

Brush Now Obscures Blanco Black Sand Mines, Operated For 40 Years

By Neonta Hall

Mining, considered one of the leading industries of Curry county in early pioneer years and the one industry which brought the early settlers to the west, is now carried on by only a few dedicated prospectors working singly as no large operations have prospered in northern part of the county in the past 30 years.

One of the larger pioneer mines, located two miles north of Sixes on the main 101 Highway, was the Blanco Black Sand Mines, owned and operated by the man who discovered gold in the vicinity, Cyrus Madden. In later years the mines became known as the Madden mines and the steep hill in the background as Madden Butte.

During the time the mines operated, the main highway (county road) was further west from the present state highway. Deep undergrowth has covered over what visible remains there are of the mines, which were in operation for more than 40 years.

Cyrus Madden was born in Ohio in 1832 and started for the west in 1858 after graduating from Denison University. He taught school in Kentucky, at the same time taking a law course, and was admitted to the bar in that state in 1860. In 1861 he crossed the plains, driving a mule team to San Francisco where he taught in the public schools. Prior to coming to Oregon he worked for more than three years at the Salmon River mines, then came north on a prospecting trip.

Madden knew "pay dirt" when he saw it and eventually acquired around 300 acres of mining land. Being an efficient operator, he used improved methods and equipment and developed one of the most valuable mines in the county.

John Fitzhugh, U.S. deputy mineral surveyor, made a complete survey of the Blanco Black Sand Mines. The surveys and special reports were made

with county clerk, J.H. Gauntlett, on July 24, 1871.

The survey notes mentioned that timber of any size was all dead. The undergrowth of young fir, spruce, alder, hemlock with the brush and briars is very dense making the survey extremely difficult. The surface of the claim is generally third rate soil with a very small portion being second rate.

Where the mining has been done the stratum of paying sand is about 6 feet thick on what is evidently an old ocean beach. It is covered by a body of gray sand and clay to the depth of about 12 feet. The gold is very fine and is saved by working with sluices and collecting on blankets, copper plates and riffles made by sawing boards at about 15 degrees across the grain of the wood.

The survey included a 4 mile ditch with dams and flumes. In comparison with prices then and now the following figures should be of interest.

Estimates of Cost

of Ditch over 4

Miles Long

Cross section 5 foot surface, 3 foot bottom and 2 foot deep.

Earth to move, 11089 cubic yards, 12 cents, \$1,330.68.

Rock, 832 cubic yards, 30 cents, \$249.60.

Logs, cut and rolled out, \$60.

Trees, grubbed out, \$30.

Clearing ground of brush, \$50.

First dam on creek, \$65.

Second dam on creek, \$30.

Third dam on creek, \$65.
Fourth dam on creek, \$50.
Small dams and flumes, \$35.

Twelve waste spillers, \$30.
Surveying, \$300.

Total, \$2345.28.

Total cost of ditch includes tools, but no superintendent.

November 15, 1900

John Fitzhugh

The water supply and main dam was located on Crystal creek. The work on the dam and the ditch were put in by hand labor. Men were paid \$2.50 a day and they dug a section a day. A section was 4 feet wide and 6 feet long.

A "cook house", called the "Sour Bean cook house" was provided and Mr. and Mrs. Farrier were employed as cooks. Some of the men who worked on this project were Earl Hale, Jake W., Jess Hale, Leonard Cox, Don Arhida, Nickols, Bigger, Armsfield, Asher Post, Deed Fitzhugh, Andrew Farrier, John Prock, R. Haft, Charlie Hayes, Jim Quigley and Casebolt, who was a boss at the Madden mines.

Cyrus Madden married Miss Lucretia V. Kent on Oct. 27, 1872. She passed away in 1890. Madden passed away after a long illness at a small cabin on Crystal creek.

Curry County Reporter
Gold Beach, Oregon
Thursday, May 12, 1966



Mining operations at the Blanco Black Sand Mines, operated by Cyrus Madden in northern Curry county. The first three men, left to right, are unknown. The others are Asher Post, Andrew Farrier, John Prock and Jesse Hale. (Cop of photo owned by Neva Farrier Huntley.)

water, and silver burn snow
course at 3720 feet on the Crater
Lake highway above Union
Creek resort lost 21.1 inches of
water in the same period.

Moisture in the soil mantle
at upper elevations is near
capacity as a result of snow-
melt. However, valley lands and
some other low elevation areas

In-situ leaching of gold

stream deposits which were mined almost a century ago. However, a number of problems including significant quantities of water prevented the earlier miners and their primitive methods from fully exploiting the resource.

Today the problems are no less difficult and much of the deep leads lie beneath valuable farmlands at depths of about 100 m with a covering of clays, basalt and gravels.

CRA's proposed method begins with determining the position, depth and gold values within the leads. This involves crossing the leads with six or seven exploratory holes at about 5 km intervals.

Monitor wells are also drilled around the periphery of the well field to ensure the leach solution does not move outside the wall pattern.

About 30 different chemical systems have been examined in laboratory experiments to test their gold dissolving properties. The chemicals range from thiourea and thio-phosphate to cyanide, the latter being the traditional mean of recovering gold in Victoria.

Ore used in the experiments was extracted by another CRA experimental process, the Chanbull method of underground hydraulic leaching. Some of the thiourea and thio-phosphate systems have been tested in field trials.

Recovering the gold in the surface treatment plant can be achieved several ways. Several different methods have been tested including using resins and activated carbon to gold finally recovered by either flotation (washing) or smelting.

After removal of the gold, the process solution will be pumped to the next well field to be mined. Any chemicals in the mined-out field are removed in a surface treatment plant where they are made harmless for disposal, so that the quality of groundwater remains unaffected. CRA says the method can be conducted safely and with no long-term adverse effects on groundwater ge of surface areas. It is hopeful of moving to the trial mining stage within the next 12 months and reviewing the environmental aspects and necessary legislative consents.

Baretta exudes confidence

Oregon mining project likely despite withdrawal by Noranda

CALGARY — Baretta Mining, Inc., the 75% owned U.S. subsidiary of American Chromium, is keeping options open with respect to the future development of the company's Turner Albright gold-silver-copper-zinc deposit in southern Oregon following the surprise decision by Noranda Exploration, Inc. to drop its purchase option on the property.

"It's not often that you get a property upgraded by a major to the extent that the Turner Albright was upgraded by Noranda and then handed back . . . it's a bonanza for us," said John Alston, Baretta and American Chromium president, following the disclosure of the Noranda decision.

In conversation with The Northern Miner, Mr. Alston said that drilling by Noranda during 1982 had "more than doubled reserves" to an indicated 3.8 million tons averaging 0.105 oz. gold per ton, 0.44 oz. silver per ton, 1.33% copper and 3% zinc.

The deposit, which remains open to the southwest, contains about 1.6

million tons of potential open pit material, according to Mr. Alston. Noranda, he continued, had informed Baretta that "because of tight financial constraints, the company (Noranda) would be unable to exercise its right to purchase an undivided interest in the claims."

\$US4 million spent to date

Under the original option agreement, Noranda had the right to earn a 54% interest in the property. In addition to making an initial \$US250,000 payment to Baretta, Noranda was committed to a minimum outlay of \$US500,000 on the property last year. In order to carry the project to feasibility, Noranda would have been required to pay \$US1.25 million to Baretta by Dec. 31.

The Northern Miner gathers that the Noranda outlays on the Oregon property in 1982 far exceeded the minimum required under the option agreement. Altogether, expenditures by Baretta and Noranda since the start of drilling have exceeded \$US4 million.

Noranda drilled 18 exploratory holes and completed trenching and sampling work on the property during 1982 to establish mineral reserves, according to Mr. Alston.

(Late in August, 1982, Noranda reported encountering a 94.3-ft. section averaging 14.6% zinc, 0.73% copper, 2.01 oz. silver per ton and 0.07 oz. gold per ton from one of 17 holes drilled on the Turner Albright property. Several other holes encountered strong gold, copper and zinc values over good widths.)

Last week, Mr. Alston said that his company is reviewing the Turner Albright situation and expects to make an announcement shortly.

"We can deal with a major on a farmout, or Baretta itself can obtain direct financing — something we're seriously considering — and contract out the work," said Mr. Alston, adding that "we'll probably end up doing a financing."

He indicated that several U.S. mining companies with knowledge of the property's geology have approached Baretta since Noranda bowed out.

Bakertalc sales earnings higher on new talc use

Bakertalc Inc. had net earnings of \$129,352 or 4.5¢ per share for the nine months ended Nov. 30, 1982, up from \$62,603 or 2.3¢ per share for the same year-earlier period. Sales, net of commissions, rose to \$963,500 from \$705,104.

The company attributes the improved earnings to increased sales in September-November for a new use of talc. Sales for this 3-month period were \$452,000 vs. \$198,000 for the comparable period of 1981. This new application is not yet on a steady basis, but Bakertalc expects that these sales will become regular in 1983. It adds that should this outlet for talc become permanent, it will be necessary to expand the mine and mill.

Working capital of the company at Nov. 30 last amounted to \$344,303, as against \$239,886 a year earlier.

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Rights & Warrants listed on TSE

Agassiz Resources — Warrant buys one common share at \$1.25 to July 31, 1983; thereafter at \$1.50 to July 31, 1984.

Albany Oil & Gas — 250 rights and \$100 buy one \$100 16% debenture to Jan. 31, 1983, subject to a minimum subscription of \$1,000 (10 debentures) per subscriber.

Atlas Yellowknife Resources — Warrant buys one common share at \$2.25 to May 31, 1983; thereafter at \$3.00 to May 31, 1984.

Bankeno Mines — Warrant buys one common share at \$10 to Mar. 17, 1986. Holders may require Turbo Resources to purchase warrants between Mar. 17 and Apr. 16, 1983 for \$3.50.

Camchib Resources — Warrant buys one common share at \$7.50 to Dec. 31, 1983.

Canusa Energy — Warrant buys one common share at \$3.07 to Apr. 1, 1983.

Delhi Pacific Resources — Five rights and 30¢ buy one common share to Jan. 26, 1983.

Dividends — Dividends — Dividends

Compiled by The Northern Miner

MINES	Current			Previous Payment	Remarks	Total* 1983	Total 1982
	Paym't	Payable	Record				
Agnico Eagle	†			5¢ Jan. 4	Interim	5¢	
Brunswick				7.5¢ Dec. 15	Quarterly		15¢
Campbell R.L.	10¢	Feb. 28	Jan. 31	10¢ Nov. 29	Quarterly	10¢	33¢
Cominco				10¢ Dec. 20	Quarterly		\$1.30

PEOPLE

ULFSTREAM RESOURCES CANADA LTD. — A. A. El Dib is appointed vice-president and D. A. Mby is appointed secretary.

10/31/77

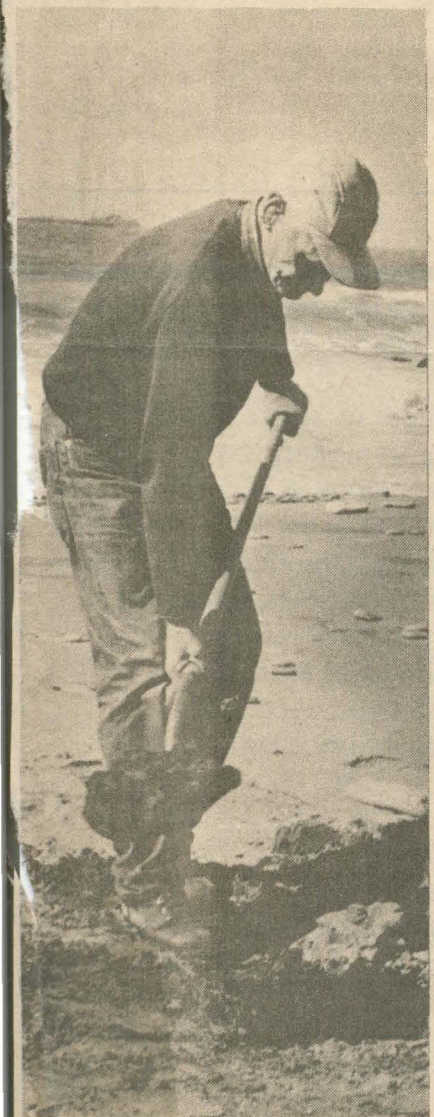
Gold on that thar beach

92-year-old mines Curry County's black sand

By MARK KIRCHMEIER
Correspondent, The Oregonian

GOLD BEACH — Beneath his red cap and wavy white hair, Cleve LeClair's eyes sparkle.

"You see this black sand?" he says, scooping up a fistful and sifting it through his lean, leathery fingers. "It's gold. Not yellow sand or fool's gold, but real gold."



HITTING PAYDIRT? — Cleve LeClair, 92, works his gold mine on beach near mouth of Rogue River.

"Pure gold," he declares with an upturn of his chin.

LeClair has mined "pure gold" from the black sands off the Curry County coastline for nearly 50 of his 92 years. "I've dug, shoveled and groveled for gold from Nesika Beach to Pistol River, but my favorite place," his eyes glisten, "is right here."

"Here" is a lonesome piece of black beach tucked in a cove three miles north of Gold Beach, where the Rogue River meets the Pacific. LeClair's beach has no access road, so he parks his car on a cliff overlooking the cove and sure-footedly descends a rabbit's trail down a 150-foot bluff clogged with thickets of green manzanitas and orange-barked madrone trees.

Once on the beach, LeClair sets his sluice box at the base of the cliff wall and goes to work. The operation is simple. He hoses water into the box from a creek trickling down the cliff and then dumps two brimming shovel-loads of sand into the box and instructs a visitor: "Watch."

The sand, loosened by the running water, glides down the cedar box and onto a copper plate at the bottom of the box where the black particles stick out like flecks of pepper. No gold. Not in this shovel-load. LeClair orders a companion to "get another."

He takes a dig himself and brings up a heaping shovel full of black dirt that spills over onto his hickory shirt and jeans. Leaning against the box LeClair slowly, gingerly pours the sand in. "Watch again," he says, "this time, closer."

The sand swishes down the cedar boards and swirls at the bottom of the box. He carefully stirs the sand, washing out lighter particles until specks of gold, shimmering on the copper plates,

are all that remain.

"Look," he says, pointing a wrinkled finger into the box, "gold, lots of it. I could mine one-half of an ounce from this spot."

He has before. The going price is near \$150 per ounce, and LeClair has sold nuggets to bankers and smelters as far away as San Francisco for that price.

On good days, like today, beach mining is a lucrative, unhurried hobby for Cleve LeClair. It wasn't always so.

"Gold mining was a necessity during hard times — the Great Depression — people were forced to mine the beaches. It was the only work they could find.

"I remember more than 40 men, all

unemployed, trying to support families beach mining in Curry County during the 1930s. For myself, when the Depression hit, I lost my job as yet had a wife and six little ones to support. The price of gold was low then, and I had to work 12 hours a day digging enough to support the family.

The end of the Depression found LeClair back into logging, which he worked until his retirement in 1960. Since then he's mined "white sand" and remembers days 20 years ago when old-timers could make \$380 a day. Now," he says, pointing to the glimmering yellow flecks in the sluice box, "I guess I'm the only timer left."