

Lost Mines of the Great Southwest

By Joe Minster

From Data Furnished by Horace J. West

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WHEN the railroads built their trans-continental systems, one of their greatest difficulties lay in the supply of water for the men who were working on the projects. Great wagon-trains were frequently essential to bring sufficient of the supply to make work for a week at a time possible. Even after the completion of the roads there was difficulty in obtaining water for the purpose of supplying the engines or the little stations necessary wherever there was a siding.

In order to secure water in abundance, the Santa Fe railroad had ordered a tunnel bored in the Clipper range, located in San Bernardino county from eight to ten miles northwest of Danby, the station to which it was to be piped if discovered in a large quantity. This all happened within a score of years. The man who volunteered for the work, a competent mining man, who was well acquainted with the sinking of shafts and the boring of tunnels, was Thomas Schofield of Los Angeles.

Tiring of work one day in early June of 1894, he started on a prospecting trip, something which he did whenever he felt in need of relaxation. He wandered into one of the canyons close at hand and discovered there a spring. What to him was more surprising and even startling was the trail that led up the canyon, stopping at the watering place.

The trail, at times very indistinct because of the solid rock formation, led over three or four small hills, the hogback of two ranges and then into another canyon. This he followed until it ended in a blank wall and he realized that the trail had been lost. Going back a short distance he discovered it winding up the side of the hill. It led to two immense rocks, rivaling the towers of an old English castle. They seemed to form the portal to the wealth beyond, and nature had set them so closely together that they allowed just sufficient passageway to permit a burro well packed to enter.

And just beyond the portal stood an isolated rock. There beside the black boulder of enormous size stood the shreds of what had been a camp. The wooden upright supports were still standing, and draped from them, floating in the breeze, were the shreds of what had been a tent. Brush had been carefully piled up around the sides. Inside there was a bench of boughs, still covered with a blanket, which was, like the tent covering dilapidated and ragged. The stillness of the place and the fact that man had been making his habitation there struck Schofield like a blow from a fist.

A pile of railroad ties, a number of rusty old axes which had been used as wedges for splitting the ties for lagging, a few other mining tools and some badly decomposed food still lay about the place, indicating very sudden abandonment of the camp by its owner. The most conspicuous of all things about the place was an old-fashioned, heavily rusted Dutch oven, the largest Schofield had ever seen and a trifle over two feet in diameter. So oppressive was the place and so nerve-racking the immediate strain, that he continued on the trail which led away from the camp.

Just a short distance away he came to a shaft where considerable work had been done. It was sunk upon a series of small stringers that ran parallel to one another for a long distance and at intervals of about six inches. He counted twelve of these peculiar formations in the rock and they were of almost solid gold! He tested them, "horning" great strings of coarse gold.

The surrounding ore was of an indigo-blue quartz formation, and "to me the stringers, passing through the dark porphyry, appeared a bed of roses of golden hues hidden in the depths of a giant bed of violets," said Schofield in telling of his discovery. "I traced these lines of high-grade ore for a distance of nearly 3,000 feet, and found them widening and enlarging as they went. They interested me so that I failed to notice for hours that the day was fast waning and that I would be forced to remain there over night.

"The mystery, the awe and even the fear of that night I shall never forget. Was I in the haunt of a robber crew who had found wealth far richer than could be obtained from their nefarious trade in the city? Had the owners been cruelly murdered and their wealth carried off by some one else? Was I the victim of some strange phantasmagoria, or would I awaken to find all the wealth and the adventure of the day a dream? These and countless other suggestions coursed through my throbbing brain, and I slept little that night.

"In the morning I explored the shaft at the first light of breaking sun above the jagged skyline of broken peaks. I found that the shaft had been sunk to possibly seventy or eighty feet, that it was equipped with a windlass, rope and bucket and that it had been well timbered all the way to the bottom. Outside I discovered a large pile of ore, indicative of the fact that little or none of the product of the mine had ever been carried away.

"After gathering a number of fine samples and a large quantity of the horned gold, I went back to the camp and there again I was attracted by the Dutch oven. Something seemed to draw me toward it. It contained gold! Half of it was full of the product and there was I unable to cart it away. All marks of those who resided there were of such an old stamp that I never thought whether it would be right or wrong. The idea of possession of so much wealth nearly overwhelmed me, and after grasping some of it I started back to the camp by the tunnel, planning a trip to Los Angeles to see whether it was really gold that I had found."

And when Schofield had his eye and his metal tested he found that it was the real article and that he had made himself richer by several hundred dollars with just the small amount he had been able to lug out on his person. It fired him with the desire to return at once and obtain all of the treasure if the right owners had not returned. But he has never been able to get back to the Dutch oven!

In coming back from the mine he had paid little heed to the general direction taken. He had followed the trail blindly on his way up and again on his return journey. Consequently after a number of weeks, when he returned with a partner to look for the treasure and found that some terrific rains and even a waterspout had been

ahead of him, his plans became hazy. The water had obliterated all signs of a trail and his knowledge of getting back was gone with it.

Men will sacrifice love, life, virtue and kindred things in the pursuit of a great opportunity presented for the accumulation of sudden wealth. Strange alliances, stories of murder, long legal fights and bitterest enmity have grown up in the southwest as adjuncts to the continued hunt for treasure. Among the strange stories that are more widely known is that which has to do with a lost placer of great riches.

It finds its origin in the early eighties, either 1883 or 1881, when a white man, a lone prospector, wandered into the camp of the Plute Indians at Plute Bend on the Nevada side of the Colorado river. The bend only lay a few miles above Fort Mohave, and it is there that Jamison, which is generally given as the man's name, gathered his first inklings of the stored wealth accumulated by several members of the tribe.

They were said to know of several great gold deposits in the desert and mountain country contiguous to their place of living, and from these they frequently brought to Fort Mohave splendid specimens of nuggets and gold dust. This gold they traded for a half or third of its actual value, buying the baubles and the gaudy apparel so dear to the heart of the red man. It also led occasionally to serious trouble, attempts of unscrupulous whites to obtain their secrets, sometimes even by force, usually by some chicanery.

Jamison took a course which brought him in direct and continued contact with all members of the tribe. He married one of the squaws, and after a year or two of living with the Indians gained many of their secrets. To his brother-in-law he was indebted for the discovery of an immensely rich placer. To reach it at all seasons of the year was apparently impossible.

"We shall wait till the snow falls and covers all the land," said the red brother to Jamison.

They waited for two years for such a time to come, snow not being a usual thing in that portion of the country every year. And when it came, the Indian took his adopted tribesman for a long journey, to a place of three peaks and a place where no water was obtainable, save through melting the snow, and there they gathered from beneath the white cloak much gravel, and carried it back to the camp of the Indians in three days.

Feeling assured, then, of the wealth he was to gather, Jamison wrote an old eastern friend whose name has been lost. It is said to have been Fields. He told Fields all about the wonderful gravel, and so excited his desire for riches that within a few months Fields had arrived at Fort Mohave. Jamison left the Indians with the excuse that he had to look after particular business in California.

Then with Fields he went to Homer, a station on the Santa Fe railroad in San Bernardino county, California. There they purchased a span of good mules with some of the gold that Jamison had saved from his first trip, and they loaded an old buckboard with a barrel of water and a few provisions and started out, driving south into Homer Wash. From all reports they probably traveled forty miles that day and night, arriving at the diggings early the next morning.

"There we climbed a mesa," said Fields, telling of the discovery in after years. "And on top of this proceeded with our work, which merely consisted in scraping the gravel in heaps and panning it in a tub which Jamison had brought along for the purpose. The water which had been left in the barrel was used in the tub. The gravel was nearly half gold, so rich that it nearly stunned us. We became careless in our work, picking off only the coarse gold and the nuggets, and dumped the residue of fine gold and dust into the tub. It was far too much work to pan it clean."

Want of water, the bugaboo that has menaced every prospector at one time or another in the southwest, came upon them at nightfall when they were forced to give to the two mules the water that had been used for panning. It was less than enough to quench their thirst, and in half panic the two miners cached their tub, half full of dust, and their gold pan in a small cave which they had discovered in one of the little canyons leading off the mesa.

Then came their retreat, as ignominious as any that ever befell an army. With all their wealth they were forced to run. A panic seemed to overtake them and they jogged their mules through the desert night, trying to get to Homer before the break of day and the heat that came with it in that summer period. With coming of dawn they found themselves in a sad plight. They had lost the trail entirely, were in a country new to them, had not a drop of water and scarcely a handful of food.

With breaking light came hope. Way off in the distance they discerned the gulchpost that has led to many a salvation in the desert wastes; telegraph poles strung at regular intervals. To reach them and the railroad tracks they marked was their aim. Through three hours of tortuous work, walking instead of trying to ride behind the worn-out mules, they struggled on, their tongues lolling black from out their mouths, their throats burned to a cinder crispness, their eyes bulging in continued effort and strain.

And reaching the railroad, they could discern, just a short distance to the right, a few straggling buildings, some little outpost of civilization, with promise of water if nothing more. And this they reached eventually, pulling their mules behind them. They were found by an old miner who happened on to the broad wooden platform of the only bar in Blake during the noon siesta of the town. They were more dead than alive, and it took several hours of hard work to bring them to. For two days they were out of their minds.

Their first thought on coming to was their gold. Had they lost it? Had it been stolen? They directed search for it in the wagon, and there it lay in a large canvas sack, untouched by the men who had cared for the mules. When it was weighed, the men found themselves in possession of \$15,000 for a single day's work! The story of their find made Blake a deserted village in a few hours. A stampede for gold was on. For days and weeks it continued, but never successfully. Their trail had been obliterated in the winds that continually wave the sand from dune to dune and obliterate ceaselessly through ages.

It was a week before Jamison and Fields could travel. They packed up at the end of that time and in their swaying buckboard they drove to

Needles, where Fields with his share of the gold started for the east to secure capital for development. Jamison turned his mules back to Homer then, and on back to the Plute Bend to his Indians, arriving there in a delirium caused by a relapse into fever acquired on the trip from the diggings. His squaw nursed him tenderly and medicine men of the tribe gave him herbs, but Jamison died.

Fields came back when he heard of this. He had a chicken heart induced by past experiences, and nothing would induce him to start out alone on quest of wealth that lay hidden in the desert near the three peaks.

He sent other men for him, giving them a map of the country as he had conceived it, but they all failed in the relocation of the treasure.

Three men rode leisurely out of the Panamint range of mountains at the edge of that famous sink of mystery, Death Valley, and on across country toward San Bernardino, their destination. They were all on good horses, had ample packs, and ten-gallon water canteens. They rode through the heat of the day, their horses kicking up the dust of the desert and leaving behind a continuous hazy vapor which always distinguishes anything of life that moves in the desert wastes.

During the heat of the day they stopped to camp in the shade of their horses, which were watered and fed. Soon they started on. This time there was not the same certainty, the same equanimity, among them, and a quarrel arose as to the proper direction to take. They quarreled all that afternoon, and finding their water-supply practically all gone on the following morning, their words almost resulted in blows. They separated.

One of them Frank Goler, struck out alone in an easterly direction, while the other two went south.

By noon of the second day Goler had arrived at a series of low hills that lay directly in his path. He crossed them, and on the farther side discovered a canyon into which he plunged without the least fear and with renewed hope of salvation. It contained abundant vegetation, and what was more than all the rest, it carried in its deepest embrace a little mountain stream.

Arriving at its banks, Goler, nearly delirious from lack of water, gave his horse its freedom and dropped to the edge of the stream and began lapping up the cool, bright water. And while he drank, the rays of the sun, penetrating the foliage of an overhanging cottonwood, glinted upon something on the bottom of the stream—something yellow just beyond the touch of his lips.

It was a nugget weighing several ounces. There were others near it, and Goler, bewildered at his good fortune, pulled forth three of the pieces of gold and then stopped to think of food, for he had not taken nourishment for more than a day.

He tucked the nuggets into the bosom of his shirt, caught his horse, mounted, and then proceeded with all possible speed down the canyon, taking little time even to make proper survey of the location of the treasure. Finally, after several hours of rough riding he came out upon a plain. Just ahead of him he saw what apparently had been the bed of a big body of water.

It was all dried out and lay in a straight easterly line with Mount San Antonio, or Mount Baldy, as it is more generally known in the southwest. The snow-capped peak gave Goler encouragement, and also indicated the proper direction to the little mining town at the foot of the famous Arrowhead, where the Indians found relief from many ills in the waters that perled from several springs.

It required another day for him to reach this place, and when he did he was completely exhausted and his horse fearfully jaded, and ready to collapse.

Three weeks elapsed before he had fully recovered, and then he showed the treasures that he had collected.

"Why, there is enough of this stuff to load several wagons where I found it, and I am going to bring in a load in less than a month," he assured some of his friends.

He at once set out to fit up a wagon with broad-rimmed wheels, light canvas top and a team of sturdy horses.

The day he set out, a large gathering watched him off and several prospectors followed, hoping to be in on the wealth that he had discovered. In a few days they returned, disgusted with the fact that Goler apparently did not know whether he was traveling. In a month he came back, tired out and disgruntled because he had been unable to relocate the same chain of hills and the hidden waters. Six different times he went in search of his wealth and always returned with the same story—one of reverses and loss, until finally he had spent all of the money he had accumulated in a lifetime and had to give up the quest.

It is generally conceded that the Goler discovery has since been found. His first location was in 1886. In 1891 an old and odd character, Heg Moss, who made his home in San Bernardino started out on one of his regular prospecting trips. One of his burros wandered away from the other three, and Moss started to follow the lost animal with his entire train.

The wandering burro found a canyon and in it water, and in this way led Moss to the discovery of a gold deposit. In a few hours he panned out several ounces of dust with his horn spoon and also found two or three fair-sized nuggets. The discovery went to his head. He failed to place his locating stakes and hurried back to San Bernardino to celebrate his good fortune.

With borrowed capital he fitted up a second time, and when he left town he might have been mistaken at a distance for the Pied Piper of Hamelin. More than half the male inhabitants of San Bernardino were at his back, all equipped for a long journey with pack train or on horse.

Moss tried to throw them off his trail, doubled on them, returned to San Bernardino, but all to no avail.

"Guess I might as well take you along," he said one day when his patience had been frazzled to a rag.

This time he proceeded directly to the distance range in the open desert. And when he neared the canyon those who were following him realized the peanness of the end of their journey. Moss spurred his horse ahead and left his pack train to care for itself. There were better horses in that group, and race as he might, his hand unsteady and his saddle not so well filled as others, he was overtaken and passed.

The stampeded prospectors, filled with lust for gold, had reached their goal, and old Heg Moss was one of the last to arrive on the ground of his discovery. He staked what proved to be the poorest claim of all the eighty that were staked out. The men all figured that they had come to the old Goler discovery, and therefore they named the district, which was at once organized. The Goler district is located in what is now Kern county, California, about twenty-eight miles north of Mojave, a little mining town on the Southern Pacific.

The creek proved one of the richest ever found in California. Several hundred thousand dollars were taken from a comparatively small area.

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

SECRETARY BRYAN JOKES OF OFFICE



William Jennings Bryan is heartily enjoying his new position as secretary of state, according to the impressions he gave a number of friends with whom he conversed the other day. Dixon Williams, president of the Southern club of Chicago, which entertained the colonel, is telling a number of anecdotes which the secretary related.

"This new position of mine has put me in a place where I can get back at my critics," said Mr. Bryan in the course of a conversation. "All I have to do is to appoint them to some diplomatic post."

"You see, there are a great variety of posts. If I want to get a man out of the country all I have to do is to send him to some remote place. The trouble is that I can send him only 12,500 miles at one time. If I send him any farther he'd be coming back."

"I'm beginning to think," he continued, his eyes twinkling, "that it would be a good thing to appoint only Republicans to offices in the diplomatic service. I might manage to get enough Republicans out of the United States to insure Democratic success at the polls four years from now."

NEW HEAD OF NAVIGATION BUREAU

Secretary Daniels has appointed Commander Victor Blue of South Carolina to be chief of the bureau of navigation navy department, in place of Capt. Phillip Andrews, resigned. The incumbent of that office has the rank and pay of a rear admiral.

Before the navy personnel had fairly recovered from the surprise caused by the change in head of the navigation bureau, Secretary Daniels issued a fresh order that will have far-reaching consequences. That makes sea service an absolute condition for promotion. It took the form of an instruction to the naval examining board, requiring:

"That officers coming up for promotion shall have had sufficient sea services in the grade from which they are to be promoted, to insure beyond doubt that they are fully qualified and experienced at sea to perform the sea duties of the next higher grade."

The new chief of the bureau of navigation has had a conspicuous career in the navy.

During the Spanish war Commander Blue was promoted for heroism as a result of daring reconnoitering tours around Santiago to locate the enemy's fleet.



BACK TO FARM IS PLAN OF MOORE



Willis L. Moore, chief of the weather bureau, whose resignation, to take effect July 31, has been accepted by the president, broke winter camp in the Powhatan hotel the other day and supposedly started on a hike to his Rockville home.

A large and profitable estate is owned by the chief of the weather bureau near Rockville. That he will devote his attentions to this and his Virginia place is generally expected.

Professor Moore is a native of Scranton, Pa., where he was born January 18, 1856. At the age of eight years, his father having joined Grant's army, and being unable to bear the separation, Young Moore joined the troops in the field, where he supplied them with newspapers.

He was educated in the Binghamton public schools, and science seemed to be his strong point. However, he didn't take it up as soon as he launched into manhood, as he

came a compositor and later a reporter on one of the Binghamton papers, and then went to Burlington, Iowa, where he continued to do newspaper work.

In 1886, at Closter, N. J., he married Miss Mary Lozier. Norwich University in 1896 gave him the degree of LL.D., and in the same year the University of St. Lawrence made him a doctor of science. Before this was done, however, he had joined the weather bureau forces, which were then a part of the United States signal corps, and began watching the clouds and the sun and other meteorological adjuncts of the earth.

He rose in the weather bureau to be local forecast official at Chicago, 1891-94. Since 1895 he has been chief of the central bureau at Washington.

McADOO SUGGESTS USE OF MAIL

The United States mail is suggested by William G. McAdoo, secretary of the treasury, as the best means of applying for a job in his department of the federal government. Driven almost to distraction by the rush of the hungry to his pie counter during the first days he was in office, he slipped back the other night to New York as a haven of refuge from the mob. Mr. McAdoo returned the next morning sufficiently rested and refreshed, but the army of job hunters also had a good rest in Washington during his absence, and they swarmed about him thicker than ever.

Mr. McAdoo, in desperation, gave out this statement:

"Without any disposition to be disobliging, I am compelled to discontinue my efforts to receive personal applications for office. I have tried it for ten days and I find that it consumes my entire time and leaves me no chance to attend to important public business. Besides, it is absolutely futile, because none but a superman could remember at the end of a day every one who has poured a story into his ear.

"Applications should be made in writing and mailed to the secretary of the treasury. They will be filed and receive much more careful consideration than if pressed in person."

