

Articles from the *Sacramento Union*:

“Later from Carson Valley,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, September 5, 1860, 1:7 (*Territorial Enterprise*, September 1):

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The prices of lots in the center of Carson City, on Carson Street, have risen from between \$25 and \$50 a year ago to \$300 and \$400 6 months ago and to \$300 and \$400 today; even so, the owners do not care to sell.

One year ago, Carson City did not contain even two-dozen houses; but now, the town contains more than 200 buildings, many of them “large and substantial” and nearly of them put up “with some regard to durability and taste.”

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According to recent information, conditions at Mono are somewhat less brisk than a month or two ago, the result of a shortage of water. Those who do have water, however, are doing well. From 400 to 500 miners are in the Monoville area, making from \$3 to \$50 a day.

Delta, “Letter From Washoe,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, September 20, 1860, 1:5 (*Virginia City*, September 17, 1860):

“Last week was prolific of events; we had discoveries, inquests, elections, lawsuits, arrivals and torchlight celebrations. So much for one week in Virginia [City]. Now for description in details.”

A party led by [ ] Snyder, who had been sent on an exploring expedition, returned on Thursday. He reported rich strikes of silver-bearing quartz about 150 miles from here, northeast of Mono, it’s believed. The company brought in specimens, which “indeed look well”; they assay from \$300 to \$500 a ton. Since the samples were taken from the outcroppings, much richer ore may be expected under. If the accounts turn out to be true, “the Comstock lead will be thrown into the shade, and next Spring we may expect another rush across the mountains, *via* Visalia, in comparison with which last Spring’s excitement will be nothing. . . .” The name of the lead is the Esmeralda; a district has been organized under that name, with a “Recorder more experienced in mining than writing.” To remedy this defect, the “able Recorder of the Argentine District starts on Thursday to take his place.”

“Silver and Gold in Utah Territory,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, September 29, 1860, 1:6 (correspondent of *Union*, Esmeralda District, U. T., near Monoville, September 19):

The Esmeralda district was discovered about August 25. The discoverers were J. U. [M.] Braly, J. W. [M.] Carey [Cory], and E. R. Hicks, who then returned to Monoville, about 25 miles away, and formed a party who proceeded to prospect the ground thoroughly. They found many rich silver- and gold-bearing lodes. The first claim located, the Esmeralda, shows little gold so far, but it exceeds better than expected in silver.

The other lodes located are the Silver Hill, Antelope, Utah, Real Del Monte, Cedar, Aurora Borealis, and Last Chance. Some ore will assay \$10,000 per ton—\$20,000, if selected. When gold and silver are found in the same ore “in such extravagant richness, it makes our rock here surpass all our previous ideas of rich ore. . . .”

A wagon road can be built to the Esmeralda district with little difficulty. The district lies about 20 miles southeast from Sweetwater Creek, on the wagon road to Monoville, and about 60 miles from Allen's bridge, on the East Carson River."

"Letter From Carson City," Sacramento Daily Union, October 6, 1860, 1:6 (Carson City, October 3, 1860):

The correspondent has just returned from a 1-week trip to the newly found Esmeralda mines.

Camp Esmeralda, the center of the mines, is 110 miles a little south of southeast from Carson City and about 27 miles northeast of Monoville. Though the mining district is 10 miles square, the area containing the mines, as far as can be learned, is no more than 2 miles square.

Some very rich placers are found in the Bodey Diggings, 15 miles to the southwest. Also, several extensive tunnels are being driven, in order to reach a silver-bearing quartz ledge.

Several miles south of the Bodey Diggings is the Masonic ledge, which is being prospected by a tunnel.

The discoveries were not, "as is usually the case, the result of accident, but of systematic, persevering and well directed effort. The lucky finders of the original lead, James M. Cory, J. M. Braly and E. R. Hicks, belong to a class of young men who do not rely upon chance for success. They came over here, the first two mentioned from San Jose, and the latter from southern Oregon, early in the Spring with the determination to prospect the entire eastern slope thoroughly without regard to difficulties or danger, pursuing their researches, if necessary, to the borders of Mexico, and then, whatever the result, of returning home satisfied. In pursuance of this resolve, they had already, either one or more of them, passed over the whole northern country, beginning at Virginia [City], and visiting the region of Black Rock, Pyramid Lake, Humboldt river, the districts east of the Carson, and so on, into the wild and mountainous country skirting the forks of [illegible section:] the[?] Walker river [ . . . ] traveling[?] from range to range, in a zig-zag course, crossing deserts, climbing over precipices; suffering by turns hunger, thirst, heat and cold, yet bent on fulfilling their mission, like brave men, until at last their attention was attracted by a gold ledge, seen from a distance, on the crest of a high hill, and which on being approached and examined, proved to be an immense lode of argentiferous quartz. Five months had already been spent in fruitless toil by these mountain wanderers, who were now pressing on south towards the Coso country, when they came upon what must prove—to them at least—the means of securing an ample fortune, since there can be no mistake about the claims were taken up by them, containing large quantities of silver ore, that will yield from five to seven hundred dollars to the ton.

"This discovery was made on the 22d day of August, and, although these young men were satisfied of the great value of the ledge, Mr. Cory, being a thorough mineralogist, and abundantly competent to test the rock, yet they observed the greatest moderation in taking up claims, securing but one or two apiece, before they proceeded to Monoville and made their discovery known. Immediately there was a rush to the locality; but, fortunately, everything was conducted with regularity and order. A code of excellent laws was at once adopted, whereby system as well as harmony and security was secured, and up to the time I visited the district the first difficulty or misunderstanding had not yet occurred in regard to claims, nor had the first sign of disorder or contention yet been manifested, notwithstanding the excitement was great."

The original ledge consists of a mass of quartz, about 20 feet wide, running north and south over the crest of a high hill, where it projects from 10 to 50 feet. Throughout the ledge is silver-bearing rock. From the east side, just at the top of the ground, about 5 or 6 tons of ore have

been broken off with sledges; it will yield from \$500 to \$700 a ton in silver and a high percentage of gold.

On the very top of the ledge, 40 or 50 feet above the surface, ore that will pay the expense of reduction can be obtained. This ledge extends several thousand feet north from the Discovery Claim; growing larger, it ends in a high bluff. From the base of the bluff, the hill slopes both to the north, east, and west; along its sides are a series of minor ledges, nearly all of which are rich in gold and silver. In fact, almost every piece of rock broken from some of the ledges “exhibits particles of gold, as well as streaks of sulphurets of silver. . . .” Random specimens taken from the Silver Hill lode, tested by the state assayer, yield \$1,196.90 a ton.

But only 8 or 10 such leads, all of them small, have been found. And a “multitude” of others show no traces of gold or silver. Many claims have been located as ‘blind ledges,’ which have “only a supposed existence.”

Since the elevation is great—about 7,000 feet—the climate “necessarily rigorous,” and every resemblance to a ledge claimed, the correspondent advises any would-be prospectors to stay away this fall. Besides, tools and provisions are scarce and “dear,” and, at least from California, the journey is a long one.

The route from Sacramento will pass through Placerville, the Carson Valley, and the Walker River, traveling the wagon road to Monoville, and following it to the mouth of Sweetwater Creek, on the east [missing words] Walker River, then by a trail due south [missing word] 25 miles, to Esmeralda.

When the correspondent left, about 100 men were at the mines, and many others were arriving daily. The correspondent noticed several acquaintances, including Dr. Benjamin Cory and J. A. Moutree [Moutrie], both of San José, who are owners in the original claim, and James G. Dow and Dr. [ ] Pugh, both of San Francisco.

“Examination Of James Sears,” Sacramento Daily Union, October 22, 1860, 2:5:

James Sears, arrested for shooting Jules Martenot, in Sacramento, on October 13, was brought before Justice [ ] Barr on Saturday afternoon, to determine if he was eligible to post bail. Since Martenot was likely to recover, Barr allowed Sears to get out of jail on bail. [More to come.]

“Valuable Ores,” Sacramento Daily Union, November 3, 1860, 4:2:

In San Francisco, a recent assay of ore from the Wide West lead, in the Esmeralda district, yielded \$5,445.50. An assay of ore from the Ophir lead, at Washoe, yielded \$3,623.47.

“Late From Carson Valley,” Sacramento Daily Union, November 6, 1860, 2:6:

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 “ESMERALDA DISTRICT.” The outcroppings of the ledges there seem to contain silver or gold. The surrounding country is well watered; very fine grazing is found on the hills, and ample hay is found in the valleys. The district also has enough timber to last “a large mining population for years.” Excellent lumber is available from McFee’s mill, on the east branch of Walker River, about 20 miles away.

J. E. Clayton, a surveyor, formerly of Mariposa [County], has laid out two towns, Esmeralda and Aurora.

It's said that locating is done according to a system. Claimants have to take the mining-district recorder to their claims and have the boundaries "distinctly designated."

"Late From Washoe," November 13, 1860, 2:3 (Territorial Enterprise, November 10):

[Main points:] The census marshal for the district counted 2,041 houses, inhabited by 6,870 people. He took the names of 1,901 persons who considered themselves residents of California, though he did not include them in his count. He also found 200 deserted cabins and 190 farms, encompassing 77,076 acres, or more than 405 acres per farm; 14,860 acres are fenced. He also counted 6,856 head of oxen, cows, and calves; 600 head of horses and mules; 300 sheep; 350 hogs; 12 sawmills in operation. He reports the following populations: Virginia City, 2,244, besides 525 from California; Gold Hill, 600; Silver City, 594; Carson City, 700, excluding 200 Californians; and Genoa, 225. The population of Honey Lake Valley, Long Valley, and all of Walker River mining district was not taken.

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According to recent accounts from Esmeralda, it seems that valuable discoveries continue to be made; many rich claims have already been located. The weather remains mild and pleasant, about the same as in Virginia City, which stands at the same elevation. Only 1 inch of snow has fallen so far; it remained only for a day.

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A Catholic church, the first one built in Western Utah, was opened for services last Sunday.

"City Intelligence[:] From Mono," Sacramento Daily Union, November 14, 1860, 3:1:

J. W. Kelso, of Visalia, showed the editor a specimen of quartz from the Mono district; it was taken from a lead of which he is the main owner. The specimen is said to yield from \$1,100 to \$2,000 a ton, when worked in arrastras. Kelso plans to build a steam-powered plant as soon as it is feasible.

He had left Mono 20 days ago, when about 250 men were in the diggings; two-thirds of them would be entitled to vote if polls were opened. The population was decreasing as winter approached. Kelso is about to return there at once with provisions for the winter.

"City Intelligence[:] From Esmeralda," Sacramento Daily Union, November 15, 1860, 3:1:

The first shipment of gold quartz from the new mining region known as Esmeralda, in Utah Territory, east of Monoville, arrived in Sacramento yesterday. The shipment, weighing a little more than a ton, was sent by L. A. Upson, of Placerville, to Sneath, Arnold & Co., of Sacramento, which forwarded it to San Francisco for assay. The ore was taken from several leads

"Esmeralda," Sacramento Daily Union, November 22, 1860, 2:5 (Silver Age):

According to Wm. C. Phillips, who has just returned [to Carson City] from the Esmeralda Mining District, the prospects there are "bright." About 30 or 40 ledges have proven good, and the discoveries continue.

The town of Esmeralda is being deserted, and settlement is moving toward Aurora, where about 40 houses have been built, several of them “substantial buildings.” Phillips estimates the permanent population at 300, including two ladies.

Provisions are abundant, and the prices are reasonable.

Tunneling will be suspended until the spring.

The Esmeralda Ledge, which crops out from 10 to 30 feet, is from 20 to 60 feet thick. The rock assays from about \$700 to \$800 per ton, though it will be impossible to ship until the spring.

The Utah and Bear Flag leads are believed to be rich. The Utah contains all silver, but the Bear Flag contains gold. The owners of the Bear Flag have turned down an offer of \$50 a foot.

In the spring, Blackmen & Co. will build a 25-mile wagon road, which will connect with the Mono road. The trails are now good enough to accommodate pack trains; feed is abundant.

The Mono and Bodie districts are very nearly deserted.

“Esmeralda Mines,” Sacramento Daily Union, November 24, 1860, 2:1:

Yesterday, the editor saw assays of ore taken from several leads in Esmeralda. The yields ranged from \$30 to \$250 a ton. The specimens had been taken from outcroppings, in some cases, from 10 to 20 feet.

“The Coso Mines,” Sacramento Daily Union, December 1, 1860, 4:1 (correspondent, Pioneer Camp, November 9, to San Jose *Mercury*):

The party that went out prospecting has returned; some of its members were on foot, for their animals were worn out. They nearly died from a lack of water; they went without any food for two and a half days.

Some of the members, who went into the mountains, found only the trail of the emigrants who had found the native silver.

The correspondent will start for the Mormon camp tomorrow. In Pioneer Camp are Bennett and Dr. Stockton, who belonged to the company of Town, Brier, and Reddick. In 1849, Bennett and other members of the party had wintered near the present Mormon camp, at Bennett’s Wells, on the desert, about 50 miles south of where Brier and his company had left their wagons.

Bennett and Dr. Stockton traveled about 70 miles beyond the abandoned wagons. They had gone up to Furnace Creek, crossed the mountains, and found a stream emptying into a lake of clear, pure water, full of fish and waterfowl. Hundreds of tons of grass grew on the banks of the lake. Considerable ash timber grew along the margin of the stream. “. . . Every trip opens new facilities for prospecting.”

Aurora, “Letter From Esmeralda,” Sacramento Daily Union, December 26, 1860, 1:7 (Aurora, Esmeralda District, December 12, 1860):

Six weeks ago, only 50 persons were in the district, and Aurora had only four buildings, three of them made of logs and one made of cloth. Aurora now contains about 70 houses including cabins, made of various materials, and from 400 to 500 residents. Others are arriving each day.

Pack trains are arriving from Carson [City], Virginia [City], Placerville, and other places. They were selling provisions readily at fair prices or in exchange for feet, "which all are anxious to procure. . . ." Loaded teams are passing along the road with little difficulty.

The area being prospected is about 3 miles square. The district has from 300 to 320 "fair and well defined leads of gold and silver quartz," which test well and are easily worked." Most of the leads are outcroppings, which can be easily traced and fully show their dips and angles. Because of a lack of machinery, all that can be done is to work into the ledges and prepare for the summer, when the miners hope to obtain mills.

Money is so scarce that claims or parts of claims can be bought cheaply, whereas in the spring, many claims will sell for 10 or 20 times the present prices.

Leads are being struck almost daily. The best-prospected claims are the Santa Maria, Maria, Antelope, Utah, May Flower, Silver Hill, Winemicke [Winnemuca], Esmeralda 1 and 2, San Francisco, Tennessee, New World, Christiana, Garibaldi, Riodelmonte [Real del Monte], Bay State (4 acres), Lord Byron, Sam Patch, Wide West, Aurora, Yellow Jacket, Farewell, Mayfield, North America, Cedar, and many others. Owning 25 feet in any of those claims "would last us poor folks a long time. It is supposed by many that we are connected with Calaveras county, while many think we are in the Territory [of Utah]."

The residents are expecting severe weather and little more construction.