

# NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

“...The Back Number...”



Summer Issue  
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*Peter Skene Ogden's*

## NEVADA EXPLORATIONS

By GLORIA GRIFFEN CLINE

Peter Skene Ogden, Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company and one of Western North America's most famous explorers, played a significant role in the exploration of what is now the present State of Nevada. In his capacity as leader of the famed Snake Country Expedition from 1824 to 1830, Ogden led his trapping brigades southward from the Oregon Country exploring large portions of Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. Ogden has the distinction of being the second white man<sup>1</sup> to enter what is now Nevada, being superseded only by Father Francisco Hermenegildo Garcés<sup>2</sup> who penetrated a short distance across the present boundary of Nevada while following the Colorado River. Although in regard to the time sequence of entry, Ogden is in second place, his record of exploration of Nevada is second to none, having covered more miles of virgin territory than such famous competitors as Jedediah Smith, Joseph Walker, and John Charles Frémont.

Unfortunately, Peter Skene Ogden's place in Nevada History has been minimized, and, in some cases, distorted. Many of the standard histories of Nevada give erroneous reports regarding the time that Ogden was in Nevada as well as the areas that he explored. Several of the histories<sup>3</sup> even go so far as to attribute the discovery of the Humboldt River to Jedediah Strong Smith who never saw that stream, but passed perhaps within 125 or 150 miles of the Humboldt prior to its discovery.<sup>4</sup>

This confusion is due, in part, to the relatively small amount of material that has been available concerning the activities of Ogden. However, in 1950 the Hudson's Bay Company's Record Society published Ogden's Snake Country Journals for the 1824-25 and 1825-26 expeditions, and, therefore, we have information concerning Ogden's penetration into Elko County in the late spring of 1826. The journals of the subsequent expeditions have yet to be published by the Society although extracts of these journals have been edited by T. C. Elliott for the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*.<sup>5</sup>

Ogden's journals are of great importance in Western American historiography for they record graphically the movements of the Snake Country Expedition through previously unknown areas and provide the first written descriptions of what is now northern



Nevada. Although they were written by an executive in the midst of heavy duties, the Ogden journals reveal much more than a record of the number of beaver caught for they provide much geographical and anthropological information. These journals, although they were written under the stress of circumstances and with the knowledge that they were meant for ultimate reading by the Governor and Committee in London, clearly reveal Ogden's characteristics and power of leadership.

Ogden's physical prowess as well as his alleged ability to outbrawl, outswear, and outjest any of his subordinates made him an excellent choice for the leadership of the Snake Country Expedition which was considered "the most hazardous and disagreeable office in the Indian country." The Snake Country Expedition had been inaugurated by the North West Company in 1818 and was adopted by the Hudson's Bay Company when the two companies merged in 1821. However, it functioned with rather dubious results until Peter Skene Ogden took command of it in 1824.

In replacing Alexander Ross with Ogden as leader of the Snake Country Expedition, something far more significant than the mere changing of the leadership of an interior brigade took place. No doubt, one of the most important considerations in regard to this appointment was the American question. Ogden was shrewd, and as Governor Simpson put it, "he does not want for ability;"<sup>6</sup> hence it fell to Ogden to attempt to combat the Americans in the areas from whence they came—the Green River and Great Basin areas<sup>7</sup>—instead of allowing the competitive battle to take place in the richer areas to the north. In referring to the Snake Country Expedition, Governor Simpson said: "If properly managed no question exists that it would yield handsome profits as we have convincing proof that the country is a rich preserve of Beaver and which for political reasons we should endeavor to destroy as fast as possible."<sup>8</sup> Thus began the famous "scorched earth" policy which was to transform the Snake River Brigade into a potent political weapon.

In accordance with the "scorched earth" policy, Ogden pushed into Nevada and other parts of the Great Basin with the purpose of creating a "fur desert" to discourage economically the American trappers in their thrust westward. Another consideration also led the British fur men into Nevada for when it was believed that Great Britain could no longer hope for a boundary which would include the Oregon Country, the Hudson's Bay Company desired to obtain as many pelts as possible from that area. As early as 1824, the year in which Ogden took command of the



Snake Country Expedition, the Governor and Committee stated ". . . as we cannot expect to have a more Southern boundary than the Columbia in any Treaty with the Americans . . . it will be desirable that the hunters should get as much out of the Snake Country as possible for the next few years."<sup>9</sup>

With the dual purpose of obtaining furs and discouraging the Americans, Ogden set out from Flathead Post, December 20, 1824, on his first Snake Country Expedition. As per instructions, Ogden and his men proceeded "direct for the heart of the Snake Country towards the Banks of the Spanish River or Rio Colorado . . ."<sup>10</sup> Although Ogden trapped portions of the Great Basin, he did not travel far enough west to enter what is now modern Nevada.

Ogden's first entry into Nevada had to wait until the following spring when he crossed into the state from Idaho by way of the East Fork of the Bruneau River. With this penetration across the Nevada-Idaho boundary, Ogden became the first white man to enter northern Nevada and the second white person to enter the state. Father Garcés in 1776 had penetrated across the present southern Nevada boundary in his effort to establish an overland route connecting the Spanish settlements of New Mexico and California; however, he traveled across a most barren region and developed little geographical understanding of the area. The remainder of Nevada lay unknown.

Although the area had been unexplored, much geographic speculation was directed toward this unknown region which was depicted on contemporary maps as the home of a river of great magnitude.<sup>11</sup> Exploration of Nevada was undoubtedly motivated to a great degree by belief in this river which was thought to flow from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. It is clear that the British believed in such a stream as evidenced by a letter written by Dr. McLoughlin: "It is certain when Mr. Ogden's men left him<sup>12</sup> he was not on the waters of the Columbia and I think he was Either in the head waters of a River that falls at St. Francisco or on those of a River said to fall into the Ocean a little South of the Umpqua . . ."<sup>13</sup>

Ogden, with the twofold purpose of obtaining pelts for political and economic reasons, was most likely also searching for the mythical river when he entered Nevada early in June, 1826. He crossed into the state by way of the East Fork of the Bruneau River, slightly west of the present U. S. Highway 93, and crossed to the Jarbidge River near the present town of Jarbidge in Elko County. He and his party trapped in the vicinity of the West



Fork of the Bruneau River for several weeks, crossing back and forth over what is now the Idaho-Nevada boundary line. However, the beaver catch was small, and the party experienced poor weather as is evidenced by the entry in Ogden's diary for June 4th: "I was rather surprised on rising this morning to find the ground covered with Snow and still snowing and Cold severe . . ." <sup>14</sup> The group continued westward, just south of the state line, passing closely to the present Nevada towns of Mountain City and Owyhee, and on June 13th or 14th entered what is now the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. On June 15th the Snake Country Expedition struck the South Fork of the Owyhee River and traveled northward out of Nevada.

Ogden's two subsequent expeditions are of little interest to Nevada historians for these were devoted primarily to trapping and exploring parts of Oregon and Idaho. However, his next expedition, that of 1828-29, is of great import for it was during this trip that Ogden discovered the Humboldt River, one of the most important physical features in Nevada. The Humboldt River, which flows from its source near Wells, Nevada, to the Humboldt Sink, west of Lovelock, is the only river in the state which pursues an east-west course providing an arterial across Nevada. This river set the course of the Overland Trail and even today plays an important role: two transcontinental railroads and U. S. Highway 40 follow its course; its waters irrigate the crops that are grown along its banks.

On September 22, 1828, Ogden and his Fifth Snake Expedition left Fort Nez Perces on their trek to the Humboldt River. Much speculation as to the route followed by Ogden south of the Malheur River has taken place, but historians have generally agreed that Ogden passed southward into Nevada by way of the Owyhee River. Even those familiar with the local topography, such as James Scrugham <sup>15</sup> and F. N. Fletcher, <sup>16</sup> state that Ogden and his party trapped along the west branch of the Owyhee and entered Nevada in the vicinity of McDermitt. Their assumption is based primarily on an entry in Ogden's diary for October 17, 1828, in which he states: "I shall proceed to Sandwich Island River." <sup>17</sup> Although Ogden makes this mention of the Owyhee River, nowhere in his diary does he make a definite statement, within this period of time, of being on that stream.

Therefore, it seems probable that Ogden traveled slowly along the Malheur River, trapping as he went; from a point on this river, he traveled southward to what is now known as Alvord Lake in Harney County, Oregon. Gerald A. Waring <sup>18</sup> and F. W.



Libbey, Director of the Oregon State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries,<sup>19</sup> consider Alvord Lake to be saline, and thus it would fit Ogden's description of a long, salty lake mentioned in his diary on October 26th.

An entry in the Ogden diary for October 27th gives almost conclusive evidence that Ogden was in the Alvord Lake region rather than on the Owyhee River for it states: "We passed a hot spring in a boiling state strong smell of sulphur, tracks and huts of Indians."<sup>20</sup> Mr. Libbey mentions in a letter that "About 21½ miles south of Alvord Lake there are some hot springs . . ."<sup>21</sup>

Upon leaving the hot springs, Ogden probably traveled southward to Kings River and followed it to its junction with the Quinn. The latter was discovered on November 7th as the following entry discloses: "At 7 A. M. we crossed over the river wh. from running thro' a number of lakes I have named River of the Lakes, although not a wide stream certainly a long one."<sup>22</sup> The Quinn River passes through a series of shallow lakes and marshes, and thus the name that Ogden applied to it was appropriate.

On Saturday, November 8th, Ogden recorded in his diary the discovery of a river ". . . similar in size to the River of Lakes."<sup>23</sup> This entry discloses the encountering of the Little Humboldt River, a tributary of the Humboldt. Ogden probably crossed from the Quinn River near what is now State Highway 8A, passing to the south of the Santa Rosa Mountains and struck the Little Humboldt River a short distance above its confluence with the Humboldt in the vicinity of Winnemucca.

On the following day, November 9, Ogden made a more important discovery; he discovered the Humboldt River itself. He gave the name "Unknown" to the river because its source and course were unknown to him. He even speculated as to the Humboldt River being connected with the Owyhee River and thus part of the Snake River drainage as he muses, "Should this river flow to Sandwich Island River I trust we shall have full time to trap it."<sup>24</sup> A map that has been attributed to Ogden,<sup>25</sup> clearly shows the confusion that existed in regard to the Humboldt's position in the drainage pattern of the area, for the map depicts the Humboldt (Unknown) River as a tributary of the Sandwich Island (Owyhee) River and places both in relation to the Great Salt Lake in a most interesting and novel way.

On November 11th Ogden and his party started down the Humboldt "To ascertain if possible what course this river takes . . ."<sup>26</sup> They traveled down stream until they reached the vicinity



of Mill City where Joseph Paul fell ill and shortly thereafter died.<sup>27</sup> At this point, Ogden decided to move his men to winter quarters in the buffalo country northeast of Great Salt Lake since the weather was becoming cold. The party now traveled up the Humboldt River and crossed to the Great Salt Lake by a route that has been similarly followed by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

After spending the winter in the Salt Lake region, the Snake Country Expedition set out for the Humboldt River again as the entry in Ogden's diary for March 30th discloses: "This morning 12 men 24 horses and all our traps started for Unknown River. They will reach the river 8 days before me . . ."<sup>28</sup> On April 8th Ogden reached the Humboldt River. This time more of the river was explored, and its features revealed to him. Ogden and his party continued down the river from its forks and evidently found the catch to be quite small, for on April 13th Ogden states in his journal: "We shall steer our course in quest of Sandwich Island River, all the Indians say we shall find beaver there."<sup>29</sup> The party undoubtedly went north from the vicinity of Elko to the South Fork of the Owyhee River, north of Tuscarora. Upon finding the trapping grounds in this region unsatisfactory, Ogden and his men now returned to the Humboldt River.

Ogden returned to the Humboldt by somewhat the same route that he had followed going to the Sandwich Island River. On Sunday, May 8th, Ogden's diary states: "Followed down Unknown River . . . Country is level as the eye can see. I am at loss to know where this river discharges."<sup>30</sup>

In an effort to ascertain the course of the Humboldt, the party proceeded down the chief arterial of Nevada, this time as far as the Humboldt Sink, south and west of the present Lovelock. At this point, Ogden and his men learned from the Indians about a river which lay about eight days' march from the Humboldt, which, undoubtedly, was a reference to the Truckee River. Ogden was not able to proceed farther to discover the course of this river due to the lateness of the season and also because he did not wish ". . . to infringe on McLeod's territory . . . McLeod's territory is the water discharging in the ocean. If Mr. McLeod has succeeded in reaching Bona Ventura he must have crossed this stream."<sup>31</sup>

On June 2, 1829, Ogden and his party left the Humboldt Sink on their return journey to the Columbia. The group retraced their route along the banks of the Humboldt River as far as the



present site of Winnemucca, Nevada. From this point, the Snake Country Expedition turned up the Little Humboldt River to follow the route that they had established when entering Nevada the previous year, and passed to Silvies River, Days' Defile, and the Blue Mountains. On July 5th, Ogden states in his diary: "As the tracks to Nez Perces is now well known, and no danger to be apprehended, I shall tomorrow leave with 2 men for the fort. Thus ends my 5th trip to the Snake Country."<sup>32</sup>

Although Peter Skene Ogden led only two brigades into Nevada, he must be remembered as one of this state's greatest explorers. His important exploratory work lifted the veil of ignorance that enveloped parts of the Great Salt Lake region and added the Humboldt River and the comparatively barren areas of Nevada to geographical knowledge. Ogden was the first white man to explore northern Nevada, and to him also goes the distinction of being the first white man to see the Humboldt River and to trace it from its source near Wells to its sink in the Nevada desert west of Lovelock. The Ogden map is the first true cartographic expression of the western Great Basin, and the Ogden journals provide the first written descriptions of what is now northern Nevada. For these reasons, Peter Skene Ogden, Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, should be considered one of Nevada's greatest explorers.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ogden entered Nevada in June, 1826; Jedediah Smith's entry was not until the latter part of August or first part of September of that year.

<sup>2</sup>See: Elliott Coues, Ed. & Trans., *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer: The Diary and Itinerary of Francisco Garcés in his Travels through Sonora, Arizona, and California*, 2 vols. (New York, 1900); Herbert E. Bolton, *The Early Explorations of Father Garcés on the Pacific Slope* (New York, 1917); & Bolton, *Outpost of Empire* (Berkeley, 1930).

<sup>3</sup>Thompson & West's *History of Nevada*, Ed. by Myron Angel (Berkeley, 1958), p. 22; Sam P. Davis, *The History of Nevada*, 2 vols. (Reno & Los Angeles, 1913), p. 19; and Thomas Wren, *A History of the State of Nevada, Its Resources and People* (New York & Chicago, 1894), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>In May, 1827, Jedediah Smith, together with Silas Gobel and Robert Evans, crossed from the Stanislaus River of California to the Bear Lake region of Utah. This was the first crossing of Nevada, and, in general terms, the route was approximately that of the present U. S. Highway 6 across Nevada. See: Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and*



*the Opening of the West* (New York, 1953) and Morgan & Carl I. Wheat, *Jedediah Smith and his Maps of the American West* (San Francisco, 1954).

<sup>5</sup>T. C. Elliott, Ed., "Journal of the Snake Country Expedition, 1826-27," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. XI, no. 2 (June, 1910), pp. 201-222; "Journals of the Snake Expeditions, 1827-28; 1828-29," *O. H. Q.*, vol. XI, no. 4 (December, 1910), pp. 355-396. Mr. Elliott edited these journals which were copied from the originals in the Hudson's Bay Company's Archives in London by Agnes Laut circa 1904. Unfortunately, Miss Laut did not make verbatim copies of these journals, and thus there are gaps of several weeks existing between entries in these diaries. Elliott's copies of the Laut drafts are now part of the T. C. Elliott Collection of the Oregon Historical Society in Portland where this author compared these drafts with the published works for omissions or errors.

<sup>6</sup>Governor Simpson to A. Colville, September 8, 1823 as quoted in Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire: The Journal of Sir George Simpson* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), Appendix A, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup>After Jedediah Smith's effective discovery of South Pass in 1824, American fur trading operations centered in the Great Salt Lake region for several years.

<sup>8</sup>Entry in Simpson's diary for October 28, 1824, Merk, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>9</sup>The Governor and Committee to J. D. Cameron, July 22, 1824, *Ibid.*, Appendix A, pp. 241-242.

<sup>10</sup>Frederick Merk, "The Snake Country Expedition, 1824-25," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. XXXV, no. 2 (June, 1934), p. 99. The initial instructions to hunt towards the banks of the Rio Colorado was based on an incorrect conjecture by earlier Snake Country Expedition leaders that the Colorado was an extension of the Bear River, which had been explored only in its upper courses.

<sup>11</sup>See: C. Gregory Crampton & Gloria G. Griffen (Cline), "The San Buenaventura, Mythical River of the West," *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. XXV, no. 2 (May, 1956), pp. 163-171.

<sup>12</sup>Referring to the episode at Mountain Green, Utah, when 23 of Ogden's trappers deserted to the Americans.

<sup>13</sup>John McLoughlin to the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee, October 6, 1825, as quoted in *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-38* (London, 1941), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>E. E. Rich, Ed., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26; The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society*, vol. 13 (London, 1950), p. 175.

<sup>15</sup>James G. Scrugham, *Nevada*, 3 vols. (New York, 1935), vol. 1, p. 40

<sup>16</sup>F. N. Fletcher, *Early Nevada* (Reno, Nevada, 1929), p. 57.

<sup>17</sup>Owyhee River, T. C. Elliott, Ed., "Ogden's Journals, 1828-29," p. 383.

<sup>18</sup>Gerald A. Waring, United States Geological Water Supply Paper 231 (Gov't. Printing Office, 1909).

<sup>19</sup>F. W. Libbey to Gloria Griffen, April 19, 1952.

<sup>20</sup>Elliott, Ed., "Ogden's Journals, 1828-29," p. 383.



<sup>21</sup>Libbey to Griffen, April 19, 1952.

<sup>22</sup>Elliott, "Ogden's Journals, 1828-29," p. 384.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 384-385.

<sup>25</sup>Although the cartographer is unknown, it is clear that he was a member of the Snake Country Expedition, for minute information is included showing the artist's knowledge of events concerning this brigade as well as the terrain covered by it. The map is unsigned, but some authorities attribute it to Ogden which seems likely.

<sup>26</sup>Elliott, "Ogden's Journals, 1828-29," p. 385.

<sup>27</sup>Joseph Paul was the first white man to die in Nevada.

<sup>28</sup>Elliott, "Journals, 1828-29," p. 392.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 395-396. McLeod was trapping in the San Joaquin Valley. Ogden's reference to "Bona Ventura" relates to the Sacramento River, and Ogden, no doubt, believed that the streams directly west of his encamped party on the Humboldt Sink flowed to the Sacramento Valley.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 396.



## AS I REMEMBER GOLDFIELD

By FRANK P. TONDEL

From 1902 until 1908 Goldfield was known as the greatest gold camp on earth, and millions were taken out of that favored spot on the desert. It was the last of the great gold producers of the west.

Since the golden days of Virginia City, Nevada has been the popular stamping ground for the prospector and the miner; and although it has the smallest permanent population, on account of its valuable gold, silver, copper, lead and other mineral deposits it has the largest floating population per capita.

It rivals California in the number of its ghost towns. The once flourishing Rhyolite is an example. Still standing is a six-story building dating from the five-year period, 1903 to 1908, when the population was 8,000 and approximately three million dollars worth of gold were produced.

In 1906 I was working for the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in Los Angeles. My chum, Roy Hayden, and I decided we would try our luck in the booming town of Goldfield. By horse we crossed the Tehachapi Mountains and the San Joaquin Valley. With two horses and two pack burros we crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains over the Mammoth Trail, then the White Mountains and the desert to Goldfield. On our first night there we spread our blankets in a horse corral.

In 1902 Tom Fisherman, a Shoshone Indian, first brought in a specimen of gold ore that he had found a few miles south of Tonopah. Tom Kendall, proprietor of the Tonopah Club, grubstaked Billy Marsh and Harry Stimler, a half-breed, to look for the place where the gold rock had been found. They staked their first claim on the flat below Columbia Mountain on December 4, 1902. Other prospectors joined them, among whom were Al Myers and a man named Murphy. Myers had both practical and theoretical knowledge of minerals and filed on what was to become Combination Fraction, which later proved to be one of the richest mines of them all.

News of the find, twenty miles south of Tonopah, spread and from California to Colorado, from North, South, East and West, across the mountains and the desert, they came, prospectors, miners, engineers and promoters, followed by the adventurers, gamblers, dive-keepers and the women of the streets, until Goldfield hummed with a happy and excited, greedy throng. Tents



sprang up like magic, followed by the cabins, houses and business blocks.

All day long and far into the night could be heard the beating of the hammers, the buzz of the saws, and the puff, puff, puff of the engines resounding through the desert. Every available inch of ground for miles around was staked—up the hillsides, in the canyons and on the flat miners dug their holes.

As Al Myers dug deeper the gold grew richer. This was the beginning of the rich Mohawk mine. The population grew until at its peak Goldfield had a population of 20,000 and the mines produced millions. The county seat was moved from Hawthorne to this new town.

There were three banks, the John S. Cook Bank, the manager of which was John S. Cook; the Nye & Ormsby Bank, Frank Golden, president, and the State Bank & Trust Company whose President was Thomas B. Rickey. The latter was a branch system with the head office in Carson City, and other branches in Tonopah, Manhattan and Blair.

"God Bless You" James L. Lindsey was cashier of the Goldfield branch. Thomas B. Rickey was a large cattleman. He had control of the water in many Nevada streams and over the rights had numerous law suits with Henry Miller, the cattle baron of California.

Jim Lindsey was a very fine man and religious. He often used the words "God Bless You" in ordinary conversation. I remember a story told about him the first night he spent in Goldfield. A Mr. Kelly, who was marshal of the town, found Jim wandering around looking for a place to sleep and offered to find a room for him. He convinced the owner of the rooming house that Jim would be a fitting tenant and she consented. Jim was delighted. "God Bless you, Lady," he said, and again "God Bless You." The woman turned on him. "Get out of here, I've changed my mind. I won't allow any God-bless-you roomers in my house."

I was hired by Mr. Lindsey as a bookkeeper in the bank at a salary of one hundred and fifty dollars per month. Abe Kirby, the janitor, had been a slave in the South. He was one of those good natured sons of Africa who always had a smile on his face and a good word for everyone. His friends were legion. He signed his checks with a rubber stamp. Mr. Rickey came to Goldfield on rare occasions. One morning before the bank opened a man walked into the bank and Abe told him that only employees were allowed in the bank before ten o'clock when the apparent stranger



said that he was the President of the bank. Abe was profuse in his apologies, much to the amusement of Mr. Rickey.

The Mohawk was the big producer and millions were taken from its leases. Hayes and Monnette operated one lease but ran out of money before striking pay-dirt but were able to raise more money from their Chicago backers and soon after struck ledges that assayed up in the thousands per ton. They took out as much as \$3,000 a day. On February 9, 1907, the Selby Smelting and Lead Company of San Francisco gave a check to the Crocker National Bank for the account of Hayes-Monnette Mohawk Lease for \$574,958.39 in payment of forty-seven tons of ore which carried 609.61 ounces of gold and 75.38 ounces of silver to the ton.

Donald McKenzie controlled the Frances-Mohawk Lease. He financed operations by selling stock all over the country, but that was one lease that paid rich dividends. The Goodberlet sisters were kept busy mailing dividend checks all over the United States. At one time McKenzie had hundreds of sacks of gold ore stacked inside the State Bank and Trust Company that assayed up in the thousands per ton. One could plainly see streaks of gold running all through the rock. 1910 was the peak year when eleven million dollars of ore was taken from the mines.

From March, 1906, to March, 1907, these stocks showed gains as follows: Daisy, .45¢ to \$2.65; Red Top, \$2. to \$4.; Jumbo, \$1.40 to \$4.20; Jumbo Extension, .26¢ to \$2.55; Combination Fraction, .15¢ to \$6.; Laguna, .13¢ to \$1.70; and Mohawk, .48¢ to \$16.50.

Five years after Al Myers found traces of gold at grass roots on the flat below Columbia Mountain he sold his block of 100,000 shares of Mohawk to some Philadelphia people for \$400,000. It was reported that he built a mansion in Long Beach with gold door-knobs.

Tex Rickard and Ole Elliot owned the Northern Saloon located on the corner of Main and Crook Streets. They paid \$10,000 for the lot alone. Today that same corner is occupied by a service station and the owner, the hack driver in Goldfield's palmy days, paid exactly \$25 for the lot.

The Northern had the largest and most complete gambling outfit in town, the sky was the limit. The Mahogany Bar extended along one entire side of the room. There was nothing small about Tex, he used a bath-tub and a paddle with which to mix his Tom and Jerrys.

The dance halls and the rooming houses of the painted ladies were confined to the upper end of Main Street. There on Summer



days they could be seen sitting on their porches in gay colored pajamas.

The restaurants, saloons, gambling dens and the dance halls made a bid for the custom of the populace. The atmosphere was one of swift, gay and happy-go-lucky life under which burned the fever of gold. So many people were moving about at night that part of them flowed out into the street. Gamblers dressed in the height of fashion, roughly attired miners, and women heavily roughed and wearing finery that made it easy to guess their calling.

In its early stages Goldfield was a strong labor union town. The town was booming, the mines were pouring out their golden stream, salaries and wages were high, everyone was prospering, mine owners, miners and business men. The miners were well paid and the conditions under which they worked were good, but they were not satisfied. The mine owners discovered that some of the miners were stealing as much as \$100 a day. The practice had been developed in the mining camps of Colorado.

As a result the mine owners installed change rooms and the workers were required to change clothes at the end of their shift. One way of stealing gold was related to me by Tim Connolly who was superintendent of the Frances-Mohawk lease. A fellow who had been working on the surface got a yen to work under ground. He had a friend who examined the workers as they left the shaft and despite the fact that the first man had his high walking boots filled with the precious ore, he was passed. By accident a drunk gave the secret away and they found \$14,000 hidden in the man's cabin. Mr. Connolly also told me that some of the miners wore two shirts with the tails sewed together and filled the sack-like cavity with high grade ore.

Naturally, the miners did not take kindly to the change rooms and they called a strike. The mines closed down, an unnatural stillness filled the air, Goldfield was dead, twenty thousand people walked the streets. The baskets had stopped drawing the golden treasure from the bowels of the earth and business was at a standstill. There were frequent meetings of the mine owners, the miners and the business men, but nothing came out of them.

Law abiding citizens fearing bloodshed, appealed to the Governor of Nevada. He, in turn, wired to Washington, and Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, ordered United States troops sent in from the San Francisco Presidio. They were commanded by General Funston, later to be the hero of the first World War. For several months the soldiers camped on the flats



near the mines, not to take sides, but only to see that there were no acts of violence. The troops left on March 7th, 1908, when they were replaced by the Nevada State police.

One of the mine owners was Diamondfield Jack Davis, a familiar figure in mining camps from Alaska to the Mexican border. In the eighties and nineties John Sparks and Frank Tinnan, former Texans, had at one time 150,000 cattle which ranged over three million acres in the northeast corner of Elko County. They waged unrelentless war on the encroaching sheepmen and hired gunmen, led by Diamondfield Jack Davis to shoot up the sheep camps. They killed many sheepherders and nothing much was done about it, but when Davis killed a sheepherder in Idaho he was arrested, convicted and sentenced to hang. Sparks hired good lawyers. Three times the gallows were built for Jack. Twice he was reprieved, and the third time Sparks, then Governor of Nevada, secured a quiet pardon from the Governor of Idaho. During the strike Jack rode through the streets, a large sombrero on his head, a gay kerchief around his neck, and across the pommel of his saddle, a rifle that meant business. Miners threatened to get him but no one took a chance.

In the Fall of 1907 a panic spread over the United States, banks everywhere closed. The State Bank & Trust Company and the Nye & Ormsby Bank shut up shop. There were numerous meetings of our depositors about a probable reopening. Mr. Rickey humorously remarked that if he were to attend all the meetings at which his presence was requested, he would have to be divided into pieces. When he did come to town he had the hack man drive him through the back alleys as he feared that some excited depositor might take a shot at him. In the end the bank failed for \$3,000,000 and the depositors received only ten cents on the dollar.

When the town was at the height of its prosperity the Goldfield Hotel, estimated to cost \$300,000, was built. It was four stories high. It had a beautiful lobby with woodwork done in mahogany. When I revisited Goldfield in 1946 there was a lock on the door. All I saw was a black cat staring somberly through a broken window.

The year 1923 witnessed a disastrous fire in which fifty blocks were destroyed. Main street is a wreck. Where the three story stone building of the John S. Cook Bank stood there is nothing but a hole in the ground.

Death Valley Scotty, a good friend of our cashier, was a frequent visitor to Goldfield. He always wore a red necktie. Until



his death in January, 1954, he was still making the head lines.

Tex Rickard began his career as a fight promoter with the Gans-Nelson championship fight on Labor Day, Sept. 3rd, 1906. Gans was thirty-two years old and has been called the best light weight of all time. His skill as a boxer was expected but his endurance surprised everyone. Shortly after the forty-second round Nelson deliberately fouled Gans by a vicious blow in the groin. The colored boy sank to his knees and rolled over on his back. George Siler of Chicago, without hesitation, ordered Nelson to his corner and awarded the fight to Gans on a foul. The twenty-four-year-old Nelson was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on June 5th, 1882, and came to America as an infant. He died at the age of 71 of lung cancer.

At an early age Rickard became a cow hand in Texas and learned to shoot swiftly with either hand. Discovered he had a natural talent for gambling. At 27 he joined the multitude going to Alaska. In 1906 he went to Goldfield and opened the Northern saloon with Ole Elliot. Later he became a cattleman in South America but found money too slow in that field and returned to the United States to become the greatest fight promoter of his time. In Goldfield he promoted the fight for the sole purpose of advertising, but later he entered the field with the view to profit and drew some of the largest gates in boxing history. The gate take at Goldfield was \$70,000 but his later fights brought in millions.

Claude C. Inman, a native of Bishop, California, and later a resident of Redondo, was the first Goldfield sheriff and set an enviable record as a peace officer.

George Wingfield, later a prominent Nevada millionaire, had his start in Tonopah and Goldfield. He was born in Arkansas, was a cowboy in Oregon, and at the time of the Tonopah strike in 1900 was working on ranches around Winnemucca, Nevada. He landed in Tonopah in 1901 with \$150 and in five years rose from a faro dealer to the control of the Mohawk and many other mining companies. He consolidated various interests, the Mohawk, Laguna, Atlanta, Red Top and Goldfield Mining Company under the single name, Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company with a five million shares capitalization. This consolidation, with Senator Nixon's help, produced more than eighty-five million dollars gross and paid dividends of more than thirty million dollars.

By the Spring of 1908 Goldfield was on the downgrade and many of the populace were moving to the new gold strike of



Rawhide, Nevada, about two hundred miles north of Goldfield and twenty-five miles west of Walker Lake. Tex Rickard, who had already prepared a place in Rawhide to welcome thirsty travelers, stood in the almost deserted streets of Goldfield and looked about him. Then he put up a sign on the little church there, "This church is closed, God has gone to Rawhide."

*To Be Continued*



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