QUICKSILVER

NEVADA
ESMERALDA COUNTY
FISH LAKE VALLEY
(SILVER PEAK MTS.)

88
Item 1

1600 0001

BLUFF MINE

Property and Ownership: One or more unpatented claims, owned by a Mr. Wright of Dyer, Nevada.

Terms: Real Goulet of Bishop, California, with whom I looked at the property on December 13, 1964, thinks he can tie up the property on a 10% royalty, with minimum royalties of $150 per month from March thru September, on a purchase price of around $20,000.

Location and Access: In Section 30, T. 2 S., R. 36 E. (projected); shown as shaft symbol on 1:24,000 preliminary print of McAfee Ranch NE quadrangle (1962). It is the only mine for several miles around. It is at the foot of the Silver Peak Mts., about 3 miles east of the Circle L (Cord) Ranch. Reached from Nevada Highway 3A, which runs down the middle of Fish Lake Valley, by about 4 miles of fair graded dirt road and one mile of fairly steep pickup trail. Elevation 5,400'.

Improvements: One inclined shaft bearing due S and inclined at about 55°, 45' deep. At about 40' depth, 50' or so of level workings to the east. Half a dozen old hand-dug pits and some bulldozer scratching.

Geology: Mine area is in Paleozoic sediments, thin-bedded limestone, fairly massive dolomite, and some shales. On at least three sides, surrounded by Quaternary basalt underlain by tuff that may also be Quaternary. The mine lies at the south edge of outcrop of the older rocks, so there is a possibility of extensions under covered ground to the south. Much of the older rock area is pretty well covered by alluvium.

In mine area, a couple of faults intersect. One fault is N. 40 W., 60 SW, and drops tuff against Paleozoics. Another probable fault is about N. 70 W., with SW dip. These faults intersect about at the mine shaft, and there is heavy limonite in the vicinity and extending out for 50' or more along the faults; accompanying the limonite is local silicification, mostly fine-grained rosy quartz replacements. The rocks in the NW quadrant of the intersection are heavily iron-stained and silicified for about 100' from the intersection, not only along the faults but also between them -- possibly along bedding.

Very little mineralization (mercury) is seen in surface exposures -- I found one piece of rock with a trace of cinnabar on a pit north of the shaft.

The shaft follows down a shear zone a few inches wide, about N. 40 E., 50 SE, and the drift on the bottom also follows this shear. In the lower part of the shaft and the drift the shear becomes stronger, up to a couple feet wide, and is locally occupied by porous to massive limonite after massive pyrite. Cinnabar is fairly common in some of this, and also occurs as small patches of films and low-grade disseminations for about 2' out into the hangingwall; I found very very little in the footwall. The cinnabar is all pinkish and very fine-grained, not massive and crystalline. One crosscut reaches 15' or so into the footwall of the shear, in shattered dolomite, and near the face of this is one patch 6" or so in diameter with a little cinnabar, the farthest I found any from the shear.

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Real Goulet says a sample he cut across the best mineralization in the shear zone, in heavy limonite with quite abundant cinnabar, assayed 4.4 lb. Hg. This was about 18' of vein. The mineralization within the shear gets poorer to east and west of this sample, but my impression is that if one took a 3' thickness of ground including the vein and hangingwall all along the exposed length, one would get about the same average throughout -- that is, an average of about 1 lb. Hg or less. Outside of his sample area, the mercury is scattered in the hangingwall instead of being concentrated in the vein.

Conclusions: The mineralization distinctly appears to get stronger as one goes down the shaft, but this could be because of the dirt on the upper walls, and lack of outcrop immediately above. This improvement at depth is what interests Real.

I don't see any particular reason for mineralization to improve with depth, though it could. The existing exposures are not ore under any circumstances. The lack of any other mines in the vicinity (though across the valley ten miles northwest is a fairly productive mercury district) is not encouraging.

On the other hand, with the country mostly covered with Quaternary rocks, this could be the edge of something big. But more likely of something small.

Recommendations: The odds are not good enough to make this worth further work. Real would like to get someone to shoot a good cross-section through the shear at the bottom of the shaft, hoping to dress it up enough to promote -- not a bad idea. The only reasonable further work would be a hole or two aimed to reach the shear at somewhat greater depth.

But it isn't worth the expense.

ABE

Arthur Baker III

Property examined December 13, 1964