

JONAS LONG'S SONS. JONAS LONG'S SONS. JONAS LONG'S SONS. JONAS LONG'S SONS.

THE STORY OF GOLD DISCOVERY IN THE YUKON DISTRICT.

Told by One Who Has Spent Years in Work as a Surveyor Along the Yukon River and Its Tributaries.

In a recent issue the New York Sunday Sun presented a page article on this subject by William Ogilvie, F. R. G. S., who for years has been employed principally in the exploration of the vast north land of Canada, and is conceded to be the greatest living authority upon all matters concerning the far northern portion of America.

Early in the seventies an attempt was made to get over to Teslin lake by Cassiar miners who had learned of the existence of a large lake northward from Cassiar. Several men tried, but unsuccessfully, and returned disgruntled. In 1872, Sept. 2, two north of Ireland men from county Antrim, named Arthur Harper and Frederick W. Hart; George W. Fitch, who came from the vicinity of Kingston, Ontario; Andrew Kamselar, a German; and Sam Wilkinson, an Englishman, left Manson Creek to go on a prospecting trip down the Mackenzie river.

Harper, because gold had been found on the Liard, which empties into the Mackenzie and is one of its principal branches, was under the impression that there was gold on the Mackenzie. They made their way down Peace river, by the Finlay branch, to what is known as Half Way river. There they met a party of men surveying for the Canadian Pacific railway, and unwittingly helped to drive a spike in our great national highway, because they gave their boat to the survey men to make their way up the Peace river. Harper and the others packed their provisions up the Half Way river and over a twenty-five mile portage to the waters of the Nelson river, down which they went until they found it safe for the passage of canoes, when they made a cache and proceeded to make two dug-outs, with which to ascend the Nelson.

In 1871 I was sent by the Dominion government to examine the northeast portion of this province, and coming out by the trail followed by Harper I saw the cache which Harper had told me about in 1872. Well, Harper's party made their way down to the Liard river, where they met two men named McQuesten and Mayo. With them I determined to try my luck on the Liard, and left the others. Harper, Hart, Kamselar and Fitch went down the Mackenzie, across to the Peel, and thence over to Bell's river, an affluent of the Porcupine, and down the Porcupine to Fort Yukon, where Harper saw an Indian who had some native copper which he said came from White river.

Harper determined to try for it. With Fitch and Hart he went 400 miles up the Yukon to White river in September, and thence up White river until they were stopped by running ice, when they made preparations for winter, building a cabin of suitable dimensions. From this point they made prospecting excursions in various directions, mainly in search of the copper, which they did not find. Harper attributes their non-success to the late closing of the river and the thickness of the ice drift, which precluded any attempt to cross it. He believes he saw across the river rock of such peculiar colors as to justify him in at least assuming that he had found a copper vein of considerable extent. He kept that matter a subject of inquiry with the Indians during his long sojourn in the country, and now thinks that he is certain of its location, having from time to time obtained from the Indians of the locality pieces of native copper, and copper ore, all of which seem to him to point to one locality. Where this is he did not tell me, but he hopes, if he lives long enough, to be able to discover and prospect what he considers a very extensive copper district.

THE FIRST PROSPECTS. In the spring, being short of provisions, they made their way down the river, prospecting as they went, and found very good indications in the vicinity of the mouth of the Stewart. But the shortage of provisions prevented their taking advantage of these discoveries. On their way up they ascended Forty Mile river two or three miles, prospecting, and found very good prospects, but the Indians whom they met on that river scared them away by telling them that there was a very dangerous and impassable canyon some distance further up. We now know this is not the case. They found no gold on the Mackenzie, and the result of their prospecting Harper summed up to me thus:

On the Nelson, nothing; on the Liard, but colors; on the Mackenzie, nothing; on the Peel, fair prospects; on the Porcupine, colors; on the Bell, nothing, and on the Yukon, prospects. To obtain provisions they had to make their way to St. Michael, and on their way back they encountered McQuesten and Mayo, who had gone into the service of the Alaska Commercial company. Near the mouth of the Koyukuk Harper saw an Indian with some gold which he said came from a mountain in the vicinity. Harper spent the winter of '74 and '75 prospecting at the point indicated, but found nothing. McQuesten and Mayo, as the result of a conversation with him, went up the stream and established Fort Reliance in August and September, 1874. Harper joined them the following summer, and a partnership was formed which existed until 1889.

CLOSE TO THE KLONDIKE IN '74. Fort Reliance is only six and a half miles from the mouth of the renowned Klondike. While trading it appears that they made very few and short attempts at prospecting.

The valley of the Klondike and its affluents is a favorite hunting ground, but they never prospected there, and if they had done so in the Klondike itself they would have found nothing, for its bed consists of coarse gravel through which fine gold would have soon gone out of sight, and at that time no prospecting was done except surface work. In the summer of 1887 the valley of the Klondike was prospected for upward of forty miles, with no result. Again, in 1893, it was prospected and nothing found.

Early in the '80s gold was found on the Stewart river by miners, prominent among whom were two brothers named Boswell from Peterboro, Ontario. There is little doubt that much of the early mining done in the country was due to the reports of Harper, who has written to old comrades in British Columbia, where he had mined for many years, trying to induce them to try their luck on the Yukon. In 1886 Mr. Harper erected a trading post at the mouth of the Stewart for the benefit of the miners there, some thirty or more in number.

In the same year coarse gold was found on Forty Mile. Now, as coarse gold is what all miners principally search for, as soon as this discovery was made known Stewart River was deserted. Harper left Stewart River in June, 1887, and went down to the mouth of the Forty Mile, where he began the erection of a residence and trading house, the nucleus of the famed town of Forty Mile was prospected its entire length, and the result was that the creeks and gulches on its headwaters on which gold was found would now be a waste of time.

THE FIRST RICH STRIKE. From the headwaters of Forty Mile many went over to the headwaters of Sixty Mile—the two being separated only by a low, narrow divide—the Miller and Glacier creeks were discovered. Miller was considered the richest creek in the country for several years, but would not at all compare with Bonanza or El Dorado. Miller and Glacier creeks were believed to be in Alaska until I produced the flat meridian, which is the International boundary line, and then the fact was established—so far that there can never be any question as to which side of the line they are on. I may state for the information of many, as a case of what those contemplating entry to that country may regard as the usual thing, that Miller Creek was prospected three different times, and on each occasion given up as worthless. Yet, after all, it turned out to be the richest creek known in the country until 1898.

Forty Mile, with Sixty Mile, was the mining ground in that vicinity until 1891, when gold was found on the headwaters of Birch Creek. This discovery was led to by a Canadian missionary, Archdeacon Macdonald of Fort MacPherson on the Peel River. This gentleman, in connection with his missionary labors, had traveled a great deal over the country. In coming from Tanana river he found a nugget in a gulch on one of the head streams of Birch Creek. He reported the find to some miners, and they made search for the place where he had found it. But although they did not find the place answering the description he had given, they found the gold.

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CIRCLE CITY'S ORIGIN. This was the origin of Circle City, which is on the banks of the Yukon, about 200 miles below Forty Mile, and eight miles from the head of Birch creek. This town was begun in 1891, and absorbed the attention of a great many at Forty Mile and the bulk of the newcomers. There are a couple of gulches at the head of Birch Creek which were thought to be rich, and are good—but they cannot be compared with El Dorado. The only one will use the words of an old, experienced miner, who said to me that the Birch Creek diggings "are only Chinese diggings compared with Bonanza or El Dorado."

"Why," he went on, "I know one or two diggings on El Dorado that would not give for the whole Birch Creek district." A good creek was discovered on the head of Forty Mile in the fall of 1895 named Mesquite Creek. As the law allows a claim of 150 feet measured from the head of the creek, the creek the few who were in the country at the time of discovery took up the whole creek by locating claims to that extent, and although the rule up to that time had been claims of 500 feet only.

FINDING THE KLONDIKE. The discovery of the gold on the Klondike, as it is called, although the name is Indian, was made by three men, Robert Henderson, a Canadian, a native of Prince Edward Island; Frank Swenson, a Norwegian, and another man, named Munson, whose nationality is not known. They were in July, 1896, were prospecting on Indian Creek. They proceeded up the creek without finding sufficient to satisfy them until they reached Dominion Creek, and after prospecting there they crossed over the divide and found the head of an affluent of the Klondike, where they got good prospects and went to work. Provisions running short, Henderson retraced his steps to the mouth of Indian Creek, leaving the other two at work. From the mouth of Indian Creek he went up to Sixty Mile, but failing to obtain a supply there he had to make for Forty Mile. On the way down he passed an old mining comrade named George W. Carmack, a native of California, who had associated with him, two Indians, Tagish Jim and Tagish Charlie natives of the upper waters of the Yukon, who proudly claimed to be "King George men," or British Indians.

Now one of the articles of the miner's code is that he shall proclaim his discoveries made by him as soon as possible, and Henderson at once advised Carmack of the discovery on Gold Bottom and advised him to try there. Making inquiries of the local Indians as to the situation of Gold Bottom, Carmack learned the route to it, and, along with the two Indians mentioned, started climbing over the ridge which divides the valley of the Yukon from that of the Bonanza Creek, down into the valley of the Klondike. He went up it about three miles and then followed the ridge dividing its waters from those of Bonanza until he struck the watershed between Indian Creek and the Klondike. Along which he traveled until he reached the head of the creek, that he assumed to be the Gold Bottom. He went down, found Swanson and Munson at work, but was not satisfied with the prospects there, and determined to return and prospect the creek now known as Bonanza from its direction in the Klondike to the westward of his own home.

STRICKING IT RICH. He found nothing of note until he came down about midway, where from a little nook in a bend of the creek he panned out a good prospect. This encouraged him to try again. He did so, and in a few moments panned out \$12.75, which he put in an old cartridge shell and corked with a piece of stick. This was on Aug. 10, 1896. The next day he staked discovery claim and No. 1 below for himself, No. 2 for Tagish Charlie, and No. 1 above for Tagish Jim. He then made his way down the creek as fast as possible and went down the river for a supply of provisions.

On the way he met several miners and informed them of his discovery. At first they would not believe him, as his reputation for truth was not above par. These miners said they could not tell when he was telling the truth, if he ever was, as he was the greatest liar this side of—a great many places. Some of them came to me and asked my opinion. I pointed out to them that there was no question about the man having the \$12.75 in gold. The only question, then, was where did he get it? He had not been up the Sixty Mile nor yet the Forty Mile, and he must have gone to some place near where he was engaged fishing, and that was right at the mouth of the Klondike.

EXCITEMENT BEGINS. Then followed the excitement. Boatload after boatload of men went up from Forty Mile. They went up any how and any way, starting at all times of the day and night. Men who had been drunk and had no money, in fact, were tumbled into the boats and taken up without any knowledge that they were travellers. One man, indeed, was so drunk that he did not realize that he had left Forty Mile until he was more than twenty miles on his way to the Klondike. And yet he owns one of the very best claims in the Klondike district today.

The whole creek for a distance of about twenty miles, lying in the neighborhood of Forty Mile, was staked in a few weeks. El Dorado Creek, seven and a half or eight miles long, providing eighty claims, was staked in the same length of time. Boulder, Adams, and other gulches were prospected, and gave good surface showings, gold being found in the gravel in the creeks. Good surface prospects may be taken as an indication of the existence of very fair bedrock.

It was not until December, however, that the character of the diggings was established. Twenty-one days after the discovery, on Bonanza, was the one which first proved the value of the district. The owner of this claim was in the habit of cleaning up a few tubfuls of dirt every night, and paying his workmen \$1.50 an hour.

WONDERFUL PANS. Claim No. 5, El Dorado, next produced a pan of \$75. This was succeeded by one of \$100, and then another one of \$112. Soon after claim No. 15 showed up a pan of \$212, and this it was that caused the intense excitement in that country. I believe the excitement outside was even greater than it was there, but of that you will know more than I, for you saw it and I did not.

The news went down to Circle City early in December, and it at once emptied itself and came up to Dawson. The scenes of the Forty Mile rush were repeated. The same excitement, in any way they could, at all hours of the day and night, with provisions and empty-barrelled. On their arrival they found that all the creeks had been staked weeks before. A good many Canadians and others who at Circle City and other American points, had been protesting and professions of Americanism, came up to our territory in this rush with certain expectations of realizing something in the new finds by reason of their nationality, and they were disappointed. Professions of loyalty, cursed their luck, and declared it strange indeed that a Canadian or a Briton could not get a foot of ground in his own country.

HOMESTAKERS NUMEROUS. Bonanza and El Dorado creeks afford between them 278 claims; their several affluents will yield as many more, and nearly all of these claims are good. I have no hesitation in saying that about a hundred of those on Bonanza will yield upward of \$30,000,000, and about thirty on the El Dorado will yield \$1,000,000 each. These two creeks will, I am quite confident, turn out from \$60,000,000 to \$75,000,000, and I can safely say that there is no other region in the world that has afforded so many homesteads—that is, fortunes enabling the owners to go home, and enjoy the remainder of their days in ease, considering that the work has had to be done with very limited facilities, the scarcity of provisions and of labor, and that only the crudest appliances are as yet available. When I tell you that to work properly each claim ten or twelve men are required, and that only 500 were available that season, it will give you an idea of the difficulties which had to be contended with.

On Bear Creek, which joins the Klondike about seven or eight miles above that, good claims have been found, and also on Gold Bottom, Hunker, Last Chance, and Cripple creeks. On Gold Bottom as high as \$15 to the pan has been taken, and although we cannot say that they are as rich as El Dorado or as Bonanza, they are richer than any other creeks known in that country. Then, thirty-five miles higher up the Klondike, Too-Much-Gold Creek was found. It obtained its name from the fact that the Indians who saw mica glittering in its sand mistook it for gold and so named it.

WORLD'S RICHEST GOLD FIELD. A fact that I am now going to state to you, and one easily demonstrated, is that from Telegraph Creek northward to the boundary line we have in the Dominion and in this province an area of from 550 to 600 miles in length and from 100 to 125 miles in width, over the whole of which rich prospects have been found. We must have from 90,000 to 100,000 square miles, which, with proper care, judicious handling, and improved facilities for the transportation of food and utensils, will be the largest, and probably the richest gold field the world has ever known. The British Columbia ministry of mines

may wish to extend that down to the boundary line, but that of course I leave to him. The Stewart and the Pelley rivers are in this gold-bearing zone, and also give promising indications. As I before mentioned, the Stewart river had been mined for several years before the discovery of coarse gold on Forty Mile. After that discovery Forty Mile took the attention of all the miners entering the country until the discovery of gold on Birch Creek. The Forty Mile district, together with the Birch Creek district, engaged all the transportation facilities of the two companies trading on the river, and there were no provisions to spare for any other than these two points.

This prohibited prospecting on the Stewart or elsewhere, but so many of the old-timers declared, and do so yet, that with a proper supply of provisions placed convenient to the Stewart it will be the camp of the country, as with its affluents, aggregating about 500 miles of stream on the bars of Stewart river, year after year grub stakes have been cleaned up, the supply being replaced annually. It is now easy to make \$8 a day of these bars, and the discoverers for several years made \$20 a day and upward. It is obvious from the yearly renewal of this gold that it must come from somewhere. That somewhere has not yet been found. Give us facilities and a very short time will settle the question. The Stewart itself, it is argued by those who ought to know well, is navigable for a distance of about 150 miles from its mouth. This in itself is a valuable asset in the development of that district.

Robert Henderson, to whom I referred as leading up to the discovery of gold on Bonanza, in June of the present year started up the Stewart alone in a small boat with a supply of provisions and tools to prospect on the creeks and its branches, being convinced that it offered the largest and probably the richest field in that country for prospecting. That is the stuff the true prospector is made of, and I am proud to say that he is a Canadian.

AS TO QUARTZ CLAIMS. Seven quartz claims have been located already in the vicinity of Forty Mile and Dawson. One of these, named Cone Hill, about two and a half miles up Forty Mile River from the Yukon, is a veritable mountain of gold-bearing rock and would require generations to work out. Assays show from \$3 to \$11 per ton. The only question is, Will that amount pay for reduction under the conditions there exist and the enormous freight rates incidental to transportation to that vicinity? About forty miles further up the river two large claims have been located by an expert miner hailing from the United States,

who has had considerable experience in Montana and other mineral States, and he assured me that the extent of the lode on which these two claims are situated is such that it is greater than anything else in the world, his assays showing the value to be about \$3 a ton. On Bear Creek a quartz claim was located last winter and I drew up the papers for the owner. He had to swear that he had found gold, but he would not tell me what it was. I pounded up several specimens of the rock in a hand mortar, but had no sieve to complete the operation properly. Those who understand this will infer at once the difficulty I had to contend with. The poorest specimen I tried yielded \$10 to the ton; the richest, \$1,000.

Now, while I am positive of this, I know nothing of the extent of the lode. The discoverer described it to me as being about 30 feet high and 15 feet wide, projecting into the bed of the creek, but whether it was the lode itself or simply the result of a slide he did not know. Even if it is the latter, it would not be a very difficult feat to find the lode from which it was detached. About thirty miles up the Klondike another quartz claim has been located by a Canadian, who swore positively that he found gold in it, and that it was good, but he did not say just how good.

AFTER THE MOTHER LODE. A point to which I now want to direct attention is that the gold on Bonanza and El Dorado creeks at certain stages has the same degree of fineness. As you come down both creeks it decreases in value until it reaches a minimum of about \$12.25 per ounce, Troy weight. From that point it again increases, and we go further down. Now, if we draw a line through the points of corresponding value on these two creeks, we find that, projecting them eastward, we strike Gold Bottom and Hunker creeks. Projecting them west, we strike Miller and Glacier creeks and the heads of the various gulches in Forty Mile, from fifty to sixty miles away. What do we infer from that? That there is a continuous system of gold-bearing rock running across the country in this direction.

Again we find that the gold in nuggets found on Bonanza and El Dorado bears no evidence of having travelled any distance—in fact, the majority of the nuggets are as angular and irregular in shape as though you had just pounded them out of the mother lode. This, I think, leads to the inference that that mother lode is not very distant from where this gold is now found, and the only debatable question in my mind is, is it in lodes of sufficient dimensions to pay for working by stamp mills, or is it a series of widely separated lodes, so that the miners call them "stringers," so scattered as to

render working them unprofitable. Time alone will reveal this secret. I have been told that gold has been found at the head of Lake LeBarge on a stream flowing into the lake from the east. Prospects, too, are found on the Dalton trail, on the other side of the Yukon river. A man riding across the Alsek on this trail was thrown from his horse, and in clambering ashore, caught at a small tree, which pulled out by the roots. Where he landed he saw something shining on the rock. He picked it up and found that it was gold. He showed me this gold at Fort Cuddey in July, 1896, the amount being about \$100. Other prospects have also been found along the same trail, about midway between there and Selkirk.

From these circumstances and discoveries it may be assumed that in all this country there is gold, while in this particular zone it is especially abundant. This zone lies outside of a range of mountains which extends to the westward of the Rockies and has the same general trend. It consists of cretaceous rock, rising into very high peaks in some places, and crosses the Yukon River just below the boundary.

COPPER AND OTHER METALS. Another product of the country that demands attention is copper. It is doubtless to be found somewhere on the White River in great abundance, although the location of the main deposit has yet to be made. Mr. Harper saw a large piece of pure copper in the possession of the Indians; indeed, I have seen it myself. It comes from the vicinity of the White River somewhere just where has yet to be disclosed. Silver has also been found, and lead, and, in addition, to work these when the proper time and facilities come, we have coal in abundance. It is found running along the base of the last described range of cretaceous mountains. A deposit of coal in this range runs right through our territory. At two points near Forty Mile it crosses out prominently, in one place only about three-quarters of a mile from the bank of the river Yukon. A short distance above this it crosses out again, only about eight miles from the Yukon, and whenever the Cone Hill mine, which I have spoken of before, is worked, the coal to work it with is only some fourteen or fifteen miles distant from the scene of operations.

ANY AMOUNT OF COAL. About thirty miles further up, on one of the many small affluents of the Yukon, it again crosses out a few miles from the bank of the main river, and at Fifteen Mile Creek and at the head of the Thondray there are also outcroppings of coal. On the upper branches of the Stewart claim is said to occur in the drift; and again about six miles above the Five Fingers coal crops out on the banks of the Yukon

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On the upper branches of the Stewart claim is said to occur in the drift; and again about six miles above the Five Fingers coal crops out on the banks of the Yukon

River. In fact, there is any amount of coal in the country with which to work our precious minerals when we obtain the necessary facilities.

In one instance eighty avoirdupois pounds of gold were realized from a single clean-up, representing about \$16,000 in money. This seems extraordinary, but we must bear in mind that the dump from which this came contained only \$10,000 and took the united efforts of five or six men at \$1.50 per hour for upward of three months, not including the labor of sluicing, so that although it is tremendously rich, it is not exactly all profit.

I saw the other evening in one of the papers that a man who owns a claim on El Dorado and another on Bear Creek has sold out for \$1,000,000. He went into the country a poor man with the intention of raising sufficient money to pay off the mortgage on his place.

Well, he has done so; he has not only paid off his own mortgage, but the mortgages of his neighbors. Although these creeks are rich, and as I have told you more men have made homesteads there than anywhere else in the world, I do not wish you to look only on the bright side of the picture. An American from Seattle came in June, 1896, to the Forty Mile with his wife, with the intention of bettering his condition. They went out again last July with \$2,000. I was well acquainted with this man, a very decent, intelligent chap. He told me one day that if he could remain in that country from three to five years and go out with \$5,000 he would consider himself in great luck. He has come out with \$2,000, and after prospecting his claim at both ends and a little in the middle he concludes that there is \$1,500,000 in it.

THE OTHER SIDE. On the other hand, an old Scotchman by the name of Marks has been in there for eleven years. He has known him well, and once when he was sick sent for him to ask him how he did. He was sixty-three years, he said. Then I asked him how long he had been in mining. His reply was, forty-two years—in all parts of the world except in Australia. In answer to a question as to whether he had never met his stake, he told me he had never yet made more than a living, and often that was very scanty. This, of course, is the opposite experience, but I could quote scores of similar cases, so that I would not have you look too much on the bright side.

There are men in that country who are poor and who will remain so. It has not been their "luck," as they call it, to strike it rich, but I may say that that country offers to men of great fortitude, steadiness, and some intelligence an opportunity to make more

(Continued on Page 8.)

HAIR HUMORS. Itching, irritated, scaly, crusted scalp, dry, thin, and falling hair, cleaned, purified, and beautified by warm shampoo with CUTICURA SOAP, and occasional dressings of CUTICURA, purges of emollients, the greatest skin cure.

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