

PROPERTY FILE

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3W

WILLIAMS CREEK "GOLD HOLE" (9³/₂ H/3W)

Cariboo Mining Division

The "Gold Hole" story in the issue of True Treasure, January - February, 1974 is an exaggerated and inaccurate account of placer operations on Devlin Bench on the north east side of Williams Creek. These started in 1952 and 1953 with the dredging operation of Kumhila Exploration Company Ltd. and were followed in 1956 by a second dredging operation in the same area. Finally after a period of inactivity the tailings from the previous operation on Devlin Bench were reworked in 1962 and 1963.

All this work was done on a placer lease which was owned by the Lowhee Mining Co. Ltd. Subsequently the lease lapsed and the ground was relocated in February, 1970 as Placer-mining Lease #7097. This lease currently is in good standing.

The several operations are recorded in the Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources as follows:

In the 1952 Annual Report, page 236:-

Kumhila Explora-
tion Co. Ltd.

D. P. Kumle, A. T. Lazzareschi, and
L. J. Hickman, all of California,
formed this private company and

optioned part of the Lowhee Mining Company's leases at Devlin Bench on the east side of Williams Creek at the Bowron Lake road crossing. After considerable churn-drill testing, the dredge equipment formerly operated by Summit Mines Limited was assembled on the property. This equipment consists of a Hickenbottom steel-pontoon all-riffle washing plant of 3,500-cubic yards-per-day rated capacity and a Marion 40A walking dragline shovel with an 80-foot boom and a 3-cubic-yard bucket.

Washing operations commenced in July and continued to early November, when winter conditions halted the work. As drill testing showed the pay gravel to be at an approximate depth of 50 feet, a Caterpillar D-8 bulldozer was used to strip as much of the barren surface gravel as possible. A crew of eighteen men was employed, and 200,000 cubic yards of gravel was moved, of which 84,680 cubic yards was treated by the washing plant.

In the 1953 Annual Report, page 175:-

Kumhila Exploration Company Limited.-- This company, employing a crew of eighteen men, mined 68,200 cubic yards of gravel with their dragline dredge on Williams Creek near Devlin Bench on the Bowron Lake Road. Operations were suspended in early September and the washing plant dismantled when no further pay gravels were located.

In the 1956 Annual Report, page 139:-

L & L Dredging.-- In 1956 the Lowhee leases on Conklin Gulch and Williams Creek were under option to L. A. Prosser. He employed a crew of twenty-nine men supervised by dredge-master K. R. Kumle. A dragline dredge, previously operated by Kumhila Exploration Co. Ltd., was put into operation on Conklin Gulch about 1 mile southeast of Barkerville. The work in Conklin Gulch terminated early in the season. On Devlin Bench on Williams Creek, one-half mile north of Barkerville, a diesel-electric Bucyrus-Monighan walking dragline with a 4½-cubic-yard bucket was used to strip overburden. In the pit a Lima dragline with a 3½-cubic-yard bucket was used to dig gravel which was washed in a floating steel-pontoon washing plant. A Bucyrus 27T drill and a Hillman Prospector drill were used to test additional ground along Williams Creek.

In the 1962 Annual Report, page 139:-

Williams Creek
Hydraulic Mines
Ltd.

Company office, Box 745, Prince George.
Frank Jamieson, president; Vern Saur,
foreman. In 1962 this company commenced
to rework the old tailings on Devlin's Bench

on P.M.L. 3354, about midway between Wells and Barkerville and approximately one-half mile up the road to Bowron Lake and just north of the road. The tailings were excavated by means of a Bucyrus Monaghan dragline with a 100-foot boom and a 42-yard bucket. This loaded the gravels

direct into a dump box which fed them onto portable steel sluice-boxes fitted with rail, Hungarian, and punch-plate riffles. Water for the sluice-boxes was supplied from a 16-inch centrifugal pump powered by a D-8 Caterpillar diesel motor. The tailings were stacked by a bulldozer. The writer was told that the company intends to remove the tailings and then rework the bedrock, since it is believed that this was not done very effectively by the previous operators.

The company began washing gravels about June 1st and closed down for the winter at the end of October. It is estimated that about 150,000 cubic yards of gravel was treated. The gold recovered is reported to be fairly coarse, better than 50 per cent being retained on a No. 4 mesh screen, and the fineness runs approximately 840.

A crew of four men was employed under the supervision of Vern Saur.

In the 1963 Annual Report, page 132:-

Williams Creek
Hydraulic Mines Ltd.
Ltd.

Company office, Box 745, Prince George.
F. M. Jamieson, president; Vern Saur,
foreman. This company continued to re-
work the old tailings on Devlin's Bench
on P.M.L. 3534, about midway between

Wells and Barkerville and approximately one-half mile up the road to Bowron Lake. The tailings were excavated by a Bucyrus Monaghan dragline with a 100-foot boom and a 4½-yard bucket. The gravel was loaded directly into the dump box, which fed it onto portable steel sluice-boxes fitted with rail, Hungarian, and punch-plate riffles. Water for the sluice-boxes was supplied from a 16-inch centrifugal pump powered by a D-8 Caterpillar diesel motor. The tailings were stacked by a bulldozer. Work this season was begun on April 30th and concluded on September 15th. It is reported that approximately 90,000 yards of gravel was put through the sluice-boxes. A crew of four men was employed under the supervision of Vern Saur.

The officially recorded production of placer gold from these operations is as follows:

Year	Ounces of placer gold
1952	6044
1953	4827
1956	326
1962	272
1963	430
1964	129
	<u>12028</u>

The price of placer gold ranged from \$28.18 per ounce in 1952 to \$29.96 per ounce in 1964.

It is true that about \$400,000 was recovered by dredging and hydraulicking but there is absolutely no information to support the statement in the True Treasure story that "at least \$4,000,000 has been estimated to remain in the bedrock below."

References: Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources,
Annual Report 1952, p. 236
1953, p. 175
1956, p. 139 and photograph p.140
1962, p. 139
1963, p. 132

Shirley Holland
10/14/74