

Mines of Eastern Placer County

To The Editor:—A recent trip among the mines of eastern Placer gives evidence of greater activity in quartz and gravel properties than has been shown for years. There are numerous quartz mines at present being operated with profit, while almost innumerable ledges exist, many of which were worked, in a measure successfully, by the crude methods of early times, and which now only await capital and the improved methods of working quartz. In eastern Placer, however, gravel mining will continue to be the leading industry.

When compared to the vast quantity of gravel workable by the drifting process, which lies in the lava-capped ancient river channels of the Forest Hill and Iowa Hill divides, such valuable drift-mining properties as the Gray Eagle, Mayflower, Breece & Wheeler, Hidden Treasure, Mountain Gate and Red Point mines only amount to a fair prospect of the channels, and it is only then that some idea can be formed of the magnitude of operations which may be carried on in this district in the future.

Following is a mention of some of the properties in eastern Placer:

The Mayflower gravel mine, near Forest Hill, has a regular working force of one hundred men, and I understand the number will soon be increased. About seventy cars of cement gravel is the daily product of the mine and the twenty-stamp mill is running at its full capacity.

The Dardanelles mine, at Forest Hill, owned by Gen. Jo. Hamilton, of Auburn, is at present working but ten men. The channel had been lost for some time, but on November 1st some very rich gravel was found and the present prospects are very flattering. Their ten-stamp mill is now running twelve hours per day. The Dardanelles is the only mine on the Forest Hill divide that is equipped with an electric plant. The mine is lighted and the drills, pumps and hoisting works are run by electricity. The use and application of electric power has been a thorough success in the mine.

The old Paragon mine, now known as the Breece & Wheeler, at Bath, two miles above Forest Hill, is still being worked with profit. The superintendent is working thirty-five men, and the ten-stamp mill crushes gravel twelve hours per day.

Among drift gravel mines the Hidden Treasure mine, located at Sunny South, takes the lead. It is operated on the most extensive scale of any drift-mining property in the State. A total of 160 men are employed, and on the day your correspondent visited the mine 570 carloads of gravel were taken to the dump. The gravel is of low grade, but it is free-washing and the upper sluice boxes are cleaned up daily. As an example of the amount of work accomplished in this mine, 74,000 pieces of heavy timbers, independent of logging, are piled near the main tunnel and they are expected to last only until the first of next June.

The Dam drift gravel mine, three miles above Sunny South, is working a small force of men with very fair success,

A visit to the old and well-known mining town of Michigan Bluff showed quite a revival of interest in properties in that locality. Mining litigation, which is the curse of every camp, has tied up some of the best properties, as well as much territory that has not been thoroughly prospected. Following is a mention of some of the claims at or near Michigan Bluff:

The Ontario quartz mine, owned by E. Polifka, Wm. Stuart and C. A. Knopfel, shows a fine ledge. No work is being done at this drift mine at present.

The Daniel Webster quartz mine has a well-defined vein that can be traced for miles. The ore was worked in early days by the arrastra process, but a mill has never been erected to work the property.

The Manhattan gravel mine, two miles above Michigan Bluff, is being pumped out through the old Weske tunnel preparatory to resuming work upon the property.

The Bowen gravel mine, adjoining the Weske, is working a force of 12 men, and is paying well. John Mutchler, who owns the Mutchler drift mine, formerly known as the old Franklin, is running a bedrock tunnel.

Several men are engaged putting the Gorman gravel mine in shape to work this winter.

James Tickell, who owns the Bendago drift gravel mine near Sunny South, has just finished running a new prospect tunnel, which has reached the channel. He has breasted some fine gravel, and will be ready for work in the mine next month.

The Central drift mine, near Deadwood, is at present working ten men, and the force will be increased when water becomes more plentiful.

Miners in the neighborhood of Deadwood and Last Chance, to the number of 40 or 50, are operating small drift mines on a small scale with very good success.

The gravel mine at Red Point, owned by the Mines de Lexington Company, is in a prosperous condition. The main tunnel of this mine, as is well known, was driven from a survey made by the well-known civil engineer, Ross E. Browne. The black gravel was reached a few feet above the bed of the tunnel, and the company is working upstream in the channel with excellent success. At present 64 men are employed, who mine an average of 110 cars of free-washing gravel per day. Superintendent Hoffman recently made a trip to San Francisco to purchase a water wheel, which will enable the company to operate the blower by water power instead of steam.

The Eureka mine, owned principally by F. Chappellett, is located on the east side of the divide from the Red Point property. A bedrock tunnel is being driven to tap the channel from the lowest part of the property, to enable them to work upstream.

The New Brazil Company has run a tunnel from Black Canyon into what is known as the Whisky Hill channel. The tunnel was too high, and they have made an air shaft, and will run upstream until they strike the bed of the channel.

The well-known Mountain Gate gravel mine at Damascus is not being operated at present. The owners are negotiating with parties who expect to reopen the mine and work it on a percentage.

D. W. Osborne, owner of the Osborne quartz mine, near Indian Springs, has opened the mine. He has a slope of 200 feet, and the mine is now ready for a mill.

The Page mine is a quartz property just below Last Chance. They have a ten-foot ledge and there are thousands of tons of ore in sight, but it is not of a very high grade. A two-stamp mill is operated for prospecting purposes.

The Sailor Canyon gravel mine, owned by a San Francisco company, will soon be in active operation. A bedrock tunnel has just been finished which taps the channel, and they are now engaged in getting the sluices and dumps ready for work.

The Theodore Winters quartz mine, which was recently sold to Montgomery, the Salvation Army man, is an immense 50-foot ledge of great promise. This mine will be worked exclusively by members of the Salvation Army. They have been engaged all summer grading a wagon road to the property on which to take in their machinery and supplies. The Army go through with their regular drill and devotional exercises each day. The scenery in the canyon is very fine, and the immediate section is replete with grassy flats and beautiful places for homes.

At the Flat Ravine gravel mine, on the south side of Bald Mountain, which is owned by Davidson, Juergensen & Co., a 1500-foot tunnel has been run which is too high. They expect to reach a

level from which they can work the channel by extending the tunnel about 300 feet up grade. The gravel, which has been prospected by means of a shaft, promises well.

A half-dozen miners work around Bald Mountain at ground sluicing. The section always pays well, especially in the spring when water is plenty.

At Deadwood the property formerly known as the Davis mine, now owned by Frazil & Co., has a force of 12 men at work. The gravel is very rich, but they are obliged to work it on a slope. The mine is drained through the Elkhorn tunnel and cannot work more men on account of the slope.

Five men are now engaged at the Bishop drift gravel mine at Last Chance.

The Caledonia gravel mine at Last Chance, owned by Dixon, McCarty & Co., has paid well in former years, but they struck a lower channel. This has been reached, however, by a new bedrock tunnel. The mine is at present working but four men.

Perhaps the best-paying quartz property in eastern Placer is the Pioneer, or Lynn, mine, near Damascus, owned by James G. Fair and A. E. Davis of San Francisco. The mine is operated under the superintendency of D. J. Sullivan, who is at present working a force of forty-two men.

From thirty-five to forty tons of ore are mined each day. Their lowest working tunnel is 2300 feet above sea level. A twenty-stamp mill, which is in constant operation, is located in the canyon 600 feet below the tunnel. The mine has been a steady dividend-payer for the past twenty-five months.

Adjoining the Pioneer on the north is the Golden Cross quartz mine, owned by Richard Dorer. The mine has fine prospects, but the owner has not sufficient capital to work it.

Next to the Golden Cross is the Southern Cross, the property of Ford & Bentley. Parties from San Francisco contemplate building a wagon road to the mine and putting in a twenty-stamp mill.

The Dorer quartz mine, seven miles southeast of Towles and owned by San Francisco parties, has been leased by Placer county men, who have a ten-stamp mill in operation.

The Central quartz mine, owned by the Dorer Bros., shows good ore, but it is not being worked at present.

The Big Dipper gravel mine at Iowa Hill is at present working forty-six men. Two months ago they put in a new ten-stamp mill and they are now engaged in running; a new bedrock tunnel. This mine has been paying dividends for the past two years.

The famous Morning Star mine at Iowa Hill is working its usual force of men. The amount and frequent payment of dividends is a matter of which the public is well acquainted.

Ivan H. Parker. Auburn, Cal., Nov. 20, 1893.

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