Mining History of Goldstone

Larry Vredenburgh, Bureau of Land Management, 3801 Pegasus Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93308

Gold was reportedly discovered at Goldstone as early as the 1880s. Subsequently there were two periods of activity, 1910-1916, and the 1930s. In May 1910, the Pacific Miner trumpeted: "Gold Stone is the name of a new camp, thirty-five miles north of Barstow, where some phenomenal ore has been found. Quite a stampede followed the supplies hauled to his camp and by May the two had sunk two shafts.

Cook himself came to the property with two men to work the property, but before the month of February was out, dropped the bond. After the deal with Cook fizzled, the mine of Halford and son began to attract attention. In February Halford had material and supplies hauled to his camp and by May the two had sunk two shafts 80 and 50 feet deep and had drilled 30 feet in a four foot wide ledge of "shipping ore". Their cabin was built out of yucca "...which is fitted out in good old miners' style." By February 1912 some half dozen miners were developing properties, and Mitchell and Andrews struck ore peppered with gold. They were developing a three foot wide vein with a pay streak yielding $100 per ton. Also of note is Rinaldo and Durand's 18 inch pay streak that at a depth of 50 feet ran $65 per ton. In November 1913, there was a small stump mill at the Drumm Mine.

Mining excitement was stirred anew at the camp in October 1915. On October 16, 1915, gold was discovered on the Redfield claim that ran from $1,400 to $3,000 per ton in gold. Soon the Barstow "Big Drum" announced "Gold Stone camp is attracting many prospectors, and indications are that Barstow will have a camp equal to any in the Southwest."

The rediscovered gold district attracted swarms of prospectors. By March 1916, there were some 150 "permanent" residents, in addition to a lodging house, and daily mail service and delivery of supplies. For $5 one could buy a round trip ticket from Barstow to the nearby camp, or $10 from Los Angeles with service on Thursday and Saturday. By May, 1916 the camp had "seven operating properties, two of which have already granted five leases." A townsite was surveyed and several lots immediately sold. Residence lots were priced from $50 to $250 and business lots from $150 to $350. There were nine buildings and ten houses at the site, and the mining house could accommodate 25 and boasted a separate restaurant capable of serving more than one hundred people a day. Within a month a large general store was doing business. In October a Chilean mill with a daily capacity of about 20 tons was operating. A subscription campaign to construct a telephone line to Barstow was kicked off in April, 1917, but the line apparently never was completed. A few months later, in June 1917 the post office of Goldbridge was opened at the camp, and Malcolm Smith sworn in as postmaster. At that time the Goldstone Company's shaft down 210 feet:

But as suddenly as the camp swept onto the mining scene, news abruptly ceased. Perhaps the entry of the United States into World War I on April 6, 1917, had proved too much a draw of men and equipment to the still fledgling mining camp. The post office closed August 15, 1918.

The camp was never completely deserted, nine years later the Barstow "Big Drum" noted: "A half dozen people are in Goldstone and several have been working their claims for months. One miner is reported as making wages developing his property and using a dry washer."

George Drumm continued to develop a promising vein and in August 1928 had begun construction of a "canyon plant." Only months later the camp lost its long time promoter; George Drumm died on January 10, 1929.

But with the new decade came new progress. New properties were developed and by 1931 there were two mills in operation, one at the Goldstone mine and the other at the Belmont.

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End Notes:
2. Pacific Miner May 1910, p. 106
3. Los Angeles Mining Review: May 7, 1910, p. 23; Barstow "Big Drum", Aug 5, Nov 11, 18, 25, Dec 2, 9, 30, 1910, Jan 6, 27, Feb 3, 10, 17, 1911
4. Barstow "Big Drum", Feb 24, April 7, May 26, 1911