

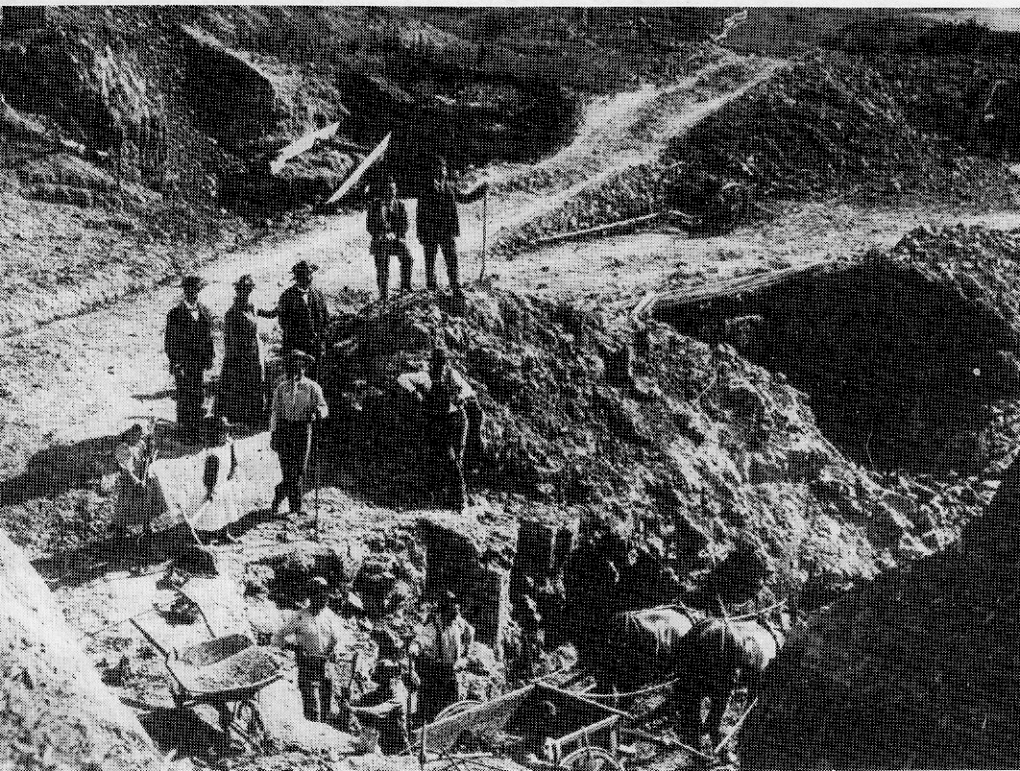


The Bunchgrass Historian

Vol. 7, No. 1

Spring, 1979

The Earth Gives Up Its Treasures



—Photo Courtesy Clifford Ott

One of Whitman County's producing opal mines located on the Chlor Patterson farm about five miles west of Moscow. This and several other opal-producing properties in the county were known as "The Moscow Opal Mines" as they were developed by residents of that town. The first discovery was made in 1890 on the William Leasure farm near the above mine.

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Editor's Note

Many of us, especially newcomers, living in The Palouse, think of wheat, barley, peas, lentils and fruit as the only riches coming from the earth in this area. Few are aware that it has yielded good quality clay for pottery, tiles and bricks, along with opals, amethysts, agates, coal, gold and important archaeological objects.

Palouse City had two potteries; brick kilns were active in Pullman, Uniontown and Palouse among other villages producing bricks needed in building up pioneer homes and business sections.

Opals of gem quality, were found in commercial amounts on a farm west of the county line between Pullman and Moscow. The mine became known as one of the Moscow Opal Mines. This gem stone was also found across the Snake River, from Silcott Island on the north side of the Snake River below Lewiston, near Tekoa, Uniontown and the Ringo Hills south of Palouse.

While little gold was found in the county, Pullman and Palouse became the supply centers for miners and the homes of the numerous people who were promoting gold mining in the area northeast of Potlatch, Idaho, and elsewhere in Idaho. Not only did the promoters push for development of gold mining but that of coal in Pullman and near Palouse and copper east of the state line.

The report of an early archaeological "dig" is included in this issue because the unearthing of archaeological treasures such as those at Almota, on the fruit ranch of Lance Batty, June Critchfield's parents, upriver from Wawawai on the Snake and the excavation of the Indian burial site at the mouth of the Palouse River provide clues to the prehistory and early history of Whitman County. At the Palouse River burial site, one of the Lewis and Clark Expedition peace medals was excavated under the direction of Dr. Roderick Sprague in 1964.

The purpose of this issue of the Historian is to bring this little-known chapter of the county's history to those who know nothing of it and to refresh the memories of those who do. □

Cover Photo—Foreground: Names of workmen are unknown. Center: (r to l) George S. Hall, John Hall and his two daughters. Background: (r to l) Henry Hall, Ralph Hall, Edward Hall, Margaret Hall and Charles Hall. This mine was on the property of Mrs. Chlor Patterson, which was leased and later bought by E. C. Hall, Moscow for opal mining.

GOLD IS FOUND NEAR PALOUSE

HARVEST HAND BREAKS PIECE
OF LEDGE AND HAS ASSAYED
—TESTS FOUR HUNDRED AND
FOURTEEN DOLLARS PER TON.

It is reported that Verne Hull, a familiar character around Palouse, while working in the harvest fields on the old Sam Ullery place, discovered a ledge of rock which to him had the appearance of quartz. He broke off a piece of the stone and showed it to the owner of the place, telling him that he believed it to be quartz.

The owner of the land accordingly sent the stone to an assay office and the assay proved to yield a little over \$414 to the ton.

The Ullery Place lies about six miles southeast of Palouse and the discovery of mineral bearing quartz there simply bears out stories told by early prospectors and old timers in this community. It has long been known to old timers that a chain of mineral extended across the Palouse country between Potlatch and Palouse, crossing the river this side of Kennedy ford, evidently leading from mineral deposits in the mountains beyond.

These croppings are especially found south of the Palouse river in the Cove and crossing the Moscow mountains, when they are lost track of.

In years past considerable interest was taken by people in this vicinity in these croppings and work has been done, for instance, on the J. M. Kincaid place, where a shaft was sunk and specimens obtained that showed a fair deposit of gold. Such work was done only in a crude manner, no one ever having searched for minerals in a scientific manner.

WILL DEVELOP BISHOP COAL FIND

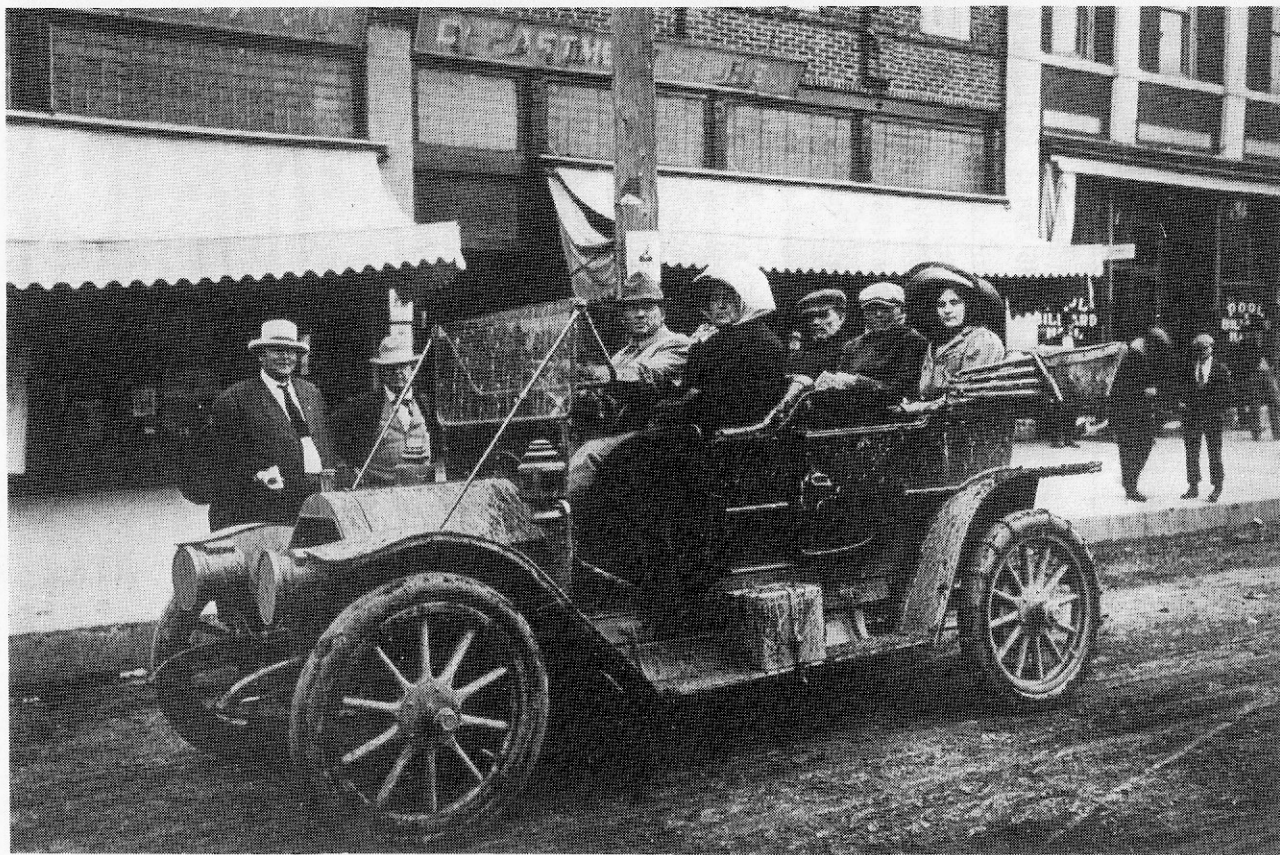
A Company Is Organized in Palouse With
\$100,000 Capital Stock.

A LOCAL MINING MAN IS AT THE HEAD

Will Commence Operations at Once.—Believe
Large Deposits of Coal Exist North-
west of Palouse.

It is now an assured fact that the coal find on the Bishop farm six miles northwest of Palouse will be developed and that the development will be brought about by Palouse men. The Palouse River Coal & Development company was organized here Wednesday with the following officers: Paul Bockmier, president and manager; J. W. Comer, vice-president; Geo. M. Carey, secretary and treasurer; Carl Smith, of Minnesota, consulting engineer. These men, with H. R. Sanderson, a capitalist of Seattle, are the incorporators. The organization is formed with a capital stock of \$100,000. Ten thousand shares of the stock will be placed on the market at once, Mr. Carey having charge of the sale of the stock.

The company has 1,440 acres of land under lease in the neighborhood, including the Bishop find, on which the coal was encountered last spring at a depth of some 200 feet in a well which was being drilled. It is believed that the territory is underlaid with heavy veins of coal,



—Photo Courtesy Paul Byers

Mine promoters return to Palouse from the Mizpah Copper Mine, 1912.

Mining in the Palouse

by J. B. West

Gold was first discovered at the headquarters and tributaries of the Palouse River in the mountains of western Idaho in the year 1861, and is still being found there. When Palouse City, Washington, was founded on the river in 1874, it became the gateway and the "jumping-off place" for the gold seekers. Although no gold was ever found near Palouse City, it became the "mining town" of the area. Miners who needed to replenish their supplies or were on their way out of the country always traveled to Palouse City first, where their gold was accepted as legal tender. Mining played an important role in the early growth of the town before lumbering became the major industry.

Most of the prospectors were transients who stayed only long enough to accumulate a stake, so they could move on in search of richer fields. But others, attracted by the wide meadows along the many streams, the tall trees, the abundance of water, fish, and wildlife, took up homesteads and built permanent homes. These homesteaders could do the work required on their farms and continue to work their mines if they so desired. Palouse City was "their town" and it remained so for a couple of generations. A trip to Palouse City meant an overnight stay there. They could put the team in a livery barn, secure a room, and spend the night on the town, as nearly all businesses remained open until late in the evening. At one time, in the late 1880's a stage coach made scheduled trips to Meadow Creek, in the mining area, which was as far as a team could travel in one day. Even after the railroad was built and automobiles came into use, these former miners were familiar figures in town. In my younger days I became acquainted with many of them.

The Grizzle family settled on the land that is now Laird Park. They established a trading post, and a small settlement grew up around it. When the nearby mines petered out and the little settlement was on its way to becoming a ghost town, the Chinese came in to rework the claims for gold that had been overlooked. The sordid story is told that white men came back and murdered the Chinese for the gold they had found. It is said that none of the murderers was punished, as the Chinese were considered fair game. The Chinese soon learned to hide their gold as soon as they acquired it, but it is believed that they often had to flee for their lives and were unable

(Continued on Page 6)

(Photo on page 4). C. E. Frederick's Chalmers car as it arrived in Palouse Monday evening from the Mizpah Mine (copper). It is the first car to make the trip to the mine. The road, from Harvard in, is mountainous, and it is only during recent months that it has been possible to make the entire trip by wagon. Until recent years what is now a passable road was but a trail, the only means of transportation being a packhorse. The trip made by the Frederick party was through heavy woods, rain falling almost continuously from the time the party left here until the return Monday. Coming back it was necessary to saw trees out of the road and cut the way through the underbrush in order to avoid the impassible places in the road. In the party were C. E. Frederick, president of the company, Mrs. Frederick (front seat), J. C. Northrup, the heaviest stock holder in the Mizpah, Stanton Frederick and Miss Nellie Northrup. Behind the car, left to right, W. R. Belvail and W. F. Chelenor, both heavy stockholders in the Mizpah, are seen. **Palouse Republic**, Sept. 6, 1912.

(Continued from page 5)

to retrieve it. Years later a Chinese employed as a cook in Colfax said he had such a treasure but that he was never going back to search for it. Grizzle Camp disappeared without a trace, as did another camp on Jerome Creek.

Another miner on Gold Hill took over nearby claims that had been abandoned and hired Chinese to rework them. It is claimed that at one time he had eighty Chinese on his payroll.

It is estimated that one-and-a-half million dollars in gold was taken out by all the prospectors. In the late 1930's a Spokane man set up a dredge a few miles upstream from Laird Park to work the gravel of the river bed. He built a home there and the dredging continued for three years. The dredge ruined the stream bed, killed all the fish, and muddied the Palouse River for its entire length, but one-and-a-half million dollars in gold was recovered.

But the town of Palouse was to have its own mine. Coal was discovered along Cedar Creek about four miles north of Palouse, a mile or so upstream from its confluence with the Palouse River, on land that was farmed by the Fulton family. Paul Bockmier, Sr., who had spent most of his career prospecting for gold in Idaho, formed a corporation to develop the coal mine. When he first came to the country he settled in a log cabin near the site where coal was later discovered. It was there that his son, Paul, Junior, was born. High on the hill across the river from the mine was the farm where by parents lived when they came to the country in 1890, and where my brother, Clayton, was born. I knew the Fulton children in school, and around 1912 I visited them and saw a tunnel being driven into the hillside in search of the coal. At about that time, the old Farmers Union Company was shipping coal into Palouse and paying \$1.50 per ton loaded on the car in Utah.

Promoters of this and other coal deposits lying between Palouse and Elberton claimed the seams to average six feet in thickness. It was stated that the coal fields would mean riches for everyone in the Palouse. □

The most important strike in the history of the mining district east of Palouse was made last week when a ledge of rich copper-bearing ore was encountered in tunnel No. 5 of the Mizpah Copper Mining Company's property at a depth of 250 feet. **Palouse Republic**, Sept. 6, 1912.

Turning Out Pressed Brick

The Palouse Pottery Manufacturing Company began Tuesday the manufacture of pressed brick with the new plant installed recently. The machine has a capacity of 20,000 brick a day, but so far this amount has not been turned out because the plant has been necessarily run short handed. The first sample of brick burned showed a fine quality. The pottery is also fully equipped for tile making, and has an order for five carloads for the sewer system at Potlatch.—**Palouse Republic**, Sept. 14, 1906.

Opal Mining

Jeanette Fleener Talbott

A sunny spring week-end afternoon would be a favorite time for a small group of neighborhood teenagers to try their luck at the Moscow Opal Mines. Armed with hammers or small mallets we would walk to the rock strewn site. There were no longer any tunnels or excavations apparent—only some unpromising looking grey basalt rock.

A sharp blow with a hammer might expose the milky sheen of a creamy looking surface or sometimes a glassy, bubbly deposit in a small void in the rock.

Occasionally a cry of discovery would send us all running to see the flashing color of some one's lucky find. That cry might also mean that one of the girls had turned over a rock and found a sleepy garter snake.

A find of some kind happened often enough so that we usually kept at our search for three or four hours. Who knew when Lady Luck would be with us? As far as I remember no one found opals of a size to mount in jewelry, but the memories of companionship, of high anticipation and of seeing those vivid bits of greens, blues and pinks are as treasured as a jewel. □

Footnote: Mrs. John Talbott (Jeanette Fleener) is the daughter of Dora Fleener, who recently published "Palouse Country Yesterdays."

Working in the Gold Hill Mine

by Perry Cram
as told to Kay Kenedy Turner

During the Depression I bought a home in Colfax, got married and went up to the Gold Hill Mine. We lived there for over a year and worked for nothing, but was taking out stock in the mine.

That was the best part of my life, up there in the hills, as I liked the mountains and the timber. We came into town about every two weeks and would buy enough groceries to last. There was a cow up at the mine so we didn't have to buy our own milk. It didn't cost anything to live in those days.

I kept the stock I got in the mine; I still have stock in it but never got anything from it. At one time I had the whole thing. Besides working up there, five of us got a mortgage on it. It was a hundred and ninth-three acres. We took a mortgage on it for \$2,000 to pay the company out of debt. A man by the name of Pernell was head of the company and he let the mortgage come due on it and then tangled it up on the five of us. We were going to foreclose on him, so, he came down and told us that if we would turn over the mortgage the company would sell the timber on the land and jointly open up the mine and get it going. So, we signed over the mortgage and let them sell the timber. As far as I know, nothing was done at the mine. But Pernell got all the money and we lost the mine. So that was the end of that! □

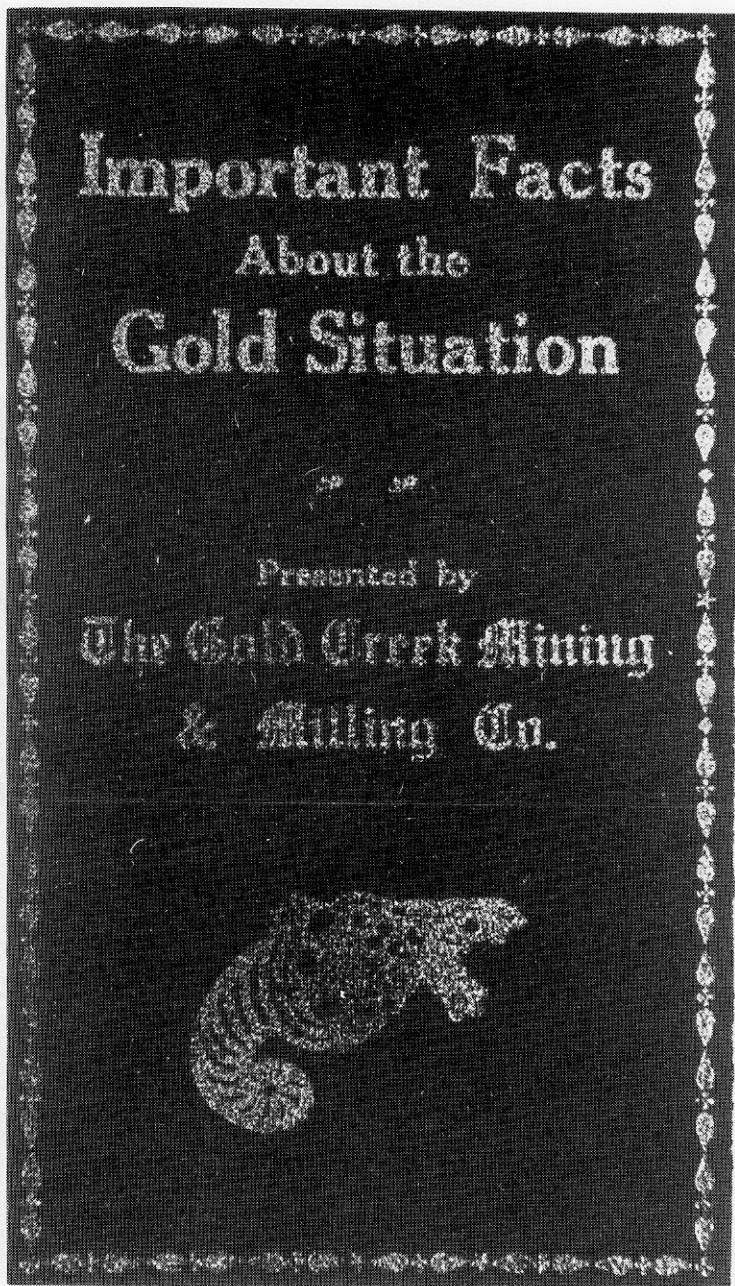
Footnote: Perry Cram was born at Penawawa on July 4, 1894 and has lived in Whitman County most of his life. He served in the Army in France during World War I. Perry currently resides in Colfax.



—Photo Courtesy Paul Bockmier, Jr. Collection

Paul T. Bockmier, Sr. (1856-1935)

Mr. Bockmier was an early mining promoter in the Palouse and Gold Hill areas. At one time he was interested in the oil fields of Pennsylvania. He came to Palouse in 1885, turning to mining in 1895. He was the father of Charles Bockmier, Moscow, Idaho, and the late Paul T. Bockmier, Jr. of Garfield.



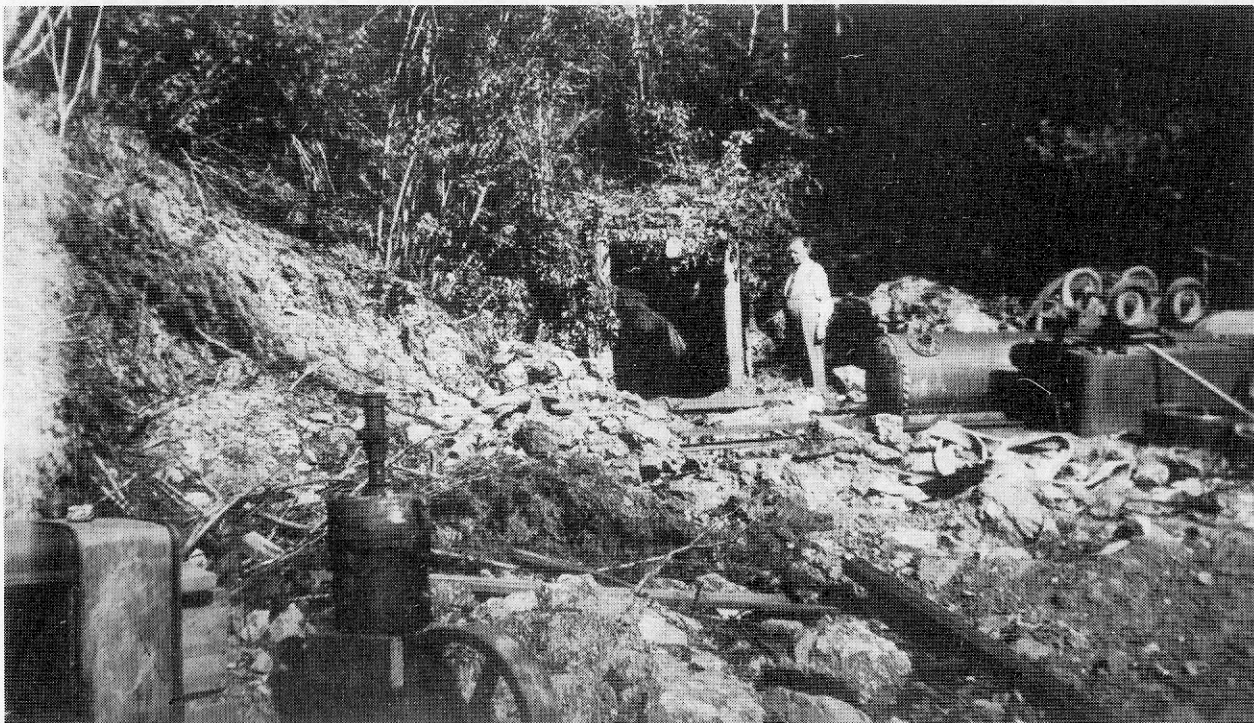
—Photo Courtesy Paul T. Bockmier, Jr. Collection

Copy of a small brochure, gold on purple paper, issued by the above named company in 1920 or 1921. Paul Bockmier, Sr. was the company's manager.



—Photo Courtesy Paul Bockmier, Jr. Collection

Gold Hill Post Office built in the late 1860's located about one and one-half miles north of Gold Hill in Township 42 N. Range 4 West, Section 11 near the Carrico Gold Mine. L. to R. Paul Bockmier and a Mr. Brown, with gun. Picture taken in 1924.



—Photo Paul Bockmier, Jr. Collection

Old Mine Diggings

This photograph was found with that shown on page 10 and is assumed to have been taken at the Gold Hill Mine or nearby.

News Items on Early Mining Activity

by Dorothy (Sevier) Matson

Gold Found in Albion

A good many gold nuggets were found in Rowe's Artesian well in Albion in August, 1894. A prospect hole was sunk and gold was found from eighteen to twenty-two feet in the sand and gravel strata.¹ Some Albion folks believed that the well has been "salted."²

Two fair-sized gold nuggets were found in the crops of two hens belonging to R. M. Bachus in the spring of that year. A man even bought a hundred chickens from Mr. Bachus in the hopes of finding a gold nugget in every chicken.³ Another gold nugget was found along the creek and many prospectors were out prospecting.⁴

Moscow Opal Mine

Opals were discovered in September, 1890 on the William Leasure farm in Whitman County. The location was five miles from Pullman on Missouri Flat Creek. These opals were also found while digging a well. The opals were found twenty-six feet below the surface. Mr. Leasure was disturbed when two hundred mining claims were staked out. He had made final proof on his land and he didn't think people could stake out claims there. It was later called "The Moscow Opal Mine" and S. Barghorn and E. C. Hall brought it in March, 1897.⁵ (A book entitled "The Moscow Opal Mines 1890-1893" by Ron Brockett is a very good history of this mine.)

Pullman Miners and Prospectors

Blackmen Bros., of Pullman advertised that they could fix miners up in good shape with blankets, tenting canvas, and miners hob nail shoes,⁶ but G. H. Pilcher decided to buy his supplies in Vancouver, B.C. as he wouldn't have to pay duty there as he would have to pay locally.⁷

Some of the Pullman miners who went to the Klondike, Yukon Territory, in 1897 and 1898 were: C. L. Day, G. H. Pilcher, R. M. Hester, and A. B. Hardwick.⁸

Robert Hester wrote the following letter to his wife from the Klondike in January, 1898. The letter was printed in the Pullman Herald and is paraphrased below:

Flour Better Than Gold

They arrived at Skagway and went over the trail as far as White Horse Rapids, one-hundred-fifty miles distant. At this time in January 1898, Klondike parties brought alarming news of the prevalence of famine at Dawson. While Hester and Hardwick were debating whether or not to go on, parties from Dawson offered them a large contract for carrying flour to the half-starved Klondikers. They were offered \$100 a sack for all the flour they could take. The offer was accepted and leaving their boats and belongings cached near the rapids, they started back to Skagway walking over the snow and ice-covered lakes and reached Skagway in eight days. They bought a ton of flour and with sleds went to White Horse Rapids. There, they waited for the spring thaw before going on to Dawson.

Mr. Hester sent his wife a small gold nugget given him by a Seattle man.

At present, Mr. Hester and Hardwick work at Skagway for \$1.00 per hour.

The spring rush has already begun and hundreds of prospectors bent on going to the Klondike arrived at Skagway by every boat.⁹

Coal Discovered While Digging Wells

Coal was discovered while digging several other wells in Pullman. When Edward Henry Letterman's well was being dug, coal was found one hundred eighty feet below the surface. The outcropping can be seen near the depot.¹⁰ Coal, several inches thick was found one hundred eighteen feet below the surface when John J. Shupe drilled Elias Johnson's well.¹¹ As Pullman's Seventh Artesian Well was being drilled, many chunks of coal were thrown up. The quality wasn't as good as that found in the other wells.¹²

The Cyprus Mine

The Cyprus Mine was named after the Island of Cyprus where in ancient days, the first great copper mines were discovered. A million dollars were incorporated in March, 1897 on land owned by E. T. Gimmel near Volmer (now Troy, Idaho). The incorporators were: T. W. Busby, O. E. Young, H. G. Depledge, D. F. Staley and Ellsworth F. Gannon.

One test assayed on surface rock showed: 11.7 percent copper, \$4.61 in silver and \$16.54 in gold or a total value of \$46.89 per ton.¹³

Mr. Gimmel leased the mine to Young, Gannon and Busby in February, 1897.¹⁴

The Chinese also joined the "mining fever." "Ah Jim" said; "Me catchum 1,000 shares Clysus, buy him of Stalaley (Staley). You savey Stalaley—for \$25 mining stock—Alle same, gamble, mebbe lose him all."¹⁵

The Watcheer Mine at Florence, Idaho

The Watcheer Mine at Florence, Idaho was being mined by Pullman people by August, 1897. Some were successful, but others came back empty handed. R. Lanning, F. D. Gelwick, and J. R. Moys came back empty handed that year, but C. O. Morrell brought back some choice samples of ore.¹⁶

M. C. True of "Trues's Palace Hotel" of Pullman would go to Florence to mine and spend the summer with his family.¹⁷ He planned to build a home there.¹⁸

Snow sometimes get pretty deep in Florence, Idaho, and the spring thaw in July, 1897 was late melting. The True and Morrell parties had to wade through mud getting to their mine.¹⁹ Attorney Harvey planned to join them in August. Thomas Duff had been running a pack string for eight years about this time.²⁰

William Williams was killed by a falling tree while he and M. C. True were felling a tree near their mine at Florence. Mr. True seemed to be in a dangerous place as the tree was falling, William watched Mr. True get to a safe place without regard to his own safety. A topmost branch of the falling tree struck William and killed him instantly. William was placed in the snow and his brother, J. William, was notified. The spring thaw made the mountain trail difficult and it was first thought that William would have to be buried in Florence, but his brother arrived and brought his body back to Pullman for burial.²¹

Old timers of Pullman remember "Prospector Martin" of "Over the Lo Lo Trail" fame. He spent a good part of his life looking for a \$100,000 mine and he found it in July, 1897 along the Lo Lo Creek. The rich ledge assayed at \$950 per ton. Some Pullman miners prospected with him the year before. (Continued on page 15)

The Mining and Milling Company

The Mining and Milling Company was located about sixty miles above Lewiston on the Snake River and was mostly made up of Pullman stockholders. The manager was A. B. Baker.²³

Pres Brewink, Jo Lingg and Abe Johnson planned to run a launch to the mine. A forty horsepower gas engine, thirty foot launch, named the "Swastica," was being built in December, 1913. Platinum was found in this mine along with other minerals in April, 1925.²⁵

George Eastman, of Pullman, had a display of rocks in his window in the fall of 1897. The specimens were from the Minnehaha mines.²⁶

W. L. Richey and John Gibbert staked some claims along Blue Ledge. The claims were located where the Grande Ronde empties into the Snake River near Wild Goose Rapids.²⁷

J. A. Wilkinson had an interest in the Kaufman Mine on Knott Creek in Latah Co., Idaho. This valuable mine was developed in November, 1889.²⁸

Phillip Bremer and his son, George, went prospecting near Kettle Falls in March, 1890. Ellsworth F. Gannon and Post went by wagon to the Colville reservation to prospect in May, 1897.³⁰

Petrified Tree Trunk Found Near Diamond

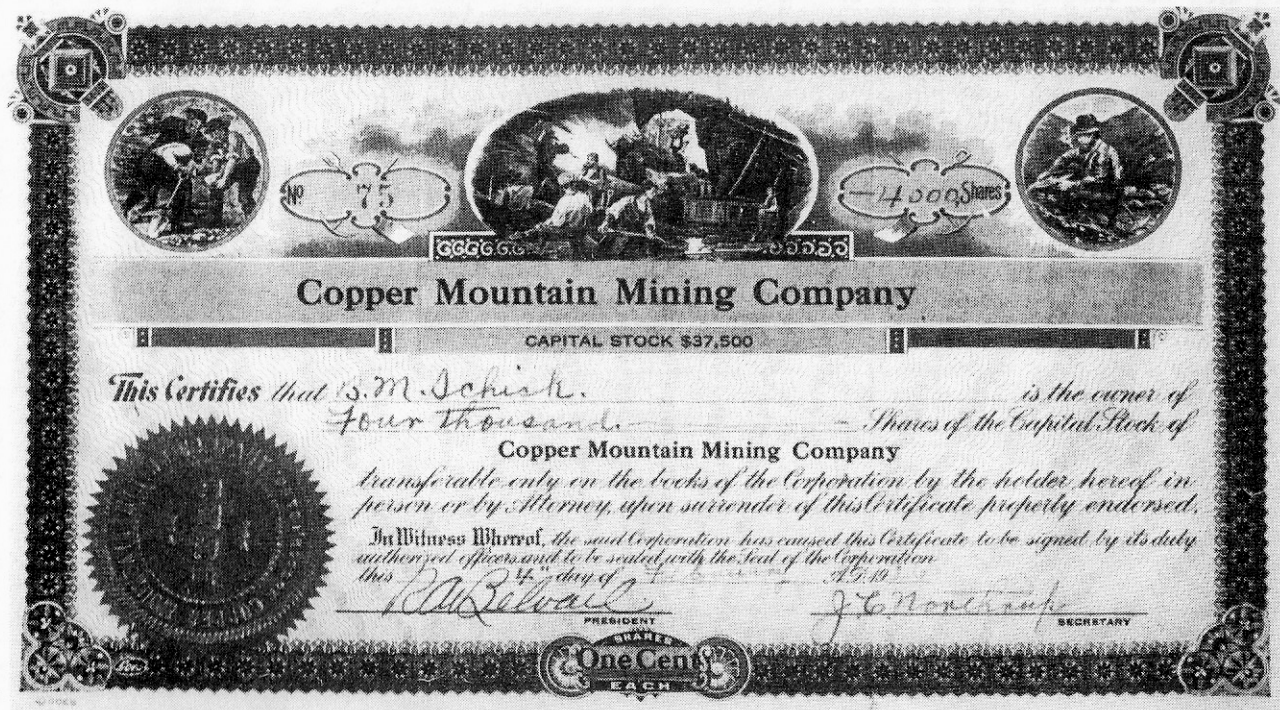
A three foot petrified tree trunk was found December, 1970 while Bob Thomas, contract bulldozer operator, was leveling and filling dirt alongside the former dump-ground about three miles from Diamond on the Palouse River. Arrowhead diggers and other rock hounds uncovered some more of it. Later, Stan McClintock, state highway employee, and Loren Anderson excavated a hole around it; from five to six feet across and ten feet deep and removed more of the log.³¹

A small piece of petrified tree was also found several years ago near Ralph Morton's place on the South Palouse River.

The search for gold and precious metals gripped these early Pullman and Albion pioneers. Some struck it rich, but others came home without having discovered fame and fortune and went back to farming, running a hotel, draying or other occupations. □

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One of the many mining stock certificates that “papered” Whitman County during the mining boom in the early part of the century. This certificate was issued to B. M. Schick, Editor of the *Palouse Republic*, in 1926. Certificate loaned to the editor by Fred Olson, whose wife is the daughter of Mr. Schick.



Stock certificate issued to J. B. West in lieu of cash for groceries purchased by miners at the Lost Wheelbarrow Mine in 1941.

The Lost Wheelbarrow Gold Mine

J. B. West

One of the stories to come out of the old Palouse River mining days was about the Lost Wheelbarrow Gold Mine. According to the story, two partners made a rich gold strike in a remote area. They were rarely seen except when they came out for supplies, and few people knew them or the location of the mine. One day the older man came out alone and, instead of returning to the claim, left the country. He was never seen again.

There was speculation about the young partner who had been left behind, until he, too, came out. He made inquiries in Palouse about his partner and then left the country himself. Nearly twenty years later he returned and told his story. He said that he and his partner had accumulated about twenty thousand dollars in gold and then had quarrelled. The older man had hit him on the head with a pick and knocked him unconscious. When he came to, he found his partner had gathered his belongings and departed with all the gold.

The younger man was not badly hurt and set out determined to overtake his former partner and settle accounts, after which he planned to return and continue work at the mine. But he never found his partner, and when he eventually returned was unable to find the mine. He said that he remembered it as being on the south side of one of the Moscow mountains, but after several unproductive weeks was giving up the search for it. He assured everyone that there was still plenty of gold to be mined there and that it would be worth hunting for. The mine could be identified by a wheelbarrow constructed of barrel staves which had been left in it. Ever since, it has been known as the Lost Wheelbarrow Gold Mine.

It was no doubt this story that attracted L. J. Moore, a mining engineer, to the area. He looked over the old gold country, with its hundreds of abandoned claims, and apparently liked what he saw. He moved to Palouse in 1940 and began making acquaintances. I had one of the five grocery stores in town and was among the first to know him. He said he was interested in inspecting some of the old diggings to see if any of them might be developed further. When asked about someone familiar with the mining area to act as a guide, he was referred to young Charles Bockmier, whose father, Paul Bockmier, Sr., had spent many years exploring the area.

The two men visited an old mine on Gold Hill, just east of Potlatch, which originally had been explored by a prospector who found nothing. The Senior Bockmier had thought the place looked promising and had sunk a shaft but with no better success. Moore decided that this was a good place to set up his own mining operation. Gold Hill, rising from Gold Creek, seemed to be a likely place for a lost mine. Furthermore, it was less than an hour's drive from Palouse, the base of his operation; it was accessible to two state highways, and a short distance from several towns at which supplies could be purchased.

Moore became acquainted with Doctor Treichler, an osteopath who had practiced in Palouse for a number of years, and with Jack Sheets, a long-time barber in town, and told them he would like to take them to Gold Hill. He said that as an engineer he thought the prospects for uncovering pay dirt were very good. If they were interested he would let them in on the ground floor of a corporation he was organizing to raise capital to carry out further exploration. The corporation was formed, called the Lost Wheelbarrow Gold Mining Company. It had an announced capitalization

of \$500,000, and certificates with a par value of 10¢ per share were printed. The location of the lost mine in the old story was nowhere near Gold Hill, but there was no proof that it was not located there.

Moore brought two men with their wives into our store and said he would like to make arrangements for them to charge groceries by the month, as they were going to work in his mine. He promised to pay the bills promptly on the first of the month when he received a statement. As a guarantee he signed a check in blank which I could fill out if his monthly check did not arrive. The account was a good one. The customers were careful buyers and did not take advantage of the situation in any way. Checks arrived promptly for a number of months. We discovered later that Moore had hired a number of other families and apparently had made similar arrangements in stores in nearby towns. Moore went around the farming community and purchased old farming machinery at inflated prices—paying for it in mining stock. He bought two Caterpillar tractors and other equipment that looked useful for working a mine. He set his crew to work building a road to the mine and cottages for themselves. A schoolhouse was also built and one of the mothers hired as a teacher. This gave the new camp a touch of permanence. But someone remarked that while the cabins might stand for the summer, they looked as though they would collapse with the weight of the first winter snow.

Now, with the stage all set, Moore launched a nationwide stock-selling campaign. Headlines reading LONG LOST WHEELBARROW GOLD MINE REDISCOVERED appeared in newspapers throughout the United States and abroad. The **Pullman Herald** came out with a half-page coverage of the story. The news was broadcast on national radio networks, and Doctor Treichler traveled, with all expenses paid, to New York City to tell the story on "People to People," a national radio talk show.

After the news had broken, automobiles, many bearing license plates from distant states, began to appear. On weekends so many visitors wanted to see the mine that guards had to be stationed on the narrow mountain road in order to control the traffic. Visitors were thrilled at seeing an old mining camp in full operation, and many were looking for an opportunity to get in on the ground floor while stock was still available. The mining crew, who had been paid partially in mining stock, were not averse to selling their shares to eager visitors.

Then we began to hear disturbing rumors about the success of the operation. The day came when no check arrived in payment of the grocery account. When the families came in for their next order and were told that no groceries were forthcoming, they became greatly agitated as if they had suspected this would happen. They left town, and we never saw them again.

By this time Moore had left Palouse and had moved to Coeur d'Alene. I called him on the telephone about the past-due account. He said he was broke and that a check of his would be no good, but that he would be glad to settle the account by issuing me a stock certificate in the mining corporation. When the certificate arrived a few days later, I placed it with Moore's blank check, deep in my files hoping never to see them again. I charged off the account as a bad debt, and did not enter the certificate on my books as an asset. I never saw Moore again.

No gold was ever found in the mine, but it was rumored that Moore had made a nice fortune from the sale of stock and had gone to Canada. The local men who were let into the operation on the ground floor were investigated for possible fraud, but were not found to be implicated in any way.

COEUR d'ALENE BRANCH
THE IDAHO FIRST NATIONAL BANK ⁹²⁻²⁷/₁₂
OF BOISE

COEUR d'ALENE, IDAHO, May 13 1939

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

Went's Grocery

\$

DOLLARS

No. _____

J. J. Moore

PRINTED AT THE

Blank check given to J. B. West to be filled in as needed to pay for groceries obtained by Lost Wheelbarrow Mine employees. It continues to be uncashable.

Thirty-five years passed. One evening about 9:30, I received a telephone call. A voice said:

"I called Information and asked for the name of some person who had lived in Palouse a long time, and she gave me your name and telephone number. I lived in your town in 1940 and would like to contact a Doctor Treichler and a young man named Charlie Bockmier who tramped over the Idaho Mountains with me looking at old mines."

I replied, "I was living in Palouse at that time. What is your name and where are you calling from?"

"I am L. J. Moore, and I am calling from Toronto."

I said, "I remember you and you should remember me. You gave me a stock certificate in the Lost Wheelbarrow Mining Co. in payment of a grocery bill of about \$250.00. I have forgotten the denomination of the certificate, which we both knew was worthless, but I have it in my files."

I told him that Doctor Treichler had returned to his old home town in New York State. Also that Charles Bockmier still lived in the area, and I gave him his telephone number. When he had written it down, Moore became very friendly and said,

"I am very grateful for this information and for your courtesy. I'll tell you what I would like to do. I have a rich gold mine coming in near the Alaskan boundry of northern Canada, and as soon as it begins paying off, I would like to buy back that stock you have." I told him that the money would be welcome after so long a time. He said I would hear from him later and we hung up.

The next day I dug into my old files and found the stock certificate as bright and new as ever. It was for 12,500 shares, with a par value of \$1,250, five times the amount of the unpaid grocery account. Moore seemed so genuinely regretful about the worthless stock that I wondered if he might not now redeem it at par value, or even more. I would just have to wait and see.

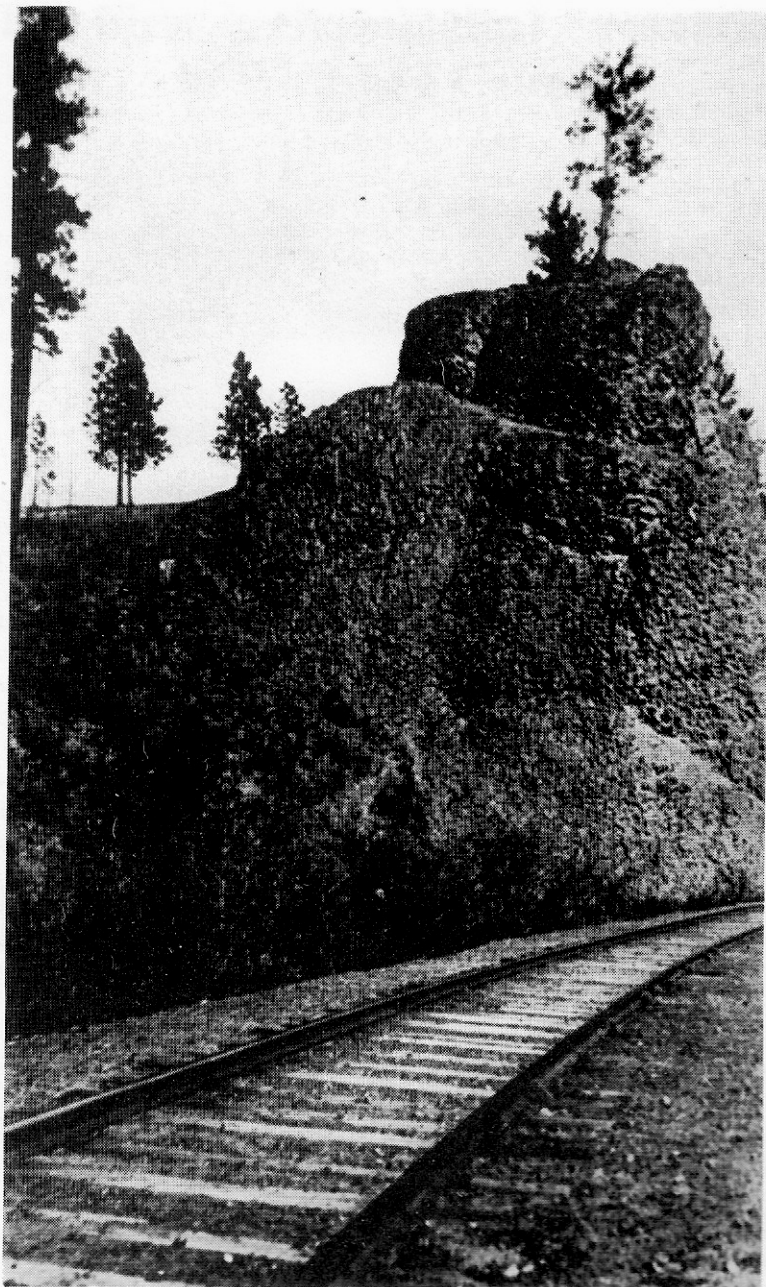
Later, in December, I received a large envelope in the mail. There was no return address on it, but it bore a Toronto postmark. It had to be from Moore. I tore open the envelope. Inside was a folded Christmas card. Opening it, I saw the well known signature of L. J. Moore under a very sentimental printed holiday greeting. But no check fell out. What did it all mean? My imagination sought the answers. It might mean that Moore still cared for me and regretted that he could not send a check as promised, but would cut me in on a share of the profits of his new mine. On a rich find, my share could be worth a million.

Three years have passed. No more calls, no checks, no Christmas cards. Maybe he will remember me in his will. □

A Deed Most Foul!

On December 11, 1912, Jesse Dillman, a miner, lured Agnes Liner, sister of a Mizpah mine foreman, into the mine where he killed her after she refused to marry him. He shot her with a revolver. **Palouse Republic**, December 13, 1912.

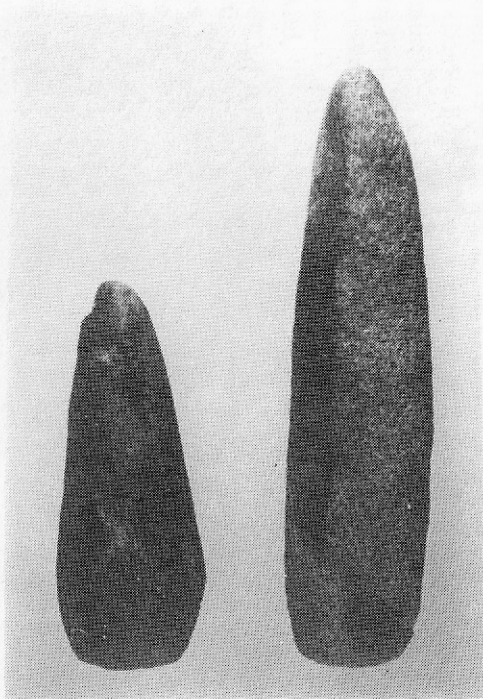
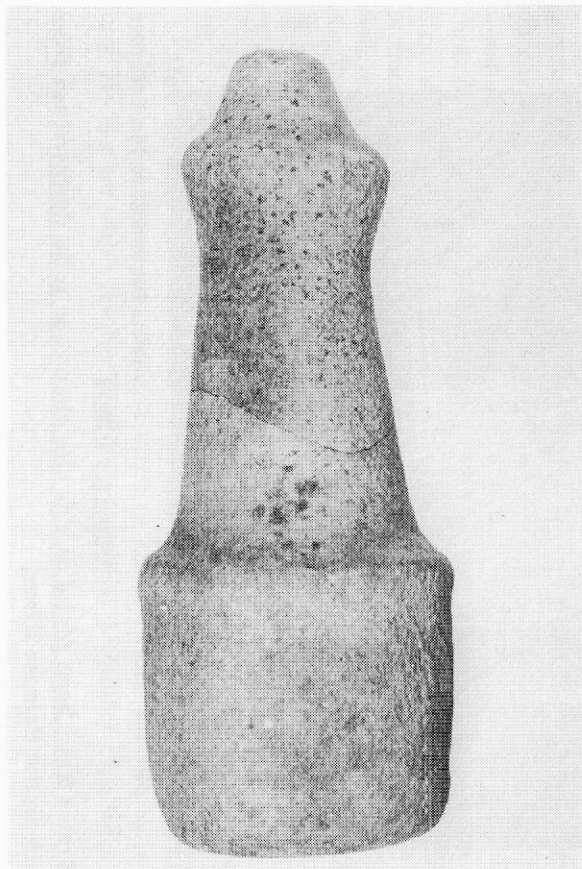
Pioneer Fire Brick and Tile Co. to be founded in 1903 to produce fire brick, sewer pipe, and tiling on the R. T. Cox farm southeast of Palouse where a larger body of fire clay is located. **Palouse Republic**, Aug. 29, 1902.



—Photo Paul Bockmier, Jr. Collection

Agate Cliff

Agates have been found at this site about one mile downstream from Palouse on the Palouse River.



—Photos Courtesy Roderick Sprague

Nez Perce pestles from area archaeological sites.

The First Archaeological Excavation in Whitman County

by Roderick Sprague
University of Idaho

The earliest recording of archaeological work in Whitman County was a brief article in the 1889 issue of **The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal** on excavations conducted in 1887 (Anonymous 1889). The journal, containing semi-popular archaeological material, was published in Chicago from 1878 to 1914. The article in its entirety reads:

AN ABORIGINAL COAT OF MAIL.—Some two years ago Mr. J. H. Hunge, now a banker in La Harpe, Ill., was in Washington Territory, He discovered in Almota, in Walla Walla valley, (the editor's knowledge of regional geography was obviously deficient) on the Snake river, a group of eight or ten mounds, and among the mounds a grave which contained some interesting relics. The relics seem to have constituted the coat of mail and war implements of some Indian chief, a chief who had contact with the early Spanish settlers or discoverers. There was in the grave a long, rusty steel sword, the head of a lance or dirk, and the coat of the chief. The dagger or dirk is about eleven inches long and three and a half inches wide, and has a crescent-shaped guard above the blade, but a tang which contained a socket for a handle, which should be at right angles with the blade. The coat was made of a vast number of copper tubes which were strung on **twine** cords and woven into shape of a coat, small tubes forming the collar and long tubes forming the main part of the coat. On the breast there were several large perforated disks made from sea-shells, the wide part of the *Buscyon perversa*. The coat was large enough to cover the breast and back and the tubes were so near together as to serve as a protection against arrows. It is probable that there was a fringe below the tubes, but this had disappeared. Along with the coat were several copper rings, one a heavy ring designed for the wristlet; another a light ring for the nose; several others designed as ornaments for the coat; also eight elk teeth, stained blue by the copper. The mounds contained some steatite mortars and pestles, though it is uncertain whether they belonged to the same age as the grave. The grave was on a terrace in a dry place and was so situated that the perishable material was likely to be preserved for a long time. This is an important find, since it connects history with prehistory, as the iron belonged to the historic period, but the copper tubes were of prehistoric character.

The grave referred to is undoubtedly a cairn grave typical of the lower Snake River archaeological region. The "coat of mail" is a perfect description of the rolled copper, tubular bead necklaces and breastplates found in the area during the early historic period (ca. 1780-1820). The "nose ring" was more likely an earring. The copper tubes, while of native fabrication, are certainly of the historic period and the stone artifacts would easily fit temporally with the historic goods. The sword is probably an iron digging stick. The dagger is more difficult to identify but certainly does not require Spanish contact for explanation.

I first discovered this reference while working on my doctoral dissertation (Sprague

FOOTNOTE: Dr. Sprague is head of Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Idaho.

1967) at the University of Arizona in 1964. In the hope of finding the present location of these artifacts I carried on extensive correspondence with descendants of J. H. Hungate and several museums in Illinois as well as other museums with which Hungate is know to have corresponded. I first contacted William E. Bradshaw, editor of **The Quill**, the only newspaper in LaHarpe, Illinois. He put me in touch with John L. Hungate, a grandson in Sterling, Illinois. Mr. Hungate recalled that his grandfather had a room full of artifacts in his barn. He in turn put me in contact with DeEtte (Mrs. Louis) Schirm, a remarried daughter-in-law in Burbank, California. She indicated that the household of J. H. Hungate was broken up about 1924 but recalled nothing of the material described in the article. A niece of J. H. Hungate, Mrs. Marion H. Smith, of LaHarpe, and a granddaughter, Elizabeth Hungate (Mrs. K. T.) Wenstel of Sterling, Illinois, could add nothing to the possible fate of the artifacts.

Museums contacted with negative results included: Smithsonian Institution, Washington; Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago; Illinois State Museum, Springfield; University of Illinois Museum of Natural History, Urbana; Illinois State University Museum, Normal; Peoria Historical Society, Peoria; Illinois State Archaeological Society (B. W. Stephens, President, 1965), Quincy; and Davenport Public Museum, Davenport, Iowa. It is know from Mrs. Schirm that an object was sent to the Smithsonian Institution, however the Smithsonian records indicate only that an inscribed stone from near LaHarpe, Illinois, was sent in 1892 and returned in 1898.

From what little I can determine, J. H. Hungate was an attorney and a banker in LaHarpe. A later issue of **The American Antiquarian** (Anonymous 1891) mentions a J. W. Hungate of LaHarpe who was associated with the Bank of Hungate, Ward & Co. Today we can only speculate that J. H. Hungate was probably visiting relatives in Almota in 1887. Gilbert (1882 Appendix: 59) lists a J. A. Hungate who was born in Macomb, Illinois, on 24 July 1844, came to California in 1864, to Washington Territory (Walla Walla), with his brother?, H. H. Hungate(?) in 1873, and finally to Almota in 1880 where he was listed as the proprietor of a flour mill.

It is truly unfortunate that today we cannot locate the artifacts from the earliest historical archaeological report in the state of Washington (Sprague 1975:7) and the earliest known archaeological excavation in Whitman County. □

Anonymous

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1975 The Development of Historical Archaeology in the Pacific Northwest. **Northwest Anthropological Research Notes**, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 6-19 Moscow.