

TAPE #5

GEOFFERY SCHWEITZER

Reference: Early Jackson and the mines

(...what time was that?)

1911.

(You came as their engineer then?)

I was in charge of the mine. No, the property, it wasn't a mine.

(You came to develop it then?)

Yeah. There was a shaft down there a few feet and we sank that to 550 feet. Got a little ore, enough to make us work a little longer and after three years we closed down. Never got a cent out of it. That is until we sold it.

(Did anybody else develop it?)

No, we were the only ones. The ~~Moore~~ Moore, on the other hand, re-opened. They put up a mill, and I think they made a little money. Then they closed down, and said they were not going to pay taxes on the property any more. Anyway, the South Texas Mining Co. had some money and decided to buy the mineral rights to the Moore. The mining rights too. They bought it at public auction for the taxes. Judge McGee was out attorney then and I was in San Francisco. I phoned McGee and he told me that they bid 500 dollars for it. And there were no other bidders.

(You spoke of the ^{Zeile} ~~Zyle~~ Mine producing. Do you know when that started?)

Well, it was running in 1879. Dr. Zyla came up to close it; they weren't making a profit and ^{Deitert} ~~Detrich~~ got him aside and told him they ~~they~~ should put him in to run the mine. If he made good he was to get an increase in salary and an interest in the mine.

Well, ^{Deiter} ~~Detrich~~ got the job and he ran the mine until 1913. December, 1913. 34 years. He made money; he was a good operator. The last thing he did was the surface job.

(What was that?)

Well, the vein outcropped on the surface, and he kept that there to keep the water out when it rained. You wouldn't have to do that now. (The drought of 1976?)

I don't know when this happened, but the Zeile family spelled their name: z-e-i-l-e. And he changed it to z-e-i-l-a.

(Did ^{Deiter's} ~~Detrich's~~ job at the Argonaut begin when he left the Zeile?)

No, he started on the Argonaut long before that. Doing one thing didn't stop him from doing another. At one time he was the biggest individual stockholder in the PG&E. And it came about this way. He backed a fellow by the name of Noble around 1920. Noble had all these power sights around the Pitt River and they had a few customers. Around that time the PG&E was up against it, they had plenty of customers but couldn't accomodate them. So they got together and Deiter took stock in the PG&E. Things like that happened, you know. He was never spectacular; always in the background. After he closed the mine down here, he moved to San Francisco and lived at the Pacific union Club.

They say they had a great time with him during the war with Germany. He was born in Austria and his sympathies went to the home country.

So that's it, I was never down in the Argonaut.

(Can you tell us about the Kennedy? And about the bad blood between the Kennedy and The Argonaut.)

You mean about Deiter? After he owned all the Argonaut claim and cleared the title he offered it to the Kennedy for 10,000 in stock and 10,000 in cash. They said no, and offered him 15,000 total. He said no, I'll develop the mine myself. They thought he was bluffing, of course---but he wasn't. Then Billy McGee came to him, then one of the promising Lawyers around here. He said we'll pay you the 20,000. No, said Deiter, it's 40,000 now! Maybe he spent 20,000 in the meantime. Finally one offer after another came and the Kennedy offered him 100,000 dollars. But it was too late; he had the shaft pretty well down and found out that the Kennedy was over the line. He sued the Kennedy and I don't know how much the Kennedy had to pay, but it was enough to put up his mill. From then on they weren't on speaking terms.

(What do you know about the Kennedy from its earliest times.)

The Kennedy was idle and McClure and Thomas re-opened it, worked it, and then sold out to the Kennedy Mining and Milling Co. Whether it had that name before they sold it, I don't know. I don't know when it was, but they (McClure and Thomas) were well along in the Guinn Mine in 1907/08. McClure told me that after Thomas and he had sold the Kennedy he had something to do in the Orient. And on that steamer he happened to meet my father. And when he came back from the orient he decided to look around the Mother Lode to see if he and Thomas could pick up another mine. Like they picked up the Kennedy. And they decided on the Guinn. It was probably lying there idle, full of water. McClure decided on it and went to see Thomas who was working hydraulics up in northern Calif. He went up there and was going to stay a day or so, but they got

drunk. And this conservative, nice Mr. McClure ended up staying there ten days! Well, they finally decided to go ahead. But they needed a partner. What was his name? Anyway, he owned the Fiddletown Building in San Francisco. And I always wondered how the building got its name. Anyway, this man joined them and they all owned 1/3 of the mine. They had trouble with the son of the Fiddletown partner; the partner died, you see. Well they put the shaft down. And I often wondered why, before I asked McClure, why did you put the shaft down in that place, right in the creek. The creek ran down in the mine and they pumped it out. And he said, "Well, that was the outcrop." And that's where the ore was. Well, I didn't say this to McClure, but if I'd been doing it, I'd of gone a hundred feet up the hill. And here's another thing---they didn't have a place for their dump. They had to run it through the mill and haul it away. I'd have gone up a hundred feet and gotten below the creek, and from there go down the vein. But that's in the early days, and they did things differently. Anyway, Mr. McClure was a fine fellow, and I felt terrible about his death. He was taking a bath, turned the hot water on and scalded himself to death.

Nowhere's an off-shoot to my thinking about that. Now this fella came in and took over this property and he put in a new boiler. And it really comes out boiling water. That's the way it happened. I'd never put in that kind of a boiler.

(I was wondering about the footwall and the hanging walls of these mines. I've heard conflicting stories about the kind of ground they were in; And the shaft problems.)

The vein generally had ore that paid as long as it was in the Mariposa slates. For instance, the Keystone, when ^{they} ~~that~~ left the Mariposa slates, down around the 900, it was too low grade to work.

And it was only greenstone. It's real hard rock. But they had trouble with that shaft all the time. Even when it was in the mariposa slate. Had men down there working all night, every night. And some mornings when the skip went down the ground had swollen so much that it got stuck. Then they pulled it out, sent men down with axes, chopped the timber away and they could get the skip down. (How big was that vein?)

It varied ya know. Sometimes...maybe it was 8 or 10 feet wide.

(Big enough so you didn't have to take the wall rock.)

There was slate on both sides of the shaft.

...When those people took it over a few years ago, took over the Keystone

~~Kennedy~~, that is, they sank it a 1000 feet hoping that the vein would come back into the mariposa slate. But it never did.

(The Keystone, was that in Amador City?)

Yes.

(Were you ever in the central Eureka?)

Yeah. Was in with Jim Davis, the superintendent. Was down in the South Eureka once. And I met Jim Davis at the connection between the South Eureka and the Central Eureka. And we came up the Central Eureka. But they're all the same. See one, see them all. Only difference is, sometimes the super has a different way of mining. And ya had to know how to relieve your timber. E.S. McCurdy told me, when he came out here---he'd been working in the coal mines in the East---that he saw them putting in timber 16x16. He said, "That's too big! Should put in 8x8." But he changed his mind quick. But some of these people never changed their minds, and they lost a lot of ore.

(What would you say would be the prospects of opening the Argonaut or the Kennedy now?)

I'll tell you what I think. None! Just as soon as you start to pull that water out of the Kennedy shaft, and it's full, Mr. planning commissioner would be after you. It's terrible water he'd tell you. You must treat it before you let it run down the street. Or the creek---no you couldn't do that. They are finished! Some of the mines could act as wells now-a-days.

(How much pumping did they have to do in the old days?)

Not much. I don't think the Kennedy ever had a pump. I think they bailed when they had to. Of course, over the years the thing would fill up.

(But if you could find a place to put the water, would it pay?)

I don't know. You'd have to retimber.

(Do you think any of that would be open down there?)

No. Of course, as long as the timbers are under water they don't rot. It may be open; I wouldn't know.

(The slate swelled when exposed to air, but would it be that way under water.)

Well, I'd say yes.

(Talking to John Pierovich about the Argonaut disaster, they came in from the Kennedy through an old drift that hadn't been used.)

There was no continuous opening, the drift went to a point, then they had to dig. Took them three weeks.

...Fellow name of Jennings lived in Dry Town---always pronounced it Dryton.

((Reference is made to New Chicago near Drytown---survivor of the Argonaut disaster lives or lived there.))

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Jim Davis and I, for a long time, were looking at Mr. Deiter's claims over there. The California group. And Mr. Jennings, he used to eat at the table with us, in the Imperial Hotel in Amador City. He said if you ever start working that mine I'll give you a home in Drytown. But never got that far. Then Mr. Stent took them over. He didn't get very far.

(That name Stent---there's a place near Jamestown called Stent. Would that be the same man?)

Yeah.

(There was a mine down there too.)

Yes, in Tuolumne County. That's the Mother Lode down there. He worked there in the early days, then he came to Jackson and was in charge of the Argonaut for years. That's when he got his claims in Drytown.

...My Father used to tell Charlie Faccini, who was superior judge here, if you ever get good roads in Amador County I'll come up in my automobile. But he never came. Some of the roads were really bad. But I'll tell you, they were impassible at times. They better do something with that crossing where the Bank of America is.

...In the early days the railroad came only as far as Ione. You had to come up by 4 horse stage. It was a rough road. The road at Martell was on a lava flow and full of holes and great big ~~holes~~ boulders.

(Do you recall that being called Cyclone Station?)

Yeah.

(A tornado lifted it off its foundation one time.)

...This railroad was originally the Ione and Eastern. It went broke through a receiver

and reorganized as the Amador Central. They had a couple of cars of passengers and a lot of freight---it was successful.

(Cypher^t was the boss. He left shortly after Wells Fargo took it over.)

...Talking about the bank, I went in there with a check one day and the teller said the check was no good. I said I made it out myself. He said he couldn't help it, it was no good and handed it back. So I put a dot over the i and a dot ~~and~~^{set} the end and he cashed it.

...Briscoe told me that after Reiser left, ya know he used to own the business. (The bank) Culbert came up, looked around the place, and said, Dave you ~~xxxx~~ should buy it. Dave says, I haven't any money. He says, Dave, come down to the bank, we'll see about that.

...Louie Spinetti, he had it in for em. He wouldn't go to the bank or anything. That's why he started his own bank. He was in San Francisco, went there for an appointment. And he went to see Giannini. And they talked it over---ya know Spinetti had the bank up here---and Giannini decided it's a good place for the Bank of Italy. So he gave Spinetti a check for 50,000 dollars, from one of the subsidiary banks, the Metropolis Bank. I should have gotten the details cause nobody knows about it now, I guess.

...When we were selling the South Jackson, this was all in San Francisco at that time, Finley Cook, put in the agreement that the money was to be paid in to the Anglo Calif National Bank. I said! How'd you happen to put it in there.? He said, I thought you did business with them? I said, Well, I have a deposit, but I tell you what, change that to Bank of Amador County.

I wasn't much at owning property. And my Father never did. Except the homes in which he lived.

(You came in 1911 for the South Jackson Mining, and then you were here about three years? And when they shut down did you leave town?)

I used to come back and forth because we still owned the ground. And I came back after my Mother died. She died in 45 and I came back in 46. My principal reason for coming back was to sell it. I forget who took it over. I couldn't subdivide. They tell me it's full now.

I'm surprised that knoll hasn't been built on. They build a road over it. The mobile homes killed that. I think they're terrible.

(Aside from your visits you didn't live here until 1946?)

Yes. Moved to the National Hotel; lived there. Then I got married. Had an apartment. Then I got un-married.

Well, that's it.