

Elko County

Location of the Bruneau City

47

Item 16

604

NEVADA'S NORTHEAST FRONTIER

ities of ore from the Standing Elk Mine on the northeast slope of Bunker Hill, operated by Lead and Copper Mines, Inc.

¹ Granger, A. E., Bell, M. M., Simmons, G. C., and F. Lee, 1957, *Geology and Mineral Resources of Elko County, Nevada*. Bulletin 54, Nevada Bureau of Mines, University of Nevada, Reno.

² *Ibid*; Lincoln, F. C., 1923, *Mining Districts and Mineral Resources of Nevada*.

³ *Ibid*.

Charleston (Mardis)

Copper Mountain—Cornwall District

Charleston district, discovered by George Washington Mardis, originally was called Mardis.¹ Although not clearly defined, Charleston district boundaries extended southward from Jarbidge district to include Copper Mountain.

G. W. Mardis (named "Old Allegheny" from his frequent references to the mountains in his home state, Pennsylvania) lived at Bruneau City, a small mining camp three miles above Island Mountain district. With one eye missing, Mardis presented the fearful appearance of a pirate from the Spanish Main. One side of his face was darkened by black powder, and the end of his nose was so sharp as to suggest an explosion had taken away part of it and bent the rest to one side.²

Old Allegheny, however, was generous and honest. He drank occasionally until after a Fourth of July celebration in Mountain City. During festivities he had too many drinks, and he and a man named Sweeney exchanged words and began to fight. Onlookers removed the men's guns, and no one interfered with the fighting. The two amused the audience by imitating what they considered to be prize ring tactics. Sweeney came too close to a mule standing nearby, and the kick he received broke his arm. Allegheny was deeply moved and explained that he did not want to do it but, "When I do hit a feller, somethin' has got to break." A few of the crowd told Allegheny he had killed Sweeney. The next morning Allegheny disappeared, and it took two days to find him. No one ever saw him drunk after the Mountain City episode.³

Mardis owned freighting horses and hauled ore to and from Island Mountain and Mardis to the railroad at Deeth. Miners entrusted him with their gold dust, and on one trip a Chinese murdered him for the gold. Allegheny's death became the community's concern, particularly the cowboys. A footprint showing six toes was found at the mur-

1050 0016

NEVADA'S NORTHEAST FRONTIER

605

der scene. Cowboys rounded up Chinese of the area and made them remove their shoes. The six-toed Chinese was apprehended and taken to Stofiel's store in Gold Creek. Self-appointed "trial and judge" jurors threw a rope over open rafters of the store, tied a noose, placed it around the condemned man's neck and heaved him to the ceiling. When nearly unconscious, the Chinese was lowered and asked to confess his guilt. Still maintaining innocence, he again had the noose tightened around his neck and was swung to the rafters. After several minutes his accusers lowered him and asked for a confession. The Chinese plead not guilty a third time. As he was being pulled up again, he confessed his guilt. Once more the noose was placed around his neck, and he was hoisted to the rafters to be left dangling until dead.⁴

Old Allegheny's story did not end with his death. His wife lost her mind, joined warring Indians against the whites and lived with them. Finally she was taken to Deeth to be with friends. The fate of Allegheny's horses worried her until she became so distraught she ran away from Deeth during the winter to return to Mardis. She traveled by night in deep snow and walked 75 or 80 miles. The Martin brothers found her in the Bruneau country, frozen almost beyond recognition. They cared for her until spring, and by some miracle her blackened legs were saved from amputation.⁵

The town of Charleston came into existence as a result of gold placer mining, north of the present town, on Seventy-Six Creek near the southwest base of Copper Mountain. Tom Charles robbed Mardis of the name of the district, and it became Charleston—a lively camp with three schools, stores, hotel, saloon, ice house and other buildings.

Placer deposits in Pennsylvania Gulch, Union Gulch, Dry Ravine and Badger Creek, all between Seventy-Six Creek and the Bruneau River, were also worked. Two pioneer families, the Grahams and the Pruntys, acquired mines in Charleston district. The Graham mine, four miles north of Charleston on a hillside west of Seventy-Six Creek, consisted of 600 feet of underground workings. The tunnel drift followed a vein reported to contain an 18" wide ore shoot with value of \$16 in copper and gold. The Prunty Mine, about a third of a mile above the Graham mine, gave small output of silver, gold, copper and antimony.⁶

When Pinckard Prunty arrived in Elko County in the 1880's, he was bent on mining and not on ranching. Otherwise, he could have found as good farming in his native Virginia, or in Texas as he traveled west. In order to pursue mining, Pinckard traded a few mustangs

strolling Indians, hold an remote area.

ed for California centered o County. rtainment ought by st for the ker, Guy iers, star- cial Ho-

mericana rontier While ountry, rier re- a.

nt of well- the In- of