

Born Before the Flood.

A cedar tree, whose age has been reckoned by geologists at 25,000 years, has been found in California, standing in an excellent preserved state, the fibers so perfect and the wood so strong that it was used for timbering in the construction of a mining tunnel. This remarkable instance of the preservation of organic remains was found in the heart of a mountain, nearly 500 feet below the summit. This mountain is a spur of the Sierra Nevadas, near the Forest Hill divide, in Placer county, between the north and middle forks of the American river.

The mountain is lava-capped with one of those singular table tops which show that there was once a day when all those ravines with which the region now abounds did not exist, and that what is now the crest of the mountain was once the lowest plane in a topography vastly different from that which exists today. For all of these millions of tons of lava material were incumbent upon a river bed, and it was on a bank of this river that this cedar tree grew, and here it was found standing, 100 feet in height, 25,000 years after its submergence. The lapse of time since it was thus sealed to the world can not be more than approximated. It is known that its inundation occurred during the Pliocene period and that this was a Pliocene tree; the geologists of California estimate that the Pliocene period ended about 25,000 years ago.

The ancient river bed on the bank of which the tree stood contained gold, and it was in quest of this that the vitals of the mountain were probed and the tree discovered. Several small oaks, having the appearance of what is common in the arid parts of California as scrub oaks, were also found upon the same and opposite bank of the dead river, but they were insignificant as compared with the majestic bearing and perfect preservation of this strong and noble cedar. All vestiges of needles had disappeared, but some of the elongated tips of the branches remained, and many cones were found upon it. These crumbled to dust as soon as brought to the air; as also did the bark, but the wood was firm and sound, the trunk being about 3 feet in diameter at its base, the roots tough and of the tenacity of seasoned wood.—West Coast Lumberman.

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 81, 7/14/1900, p. 39