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BLACK WARRIOR MINES

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Prospectors in Atlanta knew of the Black Warrior lode possibilities for many years before Thomas Walter and Charles Birdwell got out samples from a 1,000 foot long outcrop in the middle of August, 1903. When one of their assays ran \$348.50 per ton, and another one \$83.43, serious interest began to develop in the district. By the beginning of September, news of the new discovery got to Atlanta. The Black Warrior gold rush which followed led to about one hundred claim locations that fall, and another one hundred in the summer of 1904. The new district was about two miles wide and some six to eight miles long, overlapping into Little Queens River. Most of the prospects were relatively low-grade, but encouraging enough to lead to a fair amount of development work. In the summer of 1904, an arastra on the Double Standard Mine made a small production for various properties in the area. Then a custom mill ground several thousand dollars worth of ore in the summer of 1905. This paid for the limited amount of development work that was done that year. In 1906, twenty or thirty men were developing the Rice Mammoth property, and an unsuccessful mill was brought into the district. Nothing much more seemed to come of that operation, but in 1909, the Overlook was being developed, with a two ton mill being imported to help investigate a vein twenty feet wide. By 1912, only a modest return had resulted from that effort. But 2,000 feet of development tunnels had been driven.

In 1912, a one stamp prospect mill was covering Snow Kettle development costs by processing ore that averaged \$11 a ton, while Gilt Edge owners had two miners handling \$16 ore. Two others were at work on a prospect, but altogether, Black Warrior had not reached any notable level of production. Thus, although great confidence was expressed in the future of the Black Warrior mines over a number of years, they were too low-grade—considering their remoteness from transportation—to justify large-scale development. Attempts were being made at that time to build a road from Boise up the Middle Fork to Atlanta, and such a road certainly would have helped. But another thirty years or so were to go by before the Middle Fork road was finished.

[Additional material on the early Black Warrior prospects may be found in the Idaho Daily Statesman, September 8, 1903, p. 6, c. 1, Boise Capital News, January 1, 1913, p. 10, c. 1-4, and in the annual reports of the State Inspector of Mines for 1903-1909.]

(This information has not been edited.)

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