

The Lucky Nell Mine

The Lucky Nell Mine, discovered on 14ay 23, 1900, by George Gervais and William Crowell, is situated about seven and one-half miles northwest of Kioilis at an elevation of from 1450 to 1623 feet.

Gervais had worked in copper mines at Butte, Montana, and came to the west coast of Prince of Wales Island for the purpose of looking for gold in the river at flows from Klawak Lake. Not finding any placer gold, Gervais moved to the east end of the lake on a raft and prospected up the valley of the north fork of Harris Creek where he found the Lucky Nell vein. Later in the same year the upper extension of the vein was staked as the Commander group by Gervais, W.N. (Bill) Lynch, and Captain H.N. James. In 1902, all the claims were sold to an English syndicate for \$87,000 but, as only part of the purchase price was paid, the property later reverted to its original owners. Between 1900 and 1910, five adits were driven on the vein at several elevations. W. Crowell sold his interest in 1310 to a Mr. Brown of New York City (perhaps Brown Alaska Mining Company of Hadley), but something apparently happened to this deal as that share in the property was later staked by Gervais. W.N. Lynch died about 1913 and Captain James passed away in 1983.

In a survey of the mining industry around Ketchikan in 1914, Emil E. Huria mentioned that the Lucky Nell was then owned by George Gervais, and his brother Fred Gervais. The Commander groups of claims was owned by Gus Detliffson. A shipment of 30 tons of ore from the Lucky Nell, sent to a smelter in the spring of 1914 went \$46.00 per ton and netted \$33.00 per ton after smelting and freight charges had been paid.

In 1914, the Julia claims and Humboldt group, situated on the hillside north of the shaft, were owned by M. K. and J.H. Rodgers, but leased to Matthew Reese and Harry Webber. Previously, M.K. Rodgers had directed the opening up of the Hidden Creek Copper Mine near Observatory Inlet, B.C., taken over about 1911 by Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company. Anyox Smelter was later built there. Matthew Reese held the lease on the Harris Creek Mine alone during the First World War and he found and mined out a rich pocket, worth \$10,000, in the workings below the creek. Reese installed a 50-ton ball mill purchased from the Salt Chuck Mine and did much to put the property in better operating condition.

Joseph Henry Rodgers in 1922 moved to Colorado and became a leading geologist of that State where he died in Boulder, April 23, 1952. He was a part owner of the Slide Mine at Gold Hill, Colorado. His brother Myron was associated with him in the early development at the Hidden Creek Mine, Anyox, B.C. About 1923, the mine was taken over by the Kasaan Gold Mining Company and among its most prominent stockholders were Sidney Drake, H.D. Larned, W. Updike, and the secretary F.H. Knowlton, all of Seattle, Washington. Jerry Walker, a lumberman of Hoquiam, Washington, and T.L. Moore, mineral surveyor of Mt. Vernon, Washington. W.J. Elmendorf was consulting engineer.

A large sum of money was spent developing and equipping the mine. Except for a shutdown in 1925, production from the shafts and six levels continued until January, 1929. Because of the graphite in the ore, a poor recovery of gold was made and both cyanidation and flotation was used.

The Humboldt tunnel, on the hillside north of the shaft, was driven a long distance to get beneath the old George prospect on which good ore had been found. With only a little more than 100 feet to go, the Kasaan Gold Company closed down in January of 1929.

In April 1926 on the writer's first visit to Hollis, the mine was closed down with only a watchman by the name of Freeman there. Went with him underground to the deepest level on 300 and found all workings pumped dry. At that time a new road had been constructed by the Territory to the mine starting on south side of the bay where Harris Creek flows out and with bridges over both Indian and Harris Creeks.

When the mine reopened, about a year later, A.L. Howard became superintendent, but after a year resigned and his place was taken by Harold Hales.

**Source: HISTORY of MINES and
PROSPECTS,
KETCHIKAN DISTRICT,
PRIOR to 1952**

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