

## ROSSLAND – THE GOLDEN CITY

The completion of the Dewdney Trail from Wild Horse Creek to Hope in 1865 fell into disuse for many years and was little used except for a few berry gathering First Nations families. By the early 1880s a few Argonauts began using the overgrown trail to travel to the coast from Wild Horse. American gold hunters, venturing north across the border, also intercepted the old trail. Ironically, none of the original Argonauts gave a second look at a red mountain a short distance off Dewdney's trail. George Bohman and George Leyson discovered the first interesting outcroppings of ore not far off the trail and named their discovery the Lily May claim in 1887. They allowed the claim to lapse. Two years later Oliver Bordeau of Colville and Newlin Hoover of Nelson restaked the claim. In March 1890 Bordeau left to do assessment work on the claim. It was a painstaking task according to his employee Joseph Moris: "...We left Colville on the 17 March 1890 and went as far as the Little Dalles by sleigh and there Mr. Bordeau hired a boat and two men to help us up the river to the mouth of Trail Creek. Here Mr. Bordeau expected to have horses to do the packing from the river to the claim but we found too much snow on the trail so we could not use horses for the packing. So Mr. Bordeau and I had to pack everything on our backs and as I remember it now, it was very hard work as we had to travel over 5-feet of snow and in the afternoon it was impossible to get over it at all. It was not until we were very near through with the assessment work that the snow had gone off enough so I could see some bare patches of ground on the south slope of Red Mountain which showed the surface to be very red and which attracted my attention at once."

Moris endured pure hell putting in an entrance to an underground mine with a sledgehammer, drill rods and a few sticks of dynamite. Work was painstakingly slow as he had to sharpen his drill bits nightly in readiness for the next day's work.

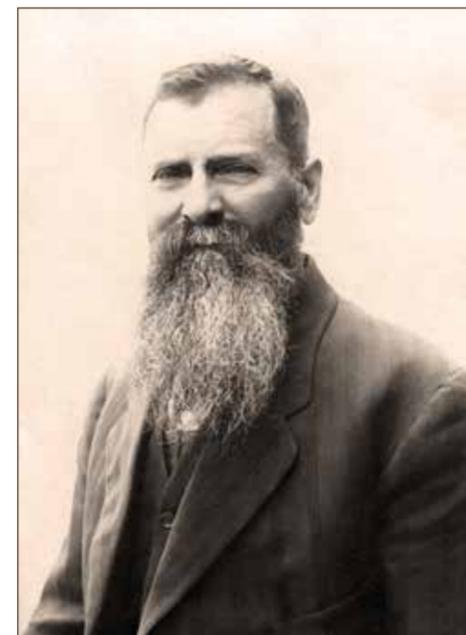
It was only after the completion of the assessment work that Bordeau informed Moris that he didn't have the money on his person to pay for his labours. Bordeau told Moris that he did have money in Nelson. On his way to Nelson Moris found an interesting looking cropping and located the Homestake claim. Unfortunately for Moris, money seemed to elude him for Bordeau reneged on making any payment even after the pair reached Nelson. To get some quick money for supplies, Moris decided to go and work in the

Silver King Mine on Toad Mountain above the town of Nelson for a few weeks. Upon being paid, he bought supplies and headed back to the Homestake claim to do assessment work when he chanced a meeting with George 'Bushway' Bourgeois. An experienced miner, Bourgeois persuaded Moris to abandon his discovery and go with him to explore the side of a mountain that had been burned over by a brush fire leaving a red scar. They dubbed the height of land Red Mountain. On 2 July 1890 the two men discovered the following five claims: Centre Star, War Eagle, Idaho, Virginia and Le Wise. Since the two men were only allowed two claims each, Moris put two stakes on the extension of the Centre Star and called it the Le Wise.

The next morning, 3 July, the two men departed for Nelson and arrived on the 4 July. They had their 10 samples assayed. Since the results were not that promising, Bourgeois, although he had \$700 in the bank, was not interested in having the claims put on record for \$6.25 each. Moris, the inexperienced miner, was almost broke with only \$18, disagreed. Bourgeois suggested they discuss their discovery with Eugene Sayre Topping, the Deputy Mining Recorder at Nelson. They told Topping about their find and offered him the Le Wise if he'd pay the \$37.50 recording fees on all six claims.

The two men left Nelson on the 17 July and were joined by Topping 3 days later. Topping examined the Centre Star extension and finally remarked to his companions: "I'll keep it. We'll call it the Le Roi and next month I will go down to Spokane and raise money to work it." Thus did Topping purchase what would become one of the richest mines in the world and earn him the name of "The Father of Trail". Born in New York State in 1842, Topping changed occupations frequently. He was a sailor, railway builder, trapper, scout, miner and newspaper reporter. In 1883, he wrote 'Chronicles of Yellowstone'.

True to his word, Topping left for Spokane with ore samples from his claim on the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway. This rail line, built by Daniel Chase Corbin, ran north from Spokane Falls to Colville. On the train or while overnighting at



**NEWLIN HOOVER**

Hoover came to Nelson in 1887 and was at one time owner of the Nelson townsite south of Hoover Street. He located the Lily May Mine at Rossland before the discovery of the famous LeRoi Mine.

TOUCHESTONE NELSON MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY #69.4.13

**AN ORE CAR SITS ON DISPLAY IN FRONT OF THE PRINCETON MUSEUM.**



**QUARTZ SAMPLES CONTAINING GOLD TAKEN FROM IN AND AROUND ROSSLAND.**

Colville, Topping chanced to meet Colonel William W. Ridpath and lawyer George Forster.

Both Ridpath and Forster were influential businessmen from Spokane and they were most interested in Topping's ore samples. They told 6 associates about their chance meeting with Topping and a deal was struck that was acceptable to everyone. The 6 newcomers were brothers George and W. W. Turner, Oliver Durant, Alexander Tarbet, F. Graves and Isaac N. Peyton. Topping would sell a 16/30th interest in his mine to the 8 Spokane businessmen. The new partners would each get a 1/15th interest in the mine for \$2,000 and Topping would retain a \$14,000 interest. The new syndicate agreed to do assessment work in the amount of \$3,000 by 1 June 1891. William J. Harris, owner of a hostelry in

Spokane, became a member of the group by accepting shares in payment of debts owned to him by members of the syndicate. Payton later purchased Topping's remaining shares and sold them to friends in Spokane. The new owners wasted little time and registered their purchase as the Le Roi Mining and Smelting Company of Spokane. The new owners now decided to issue 500,000 shares at a par value of \$5 providing there were buyers. There would soon be a glitch. The company was registered in the State of Washington but the mine was on Canadian soil!

In the spring of 1891 Topping took Durant and Harris to the Le Roi claim and before long they had 3 men build a cabin and put in an inclined shaft for 60 feet on the property. By that fall the men at the Le Roi had

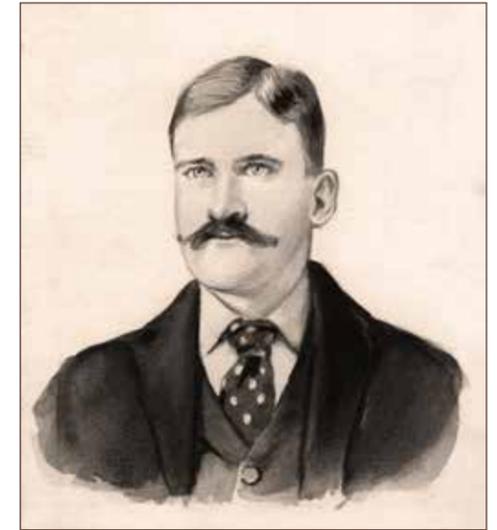
7 tons of high grade ore ready to be packed down the 7-miles of trail from their camp to the Columbia River where it was unloaded onto a boat for transportation south to the Little Dalles. From here the ore was prepared for transshipment to a far off smelter belonging to American copper king Marcus Daly in Butte, Montana. The ore ran 5 to 20 % copper. It also yielded 3 to 10 ounces of silver and from 2 to 20 ounces in gold to the ton. Although the lengthy freight and costly smelting charges ate up all the profits, the ore was incredibly rich. The entrepreneurs quickly realized that they would need a smelter much closer to the mine site to be profitable. By now the word was out that a rich ore body had been discovered in the Kootenay district of British Columbia and the local inhabitants prepared for the inevitable rush.

Topping invested his money and with Frank Hannah, a blacksmith-pro prospector, and laid out a town site at confluence of where the trail from the mining camp connected with the Columbia River. The pair called the place Trail Creek Landing. In January 1892 Ross Thompson, although only 27-years old, had a vision for the future and decided to pre-empt a 160-acre town site a short distance from the discoveries. He wanted to call the place Thompson but since a town by that name already existed ending up settling on the name of Rossland.

Joe Moris sold his Centre Star claim to Oliver Durant of the Le Roi syndicate while Joe Bourgeois allowed his War Eagle to be bonded to Durant and Tarbet.

Two big moneyed Americans cast their sights on Rossland's mines. One of the first was Fritz Augustus Heinze. He had heard rumours that David C. Corbin, the American railroad magnate and the owner of the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway and the Nelson and Fort Shepherd Railways was considering building a smelter in northern Washington at Northport.

Heinze became one of British Columbia's most flamboyant industrial pioneers. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1869. His father was a German Jew. His mother was Irish. He graduated from the School of Mines of Columbia University in his birth state and with both brawn and brains at age 20 went to work as an engineer with the Boston and Montana Copper Company in the wide-open town of Butte. He studied American mining laws and his shrewd mind began to find loopholes in the system. Heinze was not long with his employer before being let go to make room for the relative of a large shareholder. Now he held a grudge. He raised the necessary capital to purchase an abandoned water-filled mine adjacent to a rich Boston



**ROSS THOMPSON**

The founder of Rossland, Thompson initially wanted to name the town Thompson but a town by that name already existed—hence the name of Rossland.

COURTESY ROSSLAND MINING MUSEUM



**A VIEW SOUTH OF THE LE ROI MINE.**

COURTESY ROSSLAND MUSEUM #45-746 CARPENTER & MILLAR PHOTOGRAPHY



#### MINING COMPETITION

Two brawny miners compete in a drillers' competition at the 4 July 1897 celebrations in Rossland. There were two methods of hand drilling in the mine shafts and adits. One was called the "single jack" and involved a single miner using a four-or-five pound hammer to strike the drill steel that was turned after each blow to keep the hole round. The other method was the "double jack" and it involved two miners. In this case the hammer weighted eight pounds and had a longer handle than the single jack. The two men worked as a team with one wielding the sledge hammer that struck the steel as the other partner turned the bit to keep the hole round. The miners would drill the holes into the rock to provide a place for a stick of dynamite prior to blasting. It was dangerous work.

HISTORICAL PHOTO #061680  
ROYAL BC MUSEUM & ARCHIVES



#### FOLLOWING PAGES

A map showing the many claims at Rossland.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS G.3512-K65-1897-C680







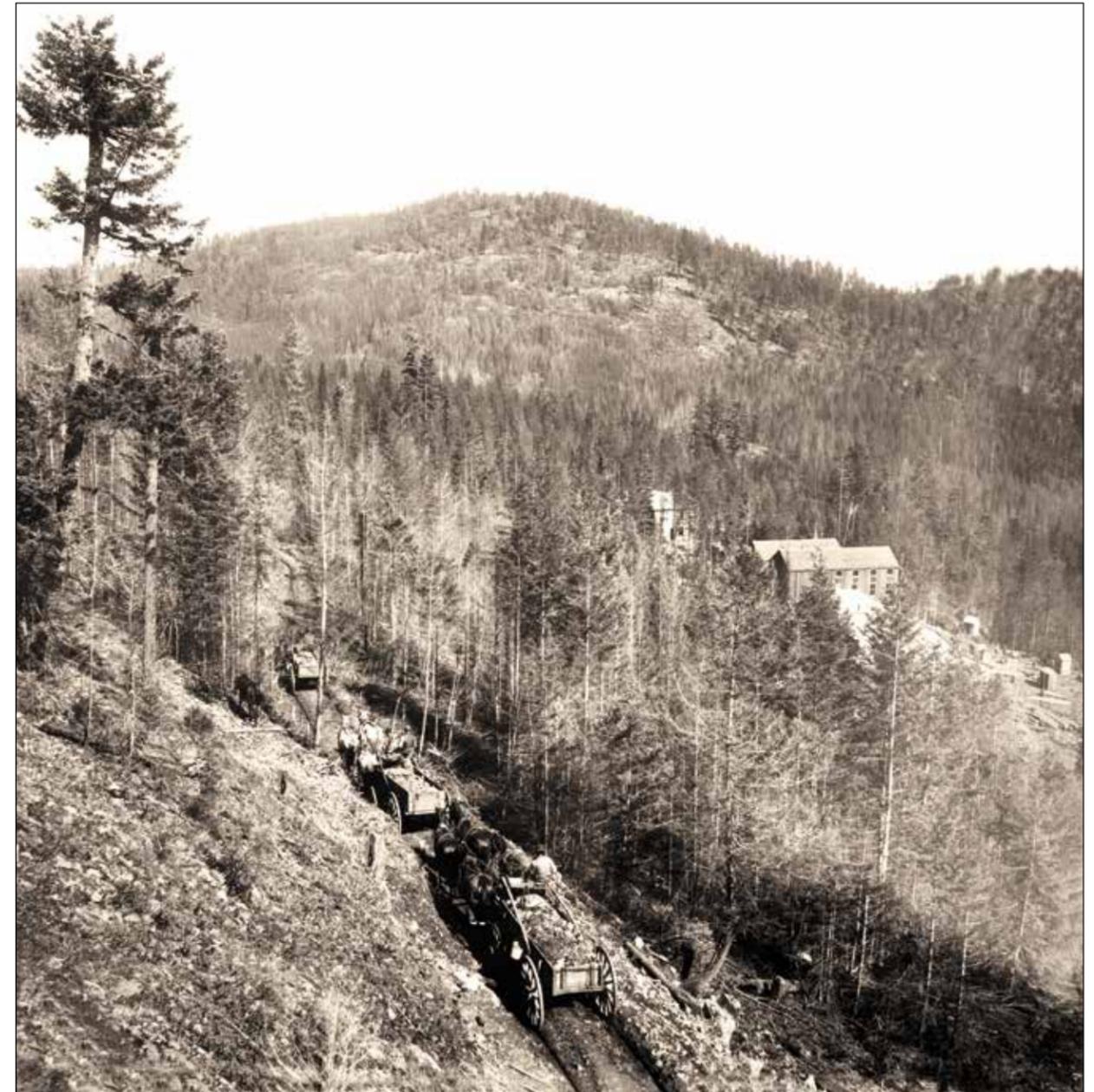
and Montana property and built an onsite smelter. He began doing underground raids on rich copper bearing neighbouring mines and bringing the ore out through shafts on his own mine. To hide his thievery, he dynamited the shafts once the ore was brought to the surface and smelted. The big players went after him but because he had powerful friends in high places, he was able to keep his enemies at bay.

It was during this turbulent time that Heinze heard about the Le Roi Mine at Rossland. Now 26 and a self-made millionaire, Heinze sent emissaries to Rossland and they reported back that he could make big money honestly by building a smelter. The provincial government offered inducements and Topping offered 1/3 of his townsite for a smelter. He quickly agreed and immediately built a tramway from the mine down the long hill to Trail. Heinze's men had concluded a contract with the Le Roi management to treat 75,000 tons of ore. The first half of the ore was to be treated for \$11 a ton and the remainder at a lower price if possible.

On 13 September 1895 ground was broken for his new smelter just



AN ORE CAR SITS ON DISPLAY NEAR THE ENTRANCE INTO THE PRINCETON MUSEUM.



Three heavily loaded ore wagons cut deep groves into the road upon leaving Rossland around 1895.

VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES #137-38  
STEPHEN JOSEPH THOMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY





**FRITZ AUGUSTUS HEINZE (1864 - 1914)**

Unscrupulous, this fast living American was known as the copper king of Butte, Montana, before venturing north across the Canadian border to do battle with the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Heinze went from being a super wealthy citizen to one that was broke very quickly.

HISTORICAL PHOTO#057107 ROYAL BC MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

above Trail on the Columbia River. Two hundred men worked on the buildings resulting in the smelter being ready for the first ore on the 1 February 1896. The growing success of the smelter led Heinze to replace the tramway with a 7-mile long narrow-gauge railroad from the mine down to Rossland. It was during this time that two of his smelter managers at Trail defected from his employment and built a smelter in competition at Northport in Washington.

Heinze soon learned that the Canadian Pacific Railway's executives had decided to run a spur line towards Trail. Now railroad conscious, Heinze built his Columbia and Western Railway to bring ore from Kootenay Lake to Trail. With copper ore being found in Phoenix Mountain near Grand Forks, the alert developer saw a new opportunity. The American went to Victoria to lobby for a charter to extend his railroad west to Penticton. The 30-year old Jewish genius made the error of biting off more than he could chew. He became tangled up in legal battles with Marcus Daly, owner of the Acaconda Mines in Butte, Montana, and with John D. Rockefeller, another Montana copper king and the President of Standard Oil.

Thomas Shaughnessy, the second president of the Canadian Pacific Railroad turned to a friend to help him select a suitable man to look after his interests in Trail. The close associate suggested Walter Hull Aldridge. Shaughnessy was impressed with the young man's impeccable credentials and knowledge of mining. Aldridge had gone to the School of Mines at Columbia University and had graduated with Heinze. He was the perfect man for the job for he knew Heinze's idiosyncrasies. Shaughnessy was lucky to get the young graduate engineer as he'd just been offered a job with the Guggenheim brothers of New York, one of the wealthiest families in the United States. After some deliberation, Hull accepted the C.P.R.'s offer to assist in the purchase of the Trail smelter and then to stay on and manage the newly formed Canadian Smelting Works. Rumours that the company was ready to sell began circulating in 1897 when owners started to disagree on the management of the mine. The values of the mines escalated when the Honourable Charles H. MacIntosh, the Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories (later the Province of Alberta) travelled to London, England, looking for wealthy Englishmen to invest in Canadian ventures. McIntosh met with school chum Whittaker Wright, the top figure in the London and Globe Finance Company. A true gambler with other peoples' money, Wright didn't hesitate to launch a new company with MacIntosh to acquire mining

properties throughout British Columbia and Alaska. It was to be known as the British America Corporation. As the managing director in Canada for the new company, MacIntosh left London and very quickly was in Rossland buying up property around the Le Roi Mine. At the same time Colonel Peyton and Judge Turner were in London for the express purpose of selling the Le Roi. Peyton met with Wright contacts in London and arranged the sale of the Le Roi for \$3,000,000. Unfortunately, his price was \$2,000,000 short of what some of the mine owners wanted for their gold mine. The case ended

up in a Spokane courtroom. The position of the State of Washington was that no alien could hold property within the state. Ironically, the property in question was in Canada. As a result the lawyer representing English interests gathered together as many documents as possible and fled across the border back into British Columbia.

American Heinze was also having problems with his Trail smelter. He wanted to charge higher rates to process than originally negotiated with the result that



These giant compressors for the Le Roi Mine, were built by the Ingersoll Rock Drill Company, Montreal, and shipped by rail across Canada to Rossland. A Red Mountain Railroad spur line transported the heavy equipment to the entrance to the mine.

COURTESY ROSSLAND MUSEUM #45-1853

## THE DUFFERIN COACH



Lord Dufferin in 1873, mistakenly identified in this archival portrait, became a well known figure following the publication of a best-selling account of his travels in North America. In 1872 he became the third Governor General of Canada, a position that he held until 1878. By a strange twist of fate, Lord Dufferin's downfall came when he gave both moral and financial support to the London and Globe Financial Corporation—headed by England's financial wizard Whitaker Wright—the man who was persuaded him into heavily investing in a mine in British Columbia. The mine, located in Rossland, eventually became the largest lead, zinc, gold and silver mine in the British Empire, that morphed into Cominco (Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company).

BOTH COURTESY NEW WESTMINSTER MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

The following information was gleaned from notes in the New Westminster Museum opposite the Dufferin Coach:

This coach was built in San Francisco in 1876, shipped to this area, and used to carry Lord and Lady Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, on a tour of British Columbia. A four to six horse team pulled the coach.

The coach was built in 1876 by N.H. Black and Company of San Francisco, especially for the purpose of carrying Lord and Lady Dufferin on their trip to the Cariboo gold fields. The splendid Dufferin Coach, its specially chosen horses, and the accompanying coach, attracted much attention on their journey.

The springs are made of 16-ply leather and the body is solid oak. The iron tires on the wheels were so made and shrunk and the only way to get them off is to break the spokes out of them. The seating capacity of the coach is 9-6 inside and 3 on the box including the driver. The total cost of such superior quality construction came to \$1,200, a very high price. After the coach was built it was transported to Yale on a steamer ahead of Lord and Lady Dufferin to await their arrival.

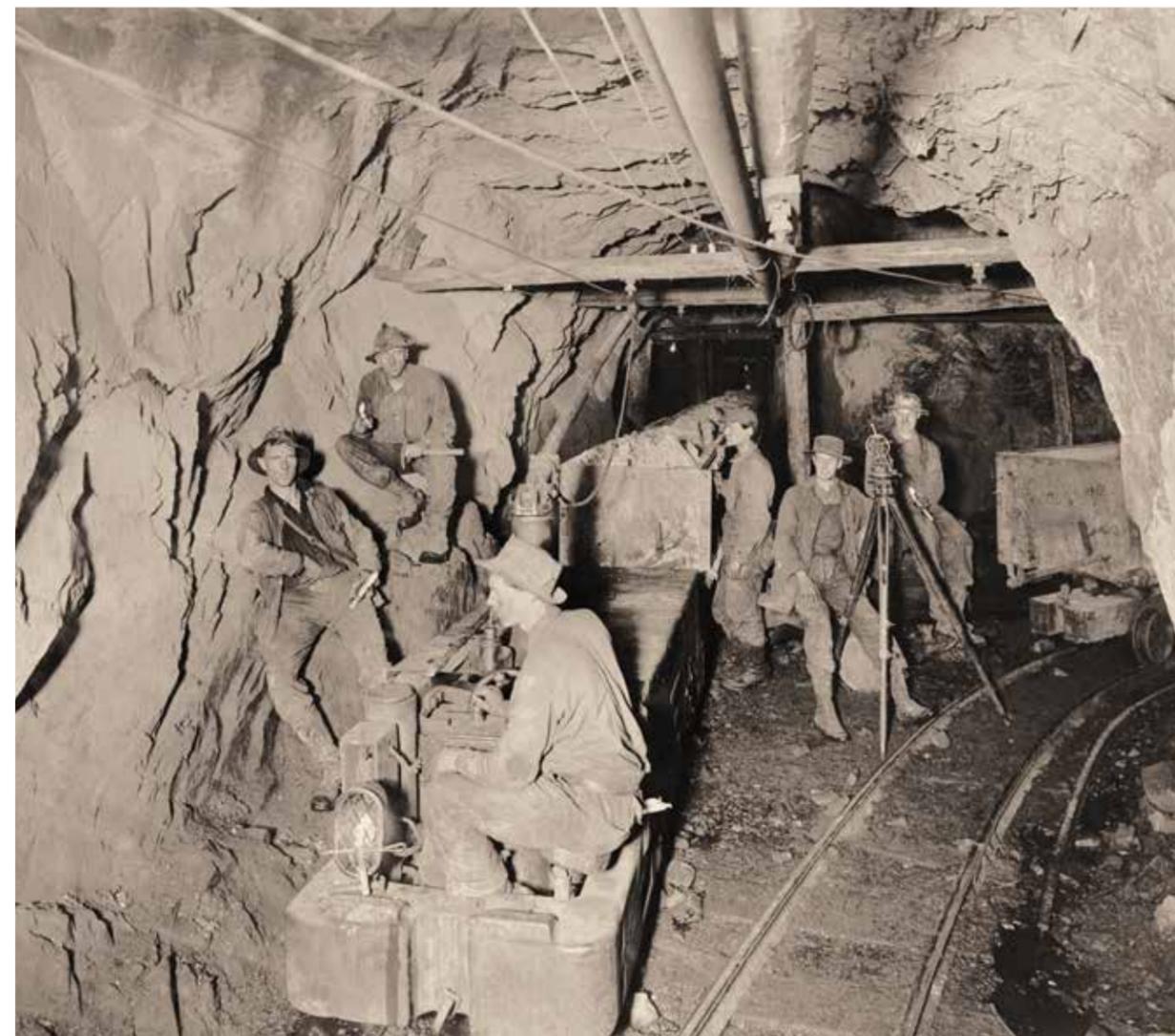


other smelters began to be built on both sides of the border. Heintz heard that Shaughnesy was interested in purchasing his smelter. Heintz bought a newspaper and told the publisher to write derogatory editorials about the greedy railroad magnate. Heintz had hoped to get \$1,000,000 for his smelter but in the end sold out to the CPR for only \$300,000.

Some of the major players in the Rossland mines came to tragic ends.

London-based swindler Whitaker Wright was convicted of fraud in 1904 and given a seven-year sentence. Before being taken away he managed to swallow cyanide pills and died in the courtroom.

In 1907 Heintz moved back to his birthplace of New York and with his two brothers became major players in the financial arena. Their company caused a financial collapse that came to be known as the "Panic of 1907". He died in 1914 at the age of 44 from cirrhosis of the liver.



THE WAR EAGLE MINE IN ROSSLAND BEFORE THE WIDESPREAD USE OF HARD HATS, 1913.

COURTESY ROSSLAND HERITAGE MUSEUM & ARCHIVES #50-1762