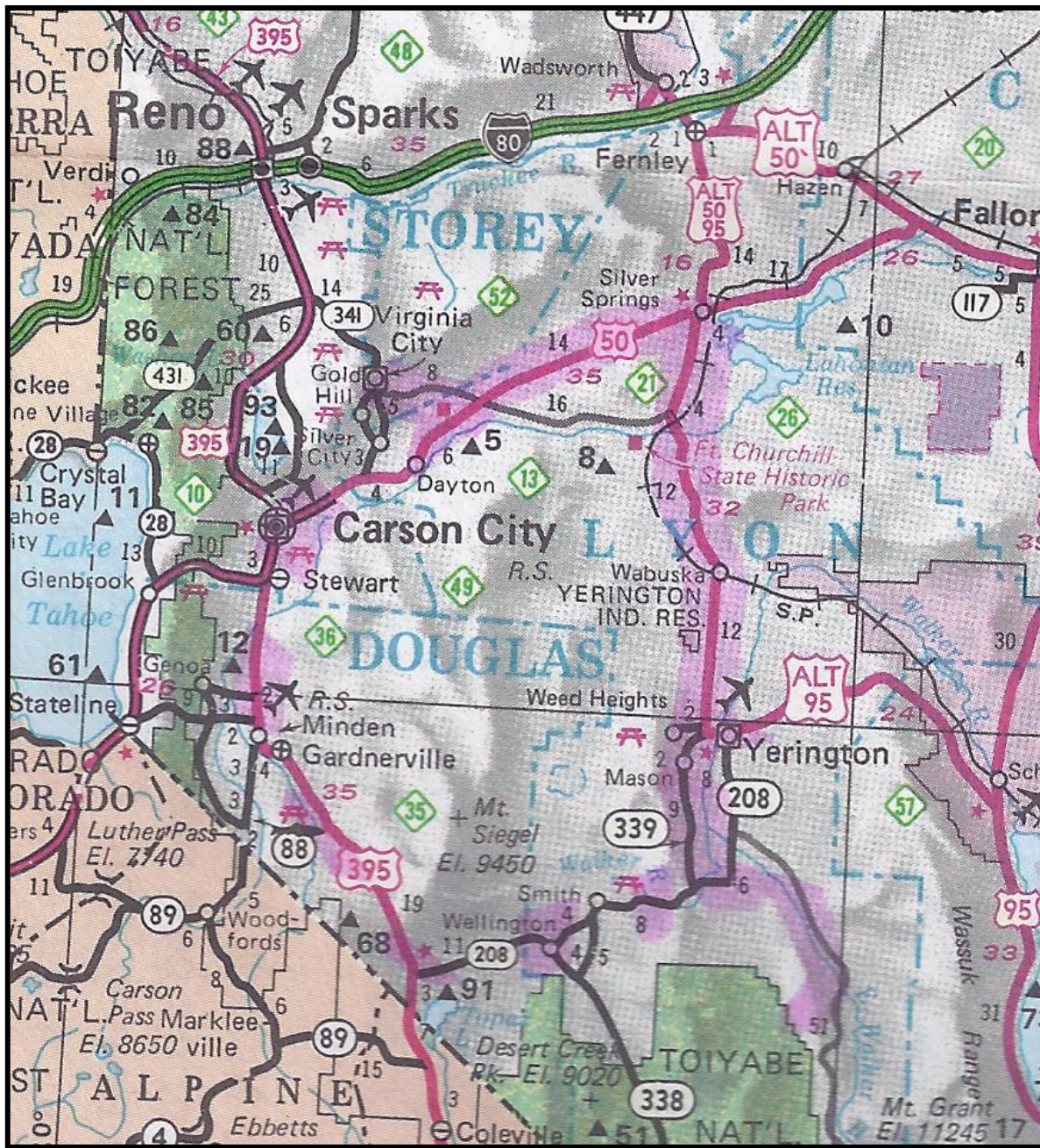


Ghost Town Tour: Sutro, Rock Point Mill, Dayton, Thompson, Anaconda, Bluestone, Mason Valley



Monday, June 15, 2015



Detail from State Highway Map of Nevada. Our tour will start in Virginia City head east down Sixmile canyon to U S 50. After stops at Sutro and Dayton State Park (Rock Point Mill) we will head east via U S 50 then Alt U S 95 to a quick stop at the Thompson smelter site then on to Yerington for lunch. After Yerington we head to the Anaconda Mine at nearby Weed Heights and the Mason Valley sites nearby above Mason. Return may be the way we came or as a loop via 208 and 395 to Carson City, then to Virginia City.

Ghost Town Tour: Sutro, Rock Point Mill, Dayton, Thompson, Anaconda, Bluestone, Mason Valley, Monday, June 15



Time schedule, approximate

8 a.m. Leave **Silverland Hotel** Parking Lot in a car caravans of twenty cars down Sixmile canyon past Butters Mill site to US 50 and then Sutro Tunnel Road.

8:30 a.m. Car caravan arrive **Sutro Tunnel** site, with guidance from Sutro Tunnel Company staff.

9:30 a.m. Leave Sutro Tunnel site and drive west U S 50 to **Rock Point Mill** site in Dayton State Park (we'll park in the casino parking lot just west of the park and walk site).

10:30 a.m. The car caravan leaves their Rock Point Mill site for drive through historic downtown **Dayton** and the **bluestone works**, then head back east on US 50 east and Alt US 95 south to Thompson smelter site.

11:30 a.m. Arrive **Thompson smelter** site and park on dirt access loop for brief walk at site.

11:45 Leave Thompson smelter site

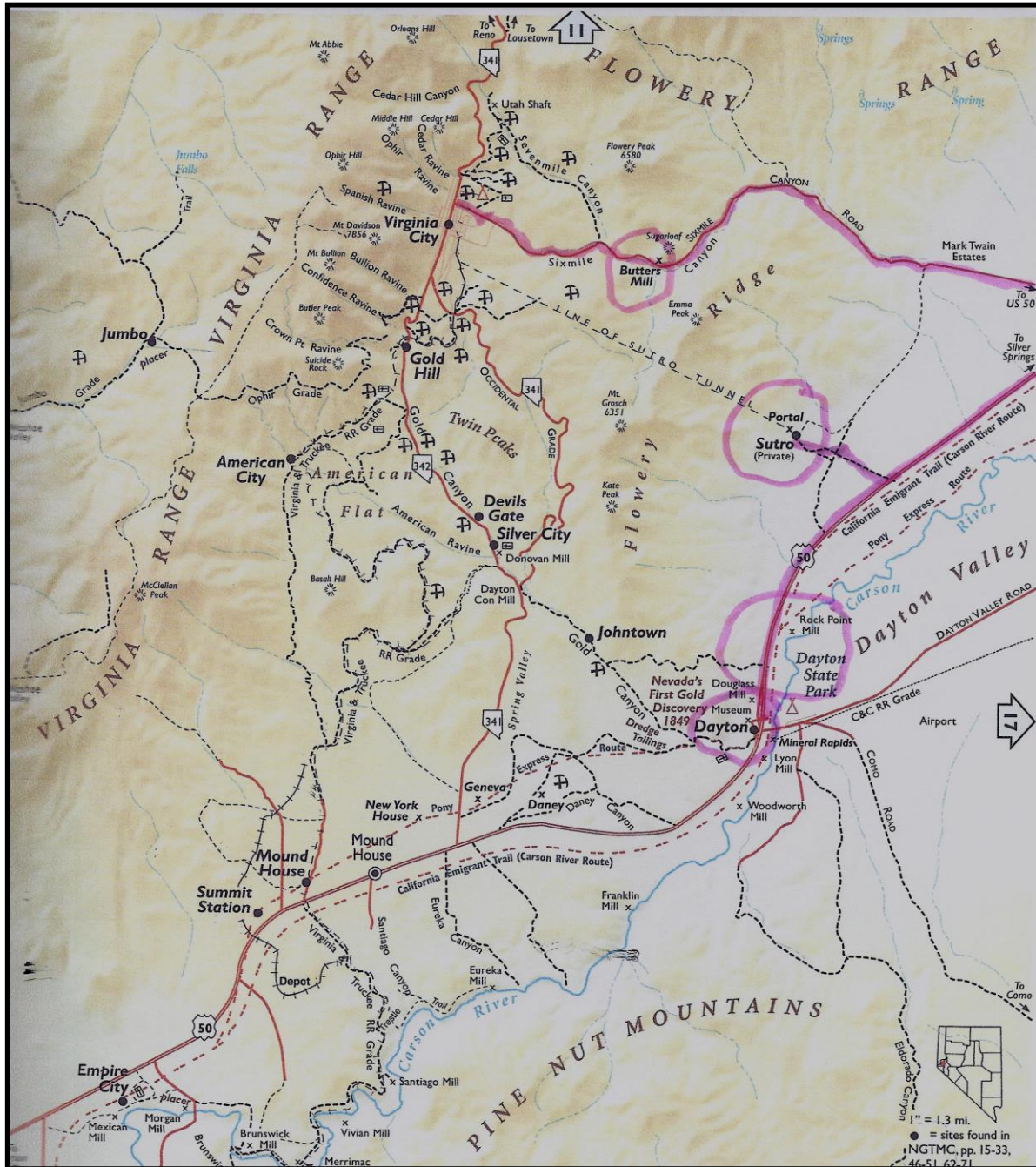
12 noon Arrive **Yerington**, lunch on your own (see restaurant hand-out sheet).

1:30 Reconvene tour at **Anaconda Pit** overlook at Weed Heights, a short drive down Birch Street from Yerington. Tour Anaconda Mine site with Singatse Peak Services staff.

3:00 Leave Anaconda mine site for the **Mason Valley** copper sites.

3:15 Caravan arrive **Bluestone Mill** ruin of Mason Valley Copper Mines Co, guests of GRG International's Mason Valley Properties, Ltd. Then follow guide to Mason Valley sites

We will not set a return departure time, but allow an hour or so for everyone to return to Virginia City



We will drive from the Silverland Hotel in Virginia City east down Sixmile Canyon, past the Butters Mill site, to U S Highway 50. At U S 50 we make a right for two miles to Sutro Tunnel Road. We make a right onto the dirt Sutro Tunnel Road and follow it for a mile or so to the tunnel entrance. Returning to U. S. 50 we make a right and drive four miles to just past Dayton State Park and turn into the casino parking lot. We will park in the back of the casino and then walk along the power ditch site to the Rock Point Mill ruins, which are in Dayton State Park. After the mill tour we will drive west an hour via U S 50 and Alt. U S 95 to Yerington for lunch. Map courtesy Paher, *Nevada Ghost Town & Desert Atlas*.

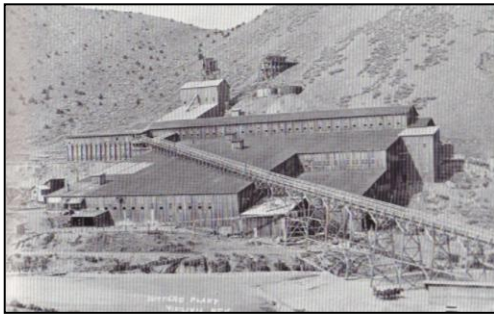
Introduction to Comstock Sites: Sixmile Canyon, Butters Mill

- 1) How to get there: Our tour will start in Silverland Hotel, Virginia City head east down Mill Street which becomes Sixmile canyon two or so miles to the Butters Mill ruin, then on to U S 50. After stops at Sutro and Dayton State Park (Rock Point Mill) we will drive through historic Dayton then head east via U S 50 then Alt U S 95 to the Yerington copper district.
- 2) What you'll see: Details will be given in the following pages for each site.

Broad Historical Background:

We will first travel to three of the lesser visited sites related to the Comstock story: Sixmile Canyon sites, Sutro Tunnel mouth, and Dayton State Park's Rock Point Mill ruin. Sixmile Canyon descends quickly east of Virginia City as paved Mill Street becomes a well maintained dirt road. Along the ten miles or so to its junction with U. S. 50 were located a number of mills, largest of the early mills being the Gould & Curry company's at the mouth of Sevenmile Canyon. Shown in an 1860s sketch at right, nothing remains of the once grand structure and outbuildings.

Here Louis Janin served as superintendent and perfected his tailings mill operation, a major technological contribution to the Lode's history. Sixmile Canyon had a number of small camps that prospered in the 1860s-70s, Mount Pleasant and Ophir among them. With the end of the Big Bonanza, the mills were abandoned, as were the towns.



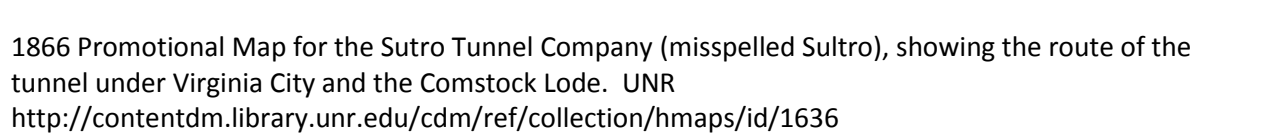
ruins of the Butters Mill are the main attraction for a trip down Sixmile Canyon. The impressive stone, cement, and iron ruins stretch up the steep hillside about two and a half miles from Virginia City.

From the mill ruin we travel eight or so miles down to the junction with US 50. From there we make a right turn westbound on U S 50 and travel about two miles to the Sutro Tunnel road. If you find yourself in historic downtown Dayton, you've gone too far.

Early in the 1900s, Berkeley grad Charles Butters built his massive cyanide mill near the land feature called the Sugarloaf. Butters had succeeded with the cyanide process early in South Africa and brought his experience back to the West. The Charles Butters & Company, Ltd., Mill reworked the Comstock tailings by the cyanide process into the 1920s. Today, the



MR. CHARLES BUTTERS.
Best Known Mining Expert in the World.
(From a Recent Photograph)



Sutro Tunnel & Townsite

1. How to get there: From U S 50 turn west onto the dirt Sutro Tunnel Road. We will be met by an employee of the Sutro Tunnel Company to lead us to the tunnel and townsite.
2. What you'll see: Tunnel Entrance and related features from its operation.

Historical Background:

The Sutro Tunnel story is well known, the financial, technological, and impact on the Comstock Lode have often been related. German immigrant and promoter Adolph Sutro deserves credit for its eventual successful financing and construction. The statistics about the tunnel include: Conceived in 1863, Sutro received an exclusive franchise in 1865 from the state of Nevada and support from the U. S. Congress in 1886, but work didn't begin until October 1869. Nine years later, in July 1878, the tunnel reached the Savage Mine on the Lode, about as good a date as any as the end of the Bonanza days on the Lode. The tunnel runs from the Carson River plain 20,498 feet (almost 4 miles) straight to the Comstock Lode. A lateral taps the various shafts up and down the Lode. The main tunnel was double tracked, measuring 8 to 9 feet wide and 7 to 7.5 feet high. It served to drain the deep mines, but they had already reached 1500 feet below the tunnel by 1878. Sutro sold out and invested his fortune in San Francisco real estate, becoming one of its multi-millionaires, builder of the Cliff House resort, and mayor. The Sutro Tunnel Company still manages the property, as it has for over a century.



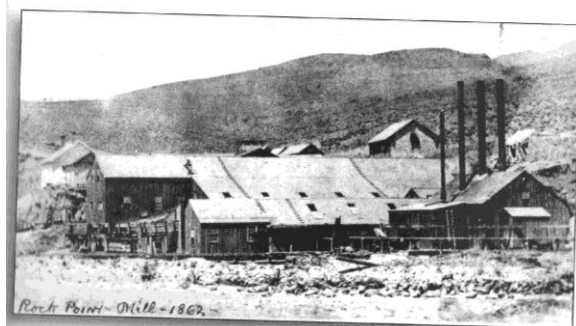
Montage of scenes at the tunnel mouth, the Sutro townsite and of Adolph Sutro. Library of Congress.



Google map of ruins. Concrete base of forty stamps' most obvious feature. The dam, center bottom, held back the reservoir. Concrete cistern at top is the lone remaining standing structure (probably for fire prevention). Foundations of tramway can be seen between the cistern and the former ore dump pit. Route of flume from lower left is marked by row of trees toward "rocky point" at mill. Evidence of out buildings above and below mill suggested by route of social paths. Mill structure would have ended about to the edge of the highway grade at right. Any evidence of earlier works there, such as teamster corrals and barn, C & C Railroad, tailings piles, or the patio process yards are obliterated.

The Three Rock Point Mills

- 1) How to get there: About two miles from Sutro Tunnel Road down U.S. 50 to casino parking lot in Dayton. Short hike to mill ruins.
- 2) What you'll see: Ruins and foundations at mill site.

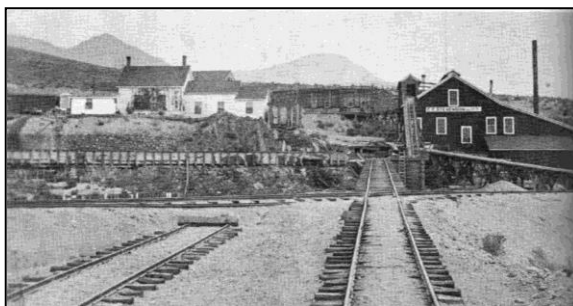


Historical Background:

In 1861, the Miners' Foundry, San Francisco built the 42 stamp Rock Point Mill, much like the first Washoe Pan Process mill built by Almarin B. Paul. A 16 foot water wheel powered the mill. In 1863, the Rock Point Mill became part of the profitable Imperial Silver Mining Company operation and, after expansion, became one of the best and the third largest mill working Comstock ores, a water-powered 56 stamp mill with the usual amalgamation pans and settlers of the period.

In 1869, the Union Mill & Mining Company acquired the mill and operated it as a "custom" mill on district ores. The plant was kept busy during the boom years of the 1870s. In 1878, with the decline, the Union company re-worked the piles of mill tailings, and then rather than pay a caretaker or taxes, removed machinery and tore down the now dated Rock Point Mill structure. During the 1860s and 1870s, a mill superintendent's house and office, later caretaker's office, and a boarding house stood near the mill. Mill hands as well as company officials also lived at nearby Dayton, a half mile south, the business center and county seat of Lyon County.

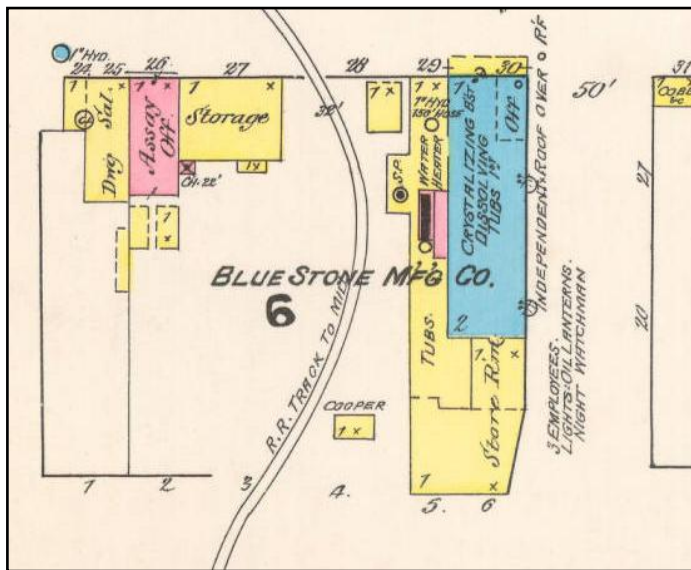
In 1883, successful Comstock mine operator and accomplished mill man Charles Clark Stevenson rebuilt the Rock Point mill with improved machinery, self-feed systems to reduce labor costs, and improved water power with turbines. Stevenson benefited from the building of a railroad spur to the mill and the re-opening of the old mines on the Comstock, which sent ore to his new twenty stamp Rock Point Mill. He also served as Nevada governor, from 1887 to 1890, when he died in office. In 1898,



which went through bankruptcy in 1912. The machinery was sold off piecemeal over the next decade leaving the layers of evidence of the mill operations across the Rock Point mill site landscape. In 1977, the state legislature established Dayton State Park at the mill site.

mine operator Herman Davis and professor Jules E. Gignoux bought the mill and formed the Nevada Reduction Works company to introduce the cyanide process. On May 2, 1909, the Rock Point Mill burned down. Davis rebuilt the Rock Point Mill of concrete and steel with forty stamps, and concentrators from the Risdon Iron Works, San Francisco. An aerial tramway was also built the five miles to the company's Haywood mine at Silver City. Davis left the over-extended company





Bluestone Works, Main st., Dayton (1890 Sanborn map). 1878 ad below.

LYON MILL AND MINING COMPANY

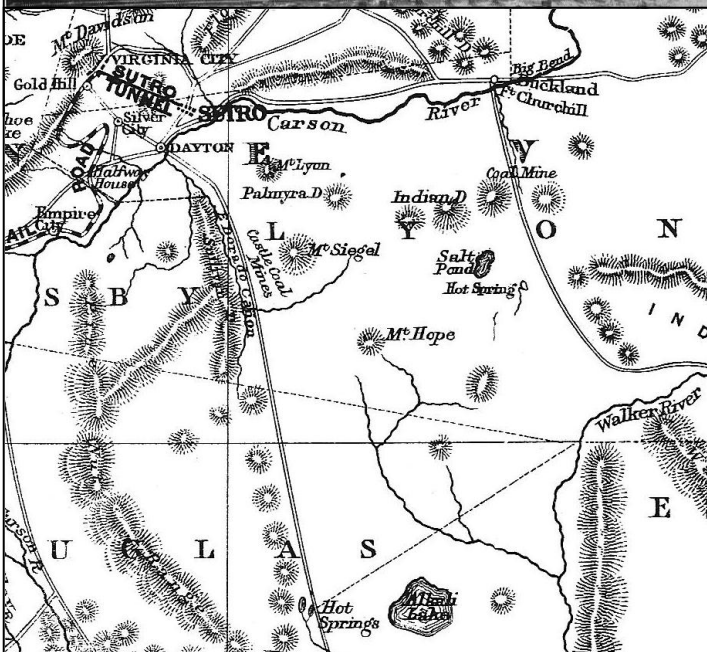
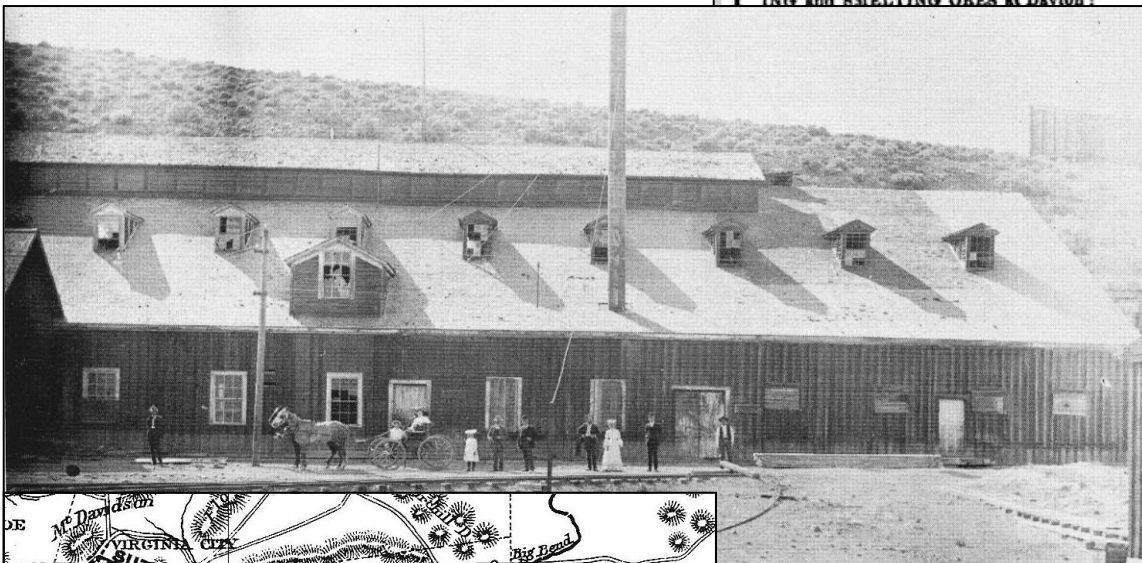
—PURCHASERS OF—

**GOLD AND SILVER SMELTING AND
MILLING ORES, COPPER ORES,
SLIMES, TAILINGS AND
SULPHURETS.**

—MANUFACTURERS OF—

BLUESTONE AND SULPHURIC ACID

**PRICES NOW PAID FOR MILL-
ING and SMELTING ORES at Dayton:**



Lyon mill and bluestone (copper sulfate) works at Dayton, in ruins (Nevada Historical Society).

Map ca. late 1870s with Dayton at upper left and road running southeast toward Bodie in California shows "Alkali Lake" lower right, site of Ludwig's mine just to east of it in the Singatse Range (unnamed small dimple on map). Note Walker River.

The Comstock tour ends & historic Yerington copper begins in Dayton

- 1) How to get there: We'll congregate at the Dayton state park Rock Point mill parking lot. From there head for a quick driving tour of historic Dayton then back east on U. S. 50.
- 2) What you'll see: Bluestone Works building in Dayton (HABS drawing at left) and the historic main street of Dayton.

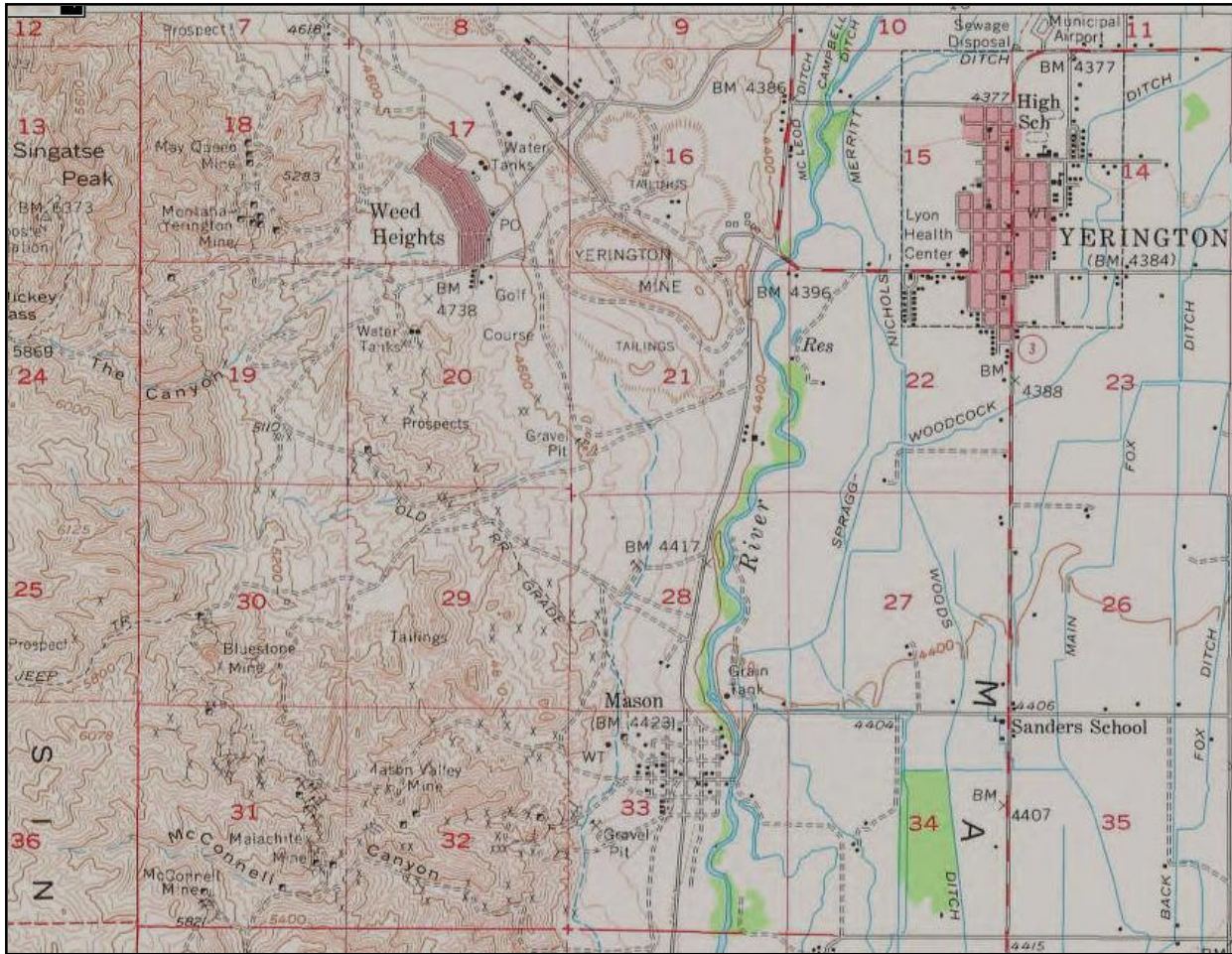
Dayton and Bluestone Historical Background:

Magistral or blue vitriol to the alchemist or copper sulfate (CuSO_4) to the chemist, bluestone was a key ingredient in the Washoe pan process for working the Comstock ores. During the 1860s prospectors discovered bluestone in the Singatse Range, followed by shipment of the mineral to mills especially at Dayton, early milling center. John Ludwig, a 48 year old "owner of a copper mine," born in Ohio, according to the 1880 census, is credited with the most prosperous bluestone mining operation during the 1870s. The Lyon Mill & Mining Company had built a mill and plant in 1874 to process Comstock ores, but also a bluestone works to refine Ludwig's ores. Period newspapers describe Ludwig's and others small mining operations at what would become the Mason Valley, Bluestone, and Ludwig mines. From shallow shafts, cuts, and adits the miners extracted ores worth up to 30% copper (some say 65%), and shipped via wagons, often by Mason Valley farmers eager for the cash, to Dayton.

Freiberg-educated Jules E. Gignoux, chemist at the Lyon mill, left us a detailed description of the bluestone works in an 1883 government report (at the time, Dayton was a chemical production center for this and sulphuric acid). Besides tin lined tanks at the mill, the company used a stone building, or bluestone works, in Dayton, a hundred foot long building with a parallel line of tanks (the building still stands). The near collapse of the Comstock coincided with the decline in need for bluestone, and the works at Dayton unable to compete outside Nevada closed (Gignoux left briefly to head the state's mining school). In 1880-1881, John Ludwig with Senator John P. Jones as a partner built a small 30 ton smelting plant at his mine and shipped some copper matte before closing operations. The Nevada Douglas Copper Company, organized by A. J. Orem of Boston and Salt Lake City, re-opened the Ludwig mine, built the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad to it in 1911, and made the mine one of the Yerington district's three important early producers. Though we won't visit the Ludwig mine site, we will see sites in Dayton related to this significant early chemical industry and Gignoux's later Rock Point mill site.



Rock Point mill foundation, Carson River, and beyond range to the east is the Yerington copper district.



USGS map Yerington vicinity 1957, revised; shows Anaconda's "Yerington Mine," and Bluestone Mine.



Google map of water filled pit and Yerington.

Yerington Historic Copper District Tour

The State that "Came Back"

In the heyday of the Comstock lode, the State of Nevada was almost as populous as the City of Utica, N. Y. Then came the defeat of free silver, and such an outpouring of people that a surrender of statehood was predicted. All this time there were enough neglected ores under Nevada's deserts to make every resident rich. Properties like the Mason Valley copper mine are making new history.

Will Mason Valley be "another Big One"?

The same interests that control the Magma copper mine are identified with the location of Nevada.

Pro push the Anot gin doub creas

W ment mean Maso

Se

JONES & BAKER,
68 Devonshire St., Boston, Ma
You may send me report 155-

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Boston Herald 7/10/1917

YERINGTON

NEVADA

THE RICHEST COPPER DISTRICT

Where in the past 12 per cent. copper was laid aside as too low grade ore to ship any distance to a smelter—

Where a boom has started that will eclipse anything in the history of the mining world. The railroads have caught the fever and are rushing surveys for new roads.

Where even the surface porphyry carries as high as 50 per cent. with an average of 80 to 90 pounds of Copper in each ton, giving at least one hundred per cent. higher copper values than the surface material at Bly—

Where ore bodies are over 1,000 feet wide. In Montana and Michigan 30 to 40 feet is considered an enormous width—

Where one property recently purchased by Capt. Delamar has in a short time opened up ore to the value of fifteen to twenty million dollars—

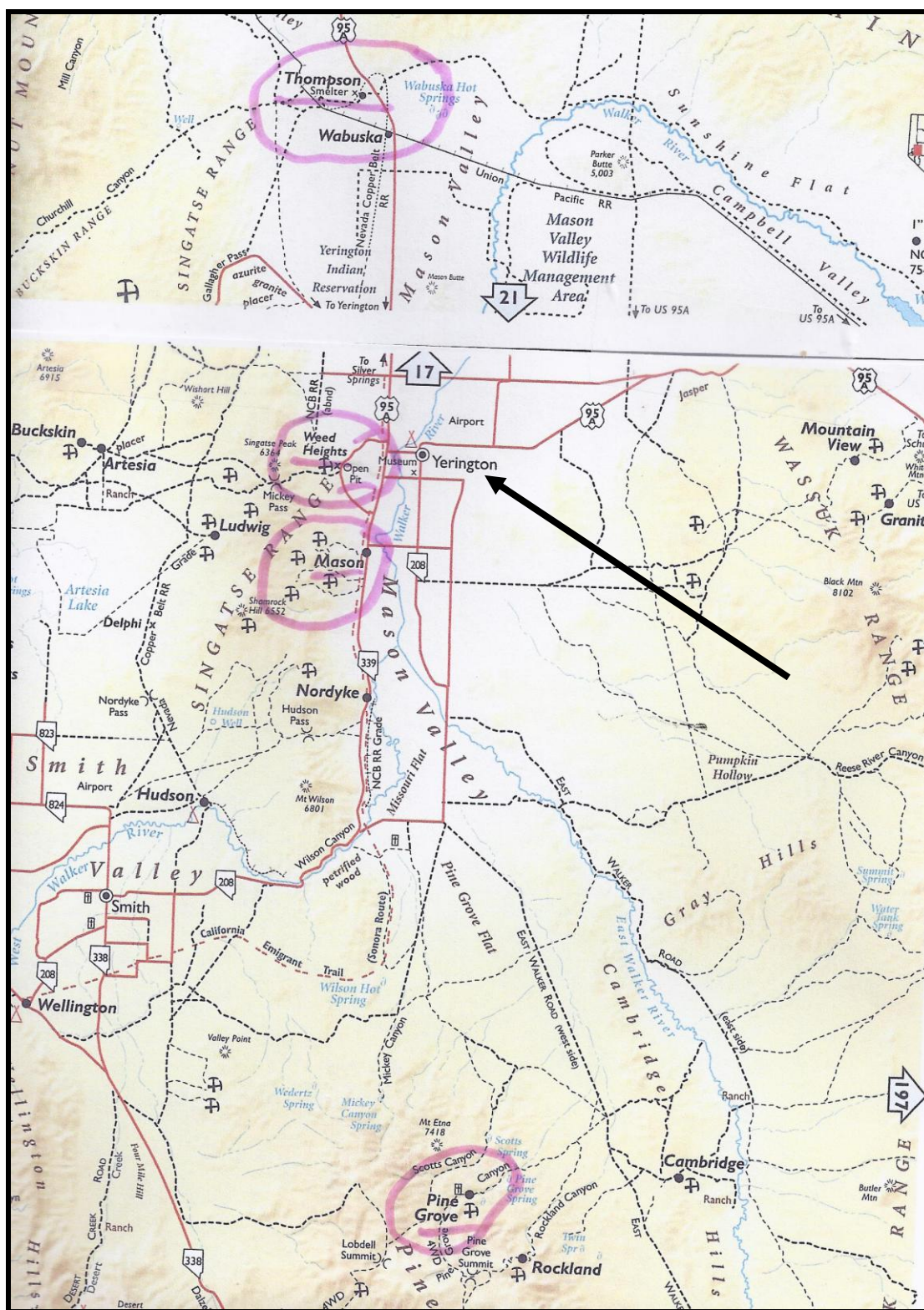
Where Samuel Newhouse and associates have purchased large properties—

Where mining engineers and experts from all over the world are flocking. They are scattering the news broadcast that Yerington is the coming Copper district of the World—

Where billions of dollars worth of copper ore is now exposed, and of Yerington will be "another Big One". A few days

Plain Dealer 2/17/1907

Ransome, 1909



Maps from Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Desert Atlas* (Reno: Nevada Publications, 2012)

Introduction to the MHA Ghost Town Tour of the Yerington District

- 3) How to get there: We'll congregate at the Dayton state park after our morning Comstock sites tour. From Dayton we head east on U. S. 50 to U. S. 95A and head south to Thompson (see map at left). From Thompson we will stop at Yerington, the Anaconda pit and sites, Bluestone mill site, Mason and Mason Valley mine sites, (circled on the map).
- 4) What you'll see: Details will be given in the following pages for each site.

Broad Historical Background:

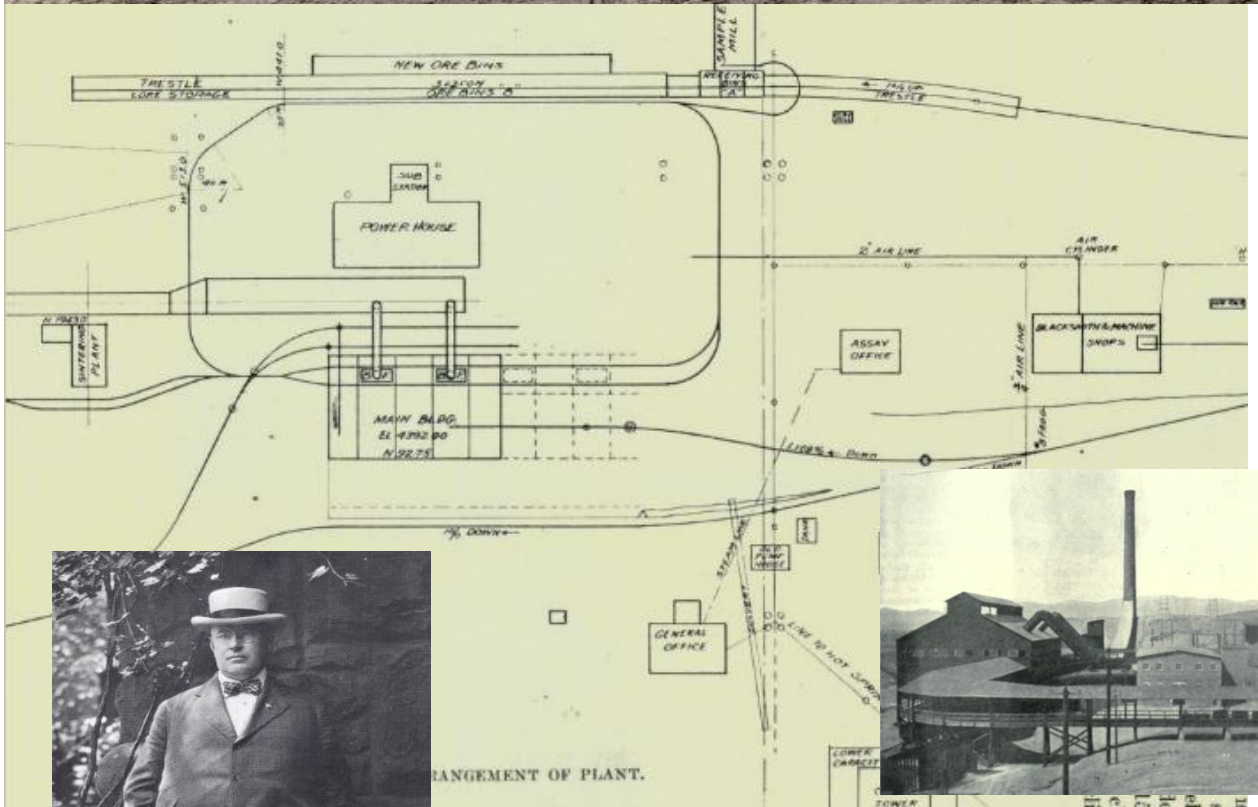
The tour will start in Dayton then head to the site of Thompson then Yerington in the Mason Valley of western Nevada (see map at left). The Walker River flows through the valley for 25 miles creating one of the few agricultural communities in the state, founded during the 1860s-70s. On the west the Singatse Range of up to 6800 feet held the region's most productive mines. We will visit a few: Bluestone, Mason Valley, and the Anaconda pit. Further south we travel to the 1860s-1900s camp of Pine Grove, a classic ghost town of the bonanza era.

Besides all the stuff, foundations, structures, and remnants from an earlier time, these sites are significant for their history, a little of which is detailed below and in the following pages. Although we won't visit a mine at Dayton, we will see remnants of one of the earliest and significant chemical industries of the 1860s-1880s American West, that of the manufacture of copper sulfate for the mills of the Comstock. This pioneer chemical industry was only possible because of the rich, high grade but shallow deposits of native bluestone (chalconthite) found in the Yerington copper district. The bluestone works of Dayton were competitive with chemical works in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the East.

The bluestone mines yielded direct smelting high grade ores during the early twentieth century mining boom, 1905-1929. The Mason Valley and Bluestone mines, and the nearby Thompson smelter all represent this era of expanding operations, new, large technological innovations in the milling and smelting of ores, new mining techniques and ore transport, and advancements in the science of geology. The million dollar smelter at Thompson served a wider region partially because it was adjacent the Southern Pacific tracks that brought ores from around the state and northern California. Though the Yerington copper district was representative of the second tier copper mines – larger new porphyry copper mines such as at Ely, Nevada and Bingham Canon, Utah were first tier – it was proving ground for a number of young professionals who rose up the mining ranks, as well as passage for immigrants from Europe and Mexico assimilating into their jobs and new home. Also, the Newmont Mining Corporation, a major mineral producer today founded in 1925, began at Mason Valley in the 1910s with creating the philosophy and core managers of Newmont at birth and through its first quarter century.

The great Anaconda pit, brought into production in the 1950s, made the Yerington copper district briefly home to Nevada's most productive mine as well a major asset of the Anaconda Copper Corporation, the nation's largest copper firm. Interestingly, the deposit had been first tested in the 1910s by the Empire Nevada company, then by larger players like the General Development Company (Lewisohns), all of who missed locating the deposit. Anaconda's team proved the area to contain a vast copper deposit and mined the Anaconda pit, 1952-1978. The nationalization of the company's mines in Chile in 1974, the end of mining at Butte, besides takeover by Atlantic Richfield, did not bode well for Anaconda, and the Yerington operations during the late 1970s. There is much that remains of the plant adjacent Weed Heights from this significant operation.

Finally, the tour will end at the ghost town of Pine Grove, typical of the long lasting Nevada mining camps, from the 1860s into the early twentieth century. From there the group will return to their home base.



The Mason Valley Mines Company's smelter at Thompson was state of the art when it blew-in January 6, 1912, shown above shortly after that date (UNR). The August 31, 1912 *Mining & Scientific Press* published a plat, photos and description. Named after mining financier and company promoter William Boyce Thompson (1869-1930), at left, the works were one of two custom plants in early twentieth century Nevada (see map on last page).

Thompson, Smelter Camp

- 1) How to get there: Off 95a via the dirt Julian Road a dozen miles north of Yerington.
- 2) What you'll see: Over a mile of foundations, landscape features and town remnants.

Historical Background:

New York City financier William Boyce Thompson, raised in the copper camp of Butte, Montana, organized the Mason Valley Mines Company and financed the building of “one of the best plants ever built in the West” at his namesake town. In 1908, with his partners, he acquired water rights and 1300 acres adjacent the Southern Pacific Railroad branch a mile and a half from Wabuska station and twelve miles from the mines. Hiring away the best technical skill at Cominco's Trail, British Columbia staff, he had them design and direct the construction of what would eventually be a million dollar smelting works, with two blast furnaces, convertors, and leaching plant. It could reduce 1800 tons per day (the Canadians, the Cominco group, would become subsequent presidents of the company – and follow that with distinguished careers as executives of Texas Gulf, Magma, and Newmont Mines Corporation, a firm founded by Thompson in 1925).

The first blast furnace was blown-in January 6, 1912. At the smelter was a company town housing 250 workers in bunk houses, cottages, and officers' quarters. The two-block townsite had stores, auto repair shop, school, movie house, and company store, all lined by the few trees watered by a company water system. Electrical power transmitted from Reno served the town. The most prosperous years were 1917-1919, during World War I, when the smelter crews were praised for their donation of a day's salary per month for the aid of soldiers at the front. The smelter served the Yerington district mines as well as 209 recorded mines and small shippers across Nevada and northern California. Closure came with the financial collapse of 1929. During World War II much of the remaining plant was removed for scrap and in June 1945 the 200 foot tall smokestack was torn down for its brick. The extensive ruins and foundations at the site can be easily seen on Googleearth.



The Thompson smelter site today spreads across a mile of desert sage north of the UP tracks.



EMPIRE NEVADA

In last Sunday's issue of this paper we invited you to investigate the **EMPIRE NEVADA** COPPER MINING AND SMELTING COMPANY OF Yerington, Nevada.

We told you that we were offering a small block of the stock to **CHARTER MEMBERS** only and that as soon as that block was disposed of the stock would be listed and sold on the public market in New York and Boston.

We told you that the company owned one of the greatest deposits of **COPPER** ore ever discovered in this or any other country.

We told you that the Salt Lake Tribune, the leading daily paper of Utah, said that **YERINGTON** possessed future possibilities so great that one could only dream of them, that its **COPPER** deposits rivaled Ely in extent and that it contained values unsurpassed in the West.

We told you that the **EMPIRE NEVADA** owned one of the greatest, and we believe the greatest deposit in that rich district.

We also told you that the company would have its Reduction Works in operation and be on a **DIVIDEND EARNING BASIS** within a few months.

We also told you that any subscriptions you might make for the stock would be held in trust until the stock was listed and selling at a higher price on the public market and that you could withdraw your subscription prior to the listing, if you desired to do so.

We repeat, that the **EMPIRE NEVADA** owns one of the greatest copper propositions, so far as development has gone, ever opened in this country.

We invite investors to visit the properties at the company's expense to verify our statements and we urge upon you to **WRITE AT ONCE** for full particulars of this great enterprise and take advantage of the bedrock offer of the stock.

The GOTHAM SECURITIES COMPANY

Cleveland Plain Dealer February 3, 1907



Left, promoter's ad for selling Empire Nevada company stock published across the country, 1907. Top, Anaconda open pit and plant at Weed Heights, 1950s. Standing period structures of Anaconda mine site, Yerington today, from Quaterra Resources, Inc. web page.

Anaconda Open Pit, Weed Heights

- 1) How to get there: From Yerington take 95A west to Birch Road, which leads to the Pit overlook.
- 2) What you'll see: The Anaconda pit overlook, period structures, leaching plant, and sites.

Historical Background

In operation between June 1952 and June 1978, the Anaconda pit was the largest producer in the district and for a few years was the largest mineral producer in Nevada. Out of roughly 40 million tons of oxide and 15 million tons of sulphides mined came 744,237,000 lbs. of copper worth \$765,500,000. Anaconda kept 400-450 workers employed while the pit yielded a return of \$212 million in profits. Located one to three miles west of Yerington, in an area nineteenth century travelers called the Copper Lakes, or Copper Ponds, or the Copper Flat, the first serious prospecting of the ground occurred during the early 1900s craze to find vast porphyry copper ore bodies.

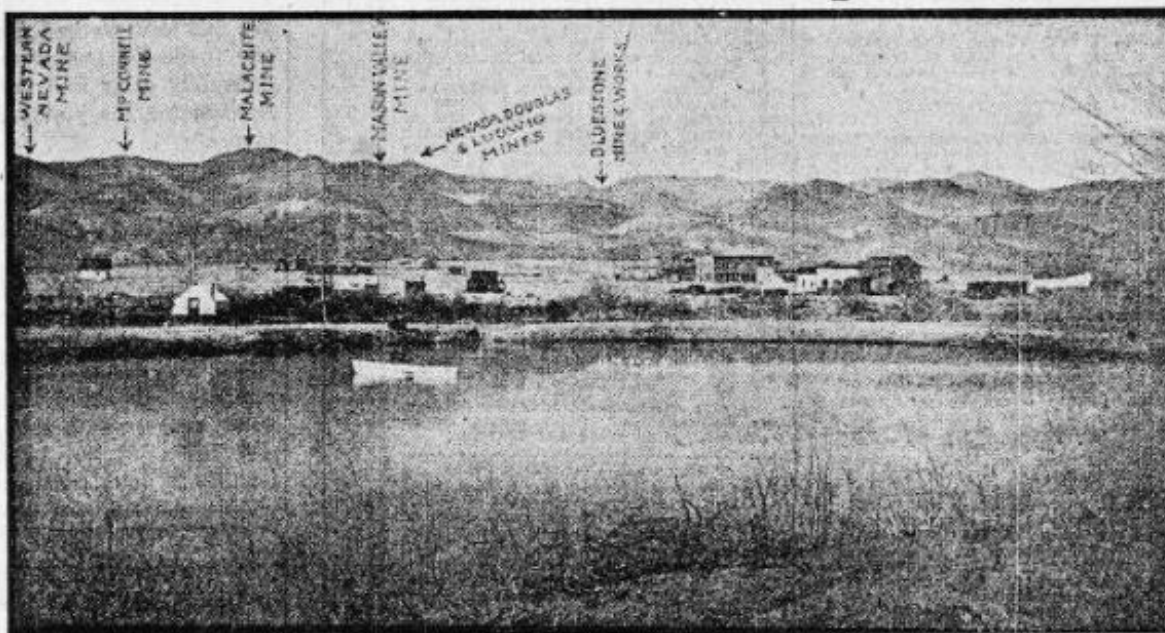
Promoter William Gelder of Denver staked claims, bought additional ground, and organized the Empire Nevada Copper Mining & Smelting Company to mine what he advertised as "one of the greatest deposits of copper ore ever discovered" (see ad at left). He built a small smelter of no value, a leach plant that failed and soon earned the approbation of industry watchdogs, such as the *E&MJ* and the *Copper Handbook*, which called the Empire Nevada company "not highly regarded" and to be avoided. J. Parke Channing, a prominent engineer with the General Development Company, during the opening of the Thompson smelter looked seriously at the ground, drilled tests and bought shares. During the first world war, a half dozen lessees dug small pits and shipped to the smelter. The General Development Company continued to test into the 1930s, but failed to find the right grade of ore.

In 1942, Anaconda acquired an option plus staked new ground where in virgin terrain they found what would prove to be part of the vast ore body. Although there was a large war-time demand for copper, the company influenced by government rule makers left the deposit untouched during the war. That gave the Anaconda team, led by chief metallurgist Fred Laist, time to develop a leaching process that would work. Under operations head Clyde Weed, later president and CEO, Anaconda began initial on-site work in 1951, and mining in 1952. Company historian Isaac Marcosson details the Yerington project, the building of the significant leach plant and works, the creation of the new town of Weed Heights, and the development of what he calls a "jewel in the Anaconda diadem." Singatse Peak Services is the land owner at the former Anaconda Mine Site in Yerington today and will provide a tour of its period structures, leaching facility, and other sites.



The Anaconda pit from the overlook adjacent Weed Heights. A mile long, half mile wide and 800 feet deep, it is now partially filled with water.

More About Mason Valley, Mason, Its Farms, Its Mines, Its Civic Institutions and Its People



View of Mason, Showing the Walker River in the Foreground and the Mines Back of the Town. An Aerial Tram Will Be Built From the Mason Valley Mines to Mason, a Distance by Air Line of Five-Eighths of a Mile.

Salt Lake Tribune June 5, 1910

MASON

will be the center of activity in Nevada during the next year. If you have a notion of trying a new field, either to establish yourself in business or to invest your money where it will do things for you, you can't afford to overlook Mason.

THIS IS WHAT WILL BE DOING AND IS BEING DONE:

A MILLION DOLLAR SMELTER TO BE CONSTRUCTED.

A HALF MILLION DOLLARS BEING SPENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILROAD EXTENSION FROM MASON TO THE NEVADA DOUGLAS MINES.

RAILROAD SHOPS AND STATION BUILDINGS NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT MASON.

EXTENSIVE PREPARATORY WORK AT THE MINES TO MAKE READY FOR THE DELIVERY OF ORES TO THE SMELTER WHEN COMPLETED.

BUILDING OF BUSINESS HOUSES AND HOMES FOR THE INCREASING POPULATION.

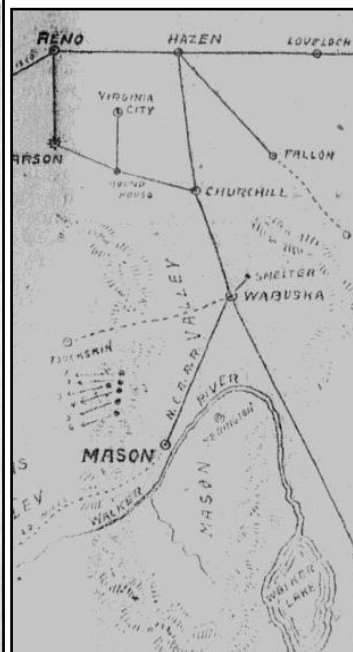
SUBDIVISION AND COLONIZATION OF FARM LANDS IN MASON VALLEY.

Mason is the supply and payroll center for this activity and is the shipping point for the splendid Mason and Smith valleys, two of the most fertile and productive valleys of the state. The opportunities are here—we invite you to investigate them.

Business and residence lots can be had now at from \$150 to \$1500—on easy payments. Call on or write to us for free illustrated booklet, "Mason; Its Resources and Possibilities."

Peck & Sample

Exclusive Townsite Agents, 201 Newhouse Bldg. Salt Lake City; 14 E. Second St., Reno, Nev. or MASON, NEV.



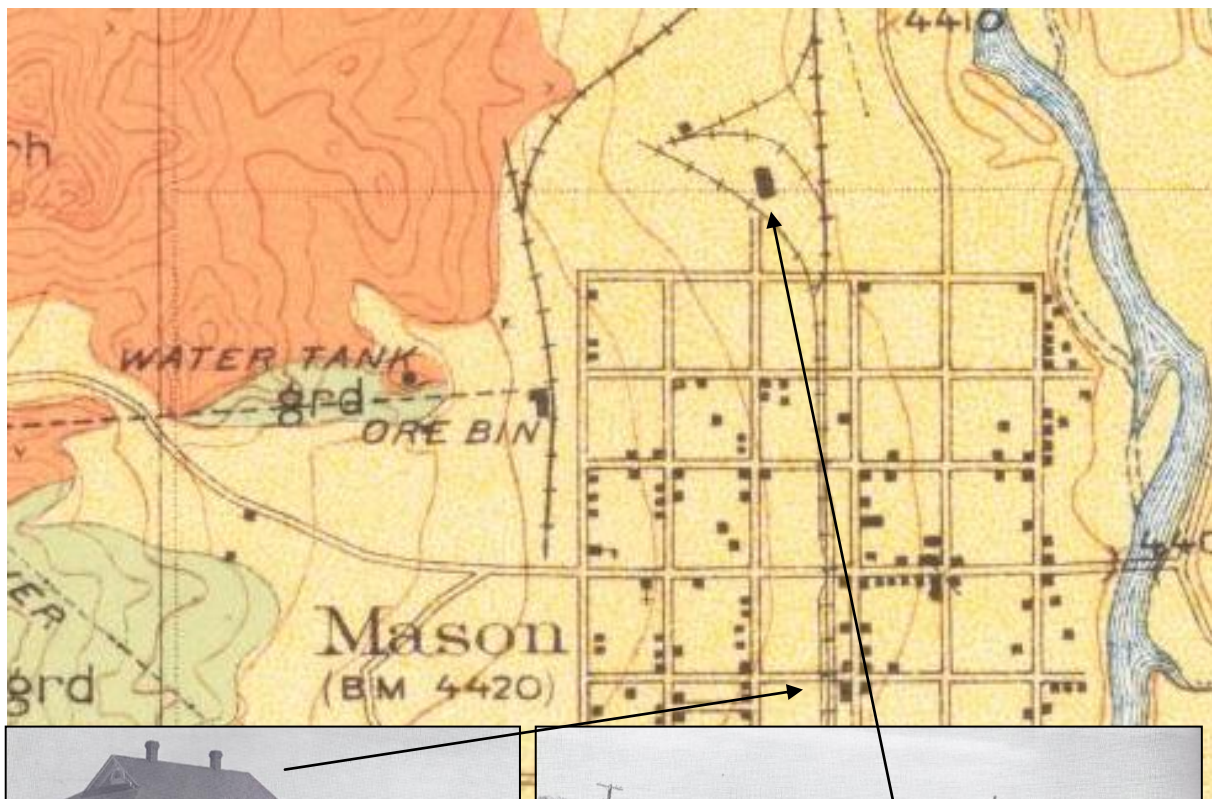
NS Journal Feb 12, 1911

Mason, Transport Center

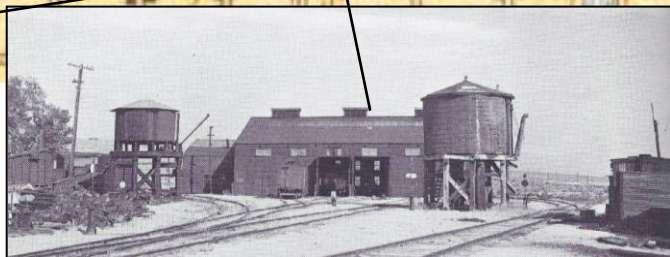
- 1) How to get there: Drive south on State Route 339 to Third Ave North.
- 2) What you'll see: Site of rail terminals, ore tram and bin terminus; town period buildings.

Historical Background:

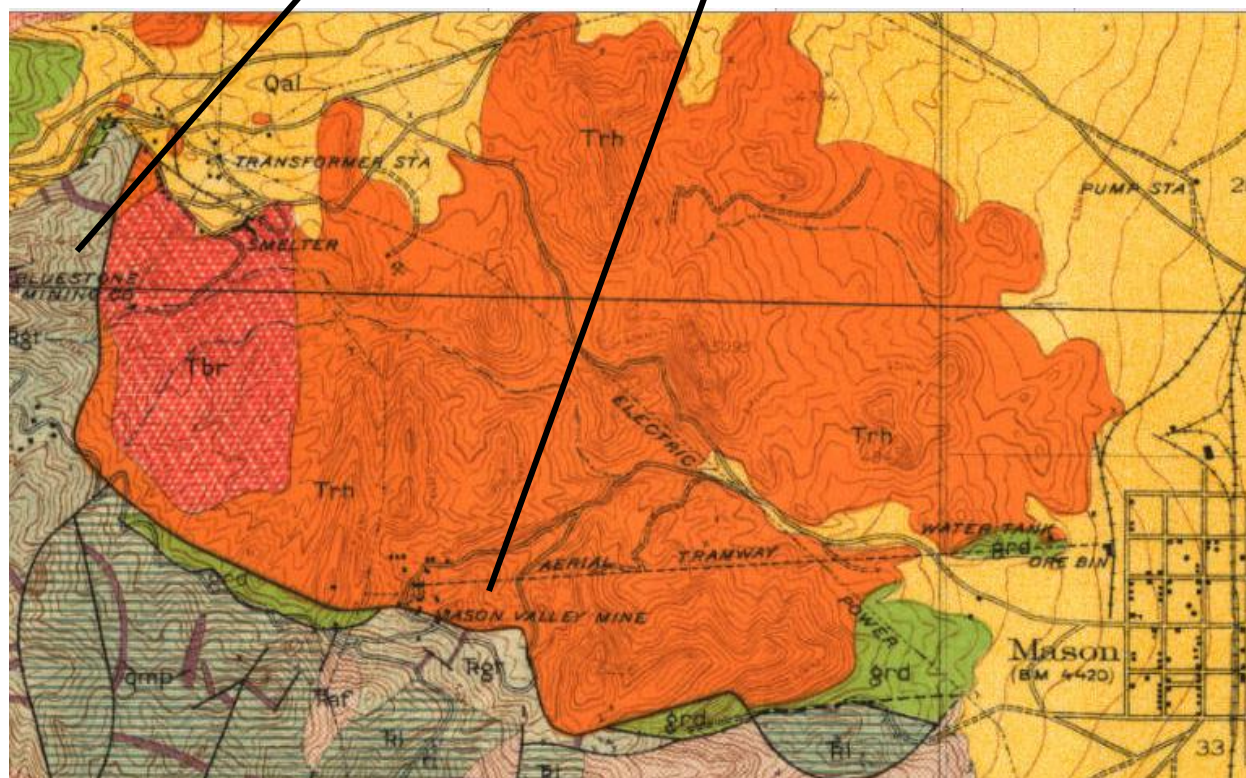
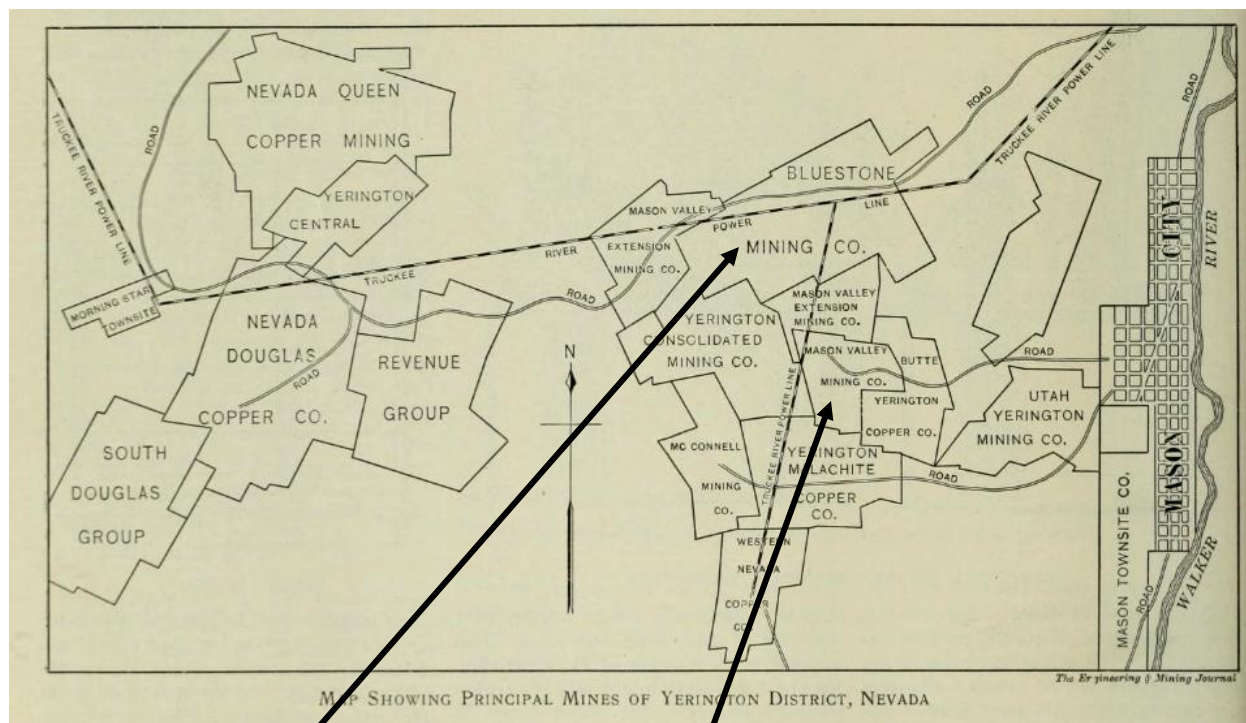
In 1908, partners William Boyce Thompson and George E. Gunn bought land and had the Mason townsite platted to serve their expanding Mason Valley mining operation. They hired a brokerage firm to promote the townsite in regional newspapers, and supported moving businesses on to the town lands. Part of the townsite was offered to A. J. Orem of the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad company. The railroad yard, roundhouse, shops, and general offices were built in late 1909-1910. As the mines prospered the Mason Valley company built ore bins, 6,600' aerial tram and terminal, and miners housing at Mason by 1912, and, in 1916, the Bluestone company's standard gauge 2 ½ mile branch railroad terminated at Mason. Mines and railroad crews gave the town an economic base, as did the nearby farms—a "substantial bridge" was built across the Walker River. A post office opened in 1908. Saloons, hotel, bank, and the usual small town businesses served a population of 1,000. When the post-World War I downturn hit and most of the mines closed, Mason steadily declined. With the abandonment of the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad in 1947, the community approached ghost town status.



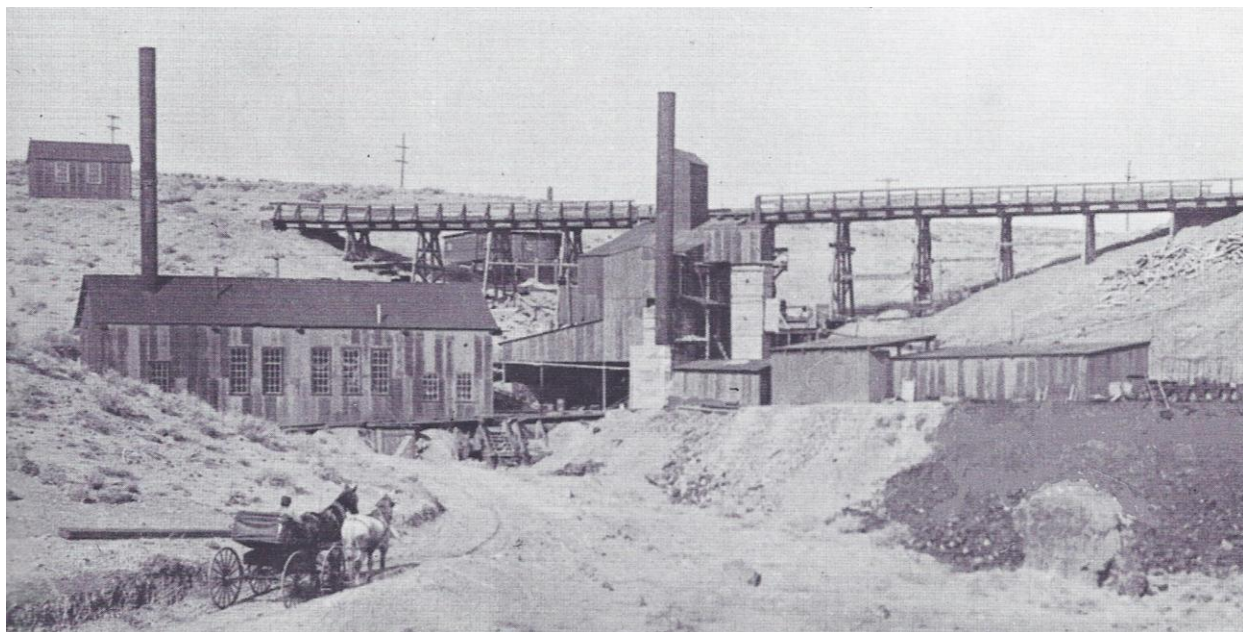
Mason depot with gas car (Paher)



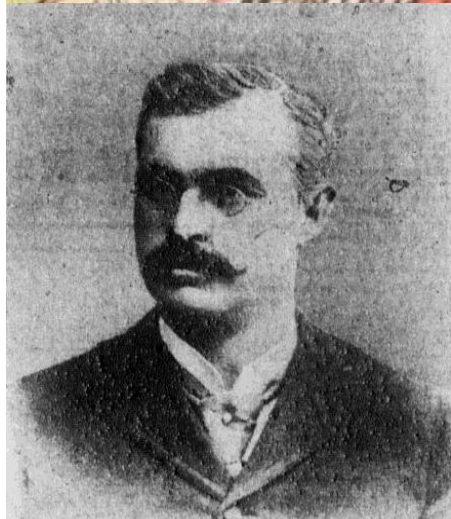
Nevada Copper Belt Railroad engine house, Mason (Myrick)



Top: map from *E&MJ* April 9, 1910 showing claim groups of sixteen companies west of Mason.
Bottom: USGS ca. 1914 detail showing location of Bluestone and Mason Valley mines west of Mason.



1901 Excelsior M & S Company smelter, Bluestone mine, above and on USGS map below. (Myrick)



Christopher S. Batterman (1859-1901)

EXCELSIOR MINING & SMELTING CO.

NEVADA.

Office: Butte, Mont. Mine office: Yerington Lyon Co., Nev. Capitalization, \$200,000. John F. Forbes, president; Frank E. Shaw, secretary. Has 150-ton water-jacket furnace, installed 1901, and is said to be smelting oxide and carbonate ores averaging 10% copper. Mine is developed by tunnels. Has steam and gasoline power; was working 100 or more men at last accounts. No returns secured.

Bluestone mine operations described in *Copper Handbook*, 1902

BLUESTONE MINING & SMELTING CO.

NEVADA

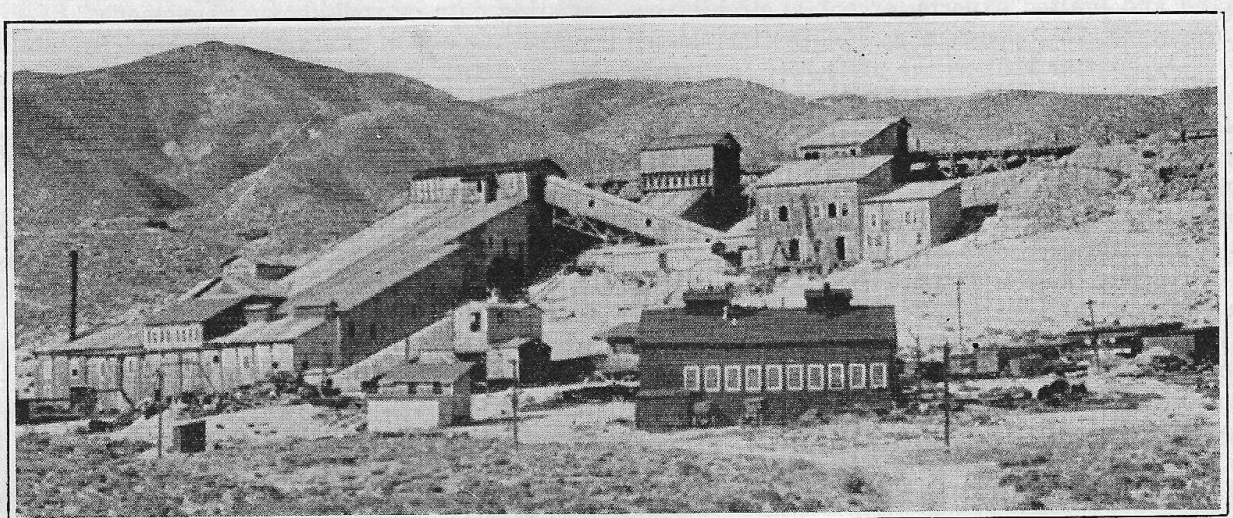
Office: 43 Exchange Place, New York. Mine office. Yerington, Lyon Co., Nev. Capt. J. R. DeLamar, owner; W. O. Fletcher, sec.; Chas. A. Weck, supt. Is not incorporated.

Property: the Bluestone mine and a group of 20 claims adjoining the Mason Valley mine. The Bluestone is the oldest property in the district, claims having been patented previous to 1890. Mine has been opened to a depth of 540' and has about 6,500' of workings, including a 1,300' main haulage tunnel, cutting an ore shoot about 300' wide and 500' long at a point 300' below the apex. This shoot is said to carry an 80' paystreak of high-grade ore, ranging up to 20% in tenor, with balance of ore carrying 2.5% copper. Management estimates 1,600,000 tons of ore in sight, averaging 2.6% copper.

Joseph R. DeLamar (1843-1918)



Bluestone mine railroad built 1916 (Myrick). Above description from *Mines Handbook*, 1916.



Bluestone concentrator rebuilt by Mason Valley Mines Company, *E&MJ* January 9, 1926

Bluestone Mine & Camp

- 1) How to get there: Mason north on 339 to Weed Heights road then left to dirt road up canyon.
- 2) What you'll see: Ruins and foundations at Bluestone and Mason Valley.

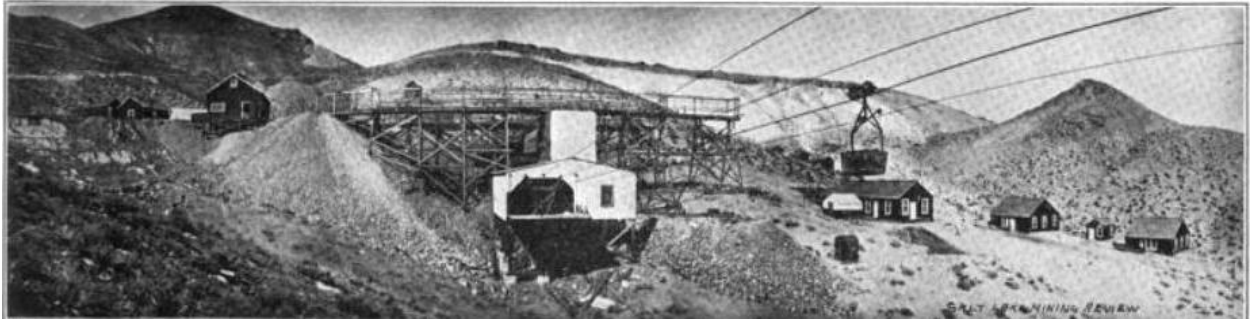
Historical Background:

One of the oldest mines worked, 1869, and the first worked on any scale was the Bluestone, three miles west of Mason. In 1899, a group of investors from Butte, Montana, led by C. S. Batterman, superintendent of the Butte & Montana mines, bought the Bluestone for \$10,000 and began opening its high grade deposit. After developing a small but rich ore body of a reported up to 10% copper carbonates at 100', the Excelsior Mining & Smelting Company was incorporated to fund further work, build a 150 ton smelter, and construct a haul road to Wabuska on the Carson & Colorado Railroad (later Southern Pacific). Production began in 1901, just as high market prices collapsed, and coincidentally with the death of prime mover Batterman. Without pay for a month the smelter workers quit, and the owners began to squabble, ending the optimistic venture.

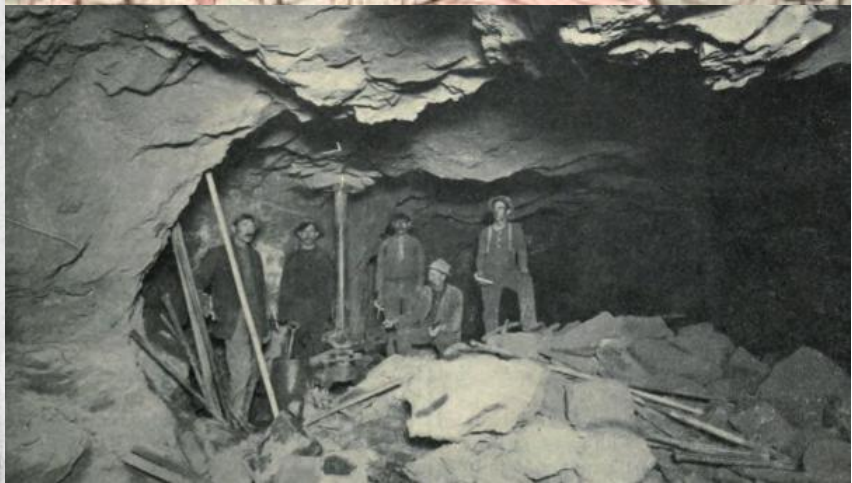
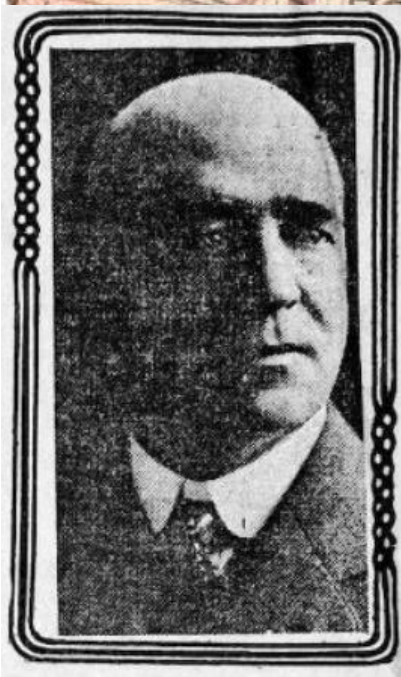
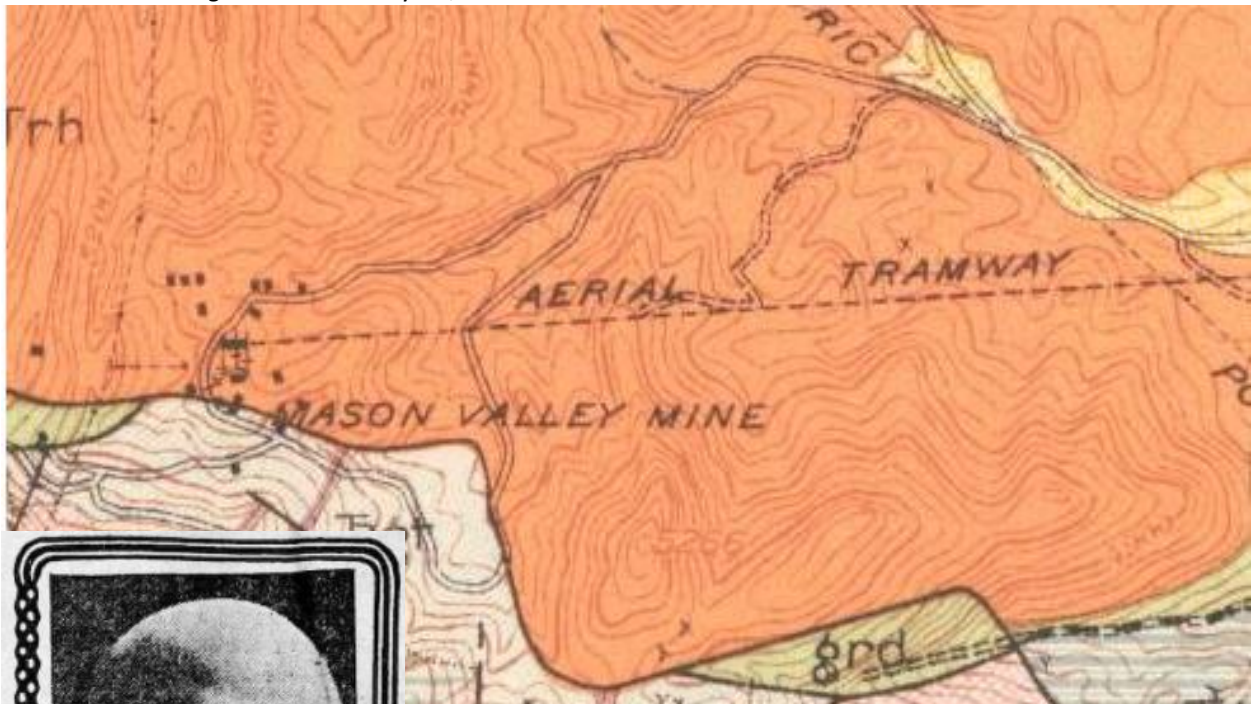
At the same time Captain J. R. DeLamar had his scouts look over the district, bought nearby claims and, after the lawsuits settled, acquired the Bluestone in 1904. DeLamar had owned Nevada's largest producer in the 1890s, the DeLamar gold mine in eastern Nevada, and had profited from the sale of his shares of the Bingham Canyon copper mine in Utah. He poured money into the Bluestone, bringing a manger down from Butte, hired forty miners and built a camp as well as built the first concentrator in the district, an experimental one using an odd electro-magnetic system that after several years was given up a failure. A new ore body of nearly two million pounds of copper 2.6% to 6% copper ore was blocked out and superintendent Charles A. Weck began shipments to the new custom smelter at Thompson. During 1916, they rebuilt the concentrator with oil flotation, at 400 tons daily, and built a standard gauge railroad from the NCB Railroad at Mason to the mill and mine. The most productive years were 1917 to 1920 when approximately three and a half million dollars worth of copper was produced. When Captain DeLamar died in December 1918, the Mason Valley began negotiating for the property, which they acquired in 1923. The combined operations are described below under the Mason Valley mine. The property is now being prospected by GRG International; we will be their guest on the property.



Bluestone mill ruins image courtesy GRG International web page



Upper terminal and loading station Mason Valley aerial tramway,
Salt Lake Mining Review January 15, 1918



George E. Gunn (1862-1913). Stopping in Mason Valley mine, *Mining & Scientific Press* July 2, 1910.

Mason Valley Mines Company Mine & Camp

- 1) How to get there: Follow dirt road past Bluestone mill site with guide from GRG International
- 2) What you'll see: Reminders or period structures, foundations of camp and mine operations.

Historical Background:

The rich bluestone outcrop of the Mason Valley mine was first worked during the 1870s peak demand on the Comstock. All but abandoned by 1900, the Mason Valley would become during the early twentieth century the district's biggest producer with an estimated yield of ten million dollars worth of copper by 1929. The enterprise began as the dream of George Erastus Gunn. In 1884, Gunn had left Ohio State University to work underground at the Anaconda mine in Butte, Montana. He fared well, worked up the ladder to become mine expert and ore buyer for a smelter at East Helena. When Asarco bought the plant he was reassigned in 1902 to the Asarco plant in Murray, Utah, and became a constant traveler across the Great Basin inspecting mines and buying ore for the firm. In 1905, after returning from mine inspections in Alaska for Guggenheim Exploration Company, he first visited Yerington and the Spragg mine, named for a farmer and part-time prospector. He had taken a flyer on the Spragg mine and with Salt Lake City's mayor and his banker organized the Mason Valley Copper Company. A thirty foot shaft looked promising and they put Fred Flindt and a small crew to explore the ground. Meantime Nevada was experiencing its last great gold and silver rushes to Tonopah and Goldfield, and a copper boom at the Ely district. Gunn quit his job with the Guggenheims and with partner William Boyce Thompson reaped a small fortune from mines in the Ely copper districts that they sold to the Guggenheims in December 1906. He next turned his focus on Mason Valley.

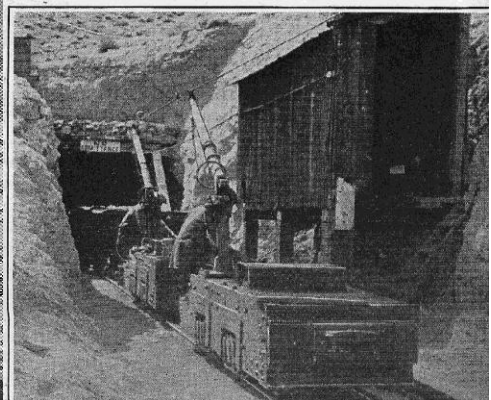
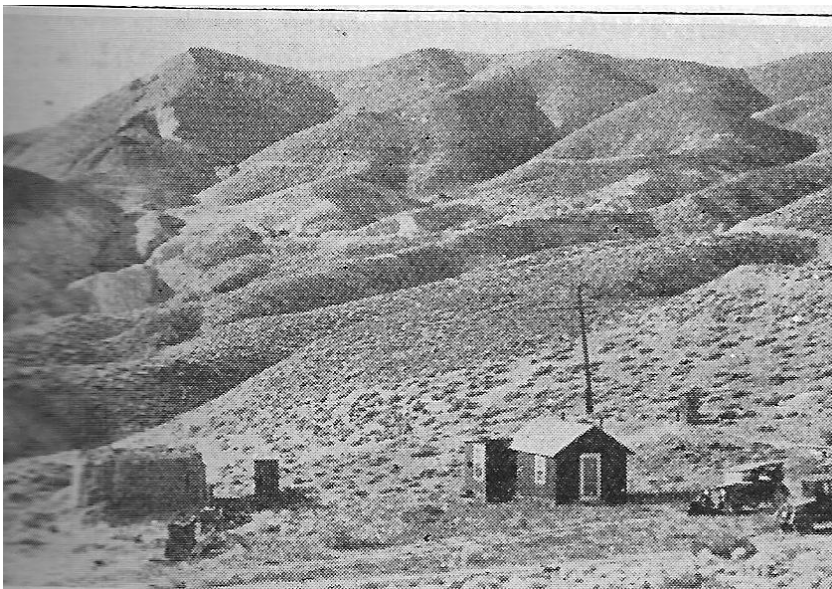
After Flindt had opened two adits and a shaft all in high grade copper ore, Gunn with Thompson, reorganized the company as the Mason Valley Mines Company with one million in stock to raise funds for development work and to consolidate the major mines of the district. Unfortunately for the Gunn-Thompson plan, a copper boom now hit the Yerington copper district. As Jay Carpenter wrote, claims were staked for twelve miles along the Singatse Range as rumors that big names like the Guggenheim's were interested in the district (they weren't, but Gunn's former association with them fed the rumors). News reports of Montana Copper Kings F. August Heinz and William A. Clark's investment in the district fed the craze. Yerington was touted as "the next big thing." When Utah copper baron Samuel Newhouse created the Western Nevada Copper Company and bought in the district, the days of inexpensive purchase options were over. Then the collapse of the financial world in the fall 1907 brought down potential investment but not claim prices; the copper frenzy had spent itself.

The Gunn-Thompson Company partners continued to finance exploration of the Mason Valley mine. General Manager Gunn's miners drove a fourth level or adit that tapped the ore body further and reserves grew to 600,000 then 1,000,000 tons of 3%-6% copper ore. In 1908, they made big plans to build a smelter, expand operations, and build a railroad between mine and reduction works. They tried, again, to acquire the nearby Bluestone mine and Nevada Douglas mine over the range, but instead only worked out operating agreements, and ore purchase agreements for their smelter. The Nevada Douglas company agreed to build a railroad and to provide 400 tons of ore a day to the smelter once it opened. Over the next three years Gunn-Thompson hired staff – much of it drawn away from the Trail, B. C. smelter of Cominco – to design and build the smelter at Thompson, open coal mines at Gunn, Wyoming, upgrade the mine haulage with electric underground trams and a 6,600 aerial tramway with a 600 foot drop from a primary crusher near the 4th level to ore bins along the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad at Mason. The NCB railroad's fourteen miles from the Southern Pacific to Mason was officially opened in January 1910. The usual delays slowed smelter construction, but on January 6, 1912 the first blast furnace blew in and Mason Valley became a respected copper producer of up to 2,000,000 pounds a

month. The product was nearly half from Mason Valley mines, a third from the Nevada Douglas and the remainder from direct smelting ores purchased from mines in Nevada and northern California. The Yerington copper district was gaining national attention again.

The guns of August 1914 in far off Europe, the start of World War I, destabilized the mineral markets. As a result, new manager Walter C. Aldridge announced that the Mason Valley would close that October until the market improved. At the same time, the Nevada Douglas company had announced it would stop shipments and build its own smelter because they considered unfavorable the rates paid for their ore worked at the Thompson smelter. The Bluestone also closed down. The effect was an immediate and widespread economic depression in the valley, as well as a mass exodus from the camps at the mines, Mason, and Thompson. In 1915, copper market prices increased and as the war wore on the demand for copper and its prices doubled, then tripled. Every mine with ore was re-opened and shipped to the Thompson smelter which was refurbished along with the mine, and finally blown-in February 13, 1917, a delay caused by a lack of coke caused by war-time demands. At the Mason Valley mine, Aldridge began a block caving mining system to remove as much ore as possible, and quickly. A glory hole formed at the surface as pillars were removed at the various levels. The district's biggest production came during the war years. The company paid off its one million dollars in bonded debt, had \$700,000 in the treasury when war ended, and had mapped out by diamond drill another million ton 3% copper reserve by the time the post war depression closed the mines and shut down the smelter February 28, 1919.

During the 1920s, Canadian engineer Alexander J. McNabb, company smelter superintendent, became president of Mason Valley and began an expansion program. He headed the leasing of properties in northern California that would provide additional ore to make the smelter profitable, and, importantly, purchased the Bluestone mine in 1923. An attempt to buy the Nevada Douglas mine collapsed when the company fell to a receiver and years of litigation. McNabb also hired Governor Emmet D. Boyle as general manager to restart the works. Boyle, born in Gold Hill, Nevada, and a graduate of the University of Nevada mining school, had served two terms as Nevada governor, 1915-1923, and was popular within the mining community across the state. Boyle's team redesigned the Bluestone concentrator and rebuilt it as a 1,000 ton a day flotation mill. He revamped the block-caving



View from above the Bluestone concentrator toward the Glory Hole of the Mason Valley mine, upper left—line across ridges is the electric mine haulage tram to the Bluestone mine adit, shown at right. Note rugged terrain of the Singatse Mountains. *E&MJ* January 9, 1926.

system at Mason Valley and Bluestone and connected the two mines by a mile long electric haulage tram. The smelter was re-designed to add a reverberatory furnace in order to work the high sulfide ores of the company's northern California copper mines. These last plans were stalled by unreasonable railroad rates. It was cheaper to ship ores from California to Utah smelters rather than Thompson, Nevada. Thus, smelter changes were cancelled, and in essence the company abandoned the working of the critical California mines. While stockpiling ore in the bins of the smelter, Boyle had a heart attack while inspecting the company's Gray Eagle mine in California. The stressful delays probably were a factor in Boyle's death on January 3, 1926 at age 46. A few months later the smelter was blown-in.

In that year, too, William Boyce Thompson fell ill in London, the beginning of a long, last illness. With George Gunn gone (he died in 1913) the future of Mason Valley Mines Company was in the hands of the newly formed Newmont Mining Corporation, founded by Thompson and holder of much of his mining stock, including Mason Valley. McNabb, Newmont director and president in the Mason Valley company, guided the operation through its final years of productivity, but Thompson determined there were better investments for the return. McNabb was to focus his time on the company's explorations at Flin Flon copper deposit in Manitoba, and the Mason Valley Mines Company was dissolved April 22, 1929, its assets liquidated. Small scale leasers picked at the carcass during World War II and other high market years, but the most productive era was over.

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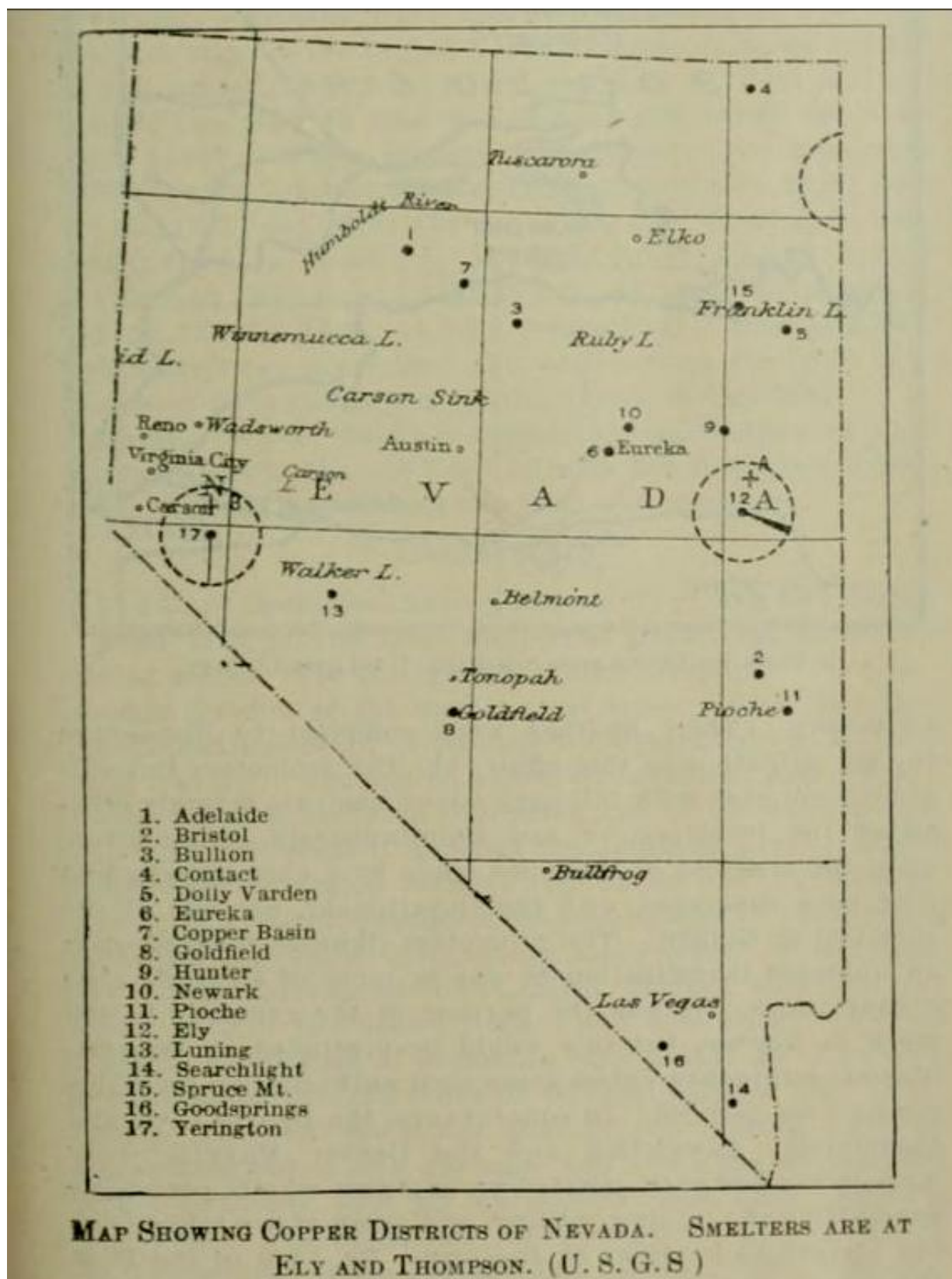
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Maps and photos from Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps* and his *Nevada Ghost Towns & Desert Atlas* (both available from Nevada Publications, Reno). Text for this guide by Robert L. Spude except for excerpted text from period literature.



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