

NEW DEPOSIT OF ORE PROVED BY TESTS ON M. AND A. RAILROAD

Gazette 7-25-37

By TOM SHIRAS.

Berryville, July 24.—A deposit of iron pyrites containing several million tons, lying five miles north of Berryville and on the M. & A. railroad, has been definitely proven by drilling operations carried on by Louie Watkins, general manager of the railroad, and associates, during the last few weeks. It is probable that the deposit extends into adjacent territory, not covered by the drilling operations and is much more extensive than they disclose. The deposit of this ore already proven is probably the largest of its kind in the South.

Discovery of this immense ore body was brought about by the desire of Mr. Watkins and his associates to investigate and determine the quantity of all undeveloped raw materials along the M. & A. railroad. In this program Mr. Watkins has discovered other mineral deposits which will in all probability build up the tonnage on his road.

The presence of iron ore in Carroll county has been known for many years. A body of hematite, an iron ore used to produce pig iron overlies the body of pyrites and has been mined at different periods since before the Civil war. In the early days a furnace was located near the deposit, which produced pig iron from the ore. During the World war several carloads of this ore was mined and shipped to furnaces, but the operations didn't pay.

Used to Make Acid.

The huge body of iron pyrites, however, is very valuable in a commercial sense, and a large industry should be built up around it. Its principal use at this time is for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, large quantities of which go into the fertilizer and paper making industries. Paper and fertilizer are both manufactured in Arkansas and this deposit of pyrites, or a part of it, could be utilized at home. Recent discoveries of phosphate rock, suitable for the manufacture of fertilizer, near Edgemont, on the M. & A. railroad, combined with the discovery of this deposit of pyrites, make a fertilizer plant on the M. & A. railroad a very feasible project.

The drilling operations on the pyrites deposit cover an area of approximately four acres. Seven holes have been sunk into it to a depth of 155 feet and the eighth hole is in progress of drilling. The deposits is practically solid to a depth of 155 feet, with no foreign matter mixed with it, and is very high grade, the drill cuttings running from 48 to 50 per cent sulphur.

Record Deposit.

In a recent interview about the pyrites deposit, Mr. Watkins said: "This is the biggest deposit of raw material we have found since we started looking for undeveloped raw material along our road about a year ago. We have had numerous assays made on it and it proves to be highly desirable for the manufacture of sulphuric acid. A number of concerns have been after it and negotiations are now under way for its utilization."

Often Mistaken for Gold.

Iron pyrites is also known as "fool's gold," and the outcrop of this immense deposit of ore in Carroll county has given many men false hopes of sudden riches. Numerous prospectors have stumbled on to it and thought it was gold or carried big gold values. They would walk on air until they had it assayed, and even after their hopes had been blasted they wouldn't want to believe it.

Mr. George, with the First National bank, Berryville, relates one incident of this kind. He had a friend in Eureka Springs, who was an amateur prospector and spent a lot of time in the Carroll county hills looking for mineral outcrops. One day this friend came to him in a very secretive manner and told him he had discovered gold, and showed him a large chunk of iron pyrites that came from this deposit. Mr. George advised him to send it off and have it assayed. Revising an old maxim, "It was too bad to be true." No—no gold.

A very conclusive test for gold can be made by any amateur prospector. Metallic gold is always malleable. Iron pyrites is gritty. Take a little piece of what you think is gold and place it on a piece of glass or other smooth, hard surface and draw the blade of a knife over it, pressing down hard. If it grinds under the knife it isn't gold. If it flattens out into a minute sheet, it is.

Much Mining Going On.

While hot weather has slowed down prospecting to some extent, there is plenty of mining going on in north Arkansas, at this time, and this fall promises to see a larger production of lead and zinc made than any time since the World war.

The Morning Star mines, while not in active operation, are giving working contracts to a number of local miners at Rush, in Marion county, and they are making a good production of free carbonate of zinc.

John Honeycutt is opening up a new prospect near the mouth of Cedar creek in Marion county.

Henry Hand, who has charge of mining operations at the Monte Christo mine, on Clabber creek, near Rush, recently put a ground crew to work and they are opening up more ground. They already have an enormous amount of jack and carbonate ready to shoot down. They also have their mill bin full.

The Huddleston Brothers, who are supervising operations at the Big Hurricane zinc mine, near Pindall, in Searcy county, are sinking a new shaft into the big, ore bearing break. They are now down 30 feet and will soon be deep enough to start drifting into the ore.

Sisk Brothers have leased 40 acres of the Almy property near Zinc, in Boone county, from the Almy heirs and have started work.

~~Democrat~~ 9-9-37
Drillers Seek Pyrites.

St. Joe—Two drilling outfits are at work on the land of the Mineral Products Company five miles north of Berryville, further determining the depth and extent of the great deposit of iron pyrites or sulphide of iron ore recently located there, according to the statement of L. A. Watkins, vice president of the M. & A. Railway.

Couch Asks Data On Ore Deposits

Gazette 10-11-37

St. Joe—That the \$1,500,000 salt cake plant which Harvey Couch on last Monday stated would be built within 150 miles of Little Rock, may utilize a recently discovered ore deposit of great extent was revealed last week when Mr. Couch telegraphed Vice President L. A. Watkins of the Missouri & Arkansas railway an inquiry concerning the extent of the deposit of pyrites of iron, or iron sulphide ore, on a tract owned by Mr. Watkins and his associates of the Mineral Products Co., five miles north of Berryville.

It is explained that salt cake, 500 pounds of which is used in the manufacture from short leaf pine of one ton of paper and pulp, is the product of a mixture of salt and sulphuric acid. Heretofore the sulphuric acid for this process has been imported largely from Germany. Mr. Couch stated that prospectors have been drilling into the mountain-sides in Arkansas and that they had now discovered an ore which could be used to take the place of the German product.

Mr. Watkins explained that the deposit of iron sulphide ore north of Berryville is of great extent. Two drilling crews have been at work there for several months and have not yet reached the limits of the deposit. He says the ore is rich in sulphur, and that already a great market had been assured.

Vice President Watkins has been promoting a program of prospecting in the territory traversed by his railroad. In forming the Manda Industrial Corporation he furnished a purchasing agency where the small pick and shovel miners in the zinc and lead ore areas would have a market for their ore in the smallest quantities. In this way several carloads of this ore go out over the Missouri & Arkansas railway each month.

Preparations Made to Resume Pyrite Ore Mining

Gazette 12-19-37

Preparations for the resumption of pyrite ore mining is being made in Arkansas three miles north of Berryville, Carrol county, George C. Branner, state geologist, said yesterday after an inspection tour of North Arkansas mineral deposits. Pyrite is used in making sulphuric acid.

Drillings have been made near outcrops in the Berryville vicinity during the past few weeks in an effort to determine the extent of the deposits. While no extensive study of pyrite deposits in the state has ever been made, the state geologist said that the mineral has been located near Yellville station in Marion county and near Magnet Cove.

Mr. Branner said that zinc mining activities in north Arkansas had been curtailed sharply recently because of an unfavorable market.

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Deposits Of Pyrite In Carroll

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Several deposits of pyrite, used in the manufacture of sulphuric acid, lie in Carroll county, Dr. George C. Branner, state geologist, said in the Arkansas Geological Survey's County Mineral Report 2, compiled from field data collected by the Work Projects Administration's state mineral survey. The 55-page publication was released yesterday.

The acid in which pyrite is used is employed principally in making phosphate fertilizers and explosives, and refining crude oil. The Carroll county pyrite, only deposit of consequence in the state, apparently is of questionable commercial value at present prices, the report said.

The mineral survey in Report 2 covered Washington, Benton, Madison and Carroll counties.

Tripoli, principally in Benton county, is best adapted as a filler and is used as a concrete admixture. In recent years the product, under the trade name "Opafite," has found a large potential market as a constituent of oil well drilling muds.

Dr. Branner said the counties have good deposits of silicia sand which could be developed commercially. Gravel and building stone have been revenue sources, but of only local importance.

The next mineral survey report will cover Pulaski, Saline, Garland and Montgomery counties.