

Mining History of Goldstone

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Gold was reportedly discovered at Goldstone as early as the 1880s. Subsequently there were two periods of activity, 1910-1916, and the 1930s.¹

In May 1910, the *Pacific Miner* trumpeted: "Gold Stone is the name of a new camp, thirty-five miles north of Barstow, where some phenomenal ore has been found. Quite a stampede followed the discovery. Reports show that it is the richest locality in the Southwest."²

This "stampede" seems to have been touched off by the rich returns from the Drumm mine, which had reported that a ton of ore from the surface yielded \$97 in gold and five ounces of silver at the Needles Smelter. In August, John Harper came into Barstow showing off some "picture rock" (rock typically shot through with native gold) from Goldstone which he said ran up to \$180 per ton in gold. Others working properties at this time included Jack Halford, Joe Goodrich, C. E. Burkhart, W. H. Scott and R. M. Dillingham. George Drumm in November began sinking a 50 foot shaft, and soon Drumm and partner W. M. Clancy had mined a ton of high-grade gold ore which they shipped to Los Angeles for processing. Early in January 1911 Drumm, Clancy, and John S. Cook, a Goldfield banker, visited Goldstone in an auto to look over the property. In February, Cook bonded the claims. The terms of the bond called for \$25,000 to be paid within 18 months, with the first payment to be made by August. Cook himself came to the property with two men to work the property, but before the month of February was out, dropped the bond.³

After the deal with Cook fizzled, the mine of Halford and son began to attract attention. In February Halford had material and supplies hauled to his camp and by May the two had sunk two shafts 80 and 50 feet deep and had drifted 30 feet in a four foot wide ledge of "shipping ore". Their cabin was built out of yucca "...which is fitted out in good old miners' style."⁴

By February 1912 some half dozen miners were developing properties, and Mitchell and Andrews struck ore peppered with gold. They were developing a three foot wide vein with a pay streak yielding \$100 per ton. Also of note is Rinaldo and Durand's 18 inch pay streak that at a depth of 50 feet ran \$65 per ton. In November 1913, there was a small stamp mill at the Drumm Mine.⁵

Mining excitement was stirred anew at the camp in October 1915. On October 15, 1915, gold was discovered on the Redfield claim that ran from \$1,400 to \$3,000 per ton in gold. Soon the *Barstow Printer* announced "Gold Stone camp is attracting many prospectors, and indications are that Barstow will have a camp equal to any in the Southwest."⁶

The rediscovered gold district attracted swarms of prospectors. By March 1916, there were some 150 "permanent" residents, in addition to a lodging house, and daily mail service and delivery of supplies. For \$5 one could buy a round trip ticket from Barstow to the nearby camp, or \$10 from Los Angeles with service on Tuesday and Saturday. By May, 1916 the camp had "seven operating properties, two of which have already granted five leases." A townsite was surveyed and several lots immediately sold. Residence lots were priced from \$50 to \$250 and business lots from \$150 to \$350. There were nine buildings and tenthouses at the site, and the rooming house could accommodate 25 and boasted a separate restaurant capable of serving more than one hundred people a day. Within a month a large general store was doing business. In October a Chilean mill with a daily capacity of about 20 tons was operating. A subscription campaign to construct a telephone line to Barstow was kicked off in April, 1917, but the line apparently never was completed. A few months later, in June 1917 the post office

of Goldbridge was opened at the camp, and Malcom Smith sworn in as postmaster. At that time the Goldstone Company's shaft down 210 feet.⁷

But as suddenly as the camp swept onto the mining scene, news abruptly ceased. Perhaps the entry of the United States into World War I on April 6, 1917, had proved too much a draw of men and equipment to the still fledgling mining camp. The post office closed August 15, 1918.⁸

The camp was never completely deserted, nine years later the *Barstow Printer* noted: "A half dozen people are in Goldstone and several have been working their claims for months. One miner is reported as making wages developing his property and using a dry washer."⁹

George Drumm continued to develop a promising vein and in August 1928 had begun construction of a "cyanide plant." Only months later the camp lost its long time promoter; George Drumm died on January 10, 1929.¹⁰

But with the new decade came new progress. New properties were developed and by 1931 there were two mills in operation, one at the Goldstone mine and the other at the Belmont.¹¹

Acknowledgments:

I thank Alan Hensher for liberal use of his source information, his monumental work of copying information pertinent to the Mojave Desert from the *Los Angeles Mining Review*, and above all for his continued research into the history of the Mojave Desert, and allowing me to be his sounding board.

End Notes:

- 1: Paher, Stanley W., 1973, Death Valley Ghost Towns (Nevada Publications: Las Vegas, NV), p. 43.
- 2: *Pacific Miner* May 1910, p. 196
- 3: *Los Angeles Mining Review*: May 7, 1910, p. 23; *Barstow Printer*: Aug 5, Nov 11, 18, 25, Dec 2, 9, 30, 1910, Jan 6, 27, Feb 3, 10, 17, 1911
- 4: *Barstow Printer* Feb 24, April 7, May 26, 1911
- 5: *Barstow Printer* Feb 9, Mar 1, May 24, 1912. Cloudman, H. C., "Big Drum Group," California Mining Bureau unpublished field notes, November 25, 1913.
- 6: *Barstow Printer* Oct 22, Nov 5, 1915
- 7: *Barstow Printer* May 12, July 14, Oct 6, 1916, Apr 13, Jun 8, 15, 29, 1917; Ray, A. E., "Goldstone District - San Bernardino County - California," *Mining and Oil Bulletin*, June, 1916, p. 149; Cloudman, H. E., Huguenin E., and Merrill, F. J. H., 1919, "San Bernardino County," California Mining Bureau Report 15, pp. 804-808.
- 8: Frickstad, Walter N., 1955, A Century of California Post Offices 1848 to 1954 (A Philatelic Research Society Publication: Oakland) pp. 140-141.
- 9: *Barstow Printer*: Apr 28, 1926,
- 10: *Barstow Printer*: Aug 26, 1926, May 12, 1927, Aug 6, 1928, Jan 10, 1929
- 11: Mar 13, 1930, May 28, Jun 25, 193; Hewett, D. F., 1936, Mineral Resources of the Region Around Boulder Dam, US Geological Survey, Professional Paper 871, p. 48; Tucker, W. B., 1924, Los Angeles Field Division, San Bernardino County, California Mining Bureau Report 20, p. 47; Tucker, W. B. and R. J. Sampson, 1940, Current Mining Activity in Southern California, California Division of Mines, Report 36, p. 57; Tucker W. B. and R. J. Sampson, 1943, Los Angeles Field Division, San Bernardino County, California Division of Mines Report 39 p. 441.