

ed by Cyrus Madden in

# 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 "paydirt" when

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.

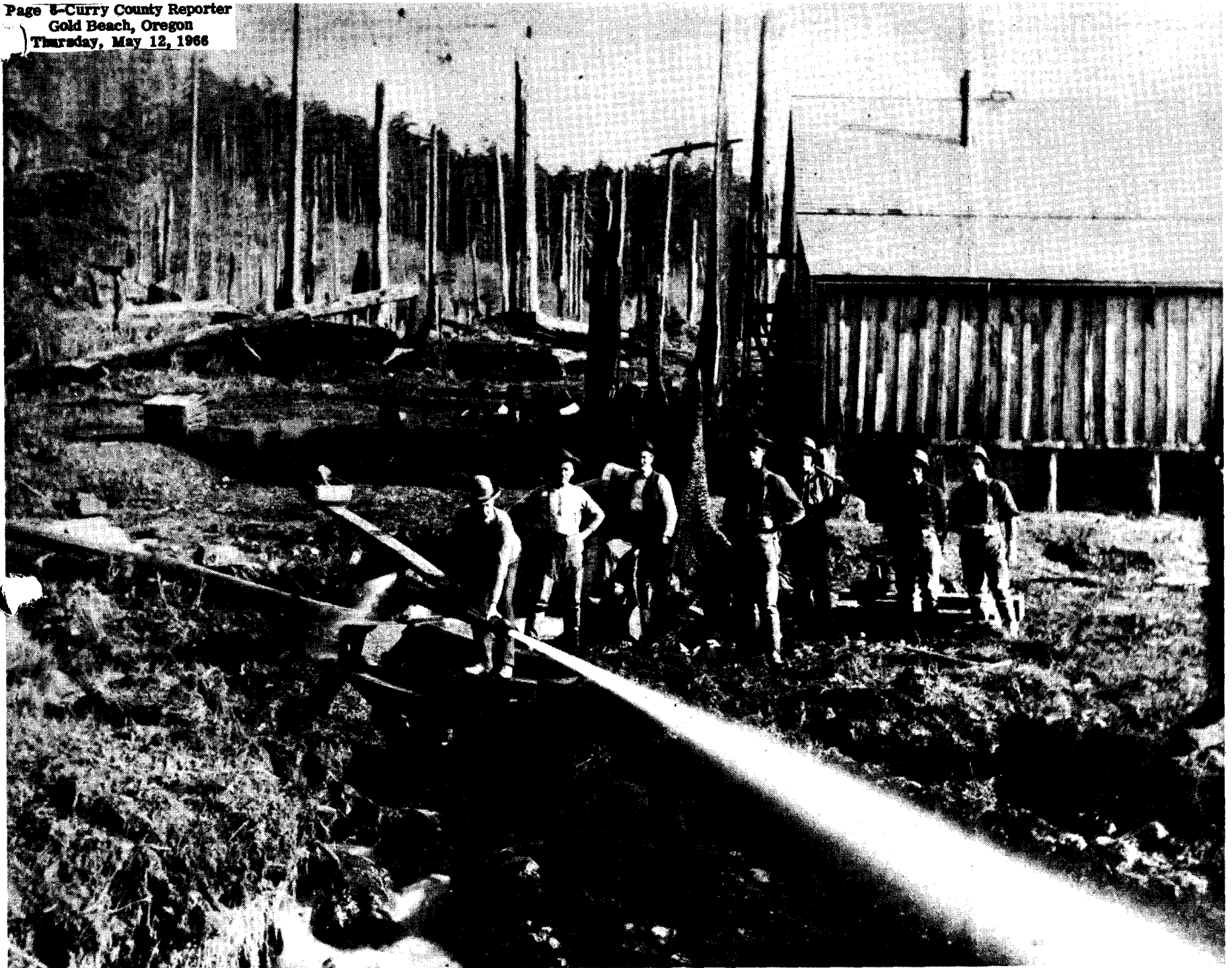
Total cost of ditch includes tools, but no superintendent.

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. Jesse Hale, Leonard Cox, L. Arhide, Nickols, Bigger, Armsfield, Asher Post, Deed Fitzhugh, Andrew Farrier, John Prock, Roy 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 1893. Madden passed away after a long illness at a small cabin on Crystal creek.



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

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