

Mining

In January of 1977, the *Southern Oregon Sunrise* magazine printed two articles written by local miners. As I was going through the files, I found a copy of the magazine and began reading some of the articles. I thought the readers of Mondays Make History might like to step back 33 years and read what Mel and Betty Galli thought was of interest to the community. *Southern Oregon Sunrise* was published locally with Mel Galli as the Publisher and Betty Galli as the Editor. Subscriptions were \$1.50 for 6 months and \$3.00 for a year. January 1977 was Vol. 1, No. 3. The magazine's contents were copyrighted by Mel Galli and the bottom line on the table of contents said: *Sunrise Magazine* is delivered once a month. Material in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without permission. Galli's son, Bill Galli, granted permission to reprint these articles. Some of the comment written 33 years ago, still are valid today.

Millions in Gold with Hank Speaker

Many books have expounded on the adventure and romance of the Gold Rush of the 19th and 20th centuries here in the United States. The most celebrated miners are, of course, the 49ers.

The 49ers were a different breed. They were men that went out alone, on their own, to find gold. The miners that hit the west coast of America in the 1850's were filled with the American Spirit. This land of plenty was going to help them to become rich, if they worked hard enough and had just a little luck.

Those days and that type of man are gone you say. Mines are big giant affairs now, and they are owned by consolidated international bankers, you say? No more hard work, good luck, and the romance of man pitted against nature, searching for her riches? If that is what you think, then you haven't talked to the miners of Josephine County.

In particular you haven't talked to "Hank" Speaker. Hank is a placer miner. He is one of those men we've been talking about, a 49er through and through.

In 1929, when the depression hit, Hank Speaker was just a young man falling timber on the Oregon coast. But, like most men at that time, he lost his job when the timber industry failed. This was probably the best thing that ever happened to him. How can losing a job be good for someone? Because that's when he got the "gold bug" and located a choice mine on Wolf Creek.

"The Speaker Mine", as his place was known, not only helped him weather the depression, it made him an independent businessman. He mined in the winter and then had the summers for himself and his family. The Speaker Mine brought a lot of gold into Josephine County for 28 years. His mine was the work and ingenuity of a true individualist, miner Hank Speaker.

In 1957 Hank sold the Speaker Mine on Wolf Creek and looked to our new state of the north, Alaska! New land and the promise of richer, better mines lured Hank and others like him to Alaska. Before you can mine you have to find the gold, though, and Hank hunted for the right mine in Alaska for eight long years. If he was going to mine in Alaska, he wanted a rich mine, one that would pay off well. While Hank was hunting

for the right mine in Alaska, he kept himself busy with a little logging, and as a member of the Sourdoughs of Josephine County.

"The Sourdough Club of Josephine County was formed in the 1950's. Miners and mining enthusiasts banded together to keep their rights to mine," says Hank.

"In the 50's many miners in Josephine County felt harassed by government officials. Most miners alone were very much afraid of these officials when they came out to their mines. They usually just stopped mining without really looking into the laws that govern mining. When the Sourdoughs formed, they helped individual miners keep their mines. One famous case was the Forest Creek Mine, owned by Harry Stewart.

"Harry Stewart had owned the Forest Creek Mine, on Forest Creek, for quite some time when the D.E.Q. came in and told him he would have to shut his operation down. Well, Harry Stewart had his whole life into that mine and he wasn't about to stop mining on his own property when he wasn't bothering anyone else.

"The D.E.Q. said that Harry had sediment stirred up in the creek and in the Applegate River. Harry went to the Sourdoughs for help. As a result, they found out that the D.E.Q. was absolutely in error. Harry Stewart then hired the foremost mining attorney in the United States, William B. Murrey of Portland. It turned out that Harry Stewart filed a \$350,000 suit against the D.E.Q. The D.E.Q. had broken the law by harassing Harry Stewart and his pursuit of mining and happiness.

"An examination of the Forest Creek Mine showed conclusive evidence that Harry Stewart's mining actually cleaned the water. That's right! Sediment from the Forest Creek Mine never did reach the Applegate River because the water from the mine ran through three or four miles of gravel that was the "tailings" of the mine. This gravel completely filtered the water and made it some of the purest water found on the Applegate River!

"The Sourdoughs not only help miners that in trouble, they also have a lot of fun. Thousands of people have enjoyed their display at the Josephine County Fair each year. The Sourdoughs have a big place where people can pan their own gold for 50 cents a try. The gold concentrate in the water is so rich that most people usually pan out 2 to 3 dollars worth of gold.

"Josephine County owns the old Davis Mine on Coyote Creek, and the Sourdoughs pan gold here on the weekends. On some weekends big crowds of Sourdoughs are panning with their families on Coyote Creek. Once in a while someone will find a pretty good sized nugget and let out a big whoopee! You see, Davis didn't clean the crevices out and there are still some big nuggets in there.

"In fact, ' Hand speaker says, "There is a lot of gold left here in Josephine County. A lot of gold! The old Channel Mine on the Rogue River has five miles of channel left, in that 5 miles there's millions and millions in gold. One of the richest placer mines in the world sits idle because of some misconceptions about the process of placer mining. Contrary to uneducated opinions, mining is a natural process and the sediment it releases into the river does nothing but help the fish. The sediment stirs up food for the fish, covers their eggs, and keeps fishermen from killing them off.

"The old Channel Mine started running in the 1800's and the fish runs were the best when the mine was running at full capacity. Zane Grey wrote a book in 1920 when the old Channel Mine and many others were working full bore on the Rogue. In this book Zane Grey states that the Rogue River was without a doubt the greatest fishing stream in

the world. But it's a fact that Zane couldn't say that now, and we don't have any mines running

"By keeping the mines shut down we rob our county of the most colorful industry on earth. Mining would literally bring millions of dollars into Josephine County. As a county rich in gold, we should stand up for our rights. Letting the federal government or even the state government legislate our lives for us without even a vote is a sad and miserable existence! Mining would also help bring better fish runs back to the Rogue River. The sediment would cover the spawning beds and keep the eggs from working away and being eaten by sucker fish. Right now we spend thousands of dollars putting logs and sediment into tributaries of the Rogue to build spawning beds. This is the irony, because with mining these beds would be put in naturally. The silt would also protect the fish from the year around fishermen that are literally behind every rock, catching fish just for the fun of it!

"Mining was the industry that made Grants Pass a town. Let's not give it up! After all, it's our land, our gold, our fishing, and our water. Let's start using them to everyone's best interest.

"Placer mining has been the main method of mining in Josephine County. However, the 'Old Greyback Mine' was a rich quartz mine. A quartz mine is one that tunnels along a vein of quartz and gold mixed. As long as the vein can be followed, these mines are much richer than placer mines and have made millionaires over night. Over three and a half million dollars worth of recorded gold was brought out of the 'Old Greenback Mine.' There was probably a lot more gold brought out that never was recorded. The mine was closed down because they finally lost the vein of gold at 1800 feet.

"Just to show how rich this mine was, a fellow-miner named Klumph bought the old dump of the "Greenback Mine" and reworked the left-overs. It is said that he took out a brick of gold a day for two years, and that's a lot of gold.

"Since mining is difficult to carry out here in Josephine County, many miners from here started searching in Alaska as I did. As was mentioned before, it took me eight years to find a suitable mine in Alaska.

"I located an old placer mine set up on Harrison Creek in the "Circle Mining District,' just out of Fairbanks. The old pipe was still good and portions of the three miles of valley I bought were rich with gold.

"In the summer of 1964 I set out to get my mine in operation. Let me tell you, putting together a first-rate place mine single-handedly is no easy task. It took me two years to righ the mine. The process included building a dam, digging a long water canal over to my pipe and then laying pipe down the mountain to my mine.

"In 1966 I started in mining and as luck would have it, the mine was extremely rich. Of course, in Alaska, you can only mine in the summer, so some mighty long days were put in. More fortune came our way when the price of gold sky-rocketed. With the same amount of work we made three and four times the money. We had hit the Jackpot!

"News of my mine got around to other miners and prospectors in the Josephine County area and soon we had a whole clan of Oregonians on Harrison Cree, Alaska. In fact, there is talk of re-naming this stream "Oregon Creek."

"The mine I have been running in Alaska has been in operation since 1900. If any creek has been mined, Harrison Creek in Alaska has, yet to this day trout fishing at the

bottom of the mine is spectacular., Little girls and children have caught hundreds of fish out of a fishing hole at the bottom of the mine. The amazing fact is that other streams in the area aren't good fishing streams. The fine silt and small gravel stirs up the food and makes for good spawning beds.

"One bright summer day, while my family and I were busy mining, a government car drove up. Out stepped four men; one from the D.E.Q., one from the Game Commission, one from the B.L.M, and one from the E.P.A. Unbelievable? Perhaps I was to be honored for bringing new mining methods and great fishing to the Circle Mining District? Maybe these men had heard of such a great mine and wonderful stream and just had to see it and test it to make sure it was real? My family and I invited the men for coffee and told them of their work. Presently, all four began to tell me that I couldn't stay on my land and mine. They told me that this mine was a problem. But why was it a problem? They didn't say, just continue to take samples and poke around without any legal reason or right whatsoever.

"I had not spent ten years getting my mine in Alaska just to have a perfect stranger run me off for no reason whatsoever. So I got hold of none other than William B. Murrey, the mining attorney in Portland, Oregon.

"In a short period of time attorney Murrey found that these four men were guilty of a federal criminal law that had a fine of then thousand dollars and a possible ten years jail sentence. You see, these four men had driven one hundred and twenty seven miles out and one hundred and twenty seven miles back to their offices because they had nothing better to do than harass and bother a mine mining in his own valley. A telephone call or a letter wouldn't do! One man wasn't enough, either! No less than four men had to come out to tell Hank Speaker what to do on his own land.

"Sine the above-mentioned fiasco, a man from Washing D.D. has been to my mine. His findings?...the Speaker Mine on Harrison Creek , in the Circle Mining District of Alaska is a perfect mine. The mining process doesn't bother a thing. He said that nature did the same thing with rains and floods. As a result , the Game Commission gave the Speaker Mine a formal apology and hoped that suit is not brought against them or the other agencies, for they were all clearly in the wrong.

"If I and the other miners decide to prosecute, the decision and could open mining up all over the county, because this could undoubtedly go all the way to the Supreme Court.

"Taking away the 49ers right to mine would have been anarchy! Don't we have the same rights now, as then? Aren't there still those men that have the American Spirit! Men that, with hard work]and a little luck, can make this rich American land pay off? I and a lot of other miners know so", says Han k Speaker

To show the tragedy of the mining shutdowns around our county, Hank Speaker showed me the following scientific study of mining on the Rogue River: AM ENOLOGICAL STUDY MADE FOR THE OREGON STATE DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL INDUSTRIES by Henry Baldwin Ward, Consultant.

The Rogue River has long been held in high esteem as a salmon stream. It has been visited annually by many fishermen from Oregon and from other states and records of their sport, printed in various magazines devote to travel and outdoor live, have given it truly an international reputation.

No one knows when salmon or trout first came to the Rogue River, but it seems probably that the salmon spawned at the foot of the retreating glaciers of the Ice Age and followed up the cool run off of the disappearing ice masses until their spawning ground became as today.

The Rogue has always carried loads of silt. The extent of its drainage, the depth of its valleys, the amount of waterworn material in its area, the drop of several thousand feet its course of 250 miles to the sea, as well as the consistent testimony of explorers and settlers during the last century, give evidence of marked fluctuations in volume of stream flow and in clearness and turbidity of its waters.

All the evidence that has been obtained justifies the conclusion that no present-day contributions of materials produced by bank erosion differ in character or exceed in amount those added periodically by purely natural processes in past times.

The river was once the seat of an extensive commercial fishery. Washings from placer mining have been poured into the Rogue River in quantities since 1850 and even when the stream was crowded with the immense runs of salmon, which characterized it in earlier days, the fish found these waters favorable for their existence; they maintained their runs.

To designate placer mine run-off as pollution is a confusion of terms. Neither in dictionary definition nor in scientific analysis can the use of this term be justified. To pollute is to defile; to contaminate with wastes of man or animals; this is done by introducing domestic or community wastes, or such as are produced in manufacturing and industrial processes.

A. M. Swartley, experienced geologist, emphasized the fact that mining debris "is chemically inert, makes no oxygen demand on the stream and therefore takes away from the flowing water nothing which the fish require. This is equally true of this material whether placed in transit by nature or by man since (the products) are alike in nature, come from the same sources and are only being accelerated by man in their journey to the sea." Further he stated: "All these materials entering the streams, whether by natural or human activity, whether coarse or fine, whether traveling on the bottom, in suspension or solution, are almost altogether inert, suffer little change on their way to the sea, and having reached the end point of chemical change do not rob the water of oxygen which the fish demand, or add to the water toxic agents injurious to fish' (fish food or other forms of life).

The Copper River in Alaska has been one of the famous salmon streams of that territory. It has a large number of tributaries which come out of mountain ranges east, north and west of the Copper River valley. A. M. Swartley has seen among these Alaska rivers in which salmon run and spawn some so heavily loaded with mud that one could not trace the body of an adult salmon ascending the river even when the dorsal fin cut the surface of the water. The journey from the sea up the Copper and its tributary was long and strenuous; the chance for damage to the salmon from muddy water was certainly large if any damage could be wrought by such conditions, and yet none was observed. Many other similar cases could be cited from printed as well as personal records.

The long period of past time in which the salmon of the Rogue had been subject to the influence of heavily silted waters in that stream and the persistence of a run large in numbers and unsurpassed in quality serves to verify expressed above on the basis of other evidence.

Despite their far greater sensitiveness to changes in environment and susceptibility to injury, young salmon lived heartily in a concentration of sediment which was ten times the average recorded at Agness. Those who think that normal erosion products will prove injurious to such fish should examine carefully the records.

Run off from placer mines may contribute to the opacity of the water and perhaps also make it difficult for the fish to see the fly, although Dr. Griffin found that young fish readily saw and promptly captured food thrown into the tanks in his experiment. However, if the fish cannot see or are not attracted by the angler's lures, the condition of the water may reasonably be said to protect the fish, even though it disappoints the fisherman!

The essence of Dr. Ward's findings is that the placing of muddy water from placer operations in the Rouge River drainage is not inimical to fish and fish life.

Thus Speaker summarizes, "It is evident from the material in this report that mining would be a profitable, ecological and colorful industry to have going full time in Josephine County. Thousands of jobs for our men and millions of dollars for our families are available on our own land, so let's use it."

Henry Speaker lives here in Josephine County with his wife Flora. If you're interested in mining, just drive on out and talk to Hank. He's ready to talk mining almost anytime. After all, he's a 49'er through and through.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, it was originally printed in Southern Oregon Sunrise in January 1977.

Here is the second article from the same. It explains who Don Cameron was for those of you who do not remember him or his name.

Mining with Don Cameron

A former Oregon State Senator from Josephine County, and former Head Engineer for the Siskiyou National Forest, Don Cameron tells of the early days of mining in Southern Oregon.

Mining in Don Cameron's family started with his father. Just after the Gold Rush started, Don Cameron's father headed across the plains in 1852 to the mining town of Jacksonville, Oregon. Jacksonville had a western look but smacked of importance.

Todd Cameron started out with a small mine in Jacksonville. This mine paid off well and enabled Cameron to become partners with his brother. Together they bought the rich and famous Sterling Mine in Ruch, Oregon.

The Sterling Mine was one of the best gold producing mines in Southern Oregon. Soon after the Camerons bought it, major construction was needed to keep the mine running. Long canals and flumes were needed and the Camerons couldn't finance the construction so they sold the mine for \$25,000.00, a fortune in the 1950's

"There was a lot of gold mined out of the Sterling Mine. Millions came out of the Ruch area."

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“Another big mine in Jacksonville was the Opp Mine. The Opp Mine was originally owned by Beekman and Huffer and was located on Jackson Cree, two miles from Jacksonville’s city center.”

The Opp Mine was a quartz mine and had a 20 stamp mill. A quartz min is different than a placer mine. A quartz mine follows a vein of gold with a shaft rather than breaking a bank of dearth down with water pressure. The Opp Mine was rich but the vein ran out, so they finally tore the old mill down.

A short time later, the elder Mr. Cameron came to Josephine county. After settling his family, Todd Cameron got acquainted with Frank Ennis. Ennis was a miner himself, so they became partners. They go together and bought the “Old Channel Mine” on the Rogue River. The old Channel Mine is probably the most famous mine in Josephine County. It is located just up the hill from Galice. Fran Ennis and Todd Cameron placer mined there for quite a few years but finally sold the old Channel Mine to a large company for thirty thousand dollars in 1886.

Don Cameron, who was born in Jacksonville, Oregon, in 1893 continues. \

“Getting to Galice before the turn of the century was quite a trip from Grants Pass. Firwst you went by stage coach or hack to what is now called Indian Mary Park. A small ferry was located there and enabled the crossing of the river. From Indian Mary Part to Galice you had to go by burro and horseback because there was no road. Galice was the headquarters for all mining in the area.

“I can remember my mother holding me next to her on horseback as we rode down the Rogue River to Galice.”

“After selling the old Channel Mine my dad and Frank Ennis bought part interest in the Simmons Rand and mine near Waldo, Oregon. The mine was then known as the Simmons, Cameron, and Ennis Mine. The mine is righ on the road just this side of Waldo.

“As kids we had fun mining here and there. I went to the University of California a Berkeley. I studied engineering, and graduated in 1912. After graduation, at the age of 19, I moved back to Medford, Ore. And worked as a surveyor for the City of Medford.

“In 1912 we surveyed a ‘right of way’ for a railroad to run from Medford to Crescent City. This was a 4 to 5 month job and required a crew of 22 men. There were cooks, map men, brush cutters, and surveyors.

“We went down the Medford railroad to the Applegate River and then followed the Applegate to Wilderville. From Wilderville w4 ran the road straight through the little valley and up over Hayes Hill. The righ-of0-way descended into the Illinois Valley, through it, and into Elk Valley. We came out of Elk Valley and over to the Chetco River. We then followed the Chetco River to the Coast. Our4 railroad right-of-way tied into the “Hobbs-Wall” railroad at Crescent City. Hobbs-Wall had big mills in the Crescent City area.

“On our way to the Coast I went through the mining settlement of Waldo for my first time. At that time, Waldo was a busy little town of three or four hundred people. George Elder had the General Store, and Charlie Record owned the Blacksmith Shop.

“Just a few year before, Waldo had bee a boom-town with over 2,500 population. Waldo was named after Judge Waldo and was the county seat of Josephine County. Waldo was a prosperous litle town before Grants Pass came into existence.”

"When I first saw the town of Kekerby, it had three or four motels and some fine livery stables. The county seat went from Waldo to the more centrally located Kerby. When Grants Pass got many time bigger than the other towns, the county seat was moved there.

"In 1913 I inherited my Dad's interest in the Simmons, Cameron and Logan Mine. (Ennis had sold his interest of the mine to Logan.) At his time I moved to the Waldo mine.

"In order to mine on the Simmons property in Waldo, three canals were dug to the Illinois River. In places these large ditches were over 100 feet deep. The longest of these canals was 5 or 6 miles long. Another canal had to be tunneled through a ridge in order to reach the Simmons Mine. This particular canal cost \$100,000. to build and was simply a ditch to wash unwanted gravel or 'tailings' through. The other two ditches on the Simmons mine were built for water pressure. These ditches wound around up to the top of a hill and then the water was piped into a nozzle, or 'Giant', under tremendous pressure. The highline ditch had a 365 foot 'head; and the middle ditch has a 160 foot 'head'. These giants' are used in placer mines to break down the earth and move it through a flume. The gold is trapped in the flume.

"During the same time I was mining on the Simmons, Cameron and Logan mine, Logan and I leased the Osgood Mine in Waldo. The Osgood Mine was in extremely hard ground, so we ran tunnels into the bank and blew up tons of powder. This loosened the ground so we could work it with our placer giants. We sold the Osgood mine in 1916

"While I was mining in Waldo, I got married to Olga. We were married in 1916 and then in 1917 we sold the 'Simmons, Cameron and Logan Mine' to George Esterly for \$150,000.

"The Esterly Mine ran until 1925, when he died. The Esterly Mine was then sold to an English company,. This company was a dredge company, and they wanted to dredge out the Esterly property but found that it wasn't suitable for mining.

"After selling both the Simmons mine and the Osgood mine, my borther=in=law and I leased the Queen of Browns Mine. The Queen of Browns Mine was a copper mine near Takilma.

"We sent our copper ore to the Tacoma smelter by rail. First we blasted the vein and sorted out the good ore. Then, the ore went by little ore cars to a bin where it was picked up by horse=-draw wagons and taken to the Waters Creek Railroad.

"In the early days the miners had a smelter there and made squares of gold and copper mixed and shipped them to the refinery.

"Mining is not all velvet though, because we got up one morning in 1919 and read in the Oregonian that copper prices had dropped from 19 cents a pound to 7 cents a pound overnight. Were were in a fix. There were two car-loads of ore at the Waters Creek Railroad dock and it would't pay to ship them, so we just left them there. Soon the timbers rotted through and all the ore fell down beside the tracks. In 1929 the copper prices went back up to 19 cents so we sent the ore out.

"Because of the drop in copper prices, three good copper mines shut down, never to be worked again. They were our Queen of Browns mine, the Cowboy Mine, and the Waldo Mine. There is still a lot of copper in these mines. The fact is, thjere are millions of dollars worth of coppe in the Waldo area.

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“My last real mining was done at the Osgood placer mine that I once owned. An English mining company had bought the mine and hired me to help run it. I worked the Osgood Mine from 1919 to 1923 and we took out an enormous amount of gold. Today a mine named Jack Finney is prospectin in this area trying to find main pocket of gold,

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“Mining built up big along the Rogue River and was responsible for the railfoad coming into the Grants Pass area.

“Some of the famous mines in the area were the old Channel Mine near Galice, the Alameda Mine, the Granite Hill Mine, the Blue Channel Mine, and the Greenback Mine. The Greenback Mine is being reworked today.

“By 1924 I had a family of four to tg_ake care of and wanted something that was less hectic than mining. I went to work for the Siskiyou Natioanl Forest Service as an Engineer. I worked in the forest service for thiry years. In 1955, I quit and foremed a little engineering company.

“In 1957 some of the townspeople wanted me to run for State Representative. Well, I told them I wouldn’t run for State Representative, but that I would run for Senator. I wanted to follow in my father’s footsteps. You see, he had been a State Representative four terms and a State Senator tow terms. I got both the Democratic and Republican nominations for State Senator. I served as a Senator for one term, or four years.

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“In 1901, when I was eight years old, I was a page boy in the Oregon Senatge,. So when I made Senator in 1957 the paper had a big write-up saying, ‘From Page to Senator in Fifty-five Years,

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