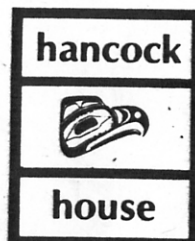


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Bralorne  
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(1994)

# mining

**The History of Mining in British Columbia**  
**By G.W. Taylor**

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pany's placer mine at Bullion. At the turn of the century this mine was owned by some of the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was reputed to be the largest placer operation in the world. As a publicity stunt the gold from the big fall clean-up of 1901 was melted at the mine in the form of the barrel of a large naval gun, and shipped to Toronto for display. It weighed 650 lbs., with a value of \$178,000.

In 1906 the Guggenheim Exploration Co. of New York, one of the world's great mining organizations, took control and later (according to the Minister of Mines report for 1912) for unknown reasons ordered all work to be abandoned. But it was still working in 1919 under the new ownership of R.T. Ward. It had more than 40 miles of canals and employed 150 men, and was regarded as the largest and best-equipped hydraulic placer operation in North America. In 1932 a Vancouver syndicate stepped in and ran it for the next ten years as a high-volume low-grade placer operation. The amount of water coming out of the hydraulic monitors each day would have supplied the needs of a city the size of Vancouver. There were smaller operations in the Cariboo, like Perkins Gulch Hydraulic (who leased 240 acres in Perkins Gulch at Van Winkle) and the Waverly Hydraulic Mining Co. on Grouse Creek.

B.C. GOVERNMENT



*On the west coast of Vancouver Island. The mill of the Privateer gold mine, Zeballos, B.C.*

B.C. GOVERNMENT

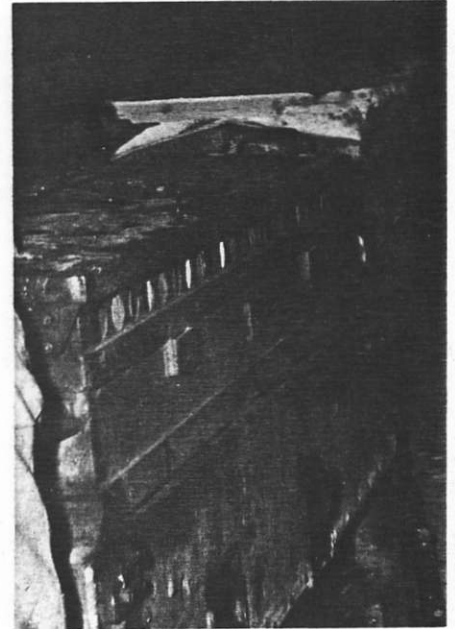


*Surface plant, with living accomodation in the background. Bralorne gold mine, Bridge River, B.C.*

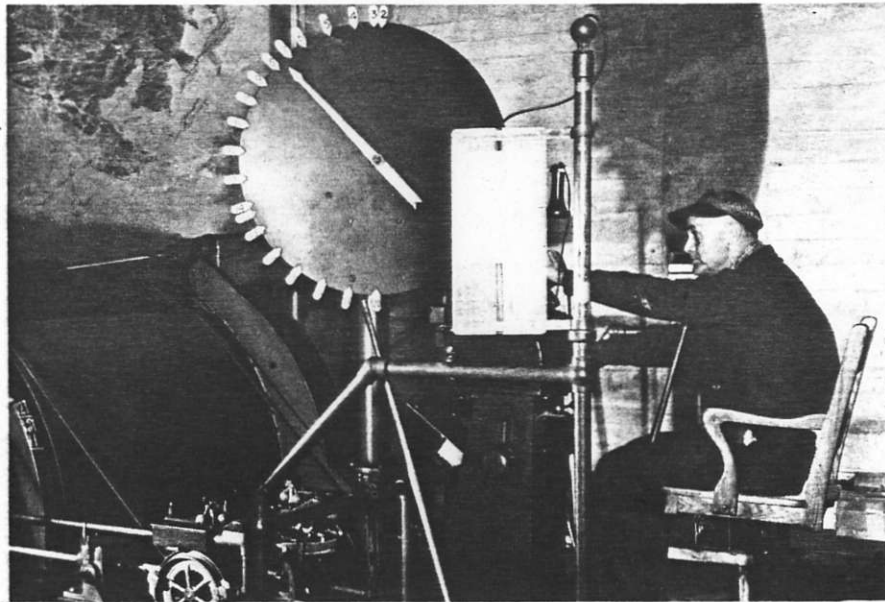
The late twenties saw the emphasis shift to hard-rock mining. In the Cariboo the leader was the Cariboo Gold Quartz, organized in 1927 to work a quartz vein on Cow Mountain west of Barkerville. At Zeballos on the west coast of Vancouver Island, it was the Privateer, first operative in 1938. On Princess Royal Island, half-way between Ocean Falls and Prince Rupert on the inside passage, as far back as 1911, it was the Surf Inlet. In the Bridge River district it was the Pioneer and Bralorne.

Gold had been known to exist in the Bridge River country since the days of the pioneer miners of 1858. It was found to be coarser than that of the Fraser and therefore of less value. Most of it was in bedrock and could not be retrieved by the pick, the shovel, or the rocker, so for the next 50 years the Bridge River country held few attractions for the gold miner. What was to become the famous Pioneer Mine was staked in 1897 by Harry Atwood, who had been grubstaked by the proprietor of the Hotel Lillooet. In 1911 it was taken over by a syndicate that spent ten years trying to interest several major companies. Not until Brigadier-General Duff Stewart and Col. Victor Spencer — both prominent Vancouver businessmen — incorporated a new company in 1928 did any meaningful activity start. The Pioneer mine became an outstanding success with yearly production in the millions of dollars. Not very far away was the Bralorne, where Austin Taylor found enough money in the height of the Depression to erect a 100-ton mill. In 1932, Bralorne

B.C. GOVERNMENT



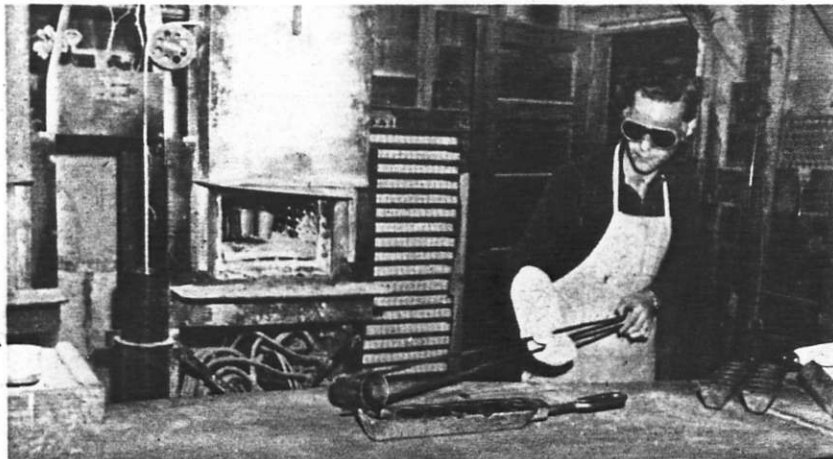
*Underground— an ore train at Bralorne gold mine, Bridge, River, B.C.*



*Empire hoist control, Bralorne gold mine, Bridge River, B.C.*

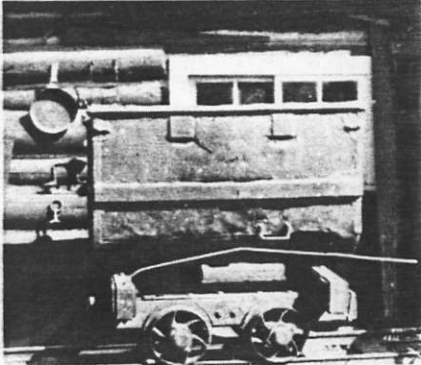
B.C. GOVERNMENT

B.C. GOVERNMENT



*Assayer at work, Bralorne gold mine.*

**B.C. GOVERNMENT**



*Gold ore wagon from the mines at Wells, B.C.*



*The only producing gold mine in B.C., as it looked in 1977. A view of surface plant, Northair Mine, seven miles from Brandywine Falls.*



*The only mine taking out gold in B.C. in 1977. The 3700' level at Northair mine, with ventilating equipment.*

**NORTHAIR MINES**



*The remains of a once-prosperous mine near Lillooet— Pioneer Mine, Bridge River.*

**B.C. GOVERNMENT**

**NORTHAIR MINES**



*Pouring the first gold brick from the Northair mine, June, 1976.*