

June 23, 1898

My dearest Emily,

I hope this letter finds you and the children in good health and spirits. I am writing to you from Bonanza Creek, where our claim, "16 Above," has finally shown some promise. As you know, we've been working tirelessly to extract gold from this unforgiving land. Today, I want to share with you the technical details of our operation and the analytical methods we're employing to increase our chances of striking it rich.

Our claim is a relatively small one, measuring 500 feet along the creek, with a total area of 1.5 acres. We've staked out 16 claims above the Discovery Claim, which is about 1200 feet upstream. Our current method of extraction involves panning and sluicing, with a moderate success rate of around 20-25 gold per day. However, we've decided to upgrade our operation by installing a small-scale dredge, which will allow us to extract gold from the bedrock.

To analyze the gold content of our samples, we've been using a combination of methods, including assay and panning. Our panning results have been inconsistent, but the assay has shown a promising average of 0.5 oz Au per ton of ore. We're confident that with the new dredge, we'll be able to extract more gold from the bedrock, which is where the richest deposits are typically found.

One of the major challenges we've faced is the water level in the creek. The recent thaw has caused the water to rise, making it difficult to maintain a consistent flow. We've had to adjust our sluice box several times to accommodate the changing water levels. However, this has also given us an opportunity to test our equipment under different conditions, which will help us refine our operation.

In terms of data-driven findings, we've been keeping meticulous records of our daily production, including the amount of gold extracted, the cost of supplies, and the number of hours worked. These records will help us identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions about our operation. We're also tracking our expenses, including the cost of grubstake, which has been a significant expense for us. We've had to dip into our savings to cover the costs of food, shelter, and equipment.

As you know, I've taken on a second job as a carpenter to supplement our income. I've been working on a few projects, including building a small cabin for our claim and repairing some of the equipment. This has been a welcome distraction from the constant pressure of finding gold, and it's helped us stay afloat financially.

We're still a long way from striking it rich, but we're making progress. I'm confident that with our new dredge and continued hard work, we'll be able to extract more gold from this claim. I'll keep you updated on our progress and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Until then, take care of yourself and the children. I'll be thinking of you and counting the days until I can return home.

Your loving husband,

John

P.S. I've included a small sample of our gold ore for you to examine. I think you'll find it interesting.