

State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

702 Woodlark Building
Portland, Oregon

WEST COAST PUMICE COMPANY

KLAMATH COUNTY

Owner: Claire E. Ritchie, Box 46, Chemult, Oregon.

Location: sec. 17, T. 28 S., R. 8 E., at Beaver Marsh on Hwy. 97, about five miles south of Chemult, Oregon.

Area: 720 acres of deeded land.

Equipment: Caterpillar D-4 tractor fitted with LaPlant-Choate bulldozer attachment. Two Ford V-8 trucks with stake rack-bed 5 ft. high, and one International truck. One steam drier. One six-car and one three-car warehouse.

Development: Pumice is dug by bulldozer, equipped with "ripper arms" extending below blade. The pumice is separated from fine material and dirt and is broken to 6 - 10 inch pieces, dried under cover or in kiln, sacked, and shipped in automobile freight cars which are water-tight and hold about 30 tons. The sacks weight from 80 - 90 pounds when filled. Plant capacity amounts to 2 carloads per shift. Loading is done at Diamond Lake siding on the Southern Pacific - ~~X6~~ Great Northern railroads.

Production & Uses: Mr. Ritchie claims that his shipments amount to 480 tons per year to Chicago, Detroit, and New York. The pumice is used for cleaning castings, buffing wheels, lithographic plates, etc.

Geology: The area lies within the great Crater Lake pumice field, the particular type is classed as pumice and scoria flows (Nuees Ardentes of Howell Williams) Williams shows a thickness of 75 feet of pumice at this point.

The pumice desired by this operation consists of blocks up to 3 feet in diameter, in beds averagering 15 feet deep. No pumice blocks of this size were seen at the time of the visit but many blocks a foot in diameter were seen.

Informants: Claire E. Ritchie and Ray C. Treasher, 3/21/41
Mining World, January, 1941.

Report by: Ray C. Treasher, 3/21/41

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Mr. Ritchie is bothered with freight rates. He claims that his rate on pumice to New York is \$0.78 per 100 pounds and that it wrangled this rate thru some involved method of ~~at~~ alternate route via the Gulf Coast. He further stated that otherwise the rate would be \$1.16 per 100 pounds.

Ritchie says that he has secured control of pumice deposits at East Lake in the Newberry Craters area; that the pumice is better quality for abrasive use; but that he has a long truck haul to the Great Northern R. R., at Lapine (?) and that his investigations show that the freight rates eliminate possibility of the development of this deposit. I suggested that he call upon Mr. Nixon upon one of his trips to Portland, and explain his transportation troubles in detail.

Ritchie is interested in developing other uses for his pumice. I suggested bonding with sodium silicate and lime, and he was fascinated with the idea and said that he would experiment. On the date of the visit he had a circular saw and an operator who was trying to cut pumice blocks. Ritchie said these blocks were trials at ~~at~~ scouring bricks. The operator was reasonable unsuccessful, breaking a great number of the blocks; - the reason, I believe, was that he was using too much pressure and forcing the blocks. I also suggested ash trays, and minor novelties, and he was still interested!!!

He also mentioned his interest in the beryllium deposits of the Medford area; that he had had samples analyzed and they ran very high in beryllium.

From the looks of his operation, the general tone of the conversation, and "hunch", I doubt if this particular operation promises any particularly bright future. I believe that a similar operation could succeed under proper and intelligent management.

Ray C. Treasher,
Field Geologist,
March 23rd, 1941.