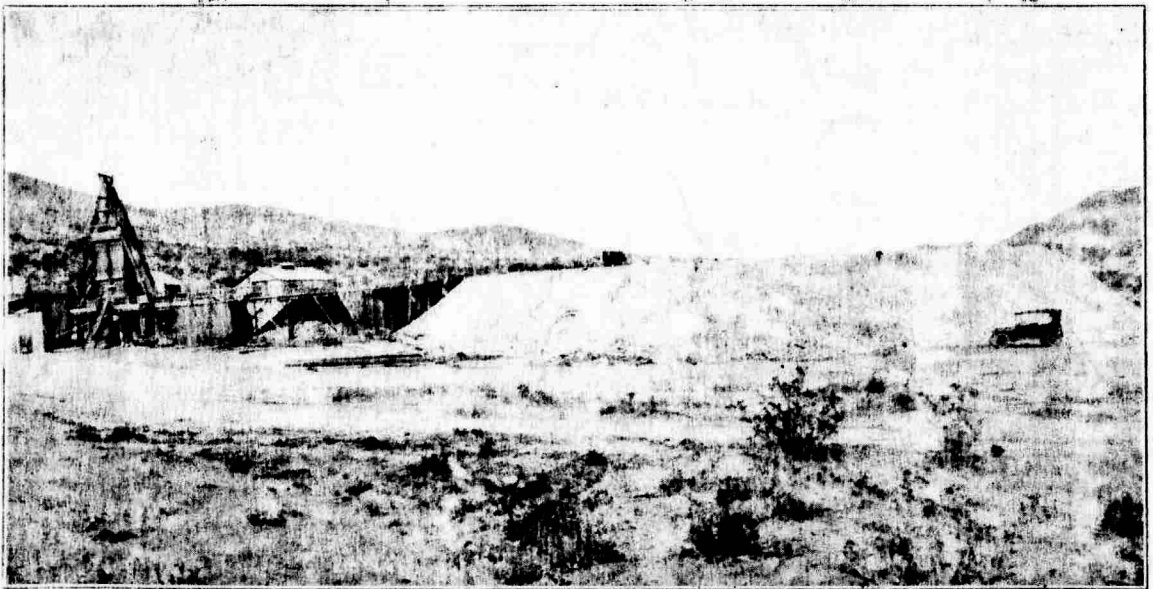


The Rand Silver Zone

By JOHN C. WRAY,* Randsburg, California.

SINCE 1895, the year in which the Yellow Astor gold mine was discovered, Randsburg, or more properly speaking, the Rand Mining District, Mojave Desert section, of Kern and San Bernardino Counties, has held the spotlight in the production first of gold, second of tungsten, and at the present writing, of silver. With the limited space at command in this publication, to do more than give a brief outline of the Rand Silver Zone will be impossible. But the facts herein recited, are drawn from the official records and the personal observations of the writer who was associated in a small way, with John W. Kelly and W. Hampton Williams, from the day they came into camp with their modest prospecting outfit in the fall of 1918. Messrs. Kelly and Williams, both prospectors of wide experience, had associated with them at that time, Miss Edith Coons, county assessor of Kern County, who had furnished the grubstake with John W. Kelly on which they had been working.



THE KELLY MINE SHOWING THE ORIGINAL SHAFT NO. 1 AND DUMP, RANDSBURG, CALIFORNIA.

Rand Silver Zone.

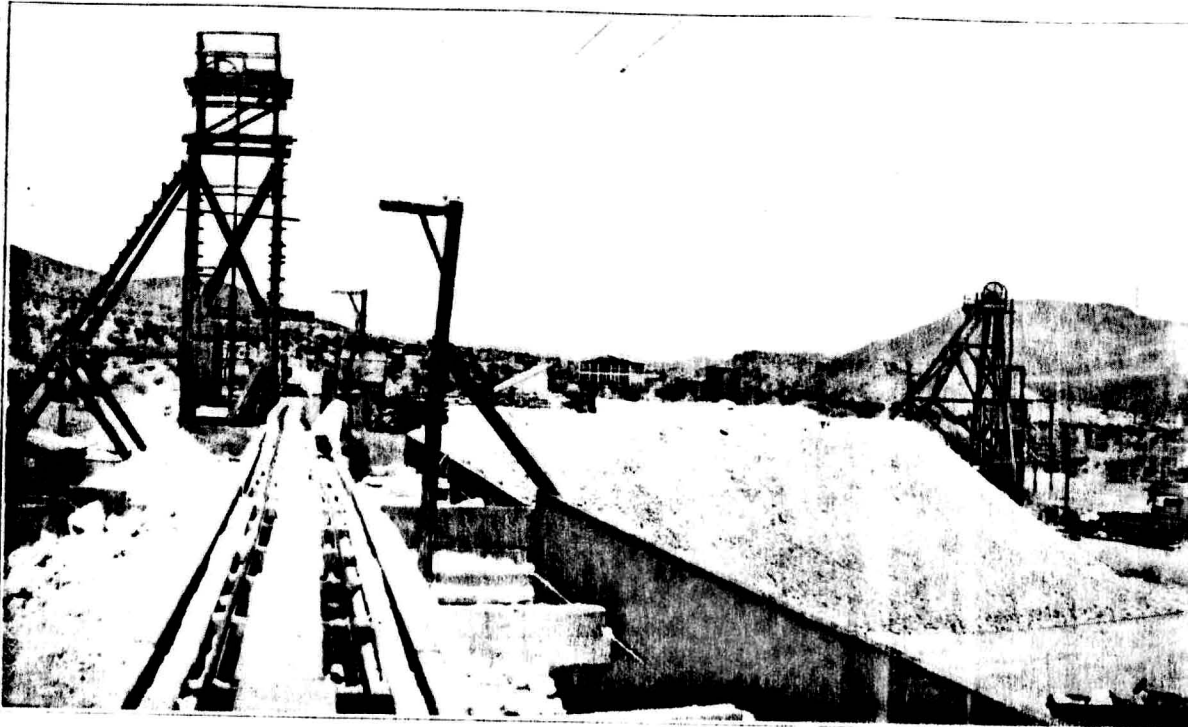
Much has been written concerning the Rand silver zone as it is now known. A major portion of the published matter has been purely imaginary, with just enough foundation in fact to pass muster as good newspaper copy which is of no value to the technical mining world.

Discovery of Silver in the Rand District.

In the fall and winter of 1918, and the early spring of 1919, Kelly and Williams, at that time, living in a shack in the rear of the old Maginnis Hotel, put in their whole time in intensive prospecting within a radius of about five miles of Randsburg. During this period,

as I remember it, in March 1919, Williams and Kelly discovered a ledge of low grade silver ore on the Atolia road about a mile and a half south and east of Randsburg. Williams, who had mined silver, and was familiar with the ore, expressed himself as reasonably certain that at depth a silver mine could be developed on this outcropping prospect. It was then up to John W. Kelly and Miss Edith Coons to furnish the money for such development work, as the two partners, Williams and Kelly, were unable to do so personally. At this point, John J. Nossier, a hard rock miner, who had never had any experience in silver mining, and in fact, did not know the ore when he saw

*See biographical sketch at close of this article.



THE RAND SILVER ZONE SHOWING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, HEADERFRAME AND FLUME, AND ON THE RIGHT, THE NEW CALIFORNIA RAND COMPANY'S 100-TON FLOTATION MILL AND ON THE

There are five shafts now being sunk in the district and all work is being performed in a miner like manner. Extension to the shafts shown in the illustration above, the Kelly shaft No. 1 is at the left of the Grady and the

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it, was taken into the combination and given a quarter interest with Kelly, Williams and Coons, the consideration being his time and labor. This shaft was put down about 100 feet under the hardest kind of mining conditions. Nossler performed most of the sinking, and Williams practically all of the hoisting to the 40-foot level, at which depth, the writer, at the time in charge of the Rand Atolia Tungsten Company, secured permission from William Ruthevin Flint to loan Mr. Kelly such tools and material as he might require including the 7 h.p. gasoline hoist which was subsequently sold for all it was worth, to-wit, \$31. When 100 feet in depth had been reached on this, the first silver discovery prospect in the Rand Mining District, Kelly admitted that while the prospect looked good, there was not enough shipping ore in evidence to warrant further development, and as Miss Coons was pressed for money and he (Kelly) had reached the limit of his resources, the original K. C. N. claim could rest, particularly as Nossler, the hard rock miner, had grown weary of work and threatened to quit the combination several times.

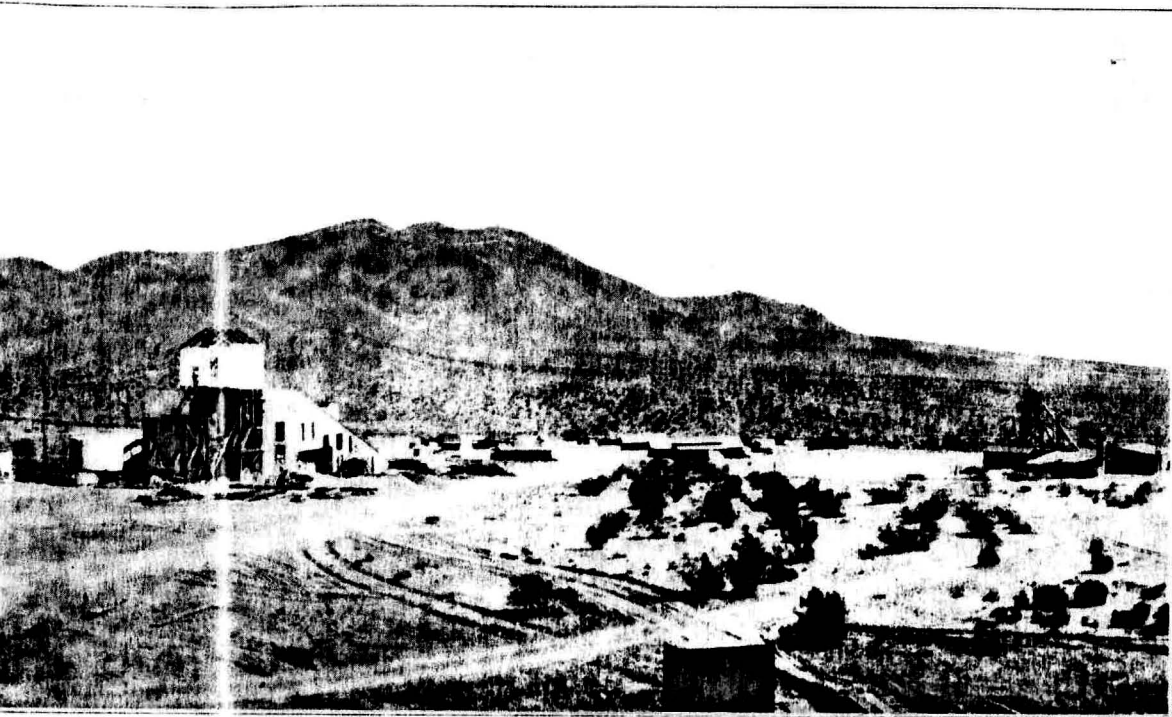
It was during the development of this prospect, that Randsburg experienced its first mild

silver boom, but it was not until after "Hamp" Williams had discovered surface croppings which assayed good values in horn and ruby silver that old timers, on the desert, believed silver strikes to be more than a fake. Immediately following the shutting down of work on the K. C. N. shaft and while Kelly was devising ways and means to replenish the exchequer, he advised Williams and Nossler to give the west side of Red Mountain the "once over" in the hope of discovering hematite, or mineral paint. It was while returning from an excursion on the mountain side, that Williams uncovered the cropping which has since been developed into the world wonder known as the Kelly Mine.

Kelly Mine—California Rand Silver Mining Co.

The field assays made by Williams, and subsequently verified by professional assayers, made possible the finding of sufficient capital to finance the initial stages of the development work. From this point, it was comparatively easy sailing, as with the ore in sight, and the influence of Kelly and Miss Coons, the financial strain was lifted, and the organization of the properties as the California Rand Silver Mining Company was readily effected.

Under the personal management of John W.



GRADY LEASE: THE NEW SHAFT OF THE CALIFORNIA RAND (KELLY) SILVER MINE; LEFT THE COYOTE SHAFT AND MINE BUILDINGS WHICH HAVE RECENTLY HAD COLLAPSES.

the surface cuts and shallow shafts that abounded in the days of the tungsten boom in this camp. In addition to the right of the Coyote. Equipment of the five shafts in the district includes nine Ingersoll brand 'E. R. I' compressors.

Kelly, the first two carloads of ore were produced from a glory hole inside of the first 25 feet, the work being done by Jack Nossier, with Pete Peterson, working by the day, Kelly assisting on top of the ground, and "Hamp" Williams making the assays. The first two carloads were shipped to the Selby Smelting Company, where the ore was treated as more or less of a joke and was allowed to lie on a siding and no attention paid to it.

At this time, Miss Edith Coons, who was acting as secretary, was unable to secure any information, or satisfactory explanation, why no returns had been received from the smelting company. E. T. Grady was then delegated to go to the Selby Company and demand an explanation for the delay. As I received the story from Engineer Thomas, Mr. Grady was informed that "somebody down on the desert had shipped up some quarry rock probably imagining that he had found a mine." Mr. Grady explained the situation, and samples were immediately taken and assays made. The smelting of the 80 tons resulted in a net profit of approximately \$4500, and the Kelly Mine became an established fact.

In verifying and surveying the original 11 claims located, staked and monumented by

Kelly, Williams and Nossier, the discovery was made that a claim known as the Juanita owned by the heirs of Dan McCormick, overlapped one of the group of located claims known as the Uranian group. It was on this Juanita claim that the first ore produced by the Kelly mining company, was discovered, and fearing complications, John W. Kelly went to Los Angeles and made a proposition which was accepted by Al McCormick, son and heir of old Dan McCormick, who had bequeathed the property to him. Kelly made a tender of \$1500 cash and \$3500 to be paid in six months for the purchase of the Juanita. Before the second and final payment was due, the mine having become a producer, Kelly accompanied by C. V. Anderson, attorney for the company, made a tender of \$3500 for the final payment, which amount was refused by Mr. McCormick because of a technical error in drawing the papers for the deed of sale, Mrs. McCormick insisting on her legal right to participate in the disposition of the property. After much discussion, settlement was finally made, and the title was passed for a consideration of \$15,000, an advance of \$10,000 cash above the original option price. With this possible legal entanglement disposed of, the development of the property to its present proportions has

been a simple matter because of the phenomenal richness and high grade values in the ore bodies, not lode as the term is generally used, but in a series of lenses more or less separated and widely distributed throughout this silver zone where intensive development is in evidence and where depth has been made.

Extraordinary Richness of Ore Shipments.

That the laymen may form a correct idea of the value of the Kelly group of claims, I give the smelter figures on ores produced and shipped from two claims, the Juanita and Uranium No. 4, and from a lease known as the Sill & Grady lease 120 feet square by 450 feet deep. From the Kelly Mine, during the past 25 months, there have been shipped approximately 800 forty-ton cars of ore to the smelter with a total value of \$2,700,000, and from the Sill & Grady lease on Uranium Claim No. 5, 355 cars of forty tons each, with an approximate value of \$1,100,000. I use the word approximate, as smelter figures are not available, as to the values of the last 30 carloads shipped from the Sill & Grady lease.

Qualified experts who have made critical examination of the Kelly Mine underground workings now down to a depth of 700 odd feet, are unanimously of the opinion that when the ground owned by the Kelly Mine company, or as it is officially known, The California Rand Silver Mining Company, is intelligently and fully developed, the property will prove to be of greater value and extent than the one time famous Comstock in Nevada, and no surprise will be occasioned if, within the now known silver zone, mines of greater extent and values will be opened up, as there is at this time no absolutely certain method of computing the undeveloped values within the limits of what geologists have christened the Rand Silver Zone.

Activities of Other Companies.

At this writing, the Randsburg Silver Mining Company, John W. Kelly, president, Harry Alderson, vice-president, E. L. Blanck, treasurer, John C. Wray, secretary, is developing a claim known as The Coyote, a full 20 acres which parallels the Uranium No. 5 on the west line. Development work on this claim consists of a shaft 660 feet deep, crosscuts on three levels with ore blocked out ready for shipment of an approximate value of above \$500,000. The plant is generally conceded to be the most completely equipped for intensive mining of any plant on the desert.

South and east adjoining the Coyote claim, a group of claims held under option by R. R. Bray, is being developed for a syndicate of Los Angeles and San Francisco capitalists. The shaft in this is down to the 600-foot level

and drifts are being run to reach the ore bodies located by a diamond drill operated by the International Diamond Drill Company.

The International Diamond Drill Company, presumably financed by the Flynn Bros., acting for a New York syndicate, have taken over by option, bond and lease and purchase outright, three or more groups of claims which practically control all of the territory contiguous to the Kelly Mine group of claims on the east, north and northwest. Intensive prospecting, diamond drills being used, is in progress by the Flynn Bros., on all of the properties owned and controlled by them.

From this brief resume of the conditions as they prevail today in the so-called Rand Silver Zone, mining men and laymen can form a reasonably correct idea of what the future may hold for the so-called worthless desert wastes of the Mojave.

Interesting Facts.

In conclusion, it will make good copy and interesting reading, I think, to point out the four outstanding features relative to the discovery of silver in commercial quantity in the desert section of Kern and San Bernardino Counties:

First, the discoverers and locators of the Kelly Mine, now that the property has become phenomenally valuable, still retain a working and profit bearing interest in the property.

Second, probably no other mine in the history of metal mining, is so advantageously located for development and operation at a minimum of overhead expense. Situated within a short five eighths of a mile of railroad switching facilities, with a main water line traversing the property, and with the main transformer station operated by the Southern Sierras Power Company less than a mile distant, the Kelly Company has at command, light, heat and power at a minimum cost.

Third, a greater number of men of moderate means, have been enriched through the ownership of stock sold first hand by Messrs. Kelly, Williams, Nosser and Miss Coons, the original locators, and in several instances, donated outright by John W. Kelly and Miss Edith Coons, than is of record in any other mine of my knowledge. Capitalized at 1,280,000 shares at a par value of one dollar, with dividends of two percent a month and three additional dividends of ten percent each since January 1, 1921, is a record seldom equaled.

JOHN C. WRAY.

JOHN C. WRAY, writer of the description of the Randsburg Silver Zone, is an old time newspaper man. He worked for the "Times" for a number of years and for the "Evening Express" prior to 1894. With Walter S. Melick he took over the Pasadena "Daily News" in 1895.

(Continued on Page 788.)