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Gold and the Southwestern Oregon gold rush.

At the close of the revolutionary war these United States were primarily an agricultural, trapping and fishing economy, without the resources to compete in world trade with the older and richer nations of the world.

In Europe and Asia all mineral wealth belonged to the crown and the mines were worked with slave or convict labor, consequently there was very little reason for the common man to hunt for gold or other valuable minerals.

Now all this was changed, the mineral wealth belonged to the people, if a man washed an ounce of gold out of a mountain stream, it belonged to him, it was his ounce of gold.

with the discovery of gold at Sutters mill in California, this tremendous amount of gold pouring into the economy was felt everywhere in the United States.

In Oregon where the pioneer settlers were using beaver pelts and farm crops for trade, the news of the rich gold finds in California caused almost every able bodied man to go to California to dig gold.

This big gold discovery created a demand for the food stuffs and supplies in Oregon that the miners could use. Pack trains from the Willamette valley and from Scottsberg on the Umpqua river carried supplies down the Appelgate trail through the Rogue river valley to the miners in California.

On June 8th. 1851 two packers James Poole and James Cluggage camped with there pack train where Jacksonville now stands, while getting water for there evening meal , they made the first find of gold in what was called Rich gulch, a branch of jackson creek. this find tuched off the big gold rush that covered all of Southwestern Oregon.

As these two men were both called Jack, the creek on which the original strike was made was called Jackson creek.

The town Jacksonville and the whole area Jackson County, from the Umpqua river south to the California line and west to the Pacific ocean.

After the initial strike at Jacksonville, the prospectors roamed all over Southwestern Oregon, which led to the discovery of gold at Whiskeyrun, Goldbeach, Johnson Creek, and Sixes and Elk river.

This gold discovery in Southwestern Oregon and the influx of miners was one of the factors that helped to start the 1856 Indian war.

Three Hudson Bay trappers, Joe and George Groulway and a man named Batiste were trapping beaver in the Coquille valley, in the summer of 1850 they found gold at what is now called Whiskeyrun, they kept their gold mining secret till some time in 1851, when the word got to Jacksonville of the rich strike on the beaches north of the Coquille river.

When the big gold rush got under way and the town of Randolph sprang up, the two Groulway brothers sold their claim to Mike and Jim Menamera for \$50,000.00.

Note "No one seems to know what happened to Batiste, His name isent mentioned again."

After an all night drinking party to celebrate the sale of the mine to the McNamera brothers, the Groulway's loaded there gold onto two mules and struck out for the Wellamitte valley. after up the Randolph trail past what is now called Sacketts beach they turned inland. Thinking that some of there frinds might try to rob them they hid one mule load of gold in an hollow whitr cedar. They continued on whith-out incident to the Wellamitte valley.

According to Dodges History the McNamera washed out \$80,000.00 in one summer from a 20 by 20 foot claim.

Randolph became a booming mineing town and lasted as long as the gold was plentiful on the beach. John Perchbacker established a store and became the first postmaster. another merchant at Randolph was Major Ebenezer Ball a cousin of George Washington.

There are two versions of the Johnson creek strike, according to Bob Harrison a squaw-man by the name of Jake Summers found gold on what is now called Johnson creek and told his frind Bull-hide Johnson who staked the first claim with Summers a silent partner.

About 1855

Dodges History says, Thomas Johnson went the Coquille and made the strike, Johnson was mineing at Randolph when a winter storm covered all the black sand and the miners went looking for other digings. After the strike the creek was named Johnson creek and they changed Johnson's name to Coarse Gold Johnson.

After the Johnson creek strike the miners found gold on the Sixes and Elk rivers.

About this time the Rogue River Indian war broke out and stopped all mineing in South-western Oregon for over a year.

During the Indian war a small company of soldiers traveling west on the devide between the Rogue River and the west fork of Cow creek east of mount Bolivar found a rich gold strike. As they were fighting Indians and not mineing they marked some trees,

planing to return after they got out of the army.

William H. Packwood, who lived at Rolland,s Prairie, a later at Enchanted Prairie, found the marked trees and the old camp site where the soldiers had spent the night. This was in 1861, later a forest fire wiped out all trace of the soldiers camp.

The Dollar Lumber Co. has logged the timber off the west fork of Cow creek the chances of finding this lost mine is lots better.

Alexander Thrift and Asop Hinch discovered the high beaches back of Randolph they were almost as rich as Whiskey Run. The two best paying mines were the Eagle and the Lane, the Lane mine was later renamed the Pioneer.

One of the things that bothered the miners was platinum, they mined almost as much platinum as gold and the platinum was worthless.

In 1916 Clayton B. Zeek recovered a large quantity of platinum from the old Eagle mine,

"Quote from Destination West, By Agnes Ruth Sengstacken, Page 170, (One old miner, a very reliable man, told me that he and his wife

took out one third of the World's supply of platinum from a mine near them during during the world war. They used only crude methods two.) end of quote.

One of the big finds on the South fork of the Coquille was the quartz boulder found on Salmon creek by Bob Dunbar, it was laced with wire gold, Mr Dunbar packed this piece of quartz to Port Orford on his saddle horse and shipped it to San Francisco, it sold for \$2,700.00. this find started the miners looking for quartz leads and a number tunnels following these stringers were dug. This led to the forming of stock companys to work these claims. Two of the bigger stock companys were the Myrtle Point Coarse Gold Mineing Company and the Salmon Mountian gold mineing Company. Both companys spent quite a lot of money, but was never a fincial sucess.

about 200 lbs

Joe Knox says that another gold laced bolder was found on Tim creek, it was broke into two pieces and carried out, the larger brought \$1,000.00 the smaller \$800.00.

One Old mine that has ben worked for years without much sucess is the Enman mine at the mouth of the south fork of Sixes river, it has about thirty mineing claims and about two and one half miles of river frontage.

It was organized as a stock company and in and out of the hands of the receivers anumber of times. One company worked all one winter and washed out about one gallon of gold, the manager told the crew, "I have enough gold to pay all you men your wages, but if you will trust me I will go to San Francisco and with this gold I can raise enough money to work this mine for three or four years, the crew trusted him and he went to San Francisco and origanized a stock company and kept the mine working for a long time.

After the white men got the easy gold, the chinamen moved in and reworked the old digings, on sixes river about forty Chinamen put up some cabins and were working the bars and small streams that ran into the Sixes river, When they came into Port Orford for supplys they had plenty of gold to pay for payment.

The white miners decided they were making too much money and ran them out. They "the white miners" could never find the rich diggings where the Chinamen were getting their gold.

One old timer at Riverton told me that one fall he fished for the cannery above Prosper, a Chinaman working in the cannery told him that he was one of the Chinese that was run out of the Sixes river mines, and that if he would go to the Sixes to mine and take him along as his cook, he would show him where to dig for gold, it being a partnership and divide what gold was found half and half. The man from Riverton did not take the Chinese up on the proposition.

Another miner on Sixes was an old man called Deafey Estus, gold did not interest him he was mining for radium, he said that he drank a quart of radium a day. He told one of the De Ments that he was having lots of trouble, he had just driven his tunnel through nine feet of solid silver, He was completely deaf, when he set off a charge of dynamite he had to stand close enough to feel the concussion.

At one time there were storys of a wild man something like the abomable snow man. What started these storys was that some Itialians had a good placer mine and one of the local miners wanted it. He whittled out two big, bare feet out of white cedar and fixed them so he could fasten them to his shoes, he then would walk around in the mud at night so these Itialians would find the tracks the next morning when they went to work. He also told the Itialians that he had seen this creature. When he thot that the Itialians were gitting prety jumpy, he went to town and bought three or four gallon of Dago-red, then he asked the Itialians over to his cabin to help him drink it. He had fixed one side of the roof of his cabin with counter weights so he could lift it up. he had also made himself a hidious false face. After they had drank most of the dago-red, he went out-side to get some wood for the stove, he put on his false face, lifted up the roof, looked into the cabin and let out a blood curdling scream, then droped the roof down took of his false

and ran back into the cabin and fell down like he had fainted. when the Itialians revived him with dago-red, he told the Itialians he had seen the wild man and he was ten feet tall. The Itialians veriefied it and set up in the cabin with the door barred. the next day they left for Marshfield, In about a week the old Sixes river native went over to Marshfield, hunted up the Itialians, and bought the mine for \$25.00.

Quote from the Oregon Historical Quarterly, Page 349, The Coos Bay News Aug.31, 1887, Quote, George Bailey found the remains of Coarse Gold Johnson! end of quote.