

## THE GHOST TOWN OF EMERY

Emery was discovered in 1872 as placer sites and worked for the next 20 years. It is estimated that \$75,000 in placer gold was taken from the Rocker, Spring, Deep Gulch, and from a small tributary of Little Cottonwood Creek near the Sterritt mine. These placers were shallow, running not more than ten feet deep. The widest was about 50 feet or less. Water was scarce and a long ditch was dug for water which came from Sugar Loaf Mountain.

We wonder if one of these strikes could have been with one told about in the book of "Montana Pay Dirt" by Muriel Sibell Wolle. She tells of a prospector, Thomas Springer, who came into Deer Lodge now and then in 1872 with some gold. He would go on a spree until the gold ran out. Then he would get his old friend, who ran a boarding house, to give him a job. He would work long enough for a grub stake and then return to the mountains again. One time Scott asked to go along, so Springer allowed him to go, but not to his mine. So Scott fished in a branch of Dry Cottonwood Creek and waited for Springer to return. He came in the evening to Scott's camp with a can full of ore.

Some prospectors had come into town and, on hearing of old Springer, they talked him into letting them go with him. But Springer would not let them go any farther than he allowed Scott to go. They waited all day, evening and night, but he never returned. The next day they went back to Deer Lodge and got a searching party. He was found dead, sitting on a log with his shot gun across his knees. The prospectors never found the lost mine.

Later, we find prospectors searching for the mother lode ore in the area of the placers that required mining and crushing. Joe Peterson was first to discover the site of the "Hidden Hand" claim in 1887. Then John Renault, one of the searching prospectors, discovered the Carbonate Hill lode in 1888. It was staked and named the "Emery" by W. C. Emery. Seven years later the Bonanza, Blue Eye Maggie, Argus, and Emma Darling became some other important mines.

The Zosell, or Emery district, is located seven miles east of Deer Lodge and covers about four square miles. It is on the west slope of the Rocky Mountains with approximately 6,300 feet elevation.

A production record was not kept until 1928, but up to that time it is estimated at \$675,000. Since that time, until 1949, it totals over two million dollars.

Originally, the mines were prospected for their gold, but other valuable minerals later proved to be almost as important as the gold. Broken down into percentages, it was 55% in gold, 30% in silver, 10% in lead, and copper and zinc, 5%.

After the discovery, W. C. Emery worked his mine for a year and found it to be a producing piece of property. In 1889, he sold it to Kohrs and Beilenberg, J. A. Murray and W. I. Higgins. They drove the shaft to 475 feet and put in new machinery and built houses for their employees. They hired about 50 men. The majority mined underground and eight worked on the surface. In 1903, there was a shut down and it lay idle. Then Loring and Higgins took a lease on the dump and mine and built a mill to treat the ore in the dump. They shipped 18 to 20 cars of concentrates a month to East Helena.

In 1907, they sold to Deer Lodge Consolidated Mines Co., who reported they made \$15,000 in the first year. For some reason, they went broke.

Ten years later, a new mill was built and produced rich silver and lead. In 1923, electricity was brought in, which provided power for the new 75 ton flotation plant. They were successful for the next 12 years.

John White leased the mine in 1945. They built a 100 ton flotation mill and profited \$225,000. They closed in 1948.

The Emery has been a rich producer for over 60 years. The last survey was taken in 1950.

In the past years, a progressive town had grown there. At times, over 100 men were working. A post office was applied for and three stage coaches a day ran to Deer Lodge.

Now Emery is a Ghost Town. Prospectors come and go. Some are looking for new strikes and others are developing old mines.

It is interesting to browse around looking at the early developments. Remnants of old mills, mine dumps, slum ponds and old houses still remain. The log houses are the oldest, some perhaps built in the late 1880's. The newer rough sawn lumber cabins are quite well preserved. The weathered, gray logs make a contrast to the yellows, browns and reds of the newer cabins.

It is a peaceful place to wander in.