

Silver Mine On The Lackawanna.

Of the value of precious metals the Indians knew little or nothing until taught it by the Whites, and then, learning to their dismay how fatal to their narrowing hunting grounds were the aggressions of the expanding settlements, they practiced every possible caution in concealing all knowledge of mines and minerals in every portion of the wilderness. The Indian who, in thoughtless or drunken mood, betrayed the secret of their location, paid the penalty of his guilt by sudden death or lingering torture. Yet about one hundred years ago the whites learned by treachery, and lost by misfortune, knowledge of a Silver Mine located about two miles up the Lackawanna from its mouth.

In 1766 the Six Nations complained to the Proprietary Government at Philadelphia of white persons who had dug into a silver mine, twelve miles above the Delaware town of Wy-wa-mick, and carried away in canoes three loads of ore. An Indian trader named Anderson, who had brought a few goods up the river, was suspected of being the transgressor.

John Teal, a German, who died some years ago at an advanced age, threw some additional light upon the location of this hidden Silver Mine. He had lived long enough with the wild tribes to understand their dialect, and enjoy the confidence of an aged chief of the Oneidas, residing in western New York, who had assisted to efface every outward and visible evidence of the existence of this mine. When the chieftain saw that his days were few, he called his friend Teal to his wigwam, to intrust him with secrets of no longer consequence to the Indian. He informed him that there were three salt springs, one silver, one gold, and one lead mine in the vicinity of Wyoming, and all used by them while in possession of the country. The silver mine, long known to the scattered tribes, was on the northeast side of the Lackawanna, above a high ledge or mountain, half an hour's walk from the River Susquehanna, twelve miles above Wyoming. After the first Wyoming massacre, in 1763, the dwellers in wigwams, hoping to retain occupancy forever of the rich plains, coveted by triple parties, used this mine to their advantage; but when the intruders again made their appearance in such formidable numbers as to annihilate the long-cherished hope, the mine was so artfully concealed from the whites that none yet have found the spot yielding the precious metal.

Traditions, treasured up by old settlers half a century ago, tell of an excavation in the bank of the Lackawanna, between Old Forge and the Barnum farm, similar to that described in the Pennsylvania Archives of 1766.

That a silver mine was known and worked by the aborigines in this vicinity, is unquestionably proved by the fact that official complaint was made by them of the depredations of Anderson, but its precise location remains at present in great doubt.

The chief described the gold mine as being under a ledge of rocks, a few miles above Wyoming Valley, at a point where a rock of the height of an Indian covered a spring.

Five miles westward from Scranton, in a direct line, on the western side of the mountain forming the boundary between the townships of Providence and Newton, rises a long ledge of rock known as Bald Mount, which, from its altitude, offers, when the day is clear, so wide a view of field, forest, and lake, that, in spite of the steep, zigzag way of approaching it, has become, during the summer hours, a popular resort for parties loving the romance of mountain life. At its very base lies the village of Milwaukie, watered by a stream turned to good mill account before it enters the Susquehanna, five miles below. Eight or ten villages can be seen from the mount, which, shorn of its larger trees by the force of the wind sometimes sweeping over it with great fury, is left comparatively bald, and thus given its name. One large rock, prominent in position, is perforated with numerous holes of the capacity of from a quart to a gallon, as shown by the preceding illustration of Bald Mount. These were probably used by the Indian women for pounding their corn into samp. The large number of stone pestles found near it many years ago favor this theory.

Under this precipice can be seen one large conglomerate rock, evidently removed some distance down the mountain by the natives to conceal the real origin of the spring. In the removal of this rock the trees, bent at the time, grew up with a very perceptible inclination toward it. From beneath its honest features emerges a spring, surpassed in the purity of its waters by no other in the world, where many metallurgists and others have supposed the gold mine was located. Explorations hitherto made upon every side of Bald Mount have failed to satisfy expectations naturally awakened by these traditions.

In 1778, a young man who had been captured by the savages in Wyoming Valley, was carried to the top of a mountain where the Wilkes Barre settlement could be seen in the distance. Here they built their camp - fire. A transaction took place at this time which, from its novel character, excited the surprise and ever afterward impressed the mind of the young, unarmed captive. A venerable chief, to whom the young man owed his safety, and subsequently his release, removed a large flat stone covering the spring. The waters of this were so conveyed by a subterranean conduit, constructed for the purpose, as to deceive the man strolling through the wilderness in regard to the real source of the spring. At its mouth a roll of bark, forming a spout, was placed in such a manner as to direct the current into a handkerchief held under it by two of the Indians. For some moments the chief, reverently attended by the warriors, arrayed with bow and arrow, and forming a circle around him, stirred up the spring with a conscious knowledge of its gainful results. After an hour had elapsed, every stone previously disturbed was restored to its former condition; earth and leaves were left as if never touched, and no one, without ocular knowledge, would suspect the existence of a water-course. The handkerchief, covered with yellow sediment, was now lifted from the spout. The glittering product thus gathered by the chief was placed in a stone vessel with great care. After the fire was extinguished, and certain incantations performed with ceremonial exactness, the Indians left the spot in charge of the wild rock surrounding it, and resumed their march toward their land of maize among the lakes.

Six days' walk led the party to Kingston, New York, where the treasures of the mountain, thus artfully obtained, were exchanged with the whites, for such articles as want or caprice suggested to the occupants of the forest.

In after years the returned hero often related the incident to his family and friends, some of whom thoroughly traversed every portion of Bald Mount and Campbell's Ledge without discovering the secret channel or the golden spring.

Lead Mines.

Tuscarora creek, a wild, clear, rapid stream, retaining its original indian name, and lying between Mashoppen and Wylusing, puts into the east side of the Susquehanna, about thirty miles above the Lockawanna. Half a mile from its mouth, under a cliff leaning gloomily over a sharp bend of the stream, where the rocks go down into the watershore deeper than any point, a lead mine was worked by the indians for making bullets, after they had been taught the use of a rifle by the English and the French.

The Oneida chief informed Mr. Teal, that not only were the Wyoming indians supplied with lead from this Tuscarora mine, but the French, while in harmony with the Iroquois, drew largely upon it. The indian, in his wild dream of future hope, imposed silence so effectually upon the rock along the TUSCARORA, that although several companies have exhausted large sums of money in attempting to recover the lost mine, no knowledge of its location is had other than that coming from indian tradition.

Tuscarora creek has a scrap of history of its own. The great warpath from Tioga down to Wyoming across the mouth of the stream. It was in the certified county of the Tuscarora at this point. When his rear guard had reached the south bank, where a large mountain, covered with oak, with little or no underbrush intervening to obstruct the view for a great distance, comes down to the very stream, a body of savages were seen stealing down its side for the purpose of securing a few prisoners. Familiar with the mode of indian warfare, the guards leaped behind the trees, affording them partial shelter. The indians more skilled in the art and advantage of woodside encounter as quickly betook themselves to the oak, which concealed even their presence, when the skirmish began. Soldiers fell, wounded or dead, without knowing from what particular quarter bullets issued. At length Mr. Eleazer Carey, who saw his fellow-soldiers fall one after another, simultaneously with the crack of the rifle near by where he was standing, espied the dusky form of a warrior cautiously peering out from behind a tree not fifty yards from where he was standing, with his well-aimed gun in his hand, bring down a soldier at each discharge of his weapon. After the indian had reloaded, Carey, who had resolved to kill him if possible when he should attempt to shoot again, watched with intense solicitude the warrior's rifle as it was again brought beside the tree.

No sooner had the slight projecting cheek and eye of the indian come out so as to be discerned by Carey, when the avenging bullet was sent forthwith into his brain. He gave one high leap, uttered one deep yell, and fell to rise no more. The indians ran, caught up his body, and fled into the forest. So much for mines and springs, which some day may possibly have more interest than that given them by rumors and vague recollections of tradition.