

The History Corner

by Dale Fisk
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Gold – Part XIII

About the time Iron Springs was making big strides in the summer of 1905, the hotel at Rand (near Rankin Mill) burned down. By this time all the Rankin properties were owned by the Iron Springs Company. The company was expanding the tunnel at its White Rose mine where a sensation had been caused among mining circles the previous summer when tellurium ore was discovered. This element (Te) discovered in 1782, is generally associated with copper mining. It is primarily used as an alloying agent. Small amounts of tellurium are added to copper and stainless steel to make them easier to machine and mill. Tellurium is also added to lead to increase its strength and resistance to sulfuric acid. Tellurium is a semiconductor, is used to color glass and ceramics and is one of the primary ingredients in blasting caps.

The Iron Springs Company also started con- mill and cyanide plant in 1905, which would take the rest of the year to complete. That summer, A.W. Reberles found gold on

Cuddy Mountain at a location reported as "300 acres said to be underlaid by a blanket formation of free-milling quartz of from ten to 50 feet in depth." It would be another decade before serious gold mining would take place on Cuddy Mountain.

The Iron Springs cyanide processing plant was completed and put into operation in January or February of 1906. A mining publication reported: "It is operated by water power taken from Rapid River. The initial run extended over a period of fourteen hours and about 500 pounds of ore was handled. Reports indicate that the entire plant ran smoothly." Another mining publication said, "The Iron Springs people are doubling the capacity of the old Rankin mill on the west fork and they will start this week to pack in 70,000 pounds of supplies and will work a large force all winter."

That fall the Weiser and Iron Springs will cast 500 votes next year." This gives a clue about the population of the Seven Devils Mining District at the time.

The Salzer – Ford operation at Black Lake hit bad luck in the summer of 1906 when their fancy new air-compressor burned up, which threw a wrench into drilling progress for blasting in their mines. Even so, they completed a 1,200 drainage tunnel that season.

In the fall of 1906 there was much news about a gold discovery in the Weiser River canyon, somewhere above the mouth of the East Fork, by someone named Sullivan. That December the Weiser Signal said Sullivan's Del Val Mining Company had completed a half mile of road from the main road to their principle ore body, where they built cabins, a large stable and a store room for winter provisions. A hoisting apparatus was nearly completed at the time of this report. I don't know just where this mine was located, or how much gold was actually taken out of it. The last reference I can find to it is from the December 8, 1906 Signal. Starkey had some certificates of assays from samples from the Sullivan / Del Val mine showing "excellent" value.

It's interesting to note



A motorcycle group at the old buildings at Paradise Flat near Iron Springs in 1938.

that the average wage for Idaho miners in 1907 was \$3.50 a day (about \$97 in today's dollars), and shift bosses were paid \$5 per day).

Suddenly in August of 1907 it was announced that the Iron Springs Consolidated Mining Company filed for involuntary

bankruptcy. Evidently it ceased operations, and by 1912 the State of Idaho declared the company a "forfeited incorporation." references to operations at Iron Springs seem to disappear after 1907.

According to several sources the operators of the mining company were little more than Eastern swindlers who only mined the pockets of their investors. As Winifred Linday put it, "All went well until the investors decided that there should be some return on their stock and announced that a coterie of stockholders would arrive to inspect their property."

Historian Frank Harris said the most notorious of the Iron Springs con men was a preacher named J. Edie Stewart. Harris said Stewart spent part of his time at the mining district, and the rest in the East, preaching on Sundays and selling worthless stock during the week: "He was too pious to make a sale on Sunday, but he would

break the day to the extent of making an appointment with a prospective purchaser for the meeting on the next day. He was the and I have met many." According to Harris, Frenchy David turned the tables on the preacher, selling Reverend Stewart several bogus claims, and receiving "enough money to buy a winter's grub and have several good drunks." It was rumored that Reverend Stewart ended up in prison in Ohio or Kentucky.

When the Iron Springs company went under, the buildings and equipment at Iron Springs on Rankin Mill were abandoned, and because the area was so remote, they were left mostly undisturbed. The wagon road to Rankin Mill soon deteriorated, as there was no reason to maintain it. As late as the early 1950s several of the buildings were still standing. Today, there is little left at Rankin Mill, and almost nothing at Iron Springs.



Motorcyclists in front of building at Iron Springs in 1938. Both photos shown here are from the January 1938 issue of "Harley-Davidson Enthusiast" magazine.

Historical Years

100 years ago
August 13, 1920
"The hunting season opens August 15. The birds and huckleberries are plentiful. If you wish you can go on to Payette Lake by auto which leaves New Meadows on arrival of the train. Fare from New Meadows to McCall

and leaves New Meadows at 5:00 p.m. on return trip. Will stop on flag to pick up parties. Round-trip fare from Cambridge \$1.50. Children half fare. War tax extra."

The basement for the new school building is being excavated.

A girl was born to Mr.

August 9, 1945
"Since a statewide bounty of five dollars became effective May 1, Idaho trappers and hunters have destroyed 858 coyotes, the fish and game department reported today. The total included 275 adult coyotes and 583 pups. The bounty on pups is \$3." There is

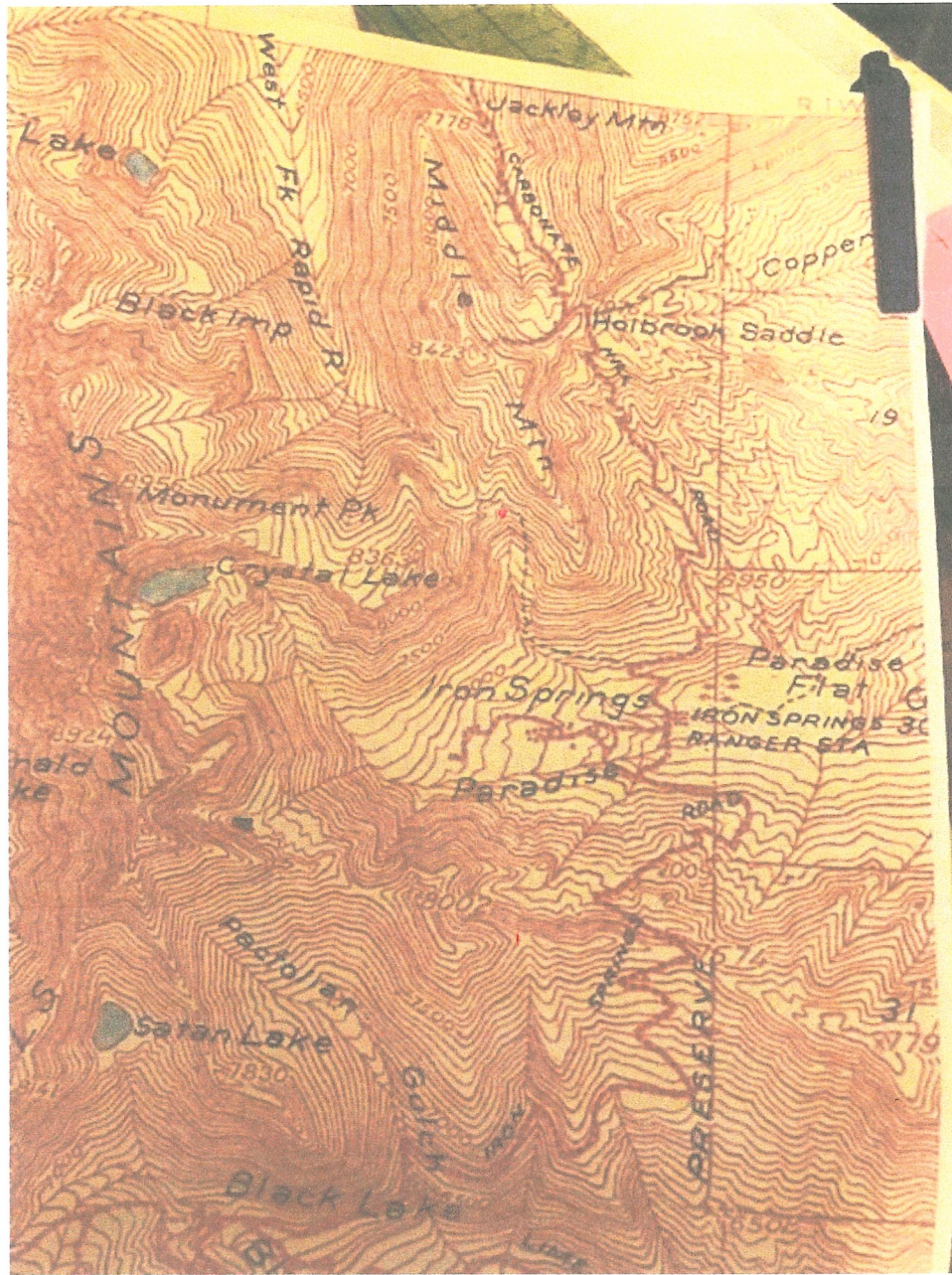
bounty.
Indian Valley – "Mrs. Georgia York sold her farm to a man from Payette and we hear Mrs. York is going to locate at the Council."

49 years ago
August 12, 1971
A daughter named Christine Michelle was born to Mr. and Mrs. David Crothaus on August

93, at the Weiser nursing home. He came to Idaho from Missouri in 1907 and had lived in Washington County since that time. He homesteaded near Midvale and later moved to Cambridge where he lived until moving to Weiser in the fall of 1970. Emergency loans are available for grasshoppers

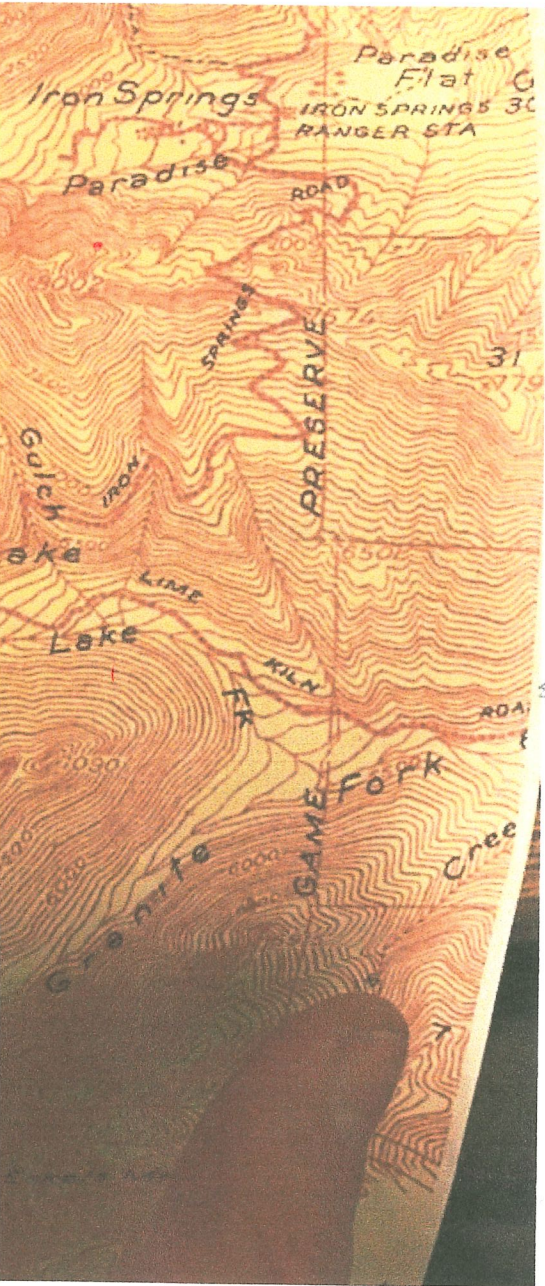
August 10, 1995
The front page of this issue featured 4 pictures of the fair and rodeo parade. The Grand Marshal was John Mount.
Died: Ralph Godlove, 91, of Meridian. He was born in 1903 at Salubria, the son of Perry and Anna Godlove.
Married on July 9:

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Paradise Flat
&
Iron Springs

Zimbra



← Lime etc. in Road

Photo
of the
Elk Preserve
historical
map

enlarged copy

