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# MINING



The History of Mining in British Columbia

D. W. TAYLOR

(1978)

Observatory Inlet from Portland Canal. Four glacial creeks flow into Granby Bay, the most important from a mining standpoint being Hidden Creek. The area is rich in copper-bearing ores.

All the commercial ore bodies seem to have been known to the Indians long before the turn of the century when fishermen and cannery operators began to come into the area. In 1898 three Indian chiefs approached Archdeacon William Henry Collinson, an Anglican missionary, and told him of a mountain of gold at the head of Hastings Arm. He set out with some companions in a rowboat to investigate. On the way back, empty-handed, his party camped at the mouth of Bonanza Creek, one of the creeks which flows into Granby Bay, and the reddish color of the rocks prompted him to stake the area. It became the site of the **Bonanza** copper mine, bought by Granby in 1912. In the summer of 1899 his son Max with two prospectors went up Hidden Creek and staked what was to be Granby's **Hidden Creek** Mine.

WESTERN MINER



*Brought into production by Granby Consolidated Mining & Smelting Company prior to World War I, the Hidden Creek mine at Anyox, B.C.*

M.K. Rodgers, representing Marcus Daly (the great copper tycoon of Butte, Montana), then came into the district looking for promising properties. He obtained options on several claims in the Hidden Creek area, but for the next few years it was an on-and-off proposition. A little development work was done before the Daly estate pulled out. Then J.H. Hilles, another mining promoter, put in two years of development work — stopped in its tracks by the financial panic of 1907. M.K. Rodgers, having left the Daly interests, purchased the Hidden Creek claims on his own and put in \$250,000 for development work. This turned out to be a bigger project than his Montana backer could handle and Granby Consolidated took it over in 1910.

The Phoenix mining office of Granby Consolidated had been looking at many properties, including Copper Mountain near Princeton, but all of them had proved disappointing. Finally O.B.

Smith, mining superintendent at Phoenix, submitted a list of potential properties to the directors in New York. They were asked to choose between Hidden Creek in northern B.C., Chelan in Washington and Flin Flon in Manitoba. They chose Hidden Creek, thereby keeping the business of the company within British Columbia.

Building began in 1912. At the mine, a mile and a half up Hidden Creek, the new camp included 50 cottages with electric light, hot and cold running water (the ultimate convenience in those days) and a dish-washing machine. According to the annual report of the B.C. Minister of Mines for 1912, "The confidence of this company in the mineral resources of the surrounding country is shown by its extensive investments."

These investments included a \$3,600,000 construction program. The smelter had as its vital unit three water-jacketed rectangular copper-smelting furnaces. A dam was built one mile back of the smelter site for the generation of hydro power. All buildings were of permanent construction; the town itself had a hospital, a hotel, a recreation hall and 100 cottages. There were mess facilities and sleeping quarters for 600 men. The streets were laid out systematically with planked walks and roadways lighted by electric arc-lights. As the Minister of Mines reported, "The year 1913 has been a most notable one, Anyox having in a very short time sprung from a small mining camp into a smelter city."

B.C. PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES



*A great smelter town on the coast. The waterfront at Anyox, with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway coastal steamer from Vancouver.*

It was no small achievement to plan, build and equip a modern industrial town within a space of two years and 550 miles from the sources of major supplies. Anyox was one of several industrial towns established by private companies in B.C. in the first decade of this century. Powell River, Ocean Falls and Swanson Bay come to mind, but these were all pulp-and-paper towns. Anyox was the first industrial town connected with the mining industry in the province (other than Ladysmith) that was systematically planned, laid out, and built before any metal was produced.



B.C. MINISTRY OF MINES



*Tyee smelter, Ladysmith, 1902.*

Logistics always presented problems. Granby was probably the first mining company in B.C. to go into long-haul coast barging. Under Captain James Griffiths of Seattle, a pioneer shipping man of the Pacific Northwest, it gave most of the business to the Coastwise Steamship & Barge Co. Large amounts of freight and heavy machinery were barged from Seattle or Vancouver up the inside passage, a new venture in coast transportation.

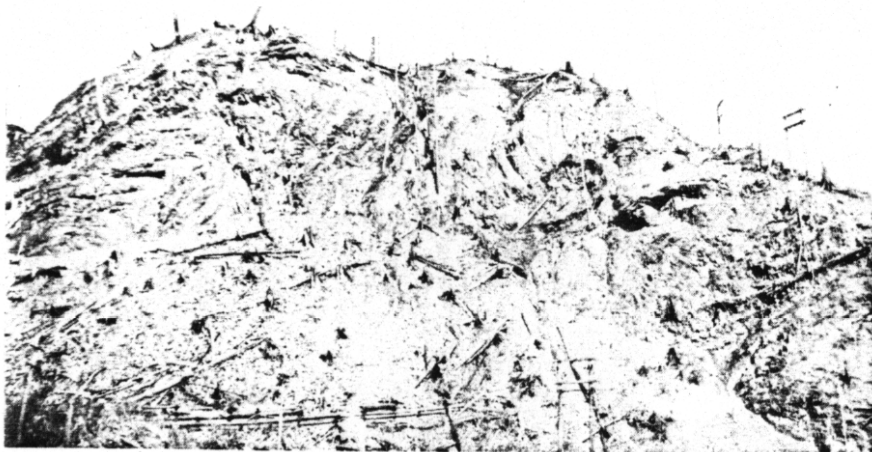
All urban needs of this isolated town were met by the company. Meals could be had at the company mess for \$1 per day, and room in the company boarding-house went for \$5 per month. A worker's family could be housed in a company-owned house for \$17.50 monthly. By an arrangement with the Workmen's Compensation Board, all men employed by the company in Anyox paid a monthly hospital fee of \$1. This entitled them to medical treatment and hospital and surgical care in all conditions arising from accident. The company built, staffed and ran its own hospital. In the words of P.A. O'Farrell of the *Province*:

At Anyox I found (October, 1917) a complete city and seaport, an excellent hotel and three churches. I also went through the wards of one of the best equipped hospitals in Canada.

The ores of Hidden Creek were not self-fluxing like those in the Boundary country; for economical treatment, they had to be mixed with ores from other sources — the mines developed in Observatory Inlet and even some in adjacent Alaska.

The company has carried out a vigorous campaign to acquire new properties in many districts, particularly in Alaska where three new mines have been acquired. . . . The ore from these mines will all be brought to the company smelter at Anyox for treatment. (B.C. Minister of Mines Report 1914)

B.C. MINISTRY OF MINES



*The nature of the ground at Hidden Creek mine, Anyox, about 1912.*

By 1915, after a couple of anxious years at Anyox, Granby occupied a dominant position in mining in B.C. The company's many sites mined and smelted 62.5 per cent of the province's ore production and produced 66.7 per cent of its copper.