

Mines in the Windermere Valley



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Did we miss something important?

Unfortunately, the creators of this text do not know everything, and we are always looking to improve our material. If you have more information about any of these mining sites, or if there is an additional site that you think should be included, please don't hesitate to contact us.

A map of approximate mine locations is available for viewing at the museum, which is open seven days a week from June-September, and one day a week during the winter months. Please see our website or look for us on Facebook for more details.

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Mineral King Mine

1895-1975 (off and on)

Location: 25 miles up Toby Creek, at an elevation of 5,500ft, on the Toby Creek side of the ridge between Jumbo and Toby Creeks.

Minerals extracted: Lead, zinc, silver, copper, cadmium, and barite. With some small exceptions, the ore was not good enough for profit without a concentrator.

Parties involved and key developments:

Ben Abel, Watt, Geo Geary (1895-1899)

\$2000 development work done as of 1898, underground exploration at an elevation of 5,730 feet.

Ben Abel and Ed Parry (1899-?)

Sheep Creek Mines Ltd (1950-1968, full operation from 1953-1967)

Began large-scale production, 2.3 million tons of ore shipped in this period.

Aetna Investment Corporation Limited (1966-1968)

Replacing Sheep Creek Mines.

Mountain Minerals Ltd (1968-1971)

Focused on the upper and lower tailings ponds of the mine for barite (used for oil drilling). Worked three shifts a day, seven days a week.

Purcell Development Co. Ltd. (1973-1975)

Attempt to mine remaining ore. Not successful.

Other Details:

The original diggings of Mineral King Mine consisted of shallow surface trenches and tunneling on two levels to produce one ton of high grade ore. Underground exploration and extensive underground tunneling began in the 1950s, eventually resulting in fourteen separate mine levels within the mountain, extending down from water level up to the top of the ridge (over 1,500 vertical feet).

During this period of mass production, a town site was built at Mineral King. It consisted of thirty houses, a large bunkhouse, a cookhouse, a small store, a one-room (later two room) schoolhouse, a community hall, staff house and a post office (the address was Toby Creek, British Columbia). Residents enjoyed dances, parties, movies once a week, and even a small library in the community hall. Other amenities included a curling rink, a ballpark, billiard room, and various picnic sites. The road up to the town site and the mine was narrow, difficult to maintain, and subject to closure from snow slides, especially in the spring.

As the road to the mine was improved over time, more employees lived in the Windermere Valley and made the commute to the mine. After the mine closed, most of the houses were dismantled and moved down the valley. Today, very little remains.

Additional Notes:

Unknown owner (1928), 5,600 ft level started (level 2)

1950: 5450 ft level (No. 3) started

1955: H.E. Doelle managing director, J.B. Magee resident manager.

An average of 90 men were employed, 40 of them working underground. In 1956, development work was being done with an average of 95 men employed, 50 of them underground.

Ore Removal:

1958: 192,426 tons, most from No.4

1959: 181,495 tons, most above No.4

1964: 183,971 tons, most above No.3

1965: 145,196 tons

1966: 114,737 tons

1967: 111,332 tons

At the end of the fourteen-year Sheep Creek Mines period, total amounts of minerals obtained were:

1,832,416 oz silver

1,439,884 tons copper

81,672,177 tons lead

190,827,473 tons zinc

660,064 tons cadmium

25,114 tons barite (since 1959)

Paradise Mine

1899-1964 (not continuous)

Location: The head of Spring Creek, a small tributary of the Toby Creek, at an elevation of 8,800 feet. Located across the valley to the north of present day Panorama ski hill.

Minerals extracted: Silver and lead. The mine contained a carbonate ore, meaning that the rock was soft enough to be mined with pick and shovel. The workings only had to be timbered, so that the greatest expense from the mine was from hauling the ore to the smelter. During its operation, Paradise Mine had a gross production of upwards of \$1.5 million.

Parties involved and key developments:

John Watson, John Jeffrey, Tom Jones (1899)

Originally staked the mine, some development work done.

The Hammond Syndicate (mining brokers) (1901-1917)

Purchased the mine in 1901 and shipped ore steadily from 1903-1906. They bought on the advice of R.R. Bruce, with Bruce as manager during this time. As of 1905, 1,950 tons of ore had been shipped and 5,000 feet of underground tunneling, with an average composition of 51 oz of silver/ ton and 59% lead.

Robert Randolph Bruce (1917-1926)

Bought the mine from the Hammond group, and shipped ore continuously during this time. A total of 12,190 tons with an average of 34 oz silver and 36.5% lead was mined.

Victoria Syndicate Ltd under Mr. 'Pat' (Robert B.) Stewart (1926-1930)

Bought the mine from Bruce in 1926 and began aggressive development, including building a concentrator at the mine with a 50 ton capacity. This was shut down in 1930 due to inadequate water supply.

Sheep Creek Mines (1942-1964)

Built a 50 ton concentrator at Jackpine (the lower base camp by Toby Creek), with J. Crowhurst as superintendent and J.B. Magee as resident manager. As the mining went deeper it also became more difficult due to more pyrite in the rock and decreasing metal prices. The site was inactive starting in 1955 with a short period of activity in 1960. In 1964, three men trucked 931 tons of ore to the Mineral King concentrator, then operations ceased.

Other Details:

Some controversy exists over the origin of the name 'Paradise' for the mine. The romanticized story is that it was intended to be called 'Pair-o-dise' after being won in a game of dice. Although this makes for a good story, the name of the claim was always intended to be "Paradise" because it was so near to the sky, and if the ideas of the prospectors turned out,

then they would be able to pave the streets with gold. Unfortunately, those who went to the mining office to stake the claim weren't very educated and so they wrote down 'Parridice' as the name of the claim, quickly leading to the story of 'Pair-o-dice'.

The small town of Wilmer just north of Invermere owes much of its existence to the Paradise mine. The headquarters of the mine was laid out near the Columbia River, creating the townsite of Wilmer (then known as Peterborough). A wagon road went from Wilmer to Pinehurst (also known as Jackpine). Pinehurst had storehouses, stables, bunkhouses, a cookhouse, and a hotel. From there, an eight-mile road switch backed up the mountain to get to the mine site at 8,800 feet. Jackpine is the current site of the offices for Toby Creek Adventures near Panorama Mountain Village.

Transporting the ore down from the mine could be a challenge. In the early years, ore was rawhided down to Pinehurst (Jackpine) from the mine, after which it was put on wagons and brought down to the Columbia River at Wilmer. From there, a steamboat brought it to Golden where it was taken by train to Revelstoke. It was then transported down the Arrow Lakes to the smelter at trail. The journey from the mine to the smelter could take over two years. A two bucket aerial tramway was later constructed down to Pinehurst, and even later the main camp was built at the mine site itself. In 1918, a monthly average of thirty to thirty-five men worked at the mine, with a further six to ten men responsible for the transportation of ore.

Additional Notes:

In 1922, 700 tons of ore was shipped, nearly 50% of it done by a single five ton truck which brought the ore down 18 miles from the mine site. The cost was 55 cents per ton-mile.

Ptarmigan Mine

Also known as Red Lion, Red Line, or McDonald Mines

? – 1899-1909, 1952-1960

Location: South side of the basin of McDonald Creek (a branch of Horsethief Creek) at the headwaters of Red Line Creek (a tributary of McDonald Creek). The mine was 27 miles from Wilmer at 8,500 feet above sea level. It was originally directly below a glacier which kept the mine frozen, even in the summer, making mining very difficult. Since then the ice has retreated.

Minerals extracted: Silver, gray copper (tetrahedrite), some gold.

Parties involved and key developments:

Ben Abel, Wellington (Joe) Kinnie, Scott (?-1899)

Owned the claim, then known as the Red Line.

Thomas Starbird (1899)

Bought the claim in 1899, and started development work in 1903.

Farnham Family (1906-1923-?)

A group of Eastern American investors who used the property to supply silver to their jewelry store, Tiffany's in New York City. Starbird remained on as manager, with small development work in 1906. In 1909, Starbird was still on the property but no work was being done. 1919 and 1920 saw dump ore being salvaged and shipped, and J.P. Farnham examined the site in 1923 but no work was being done. That same year, James McKay was hired to ship ore from the mine dump to Trail.

Heintz Seel (1952-1964-?)

Built the last seven miles of road to the mine in 1955 and founded Selkirk Ptarmigan Mines Ltd in 1958 to continue operations. 181 tons of ore was shipped and work continued from 1957 to remove ice from parts of the old workings and re-establish ventilation. A machine shop and compressor were also constructed, and the bunkhouse was rebuilt and furnished. In 1959, an additional 60 tons of ore was shipped with four men working the mine.

The mine was optioned by Belle Tahis Mines Ltd in 1963, and Union Carbide Exploration Ltd. Belle Tahis agreed to explore the property in 1964, drilling four exploratory holes.

Other Details:

A road was built from Wilmer to the mine office with a compressor plant at the lower terminal of the aerial tramway (6,500 feet). In 1903, most of the road going up was of easy grade, but as it neared the mine it went into a narrow and steep part of the valley, so that putting a road through was quite expensive.

Delphine Mine

Also known as Eureka (1897-1898)

1897-1910, little done in later years, 1963-?

Location: North side of Delphine Creek, half way to the summit from the wagon road in the valley, and six miles from the main creek.

Minerals extracted: Galena ore – 50-70 oz of silver per ton, and 60-70% lead

Parties involved and key developments:

Baptiste Morigeau (1897)

Owned the original claim, sold it for \$500 to an owner who then let the claim run out.

George Starke (1898)

Reclaimed the mine after the original claim ran out, and renamed the site after his wife.

R.R. Bruce (1898-1910)

Bought the mine for the Hammond Syndicate (mining brokers).

Western Beaver Lodge Mines Ltd (1963-?)

Acquired the mine and started geomapping in 1964. Drilled a new entry under R. Renshaw, consulting engineer.

Other Details:

When it was first developed, the mine contained one of the finest showings of galena ore seen in the province.

As of 1910, no work was done on the mine for some time. It was reportedly mined out, but little had been done to find other ore-bodies.

Thunderbird (Excelda Mine)

? -1935/36 - ?

Location: In the basin at the head of Mickelson Creek, a tributary entering Delphine creek from the north.

A packer's camp was two miles by road from the junction with Toby Creek. From here, a four mile trail led up to the main mine camp at 7,500 feet, with the workings at 8,700-10,100 feet on a steep slope rising to the main ridge of a spur of Mt. Nelson.

Minerals extracted: Silver, lead, small levels of copper, zinc, gold

Parties involved and key developments:

Thunderbird Mines Ltd

J.P Farnham of New York City as president. The mine consisted of seven separate claims in the basin, the westernmost of which were likely part of the old New Strike/Sweepstake claims.

Other Details

The official name for the mine is Excelda, and was owned by Thunderbird Mines Ltd (resulting in the common name Thunderbird Mine). In 1935, fifteen men were employed and reportedly their living conditions were very good. Buildings included a mess hall, one camp building, a powerhouse, blacksmith shop, and a powder magazine. The surface plant with a gas engine was at an elevation of 8,510 feet.

Exploration and some workings were done at this site, but as of 1935 no commercial mineralization was discovered. In fact, very little is historically known about this site, so the assumption is that it was short-lived and not very successful.

Hot Punch

1898-1926 (not continuous)

Location: On the south side of Delphine Creek on a small stream coming from one of the glaciers, a half mile southwest and 800 feet above the creek, and 6,500 feet above sea level. In the early years, a government wagon road at an easy grade was constructed as far as Delphine Creek, and from there a trail went the seven miles to the mine.

Minerals extracted: Galena ore – silver and lead (rough average 40-50 oz silver per ton, 30-40% lead)

Parties involved and key developments:

Thomas Starbird (1898)

Represented a Montana syndicate.

Ben Abel and J.E. Stoddart (1908)

Owned the mine and bonded to Coltet and Starbird.

A San Francisco company (1914-1915)

Built a series of camp buildings, constructed two to three miles of wagon road, and did other development work. By the spring of 1915 the company was in debt and work was discontinued.

J.E. Stoddart (1926)

Owner

Gwillim Lake Gold Mines Ltd. (1949)

Gwillim Lake Gold Mines optioned the property in 1949 with K.J. Springer as president. Work started that same year by C.E. Gordon Brown and continued by William Blair. The road up to the mine was repaired, the camp renovated, and a compressor and pipeline installed. Ten men were employed and 150 feet were dug before operations ceased. Equipment was removed and stored at Invermere for the winter.

Other Details:

A total of 80 tons of ore was shipped in 1908, 1909, 1919, and 1926, with an average of 43 oz of silver per ton and 30% lead.

An adequate campsite was built in 1949 on the timbered side of the mountain, but was on steep ground and subject to snow slides.

Lead Queen Mine

189?-1928 (not continuous)

Location: In a basin near the head of Frances Creek on the north side, at an altitude of 7,000-8,000 feet above sea level, 25 miles west of Brisco.

Minerals extracted: Galena – silver-lead: averaging 40-60oz silver per ton, 50-60% lead.

Parties involved and key developments:

Tom Brown (189?)

A prospector who staked the mine. He later sold it for \$5000 to a mining company.

Thomas Brown, Charles Cartwrite et al (1910)

The mine had been under bond of sale in 1908 but not yet closed.

James McKay (1911)

Developed the mine.

Bonded by Gurgess and Barry of Athalmer (1915)

Small work continued, and a fourteen-mile wagon road was nearly completed that year. Stanley Harrison was involved in this work.

Bonded to P. Denhart of Seattle (1918-1925)

Work continued with a force of eight to ten men and a camp was built. In 1918, Elgin Milligan and Walter Nixon were rawhiding for Fred Mannix. 1925 saw a telephone line put in.

F.M. Simonds (1927)

Directed eight to ten men in the removal of forty-five tons of ore. A new blacksmith shop and a bunkhouse for twelve were also constructed.

Other Details:

There was no way for a road to be built to the mine in the early years of its existence, so ore was 'rawhided' down to the valley. There were also no trails or roads in the mountains at the time so Tom Brown had to build a trail and then a wagon road up to his claim.

B.C. & Tilbury

?-1908-1927-?

Location: On the east side of Delphine Basin, with workings at 8,800 feet. It was reached by a wagon road then a switch-back trail (very steep) for a couple of miles to the mine.

Minerals extracted: 50% lead, 70 oz silver to the ton in 1908

Parties involved and key developments:

F.C. Ball (1908)
From Wilmer.

H. Forster and Rufus Kimpton (1909)
Bought the mine as joint owners. As of 1985, the mine was still in the family with Gerald Kimpton and Mrs. Forster as joint owners.

Other Details:

Pack trips could make two trips per day to the mine from the wagon road in the Delphine Creek valley.

Issac Group

1883-?, 1916-1923

Location: Near the head of Issac Creek on the south side of Frances Creek, three miles by trail from the thirteenth mile on the Lead Queen road. Elevation at 7,900 feet.

Minerals Extracted: 30-35 oz silver/ ton, 55-70% lead

Parties involved and key developments:

Arthur Isaacs (1883)

Staked the claim

Paul Denhart (unknown year, likely c. 1916-1920)

Leased the property and rawhided ore down three miles to load on wagons for Brisco.

James Rutherford and associates of Vancouver (1922)

Invermere Mines Ltd under J.J. Coughlan (1923)

Six men transported 30 tons of ore that year

Other Details:

The claim is high up a mountain on a steep rock face. Legend has it that it was discovered by a First Nations person out goat hunting. He shot a goat high on the mountain and it rolled down and landed on a small ledge where he found an outcrop of rich Galena ore.

The cabin was at 6,500 feet, the lowest workings at 7,200, and a later camp at 7,300 feet with workings above. A light aerial tram dropped ore to just above the camp.

In addition, 125 tons of ore were shipped in 1916/1917, 28 tons in 1918, and 62 tons in 1920.

Sitting Bull Group
Including the Alice, Sitting Bull, and Marg G. claims

1897-1918

Location: North side of Bruce Creek, a tributary of Horsethief Creek, on the top of a deep canyon cutting the south side of Boulder Mountain.

Minerals extracted: Steel galena (lead and silver)

Parties involved and key developments:

Baptiste Morigeau (1897)
 Original claim

Wellington (Joe) Kinnie, E.J. Johnston, and George Starke (1897-1898)
 Bought from Baptiste Morigeau, with each getting a third interest in the mine.

R.R. Bruce (1898)
 Bought the mine and arranged for a road to be built to the claim

F.W. Wonn of Seattle (1916-1918)
 Owned the mine with E.D. Smith in charge

Sitting Bull Mining Co. Ltd. (1918)

F.C. Stockdale (1928)
 Took control of the mine in a tax sale.

Other Details:

Early access to the mine consisted of a ten-mile road from the railway and a further ten miles of trail to the claim. In 1916, a cabin on site had accommodation for ten men, and was located on a small bench excavated in the side of the canyon.

In 1918 a new wagon road was built towards the claim leaving the Horsethief road between the seven and eight mileposts. This road went for the first four to five miles to the Delos claim owned by the same people. From there, a rawhide trail went the remaining three miles to the Sitting Bull claim. At the time, the intention was to put in a compressor at the Delos claim, however this never occurred.

Swansea

1891-1896 - ?, 1956

Location: Four miles north of Windermere on the east shoulder of what is now Mount Swansea (then Mount Windermere, Red Rock, or Suzanne). Elevation 5,100 feet.

Minerals extracted: Copper

Parties involved and key developments:

Baptiste Morigeau (unknown date)

'Brought to light' the mine/ area already known by the First Nations.

Windermere Mining Company Ltd (1891-92)

Organized at Spokane, unknown contribution to the operation.

Rufus A. Kimpton (1896)

Helped to pack ore down from the mine. His wife made ore sacks on her sewing machine.

Samuel Brewer (1896)

Also involved in packing ore.

Sheep Creek Gold Mines Ltd. (1947)

Drilling conducted.

Mid West Copper and Uranium Mines Ltd (1956)

Owned twenty-eight claims on Swansea Mountain. A previous two-mile trail to the forestry lookout on the mountain was reconstructed to four-wheel drive standards. Four men worked in the mine completing forty feet of excavations upward from the main level and 600 feet of underground passages.

Other Details

When Rufus Kimpton and Samuel Brewer were involved, ore was taken down on a 'go-devil' ground sleigh to the dock at Windermere and then on boat down the Columbia River to Golden. From there it was shipped by rail to Vancouver then to Wales via the Panama Canal. Swansea Mountain is so named after the Swansea smelter in Wales, where a total of 5.5 tons of ore was taken.

Gypsum Mine

1947 – (ongoing)

Location: Windermere Creek, 3.5 miles east of Windermere

Minerals extracted: Gypsum

Parties involved and key developments:

Ernie Bryan (1947) staked the site.

Columbia Gypsum Products (1950)

Columbia Gypsum Company Limited (1955)

Western Gypsum Products (1957)

Westroc Industries Limited

Other Details

The site was discovered largely by luck and accident as Ernie Bryan was working his trap line off Tegart Pass. He happened on a huge slab of gypsum and took a sample to be sent to Ottawa for analysis. The report came back that it was the purest gypsum known in Canada. Later surveys reported that it was probably the third largest deposit in North America.

The rock was crushed near the quarry site, then trucked to Athalmer and shipped by train. In 1959, consideration was made of moving the crusher to a new site near the Wilmer railway crossing. Rock is now crushed on site and trucked to Calgary.

Methods for mining were to drill holes 158 feet deep and 18-20 feet apart. These were loaded with charges and Dynamix to explode. Broken rock was then placed on trucks and delivered to the crushing plant, then on to further destinations.

Bunyan
Including the Lucille, Bunyan, Pilgrim, Christian, and Dreadnaught claims

1905-1921

Location: Seven miles from Invermere near the head of Goldie creek, on the east side of Castle Rock 300 feet above the bench lands.

Minerals extracted: Copper, silver, trace gold, high barium

Parties involved and key developments:

W.W. Taynton, Rufus Kimpton, Richard Moreland, Dave Jackson (all around 1916)

Other Details

Assay work was done in 1905 with development in 1906.

In 1921, further development work was done with eight men to dig 300 feet of tunnel. There was nothing much to show for it, however in 1923 there was reported nice looking barite if a market could be found for it.

The mine was bonded to E.J. Fader in 1921. He reportedly had the idea that the best way to mine the ore would be to blow off the shoulder of the bluff on which it was located. The blast mixed ore and waste, making sorting difficult and the product of low grade.

Giant, Giant Mineral, Silver Giant, Giant Mascot

1883-1957 (not continuous)

Location: On the Western slope of Jubilee Mountain, on the northeast side of the Spillimachine River, and seven miles from the Spillimachine railway. Elevation 3,520 feet.

Minerals extracted: Lead, silver, later some barite

Parties involved and key developments:

Tom Jones, Albert Isaaco, and W. Isaaco (1883)

Original stake. By 1890 considerable exploration and development work had been done.

W.J.R. Cowelle of Victoria (1898)

Golden Giant Mine Ltd (1907-1945)

Did a large amount of development work, including the construction of a forty ton concentrator, but this was too expensive and later burned down. 500 tons of ore was extracted in 1908, however the mine was closed 1909-1945, with the exception of a small level of ore being removed in 1916 or 1917, most likely loose rock.

Pacific Mines Petroleum Development Corporation (1926-1928)

Undertook a two-year development and diamond drill exploration project. Ownership remained under Golden Giant, and A.W. Davis was in charge of drilling.

Silver Giant Mines Ltd. (1945-1951)

Formed with W.R. Wheeler as president. 1,383 tons of ore were shipped in 1947 from the dumps, and a new concentrator was built.

Giant Mascot Mines Ltd (1951-1957)

A merger between the previous owner Siler Giant Mines Ltd and Headley Mascot Gold Mines Ltd resulted in this company taking ownership of the mine. The first ore was shipped that year (1951), and by 1952 mill production was at 500 tons/ day with 100 people on year round payroll. In 1955, B.H. Gunning was the managing director, L.P. Starck was resident manager, and R.J. Willox was mine superintendent. J.M. McDearmid rounded out the bunch as mill superintendent. Mining was discontinued due to a lack of mineral reserves in June 1957, leaving 107 men unemployed.

Baroid of Canada Limited (1959-1966)

Entered into an agreement with Giant Mascot mines to continue barite operations for a period of ten years, including both surface stripping and underground.

Other Details

From 1927-1947 minor development and exploration work was being done. The 1949 camp consisted of three old log cabins, a small bunkhouse, and an office building.

At its peak in the 1950s, over 100 men were on payroll and a large camp was constructed. It included forty houses, a school, a curling rink, and a community hall where movies, dances, and bingo were held.

Thunderhill

1884-1904, 1969-1971

Location: near Findlay Creek one and a half miles off of Upper Columbia Lake on a large butte.

Minerals extracted: Predominantly lead, also some silver and gold; Later (1969-1971) operation extracted shale and clay

Parties involved and key developments:

James Brady (1884)

Made the discovery but very little done on any claims at this time. Brady represented Cochrane interests (later known for farming, especially near Calgary)

Thunder Hill Mining Corporation Ltd. (1891-)

Formed by Brady to test and operate claims. Work was done 1891-1893 with \$40,000 total expenditure. The mine, however, never ran at any capacity, and work closed before much of the development infrastructure was even used (see below for details).

Mountain Minerals Ltd. (1969-1971)

Mined shale and clay for a short time at a location two miles west of Canal Flats.

Other Details

In 1891 as development began, it was understood that if the work was deemed promising, the proprietors would put up large scale concentrating works. At this time it was judged that the present showings of ore supply were 'unlimited' and so construction began.

A total of \$40,000 expenditure was completed from 1891-1893. This included mine buildings as well as the construction of one of the first if not the first concentrator built in B.C. for the treatment of silver lead ore. It was located on Columbia Lake two miles from Thunder Hill Ranch. A narrow gauge railway was also constructed to connect the mine and the concentrator but was never used. Tramcars powered by gravity were to bring down the ore, and then were to be transported back to the mine with horses. From the lake, ore was transported by the Upper Columbia Navigation Tramway Company north to Golden, and then by train from there.

In 1892, a collection of samples from the mine were entered into the World's Fair in Chicago.

Works were shut down in mid August 1893 owing to lack of funds. The goal was reconstruction of the company before resuming operations. This was the same year that the concentrator was completed, but it ran for only a short time before the mine ceased operation.

1895 saw reports of active work being done in the mine including with steam drills, and large quantities of concentrating ore taken out and stored in bins ready for transporting. Such reports were more hopeful than accurate however as work on the site had all but ceased.

The concentrator was eventually sold to a group of Vancouver men, and was dismantled during the First World War. The machinery was sent to Russia, while the logs were purchased by R.R. Bruce and used in the construction of Pynelogs.

Ruth Vermont

1893-1980 (not continuous)

Location: At the head of Vermont Creek, a tributary of Vowell Creek, 35 miles from Spillimachine and 30 miles from Parson. Elevation at 6,000 feet.

Minerals Extracted: Silver, lead, zinc, gold.

Parties involved and key developments:

Captain Frances Armstrong (1893)

Staked two claims named after his daughters Ruth and Charlotte.

T. Mercier (1895)

In charge of work. Also the year that work commenced on the site.

Galena Syndicate of London (1926-1930)

Managed by G.W. Edwards. Lease expired and the mine lay idle.

Harry Sykes (1930s)

Signed a contract for trucking out ore, road very bad.

Rio Canadian Exploration Ltd. (1956-1957)

Ten miles of old logging road was repaired and in some places relocated. Mapping and prospecting was done of the surface, as well as a survey, drilling and map of the underground. President of the company was D.R. Derry with manager S.M. Manning.

Columbia River Mines (1960-1969)

Mine rebuilt and a good road built to the camp. A modern camp was also constructed at creek level. The first concentrate was shipped in 1969. Twenty-two men worked under T.E. Swanson shipping seventeen tons of ore.

Copperline Mines (1971-1974)

Closure in 1974 due to a snow slide that wiped out the powerhouse and some buildings.

Other Details

Despite the good showings from the mine, it was very much an 'on again, off again' operation under different owners. This was largely due to the lack of profit made from the mine due to a lack of adequate transportation.

Work began again in 1980, but no more is known about this operation.

Mountain Minerals

1930s-1980s

Location: on Templeton River near Brisco, with the quarry five miles by road from Brisco.

Minerals extracted: Barite

Parties involved and key developments:

John and Gordon Hart (1930s)

Discovered the site but at the time there was little use for barite and they could sell.

Ralph A. Thrall (1939)

Acquired rights and built a road to the site. Thrall later formed Mountain Minerals Ltd based out of Lethbridge. The site continued to operate until the late 1980s.

Other Details

During the Second World War, barite was mined for use as ship ballast. After the war another use was found as an addition to mud for oil drilling. It was also used as a base for paint, and for the detection of ulcers under x-ray.

In 1959, 9,320 tons of barite was crushed near the quarry and shipped for processing at Lethbridge. It was hard to quarry because of the way the faults ran, as well as the swelling and pinching of the barite ore body. As a result, the size of the quarry was restricted.

Other Notable Claims

Steele Group

Unknown precisely, at least 1900-1929, in later years work was sporadic.

Location: On the opposite (north east) side of the mountain from Lead Queen mine near the summit of a peak between two small tributaries of Frances creek. Elevation at 8350 feet, with the camp at 7,850. In early years the mine was reached by rawhide trail from the Lead Queen road.

Minerals extracted: Lead, silver, zinc, trace gold.

A nice ore, but not high grade, and owing to the travel distance, profit could only be made in very favourable conditions with low overhead expense.

Parties involved and key developments:

Tom Brown (1900)

Staked. As of 1908 the claim was under a bond of sale but not yet closed. Insufficient development was done to prove an amount of shipping ore.

A man named Denby from California (c. 1918-1919)

H. Forster held a contract for rawhiding ore, and local men including Steve Archison, Jack Banks, and Charlie Watkins were also involved.

Alice Arm Holdings Company of Vancouver (1922)

Managed by A.J. Hughes

Walter Nixon and Elgin Milligan (1929)

Hired to tobaggan ore down the mountain

Other Details

A mine camp was constructed from logs several hundred feet above the timberline. We can only guess how the logs were brought up there.

A road was used for 18 miles out of Brisco until an elevation of 6,000 feet. From here, a rawhide trail went up to the mine at 8,150 feet. In 1922, the camp located on a bench 500 feet below the workings consisted of a cookhouse and a bunkhouse for eight men. A small cabin was also built near the mouth of the tunnel. Ore was taken down from the mine by light aerial tram, 1,200 feet long, then on rawhide trail two miles down to the wagon road. This tram was in disrepair in 1923.

Sweepstake/ New Strike

? -1910- ?

Location: A half-mile to the north of the BC & Tilbury claim at a slightly higher elevation, almost to the summit of the range. The physical description suggests this claim may part of the later Thunderbird (Excelda) claim (see Number 5).

Minerals extracted: Copper glance, galena with good silver (also lead)

Parties involved and key developments:

Unknown

Other Details

In 1910, two tons of ore was mined and sacked awaiting shipment, however first a branch trail needed to be built from the BC & Tilbury claim. It is unknown if and when this was accomplished.

Nip & Tuck

Including Nip & Tuck, Mohawk, Silver Bell, Nip & Tuck Fraction, and Mountain Lookout

?-1920-1927-?

Location: At the head of McDonald Creek, 28 miles from the railway, at an elevation of 9,000 feet.

Minerals Extracted: Silver, lead, some zinc.

Parties involved and key developments:

W.D. McMillan and V. Sontag (1920) of Seattle

Interprovincial Mines Development Co. (1922) managed by T.H. Kernich

Trethwood Mining Company Ltd. (1927) of Vancouver

Other Details

The long haul to the railway severely handicapped operations. At one time a compressor and oil engine were installed and a new camp built. Reports also suggest that if enough ore were mined that an aerial tram would help.

Findlay Creek

1886-1888 - ?

Location: Findlay creek near the mouth of White Tail Creek (as named in 1887).

Minerals extracted: Gold - placer mining

Who was involved?

Findlay Creek Mining Company Ltd (1886-?)

Operated under Thomas B.H. Cochrane. James Brady was also involved.

H.B. Richardson and Jack Barton were two of those hired in 1888 to work the claim.

Other Details

In 1888, eight men were working the mine site including a foreman, a teamster, a man operating a water powered sawmill, and five in the mine. A number of Chinamen also worked in the irrigation/ flume ditch.

As of 1888, the company has a good quality flume running for five and a half miles and with a capacity of 700 inches of water. A hydraulic plant had also been constructed. Below the Findlay Creek Mining Company Grounds, the Adela Mining Company had a ditch and flume nearly three miles long, however were not run long that season.

The Chinese men living and working on Findlay Creek built substantial living quarters and experienced very tough working conditions.

Purcell Mining Company

1887-1980

Location: On McLean Creek, a tributary of Frances Creek, 24 miles from Brisco and across the valley from the Lead Queen and Steel groups.

Minerals: Lead and silver

Persons involved and timeline of development:

Staked by two Swedish prospectors (1887)

The claim is described as a tunnel in a steep face of rock. The original name of this claim is not known.

McLean

Restaked after the previous claim lapsed.

1950 the estate reverted to the crown after taxes went unpaid.

Winston Wolfenden (1957) restaked.

Purcell Mining Company (1960)

Formed with Winston Wolfenden, Lloyd Wilder, and Bill Jones as partners

Alan Wolfenden held the claim in 1969

White Cat Group (Including Ground Floor, Heavenly Twins 1 & 2, and White Cat), 1898-1927, on Slade Creek, Silver and Lead. Staked in 1898, J.C. Pitts owned it in 1923, and prospecting work was done in 1927.

Copper King (1923 owned by R. McKeenan) and **Copper Queen** (1923 owned by H.W. Conover. Mined copper and silver. Located on the north side of Bugaboo Creek, two miles from the approximate 24 mile point from Spillimachine. Elevation at 7,270 ft, a few hundred feet below the summit of the ridge.

Grey Eagle and Marjory (1923 owned by R. McKeenan and M. Achenbach), adjoining Copper King and Queen claims.

Condor and Amelia claims (1923 owned by H.W. Conover and M. Achenbach), also near Copper King and Queen claims.

Young (1967, Pharoah Mines Ltd.) Consisting of 37 claims, including the old Copper King and Copper Queen showings. Located three miles up Rocky Point Creek, a tributary of Bugaboo Creek, and twenty miles west of Spillimachine.

Mag, Nimrod, Puzzler, etc. (1967 under option of Gordon Larrabee), galena ore. Consisting of 35 claims on the Starbird Ridge on the north side of Horsethief Creek thirteen miles from Wilmer. Work at this time included mapping, surface trenching, and putting in an access road.

Bobbie Burns Group (1923 owned by John E. Askwith of Ottawa). Originally claimed/ reported in 1891, 1896-1898. Located at the head of Bobbie Burns Creek at an elevation of 7,650 feet, and 27 miles from Carbonate Landing.

Relief Group (1927 owned by Malcolm McCraik of Invermere), mining silver, lead, some zinc. Located on the south side of Slade Mountain extending from the summit of the divide between Slade and Law Creeks. Tunnel elevation at 9,350, 3,000 feet above the creek bottom.

Warren Creek Copper Prospect (1925). Located on Warren Creek at an elevation of 6,750 feet, 600 feet above the creek bottom, and 24 miles from Spillimachine.

Grotto (1927 R.A. Ballentine prospecting). Galena ore. Located near the base of Starbird Ranch, fifteen miles from Wilmer. Camp buildings were constructed for thirty men.

Hart (1927 by Tom Hart). Lead, zinc, silver. Located four miles from Brisco and one and a half miles west of the Columbia River, in a narrow canyon of Templeton Creek.

Key (1958 by the Blakes of Skoocumchuk). Silver, lead, zinc. Located on the south tributary of Doctor Creek, southwest of Canal Flats on nineteen miles of logging road and seven and a half mile pack trail.

O.K. (1965 by Aetna Investment Corporation Ltd. with J.B. Magee as resident manager). Location on the north side of the Toby Creek valley, sixteen miles southwest of Athalmer and

one mile from the Toby Creek road. Elevation at 5,300 feet. Formerly known as the **Dragon** group. Drilling was done at this time then the claim was relinquished.

Jersey (1965 by Canadian Minerals and Smelting Corporation of Canada Ltd). Copper, lead, zinc, silver, with drilling only at this time. Location was near the foot of Steamboat Mountain ten miles southwest of Brisco at an elevation of 3,800 feet. Comprised of seven claims formerly known as the **Myras** group. Also examined by a New Jersey Zinc Company in 1954.

Alpha (1965, helicopter exploration by Bonanza Explorations Ltd.) Location between the headwaters of Bobby Burns and Bennison Creeks in the Spillimachine range, thirty miles southwest of Golden. Elevation at 7,500 to 8,500 feet. Worked at a number of occasions since 1896, and rehabilitation done of the entry in 1965.

Yornoc (1967, discovery 1966 by J.H. Conroy of Invermere). Galena and barite. Located at the head of Ben Abel Creek, sixteen miles southwest of Invermere with helicopter access from Invermere. Elevation at 7,500 feet.

Mining Claims Registered:

1886 Captain Frank Armstrong organized the Upper Columbia Navigation and Transportation Company. This mean that ore could be rawhided down the mountains to the wagon road then hauled by wagon and teams to the docks on the Columbia.

1898

Gallop Group on Toby

Bigham Group on Toby

Morning Glory Group - seven claims on Copper Creek, a tributary of Toby

Ruby on Toby

Ptarmigan

Paradise

1912

Little Joint - George Fisher, owner - Jumbo

Big Joint - " " "

Silver Horde -Hugh MacDonald, owner - 25 mile post Toby Creek

1913

Lucky Jim - A. Palmer, owner - Delphine Creek

Gillespie - W. Gillespie, owner - 24 mile post on Toby Creek Finn - James Finn, owner - north fork Toby Creek

Jupiter - Herbert Matthews, owner - Paradise Basin

Del Coronado - C.D. Ellis, owner - north side of north fork Toby Creek

Charlemont & Columbia - J.C. Pitts, owner - west side of Toby 7 miles from north fork bridge

Dolomite - J.C. Pitts, owner - head of Toby Creek

Victoria - James Fraser, owner - West side of Toby above north fork bridge

Bonita - C.D. Ellis, owner - Paradise Basin

Phoenix - John Cehovin, owner – Jumbo

Mining Claims Continued

1914

P.H.C. -P.H. Cross, owner - Jumbo fork of Toby adjoining the **Bessie Silver King #2,#3** -Dr. Herman Schurz, owner - Toby near Jumbo fork
Starke - George Starke, owner - on Toby
Snowshoe - Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby, adjoining **Hot Punch Blue Grouse** - Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby
Bessie - Murdock McLeod, owner - Jumbo fork of Toby
Good Luck #1,2,3 - Ed Torman, owner - north fork Toby
Juliette - Dr. Herman Schurz, owner - north fork Toby
Outlook #1,2 - Allison Palmer, owner - north fork Toby
Morning Glory - Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby

1915

Windermere - J.C. Pitts, owner - west side Toby 7 miles from N fork bridge
Michelson #3 formerly Lookout Point - Allison Palmer, owner - north fork Toby in Michelson basin
Oldtimer - James Bigham, owner - head of Toby on Brown Mountain
Star #1,2 - Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby

1916

Potlach Pioneer #1,2 -C.D. Ellis, owner - Paradise basin
Ore Galore - J. McLeod, owner - north fork Toby
Tiger -Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby
Success - John Cehovin, owner - Jumbo Creek
Mountain Lion -Ed Parry, owner - north fork Toby
Michelson #1,2 - Ed Parry - north fork Toby in Michelson basin
Elinor -James Laidlaw, owner - Paradise basin
Kootenay Star - Frank Anderson, owner - north fork Toby
I O U - Murdock McLeod - Toby opposite Juinbo fork
Jellico - James Fraser - north fork Toby, 7 miles above bridge
Ellenvale - C.D. Ellis - north side of north fork Toby one mile above Soda Spring
East Star - John Cehovin - Jumbo Creek
Comstock #1 - George Starke - north fork Toby 4 miles from main creek
Copperopolis -J. McLeod - north fork Toby
Contact - John Cehovin - Jumbo Creek
Success - " " "

1917

Kingsley - C.D. Ellis - north side north fork Toby
Michelson #1 - F.Y. Ball - north fork Toby in Michelson basin
Laughing Water - C.D. Ellis - falls of Spring Creek in Paradise basin. **Ptarmigan** claim adjoins in the north

Mining Claims Continued

1918

Dorothy - James White - head of north fork Toby

Edna B - F.Y. Ball - north fork Toby Michelson basin

Imperial - F. Stockdale -22 mile post Toby

Kootenay - A.F. Anderson - north fork Toby

Ida - F.Y. Ball - north fork Toby

Mabel - James White - head of north fork Toby

Toby King

Toby Queen - J. L. McKay - 1 mile West of wagon road bridge on Jumbo fork

Lantern - F. Stockdale - Toby, 1/2 mile above north fork

Purite - Charles Roberts - between Toby fork and north fork

1919

Toby Bear - J. Unfried - Jumbo fork

Dominion #1,2,3 - Murdock Mcleod - Toby opposite Jumbo fork West - A.F. Anderson - north fork Toby

Toby Princess - J.L. McKay - Toby 1/2 mile south of Jumbo Fork

Rex #1,2,3 - F.Y. Ball - north fork Toby in Michelson basin

Miner Boy - Percy Lake - Toby Creek 13 miles from Wilmer

Good Luck #1,2 -F.Y. Ball - north fork Toby Michelson basin

I O U - Frank Stockdale - Toby 22 mile post

R.S. Gallop - north fork Toby

Enterprise - Frank Unfried - Jumbo

Black Diamond - Percy Lake - north fork Toby

Bluemite - Charles Roberts - north fork Toby

Glossary of Terms

Barite: a heavy, inert white mineral that was processed into oil well drilling mud.

Barium: A soft white reactive metal. Barium compounds are used in water purification, the glass industry, and an ingredient of signal fires and fireworks giving a bright yellowish-greenish color. A mixture of barium sulfate and water is also opaque to x-rays, permitting a radiological examination of the stomach or intestines. (Ba)

Cadmium: a naturally occurring element found in zinc ores, and obtained as a byproduct of zinc smelting. It is used as a component in low melting point alloys and as a corrosion-resistant coating on other metals.

Concentrator: a machine used to separate metal or ore from rock, sand, etc. so as to improve the quality of the valuable portion. This process increased the profit made from shipping a certain weight of ore.

Flume: an artificial channel or trough for conducting water.

Galena: A heavy mineral, lead sulfide (PbS), occurring in lead-gray crystals, and the principle ore of lead.

Gypsum: a soft white or gray mineral. It occurs chiefly in sedimentary deposits and is used to make plaster of Paris and fertilizers, and in the building industry to make a type of drywall.

Lead: A heavy, bluish-gray, soft metal. It has been used in roofing, plumbing, ammunition, storage batteries, radiation shields, etc. Its compounds have been used in crystal glass, as an antiknock agent in gasoline, and (formerly) in paints. (Symbol: Pb)

Optioned: To acquire or grant a privilege to.

Ore: A metal-bearing mineral or rock that can be mined for profit.

Pyrite: A very common brass-yellow mineral with a metallic luster, also called Fool's Gold. (FeS₂)

Rawhiding: A method of transporting ore via a trail from the mine down to a wagon road. High grade ore was put into sacks and onto a large steer hide, hair facing down. A horse was hooked onto the bundle to bring it down the mountain. Due to the nature of the operation, it could only occur in winter.

Smelter: a place where metals are extracted from ore by a process involving heating and melting.

Stake: to claim an area of land for the purpose of conducting mining at that site. Staking a claim requires both physically marking the site with a series of stakes to show ownership, as well as

recording that ownership through official government channels and making necessary payments.

Tailings: the residue or leavings of ore being mined.

Tetrahedrite: a gray mineral consisting of a sulfide of antimony, copper, iron and zinc. Mined as an ore of copper and silver.

Tributary: a stream that flows to a larger stream or other body of water.

Zinc: A silvery-white metal that is a constituent of brass and is used for coating (galvanizing) iron and steel to protect against corrosion. (Symbol: **Zn**)