

4-1-1963

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Recommended Citation

Henderson, Patrick D.. "Bradshaw Bonanza." *New Mexico Historical Review* 38, 2 (1963).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol38/iss2/4>

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BRADSHAW BONANZA

By PATRICK D. HENDERSON *

THE lure of precious minerals has always been an incentive for frontier expansion. Mineral discoveries were obviously important to the Spanish Colonial period and some of their discoveries were indeed very rich. The mining frontier was no less important to the Anglo-American after the news reached the eastern United States and South American countries that rich placers were being worked on the American River in California.

It would be impossible in this paper to give a lengthy description of the advance of the Mining Frontier from California into the neighboring areas. It moved across the Sierra Nevadas, the Cascades, over the great river systems of the West and resulted in the development of such notorious camps as Bannock, Virginia City and the famous Comstock, or to the immediate interest of Arizonians, penetration into the mountains surrounding Prescott, the districts adjacent to the Colorado River, or the opening of the vast copper enterprises in the Clifton-Morenci area.

In central Arizona and the region around Prescott speculation as to the mineral potential was a subject of interest as early as Jack Swilling's pursuit of some Apaches up the Hasayampa for some distance in 1860.¹ At that time Swilling was positive he had seen some rich outcroppings of gold and silver. But, in spite of Swilling's encouraging report, these were turbulent times in Arizona. Placers were producing some ore on the Gila River² and south of the Gila were profitable mines,³ but the Indian barrier of the trans-Gila to the

* 3028 Frontier Ave., Albuquerque, N. M.

1. *Tucson Arizonian*, January 26, 1860. They saw "... in point of appearance this region has the finest indications of gold of any they have ever seen."

2. H. H. Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico* (San Francisco: The History Publishing Co., 1888), p. 496.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 499. Also Doris Bent, "The History of Tubac" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1948), p. 90.

north was formidable. What military protection there was would soon be withdrawn because of the Civil War. However, in spite of danger from hostile Indians and the remoteness of the country, by 1863 the placers on the Gila were exhausted, the prospectors had moved up the Colorado and were working in the La Paz and Ehrenburg area.⁴ In nearby California the camps on the Kern River were played out.⁵ Therefore, with or without military protection, prospectors became increasingly interested in what Arizona north of the Gila and east of the Colorado might yield in gold and silver.⁶

In 1863 two separate parties made rich strikes in the above area. One, led by Pauline Weaver and A. H. Peeples, found gold on Rich Hill near present day Yarnell.⁷ The other strike was south of Prescott on Lynx Creek and the Hassayampa, and the discovery was made by a prospecting party led by the intrepid old Mountain Man, Joseph Reddeford Walker.⁸ News of the new bonanzas soon had the usual motley crowd of prospectors, gamblers, saloon men, and ladies of pleasure flocking into the new "diggings."

In the early days, that is to say, from the initial discovery near Prescott by Captain Walker and his men, and the Weaver placers to the southwest, the camps were scattered. Eventually Prescott was designated as the territorial capital and gradually assumed the semblance of a town serving the needs of the surrounding camps.⁹

Prospecting out of Prescott was not merely a matter of grubstake and looking for gold. The Indians were extremely

4. Edmund Wells, *Argonaut Tales* (New York: H. P. Hitchcock Company, 1927), and Bancroft, p. 580.

5. James M. Barney, "The Story of the Walker Party" (unpublished manuscript, Arizona Pioneer Historical Society, Tucson).

6. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

7. James H. McClintock, *Arizona-Prehistoric-Aboriginal-Modern* (Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1916), I, 110.

8. Daniel E. Conner, *Joseph Reddeford Walker and the Arizona Adventure*, ed. Donald E. Berthong and Odessa Davenport (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956).

9. Act of Congress, February 20, 1863 created the Territory of Arizona and the new territorial officials were ordered to proceed to Prescott to set up the new Territorial Government. There was some doubt as to the loyalty of the Tucson citizens at this time. Strangely enough, the Surveyor General of the Territory was an exception to the above orders and was told to organize his office in Tucson.

hostile and mines and placer locations that could have been worked profitably under more pacific circumstances were abandoned. One mining operator on Lynx Creek remarked that he had to hire more guards than miners because of the Indian conflict. There were some notable exceptions, of course. "Uncle" Billy Pointer worked a shaft south of Prescott some distance during the late 1860's at a time when others had given up,¹⁰ and Shelton¹¹ had two mines working during this period of strife. However, the majority of the miners and prospectors, reluctant to risk their lives, made frequent appeals to the military and civil government for relief from Indian depredations.

The end of the Indian difficulty did not come until 1874, but three years before the Indian removal of 1874 one of the most significant, but perhaps least known, strikes was made approximately thirty miles south of Prescott in the Bradshaw Mountains; and near this strike a community grew up that was proclaimed by some to be the future capital of Arizona. Unfortunately, after a violent and rowdy period of existence the town fell into obscurity. This was Bradshaw City.

The genesis of this tough little camp was in 1869 when Jackson McCracken headed south into the Bradshaws to prospect. McCracken was no stranger to the difficulties of surviving in the mountains, but he was extraordinarily daring in the opinion of many of his fellow prospectors to attempt any venture south of Lynx Creek. McCracken, evidently a rather determined man (and, according to a story in Farish, an aromatic figure; that is to say, his fellow legislators in one of the early sessions of the territorial legislature of which he was a member, refused to convene until they had forcibly scrubbed McCracken in Granite Creek because his presence in the House was a bit rank) decided he would have to see what the Bradshaws could produce in the way of min-

10. J. Ross Browne, *Resources of the Pacific Slope* (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1869), p. 249. Herman Ehrenburg wrote this description of Pointer's endeavors and affectionately called him "Uncle" Billy Pointer.

11. Rossiter W. Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871), p. 248.

eral wealth. After an absence of three months, friends of McCracken gave him up as a victim of either the Indians or the elements. However, McCracken returned to Prescott packing sixteen-hundred dollars in select gold ore.

McCracken's discovery of rich ores in the Bradshaws focused attention upon the inner mountain mineral regions. There had been some prospecting as far south as Silver Mountain in 1864-65, but as has been mentioned, the Indian situation had made it impossible to exploit discoveries that had been made at that time.¹² With gold as rich as the McCracken prospect possessed, the miners were willing to face Indians, transportation difficulties, and many other hardships to bring out the gold and silver. McCracken, the Jackson brothers, James Fine, and R. C. McKinnon immediately returned to the new gold claim, built an arrastre, and arranged for the transportation of a stamp mill to be packed up to the mine. In 1870 the Del Pasco, as the new claim was called, was being worked at an average of \$73.00 per ton by arrastre.¹³ When the stamp mill was finally packed in and a run of six and one half tons of ore was made through the mill, the yield was \$1,900. In 1871, during the time that the mill was in and when the water source was sufficient to run it, the total produce of the mine was \$7,428.¹⁴ Obviously the mill increased the productivity of the mine, but the initial expense of bringing it in was, according to Lt. D. A. Lyle in his report, \$10,000 which represented a large overhead when the mill could only operate during periods when water was available.¹⁵

Evidently a camp was established near the Del Pasco for the *Arizona Citizen* in 1870 reported that ". . . Allen 'Scotty' Cameron shot and killed William Watson. Cameron was

12. Prospecting in the Silver Mountain area is mentioned in a publicity brochure issued by the Mammoth Mining Company. *An Undeveloped Property, Mammoth Gold and Silver* (Boston: James Adams Printer, 1883). This brochure is in the University of Arizona Library.

13. *Raymond's Report*, 1871, pp. 244-5.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

15. George M. Wheeler, *Preliminary Report Concerning Explorations and Surveys Principally in Nevada and Arizona* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), pp. 54-55.

drunk and his reason was destroyed by whisky." The newspaper item also contained some reference to ". . . first blood at the Bradshaw Camp."¹⁶

Shortly after the Del Pasco discovery, two prospectors named Hammond and Dan Moreland arrived in Prescott with several pack animals loaded with select ores from a prospect southwest of the Del Pasco. They came into Prescott Saturday, January 28, 1871. The select ores were given out for local assay and the result was silver that assayed from \$1,600 to \$11,000 per ton. The assay reports were out on Sunday, and Monday the packtrains and pedestrians were lined out headed for the Bradshaws.¹⁷ Old timers who had prospected on Silver Mountain and other areas to the south in the early days of 1864-65 rushed down to protect abandoned claims. A news item published a week later in the *Arizona Citizen* confirmed the richness of the ores in the new Hammond and Moreland prospect. A correspondent from Prescott wrote in a letter to the *Citizen*, "W. C. Collier claims he is going to move his house, goods and all, down to the Tiger Camp." (This was the name given to the new discovery. Incidentally, Collier was one of the prospectors who had dared to go as far south as Silver Mountain in 1865).¹⁸ Throughout the late winter and spring of 1871 the Tiger Mine was a principal topic of discussion among the mining men of the area.

In March 1871 the *Citizen* reported, ". . . Tiger mines are selling for fifty dollars a foot on prospects with no improvements or exploration and fifty dollars a foot refused for improved properties."¹⁹ A week later the newspaper has more precise information that gives some idea of the magnitude of this rush. For example, ". . . A. Simpson is packing ore to Prescott from the Tiger Mines . . . and C. C. Bean and

16. *Arizona Citizen*, Tucson, A. T., December 3, 1870.

17. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1871.

18. Collier came into the Territory with Ed Peck in 1863 and was active in the Lynx Creek and other mining areas. The Mammoth Gold and Silver brochure previously mentioned listed Collier as one of those who had ventured into the Silver Mountain District nine miles south of the Tiger Mine in 1864-65.

19. *Arizona Citizen*, Tucson, A. T., March 3, 1871.

Bowers [probably Ed Browsers who was at one time sheriff of the county] are packing up ores soon."²⁰ The same news item mentions the discovery of the Eclipse, Grey Eagle, and Cougar Mines. These are all noted on Blandy's map of the "Mining Regions Around Prescott, Arizona," published in the *Transactions of the Institute of American Mining Engineers, 1882*.

A more personal note is supplied by an excerpt from a letter written by O. H. Case who was residing in Prescott at this time. The letter is addressed to John Wasson in Tucson who was the Surveyor General of the Arizona Territory and also the editor of the *Tucson Citizen*. Case had done some work for Wasson and anticipated a position with the Surveyor General's office as a Deputy United States Surveyor of Public Lands. In March 1871 Case wrote, ". . . there is not much news up here [Prescott] only that pertaining to the Bradshaw Mountains where in all that own feet think that they are all right for this world if not for the next. However, I think there is little if any doubt that the mines are very rich, perhaps richer than the most sanguine expect. I understand a mountain city has been started and everything looks out brightly on the silver future."²¹

Again, from the April 1, 1871, issue of the *Citizen*, "One-hundred and fifty men are working in the new Tiger District. James Fine [who was mentioned previously as one of the early arrivals in the Del Pasco strike] told Solomon Shoup that the Del Pasco is producing rich ore. Eclipse Mine ores are being shipped to the Vulture," near Wickenburg.

Shortly after Case had written to Wasson in regard to the establishment of a mountain city near the Tiger, he was called down there to survey town lots. The survey of the townsite was located on a wash that ran into the head of Humbug Creek on the northwest slope of Mount Wasson, Bradshaw

20. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1870. Simpson reportedly shot and killed A. J. Dunn in Prescott in a fight over a woman. He was released on \$5,000 bail. Evidently the case was either dismissed, or pending, while Simpson ran his pack train from the new diggings.

21. O. H. Case to John Wasson, March 24, 1871, *Correspondence to the Surveyor General, A. T.*, Los Angeles Federal Records Center.

Mountain as it was known then. The lots were twenty-five by one-hundred and twenty-five feet. The *Weekly Arizona Miner* noted that shortly after Case finished his survey, sixty lots were sold.²² Undoubtedly many of these were taken up by speculators, but by April there were two stores in the camp, and a saloon housed in a twenty by twenty-four foot frame building. The reported sale of lots does not specify what procedure was used in purchasing them, but it is presumed that according to the Acts of Congress providing for the survey of towns on the unsurveyed public domain there must have been some form of town government in the camp. The usual tent city appeared, but with timber nearby it was not long before there were a number of permanent structures. Late in May a hotel was advertising in the *Weekly Arizona Miner* and by July a number of businesses were advertising their services in the Prescott newspaper.

The town began to flourish, as well as any community may be said to flourish in the midst of hostile Indians, its only connection to an established city a horse trail and a wagon track that only came within five miles of the town. It ended at Minnehaha Flat west of Bradshaw City. If the camp, or town, lacked refinement it offered a sufficiency of crude gaiety and the necessities of life to satisfy the miners, prospectors, and *entrepreneurs*. During the summer of 1871 Messrs. Gordon and Walker ran the Fashion Saloon. A Mr. Hagan operated the Nevada Restaurant and Simpson, the ore packer, also ran a saddle train from Prescott each week. Travelers left Prescott at 7:00 A.M. and arrived, according to the owner, in Bradshaw City at 7:00 P. M. two days later. The distance covered was estimated to be about thirty miles by Simpson who took the most direct route over rough terrain. An early traveler from Prescott to Bradshaw City gave the following description of the trail:

[We] went south of Prescott to a point near the headwaters of the Hassayampa about ten miles from town. This was the

22. *Weekly Arizona Miner*, Prescott, A. T., April 29, 1871.

first night's camp. The next day over the divide [presumably the pass between Mount Union and Mt. Tritle] and on to the headwaters of Turkey Creek. The party continued on down Turkey Creek, passed the ruins of the Bully Bueno Mill, and on to a fork in the trail at Battle Flat. From there the party took the south trail to the slope of Bradshaw Mountain [Mount Wasson] and were only a mile or a mile and a half, from the Del Pasco. They continued on into Bradshaw Basin and crossed a ridge to the south where the tents and buildings of the town were seen.²³

This was the horse trail. The wagons, carrying supplies, went southwest from Prescott to Walnut Grove and then in an easterly direction to Minnehaha Flat. From this point the goods were packed into Bradshaw City. Upon arrival, the traveler might avail himself of the "creature comforts" advertised in the Prescott newspaper by the Progressive Hall. The advertisement does not fully describe what these "creature comforts" may have been. In addition to the previously mentioned saloon and restaurant, Mr. Beardsly and Messrs. Hussey and Miller ran grocery stores. A newspaper once described Bradshaw City in the following words:

A settlement started there [the Tiger Mine] known as Bradshaw City where for many months there were many saloons and dance halls in full blast but there were no churches.²⁴

Another description of the camp that was printed in the *Weekly Arizona Miner* February 21, 1879, states that:

Bradshaw is one of those God-forsaken places wherein none but those who are barred from the pale of civilization should live. It is the headquarters for the Tiger Mine, and it has been appropriately named the Tiger as many former residents who packed their blankets out of the camp can testify.

Although this was written several years after the big bonanza, evidently there was some activity in the old camp; and the same issue of the paper contains the information that N.

23. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1871.

24. *Arizona Journal Miner*, Prescott, A. T., August 12, 1908.

C. Shekels, who would later be one of the developers of the Crowned King Mine, was running a dry goods and grocery store at Bradshaw City.

However, to return to the events of 1871, as soon as the richness of the Tiger had been confirmed there was, as Case mentioned previously, a brisk trade in footage on adjacent claims. The manner of selling a claim was briefly this: The original claimants sold fractional parts of the lode, or vein, which was, actually, selling shares in the claim. There were times when so many parties became involved in this practice, and the partnerships were so complex, that the claim was left undeveloped while the owners quarreled (which did happen in the case of the Tiger), and money that could have been expended on development was used up in expensive litigation.

The high spirits over the Tiger strike lasted through the summer of 1871 despite the lack of cash and the prevalence of transactions on paper rather than substantial development. The Tiger Mining District was organized in June 1871, and the District Law was published in the Prescott newspaper. It should be noted that the custom of organizing a district dates back to the days of the Forty-Niners in California. The gold-seekers found it necessary to establish their own rules in regard to the location of claims and the amount of improvement necessary to keep possession to the claim and its minerals. The United States Government had not been faced with a mining rush of this magnitude before, and it was not until 1866 that the government passed anything resembling a United States Mining Code.²⁵ However, this mining law of 1866 the practice of organizing a district, as long as it did not conflict with the federal law, was recognized as a legal right of the miners.

In the case of the Tiger District and most of the surrounding area, the law of 1866 was generally the basis for organizing a district. That is to say, they adhered to maximum distance allowed on the vein (3,000 feet) and lines running three-hundred feet on either side. The law also included the

25. U. S. *Statutes at Large*, XIV, 251-52.

rules for posting the claim and stipulated the amount of annual improvement necessary to retain the claim. Later, in 1872, the law was modified and the Act of Congress, May 10, 1872, still remains the basic mining law of this country.²⁶

In contrast to the speculation and optimistic estimates of the future of the Bradshaw Mines, and the Tiger in particular, a more cautious note is discernible in the report of John Wasson, printed in the *Arizona Citizen*, July, 1871. Wasson had visited the Tiger while he was en route to San Francisco. He pointed out that, although the prospect was rich, capital was just beginning to enter the field. In a mine of the type the Tiger proved to be, exploration at depth was necessary. As is often the case in mining speculation, the initial profits are on paper and the necessary funds to finance the development must come from established financial centers. Several representatives of San Francisco development companies had just arrived on the scene when Wasson made his visit. At this time the engineers and millmen were reserved in their comment, but shared Wasson's view that the silver vein would prove to be valuable.

Wasson went on to San Francisco after his visit to Bradshaw City and spoke to several promoters. He had no financial interest in the mine himself, but again reported that the San Francisco companies seemed inclined to invest in the Tiger.²⁷

Meanwhile, life in the camp began to slow down. Statements claiming the town would eventually have a population of ten or twenty-thousand inhabitants were obviously unrealistic. By the end of the summer of 1871 many of the miners began to drift off to the other fields, notably the new discoveries to the northwest in the "Wallapai" District.

Work continued on the Tiger, though, and during the winter of 1871-72 forty or fifty miners lived in the camp. Prob-

26. U. S. *Statutes at Large*, XVII, 91-96.

27. *Arizona Citizen*, Tucson, A. T. Lent, Hurst and Company, Hobart of Washoe, and Riggs and Company were mentioned by Wasson as having representatives on hand to survey the value of the Tiger. Wasson spoke to Mr. Lent when he arrived in San Francisco and Lent, although cautious, spoke well of the Tiger as a possible investment.

ably most of them were hard-rock miners and perhaps newly arrived company hired men rather than the old prospecting crowd of the previous summer. Work on the shaft continued and a drift on the vein was started at this time.

In October of 1871 Second Lt. D. A. Lyle was instructed by Lt. G. M. Wheeler to make a survey of grazing lands and mines from northwestern Arizona south to Prescott and the regions immediately south of Prescott which included the Bradshaw mines. Lyle described Bradshaw City at this time:

Prescott, Arizona Territory, is the nearest post office, about forty miles distant [Lyle entered Bradshaw City via the Walnut Grove-Minnehaha route which was considerably longer than the trail used by Simpson, but it appears Lyle went north into Prescott via the Simpson route. This creates some discrepancy between what Lyle estimates and Simpson advertised as the most direct trail] reached by a trail. This is a good track, but is in many places, very steep. There is a wagon road from Walnut Grove to Minnehaha Flat, five miles distant from Bradshaw City. A steep trail leads from the flat to the city. The place contains about one dozen log cabins and a store.²⁸

Lyle also reported that the only mill in the district (and this would include the area covering the Tiger, Pine Grove, and Bradshaw Mining Districts) was the five-stamp mill at the Del Pasco. Water was scarce when Lyle was there, which undoubtedly inhibited the use of the small mill. Living costs were high in Bradshaw City. Hay sold for \$75 per ton, barley was fifteen cents a pound, lumber one-hundred dollars per thousand feet, and miners' wages were two-dollars and fifty cents per day.

It appears that Lt. Lyle may have underestimated the size of the city as evidence of advertising in the Prescott newspaper indicates more establishments, at least during the summer of that year, than Lyle reported.

Nevertheless, development on the Tiger continued and by February 1872 the shaft was down one-hundred and twenty

²⁸. *Wheeler's Report*, pp. 54-55.

feet. The drift along the vein was reported to be one-hundred and sixty feet. Ores at that depth were valuable in ruby silver and the mine was beginning to show promise of becoming an important producer. Case reported one shipment of fourteen tons of Tiger ore to San Francisco that yielded \$10,374.²⁹

However, by this time Bradshaw City had had its brief moment of glory and would never again reach the size it attained when the report of the Tiger strike was first brought into Prescott. The late James Cash, an Arizona pioneer, said he visited the site of Bradshaw City in 1888, and the buildings were not in evidence. By that time, the center of population, in the Bradshaws, had moved over to the newer camps around Crown King.³⁰

During the years 1872-75 the mining activity in the Bradshaw region was centered around the Tiger, Eclipse, and Oro Belle Mines. Northeast of this group McKinnon and Goodwin worked the War Eagle and in one run of select ore in 1873 extracted \$1,200 in gold from eight tons by arrastre. W. C. Collier was working gold from the Goodwin, and there was activity in the Big Bug, the Walker, and the Hassayampa Districts.

All through the Tiger excitement there were those who declared the old districts had not been properly worked, and that these properties were just as profitable as any in the area. This was undoubtedly true in many cases. The milling processes were crude and transportation costs were very high, but the potential was there. What is even more important, the Tiger strike brought a substantial population into the Bradshaw area and into the Territory. Although by the winter of 1871 miners were shifting over from the Bradshaws to the new fields in the Wallapai and Sacramento Districts, the Bradshaws had been proven a rich field for mineral exploitation and remained a prominent producing region for many years thereafter.

29. *Raymond's Report*, 1872, p. 333.

30. Personal interview, James Cash (now deceased) and Patrick Henderson, 1956. Mr. Cash was a resident in the Arizona Pioneer Home and his mind was extremely alert, although he was bedfast at the time of the interview.