

[Old Days in Kingston Mine Area]

Interview Extra

Subject: OLD DAYS IN KINGSTON MINE AREA

CLAY W. VADEN, WRITER

On American Guide, Interviews

Old Ox-Team freighter C18 - N. Mex. OLD DAYS IN KINGSTON MINE AREA

Writer on American Guide Interviews

old ox-team Freighter

“Ox teams were not so fast as the trucks used now to haul ore from the mines,” observed Cobe Goins, ninety year-old pioneer freighter, “but they got the ore out.”

Goins drove ten yokes of oxen to freight wagons of seven tons capacity and with tires four inches wide. He later replaced the oxen with 12 teams of mules to each wagon. Goins hauled ore from the paying mines in Kingston district, among them the Brush Heap, Gypsy, Blackie, Lady Franklin, Buillon, U.S, Cumberland, Calamity Jane, Keystone, and numbers of others.

When a [1500?] nugget was picked up at Blackie mine, seven miles north of Kingston, a rush to that district followed. The Bridal Chamber mine at Lake Valley was one of the best paying in this section of the State. Blocks one yard square of almost pure native silver were often taken from this mine, and it has been roughly estimated that it produced ore worth between five and seven millions of dollars.

Library of Congress

“There was danger in freighting such rich shipments,” said Goins, “and I always had a guard armed with a double barreled shotgun and two six shooters on my wagons, until the ore was placed on the cars in Lake Valley.”

Goins recalls how the knowledge of ores was responsible for the amassing of a small fortune by Dennis Finley, now a resident of Denver.

2

According to Goin's story, a Judge Holt had a lease on and was foreman of the Virginia mine, while Finley was one of the 30 workmen, although he had been foreman of another mine and was a practical mining man. One day Finley picked up a rich piece of ore and said to Judge Holt, “This is worth saving.”

Judge Holt, replied, in effect, that if he wanted any information he would ask for it, and continuer to throw [\$300?]-a-ton rock over the dump. Finley was given his 'time' in a few days. He obtained a lease from the Virginia Mine Company and hauled 13 carloads of high grade ore from the dump. He now owns a chain of stores in Denver but before he made his stake at Kingston he had not seen his family in five years.

Goins came to Sierra county about 1885, living first at Percha, north of Kingston. While several fortunes were taken out of the Kingston mines, he says that the big companies never found official veins, only ores in pockets and chimneys. The Virginia mine is still being worked.

- Clay W. Vaden