

Notes from the *Panamint News*:

S. G. George, "Our Early History," *Panamint News*, March 9, 1875, 2:1 (Rose Springs, Inyo Co., Cal., March 1, 1875):

OUR EARLY HISTORY

Prospectors of '59 and '60—The Mythical "Gun-Site Lead" and the Objective Point.

ROSE SPRINGS, INYO CO., CAL., March 1, '75.

EDITOR, NEWS: Having been informed that you were desirous of obtaining a true history of the early pioneers of this part of the country, I will give you a reliable historical statement:

The First Expedition, in 1859,

Was composed of some fifteen persons, headed by Dr. Darwin French, John Lillard, and Capt. Robert Bailey, and started from Butte county, in search of the famous "Gun-sight lead." They went through Walker's Pass, thence to Little Lake, from whence they diverged to the east, making many locations and forming the Coso District. (Coso, in the Indian language, means "fire.") They then started directly east, going through Darwin Canyon, which they named in honor of Darwin French. After leaving the mouth of Darwin Canyon they crossed to the mouth of what is now known as Towne's Pass into Death Valley. Towne's Pass is about fifteen miles north of the mouth of Rose Canyon. They went on to Furnace Creek, explored on the south side of Death Valley, about as far south as your town of Panamint, returning through to Coso by the same route they went out. Thus ended their first expedition.

In the Fall of 1860, through the efforts of the undersigned,

A Second Party

Was got up at Visalia for another search after the "Gun-sight," consisting of the following persons: Dr. W. B. Lilley, Henry O'Hara, Moses Thayer and the writer of this article. Leaving Visalia, we followed the track of the French party until arriving in Death Valley. We camped about three miles from where the emigrants deserted their wagons in 1850. There we found the rusty remains of many log chains and wagon irons. After spending some three weeks in that camp we came up through a pass where Hunter & Co. are now working the Nellie Grant mine. We gave to the spring there the name of Marble Spring. I am informed that it is now called Emigrant. Then we came to this place. Our animals needing rest, we made a camp here and began prospecting. This was on or about the 15th of December, 1860. On the 23d Henderson and myself, taking two or three days' provisions, started down in the direction of Slate Range. Returning on the 25th, we came up through Mesquit[e] Flat and up Windy Canyon, crossing over to Rose Canyon, and after crossing the summit,

Discovered the Christmas Gift Lode,

So named because of the day. After this we found a series of leads in the same locality. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to which is really Windy Canyon. I can only

say that I gave the first canyon south of Rose Springs the name of Windy Canyon. Any one doubting the appropriateness of the name should pass up there and enjoy the gentle zephyrs.

On the 16th day of January, 1861, our party camped at Mesquit[e] Flat, ten miles north of Postoffice Springs. There we sunk a well, finding good, sweet water at a depth of six feet. I there procured and [an] Indian guide and started up for a distance of (as near as I can recollect) about five miles, going up an Indian trail on the north side of the canyon until I got above the falls. At a point of rocks on the right hand side, some distance above the falls, I found where a mountain sheep had fallen from the high bluff above, and for the want of a better name, called it

“Sheep Canyon.”

(It is known to the world now as Surprise Canyon, and will continue to be so called as far as I am concerned.) My guide’s actions (I was just a trifle suspicious of Indians at that time) caused me to march Mr. Indian back to camp in front of me, which prevented me from going up as high as where the embryo city of Panamint now stands. Our party returned home by way of Darwin Canyon, Little Lake, etc.

I would here state, to the best of my memory, that the Panamint range of mountains was named by John Lillard, of French’s party. Our party named the high peak, between here and Panamint, Telescope Peak.

[Check sentence:] In my next I will give you many more matters which will be interesting, at least to old prospectors.

S. G. GEORGE.

“Interesting Correspondence,” Panamint News, March 9, 1875, 4:1:

INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

We publish today two interesting letters from our correspondents at Rose Springs, which will soon prove to be one of our richest districts. The one from “Stationary” is the second furnished the NEWS by him, and he has kindly promised to write us often the news from that section. The letter from Dr. S. G. George will be read with much interest by all Panaminters, and doubtless by a great many in the interior of the State, as being one of the oldest pioneers, he gives us a lucid picture of the trials and dangers attending the first entrance of the prospector into this mining section. The Doctor, also, has kindly consented to give us a series of letters, going back to the early days of the camp and following up its history to the present time. His memory is becoming somewhat impaired from old age, and if there are any of his old comrades left who can correct any mistakes he may make, or refresh his memory, he will be glad to have them do so, to the end that we may have a correct history of our whole mining section in this part of Inyo county. Our double sheet, to be issued every Tuesday, will contain these interesting letters.

S. G. George, “Our Early History,” Panamint News, March 23, 1875, 1:2 (Rose Springs, March 18th, 1875):

OUR EARLY HISTORY.

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ROSE SPRINGS, March 18th, 1875.

EDITOR NEWS: In my last, time prevented me from giving you some interesting items in regard to what is known as

The Alvord Lead.

I stated that W. T. Henderson and myself made a trip off in the Slate Range country. While on that trip we fell in with Wm. Alvord and a Mr. Manley of San Jose, also a party of sixteen men from Los Angeles in search of his (Alvord's) leads. We left the party where we found them; but before leaving the party Alvord tried to show me where his lost lead was. From where we stood, he pointed out the middle one of the high mountain peaks back of Panamint, and he described the lead as being within five miles from said peak. Thirty-six days after parting with Alvord and party, in passing Indian Wells, we found Alvord and Manley; they had lost their horses, were out of every article of provisions, Alvord sick with an abcess [abscess] on his thigh, and Manley sustaining himself and Alvord on Jack rabbits. Our party having enough bread to sustain the sick man until our arrival at Kingsville [Keysville], we put him on my riding horse and took him in. Alvord was afterwards killed by a man by the name of Jackson, because he could not show him the rich lead near Panamint.

To continue my narrative. In April [1861] our party prepared to return to this part of the county to continue prospecting. In addition to our first party was added six more men (J. R. Bell, J. W. Rolf, Wm. Waters and others). After leaving Visalia we fell in at Walker's Pass with the New World Mining and Exploring Company, the same being under the direction of Colonel W. P. Russ. A proposition was made to consolidate the two companies, which was accepted. We then proceeded on our way to Granite Springs, in Coso, when one half of the party came on here and the rest went to Owen's River. The party coming here proceeded to organize the old Telescope Mining District. After locating a number of leads they joined the other party on Owen's River.

Before leaving this place to follow the party to Owen's River, I would state that after returning a company was formed, known as the

Consolidation Gold and Silver Mining Company,

To work the mines in this district. Several attempts were made to develop the mines, and a tunnel was run a distance of one hundred and fifty-five feet, but the Indians becoming troublesome and we having had several of our men killed, the mine was abandoned for the time being. The names of the parties killed were John A. White, Ed. Turm and two others, the names of whom I do not know.

To return to our party at Owen's River. We made the first discovery of mines ever made there. We formed a district and gave it the name of the Russ District, in honor of Colonel Russ. Among the discoveries made, were first, the Old Union Lead, the Eclipse, and many more, the names of which I leave for my old comrades to give, whose minds are not impaired by old age. After prospecting for several weeks and naming places, we returned home and organized the old Union Gold and Silver Mining Company.

I will state here that I gave the name of Inyo to the range of mountains running from the foot of Owen's Great Lake, on the east side, up to the White Mountains. The name

Haiwe was given to the Springs between Big and Little Lakes. Haiwe is the Indian word for dove.

The history of Inyo county up to and since its organization, is too well known for me to continue this article further, and Indian wars in this county have already become a matter of history. I hope, however, that some one more competent than myself will take up this matter and bring the history up to the present.

Respectfully,

S. G. GEORGE.

“Our History,” Panamint News, March 23, 1875, 4:2:

OUR HISTORY.

We publish a second and very interesting letter from Dr. S. G. George, regarding our early history. We fear from the closing sentence in this letter that this may be the last from him. We sincerely hope not, however; or that some one who is familiar with the early history of the Inyo country will take it up where the Doctor has left off and complete it. It may be valuable in the future, and certainly will be read with great interest by outsiders, as well as by everybody near here, and will be the means of creating a desire on the part of many for further inquiry regarding our country and her mines[.]

“From Borax Lake,” Panamint News, October 21, 1875, 5:3

FROM BORAX LAKE.—Robert Trewin came in from Borax Lake Tuesday morning, and informs us that Searles & Co. are succeeding wonderfully with Borax manufacturing at Borax Lake, having last month shipped to San Francisco 80 tons of concentrated borax. They also ship each month several tons—5 to 10—of refined borax. They will suspend in a few days for the purpose of enlarging their works and improving their process.