern Oregon, and the gravel of each and all were found to be rich with the yellow metal. With rocker and pan millions were cradled from the auriferous and shallow bars.

### THE WINTER OF 1853.

The palmy days in Oregon were not void of hardships. Far from it. During the winter of 1853 a continuous snow fell over Southern Oregon. For four weeks the frozen fleece fell, and at the end of this time there came a freeze, and the whole region lay buried beneath an icy mantle for two long months. All travel was impeded. Trails were blocked and packers and trains locked in an ice-bound grip. Supplies from Scottsburg, the Willamette Valley and Yreka were snowbound all along the trails. The grub kits of the many miners on the creeks and gulches and in the camps, got low.

Those indeed were cold and hungry days for the pioneer seekers for treasure in the Oregon Eldorado. Gold there was in plenty, but it could not buy that which could not be had. Flour sold for \$75 a sack, and finally gave out at this price; beans, the miner's never-failing friends, could not be had at \$25 a pound; and salt was exchanged for its weight in gold.

But by and by the warm sun of spring-time peeped through the clouds, and gladly was hailed the day when the last splotches of white disappeared. Many miners had died of starvation and exposure, while scattered everywhere over the valleys of the Rogue and the Illinois were the carcasses of hundreds of horses and mules.

### INDIAN TROUBLES.

Following closely upon the hardships of that bleak winter came the outbreaks of the Indians. Angered by the invasion of the whites on their sacred territory, and driven farther and farther back from their accustomed haunts, the red men at last burst into open revolt, and from 1853 to the summer of 1856, were the continual terror of the whites. It would require a volume to enumerate the hundreds of battles that were fought between the whites and the red men during the war of 1853-54, and of 1855-56. During these wars scores of brave whites lost their lives, and a still greater number of savages were sent over the Great Divide to their Happy Hunting Grounds. It was largely the white man's fault for trading the red man guns and ammunition for gold. Within a year's time after the invasion of the pale faces the Indians had thrown away their bows and arrows and armed themselves with guns and pistols, and all knew how to use them. Suffice it to say that during July, 1856, peace was declared, and the red man surrendered forever all his rights and claims to the Southern Oregon country.

### THE DECLINE.

The days of gold continued in Southern Oregon throughout the '50's; by that time the surface diggings were pretty well skimmed over, the rocker and shovel had done their work, and the nervous mass of gold-hunters was ready to move on to a new Eldorado. The reports of rich strikes in the Frazer River country sounded the alarm, and in a few weeks the once thickly-populated and seething camps of the Southern Oregon country, along the Illinois, Galice Creek and the Applegate, were deserted. Furniture, camp fixtures, abandoned saloons and dancehalls, which had been scenes of high revelry night and day, were abandoned, left to the rats and the decay, and to the Chinamen. The Chinamen, following up the "Melican m'n" here, just as they did in California, swarmed into the deserted camps and swept the bedrock clean of every yellow particle.

## Grants Pass District.

### GOLDEN DRIFT MINING COMPANY.

Mining in the immediate vicinity of Grants Pass is confined mostly to that district lying about four miles above the town on the Rogue river. It is here that the Golden Drift Mining Company is operating its hydraulic mines, and it is on the opposite or south side of the river that are found several good quartz prospects, the chief of which are mentioned below.

The operations of the Golden Drift Company are of more than ordinary interest. In November, 1901, C. W. Ament, of Chicago, bought the extensive placer holdings of H. A. Corliss, who had in the previous eight or ten years made a consolidation of the various claims on Bloody Run, Granite, Jones, Maple and Nealey gulches. This ground constituted the famous old-time Dry Diggings, whose name bespeaks the character of the diggings. The ground was rich, but operation was rendered difficult because of lack of water, the short gulches affording, in this respect, a serious handicap. Some idea of the pay character of the gravel is gained from the fact that over 1,000 feet of drift mining was done on Jones gulch.

Mr. Corliss added a hydraulic equipment, building a reservoir for storing the water of the gulches. He was thus enabled to operate a number 3 giant from 200 to 600 hours (eight to twenty-four days) a season, securing a production of from \$125 to \$200 for every twenty-four hours of operation.

When Mr. C. W. Ament saw the quantities of gravel available, and the unlimited water supply available from the Rogue river near by, he at once recognized an excellent opportunity for the installation of a great pumping plant. He accordingly bought the Corliss holdings and organized the Golden Drift Mining Company under the laws of Arizona, and with a capital of \$1,500,000.

An immense dam has been completed, affording a 20-foot head for generation of power. The dam is built in sections, on the hydraulic principle, the pressure of the water holding each section separately in place.

This summer will see the installation of the turbine wheels and pumps. Four 18-inch five-step centrifugal pumps, each 42,000 pounds in weight, and each capable of delivering 9,000 gallons of water per minute to a height of 800 feet, will be used to sup-

ply six number 3 giants, equipped with  $2\frac{5}{8}$ -inch nozzles, and operating under a head of from 400 to 500 feet.

The plans of the company also include that of furnishing electric power to the quartz mines, and also of extending irrigation ditches from the dam to cover both sides of the Rogue river for at least six or eight miles.

The plans for irrigation that are being formulated contemplate taking two ditches from each side of Rogue river at the point of the dam and covering in all some 20,000 acres of land. The upper ditch, on the north side, will be eighty feet high; that on the south will be forty feet high, and each will be supplied with water by pumping. This system of ditches will cover practically all the land not too steep for convenient cultivation.

### A BIG LEDGE.

When Mr. H. A. Corliss sold his placer interests to the Golden Drift Company he reserved a certain portion of the ground near the present dam because of its quartz possibilities. Within 300 feet of the dam there is a large body of granitic or syenitic formation, very highly mineralized. Any of it will assay, and some of it will assay very well. The discovery was made four years ago and some development work has been done each year since. It is the theory of Mr. Corliss that a crosscut tunnel giving depth may have some interesting things to reveal, since the formation embraces a mountain, and the situation could not be excelled for cheapness of operation.

### THE COMSTOCK MINE.

The Comstock Mining and Milling Company, of which J. Monroe Layman, of Danfield, Illinois, is manager, has eight claims on Green creek, and only one mile from Rogue river, at a point opposite the site of the Golden Drift Company's power dam.

The vein, while only partly developed, has a showing sufficiently good to induce the owners to continue work on a somewhat larger scale than has heretofore obtained. The work so far has been confined to one claim and consists of a tunnel on the main vein of 250 feet, a winze sunk on this level fifteen feet, a shaft sixty feet deep and drifts

run from this shaft, aggregating in all about one hundred feet. The working tunnel is in a distance of 250 feet, giving a back of nearly 200 feet. This entire distance was on the ledge and it has nowhere disclosed a tendency to fault, waver or in any way lose its persistence. The ledge is composed of a number of small stringers of quartz, which are very rich, the values being carried mostly in the form of sulphides, although when the vein was first discovered a bunch of ore was found which was exceedingly rich in free gold. There was enough of it to induce the owner, at that time a Mr. Belden, to erect a five-stamp mill for its treatment. The ore then turned base to such an extent that treatment by milling became unprofitable, and the mill was later removed.

The vein is in a formation of diorite having a strike nearly east and west, dipping to the north. The vein filling is also of diorite but slightly mineralized and carries good values.

Just across the gulch and in a direction west of the mouth of the tunnel a shaft has been sunk to a depth of sixty feet. At a point fifty feet down a cross-cut was started and driven to reach a granite formation which lies against the diorite. The dip of this contact is greater than the dip of the vein and it is thought that when the vein encounters this contact that it will continue in the course of the contact. Furthermore, the diorite filling, as depth is gained, becomes more altered, and the owners believe that it will give way entirely to quartz when the contact is encountered. A study of the existing conditions on the grounds would seem to justify these conclusions.

In the main tunnel the existence of a pay shoot 150 feet in length was determined and a winze started downward to connect with a drift that is being pushed forward from the fifty-foot point in the shaft. This winze is now down fifteen feet and when the drift and winze connect a nice body of ore will be blocked out.

### THE JEWETT MINE.

Not far from the Comstock is the Jewett mine, owned by Benjamin Healey, of San Francisco, and from which considerable gold has been mined and milled.

### BELOW GRANTS PASS.

On the Rogue river, below Grants Pass, there is comparatively little mining until you reach Galice creek, the exceptions being at Pickett creek and the Emerson-Flanagan mine, below the mouth of the Applegate. The latter is a well known property.



DAM OF GOLDEN DRIFT MINING COMPANY, ACROSS ROGUE RIVER, FOUR MILES ABOVE GRANTS PASS.