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STANLEY A. EASTON: Tape 1, Side 1

I am Stanley A. Easton, speaking at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, October 21, 1957. I prepared for college in the public schools and a private boys' school at Berkeley, California, my hometown. On completion of these courses, I took the entrance examination to the University of California successfully. Being barely 16, I was not anxious to go ahead with my college work until I had more fully matured. In the meantime, I sought employment which I found in the office of Salkeld-Behr, San Francisco, California. These gentlemen were mechanical and construction engineers with special emphasis on equipment for mining properties. They had a splendid background through many years during the very active periods of the Virginia City, Nevada, Comstock mines and had received a commission to design and erect a large hoisting plant and accessory equipment at the Bullion-Beck and Champion Company's property in Eureka, Utah.

Early in the spring, Salkeld recruited a crew of former employees, mill wrights and mechanics, a total of about 15 men to take to the job, and on my intercession, took me along as a secretary, draftsman, errand boy, and what-have-you.

We had at the plant a room and office building completely for ourselves, getting our meals at the mine boarding house. This crew of rugged, competent, splendid persons were quite a stimulus to me, and I was completely infected by the desire for mining by the experience and the atmosphere of Eureka. I told these men I was about to return to Berkeley and enter the university for training as a mining engineer.

They tried to dissuade me from such plans saying that mining had passed its peak. Nothing was a subject of any conversation during the evenings but the glories of the past of Virginia City, which they now pointed out had experienced its best days. The other big mining camps, Bodie, Tombstone, and other important properties, were also in a decline, and the Mother Lode mines in California were also dragging their feet.

After the job was completed, I worked for awhile at the Bullion-Beck mine, returning to California late in the winter of 1889 and entered the university in that year.

During my work in college, I spent some of my vacations working underground, especially at the old Deep Gold mine at Tritown, Amador, County.

Upon conclusion, in receiving my degree, I worked first at the California gold mines, especially at the Bullion-Beck and Golden Gate properties; the Jumper properties as middleman, and as assyayor and clean-up man at the gold reduction plant at the Golden Gate, a chloridizing plant. But mining in California, generally, was rather slow.

I became acquainted with one H. J. Jory, a graduate of the university, who had experience in the Coeur d'Alene district in Idaho. He wrote me that I could receive employment with him if I came over, and so with reluctant consent of my parents, I left California and arrived in Spokane in March 1896. I went immediately to a property which Jory was heading under the financing of Finch and Campbell, prominent operators in the Coeur d'Alene district, at a point on the Yak River leaving the railroad at Leonia. I went to work underground there in running a cross-cut tunnel. During this period, the principals of the enterprise

were in part Finch-John A. Finch, R. K. Neil, Patsy Clark, and especially Louie Davenport, who came in over the trail from Leonia and sized up the property giving me the opportunity of becoming acquainted with these gentlemen. Things dragged on during the summer and early fall when there was a change in management and I left to go to Rossland, British Columbia, which was then at the height of a tremendous lot of activity. I worked at Rossland for some time there on machines and doing some development work and then left to come back to the States, and especially to the Coeur d'Alenes, where I secured underground employment as a single-jack miner at the Bunker Hill and Sullivan. At that time, Frederick Burbridge was manager of the company, George A. Simmonds was superintendent at the mine, and Jay E. Branscombe was mine foreman.

Sometime in February 1898, word came for me to come to the office. I came out and met F. W. Bradley for the first time. He explained that he and Victor Clement, a former management supervisor, and for some years past in the gold mines of South Africa, had returned and that he and Vic Clement had been making examination of the Mercur mines in Utah. They arrived with a large number of samples which greatly overwhelmed Bill Linie, who was the only assyayor at the Bunker Hill. Bradley wanted to know if I could assay, and if so, I was to report for such work at the assay office, where I spent some weeks not only in the assay office, but also in the general office doing some paper work for Mr. Clement, especially. I then returned to underground work until later one winter or early spring when I left to go on a scouting expedition with Jory, who had some loose arrangements with Finch and Campbell looking for promising properties especially in eastern Oregon, where

there had been a quite a lot of new activity, especially on Cracker Creek and west of the Cornicopia and other areas.

I spent several weeks with Jory, hunting around without any special success, although I did take a long trip by myself with a hired man and horses clear over to the Seven Devil country. Upon emerging from there, I had word from Sonneman and Branscombe under whom I had worked at Wardner who had resigned their work there and opened an office in Spokane as mining engineers and operators, saying they had taken an option on the Cumberland property in Silver City, Idaho, and would I go down there and take over management of it which I promptly did. I arrived in Silver City late in October or early in November and immediately proceeded to the property. It was an old small enterprise on War Eagle Mountain, without any equipment but in a very excellant location. Adjoining it were such properties as the Golden Chariot, Ida Elmore, and others which in the past had produced not less than 40 millions of dollars.

Silver City, Idaho, was a prosperous, friendly, active, compact town between Florida and War Eagle Mountains. The Owyhee County area was first opened by miners and prospectors in 1862, first as placer mines and then by the discovery of fabulously rich gold and silver orebodies on War Eagle Mountain. Concurrently a smelter had been built and operated at South Mountain about 1863, using charcoal for fuel and processing solely the oxidized surface ore easy of reduction. All the metals and supplies were hauled overland to Winnemucca. This was certainly operating a hard way not only because of isolation but because of very frequent Indian threats. Shortly after this first expedition, the

fabulously rich properties on War Eagle Mountain were discovered.

The Poorman was probably the first location made, long about 1864-65. The richness of the ores at this property were beyond belief; instead of evaluating the ore on the basis of tons it was the contents per pound. Much similar ore was found in other properties, and for the period Silver City was the scene of great activity. Some lawlessness prevailed and the situation was not unmarked by tragedy. In the early 1870s there was a contest for certain property rights between the Golden Chariot and the Ida Elmore. Instead of taking the issues to court, the parties involved resorted to assertion of their rights by armed might and a battle ensued for nearly a week during which time three men were killed outright and quite a number were wounded. A military establishment at Boise sent a squadron of cavalry troopers to Silver City that resulted in cessation of operations and some sort of settlement. Although as an aftermath, some ten days later, a shooting took place in front of the Idaho Hotel in town, at which time a very noted person was instantly killed and at least two other members wounded.

It might be stated broadly that the past of Silver City can be divided pretty closely into two eras: first era from 1862-1875 during which the mines on War Eagle Mountain were extremely productive and profitable. Unfortunately, the Bank of California's failings disturbed the financing of these companies and the somewhat failure of the orebodies resulted in an almost complete stoppage of important work.

At the time of my arrival, Silver City was at the height of its prosperity during what might be called the second phase. At the time they were operating some seven successful operations, including the

Trade Dollar, the Black Jack, the Delamar (some nine miles to the west), the Poorman, and shortly thereafter, the Cumberland. The operations were noted especially by the almost universal use of hand mining. There was no cheap power. Coal was around \$30 to \$40 a ton and difficult to secure, owing to transportation difficulties. The main source of power was the burning of mountain mahogany wood which was gleaned from the slim sources of the surrounding country.

At that time, the Delamar property was directed by Dwight Huntley, manager, and a Mr. Orford, who seemed to be assistant manager and chief accountant; R. H. Brit was manager of the Poorman mine; Fred Irving was the manager of the Black Jack; James Hutchinson manager of the Trade Dollar, with Joe H. Hutchinson, his son, as foreman. The community was compact, prosperous, hospitable, and kindly in every way. The conditions were very pleasing to all in spite of its isolation. Silver City was reached by the railroad from Nampa to a hamlet called Duffey on the Snake River and from thence to Silver City, a distance of some 30 miles.

The man of the hour at this time was Col. W. H. Dewey. Although 75, he was a man of great physical and mental activity. He practically built the railroad from Nampa to Duffey, which reached Duffey in 1896. He organized the companies which took over the Trade Dollar and the Black Jack properties. He was in every way a true pioneer arriving in the Owyhee County area at a hamlet called Ruby City in 1864, and from that time on continuously was one of the head men in Silver City and the surrounding area. He started the town of Dewey at the former site of Boomville some few miles below Silver City on Jordan Creek. He built a handsome hotel there, built a 20 stamp mill and started working on areas

close to the Black Jack. His son, Edward H. Dewey, also had a handsome home at this hamlet.

At the Cumberland there was nothing at all except some shafts filled with debris and no plant. Immediately we started the work of cleaning the shaft out and erecting hoisting equipment, bringing in which at that time was a great novelty, a gasoline operated hoisting engine of the Hercules manufacturer; a so-called one-lunger-as there was one cylinder solely, I had a large flywheel to carry over the dead center in starting this equipment. There was some hesitancy as to its effectiveness and also to get it going. The scheme I hit upon of filling the water jackets up with scalding hot water so that no time would be lost in warming the machine. The result was the hoist started off very well and gave excellent service, not only for clearing out the debris, but also for sinking the shaft for some distance.

During the first winter I lived at the mine on the mountain, an elevation of some 8,000 feet as compared to about 6,500 feet at the town Silver City. On a fine day I could look down the Snake River valley and see the three Tetons in Montana. One discussion as we looked over this vast desert and the magnificent flow of water in the Snake River was that some day the water would be applied to the desert and the valley would become productive, but we feared that would be for another generation. Surprisingly, though as you all know, it all came about in less than a decade, so now the valley is well populated and extremely productive.

I enjoyed friendships at Silver City which lasted through these nearly 60 years which has transpired since. Probably outstanding was

Len York, owner and publisher of the Owyhee Avalanche. In following years he moved to Boise and very successfully and profitably operated the publishing house under his name assisted by his two fine sons. This fine gentleman whom I through past years always saw when I went to Boise, has left us just a few weeks hence. Another person was Miss Permeal French who was teaching school in Silver City. Subsequently, she was the dean of women at the University at Moscow for many years, finally resigning and building a home as a neighbor of mine in Coeur d'Alene. This fine lady is also gone. Others whose hospitality I enjoyed greatly at Silver City was the family of Ben Hastings, who at that time was State mine inspector and one who had been very active in the Silver City area for many years. I also saw a great deal of the (Getcha?) family, especially (Miseur?), who was postmaster. The Sommercamps and the (Greets?) were also good friends of mine, especially Joe H. Hutchinson, who was foreman of the Trade Dollar mine, who had served a term as Lieutenant Governor of Idaho and who was very instrumental in bringing to justice the notorious assassin of Governor Steunenberg, Harry Orchard. Because of his familiarity with explosives, Hutchinson recognized certain things which led directly to the disclosure, apprehension and arrest of this assassin. I last saw Joe Hutchinson in San Fransico some 8 or 10 years ago but since then I have lost track of him.

Ores from the Cumberland mine were hauled by team to the old Wagner Mill on Jordan Creek just above Silver City. This was a unique plant; three stamps were used to dry crush the ore so that it would probably all pass through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch mesh. That was fed through an old fashioned arrastra which I believe to be the last use of this appliance in western

mining for all time. Formerly, especially in Mexico, it was standard equipment. It consists of a circular rock lined pit, a vertical shaft on the center and cross arms from which were dragged large stones, grinding the ore in the presence of quick silver, the amalgam forming in a ring around the center. The pulp from that went to Wheeler pans, the appliance developed at Virginia City. Extraction was excellant but the cost was very high, the tonnage was small, and fuel expenses terrific.

Later in the fall I received an opportunity to enter the employ of T. A. Rickard of Denver who was starting an enterprise in Boulder County (Colorado). I left Silver City with regret but felt that the opportunities presented were more varied and the contacts and acquaintances made by it would be important. However, the enterprise which consisted of a gold mine and chloridization plant did not pan out. The ore resources were very disappointing. I left Colorado early in the following spring going to British Columbia where I was given charge of development work on important holdings known as the Gold Drop; low grade copper-silver ore. This was before the railroad came in and before the building of the smelter by the Granby people, at the Grand Forks. We worked very successfully in the large masses of this low grade ore. A compressor was installed; modern offices and living quarters were designed and erected. It is interesting to note that during this period of work we received very favorable comment from the minister of mines in British Columbia in his 99 report. Mr. F. W. Bradley, president of Bunker Hill accompanied by an assistant, examined the Granby works, the Gold Drop, and Old Iron Sides which adjoined our property and saw all the work I was going on. In passing it was interesting to note that while I was at Silver City, I also had a visit there from Mr. Bradley who saw what was going on at that undertaking.