Dos Palmas (two Palms) Spring was an important stop on the road to the La Paz gold diggings in Arizona. A correspondent of the San Francisco Alta California stopped at the spring in July, 1862, discovering that some vandal had cut down one of the palms. By noon that hot July day there were about 150 men camped at the spring. The San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin later that month stated that at “Dos Palmos” there at one time was quite a little town, but now it was “nearly cleaned out.” One fellow found an easier way to find gold than digging in the placer mines of Arizona, as in May, 1863, a “white man” had a hut there and sold liquor and grass (feed for horses), the latter of which was “brought from the mountains by Indians.” It should be noted that Herman Ehrenberg, founder of the city of that name, was murdered here in 1866.7

Dos Palmas lay on the Bradshaw Trail, and when the railroad pushed its way down from the San Gorgonio Pass, a siding was graced with the name “Dos Palmos.” This point became an important stage terminus for Ehrenberg, Wickenberg, and Prescott. 8

It seems inconceivable that so many men, looking for gold, stopping at a place with such good accommodations, would not be lured into the nearby hills to prospect. In the 1880s and perhaps before, gold prospects were located 18 miles north of Dos Palmas Spring. By 1894, 2 tunnels with nearly 300 feet of underground workings had been driven on the claims, which oddly enough never were mentioned by name. In 1896, 6 miles northeast of Dos Palmas, the Fish Mine owned by A.C. Fish of San Bernardino was active. The owner of the mine was building a two-stamp mill at Canyon Springs, 6 miles from the property. In 1916, it was reported that this mill was standing.10

In 1893, the Free Coinage and Charity mines were located 12 miles northeast of the spring. It was probably these mines which by the late 1890s were consolidated to form the Oro Copia Mine, and at that time a 2 inch pipeline was laid to the mine from Dos Palmas. The Oro Copia mine was tied up in litigation from about 1905 to 1912, but in 1912, the mine hummed with activity. Repairing and refitting of the pipeline in 1912 was carried out by Charles Brown of Mecca. At the spring there were 2 “curbed-up reservoirs 25 by 30 feet and 12 feet deep… the pump stands nearby and is a 3-cylinder Dean…” The pump was operated only 1 day a week to furnish ample water to the mine. At the mine there were 3 tunnels and “all the ore comes out the lower tunnel and is conveyed direct to the mill by a tramway in cars. The mill is a rotary, the equivalent of five stamps, and is fully equipped with a cyanide plant and complete in every respect.” 11

Although the mine was thriving in 1912, operations appear to have ceased shortly thereafter. In 1940, the old mine camp was about demolished. The tool house and blacksmith shop which had survived years of bad weather and vandalism had recently been blown down. The tailings and the foundation of the mill were all that remained. 12

Frank Coffee, who had prospected the Chuckwalla Mountains and surrounding area since about 1885, built a cabin and settled at Dos Palmas sometime after the turn of the century. He located (or relocated and renamed) a mine in the hills north of the spring that he called the Good
Enough Mine. Coffee died at the age of 77 in October, 1936. In November, 1940, his cabin was but “charred remains.” 13

The adobe walls of old Dos Palmas stage station had almost disappeared by the winter of 1920, but this was still the camping place of prospectors, as it had been since the 1860s. 14


13. Henderson op. cit.; Hilton op. cit.; Nevada C. Colley, From Maine to Mecca, (Indio: Nevada C. Colley, 1967), pp. 100,103,144; The Good Enough Mine was described near the Red Cloud Mine in the Chuckwalla Mountains in the Indio Date Palm, February 7, 1912.

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Riverside County Articles of Incorporation no.371,

On August 25, 1902 the Oro Copia Mining and Milling Company was incorporated in Arizona for $3 million, the corporators were Charles Foreman, president; Richard Mercer, vice president; W.F. Winnie, secretary; G.L.A. Richter, superintendent and J.L. Johnston. This company was organized to work the old Fish Mine. By February 1903, $18,000 had already been spent on development work on the 11 claims of the Oro Copia Mine. They wasted no time in surveying a water line from Dos Palmas to the mine for the 40-ton mill and cyanide plant, which was installed by January, 1905 and expected to be in full operation on July 1, 1905.

Engineering and Mining Journal November 28, 1903; Ora Copia – On this, the old Fish property, 16 miles from Salton, considerable development is being done. A large cyanide plant is to be put in.
Engineering and Mining Journal November 21, 1903: Orocopia - The mines are 16 miles from Salton, and a survey is being made for a pipe line to convey water from Palm Springs. It is understood that a mill and cyanide plant are to be put up.

The Mining World 23 Jan 1904, The Ora Copia company, of which Dr. Johnson is president, is intending to spend $100,000 in developing the old Fish property, 16 miles from Salton, Riverside county. A 100-ton electric cyanide plant is to be used.

The Mining World February 27, 1904: At Salton, Riverside county, the Oro Opa (sic) Mining company is preparing to set up a 75-horse power gasoline engine and three roller mills.

The Mining World January 28, 1905: The Oro Copia Mining & Milling company have 11 claims and 40-ton quartz mill on their ground 16 miles northeast from Salton and 40 miles south of the Gold Park district. A pumping plant and pipe long 81/2 miles in length has been installed the past year, and the company are now erecting a complete cyanide plant to operate in connection with the mill, which it is planned to increase to 200 tons capacity. The ores averaged $20.50 on the plates the past year, and the new plant is designed to be in full operation by July 1, 1905. Dr. J. L. Johnson, of Los Angeles, is president, and W. E. Winne secretary, of the Oro Copia Mining & Milling company, with offices in the Bullard block, Los Angeles.

Pacific Coast Miner February 28, 1903, The Oro Copia Mining Company is about to develop mining claims in San Diego county, about sixteen miles from Salton, Riverside county. The company owns some eleven claims and has already spent about $18,000 in exploration work. Hoist and reduction works are about to be put up. Water is to be piped to the mines, and an electrical plant at Salton will furnish power. W. E, Winnie, Bullard Block, Los Angeles, is secretary of the company. A number of old Comstock (Nev.) men are interested in this new enterprise.

Sacramento Daily Union 2 May 1866: we soon reach Dos Palmas, our half-way station, so called because there were once here two dwarf palm trees, one of which some vandal, during the early emigration, cut down. Here is an adobe house, abundance of warm sulphur water, a little patch of barley grown by the sulphurous irrigation, and a magnificent bath-house. These sulphur springs would be a princely fortune in the States, but most hot, tired, dusty travelers, oil a desert, would prefer here some cold water for drinking, at any rate

Rail road reached Dos Palmas – Los Angeles Herald 29 Mar 1876

Martin Christian, a well-known merchant and mining man of dos palmas is registered at the Lick. San Francisco Call 30 Nov 1899

Thomas Carver, a prominent merchant of Riverside, went out with a man named Russell prospecting in the desert near Dos Palmas. They separated, agreeing to meet at a point well known to both. Russell arrived safely, but nothing has been heard of Carver, who is supposed to have perished. Sacramento Daily Union 4 Oct 1884

From a letter dated at Dos Palmas Station, on the Colorado Desert, published in the San Bernardino Index of the 18th Instant, we clip the annexed interesting mining item: Two
gentlemen arrived here from Belmout District Chucolwalla (sic) Mountains, I think they were Los Angeles men. They made several assays while here of 60 pounds of rock—gold ore. The assays range from eight hundred to twenty-six hundred dollars per ton. How is that for our new Belmont District? Hurrah for the Chucolwalla (sic) Mountains. All we want is a few energetic men and a few good miners, and we will have one of the richest districts in the State. The mines lie about 30 miles northeast of Dos Palmas and about ten miles north of the road that runs from Dos Palmas to Ehrenberg, on the Colorado river. Los Angeles Herald 20 Apr 1882

Los Angeles Herald 10 Jun 1896:

At the Fish mine at the Dos Palmos stage station. Riverside county, a two-stamp mill run by a gas engine is crushing three tons of $18 rock daily.

George O. Ford of Los Angeles is working on the three northeastern extensions of the Desert Queen and has a large quantity of ore in sight, but cannot get it milled, as there is no feed in the camp but what is busy. Vivian Bros, are in the same condition.


Before night we reach the tents cabin and corral of the Oro Copia Mining Company where we stop. Eighteen miles away this company of California capitalists has its mine. Water almost as precious as the gold they seek is piped from this post and emptied into a reservoir that holds 28,000 gallons. It is needed not only for drinking purposes but to work the machinery and to operate the smelter.

**Dos Palmas (Black Jack Claim) Mine**

Location: Sec. 16 ?, T. 7S., R. 12 E. SBM., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Canyon Spring quadrangle, 15’ 1944, 3/12 miles northwest of Clemens Well, on the south slope of the Orocopia Mountains. The mine is reached by an unimproved dirt road up a wash which leaves the range near the triangulation station marked Can 890 on the topographic map.

Ownership: Undetermined. The claims were held in 1955 by John C. Brinton, Eileen Brinton and George W. Robinson, under the name Black Jack Claims.

Geology: The country rock is gneiss. A quartz vein lies in the plane of a fault: which strikes N. 55° E., and dips 50° - 55° NW. The fault zones is as much as 5 feet wide and contains a soft gouge of chlorite schist. It is well exposed for several thousand feet across several ridges and intervening canyons. The full northeasterly extent of the fault was not determined but to the southwest it is truncated by a wide, northwest-trending fault zone which probably is part of the San Andreas system.

The quartz vein pinches and swells, ranging from 0 to 4 feet in thickness. It is fractured. Contained pyrite is altered almost completely to iron oxides which have filled fissures and cavities. Small amounts of secondary copper minerals and calcite are present. Several samples of ore contain visible traces of gold but no assay data were found.

Development: The vein was explored by means of adits driven northeast on 3 levels in the southwest slope of a ridge immediately north of a mill and camp site. The adits are drive northeast and are joined by stopes which appear to be as much as 30 feet wide. The ground stands well, being only slightly caved at the portal. The adits are untimbered. The stopes are timbered with stulls. Ore was milled at the mine but water was probably in short supply.

Production: Undetermined.

References: Crawford. 1894, p. 221; Tucker and Sampson, 1929, p. 477; 1945, pl. 35.

R.B.S. 2/25/60.

**Fish Mine. 7S 12E? Adit on veln. May be an old name for Dos Palmas (sea hereln). {Crawford, 1894, p. 221; 1896, p. 311; Merrill, 1919, p. 541; Tucker 1929, p. 477; 1945, pl. 35.**
Dos Palmas Gold Prospect near See Report XII p 221 There are several gold claims 18 miles north of the old Dos Palmas stage station which have been described as valuable prospects. The veins are of good size and the ore of good grade. Water is obtainable within 6 miles of Canon Springs. One of the claims is described as being on a ridge between two canons 1500 feet apart. The vein is 3 to 6 wide and the pay shoot 1 to 3. Two tunnels one of 90 and the other of 190 have been driven on the vein.

Free Coinage and Charity Mines See Report XII p 221 XIII p 311 There are two locations made in 1893. They adjoin about 5 miles north of Canon Springs, 12 miles northeast of Dos Palmas, and 18 miles north of Durmid Station. The Free Coinage vein had 28” of free milling ore and a 6” vein of quartz containing galena and carbonate of lead which carry some silver. E. E. Bowles of San Diego, owner.

Fish See Report XII p 221 XIII p 311 Six miles northeast of Dos Palmas and 12 miles northeast of Salton. Elevation 1000 feet. 90 feet of tunnel and other superficial work on a quartz vein. Two stamp mill with gasoline engine at Cañon Springs 6 miles from mine. Owner AC Fish San Bernardino.

Riverside Press and Horticulturist 2 Feb 1895: ...Hon. Co. O. Barker of Banning and his partner Mr. Fish are in the city. They are owners of the Somerfield gold mine near Salton of the Colorado desert. This property has been developed by a shaft 300 feet deep and at that depth a drift is being run, all in ore. It is one of the most promising prospects in Southern California, and conservative mining men estimate that the present developments put $160,000 in sight in the property.

Riverside Press and Horticulturist 11 Feb 1899

Ten Stamp Mill

One Will Soon Be Put Up at the Gold Canyon Mine.

The Gold Canyon mining company is pushing things at its mine near Salton in this county. C. C. Doran, secretary of the company, is in from a two weeks stay at the camp, and says that a wagon road has been completed to the dump near the mine, a 400 foot railroad graded from the mouth of the tunnel to the tramway, and the latter is now being built, the length of which will be about 350 feet, at an angle of about 40 degrees. The ore at the mine is ready for stoping, and will be shoveled but once – into the car in the mine, from there to the tramway and down to the dump by rail. The ore wagons will be loaded from a chute.

W. A. Doran, president of the company, is on the ground maintaining a general supervision over the work, as well as taking a hand in it himself. L. C. Smith of Boston, largely interested, is also present, clad in the usual miner’s garb and doing yeoman work. E. G. Fisk (sic) and son, G. B. Fisk (sic) both directors in the company and men of wide experience in mining and milling ore,
contribute invaluable aid. E. G. Fisk is well known in the desert, and has visited every mine on it. He pronounces the ledge being opened to be the largest and best in this southern country, barring the Gold Cross at Hedges.

As soon as the work at the mine is completed, which will be in about a week, the force will be transferred to the mill site, the grading for which is all finished ready for the foundation. It is expected the ore crushing will begin by the middle of March or the first of April.

Mr. Doran says there is considerable prospecting going on and quite a number of mines in the district prospect well and would be of fine promise were there plenty of water to work the ore. At several places wells are being sunk in the endeavor to develop water, but nothing very encouraging has yet been reported.

**Riverside Press and Horticulturist 29 May 1903**

Improvements planned in Riverside Mine

It is announced that extensive improvements in the line of new machinery, including a 100-ton smelter, are to be made as soon as possible on the Oro Copia mine, one of the large desert properties almost on the border line between San Diego and Riverside counties. Winnie, one of the directors of the company, has gone east to consult with the owners of the mine with that object in view. A large pumping plant also is to be installed for the purpose of supplying the mill with water from the springs and wells within five miles of the mine.

**The Indio Date Palm: 7 Feb 1912**

Dos Palmas Basin

The ??? that something is doing in the Dos Palmas basin was sufficient cause for warrant THE DATE PALM reporter in ???tingthat old camping place in quest of news. He boarded the “sidewinder” at Coachella about 2 p.m. and in about a half an hour was at Salton; on the shore of the Salton Sea.

The beautiful inland lake received very scant consideration. Because it has been written up many times already; but a big pile of galvanized iron pipe and irrigation fittings received careful attention. There evidently was “something doing” somewhere in the neighborhood. The pipe was consigned to S. W. Hudson who is closely connected with the American Steel Pipe Company of Los Angeles.

Frank H. Coffey an old-time prospector and scout, was on hand and kindly offered to show me “the things of interest.” With a burro outfit we were soon on our way across the low sand ridge that seperates the Dos Palmas basin from the Salton sink.
A wide expanse of gently sloping land was spread out before us, dotted here and there by hummocks of mesquite and high bunches of flags and tulles, proclaiming the presence of living springs. Across the valley to the Northeast and about five miles from the station at Salton could be seen the well rig and the new camp on Mr. Hudon’s ranch. Lapp, Gifford & Co., of Los Angeles, have the contract for making the new well, and they have in charge of the work Mr. J. W. Wolliscroft.

The well is six inches in diameter and 356 feet deep. It is now flowing 15 inches of water, and has not yet been perforated. The fountain head is about 25 feet, so one may reasonably expect a 50-inch flow of water when the well is completed. It certainly is the cheapest water proposition that we have any knowledge of.

On inquiry we found that two whole townships have lately been filed on, and that the S. P. Co. is preparing its schedule of prices and soon be pursuing ??? of its lands. Eight wells are already contracted for and a second well rig is expected to arrive by rail in a few days. The agricultural possibilities of the Dos Palmas basin are in certainly gaining and its greatness is evidently near at hand.

From the ranch to the mine and mill was only a short step and an ardent old prospector of fifty years wandering like Mr. Coffee could be relied upon to take me across that step. He showed me many specimens of ore with the native gold plainly visible to the naked eye and said that during the past ten years he alone has found in the Chucawalla range gold in more than one hundred places – gold in sufficient quantities to warrant the expenditure of large capital and that could be made to pay on a large scale. He also has his “grub state” propositions where can go and gouge out a few hundred pounds of ore and araster it out with burrow power, and provide for immediate needs. He calls his little mine the Good Enough. It is located near the Red Cloud mine, and has 600 feet of development work on it. The vein is from six to fifteen inches wide.

The Oro Copia Properties.

About two miles to the North from the Hudson ranch at the Oro Copia springs, where the pumping plant for the Oro Copia mine is located. This is a very fair illustration of what capital can do in the way of putting a large low-grade mining proposition on a paying basis. This mine is fifteen miles from the railroad. To haul the ore by wagon is out of the question, likewise to haul water. The mine could not be worked with small capital but with a two-inch pipeline nine miles long, it is a splendid investment.

After seven years of litigation and many other troubles, the property not in “fair sailing” Mr. C. C. Dorant of Long Beach, the general manager, was on the ground and very courteously showed us how he handles the water proposition.

Two curbed-up reservoirs 25x30 feet and 12 feet deep are sunk into the soft mud of the Oro Copia spring. These stand brimming full of pure fresh water always. The pump stands nearby, and is a 3-cylinder Dean, that works under a pressure of 1,000 pounds per square inch. It is actuated by a 25-horse-power Model gasoline engine, and forces the water through the nine miles of 2-inch pipe and up to an elevation of 1,700 feet above the spring. It is only necessary to
operate the pump one day each week to furnish ample water. The repairing and refitting of this pipe-line was done by Chas. Brown of Mecca.

We were told that the Oro Copia mine consists of several claims, with two well-defined fissure veins. There is about 1,000 feet of development work done, which consists of three tunnels that are connected together by up-raisers. All the ore comes out at the lower tunnel, and is conveyed directly to the mill by a tramway in cars. The mill is a rotary, the equivalent of 5 stamps, and is fully equipped with a cyanide plant, and complete is every respect.

Mr. Dorant said, “Now that the water supply is satisfactory, we will push work on the mine and mill, and hope to be producing bullion in a few weeks at most.

[more on the Gold King Claim, Chuckwalla Mountains]

The Indio Date Palm: 22 Jan 1915

Mr. J. C. Doron of Long Beach present lessee of Oro Copia Mining Company has been visiting Mr. Geo. DeHart. Mr. Doron expects to open up the Oro Copia in a few weeks.
GOOD STRIKE: Bernardino Courier: Another rich strike has been made in Riverside county, near Salton. P. K. Living came in and brought three large specimens of quartz. The gold is visible to the naked eye, and under gaslight fairly glitters. The mine from which these specimens were taken is known as the Sommerville mine. The property has been worked for about two years by the owners, but has never been known to yield very rich ore till a few days since, when a strike of unusual richness was made on the 200-foot level, from which these specimens were taken. The mine is about eight miles north of Salton, on the Southern Pacific, doubtless be I the making of a fortune to the owners. At present they are working only a few men and have no machinery, but they will continue to develop the interests, and have given out that the property is not for sale. This discovery will probably cause a rush to that vicinity. There is a number of men prospecting in the neighborhood but no strike of importance outside the present one has been reported.

9 Feb 1895, p.90

C. O. Barker of Banning and J. C. Fish are the owners of the Somerfield gold mine near Salton on the Colorado desert. This property has been developed by a shaft 300 feet deep, and at that depth a drift is being run all in ore.

11 Dec 1897, p. 554


The company will operate the Gold Canyon mines, Riverside county. They consist of two claims, 3000 feet, a ledge averaging 7 feet in thickness. Two tunnels have been run on the vein, one 90 and the other over 300. The ore shows well, the poorest milling $10 per ton. The company will erect a 10-stamp mill. The ore is free milling.

3 Dec 1898, p. 557: W. A. Doran, Pres. Gold Canyon G. M. Co., whose properties are situated near Salton, is preparing to build a 6-stamp mill. There are several hundred tons of ore on the dump ready to be crushed.

4 Feb 1899, p. 127

The Gold Canyon M. Co. is erecting a 10-stamp mill near Salton.

4 Mar 1899, p.239

The Gold Canyon M. Co. near Salton has recently built a wagon road and will build a track 400 feet long to the foot of a tramway now being constructed. The ore at the mine is ready for stoping.
24 June 1899, p. 671: The Gold Canyon mine, north of Salton, which was formerly owned by Mr. Fish of Banning, five stamps are running.

9 Sep 1899, p. 289

The Gold Canyon mill has been running on the ore from the mine, but owing to much flour gold a cyanide plant will be put in. The mine is eight miles from the mill, and water will be piped from the springs at Dos Palmas. The ore body is 4 to 6 feet wide, and has an average value of $17 per ton. The owners are W. A. Doran of San Diego, E. G. and G. B Fish of San Bernardino, E. B. Stanton, E. B. Chappeller and C. C. Doran of Riverside.

16 Apr 1904, p. 272

The Oro Copia M. & M. Co. are sinking a well near Dos Palmas station in the salton basin, to supply water to their mine 10 miles to the northward, in the Quartz Peak canyon. A mill has been taken to the mine.

California Voter Registrations: San Bernardino Central Precinct 1902

Gail Brainard Fish age 33
Edward G. Fish age 64 (1833, PA)

Los Angeles Mining Review: 18 Feb 1899, p. 4

The Gold Canon Mining Company contemplate the erection of a 10-stamp mill at their mines near Salton. L. C. Smith of Boston has an interest in the properties.

Los Angeles Mining Review: 25 Feb 1899, p. 8

…the Gold Canon Mining Company is pushing things on their properties near Salton. C. C. Doran, secretary of the company that a wagon road has been completed to the dump near the mine, a 400-foot railroad graded from the mouth of the tunnel to the tramway and the latter is now being built, the length of which will be about 350 feet, at an angle of about 40 deg. The ore at the mine is ready for stoping, and will be shoveled but once – into the car in the mine, from there to the tramway and down to dump by rail. The ore wagons will be loaded from a chute. It is expected thee ore crushing will begin by middle of March or the 1st of April.

Los Angeles Mining Review: 1 April 1899 p. 4

W. A. Doran, president of the Canon Mining Company, who owns valuable mines near Dos Palmas, is visiting his family at San Marcos this week. He reports that the machinery for a 10-stamp mill is on the ground and is rapidly being put in position for reducing the large pile of rich ore now on the dump.
C. O. Barker has made a good strike in his gold mine at Sommerville, near Salton.

*Mining and Metallurgical Journal, June 15, 1899, p. 13-14:* The Gold Canon Mining Co., whose property is six miles north from Salton, have five stamps of their 10-stamp mill in operation on some fine ore from a mine formerly owned by Fish & Sons.

*Mining and Metallurgical Journal, 1 Apr 1897* Take the Somerville mine, owned by E. G. Fish & Son and Barker, of the Banning Land and Town Company. This mine is in the Dos Palmas mountains and is a well defined lode, with granite foot wall and slate and porphyry hanging wall, developed by 450 feet of tunneling, the lower tunnel cutting the lode at a depth of 300 feet and running along it for 250 feet; pay ore from four to seven feet wide, running from $40 up into the hundreds per ton. Nice little "stringer " Fish & Son think so, and are milling ore in their own mill at Dos Palmos, where there is all abundance of water going to waste.

Four miles east on the same hill, and in the vicinity of Canyon Springs are several locations on the contact, vein II from two to twelve feet, carrying gold, silver, co rand