# *John Dean at Granite Creek*

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# Contents

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This is the story of one man's eight-month search for a fortune in the Granite Creek gold rush of 1886.[a] It is a tale of high expectations, inventiveness, hard work and persistence in primitive circumstances, but ultimately it is a tale of frustration, exasperation and failure. Based on John Dean's daily diary for 1886, it provides interesting insights into the life of a prospector in what was then a remote, isolated mining camp.[b]

John Dean was an Englishman, who settled in Victoria in 1884. Trained as a carpenter, he launched a career as a builder, contractor and real estate broker in Victoria while dabbling in Conservative municipal politics. He was an inveterate traveller. Before Victoria, he lived and worked in several cities in North America -- Toronto, Chicago, New York, Galveston -- and while based in Victoria he visited several parts of the province, sometimes under difficult circumstances. Although he was an orphan from an early age, through his own ability and prodigious energy he became a wealthy man who devoted much of his elder years to travelling worldwide. In 1896 he made the leap from Victoria to the booming mining camp of Rossland, where he settled temporarily and became a prominent real estate broker and municipal politician. He served a year as an alderman and another as mayor, and then returned to Victoria. In the 1920s, Dean donated land that he had purchased on Mount Newton, just outside Victoria, to the Province to be used as a park. It is now the John Dean Provincial Park.[1]

One of John Dean's sallies into the interior of British Columbia took him to Granite Creek, a creek that flows into the south side of the Tulameen River, between Otter Lake and Princeton in the Similkameen district of the southern interior of British Columbia. The discovery of a rich deposit of placer gold on Granite Creek in mid-1885 set off an intense but short-lived gold rush that reached its peak in 1886 and

[a] I am particularly grateful to Diane Sterne for the provision of mining-claim data, Lou Hare's diary and other information about Granite Creek and Granite City -- and for her editorial work and general encouragement. I am also grateful to Emmanuelle Dugas, a summer research student at the Nicola Valley Museum and Archives for her assistance and to Marcie Powell for reading a draft of the manuscript and correcting grammatical and spelling errors. If errors remain, they result from my later tinkering with the manuscript.

[b] Dates in brackets are dates of entries in the diaries. The diaries were not written for public consumption so Dean did not spend time polishing the prose. The text is replete with incomplete sentences, unusual capitalization, misspellings and bad grammar. When I quote passages, I have not corrected these errors, nor have I highlighted them by littering the text with the grammarian's notation (Sic). Passages are reproduced as Dean wrote them.

Dean's diaries are part of the John Dean Fonds at the B C Archives [Dean, 1873-1937, Diaries ]. However, for anyone interested in Dean's early years in British Columbia, including at Granite Creek, there is a much more convenient source. Jarrett Teague has transcribed the diaries for the years 1884-1888 in Teague, 2015a, *John Dean's TIme: Pioneer British Columbia Revealed Through Diaries and Images*. This book also contains a wealth of photographs of Dean and people and things relevant to his life in British Columbia.

then abruptly subsided. John Dean was part of the 1886 rush of prospectors seeking instant fortunes in gold nuggets and dust.

## *Gold Along the Similkameen and the Tulameen*

By 1885, it was well known that there was gold along the Tulameen River, in the vicinity of Granite Creek, but no finds had been reported along the creek itself. Gold had been discovered on the Similkameen River in 1859,[c] followed the next year by discoveries at Rock Creek, about 60 miles east from the closest point on the Similkameen.[2] These finds sparked minor gold rushes in 1860/61. Prospectors and supplies flooded in from Washington and Oregon, focusing attention in British Columbia on the difficulty created by the high mountains east of Hope, for access to the southern interior by both prospectors wanting to join the gold rush and merchants seeking to provide supplies to the mining camps.[3] In response, major improvements were made to the old pack trail from Hope to the Similkameen and attention was paid to the collection of duties at the border on goods brought in from the south.[4] Both the Similkameen and the Rock Creek gold rushes produced some rich finds, but overall the results seem to have been modest. Indeed, some prospectors quickly departed, expressing disappointment at the paucity of gold and the high cost of supplies.[5] However, others persisted.

By 1860, there was a sizable Chinese population in British Columbia, largely attracted by the 1858 gold rush on the Fraser River. Many were engaged in placer mining along the Fraser, often working properties that had been rejected or abandoned as insufficiently rewarding by non-Chinese miners. Their patience and diligence produced modest returns, but provided a living. Like others, these Chinese miners were attracted by the reports of richer gold deposits on the Similkameen. At least one confrontation occurred. It was reported in August, 1860, that a group of Chinese miners attempting to work on the Similkameen was driven away by other miners.[6] However, the Chinese were persistent. In April, 1861, an advance party of Chinese miners was said to be making a good return on the Similkameen and had sent word to others to join them.[7] It was then reported that "Between 150 and 200 Chinamen have gone over (the Hope Princeton trail), carrying their baggage, during the last 16 days,"[8] and by August, one commentator

[c] There had been prospecting and small-scale placer mining along the Similkameen earlier, but not of sufficient interest to attract the attention of the outside world. It was the 1859 discovery that brought the Similkameen into the spotlight. The initial discovery, on a bar in the river, was by soldiers with the International Boundary Commission, so it was probably near the Canada/ US border [Victoria Colonist, 1859a, No Title: Miscellaneous News Item]. The Commission reported that finds were made up to five miles in each direction from the original one [Olympia Pioneer, 1859a, Interesting Letter From Colville, Olympia Pioneer, 1859b, Important News From The Similkameen Mines ], but the whole river soon became the hunting grounds. Prospecting quickly spread north to the vicinity of Princeton, then commonly called "the Forks," "Vermillion Forks," "Allison's Forks" or simply "Allison's." [Victoria Colonist, 1860d, Government Prospecting Party ]. Initially, the Dalles, Oregon, was the primary supply point for the Similkameen and Rock Creek mines, supplemented to a limited extent with supplies carried over the Naches Pass through the Cascade Mountains from Seattle. The town of the Dalles, about 130 miles east of Portland at a point at which the Columbia River becomes narrow and rapid, was an important distribution point for the interior of Washington. Advocates of a Hope-Similkameen supply route expressed serious concern that applicable duties were not assessed on goods brought in from Washington, perhaps by design (to help consolidate the gold rush), perhaps because of difficulties of enforcement. Governor Douglas responded with a contract to improve the Hope-Similkameen trail and by stationing more duty collectors at points on the border.

estimated that “At the Similkameen there are about 200 miners at work, 150 of whom are Chinamen.”[9] Then, in 1861, startlingly rich gold discoveries on Williams Creek set off the famous Cariboo gold rush. Many miners on the Similkameen and Rock Creek joined the rush to the Cariboo, abandoning their properties. Chinese miners stepped in.[10] Although some non-Chinese continued to work some properties, prospecting and mining along the Similkameen became essentially a Chinese preserve.

The Chinese miners worked their way up the river and by mid-1866 it was reported that they “have struck good paying diggings on the north fork of the Similkameen,” [11] as the Tulameen was commonly called. However, there is no evidence that they prospected along Granite Creek, a minor creek with difficult terrain that impeded access. There was no Gold Commissioner for the area to issue free miner’s certificates, collect the licensing fees and generally enforce the mining laws and no Mining Recorder to register claims, collect the registration fees and record (or estimate) the output. The Chinese gold miners along the Similkameen and Tulameen Rivers were essentially ignored by the mining authorities. From a mining perspective, the Similkameen-Tulameen area was a forgotten backwater that did not even merit mention in the annual reports of the Mines Department.

The situation changed in 1883. In June, a notice appeared in the “Appointments” section of the *British Columbia Gazette*:

> *John Fall Allison, Esquire, J.P., to issue Free Miners’ Certificates and record Mining Claims on the Similkameen River and its tributaries.*[12]

Allison was a pioneer rancher and merchant at Princeton, then commonly called “the Forks,” or “Vermillion Forks,” or simply “Allisons,” who had close ties to Governor Douglas. At this time he was not appointed Mining Recorder or Gold Commissioner; he was simply instructed to issue miner’s certificates, record claims and collect the associated fees in his capacity as Justice of the Peace, a status to which he had been appointed several years earlier. The impetus behind this unusual appointment appears to have been the hysteria about Chinese residents and their economic activities that was reaching a fever pitch in the province. The involvement of Chinese in placer mining was only a small part of the broader controversy, but it was a factor. It was asserted that the Chinese avoided paying taxes and fees by not taking out free miner’s licenses and by not registering their claims. Of course, they did not report their output, so it was an unknowable magniture. It was argued that their failure to take out free miner’s certificates, register their claims and pay the related fees gave them an unfair advantage over law-abiding miners and deprived the public purse of revenue. In effect, Allison was instructed to correct this situation in the Similkameen-Tulameen region by requiring the Chinese to take out free miner’s licenses and register their claims. [d]

[d] The anti-Chinese campaign was intensified in February, 1884, with the enactment of the Chinese Regulation Act, part of a larger campaign to deter Chinese from immigrating and settling in the province. The Act trebled the fee for a free miner’s license for a Chinese person, from $5 to $15. Moreover, each Chinese adult in the province was required to pay an annual fee of $10 for a license permitting him or her to reside in the province. Collectors of the license fee were appointed throughout the province. The Act did not come into force until one year after it was enacted, i.e., in February, 1885. At the beginning of June, 1885, a fine levied under the Act was contested as unconstitutional in the

Allison opened his Mining Recorder's book in June or July, 1883. The first, and only, claim registered in 1883 (July 28) was by a group of six Chinese miners, mining on a bar in the Tulameen, about 2½ miles up-river from Princeton (Record #1)[e]. This was followed in 1884 by ten claims, all Chinese, five on the Tulameen and five on the Similkameen, and before July 8, 1885, a further 12 Chinese claims, all on the Tulameen.[f] Apparently, the activities of the Chinese were then noticed by others. There was a report in May, 1885, that "the unemployed" had been encountered going to the area as prospectors and they were expected to be active over the summer of 1885.[13] The first non-Chinese claims along the Tulameen were recorded in April, May and June 1885. Perhaps the character of the Tulameen mining industry was about to change. Then, in early July, 1885, the discovery of gold on Granite Creek dramatically transformed the Tulameen valley -- both the nature of the mining industry and the composition and size of the population.

## *Granite Creek Gold Rush*

The Similkameen region was ranch country in 1885[14] and according to accepted history it was cowboys - although not local cowboys -- who set off the Granite Creek gold rush.[15] There are two stories about how this came to pass: the accidental discovery story, which seems to be the most widely accepted, and a story about deliberate prospecting and opportunism, bordering on theft, related by James Lynch.

One accidental discovery story appeared in a contemporary memoir by Susan Allison, wife of the pioneer rancher and merchant, John Fall Allison, founder of Princeton.[16] According to the Allison legend, the Granite Creek gold rush was initiated by a prank perpetrated by a number of Princeton cowboys who took some gold dust to Oroville, Washington, and showed it off as though it had been just discovered on the Similkameen or Tulameen River. Soon, a group, that included a cowboy named John Chance, rode into the Allison ranch with pack horses loaded with mining gear, wanting to know where the "big strike" was located. Susan Allison -- who was not a party to the prank, but had been warned by her returning cowboys that "it would not be dull long" -- said she did not know. The Oroville men began to prospect along the Tulameen River. On June 8 and 10, three cowboys, William Jenkins, E Purcell and John M

municipal Police Court in Victoria. The magistrate declined to rule on the issue of constitutionality, asserting that he did not have sufficient depth in the law to rule on constitutional issues and assessed a fine of $20. On appeal, in late August, the British Columbia Supreme Court overturned the conviction and declared the Act unconstitutional and hence unenforceable. The Chinese Regulation Act was then a dead letter. In March, 1886, Granite Creek miners urged the government to prohibit Chinese miners from obtaining free miner's certificates, which would also have prohibited them from legally prospecting and mining [Victoria Colonist, 1886h, Fourth Parliament, Fourth Session (March 1, 1886)].

[e] The numbers in brackets are the numbers of the claims recorded in the Mining Recorder's book and consolidated in an Excel spreadsheet by Diane Sterne.

[f] It is difficult to know how many Chinese miners and prospectors were active on the river at this time. I can identify 32 Chinese names with unique free miner's certificate numbers in the Recorder's Record book for the period 1883-July 8, 1885, but a few records of claims do not list names. Unfortunately, Allison does not provide us with a directory of free miner's certificates that he issued. However, they appear to have been issued with numbers in sequence, starting with 20401. Many numbers are missing. These may have been of prospectors, perhaps Chinese, who took out miner's certificates but did not locate a claim -- or they may simply be numbers that for some reason were skipped. Thus, the number of free miner's certificates of Chinese miners listed in the Record Book is not a reliable guide to the size of the population. However, I suspect that there were probably less than 50 Chinese miners active in the Tulameen at various times in 1883-85, not all at the same time. It was a small population.

Chance recorded adjacent claims on what was called the Rich Bar on the north side of the Tulameen River near Granite Creek (Records #21, #23). They also obtained the right to divert water from a nearby stream and to dig a ditch the length of the bar to facilitate washing the dirt and gravel dug up in their search for gold (Records #24, #36).

Susan Allison reports that the cowboys took the development of their claims seriously, working hard "except for one man, Johnny Chance, who was too lazy to work." Eventually, they "gave him a gun and told him to get them a few grouse." There are at least two stories about what happened next. According to Susan Allison, Chance was resting in the Granite Creek valley bottom

> *with his feet paddling in the cool water, when a ray of light fell on something yellow. He drew it towards him, picked it up and found it was a nugget of pure gold. He looked into the water again and there was another, then another. He pulled out his buckskin purse and slowly filled it, then picking up his gun he strolled back to camp where he became a hero and the discoverer of Granite Creek.*[17]

In another contemporary account, P L Trout offers a slightly different version of the actual discovery, but with the same conclusion. He does not explain how the American cowboys got to the Tulameen, but once there

> *… for some reason best known to himself, Mr. Chance undertook the task of riding up the canyon of Granite creek for a mile or more, a task about as difficult as some other ventures that have made cowboys famous, such as riding up the stairs in a hotel, riding into a church, etc. However, while on this expedition he noticed small pieces of gold in the cracks of the rocks. Realizing that he had discovered a bonanza, he informed three of his friends, who were mining down the Similkameen,*[g] *who came up and located the discovery claim about one half mile above where the town now stands.*[18]

The discovery was accidental.

Yet another version of the accidental discovery story was published in a reminiscence by Thomas H Murphy, a long-term resident of Granite City and Tulameen.[h] According to Murphy, rather than being victims of a prank, the American cowboys were in the area "herding a bunch of horses in the adjacent hills." Murphy says that they heard about a discovery of gold on the Tulameen River by "Charles De

[g] Trout no doubt means the North Fork of the Similkameen, the name frequently applied to what we now call the Tulameen.

[h] [Murphy, 1905a, In Days Gone By]. Murphy recorded a claim on Granite Creek on November 13, 1896 (Record # 156). It was a "hill claim," i.e., one on the hillside above the creek that involved tunneling, but he also claimed or purchased claims on the creek and on benches above the creek. In his response to the 1911 census he reported that he was born in Nova Scotia in November, 1842. However, I have been unable to find a record of his birth or of his whereabouts and activities in the intervening years. Murphy was one of the longest-staying residents of Granite City. He was still there in 1910, but the 1911 census shows him living in Tulameen. He remained in Tulameen until he died in 1930. He was a respected citizen, serving as Justice of the Peace for many years (in publishing his reminiscences, the editor referred to him as "Judge Murphy") and, at one time, a popular choice for Gold Commissioner (he was not appointed). He was the enumerator for the 1921 Census. In addition to mining, on occasion he served as agent for other miners buying and selling properties.

Barro and Joseph Florence"[i] and decided to abandon their herding of horses -- which may not have been entirely legal -- in favour of prospecting. They took up a claim across the river from the De Barro-Florence claim. The discovery on Granite Creek occurred when John Chance went searching for a stray horse and stopped to take a drink from the creek.

> *In kneeling to get a drink out of the creek he saw gold lying on the bedrock. Helping himself to what gold there was in sight, he returned to camp and reported the new strike. The news spread like a prairie fire.*

Whichever (if any) of these versions is true, these three Similkameen pioneers agree that the discovery was accidental, not a result of deliberate prospecting.

A rather different, more prosaic story was recounted by James M Lynch, who was at Granite Creek in August, 1885, soon after the rush began.[19] He did not dispute that the four men registered the Discovery Claim. Nonetheless, he stated emphatically that it was "misleading" to conclude that they were the discoverers of gold on Granite Creek. According to Lynch, gold was in fact discovered by William Briggs, Mike Sullivan and John Bromley who were prospecting along Granite Creek in the late summer and autumn of 1884. Because of heavy rains, water in the creek rose so suddenly that they could not stake and record a claim, but they did show the gold that they had recovered to John Allison at Princeton. Impressed by the apparent richness of the find, Allison prepared his store over the winter for a gold rush in the spring and summer. According to Lynch, the American cowboys were camping at Allison's ranch over the winter of 1884/85, saw Allison's preparations, heard about the Briggs' find and went to Granite Creek as soon as weather and water level permitted, staking the Discovery Claim before Briggs and company returned from their winter employment along the Fraser River. Thus, Lynch asserts, although they did not record the first claim on the creek, Briggs, Sullivan and Bromley were the true discoverers of the Granite Creek gold field. In effect, Chance and friends used insider information to cheat Briggs *et al* of their find. Some credence is given to the Lynch story by a brief note in the Daily Colonist for May 12, 1885. It began, "Granite Creek and the Similkameen has almost as much attraction for the unemployed as Cariboo this summer, and … many pilgrims (are) on the way for those gold fields."[20] This story was published well before the cowboys recorded the Discovery Claim. This is the first mention of Granite Creek that I have found in the press. As a gold field, it was still unknown. Had the "unemployed" been told about their find by Briggs, Sullivan or Bromley? Indeed, were Briggs and company among the "pilgrims"?

The Lynch story is plausible, but I find one feature of it puzzling. If their true destination was a known, rich find on Granite Creek, why did the cowboys stop -- at some cost -- to stake, record and work more

[i] The reference is probably to a claim by Joseph Florence and C DeBoudreau, on a bar on the south side of the Tulameen, opposite the cowboys' claims (Record #25). The puzzle is that this claim appears in the Recorder's book after the cowboys' claims, implying that it was recorded later. However, the Florence-DeBoudreau record is not dated. It is possible that its placement in the Record book is an error and that it was in fact staked and recorded earlier, perhaps in early June when other non-Chinese claims were recorded on the river. Nonetheless, its placement in the book is troublesome for the otherwise coherent Murphy theory.

problematic claims on a bar on the north side of the Tulameen River? Not only did they record these claims, they also acquired the right to divert water from a nearby creek and to dig a ditch along the length of the bar, to facilitate their mining. It seems like they had settled down to do some serious placer mining on the Tulameen. If they knew about the rich Briggs' find, it seems more likely that they would have gone directly to Granite Creek as soon as weather and water permitted, perhaps camping on a bench over the creek to be sure of getting there first. Perhaps, it is because of this puzzle that historians have accepted the Allison-Trout story. Alternatively, perhaps it is because it is more romantic.

I don't know which story of the discovery is true, but one fact is certain. Four men registered the Discovery Claim on July 8, 1885: William Jenkins, John M Chance, Thomas Curry and E M Allison. Jenkins and Chance were two of the Oroville cowboys.[j] A third, E Purcell, had sold his share of the Tulameen bar claim to W Jenkins for "one pinto horse." Although Lynch reports that he was also camped at the Allison ranch over the winter, Thomas Curry was not one of the cowboys. He was older, born about 1841, and an experienced miner[k] who, on July 5, had recorded a claim on the Rich Bar adjacent to that of Chance. E M Allison also was not one of the cowboys. He was John Fall Allison's 16-year-old son, Edgar Moir Allison. Growing up on the banks of the Similkameen, he may also have had considerable prospecting experience.

The inclusion of two outsiders in the partnership of the Discovery Claim -- and particularly, the inclusion of Allison's oldest son -- is interesting. Underlying the inclusion of outsiders was a provision of the Minerals Act respecting discovery claims.[21] A claim recognized as a discovery claim for a new mining area had special benefits. An ordinary claim was limited to 100 feet per partner along a creek bank.[22] For a recognized discovery claim, however, the limits were:

[j] It is not clear whether Chance ever did any real mining. He sold his share of the Discovery Claim to a group of Chinese miners a month after he recorded it (Record #105). Then for less than a year he was active staking, buying and selling claims, not only on Granite Creek but also on the Similkameen and Tulameen Rivers, including two discovery claims on other creeks (Records #413, #415) and two "quartz claims," in which the gold was embedded in quartz and was to be extracted by digging shafts and tunnels (Records #193, #408). In October he reported that he had found "a rich promising creek … much better than Granite," about 35 miles from Allison's [Victoria Colonist, 1885j, From Granite Creek, Victoria Colonist, 1885f, Granite Creek]. The location of the creek was not published (it was probably up stream on the Tulameen) and we don't know how profitable it was for him. Whatever money Chance made mining, he must have dissipated. Lynch tells us that he died a pauper at Republic, Washington, but does not provide a date [Lynch, 1930, The Discovery of Gold on Granite Creek].

Lynch also states that Jenkins was "something of a bully," who carried a revolver with three notches in the handle. Apparently, he moved to the Okanagan and then to Myers Creek, halfway between Rock Creek and Midway, and finally just across the border to Washington State. He is said to have killed a man, wounded another and died in prison [ibid., Nelson Miner, 1890a, Rossland].

[k] Curry was born in Boston in 1841. As a young man he went west to San Francisco and then north to Montana. He engaged in placer mining at Rock Creek before he went to Granite Creek. Chance and Jenkins had miner's certificates issued by J F Allison, # 20465 and #20466 in a long series that began with #20401. By contrast, Curry's certificate was #4093. It must have been issued some time earlier and in a different place, probably Rock Creek. Curry was active in mining along the West Fork of the Kettle River and became a well known and popular resident, working up and down the length of the valley. When the 1891 census was taken, he was in Osoyoos and Henderson's British Columbia Directory listed him at Rock Creek. Ten years later he was farther up the river, at Beaverton, later renamed Beaverdell, still engaged in mining. He died of a heart attack near Beaverdell in 1909 while walking with a fellow miner up a mountain trail to their claims.

| Number of Partners | Maximum Length of the Claim |
|---|---|
| | |
| 1 partner | 300 ft |
| 2 partners | 600 ft |
| 3 partners | 800 ft |
| 4 partners | 1000ft |
| | |
| (British Columbia 1882a, Section 65) | |

For any partners beyond four, the maximum length reverted to 100 feet for each additional partner. Jenkins and Chance each got 300 foot claims; Curry and Allison, 200 foot ones.

That Thomas Curry was included as a partner is probably explained by the fact that he had an adjacent claim on Rich Bar. He was someone they knew, who may have been helpful to them, and he was someone who had experience mining that would be valuable to them all. The inclusion of young Allison is fascinating. Growing up on the banks of the Similkameen, he may have had considerable placer prospecting experience, but he could not be considered a mature mining man. If Lynch's theory is correct, the cowboys may have become friendly with him while they were camped at his father's ranch and he may have been the source of information about the Briggs gold. Perhaps this possibility is a nod in favour of the Lynch story. Alternatively, Edgar may have been captivated by the cowboys' life style and actively cultivated their friendship. A few year later, he was in the stock raising business himself. Or, the cowboys may simply have been currying the favour of John Allison, who by this time had been appointed Assistant Gold Commissioner for the Rock Creek District, which included the Similkameen valley.[23]

The richness of the Discovery Claim quickly became known locally and was soon broadcast to the world. The gold rush was on. Prospectors flooded in. It was reported that by September, 1885, all of the land along the main section of the creek had been claimed and it was estimated that some 400 non-Chinese and an unknown number of Chinese prospectors were working in the area, exploring the potential of various creeks and the river.[24]

As successful miners returned to the coast in the fall and winter of 1885 to gather supplies or sojourn for the winter, reports about the wealth in gold dust and nuggets that they were finding at Granite Creek appeared every day or two in major coastal and interior newspapers. Considering that miners earned between $2 and $3 a day if employed and other workers even less, it should not be surprising that reports like the following excited fertile imaginations and acted like a magnet attracting footloose men:

> *The company have since made as high as $200 a day, the gold being coarse and of a fine quality …. An old man named Fay, working all alone, is making $40 a day.*[25]
>
> *Mr. Noble and his partner had one of the best paying claims on the creek and employed eight men, who averaged from $27 to $50 per day to the man. He brings down about $1,500 in dust, the largest piece weighing $18.50.*[26]

> *Mr. J F Allison, J.P. …brings about $5,000 worth of gold dust … entrusted to his care … among which is a nugget of smooth worn gold valued at $83; it is the property of a Chinaman.*[27]
>
> *Sam Evans, writing from Granite Creek, says he has taken out as high as $83 in one day ….*[28]
>
> *The output on the creek is very fair, an average of $40 to the claim being taken out daily. Messrs. McIntyre and Palmer, who are located about four miles from the mouth of the creek, have taken out from $40 to $80 daily for some time past with a rocker.*[29]
>
> *Mr. Ward saw a set of sluices within 1200 feet of the mouth which only one man shoveled, and the clean-up was $197 for ten hours. Another company of white men rocked out $9 in one day, and the very next day took out TWO HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS.*[30]

It is impossible to know which reports were substantially true, which involved considerable exaggeration and which had no foot in reality. In October, 1885 the Deputy Provincial Secretary, T Elwyn, was sent to Granite Creek by the Minister of Mines to investigate and assess the gold fields. In his report he presented one extreme view:

> *I was particularly impressed with the fact that those who were warmest in praise of these new diggings were among the most experienced miners there; and certainly, I have not, so far, seen any report in the newspapers which has gone beyond the truth.*[31]

There were skeptics, of course:

> *There is, no doubt, <u>some</u> gold in Granite Creek, but not enough to warrant a man who has employment, to leave it for the mines. With the exception of a half dozen claims there are no paying claims. The creek is about six miles long, and on either side are almost perpendicular banks, several feet high, which render the approach inaccessible, except from "the mouth." Mining is only practical in a few places at very low water, and should a freshet come all work must cease.*[32]

This message proved to be quite accurate. However, it, and others like it, did not divert the herd. The reports of dazzling gold discoveries overwhelmed the testimony of skeptics. There were suggestions that this was the new Cariboo, alluding to the famous, rich gold rush of a few years earlier. Men flocked to Granite Creek. In contemporary jargon, there was a stampede. Although devoid of relevant experience, John Dean was one of the footloose men with a fertile imagination who was captivated by the stories and attracted by the golden magnet. He joined the stampede.

As prospectors poured into Granite Creek, the provincial government began to set up the administrative apparatus of a booming mining camp. At first, although he was not yet appointed to the position, J F Allison, a Justice of the Peace, was responsible for performing the Gold Commissioner's tasks -- issuing free miner's licenses, recording claims, dispensing water rights and acting as judge in settling disputes. However, Allison was located at Princeton, 11 or 12 miles away from Granite Creek by a demanding, steep, mountain trail, a considerable inconvenience in a camp bursting with new claims. In late 1885, G

C Tunstall, then the Government Agent at Kamloops, was appointed to the post[33] of Gold Commissioner and assumed all of these responsibilities. He was also designated a stipendiary magistrate, responsible for the general administration of justice in the area. He arrived at Granite Creek in early 1886. A Mining Recorder was also appointed and a provincial constable was assigned to the camp. A post office was established in May, 1886.[34]

Granite Creek is deep in the mountains with the potential for bitter cold, heavy snow and ice. Almost all mining at Granite Creek at that time was placer mining. Little could be done when the banks and the creek were covered in snow and ice. Mining essentially closed for the winter. Moreover, conditions on the trail could be treacherous, muddy and slick in rainy periods and covered in deep snow and ice in winter. Potential prospectors were warned to wait until spring to attempt to reach the creek. However, the advice that spring was a good time to go to Granite Creek was misleading. It ignored the flooding that occurred in mountain creeks when the snow melted. In May, 1886, for example, a businessman from Granite City visiting New Westminster reported that spring floods had "carried away all the wing-dams,[l] sluice boxes and flumes on the creek," expensive and time-consuming installations that prospectors had made at low water in preparation for the 1886 season of placer mining. [35] His advice was to not go to Granite Creek until mid-June.

### *Routes to Granite Creek*

In the 1880s, Granite Creek was remote, isolated and difficult to access. For prospectors travelling from the coast, there were two routes to the creek.[m] The southern route -- what came to be known as the Hope-Princeton Trail -- was from Hope on a trail generally eastward through the mountains.[36] It started out as a wagon road for about 20 miles along the Nicolum River, rising steadily until it met the headwaters of the Sumallo River. The road was not well maintained and so, apart from a short stretch at the beginning, it was effectively a trail, only suitable for horses, mules and men walking. The Sumallo River flows in a generally eastward direction, down a gentle slope until it meets the junction of the Snass and Skagit Rivers. To this point, the trail was essentially coincident with the present Hope-Princeton highway. However, where the highway turns northward through Rhododendron Flats and then eastward across the face of the Skagit bluffs, the trail continued east along the Skagit River in the valley bottom below the bluffs. At this point, the Skagit River flows through a narrow canyon, with towering cliffs on each side.[37] One traveller in 1885 described walking "under an almost perpendicular wall of rock over three thousand

[l] A wing dam was a small dam built on the side of a creek bottom at low water to divert part of the flow of water away from a section of the creek bed thought to contain gold-bearing dirt and gravel that could then be sorted with gold pans, sluice boxes or rocker boxes. The wing dam was a standard approach to prospecting Granite Creek, which, through most of the relevant section, was canyon-like, with very steep, high banks and a very narrow bed. Granite Creek was not an easy placer-mining location. At high water, placer mining was impossible; at low water, the narrowness of the canyon provided very little space for a miner to work. A wing dam provided the miner with a foothold and access to potentially gold-bearing dirt and gravel.

[m] Prospectors arriving from the interior had partially different, and perhaps easier routes. Those arriving from northern points would probably have travelled a developed trail from Nicola to Princeton. Those from southern points would have made their way to Princeton by whatever convenient route and then followed the 12-mile Tulameen trail to Granite Creek.

feet high" and on his return trip travelling "from twelve o'clock until night in the shadow of this rock, never at any time obtaining a single glimpse of the sun."[38] The trail followed the Skagit River until its junction with Cedar Creek at what was then called Cedar Flats (now Cayuse Flats).[n] It then climbed the steep mountainside, following the Skaist River, until it reached the summit at the 6,000-foot Hope Pass, the next mountain pass north of the more familiar Allison Pass through which the Hope Princeton Highway crosses the mountain range. The rise from Cedar Flat to the Hope Pass is about 3,300 feet in 15 miles, a steep climb for man or beast. From the Hope Pass, the trail reached the headwaters of Whipsaw Creek, which it followed to the Similkameen River. It then followed the river to Princeton. From Princeton, the trail turned westward, about 12 miles over a steep, dry mountain beside the Tulameen River to Granite Creek (the river bank is so precipitous that the trail had to go over the adjacent mountain). The total distance from Hope to Granite Creek was estimated at 78 miles. Although a demanding mountain trail, the Hope-Princeton trail was a well-used passageway to the Similkameen country and beyond and parts of it are still used for recreational hiking.

The Hope-Princeton trail was heavily used by operators of pack trains carrying supplies to various places in the southern interior for merchants, miners and others, but was also a popular means of access to the Granite Creek gold fields by people, some on horses, but most on foot. Some touted it as the best route to the gold fields.[39] Accommodation for travellers existed along the trail and was being increased. Thus, an editorial in the New Westminster newspaper, the *British Columbian,* in late November, 1885, stated that

> *There are two excellent hotels now between Hope and Granite Creek, and a third will be opened very shortly. These way places furnish miners and others with meals and accommodation en route to and from the mines, and do away with the necessity of carrying a heavy pack.*[40]

A little over a month later, it was reported that there were five "hotels" along the route.[41] I am sure these statements involve a situational definition of "hotel" and "excellent." Trout described one establishment as "a bona-fide log cabin, covered with shakes, but minus a door and … for the small sum of four bits a man can have the soft side of a plank split out of a cedar log to sleep on."[42] In *White Gold and Black Diamonds,* her fascinating history of Granite Creek and Coalmont, Diane Sterne refers to the hotels as "crude roadhouses … makeshift places to 'grab some grub' and 'drop your blanket."[43] One commentator suggested "a person can go to the mines from this city (New Westminster) over that route comfortably for $10, or for less if he takes his own grub."[44]

The other route -- the northern route -- began at Spence's Bridge, on the CPR mainline and the Thompson River, and then went eastward along a wagon road to the Nicola Valley. For those who could afford the tariff, there was stage coach service on this part of the route and a hotel at Coutlee's ranch,

[n] Early plans for the Hope Princeton Highway proposed a valley-bottom route past the bluffs, but it was decided that the maintenance costs from snow, ice and debris falling from the cliffs would be excessive. A very expensive, dangerous but picturesque route across the face of the bluffs was chosen instead.

about a mile west of present-day Merritt (Dean reported that the fare was $5.00, a not inconsiderable sum in 1885). For travellers to Granite Creek, Coutlee's was the end of the coach ride. From there on they had to walk or acquire a horse or mule to ride. From Coutlee's, the trail went southeast to Courtney Lake where it met a well-travelled trail from Kamloops and Nicola to the north.[45] From there it followed Otter Creek south, passing Otter Lake until it reached the Tulameen River. A jog to the left brought the travellers to Granite Creek and Granite City.

Measured from the coast, the northern route was much longer than the southern route, but for a prospector (like John Dean) who could afford the train and stage coach fares, it was a much easier passage. The distance from Spence's Bridge to Granite Creek was estimated at 102 miles, but only about 60-65 miles of that was on the trail from Coultee's ranch. Moreover, the grade on the trail was much easier than that on the southern route. There was no 6,000 ft. mountain pass to be crossed and much of the trail, although rough, had a generally gentle slope along a large creek (now classified as a river) and several lakes. Advice given to potential prospectors by the *Victoria Colonist* favoured the northern route. Dean chose it.

Both the northern and the southern routes left the traveller on the north side of the Tulameen River. Granite City was on the south side. The Tulameen was not a trivial river. Crossing it was a problem until over the winter of 1885-86 the government built a bridge, 174 feet long and 8 feet wide.[46] The bridge had not been open long when the spring runoff carried away the centre span. It was quickly repaired, but the incident demonstrated the vulnerability of the bridge.

John Dean was impatient. If he accepted the Colonist's advice not to go to Granite Creek until spring, he had a rather early definition of spring. He left Victoria in mid-winter, on February 23, 1886. Following a very rough voyage across the strait, he spent several days in Vancouver and New Westminster, looking for business opportunities and dealing with Masonic Lodge affairs, before boarding a train for Yale on February 27. The next morning, he continued his train trip to Spence's Bridge to begin his overland trip to Granite Creek. From Spence's Bridge he took a stage coach to a place he called Kootley, undoubtedly Coutlee's ranch, where there was a hotel. Unfortunately, his diary entries for the next few days are sketchy at best. Neither the route to Granite Creek nor the means of transport are described, although two stopping places are noted. Dean makes no mention of acquiring a horse at Coutlee; he must have walked. He left Coutlee at 9:30 on March 1 and arrived at his first stopping point, said to be 20 miles down the trail, at 6:30 pm, "very hungry and very tired" (March 2, 1886). He called this place Manning's. It must have been "Manning's Tavern," noted in an 1885 Works Department report as being somewhere south of Courtney Lake in the Otter River valley, possibly at the junction of Sperling Creek and Otter Creek.[47] The next stopping point, about 10 miles along the trail, was at another roadhouse, Pike's.[o] He

[o] A story in the Victoria Colonist in December, 1885, stated that there was accommodation at two places on the trail to Granite City, "at Manning's, 28 miles, and Pike's, 35 miles from Nicola." Nicola was farther east than Coutlee's [Victoria Colonist, 1885g, Granite Creek]. The distance from Coultee's to Pike's was estimated as 35 miles and to Granite Creek, 65 miles. An 1887 Works Department report said that Pike's was 30 miles from Granite City [British

stayed there over night, and then carried on to Granite Creek, where he arrived about 6 PM, "in pretty good shape" (March 4, 1886). However, he was far too early in the season for prospecting. The ground was still covered with snow and the creek with snow and ice.

## *Dean at Granite Creek*

Granite City was a town that had developed spontaneously on a flat piece of land on the west side of the mouth of Granite Creek. It was a thriving community when Dean arrived and was growing. A late December, 1885, report stated that

> *At Granite there are eight general stores, six saloons, and two hotels, baker's and butcher's shops, drug store, three Chinese stores, wash-house, etc. There are two streets, Miners and Government, the former being at present the principal, but the latter is the coming street, being wider and more regular. There are about 52 log cabins in the town proper, besides many more scattered around.*[p]

By February, 1886, those numbers had increased to "9 general stores, including 2 Chinese stores, 9 saloons, and 3 restaurants"[48] and in late March

> *There are at Granite Creek thirteen hotels and saloons, nine groceries, two jewellers' stores, a shoemaker's and a drug store, two blacksmiths' shops and one doctor. Scores of new houses are building.*[49]

In mid-January, 1886, it was reported that there were about 150 houses on two streets[50] and building was continuing vigorously. Trout reported that there were also two or three "villages" of miners' cabins farther up the Creek, at least one of which had a store.

Stories of mining at Granite Creek suggest that many -- perhaps, most -- of the claims were held by "companies," not by individuals.[q] These were not limited liability corporations organized under the province's Companies Act, but *ad hoc*, temporary partnerships of two or more miners, organized on the spot, under a provision of the Mineral Act. However, like corporations, mining companies had the right to sue and be sued as an entity. The purpose was to share financial and other resources, as well as the work, the risk and hopefully the rewards from developing a claim. As then in effect, the Mineral Act provided for the formation and registration of such companies, which could be governed by the provisions

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Columbia, 1888c, Report Of The Chief Commission Of Lands And Works, 1887 ]. Clearly, all distances are, at best, approximations.

[p] [Victoria Colonist, 1885g, Granite Creek]. In *White Gold and Black Diamonds*, Sterne says there was only one street in Granite City. However, in later research she discovered a contemporary source that stated that there were in fact three streets: Government, Miners and Broad. Presumably, the third street was added during the 1886 building boom.

[q] The table of Mining Statistics in the Annual Report of the Minister of Mines in this period listed the number of companies working in each district, divided into the number of companies prospecting and the number producing. It did not list number of individual prospectors or miners working claims -- although it is possible that individual prospectors were counted as companies for statistical purposes. The table also lists the "number of interests." This, however, relates to the number of individuals involved in companies. In the Mineral Act, members of a company are not referred to as shareholders, but members, and the extent of their shareholding is referred to as their interest in the company. As with shareholders in a corporation, in voting, the weight of an individual's vote depended on his interest. Each member was not counted equally.

of the Act, or by their own articles of agreement if they were approved by the Gold Commissioner. The Commissioner would also act as a judge to settle disputes. The lead person in the company would be the manager or foreman. By registering the company with the Gold Commissioner, members obtained a form of limited liability, but a very weak form. They could not be held responsible for debts of the company beyond their share of the debts approved by the manager. Presumably, the critical provision was that to be valid, debts had to be approved by the manager. If he went wild, the protection offered by the Act did not amount to much. Shop owners who extended credit for purchases of equipment and supplies were probably the most common creditors of such mining companies. I don't know about other potential lenders to what were highly speculative ventures, but there were always some people willing to gamble when the potential prize was very large. A company had a life of one year, but it could be extended "from year to year by tacit consent."[51] Dean seized on the company concept to join with others in mining ventures.

After his arrival at Granite City, Dean spent two days resting and getting acquainted with the town. Just over three miles from its mouth, Granite Creek divided into two creeks, the South Fork and the North Fork (now called Blakeburn Creek). The part of the creek below the forks was thought to be the most productive part, but when Dean arrived all of the land along this section had already been claimed. Dean was an ambitious, aggressive business man, loaded with organizational talent, but naïve on mining matters. Steeped in the "you can't miss" psychology that pervaded at Granite City, he impetuously plunged into the placer mining business, sight unseen. On March 7 he joined a group of seven other miners who had staked a stretch of placer mining land on the South Fork, about five miles upstream from Granite City. On March 8, Dean busied himself "Drawing up Articles of Agreement and getting the Company together" (March 8, 1886). The "Relians Company" (Dean called it the Reliance Company) recorded 800 feet of "mining ground creek claim" (Record # 345) that day. There is no evidence in his diary that he had made the five-mile trek to inspect the grounds -- but perhaps he did not know enough about placer mining for a visit to make any difference.

The next day he drafted Articles of Agreement for the Victoria Company (March 9) and was "arranging for an interest in that" company (March 9, 1886). The Victoria Company predated Dean's arrival at Granite Creek, having staked claims on Granite Creek, the Tulameen River and other creeks from mid-September, 1885, with a changing cast of characters. Dean is never mentioned in the Recorder's book in connection with the Victoria Company. Perhaps he failed in his attempt to arrange an interest in the company. He did the same for a "hydraulic Mining Company" (March 9). This was probably the Jameson Hydraulic Company with which he was later heavily involved (April 5).

### *Dean on the Similkameen and Other Creeks*

With placer mining on the Tulameen and its tributaries stymied by snow and ice, Dean decided to look elsewhere for a workable claim. On March 11 he hired a horse and with two other men, one of whom was a Mr. Jameson (Dean spelled it Jamieson), who had a store at Granite City and had earlier been

active along the Similkameen, went to prospect a site on the South Fork of the Similkameen. (What he called the South Fork of the Similkameen we now regard simply as the Similkameen River.) Dean and Jameson complemented each other. Dean had the money, business experience and organizing ability needed to organize and manage a company. Jameson presumably had the mining experience needed to develop a prospective mine. I don't know Jameson's deeper background, but he had been a merchant and prospector in the area since June 1884.[r] I suspect that it was Jameson who persuaded Dean to undertake the Similkameen venture.

Jameson had a place along the Similkameen, probably in the vicinity of Whipsaw Creek. That is where they stayed. The next day they went out prospecting along the Similkameen. Dean said he was prospecting "by eye" because there was too much ice and snow to actually do any real prospecting (March 12). It snowed all that night, but the next day he tried a little prospecting along Whipsaw Creek, "with poor results, only getting a color or two" (March 13). Then there was a bizarre incident, on which he does not elaborate. One of his horses was shot; Dean does not tells us how, or why. The situation was quite serious because the other horse was suffering from a lack of food because of the snow covering the ground (March 13). Apparently, they had not brought food for the horses with them from Granite City.

At Jameson's urging, they decided not to return to Granite City immediately because "up to this time we had accomplished nothing" (March 13). Instead, Dean investigated two small, unnamed lakes (now called Smelter Lakes) for their capacity to provide water to a potential hydraulic mining site (March 14). The lakes were located near the headwaters of Wolf (now Wolfe) Creek, almost directly across the Similkameen from the mouth of Whipsaw Creek.[s] Sometime in April (no date noted), the Jameson Hydraulic Company applied for and was granted the right to divert water from Wolfe Creek into the two lakes and then draw water from the lakes to the adjoining bench on the Similkameen to permit washing the sand and gravel excavated from the site.

Describing his adventure on the Similkameen as "a pretty rough trip," Dean returned to Granite City on March 15, but he had not given up on the Similkameen prospect. He later made a serious prospecting trip to the site after the snow melted, discussed below (see p. 20). In the meantime, he spent two days at Granite City recuperating, "gassing" and "writing letters" (March 16, 17) before he went up the Tulameen River to investigate other creeks, including Bear Creek (now Lawless Creek) and Slate Creek (now Olivine Creek). Bear Creek is about 12 miles up the river from Granite City. It had received considerable prospecting attention in 1885,[52] but was generally regarded as unrewarding.[53] Dean agreed, saying I

[r] The *British Columbian* newspaper, published an extensive interview with James Jameson on March 27. He had arrived in New Westminster on March 22, having left the Granite Creek area on March 19, four days after Dean returned to Granite City. The *British Columbian* reported that Jameson had been "prospecting and trading in the Granite Creek region since June, 1884" [British Columbian, 1886b, Latest From Granite Creek ]. This was well before the Granite Creek gold rush, so Jameson must have been "prospecting and trading" on the Similkameen River. He regularly ran a pack train over the Hope Pass, so he was probably in New Westminster obtaining supplies for the new season.

[s] Wolfe Creek flows northeastward, emptying into the Similkameen about 12 miles east of Princeton, near Bromley Rock Provincial Park. The lakes in question were eventually named Smelter Lakes. They are located slightly east of the Similkameen. just north of Copper Mountain.

"don't think anything of the Ground." He tried to go up Slate Creek instead but found the trail was "very bad" and turned back (March 19). Frustrated, he camped with friends that night on the flats at the base of Otter Lake, near the settlement that became the village of Tulameen. The next morning, he returned to Granite City.

### *First Visit to the South Fork of Granite Creek*

On March 22, 1886, with a 47 lb. pack of equipment and supplies that he "found … quite plenty before I got there" (March 22), Dean went to an unidentified prospect on the South Fork of Granite Creek, about 7 miles from Granite City. The prospect was not a placer mining site on the creek. It was a dry land site, on a bench above the creek, that required excavation of a shaft to get down to potentially gold-bearing bedrock in an old creek bed and a flume to bring water from the creek to wash the gold out of the dirt and gravel. On this, his first trip to South Fork, Dean built a shelter to sleep in "with tent over it," and spent several days cutting and shaping timbers to act as lagging for the shaft, i.e., as timbers to be used to shore up the sides of the shaft to prevent dirt and rocks from falling in. He also built a frame for a windlass, a pulley system to raise rock and dirt from the shaft. He does not tell us if he was working alone or had companions. Then, on March 31, he "Staked out ten acres of dry diggings & came down to town."

### *Father Pat at Granite City*

Dean spent a few days lounging in Granite City and on April 4, 1886

> *Went to church held by Mr. Irwin, about 12 men present & 4 women of poor repute (April 4).*

In itself, this was an insignificant incident, but it is interesting because of the coincidence that showed up 10 years later. Dean and Mr. Irwin would meet up again in Rossland in the late 1890s when Dean was a prominent real estate broker and municipal politician and Mr. Irwin was his parish priest. "Mr. Irwin" was Henry Irwin, a newly ordained (1884) Anglican priest, who had come to British Columbia in 1885.[t] He was affectionately known as "Father Pat," a reflection of his Irish birth and upbringing. His first posting was to Kamloops, as assistant to the Vicar. Exploring the country to which he had been assigned, in September, 1885, he rode a horse south, over a rough trail to "Princetown," where he stayed with the Allisons.[u] He describes his trip in detail in letters to "M" and "B," reprinted by Mercier in her early biography of him.[54] They provide a graphic account of the difficulty of travel in the Nicola-Similkameen area at this time.

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[t] Henry Irwin was born in Northern Ireland on August 2, 1859. He attended a prestigious boy's school in Dublin and Keble College, Oxford, before studying theology for a year at Ely, England. He was ordained a Deacon in May, 1883, and as an Anglican Priest in June, 1884, then served as a Curate at Rugby. In early 1885 he was sent to British Columbia, arriving at New Westminster in March, 1885 [Mercier, 1909; 1968, Father Pat: A Hero of the Far West , Wicklow, 1902a, Death of the Rev. Henry Irwin, M.A. Oxon].

[u] He describes his trip in a letter published by Mercier in [Mercier, 1909; 1968, Father Pat: A Hero of the Far West ]. He dated the letter "Princetown, Similkameen, Saturday 19th, 1885." September, 1885, had a Saturday, the 19th [timeanddate.com, 2018, Perpetual Calendar]. Given the context (the shooting at Granite City occurred in September, 1885), this must have been when the letter was dated.

In September, 1885, there had been a shooting at Granite City. Apparently, a group of cowboys, at a drunken party, were shooting off their guns. One tried to shoot the hat from J C Newland's head and instead shot him in the forehead. It was thought that Newland was dead; the incident was said to be Granite City's first murder.[55] The cowboy fled, pursued by an *ad hoc* posse that Justice of the Peace Allison legalized by designating them special constables when they passed through his ranch. The posse captured the cowboy who was taken to New Westminster for trial.[v] In fact, Newland was not dead. It turned out that he was a friend of Henry Irwin, so the ever-compassionate Irwin rushed to Granite City to comfort his wounded friend.[56] Newland was not seriously wounded and they had a pleasant reunion.

Apparently, Irwin remained at Allison's ranch for some months, delivering church services in the district. He passed through Granite City again at the beginning of April, 1886, when he held the church service that Dean attended. Irwin was on his way back to Kamloops by way of Otter Creek valley, in part following the route that Dean had used coming to Granite Creek. He was unable to obtain a horse, so, like Dean, he walked, carrying his saddle bags.[57]

After some years at Donald, a railway town near Revelstoke, and New Westminster, Father Pat was sent to the booming mining camp of Rossland in late January, 1896, to establish an Anglican church there. Through his warmth, kindness and dedicated involvement in local affairs he became a revered member of the community, highly respected and much loved by all. A life-long Anglican, John Dean would have been one of his parishioners. In 1899 Father Pat was reassigned to other Kootenay and Boundary parishes, but, in January, 1902, while posted at Fairview in the Okanagan, he suffered severe frostbite of both feet. He was taken to Montreal for treatment, but died suddenly.[58] A couple of years later, Dean spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for a memorial to Father Pat. Dean favoured a permanent monument, but the committee opted for something practical -- an ambulance. That horse-drawn ambulance is now on display at the Rossland Museum. A few years later, after Dean had left Rossland, a monument was erected to Father Pat that still stands on Columbia Avenue, the main commercial street in the heart of downtown Rossland.

### *Jameson Hydraulic Mining Company*

After the Similkameen expedition, Dean spent several days in Granite City, resting and looking after his own affairs. Then, on April 5, he recorded that

> *Had quite a time organizing Jamieson Hydraulic Mining Company, some who had subscribed backing out at the last moment so had to hunt up others to take their places finally got ten paid up & put in application with these ten names attached.*

[v] The shooter, Louis Lawson, was charged with attempted murder. According to a contemporary story in the *British Columbian,* Lawson was arraigned before the Assize Court twice, but each time the hearing was adjourned. On June 1, 1886, he was released on a writ of *habeas corpus* obtained by his lawyer [British Columbian, 1886c, DIscharged]. This conflicts with the assertion of W H Holmes, an eye witness to the shooting, that "Shorty," as he called the shooter, served a year in prison [Sterne, 2011a, White Gold And Black Diamonds: The History Of Granite Creek And Coalmont, p. 16].

In my mind, hydraulic mining involves a powerful jet of water washing dirt and rock from a hillside to reveal the potentially gold-bearing bedrock below. It produces utter devastation, radically changing the landscape. In 1886 Granite Creek, hydraulic mining meant something else. They did not have the power to produce the necessary violent jets of water. There were no internal combustion engines and no electricity and none of the mining companies had a steam engine.[59] By hydraulic the Granite Creek miners seem to have meant the diversion of water from a creek by means of a flume to wash the gravel taken from the shaft of a dry-land claim.

The Jameson Company was created to work on a claim on a bench above the Similkameen River. While waiting for the Jameson Company to be approved, Dean made a side trip to another creek that was receiving some attention, Collins Gulch, 3 or 4 miles up the Tulameen River from Granite City. On April 3, he had sent some members of yet another of his companies -- the Dean Company -- to Collins Gulch "to take up ground" (April; 3). Then, on April 8 he set off himself, with an unstated number of men, to visit the Gulch. He found the going very difficult, in a narrow canyon, at high water with several water falls ("one about 40 ft. high") and the next day, when they reached the "Dean Company ground," -- this is the first and only mention of the Dean Company -- he "was very much disappointed on seeing it as it is a most unlikely place. Backus who went with me is entirely disgusted"[w] (April 10). No more is heard of the Dean Company or of a Dean Company claim on Collins Gulch.

When Dean got back to Granite City he found "everybody looking blue, on account of the high water." The creeks and rivers were swollen with the spring runoff. Placer mining was not possible. The town was dead and dispirited. Symbolic of morale in the town, as the highlight of the day, a

> *Preacher gave us the benefit of his knowledge and experience at one end of a short street and a whore and a disreputable character gave us the benefit of their knowledge of each other in a tongue fight at the other, both at the same time (April 11).*

The next day,

> *Things look bluer & bluer, and don't feel any to bright myself many men are leaving on acct of high water only excitement in town is another fight between a blackguard & a whore (April 12).*

The unhappy state of Granite City was also reported by others talking to newspapers in New Westminster and Victoria. Confirming this state of affairs, in April, 1886, the newly arrived Gold Commissioner wrote to the Minister of Mines:

> *The prevailing freshet on Granite Creek and the Similkameen and Tulameen Rivers has almost entirely suspended mining operations. …. It is probable that no mining activity will be exhibited before the middle of June, or perhaps later. This is a very unfortunate state of affairs for the district, as few of the newcomers can afford to remain idle, and many*

[w] I don't know who Backus was, but Dean noted on April 13 that "Backus & Ross left today disgusted."

*have left with reports of an unfortunate nature, calculated to encourage the belief that the mines are a partial failure.*[60]

Discouraged by the state of affairs on Granite Creek and not wanting to sit idle, Dean returned his attention to the claim on the Similkameen. He convened the first meeting of the Jameson Hydraulic Company at which it was decided "to send out Foreman Ed Thomas & myself prospecting the bench" along the Similkameen. I presume that Thomas had the mining experience that Dean lacked. Dean then spent several days "Idling about town" and "looking up record of ground with a view of buying" (April 15-17, 19). Which ground is not specified, but it was probably two claims on the bench above Granite Creek "right by the old channel" which he purchased, "$150 for the lower one & $200 for the upper one" (April 20). He also got together supplies for the prospecting excursion to the Similkameen (April 17).

The Similkameen venture began on April 21 when he headed out with a miner named Frank Collingsworth rather than Ed Thomas and another man as had been decided at the meeting of the company. They first checked the water in the lakes, then on April 23 began to dig a 4 ft x 6 ft shaft, soon reduced to 4 ft square. They got down 19 ft on April 30, "found nothing and decided to let her go" (April 30). To add to Dean's misery, it snowed 1½ inches that night. After another day of prospecting, finding nothing, he "Gave it up disgusted & came back to town" (May 2). He convened a meeting of the Jameson Hydraulic Mining Company and wound up its affairs (May 3). Dean "took the tools value about 14 dolls for 11 days hard work" and then "got tight tonight" (May 3).

A couple of days sickness followed and then he undertook his next project, a petition to the government to build trails in the area (May 7). Several days canvassing in town and along the creek resulted in the neighbourhood of 100 signatures. He mailed the petition on May 17. I don't know if it was a consequence of the petition, or not, but the government built a trail 4 miles long from Granite City to the South Fork of Granite Creek.[61] It is rugged country and I don't know the route of the trail, but if completed quickly, it would have made Dean's working life easier.

## *Back to the South Fork of Granite Creek*

As soon as the petition was mailed to the government, Dean began to prepare for an extended stay at a prospect on the South Fork of Granite Creek. He spent a couple of days repairing and sharpening the tools. Then, on May 18 he loaded up two pack animals with tools and supplies and walked up to the site. Again, he doesn't tell us if he was alone or accompanied by co-workers or employees. However, either then or somewhat later, he employed several men at the worksite, some of whom he identified by name. He referred to them as "the boys." One, he noted, was paid $2 a day. The co-worker upon whom Dean seems to have relied most heavily was "Frank." This was Frank Collingsworth who had accompanied him on the Similkameen expedition and would soon have his own claim adjoining Dean's and an agreement to work their claims together.

### *Making a Cabin*

Dean does not tell us where he lived when he was in Granite City, whether he owned or rented a cabin or lived in a room in one of the several boarding houses or hotels in the town. His first task at the South Fork was to build a cabin, or more likely to convert the "sleeping place" that he built earlier into a cabin that he could call home. He devoted a couple of days to cutting shakes and on May 21 put on the roof. He then built a stone chimney, which was "a bigger job than I thought" (May 22), and built furniture, including a table, stools, a bench and a bathtub. He particularly enjoyed having a relaxing bath in his new tub (e.g., July 4: "had a splendid bath"). Although he continued to work on the cabin over the next few weeks, it went up so quickly that it must have been rather rough-and-ready. I have found no evidence, either in the diaries or in the Recorder's book, that Dean had staked and recorded a claim to the land when he built his cabin. Nonetheless, he settled in to his new quarters, which became his home at Granite Creek. It was there that he entertained a visitor, Mr. Smith, a "particular friend of mine from Victoria," for an over-night stay and walking tour of the mines (June 17-18). This must have been Henry Badeley Smith, a distinguished civil engineer and surveyor, with whom Dean had formed a close friendship in Victoria, later accompanied on a surveying project in the West Kootenay and still later formed a real estate and surveying partnership in Rossland.

### *Scrambling for a Claim*

Dean then had a contest over some mining land on a bench, which he won. On June 25, he "Staked off 100 ft of unrepresented ground." The same ground was then staked that day by another party, Angel and Strong, and early the next day (5:30 AM), by a third party, Swanson and McKay. Then the scramble began. Dean hustled into town and saw the Gold Commissioner. He "managed to get first record," so the land was his. He then met Angel and Strong and "agreed to a compromise." The nature of the compromise was not explained, but he "abandoned what I don't want" (June 26). Perhaps that went to Angel and Strong. I have not found records of the claims of Dean or Angel and Strong in the Mining Recorder's book. However, some pages are damaged or missing. It is likely that the claims were recorded on those pages. In any case, the existence of the Dean claim is confirmed by other records:

> *Frank Collingsworth.*
> *Record of 100 ft. Mining ground, creek claim on Granite Creek about 3 1/2 mile from Town, commencing at a Stake bearing my name (Frank Collingsworth) and running up Stream to a Similar Stake, joining Deans ground, and to be worked in conjungtion with Dean's and Coullie's claims. (# 18945, June 26).*[x]
>
> *Recorded in favor of Louis Lerdmount and Frank Pariot 200 feet of bench claims on Granite Creek, commencing at the upper stake of the Dean Co. and running up stream. (#19256, August 2).*

[x] As with Dean's diary, in quotations from, the Mining Recorder's book, I have not corrected either grammar or spelling. This entry could be read as implying that the Dean claim was a placer claim on Granite Creek. However, it was a "bench claim," on dry land. Dean recorded a placer claims on the creek later (September 20).

### *Making Lumber*

A sawmill was sent from Yale in early January, 1886, carried in pieces on a pack train.[62] By mid-March it was installed at Granite City[63] and on March 26, Lou Hare recorded in his diary that the sawmill "started to run a day or so ago." An early April story reported that "The sawmill is at work, and although it hasn't water enough it is turning out from 2000 to 2500 feet per day."[64] Presumably, the source of power was the Tulameen River.

Dean needed lumber, but initially he did not purchase it from the sawmill. Rather, like many other prospectors, he chose to make it himself. He felled a big spruce tree ("3 ft. through at the butt") for that purpose and nearly had a disaster. When burning the limbs and trimmings the fire got out of control and began to spread. He and his crew had to work quickly to put it out. Then, they dug a saw pit and whipsawed lumber out of the big spruce tree. He doesn't tell us where he got the whipsaw. Probably some enterprising merchant had it brought in on a pack train or acquired it from someone in the Similkameen valley. Whipsawing was a two-man operation, with one man in the pit and the other above. Having cut the tree into blocks of appropriate length, they cut boards out of the blocks with a vertical rip-sawing action. It was hot, hard, difficult work and both dangerous and dirty for the man in the pit. He often got covered in sawdust and sometimes developed eye trouble from sawdust in his eyes. Dean spent 10 days sawing, interrupted by a couple of days off. On the second to last day he complained to his diary "Whipsawing is hard work am awful tired of it" (June 7). When it was done: "Finished the sawing am glad of it" (June 9). He then went into town and "Brought up a lot of Conveniences" (June 10). I am sure he had a few good stiff drinks as well.

Later, when Dean needed more lumber, he went to town and ordered it from a local merchant who agreed to deliver it to the forks of the creek. Dean took three men with him to get it and carry it back to the claim. When it was not delivered as promised, he "went to town in a rage and demanded my money refunded, and got it" (July 12). He then went to the sawmill and ordered the lumber. When it was not delivered as promised he again made his own, whipsawing 300 feet of lumber in a day. Of course, the lumber from the sawmill came that afternoon. Surprisingly, he accepted it (July 13). Lumber in hand, he continued his construction of mining equipment (July 14).

### *Making Equipment*

Much of his time for several weeks was occupied by making various bits of equipment. The basic problems were that the gold-bearing gravel had to be extracted from a deep shaft, water had to be brought from the creek to wash the gold out of the gravel and the residue had to be disposed of. Each of these tasks required specialized equipment. What was not readily available in this isolated camp, he made for himself. For some of the things he made, the purpose was obvious; for others, he only records the name, which would have been meaningful to him, but not to me.

Dean first turned his attention to making sluice boxes (June 11-12) and riffles (June 14, 19). A sluice box is a long, narrow box, with grooves or elevated strips (called riffles) across the floor. The sluice box is positioned with one end elevated and gold-bearing gravel is washed down it. The relatively heavy gold is supposed to be trapped in the riffles, while the lighter dirt and gravel is washed out the end to be dumped somewhere as "tailings." Dean then made an apron, a platform to be placed at the base of the sluice (July 14,15) with a "panning out box" (July 24), which was used to sort gold from the tailings.[y] He also made "V Boxes" and a "shovelling Box," the nature and purpose of which escape me. He built a wheelbarrow (June 28), presumably to haul the tailings to a disposal site.

Dean had earlier built the framework for a windlass (see above, p. 17) to lift dirt and gravel from the shaft to the surface where the gravel could be washed through a sluice box. A windlass involves a cylinder, normally with a handle, at the top of the shaft, around which a rope or belt with some kind of container attached would be wound, to lift gravel and water to the surface. On July 3 Dean reported that he had "Finished Journal Bearing" (July 3). "Journal bearing" is the engineering name for a type of bearing, commonly made of babbitt, a very soft metal, that surrounds, supports and lubricates a revolving steel shaft.[65] I doubt that Dean had access to babbitt at Granite Creek. He must have had something simpler in mind. In any case, in the next reference to the journal, Dean noted "put spindle & Iron Journal in lower pulley she runs first rate" (July 24). This suggests that the journal bearing was made of iron. I suspect, however, that it was actually the spindle that was made of iron and the bearing was made of wood. The pulley, I assume, was also made of wood. The source of the iron for the journal bearing or the spindle was not reported. To actually carry the dirt and gravel, he made a number of wooden buckets (June 19, 21) which he attached to the belt of the windlass (July 9). To provide water for the operation, he built a flume from the creek to the mining site.

Two other Dean creations are intriguing. One, of which he was very proud, was a "China blast" that he built to force air into a forge (June 23). He provides a detailed sketch of the China blast, but does not tell us how he used the forge. Presumably it was to repair and repurpose tools. Did he use it to make the journal bearing or spindle? In that remote, previously uninhabited location, into which everything had to be carried, scrap iron from which to forge equipment would have been scarce.

Perhaps the most enigmatic of his creations was a "pump." He does not explain what it was made of, how he made it, how it worked or what its purpose was, although he offers some clues. To my mind, a pump is a device to compress and move a liquid or a gas, perhaps to raise water from a well or inflate a tire. In this case, a water pump would have been useful to remove water that had seeped into the bottom of the shaft, or perhaps to get water out of the creek. However, notes in the diary suggest that the device was something other than a water pump. On July 10 he wrote "Working hard to start pump started it but runs to slow." Then on July 23 "Trouble with pump owing to shrinking & cupping." Apparently, it was made of wood that was very green. He continued: "dressed buckets down last night find this morning

[y] I am grateful to Diane Sterne for the explanation.

that I have taken too much off so I put on every third bucket a larger one got her running O.K." I find this cryptic statement very confusing. However, the implication seems to be that the "pump" was in fact a device to run the windlass, raising buckets full of dirt and rock from the shaft to the surface. For it to work effectively he had to reduce the number of buckets attached to the belt from the number that he had originally planned. If this was the purpose, what was the source of power? Dean provides another oblique clue. For miners on Granite Creek, finding a dumping place for tailings that would not interfere with other people prospecting or mining was a serious problem. Dean seems to have found a place on the bank of the creek. He reports that he spent July 5 "making wheel frame," i.e., a water wheel. He does not tell us its location, but it must have been on the edge of the creek next to a "tail dam" that he built to contain the tailings (July 17, 19). On September 28 while working at night, the pump stopped working. Part of the reason was that the tail dam had buckled and "tailings backed up against wheel which had stopped," stopping the pump. In other words, the power for the pump was generated by a water wheel. How the rotary action of the wheel was transmitted to operate the pump is not explained. Presumably, it involved pulleys and a rope.

### *Interacting with Neighbours*

Once settled at the South Fork, Dean was surrounded by the claims of other prospectors and miners. He must have interacted in some way with most, if not all of them. Three such interactions were sufficiently important to him that he noted them in his diary. Two of them involved the application of his special talents to the problems of neighbours. On May 17 he

> *Raised a subscription of $100 for the Spokane Co. to help them prospect their ground on the South Fork, pretty hard work as things are so dull & blue looking, it is quite discouraging (May 17).*

The Spokane Co. had a placer claim on the South Fork of Granite Creek (#463).

Later, he describes in detail, complete with an annotated sketch, a four-wheel cart that he built for another miner, Mr. Pogue,[z] to haul away his tailings (September 3-6). The Pogue claim was a placer claim on the creek, close to Dean's.

### *Working the Claim*

A third interaction with a neighbour was different in nature. On June 14, he

> *Went down town to see Mr. Coutlie about working in conjunction saw him but he was waiting for his Agent return to report on it so left about noon and went home."*

This is interesting. Although Dean had made preparations for mining, he had not yet recorded his claim. The next day

[z] Trout identifies Pogue & Co. as the discoverers of gold on the South Fork of Granite Creek [Trout, 1886a, Prospectors' Manual, p. 3].

> *Made inventory of Material & Tools on hand with Man in Coutlie's interest went down town drew up agreement Coutlie & I signed it & left it with Swan to record. (June 15).*

Swan was the local police constable. He often stood in for the Mining Recorder in recording claims and transactions in the book. Coutlie was Alexander Coutlee, proprietor of the roadhouse at which Dean had stopped on the wagon road from Spence's Bridge. Situated at a critical point on the trail to Granite Creek, people going to or coming from the Creek would have stopped at the roadhouse, so Coutlee would have received a steady flow of information about the first findings of gold. He must have decided to join the rush. On June 22, Dean recorded that "Boys are Wingdamming."[aa] They were probably working on a wingdam in preparation for placer mining on the Coutlee claim, as part of the agreement.

The Coutlee agreement was broader than with Dean alone. Dean developed a close friendship and working relationship with Frank Collingsworth.[bb] On June 26, the same day that Dean recorded his bench claim, Collingsworth recorded a placer claim on the South Fork of Granite Creek, adjoining Dean's claim, with the understanding that it would be worked in conjunction with those of Dean and Coutlee (see above, p. 21).

The details of the Coutlee agreement were not revealed, but, in any case, Coutlee soon soured on the arrangement. On August 2:

> *Went down town to see Coutlee to settle up, he having decided to back out, settled up fairly well took his Bill of Sale for his interest started in to throw head dam over (August 2).*

Not only was the agreement abandoned, but apparently the work that "the boys" had done on the wing dam was being destroyed.

The flume was ready on August 5 and set in place on August 7, presumably tapping the creek on Collingsworth's claim. Then Dean went "Down to town to see about water" (August 8). Again, there is no elaboration. He must have arranged with Collingsworth for access to the creek but he needed permission of the Gold Commissioner to draw water (you would think he would have arranged this before he undertook all of the work that he did). The creek was very low; water was scarce. Apparently, he was told that he could only draw water from the creek at night. Thus, on August 13, he noted "Started night work our only resource" and the next day "Night work uphill business must be done though" (August 13, 14). When he started only working at night, two of his workers quit and he had to discharge a third (August 15). He was left with only Frank to help him. That night, "Worked all night Frank & I alone" (August 16). He does not explain how he obtained enough light to work at night, but I presume he had oil

[aa] See footnote l.

[bb] I have discovered very little about Collingsworth. He was in Cassiar when the 1881 Census was taken and reported that he was born in the United States about 1848 [Canada, 1881b, Census of Canada: British Columbia, New Westminster District, Cassiar ]. Whether because of Dean's presence, or for other reasons, Collingsworth went to the West Kootenay in the 1890s. He had at least one mining property at Yahk where Dean was for a time a real estate agent. Collingsworth took seriously ill and was cared for by Dean. He died in 1898 or early 1899 and Dean was the administrator of his estate [Tribune, 1899b, Mining Records]. I have not found an official registration of his death.

lamps. On August 17, he managed to hire another worker and began to work afternoons and night, expanding and sinking the shaft and dealing with tailings in the day and washing dirt and gravel at night (August 17,18). Later he said they were "Stripping, wheeling all dirt and washing none as we can't get water in the day time" (August 30). It was a demanding, discouraging regime.

Despite the difficult circumstances, he expanded his empire. On August 26, he joined with Frank Collingsworth to record another bench claim (200 feet) adjoining his original one. Then, on September 20, he recorded a placer claim on the South Fork acquired from the original claimant. This acquisition is puzzling. He was very unhappy with the results of his mining work and was on the verge of a decision to abandon his properties at Granite Creek. The gold recovered is detailed in the diary. On August 21 he noted that he was "fairly in the old Channel" of the creek and for the first time washing the dirt and gravel produced some gold -- quite a lot, in fact, $30 worth.[cc] More finds followed, but not enough to satisfy Dean and provide a return on his investment. In early September, he vented his frustration to his diary: "… am about disgusted with this business" (September 4), a sentiment he repeated several times over the next few weeks. He then reviewed the results of his time at Granite Creek: "an expenditure of 1200 Dolls netted me $101.50" (September 5). As work went on, he added to that total (September 9, $71.75, "biggest washup we have had"; September 10, $32; September 18, $10.50; September 25, $21), but by the time he quit, the total of the returns recorded in the diary was only $236.75 -- and, of course, by that time his total expenditure would also have increased. For Dean, Granite Creek was far from a profitable venture.

### *Dean Quits*

After all his grumbling, Dean finally threw in the towel. In late September, he "Made up my mind to spend no more money and make the boys an offer to work the ground themselves if it pays them wages all right if it don't it is their loss" (September 27). Details of the offer were not revealed, nor was the boys' response. I have found no record of a transfer of the property in the book of the Mining Recorder, so I suspect that Dean's offer was not accepted. Having decided to leave, he "went down town had quite a time with the boys" (October 5) and despite a roaring headache left the next morning on his trek to Hope, en route to Victoria. He spent two nights on the trail and arrived at Hope with worn out boots. That was the end of his adventure as a Granite Creek prospector and miner.

[cc] Gold production was regularly reported not by weight but by value, calculated at the price prevailing at the site at that time. There was a fixed, official price of pure gold at the United States' Mint: $20.67 per Troy ounce. The price received by the miner was the official price less the costs of processing and shipping the gold to the Mint, with a further adjustment to account for its quality (purity). The average price at Granite Creek was regularly reported in the Mining Statistics published in the *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines*. In the relevant years the reported average price was: 1885, $16.50; 1886, $17.00; 1887, $16.00-$17.25.

### *Granite Creek in 1886*

1886 was a climactic year for Granite Creek. Although it was the peak year for production (see Table 1, p. 28)[dd], the output of gold did not match expectations. Overall, apparently production from existing producers was well maintained and indeed increased, but the output of some established mines was declining and new mines were a serious disappointment. Toward the end of the season, it was reported that "more than half of the claims are worked out"[66] and that many of the placer mines along Granite Creek had been sold to Chinese miners,[67] generally regarded as a sign that non-Chinese miners had given up on the properties. One commentator noted

> *There are very few idle men in camp at present. The gamblers have all gone away and six whiskey shops have closed up since spring; but unfortunately these cannot be claimed as triumphs for morality or temperance, seeing the gamblers and saloon keepers left because the dust was not there. Things are severely quiet just now at Granite Creek.*[68]

Another devastating commentary by an experienced miner was printed in the *Victoria Colonist* on November 7. He described Granite Creek

> *as the worst mining camp he has known since 1850. Those who are remaining are only holding on in the hope of an improvement. …. A house that cost $600 in labor alone was sold for two glasses of whiskey. Another that cost $1,500 was sold for $15 and cut into firewood. …. About forty white men still remain.*[69]

Dean's results were not unusual. In the following years, the number of producing mines, their output and employment fell steadily.

[dd] I don't know how much confidence to place on the official statistics from the Annual Report of the Minister of Mines. It was generally agreed that output was underreported, perhaps deliberately, perhaps accidently. This was probably a particular problem in the first part of the 1885 rush, before a gold commissioner and mining recorder were stationed at Granite Creek. It was also a particular problem with gold produced by Chinese miners, who were, understandingly, suspicious of authority and notoriously secretive. However, the figures in Table 1 are the only available data. They no doubt show the general trends even if the individual numbers are not accurate.

***Table 1***
***Reported Mining Statistics, Granite Creek, 1885-1890***

| | Number of Companies | | | Output | Number of Workers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Prospecting | Producing | Total | $ | Other | Chinese |
| | | | | | | |
| 1885 | 70 | 72 | 142 | 54,000 | 400 | 80 |
| 1886 | 60 | 80 | 140 | 170,000 | 300 | 80 |
| 1887 | 4 | 36 | 40 | 90,000 | 70 | 120 |
| 1888 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 69,000 | 43 | 32 |
| 1889 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 10,000 | 32 | 3 |
| 1890 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 6,000 | 2 | 18 |
| Source: Annual Reports, Minister of Mines | | | | | | |

## *Platinum at Granite Creek*

An interesting discovery just before Dean arrived at Granite Creek was the presence of platinum in some gold deposits.[70] At first the miners did not know what the heavy, silver-grey mineral was that they found in the bottom of their gold pans, mixed with the gold. They picked it out and discarded it. Then it was ascertained that it was platinum and that it was potentially valuable if they collected enough of it and could get it to market.[ee] Some miners began to keep a bucket for the platinum shards. Some years later, after a trip to England, John Dean spent some time in Portland, Oregon, studying platinum under the guidance of an assayer. He then paid another visit to Granite Creek seeking to buy platinum from the miners. He seemed to think that he could get the metal at a bargain price from miners ignorant of its value, package it and sell it at a profit in England. However, miners knew the value full well. They were unwilling to sell at the price Dean was offering. His platinum venture, like his gold-mining venture, was a failure.

[ee] Sometime in the fiscal year 1886-87, the provincial government, through the agency of the private banker, Garesche, Green & Co., sent 2 ounces of "white metal" to the Geological Laboratory in Ottawa for testing [British Columbia, 1888d, Public Accounts for the Fiscal Year ERnded June 30, 1887 ]. The lab determined that the metal was platinum [Canada, 1887a, Annual Report of the Department of the Interior; Geological and Natural History Survey and Museum Branch ]. Garesche, Green & Co. had been active in the gold trade in British Columbia since the Cariboo gold rush. I have no evidence of a branch of the bank at Granite City, but the fact that the bank was retained to collect platinum and deliver it to Ottawa suggest that it had an agent who visited Granite Creek to purchase gold and take it to market.

## *Last Word*

John Dean was a fascinating character whose life was replete with adventure. He regularly plunged into situations without much apparent forethought. His rush to Granite Creek had that appearance, as he was caught up in the mad, herd psychology of the gold rush. Dean tried various potential mining sites. Most defied him, until he settled on one next to the South Fork of Granite Creek. It was not on the creek, where all of the rich finds were, but on dry land, on a bench above the creek. Getting to the gold bearing gravel involved a lot of hard work, felling trees, whipsawing lumber, digging a shaft and applying great ingenuity and skill in making the equipment that he required. He found gold, but not enough to satisfy him. In the end, like those of many prospectors at Granite Creek and elsewhere, his search for wealth on and under the ground was a source of anguish. He was not one of the lucky few. Frustration drove him home to Victoria, but it did not diminish his brashness or his search for other challenges. Ten years later he was in Rossland and Yahk, both booming mining camps, dealing in real estate and mining shares and dabbling in municipal politics -- and, of course, he again got involved in gold mining.

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