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STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MINES AND MINERALS

ITINERARY REPORT ON A TRIP TO THE CIRCLE DISTRICT, 1959

by

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During August 17 to 19, 1959, I made a trip to the Circle District to acquire information pertaining to mining operations in that area.

My itinerary for the trip was as follows:

- August 17 - Left College by car and drove to the Hope Mine on Faith Creek and to the Lucky Seven Mining Co mine on Mammoth Creek. Spent the night at Miller Roadhouse.
- August 18 - Visited mining operations of Glenn Carr, Miller Creek; Jak Mining Co, Crooked Creek; Jens Langlow, Switch Creek; Paul Bittner, Deadwood Creek; and Heine Carstens, Portage Creek. Started back toward Fairbanks and spent the night at C. J. Carlson's camp on Sourdough Creek.
- August 19 - Visited C. J. Carlson's mining operation on Sourdough Creek and the site of R. B. Palmer's prospecting activities on upper Sourdough Creek. Returned to College.

Hope Mine.

Bob Watkins, owner and operator of the Hope Mine on Faith Creek, was moving his equipment from a cut about one mile below his camp buildings to an area on upper Faith Creek a few hundred yards below the mouth of Charity Creek. At the last cut mined on lower Faith Creek, the ground is 19 feet deep, and at the site of the new cut on upper Faith Creek, the ground is 7 to 8 feet deep. Prospecting has indicated that on the upper part of the creek there is a winding paystreak about 60 feet wide and that there is also some "side pay" of marginal value. The new cut will be on ground owned by the U. S. Smelting Refining and Mining Co. A TD-14 International tractor is used for mining and pushing to a sluice plate at the head of the boxes, and a small dragline is used for stacking tailing.

A few years ago Watkins employed two to four men, but he is presently

working alone. It appears to be more economical for him to work alone and mine a small yardage each season rather than to hire a crew, mine a larger yardage, and maintain the necessary camp facilities.

Lucky Seven Mining Co.

The Lucky Seven Mining Co, owned and managed by Walter Roman, is mining on the left limit of Mastodon Creek just below the mouth of Independence Creek. The area being mined is beside ground that was mined by Parker and Raymond, and it lies at the upstream end of the area that was mined by the C. J. Berry dredge. The ground averages 15 feet in depth, 7 to 8 feet of this being muck. The bedrock is uneven, and, in some places, the muck and vegetation lie directly on bedrock. Mining has disclosed three stream-cut terraces on the left limit side of the valley. The minable ground remaining is about 80,000 square feet in area. The mining of this ground probably will be completed in 1960, and the outfit will then be moved to the upper part of Portage Creek, where ground has been leased from Henry Martin.

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The muck is stripped with monitors, a bulldozer is used for mining and pushing gravel onto a sluicelate, and a dragline stacks tailing. Steel sluicelates with transverse riffles are set on a grade of 18 inches per 12 feet. "Pierce" joint pipe is used for the water distribution lines, and the owner considers it far superior to slip-joint pipe because it can be moved more quickly and easily. The owner and two employees comprise the crew.

G. W. Carr.

G. W. Carr is mining on Miller Creek; he purchased the ground and

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equipment from Robert Wilkerson and is mining on ground adjacent to that mined by Wilkerson. A bulldozer is used for both mining and stacking tailing. The steel sluice-box being used has a rather unusual box at the head that serves as a sluice plate (Fig. 1); water is fed onto the plate at the bottom of the box through a pipe and a series of rectangular openings along the sides of the plate. The ground being mined is 15 feet deep. The owner and one employee comprise the crew. The owner reported that about twenty per cent of the gold is recovered in the form of amalgam, although he is not using mercury.



Fig. 1. Box used as a sluice plate by G. W. Carr on Miller Creek.

Jak Mining Company.

At the time of my visit, the Jak Mining Co. was owned jointly by Al Wendt and Ken Ringstad; a month or so later, Ringstad bought Wendt's interest in the company. Jak Mining Co. is operating the

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dredge that was operated first by the Berry Dredging Co. and later by the Circle Dredging Co. The dredge is now digging on Crooked Creek. Al Wendt reported that the concentrate recovered contained considerable amounts of tin and tungsten. He also reported that the gold below Bedrock Creek appears to be different from that above, and he believes that rhyolite dikes below Bedrock Creek are gold-bearing. He reported recovering amalgam from drill holes on Crooked Creek. Both Al Wendt and G. W. Carr expressed the opinion that the amalgam they were recovering occurred naturally and could not have migrated from sites of old mining operations.

Paul Bittner.

Paul Bittner mined in 1959 on the upper part of Deadwood Creek. At the site of his mining operation, the valley floor is 30 feet wide and the ground is 5 feet deep. The creek was mined in the early days by shoveling-in, but apparently the first mining did not go deep enough into bedrock to recover all the pay. Bittner uses two monitors for mining and moving the gravel through the boxes and one monitor for stacking tailing. He has a small bulldozer that he uses for general work around the cut and occasionally for stacking tailing. In August, he was still working on the first cut of the season.

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Fig. 2. Paul Bittner's mining operation on upper Deadwood Creek.

Jens Langlow.

Jens Langlow is mining on upper Switch Creek on a paystreak on the left limit of the creek, the same general area that he has been working in for several years. He carries on a one-man hydraulic operation using three monitors for mining and stacking tailing. At the time of my visit, his mining operation was shut down, and he had been confined to his cabin for ten days with a twisted ankle sustained while he was working in the cut.

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Heine Carsteng.

Heine Carsteng is mining on Portage Creek using a washing plant that has been described in earlier reports. The plant now has a hopper at the front so that it can be fed with a dragline, and a conveyor-belt

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Fig. 3. Heine Carstens' mining operation on Portage Creek.



Fig 4. Heine Carstens' washing plant.

stacker has been added to the rear of the machine for stacking coarse tailing. He mines with a dragline and uses a D-6 bulldozer for pushing gravel to the dragline and for pushing aside the fine tailing.

C. J. Carlson.

C. J. Carlson is in process of purchasing ground on Sourdough Creek ^{KL 50-43} from Mrs. A. A. Zimmerman. On the property he has a 3000-ft pipeline, several monitors, and a bulldozer; this equipment apparently is being purchased with the property. At the time of my visit he had a sluicibox in place for mining a cut, but mining was not in progress. He was working on improvements to the camp buildings. Apparently Mr. Carlson is retired, and he seems to consider the purchase of the property as being the purchase of a summertime vacation spot rather than as a mining investment.

R. B. Palmer.

R. B. Palmer is prospecting on upper Sourdough Creek. For the most ^{KL 50-81} part, his prospecting is an attempt to find a narrow, high-grade, gold-quartz vein that was exposed in a placer cut in the 1930's, when Walter Roman was mining there. Palmer was working for Roman when the vein was exposed, and he still has some high-grade specimens that were chipped from the vein. No attempt was made to explore the vein at that time, and, as placer mining continued, it was covered with tailing. The vein is only an inch or so in width.

Palmer has cut a drain through the tailing with an old tractor and a "tumblebug" scraper and has laid a pipeline from an old ditch so that he can use a nozzle to move the tailing and expose bedrock. He had not exposed bedrock at the time of my visit.