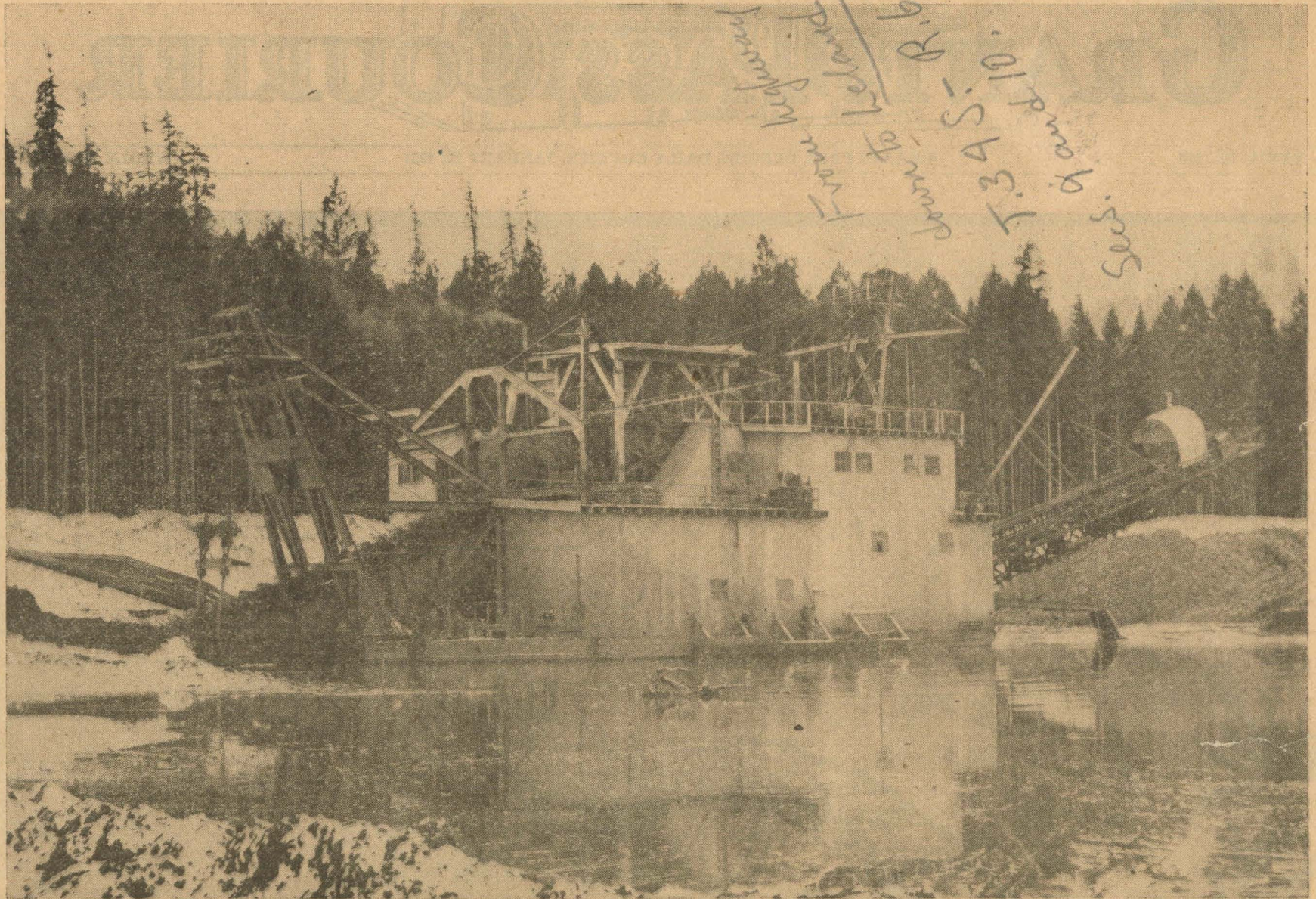


Big Gold Ship Now 'Cruising' on Grave Creek



Huge dredge of Rogue River Gold Company now operating in three-acre lake which it excavates for itself as it moves ahead. The gold is extracted from the dredged material taken from the bank by the digger and the tailings thrown out behind.

Rogue River Gold Co.

Has \$500,000 Invested

The largest gold mining operation in Southern Oregon, from the angle of total investment, annual payroll and amount of material mined each year, is that of the Rogue River Gold company, which operates its dredge on Grave Creek, 20 miles north of Grants Pass. D. H. Ferry is vice-president and manager and H. E. Henderson foreman of the crew, which varies from a minimum of 25 men to a maximum of 75, according to the nature of the work from time to time. At present, 64 men are on the payroll including the clearing crew, which works with large scale logging equipment for several months each year removing the heavy forests and blasting and pulling stumps in advance of the dredge.

The visitor is astounded when he comes upon this huge piece of equipment towering above the skyline like a large four-story building. Then he discovers that it is actually a 1000-ton ship, floating and moving about on a deep, three-acre lake, which the dredge excavates for itself as it moves ahead, storing all the excavated material in place behind the boat except the floating silt, which is pumped out of the pond into extensive settling basins to make new rich agricultural land where none existed before. Originally the ground before it is dredged is worthless for any other purpose, being rocky and covered with thick trees and brush on a high hillside; the clearing cost

alone of \$300 per acre would make the land prohibitive for farming even if the soil were fit for growing anything.

As a contrast to the familiar operation of a power shovel, digging with its single bucket and requiring so much time to swing and dump it and then dig another bucketful, the visitor at the dredge is fascinated watching the steady digging operations as the boat swings itself in the arc of a circle, the continuous chain of 70 manganese steel buckets gouging into the solid, tight gravel and bedrock, elevating the material to the hopper above the top deck, whence it passes through a perforated revolving screen, where the material is disintegrated, washed and sorted, the "fines" passing over gold-saving tables while the coarse material is rejected on a 100-foot long belt conveyor in a steady stream to high tailing piles. The dredge is 250 feet long from the front of the bucket line to the end of the tailing stacker.

Still the visitor is unprepared for what he encounters inside the housed-in building when he boards the dredge—the strong steel trusses and beams, the maze of motors, heavy machinery, pumps and equipment which enable this dredge to do the work of 2,500 miners. Everything is mechanical. No human hand touches the material from the time it is excavated from beneath the water until the waste is discharged in the rear.

The machinery is driven by 15 motors aggregating 700 horse-power. Each of the 70 buckets weighs a ton empty and carries half a ton of material. The dredge has a capacity of 8,600 cubic yards or 13,000 tons per day. When one considers that a quartz mill handling 100 tons a day is considered large in Oregon, he appreciates what it means when this dredge handles 8,000 tons almost every day in the year, working three shifts, day and night.

After operating on Foothills Creek for seven years, the dredge was dismantled hauled to Grave Creek and about half of its material used in the reconstruction of the present dredge, five months being occupied with this transfer and reconstruction, employing 75 men. The dredge has run continuously since it started operating on Grave Creek on September 25, 1935, except for occasional shutdowns of a day or two at a time for repairs.

Even while operating on Foothills Creek, this dredge was the strongest of its size in the world. To contend with the extremely tough formation on Grave Creek, the dredge was reconstructed much stronger,

but after running a few months, still stouter equipment had to be purchased, including two new steel spuds, 70 new buckets, new lower tumblers, new elevator for sand, complete new manganese screen and many other heavy parts. These additional items in 1936 cost a small fortune alone—enough to build an ordinary dredge.

Rogue River Gold company's investment represents an outlay of about one-half million dollars. During its eight years of operation up to September 30, 1936, it had spent in Oregon \$1,388,706, including \$500,886 for wages and incidental expenses including prospecting and clearing, \$307,078 for materials and supplies, \$259,253 for property purchases and examinations (including some labor), \$105,663 for electric power, \$30,226 for taxes (mostly county and state), \$185,600 for expenses not otherwise classified such as express and treatment, insurance, interest, etc.

The average expenditure for every day for eight years has been approximately \$500 per day. The

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OPERATING COST

\$500 PER DAY

(Continued from page 2.)

average annual expenditures, year in and year out, have been \$173,588. Expenditures on the Grave Creek property are proving heavier, especially labor, materials and power, due to steady operation each full 12 months, heavier clearing, bigger power load and more settling basins.

The average number of men employed every day for the past eight years was 40; the average man-days per month, 1160; average man-days per year 13,900. In other words, this mining employment has been continuous—perhaps the steadiest of any industry in southern Oregon.

Similar to its voluntary water clarification procedure while operating on Footh Creek, the Rogue River Gold company succeeded in keeping the Rogue river clear by retaining its mud in settling basins throughout the summer of 1936 on Grave Creek. This company is now spending several thousand dollars on additional settling basins to prevent its muddy water from entering the stream during fishing season. The six new basins will cover about 40 acres of flat ground and involve building 8000 feet of levees. The accompanying photographs show a large caterpillar "bulldozer" at work building one of these dikes for impounding muddy water. This work started a few weeks ago and will continue for at least another two months. These new auxiliary basins in the valley, supplementing the basins and filters at a higher level, will be in use by the time the fishing season opens and should continue to prevent any muddy water from entering Grave Creek.
