

Transcription
of
Alan Garbarini

Tape 1/Interview 1
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My grandfather V.S. Gabarini worked at the Kennedy a number of years. He was the Master Mechanic at the Kennedy. That's a term that is no longer used, but a Master Mechanic was someone who could design and build whatever. This is a pretty good book, I'm sure it's available in the library, it's by Jack R. Wagner, it's called The Gold Mines Of California. It was written in the 1960's. It has a lot of information on the Kennedy and I'm sure the Foundation has it. Here's as picture here on this page of a head frame that he designed and built around 1900. It was used until about 1926 when it burned down because it was a timber head frame. the present one was a steel one, which replaced it. He sort of supervised the construction of that one too, but he was sort of like a consultant for the Kennedy. He was pretty old then.

The Master Mechanic was responsible for the hoisting works and so forth. This information in here (The Gold Mines Of California) tells about that particular head frame and the hoisting works. Here are some other views of it.

All of the timber in this picture was used in the mine. They had a hoist works that would raise, at that time, from a maximum depth of about five thousand feet. He was there, I'm guessing, five to seven years. That's about all I know about it.

It's interesting to note that the Kennedy Mining and Milling Company, which was a kind of modern operation, began in 1885 and a man by the name of F.F. Thomas, who was a mining engineer had come from the East, worked in Mexico, and then bought the

Kennedy and organized the Kennedy Mining and Milling Company, which was very successful. Then he sold the Kennedy and started the Gwen Mine down here across Middle-Bar bridge, which is no longer usable. It is on the Calaveras side. It was an excellent mine, and in fact is in the process of reopening right now. So he really was the one who put the Kennedy on the map. It was discovered before that. My grandfather was the Master Mechanic for a number of years.

Do you know approximately what time period your grandfather was the Master Mechanic?

Yes, it was sometime between 1895 to 1900 because they built that head frame in 1900. I'd say 1898 to 1905. It was around 1900 and did not extend past 1905.

So he wasn't for very long? Or did he do other things with the Kennedy?

Well he didn't make a career out of it, but he did work there or for them at different times. It was back and forth, but as Master Mechanic it was a period of a few years.

But he never went down into the mine to be a miner?

No, he was never a miner.

So he was a higher level type...?

Well he was in the design and construction end of it. He wasn't a miner. He was a builder and designer. All of the stuff he designed and built was for the mine. Various types (of mines); he designed and built things for Constant Mine down in Southern California, but no, he wasn't a miner.

Did he help build any other mines around this area?

Oh yeah, the Argonaut. In fact, the head frame you see today, he was the Superintendent, he designed and built it. I think it was about 1910, 11, or 12, and it is still there. The mill that used to be there on top of the hill, which is gone now, he designed and built that. The hoisting works below the hill, you can still see the remains below the road, he designed that. Then he was the Superintendent of the Argonaut.

Do you know what time period he was the Superintendent of the Argonaut?

Yeah it was an unfortunate time period. He was the Superintendent during the Great Fire, which was 1923, and he was Superintendent for three or four years. He was also Master Mechanic before he was Superintendent. When he designed the head frame you see now, and the hoisting works and the mill that used to be there, he was the Master Mechanic at the Argonaut. Then he became the Superintendent.

I heard that there was a big lawsuit between the two mines after the fire. Do you know what happened?

Well it had nothing to do with the fire. The Kennedy and the Argonaut had a big legal contest over who was on who's vein. The Kennedy property was patented in 1872, and by 1873 it says two promising ore chutes were being worked. The Kennedy on the north side and the Pioneer of the south end of the mine, and with 170 feet of the vein lying within the Kennedy property. It was this 18 foot wide Pioneer vein that led into the Argonaut mine and was to be the cause of years of litigation between the two mines. They had to decide where the vein originated, and there's a law in the Mining Laws called the Apex Rule that says that you can follow a vein onto other property if you can prove that the vein originates in your property. That was a big, long, drawn out lawsuit, but

now I'm not sure who won it. It went on for years, they're so close together. That's the only lawsuit I know of, but there could be something else too.

When they had this lawsuit going, was your grandfather involved with it?

Yes, I don't know if he was with the Kennedy or the Argonaut because it went on for so long, but he made a model, a wire model, that depicts the underground workings and it was used in the suit. So yes, he was involved that way. He was involved with one or the other, but I'm not sure of the dates of the lawsuit. It was before the 1920's I believe. The Kennedy was a very profitable mine. There are some other things that sometimes don't give us the exact picture of how profitable it was. Like when they talk here. The total of \$34280000. Well you have to take into consideration that was when gold was not more than \$35 an ounce. Where today it is close to \$350 an ounce. Actually a lot of that gold taken out was under \$20 an ounce. so to get an accurate estimate of what it was worth, they should print this in the number of ounces taken out. Which today it would be worth close to \$350 million, not \$34 million. There's another thing that should be taken into consideration. You should look at the purchasing power of the dollar. Well lets say that in 1935, when gold was \$35 an ounce, you could buy a modest home in Amador County for \$15000. Today, a modest home is going for \$70000. So you have to look at the purchasing power of the dollar. You would have to multiply this by ten time to get what the price of gold is today. I think you would have to times it tern times more to get the purchasing power. So in my opinion, the Kennedy's true worth is about \$1 billion not \$34 million. It's very misleading when the use these figures. I think they should just stick to ounces of gold. Both mines took out 1 million ounces or so. It was profitable from 1885 to 1942. It was a long, prosperous period.

When your grandfather left the Kennedy to go to the Argonaut, was there any reason?

He probably got a better job. He had finished a large project at the Kennedy, in addition to the head frame, he had done a lot of design for the processing plant or the mill as they called it. So they weren't doing that much. I suspect that the Argonaut was planning the new head frame and mill, so maybe they hired them away. I'm sure that he would have liked it much better because there was a lot to be done.