

MONTANA CAMP

GOLD AND SILVER MINING AT THE MONTANA MINE IN THE ARIZONA TERRITORY BORDERLAND

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PREFACE

This paper is one of three papers prepared for the Spring 2002 New Mexico–Arizona Joint History Convention special session: “Ruby, Arizona: From Four Star Mining Camp to Ghost Town.” This paper, the first of three, “Montana Camp: Gold and Silver Mining at the Montana Mine in the Arizona Territory Borderland,” covers the history of the Montana mine from the mid 1800’s to 1912, when Montana Camp was renamed Ruby. The second paper, “Ruby: The Montana Mine Becomes the Largest Producer of Lead and Zinc in the State of Arizona,” covers the period from 1912 to the present. The third paper, “Ruby: From Its Heyday in the 1930’s to Ghost Town,” covers the author’s recollections of her life in Ruby in the 1930’s and a description of today’s ghost town.

These papers on Ruby are one product of continuing research by the authors on the history of mining in Southern Arizona, primarily in Santa Cruz County’s Oro Blanco region. Several major sources of information on early mining records and activities should be mentioned. These include the State of Arizona, Department of Library, Archives and Public Records; Pima County Recorder’s Office; Santa Cruz County Recorder’s Office; Santa Cruz County Assessor’s Office; and microfilm records of the *Arizona Daily Star* and *Arizona Daily Citizen* at the Arizona Historical Society. The authors have spent literally hundreds of hours compiling a detailed history of Oro Blanco mining from these sources.

MONTANA CAMP: GOLD AND SILVER MINING AT THE MONTANA MINE IN THE ARIZONA TERRITORY BORDERLAND

After a brief introduction to the Oro Blanco region, this paper covers the initial American mining explorations in the 1840's, the first official location of the Montana mine in 1877, and subsequent mining development and mining camp history to 1912, the year Arizona became a state and Montana Camp was renamed Ruby. The paper highlights the stories of the original locator of the Montana mine, James Kirkpatrick; early mine developer, George Cheyney; financier and long-time mine owner, Louis Zeckendorf; and general store owner, Julius Andrews.

The Forgotten Gold Mines of Oro Blanco

The seven cities of gold that Coronado searched for in the 1500's never existed. But the gold mines of Oro Blanco did exist, and they were found. They've just been forgotten.

Oro Blanco's mining story begins in 1736 with a unique silver discovery, Planchas de Plata (Sheets of Silver). The location was Arizonac, just south of the present international boundary with Mexico, and just west of the present town of Nogales, Arizona. Large chunks of almost pure silver were found near the surface of the ground. Literally thousands of fortune seekers from all over the world were attracted to the exciting find. Some of the unsuccessful prospectors drifted northward along the route established 40 years earlier by the Jesuit priest, Father Eusebio Kino. These would-be prospectors began to settle in present day Arizona, along the Santa Cruz River, at Tubac, just north of the mission at Tumacàcori.



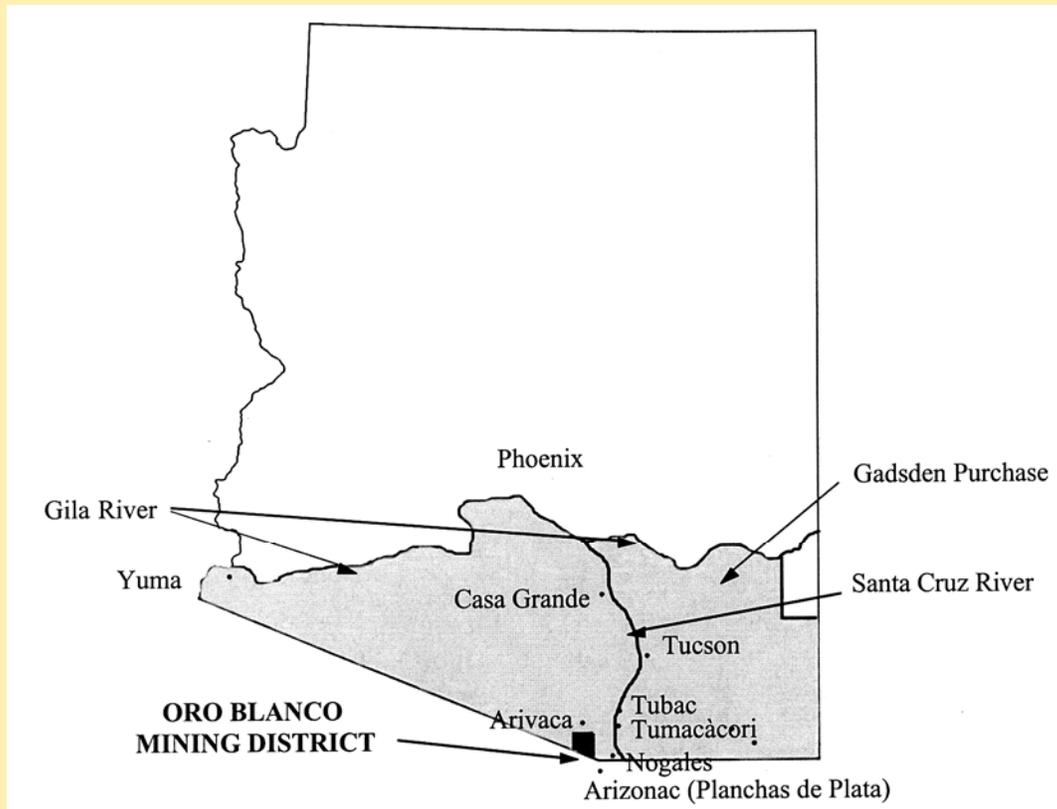
*Oro Blanco country today – Montana Peak in background.
(Photo by Bob Ring, 2001)*

The tiny Oro Blanco area was just 20 miles southwest of Tubac, along the present day border with Mexico. Prospectors from Tubac probably first entered the region around 1740. (1) Oro Blanco was a beautiful setting for mining, with mountain valleys covered with rich abundant grasses and live oak forests. The area was named for its characteristically white-colored gold (oro blanco), resulting from significant silver content in the gold.

For over 100 years, mining in the Oro Blanco area was intermittent and on a very small scale, as political responsibility for the area changed from Spain, to Mexico, and finally, with the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, to

the United States.

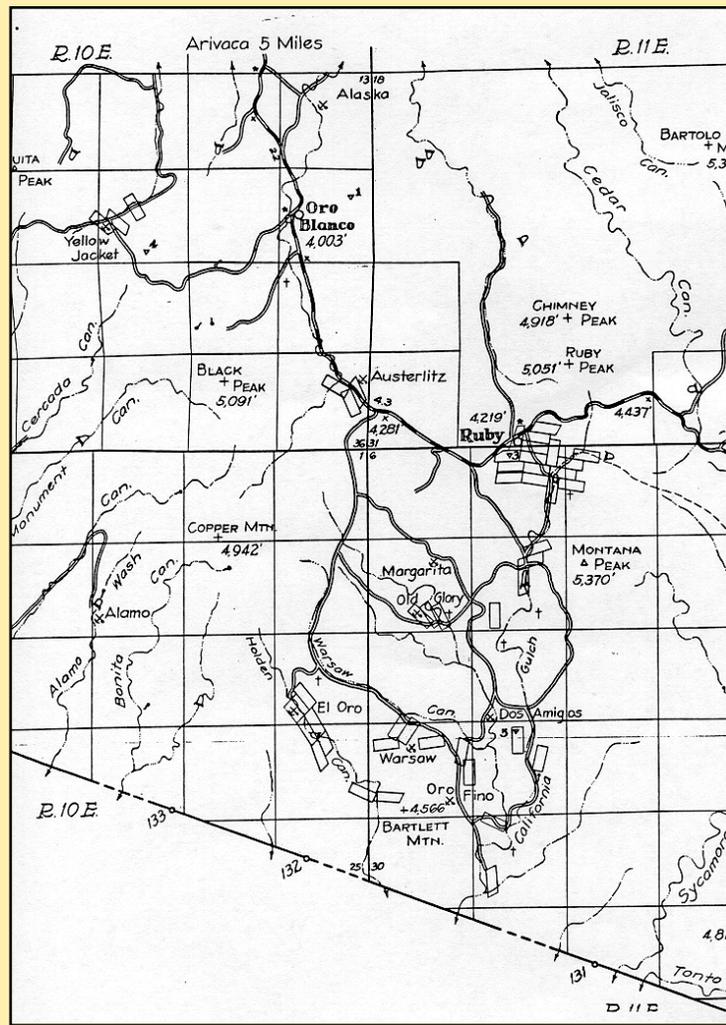
In 1872, just in time for American mining in Oro Blanco, the U.S. Congress passed a comprehensive mining act that provided for the formation of mining districts and defined regulations for locating mining claims and mill sites. The law set the maximum size of a claim at 1,500 feet in length and 600 feet in width. (2) This foreshadowed the patchwork of mining claims that would soon blanket the Oro Blanco area.



*The Oro Blanco Mining District was organized in the 1870's,
just north of the Mexican border in Territorial Arizona.
(Map drawn by Al Ring, 2001)*

Another provision of the 1872 mining law was that unless a mining claim was already privately owned (patented), a claim would be subject to relocation by another party if “not less than one hundred dollars’ worth of labor shall be performed or improvements made during each year.” Such unpatented mining claims established the claimant’s mineral rights only, not title to the land. So, unpatented mining claims that languished or were abandoned could be claimed by someone else. This became a common practice in Oro Blanco.

The first American gold mine was located in 1873 and appropriately named the Oro Blanco. Other gold mines were located soon afterwards. (3) In the mid 1870’s, as mining activity increased, the 40-square mile Oro Blanco Mining District was organized.



Since 1873, over 4,500 mining claims have been located in the tiny Oro Blanco Mining District.
 (Map drawn by Robert Lenon, 1950)

Gold mining in Oro Blanco was a continuing uphill battle. First of all, it was difficult to attract outside capital to develop the mines. Silver and copper mining booms in Tombstone and Bisbee, starting in the 1870's, attracted most of the investors. Moreover, the Oro Blanco gold ore was generally low grade. Water to process the ore was scarce. Recovery of gold from the ore was inefficient and the gold that was recovered had to be carried 25 to 35 miles by mule or wagon over mountainous trails to the nearest railroad in Nogales. Finally, Indian attacks, fickle U.S. monetary policy, and sensational robberies and murders contributed to on-again/off-again mining operations.

Despite all of these challenges, gold mining in Oro Blanco stubbornly persisted. Many mines were located, worked, abandoned and then relocated later, some several times, and often with a different name. Sometimes a particular mine would go bankrupt and start up again later with a new name. The mines were shamefully promoted, beyond the actual results achieved. In a constant "shell game," more money was probably made through buying and selling claims than in the actual recovery of gold from the mines.

In addition to small mining camps, two villages, Oro Blanco and Ruby (earlier named Montana Camp), emerged to support mining operations in the Oro Blanco Mining District.

Life in the Oro Blanco mining camps was brutally tough. Yet for the few hundred people who lived in the camps, there were familiar hallmarks of civilization, such as stores, post offices, saloons, schools, and cemeteries. Housing ranged from a few crude adobe buildings, to frame buildings, wooden shacks, tents, and even caves. Some of the larger mining camps had crude boarding houses.

Nevertheless, people came, drawn by visions of wealth and the challenge of the mining. They came from Mexico, France, Ireland, England, Japan, China, and of course the United States. Some of these people were prominent pioneers of early Arizona. The list includes soldiers, Indian fighters, doctors, bankers, cattlemen, teamsters, sheriffs of Pima County, mayors of Tucson, and governors of Arizona. Others, including the author's paternal grandparents, came not seeking riches, but to work at the mines and to do a job. They were not well known people, but they worked just as hard under very difficult conditions.

By the late 1890's and early 1900's, the district reached its peak of activity for gold mining.

By 1914, over 1,750 mining claims had been located in the Oro Blanco Mining District. Most production of gold had ceased, but locations of gold mines by persistently optimistic prospectors continued at an average rate of about 35 locations per year through the 1980's. Incredibly, a total of over 4,500 mining claims have been located in the tiny district since 1873. (4)

Total gold production from the relatively low-grade gold ore in the district is estimated to be 126,500 ounces. (5) At an average price of gold of \$20 per ounce (most production was before 1914), that's a total value about \$2.5 million. This amount is only about one percent of the total gold production in the state of Arizona. Average earnings for each of the 4,500 mining claims in the district was a paltry \$555, surely not a return worth the miners' considerable efforts.

Little evidence remains today to remind us of the tremendously difficult mining efforts and personal sacrifices of the miners and their families. (6)

But there were successful mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District; the most notable was the Montana mine.

Introduction to the Montana Mine

Seventy miles southwest of Tucson, near the Mexican border, lies Ruby, Arizona, now a mining ghost town. Settled at 4,200 feet altitude, amongst beautiful rolling hills and rugged canyons west of the Atascosa Mountains, Ruby lies at the foot of 5,370-foot Montana Peak, the most distinctive landmark in the Oro Blanco Mining District. Today, Ruby is 300-plus acres of wonderful memories of gold, silver, lead, and zinc mining. But Ruby wasn't always named Ruby, not until 1912. Before that it was known as Montana Camp, with one of the most colorful histories of the early Arizona Territory mining camps.

The Montana mine was different from the other gold mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. First of all, gold was only the fourth most prevalent mineral, after lead, zinc, and silver. Secondly, in 1927, after a long period of intermittent, small-scale mining for gold and silver, the Montana mine became the district's first and only large-scale operation, when lead and zinc mining took off. From 1935 to 1939, the Montana mine was the largest producer of lead and zinc in Arizona. Ruby's population approached 1,200 people during that period.

Important milestones for the Montana mine. (7)

Year	Event
1877	First location of Montana mine by James Kirkpatrick. Gold and silver are mined.
Mid 1880's - 1896	George Cheyney operates the Montana mine. Significant mine development, road and water resource improvements.
1887	Earthquake reshapes Montana Peak.
Late 1880's - 1927	Louis Zeckendorf finances and/or owns the Montana mine. Leases mine to various operators.
1897-1914	Julius Andrews operates Montana Camp general store. Store is profitable as mine.
1907	Louis Zeckendorf patents Montana Mine Group of 10 individual mines.
1912	Post Office established. Montana Camp renamed Ruby after Julius Andrews' wife.
1914-1921	Phil Clarke owns and operates Ruby general store.
1917-1919	Goldfield Company operates Montana mine. Modern mining methods introduced. Significant production of lead, zinc, silver, and gold.
1920	Brothers John and Alexander Frasier murdered by Mexican bandits at Ruby store.
1921	Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pearson murdered by Mexican bandits at Ruby store.
1927	Eagle-Picher Lead Company buys Montana patents. Extensive development for lead and zinc mining.
1928	Eagle-Picher acquires/patents 9 additional near-by mines; adds to Montana Group.
1929	Seventeen-mile pipeline built to bring domestic water to Ruby from Santa Cruz river.
1935-1939	Ruby is largest producer of lead and zinc in Arizona. Ruby reaches maximum population of around 1,200 people.
1940	Eagle-Picher mining operations suspended.
1941	Ruby Post Office closes.
1945-1957	Hugo Miller owns mineral rights of the Montana Mine Group.
1961	Ruby bought by five Tucsonans for recreational use.
1971	U.S. Forest Service evicts transients (hippies) from Ruby.
1972	Ruby Mines, Incorporated formed. Includes 19 patented mines around Ruby.
1975	Ruby is listed in National Register of Historic Places.
1984	Ruby tours started by Pima Community College.
1993	Arizona State Parks Board grant for limited restoration of Ruby.
1993	Regular reunions of former residents begin at Ruby.

The early history of the Montana mine is similar to that of many southern Arizona mines. In the late 1700's, Spanish prospectors reportedly extracted gold from Montana Gulch stream sediments, called placers, near the surface of the ground. Prospectors from the U.S. probably first worked there in the 1840's. Two U.S. mining engineers are said to have revived the placers in 1854. Mining was interrupted during the U.S. Civil War in 1861-1865, when the (protective) military was pulled out of the area, and the threat from hostile Indians increased. After the war, the troops returned and resettlement and mining resumed.

James Kirkpatrick Locates the Montana Mine

On April 10, 1877, the Montana Silver and Gold mine was located by James M. Kirkpatrick and Isaac Flood. But the location was not actually written up until March 4, 1878, and not officially recorded until December 18, 1878. (8) Interestingly, James Kirkpatrick was the County Recorder for Pima County at the time. The location notice speaks of gold and silver ore. Both silver and gold were obtained near the surface of the ground in a heavy lead vein.

“Montana Silver and Gold Mine”

Notice of Location. We the undersigned having located this mining claim known as the Montana Silver & Gold mine April 10th, 1877 now make a new location covering the same ground under the same name to-wit, The Montana Silver & Gold mine. This we do to more fully comply with the Mining Act of May 10th 1872. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of an Act of Congress dated May 10th 1872, the undersigned have this day located & claimed fifteen hundred linear feet in this vein or lode of Silver and Gold bearing ore and three hundred feet of width on each side thereof located in Oro Blanco Mining District, County of Pima, Territory of Arizona and more particularly described as follows to-wit: Commencing at a monument of stones on the ledge on the west end of claim which bears North thirty three degrees west from the Oro Blanco Peaks and north fifty six degrees east to white oak tree with cross distant fifteen feet, thence North thirty degrees west three hundred feet to post in rock mount, thence South sixty degrees east fifteen hundred feet to a post in rock mount, thence South thirty degrees west three hundred feet to post in rock mount on the ledge, thence South thirty degrees west three hundred feet to post in rock mount, thence North sixty degrees west fifteen hundred feet to post in rock mount, thence North thirty degrees west three hundred feet to place of beginning. This claim shall be known as the Montana Silver & Gold mine and this notice being posted at the west end in monument of rocks on the lode. Dated March 4, 1878.

Original locators Isaac Flood
J. M. Kirkpatrick

Recorded in Book G, page 70 of recorder of Oro Blanco Mining District, J. M. Kirkpatrick District Recorder. Filed and recorded at request of J. M. Kirkpatrick, Dec 18th, 1878 at 10:15 a.m.

(Signed by M. A. Dumott, Deputy County Recorder,
for J. M. Kirkpatrick, County Recorder)

*The Montana mine was first located in 1877, but not officially recorded until 1878.
(Original handwritten location notice filed in State of Arizona Department of
Library, Archives and Public Records, Mining Locations, Book D, page 511)*

At the end of 1878, Kirkpatrick sold his interests in the Montana. But Kirkpatrick wasn't completely out of the picture. By 1880, the Montana mine belonged to the Orion Company, with James Kirkpatrick as superintendent. The mine now had a tunnel running 120 feet into the ore vein, and was producing large quantities of very handsome looking ore.

James Kirkpatrick turned out to be one of the important figures in developing the early mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. He was born in Ohio in 1827 and his early career was cabinet making in Portland, Oregon. Kirkpatrick spent years working Mexican mines before he started mining development in the Oro Blanco Mining District in 1877 with the Montana and several other local mines, including the Alaska, Idaho, Mary Ann, Warsaw, and Wyoming. Living in the village of Oro Blanco, Kirkpatrick was also a member of the Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1879. As late as 1903, Kirkpatrick owned the Ragnarok gold mines. In times of slow activity in the mining business, Kirkpatrick would work at his old trade of carpentry and his skill could be noted in several houses he built. One of his last jobs before retirement was to build his own redwood coffin. In 1907, Kirkpatrick died in Oro Blanco and he was buried in his redwood box in the Oro Blanco cemetery. “He left to his friends and neighbors a legacy of kindness and good deeds.” (9)

In the 1880's, despite the dangers from Indians and the hardships of the environment, white men kept moving in, and the hills were soon full of mines, camps, and people. There were far more Mexicans than Americans and probably more miners than farmers and ranchers. The Ostrich mill, near the village of Oro Blanco, processed some of the Montana ore during this period.



In 1881, 200,000 shares of stock were generated to raise development money for the Montana Gold and Silver Mining Company.
(Reproduction of stock certificate from *Arizona Mines and Mining Companies, 1854-1954*, by James Garbini)

In 1881, in an effort to raise funds to develop the Montana mine, the Orion Company sold stock in the Montana Gold and Silver Mining Company. Two hundred thousand shares of capital stock were generated and sold at \$2 dollars a share. (10)

The Orion Company was reorganized in 1884 as the Montana Company, controlled by the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company. (11) Enter George Washington Cheyney.

George Cheyney Develops the Montana Mine

In the early 1880's, George Cheyney was superintendent of the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company. In addition to his duties in Tombstone, Cheyney began operating the Montana mine in the Oro Blanco Mining District. Cheyney hired an experienced mining man, George Whitwell Parsons, who helped him figure out how to best develop the Montana mine. According to Parsons' diary, considerable work was underway by the end of 1886. (12)

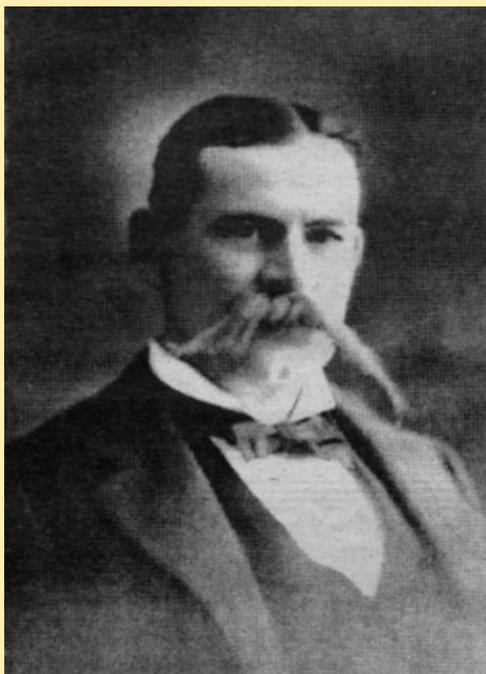
On May 3, 1887 an earthquake, centered in northern Sonora, shocked the Montana mine area. The Richter Scale magnitude 7.2 earthquake lasted about 40 seconds, caused the ground around the Montana mine to quiver and roll, and broke large slabs of rock off Montana Peak. (13) The earthquake effectively reshaped Montana Peak to its present well-known configuration as the most recognizable landmark in the Oro Blanco area.

Cheyney's development of the Montana mine continued throughout the 1880's and well into the 1890's. Several tunnels were dug. Water was scarce and the old methods of ore reduction were inefficient and not profitable. So, in 1894, Cheyney had 10 ore-crushing stamps and a 120-horsepower steam engine disassembled in Charleston, Arizona, where they had been milling silver ore from Tombstone. The equipment was then transported to the Montana mine and reassembled. A new mill, with an ore concentrator and pan amalgamation system, was in operation by mid 1895. Until then, promising ore was separated by hand sorting and/or simple gravitational systems. To supply water for the steam engine to mill the ore, a water storage dam was built in a narrow place in the canyon, northeast of the Montana mill. The dam was of solid masonry, 36 feet high from the bedrock, and 130 feet long. The dam collected the watershed from local rains and formed a lake a mile long and 32 feet deep. (14)

The main revenue during this period was from silver, then gold. There was plenty of lead and zinc, but the value of these metals did not yet justify mining.

Two significant problems arose. First, how could the silver or gold be extracted from the ore? Second, how could the concentrates or bullion be transported to market? Isolated, remote camps in rugged terrain like Montana Camp made costs very high. The Montana mine was able to take advantage of a new wagon road, completed in 1895, that extended 28 miles from the nearby Old Glory gold mine to Nogales on the railroad. The road was built by Captain George G. Mullins, manager of the Old Glory, and dramatically cut freighting costs over the usual 75-mile trek to Tucson.

George W. Cheyney was born in Philadelphia in 1854, the son of a businessman of that city. As a young man he worked in New York City; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Atchison, Kansas; and Leadville, Colorado. He came to Tombstone, Arizona in 1881 to work with his father in the mining industry and became superintendent of the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company. This was during Tombstone's silver mining boom. In 1882, Cheyney married Annie Neal, a native of Atchison, Kansas. Following his work developing the Montana mine, Cheyney moved his family to Tucson and went on to an active career in southern Arizona politics. He was appointed Postmaster of Tucson in 1898 and elected Probate Judge in Pima County in 1902. Unfortunately Cheyney died in 1903, at the relatively young age of 48. Cheyney didn't live to see the beautiful home that his wife Annie built in Tucson in 1905. The old home has recently been restored in Tucson's historic district.



George Cheyney, influential Arizona Territorial politician, was instrumental in the early development of the Montana mine.

(Photo from *Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona*, Chapman Publishing, 1901)

Since long distance shipping of ore concentrates was still problematic, Cheyney decided to experiment with on-site processing of the high-value tailings. In 1896, he erected a small cyaniding plant. He planned to double the work force, but apparently began to have trouble. Also, the price of silver was dropping. So Cheyney quit the Montana, but not before he had paved the way for future development by improving the local roads and water sources, and putting the Montana mine on the map. Cheyney was also the first to keep detailed records of the mining operations. (15)

Louis Zeckendorf's 40-Year Involvement with the Montana Mine

Starting in the late 1880's, Cheyney's Montana mine operations were financed by merchandising magnate Louis Zeckendorf. Zeckendorf and Cheyney began leasing the mine to various operators, while Zeckendorf, living mostly in New York City, purchased goods for his Tucson merchandizing business.

Louis Zeckendorf was born in Germany in 1838 and came to New Mexico with his two brothers in 1854 to start a small general merchandise business. In 1866, the brothers opened a second in store Tucson. By 1889, the Tucson business was the largest retail and wholesale merchandising business in the Arizona Territory. The Zeckendorfs quickly expanded to farming and cattle raising. They also invested heavily in mining operations, beginning in the 1882 with the famous Copper Queen Mining Company in Bisbee. Besides the Copper Queen and the Montana, Louis Zeckendorf owned several other mines in Pima and Santa Cruz counties, including the Old Glory gold mine in 1902. Louis Zeckendorf died in New York City on March 11, 1937 at the age of 99 years. The next two generations of Zeckendorfs built a New York real estate empire. It was a Zeckendorf who put together the land parcel that John D. Rockefeller donated to the United Nations for its headquarters in New York City. (16)

In 1889, George Cheyney (actually his father William J. Cheyney) relocated the original Montana Silver and Gold mine and renamed it the Philadelphia mine. In 1893, George Cheyney located the contiguous Montana

Camp mine, and in 1894, he located the Montana Dam mine, also contiguous to the Philadelphia claim. These three mines became the core of what became known as the Montana Group of mines. Montana Camp developed on this location also.

In 1898 and 1899, other nearby mines, that would eventually become part of the Montana Group of mines, were located by Cheyney and other Zeckendorf people (principally J. N. Curtis) and added to Zeckendorf's holdings. These included the Mineral No.'s 1-7 mines. The entire group of ten mines was commonly referred to as the Montana mine.

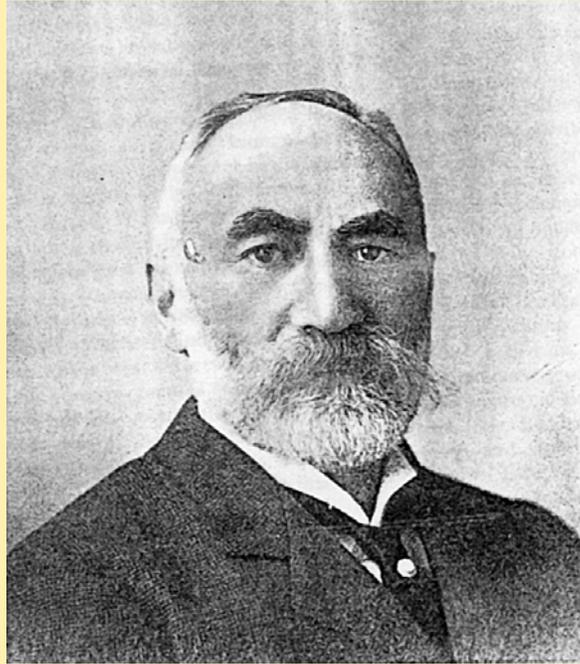
By 1900, the Montana Group consisted of ten mining claims.

No.	Mine	Original Location Date	Located By	Patent Date	Patented By
1	Philadelphia	May 13, 1889	W. J. Cheyney	April 23, 1907	Louis Zeckendorf
2	Montana Camp	January 4, 1893	George Cheyney		
3	Montana Dam	November 2, 1894	George Cheyney		
4	Mineral No. 1	December 29, 1898	J. N. Curtis		
5	Mineral No. 2	December 29, 1898	J. N. Curtis		
6	Mineral No. 3	December 29, 1898	J. N. Curtis		
7	Mineral No. 4	December 29, 1898	J. N. Curtis		
8	Mineral No. 5	November 6, 1899	J. N. Curtis		
9	Mineral No. 6	November 6, 1899	J. N. Curtis		
10	Mineral No. 7	November 6, 1899	J. N. Curtis		

At the turn of the century, Montana Camp was a scattering of tents, adobe houses, and crude shacks of scrap and canvas. Many of the early settlers worked at the Montana Group of mines, and others explored various glory holes throughout the area.

During the period from 1899 to 1901, copper prices peaked and development capital was drawn away from the gold and silver mines of the Oro Blanco Mining District. Many mines, including the Montana, shut down for a while. But by 1903, the Montana was resuming operations with a new mill under construction.

In 1907, recognizing his long term interests and appreciating the mines' development value, Louis Zeckendorf patented each of the ten mines in the early Montana Group. This meant that Zeckendorf now held official title to the mines and he need not worry in the future about his locations lapsing. Zeckendorf's ownership of this Montana Group was to continue for two decades, until 1927.



*Louis Zeckendorf, pioneering Arizona Territory merchant,
owned the Montana mines for four decades.*

(Photo from *Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona*, Chapman Publishing, 1901)

The General Store Becomes as Profitable as the Early Mine

The story of Montana Camp's general store parallels the development of mining in the area. In the late 1880's, the Montana mine had attracted a significant number of miners and their families, creating the need for a general store. That first store was built and owned by George Cheyney. Louis Zeckendorf took over the store by default when Cheyney left in 1896. Zeckendorf quickly sold the Montana Camp store to J. B. ("Pie") Allen. The next proprietor of the store was Allen Bernard. However, despite the excellent opportunity and the good location, the store was not very successful in these early years due to poor management.

Julius S. Andrews purchased the store for \$900 in 1897, after a long negotiation with Louis Zeckendorf. Before long the store was out of debt and operated on a paying basis.

The store became as profitable as the early mine. Julius and wife Lille rose at dawn and did not return home until closing time, which was frequently ten o'clock at night. They pushed themselves to the limit, determined to make a success of the business. They sold food, clothing, ammunition, dynamite, mining tools, oil lamps, stove parts, and many other items. Their customers included homesteaders and miners from outside the community as well as the local people. (17)

The Andrews started out in the same store, on the east bank of Ruby Lake, that George Cheyney, Louis Zeckendorf, and others had operated in Montana Camp since the late 1880's. The Andrews built a second store, to the north, along the entrance road to the Camp. The original store then became a residence.



*The first Andrews' general store was situated just east of Ruby Lake.
(Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon private collection)*

Julius Andrews was born in Ohio in 1853. He married Lille B. Ruby in 1879. Andrews worked at farming and the lumber business in Minnesota, before coming to Arizona in 1884. For a year, Andrews ran a sawmill engine in the Hauachuca Mountains. He moved to Tucson in 1885, tried farming near the San Xavier Mission, and established a cattle ranch in the Santa Rita Mountains. After selling his interest in the ranch in 1891, Andrews managed ranches for others and hired out to help develop a mile long irrigation canal for the Canoa Ranch. Andrews went to Montana Camp in 1895 at the urging of a friend who thought he should take over the store. Julius Andrews finally bought the store in 1897 and owned it until 1914, selling it before the tragic events that were to make Ruby famous in the 1920's. Julius and Lille Andrews were also heavily involved in the mining business, locating over a dozen mines in the area during their stay in Montana Camp and Ruby. In 1915, Julius Andrews patented four mines, Laura, Ruby, Sunny Side, and Two Republic. Meanwhile the Andrews had moved back to Tucson where Lille died in 1939. Julius Andrews died in Tucson in 1943 at the age of 90.

Arivaca, Arizona March 1 st 1907		
M. Gold Boulder Mng. Co.		
In Account With		
J. S. ANDREWS		
GENERAL MERCHANDISE		
HAY, GRAIN and FEED. MINING SUPPLIES		
Location at Montana Camp		
Feb	10 70 70 th Pint Powder	1 80
	15 " Candles	25
	22 " 100 ft fuel	75
	24 " 2 Bales Hay ^{25th} quant Machine Oil 22	2 70
	28 " 1 Bale Hay	1 25
	" 28 days Labor by Vicente Padilla @ 15 th p. day	4 20
	" 4 " " Vicente Solis	6 00
	" 4 days hire of horse @ 50 th p. day	2 00
		56 75
	Jan. 10/7	567
		1 08
		1 46

*This 1907 receipt from the store at Montana Camp shows an assortment of goods and services.
(Manuscript 226, Gold Boulder Mining Co. Receipts, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, AZ)*



Julius and Lille Andrews owned and operated the store at Montana Camp from 1897 to 1914.
(Manuscript MS0021, Photo No. 10304, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, AZ, 1938)

As Statehood Approached

Life in the Montana Mining Camp at the end of Arizona's territorial years, before statehood in 1912, was certainly difficult. Most of the people were Mexican. "A few of the men of the neighborhood had their own diggings, but many worked for others. Wages were small and money was scarce. Some families lived in adobe huts, but many had only tents or even occupied caves. Everybody worked hard but there was little to relieve the grimness of the struggle." (18)

From 1878 to 1912, the Montana Group of mines produced mostly silver and gold. There are no records of the total value of the production during that period. But, there are some clues. First of all, the Montana mines were not among the most successful silver and gold mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. The more successful mines included the Austerlitz, Commodore, Gold Boulder, Old Glory, Oro Blanco, Warsaw, and Yellow Jacket. Secondly, even the more successful mines were not big producers due to the generally low-grade ore in the district, the scarcity of water to process the ore, and inefficient recovery of silver and gold from the ore.

The frustrations of gold miners in the Oro Blanco Mining District were voiced by an unsuccessful mine developer in a letter to the mine owner (19):

"A gold mine is a hole in the ground with a fool standing on top."

So, if the Montana mines had to rely on gold mining for their lasting fame, they would have been forgotten long ago. But with Arizona statehood in 1912, and the rapidly growing value of lead and zinc, the Montana mines were about to be reborn.

NOTES

1. John P. Wilson, *Island in the Desert – A History of the Uplands of Southeastern Arizona* (Albuquerque, NM, University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 42.
2. This mining law was popularly known as the Congressional Mining Law of 1872 and is documented in the records of the 42nd Congress, Second Session, Chapter 152, in “Statutes at Large,” vol. 17, p. 91. A copy of the law can also be found in “United States Mining Laws and Regulations There under,” Catalog A, Library No. 360, pp. 3-19, at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson, Arizona.
3. The location of a mining claim, according to the 1872 Mining Law, required that the name of the mine, location date, name of locator, size, boundary markings, and home mining district had to be formally recorded. See note 2.
4. The author’s brother, Al Ring, with a little help from the author, spent many days in the records vault at the Santa Cruz County Recorder’s Office in Nogales, Arizona patiently searching the old books for location notices for the mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. What makes such a task particularly challenging is that the mining claims for all 22 mining districts in Santa Cruz County were mingled together by date, and many of the early records were handwritten. As an added roadblock for researchers, the Oro Blanco Mining District was in Pima County, until 1899, when Santa Cruz County was formed from a piece of Pima County. So, mining records for the years prior to 1899, are located in Phoenix and Tucson, not Nogales.
5. Stanton B. Keith, “Index of Mining Properties in Santa Cruz County, Arizona,” *The Arizona Bureau of Mines Bulletin 191* (Tucson, Arizona, University of Arizona, 1975), p. 17.
6. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, following the decline of significant gold mining production, the U.S. Forest Service cleared the entire Oro Blanco area of old mining buildings and equipment. Mine shafts were sealed. This controversial action was done for safety reasons and to discourage settlement by transients during America’s “hippie” period. Over the years, there was also considerable vandalism of the old mining buildings and theft of equipment.

Today the population of the Oro Blanco area is sparse. The live oak forests were long ago cleared to supply timber for mine buildings and tunnels, and fuel for steam engines to run the ore processing mills. The lush, tall grasslands have been replaced by Mesquite trees. Most of the current residents of the former Oro Blanco Mining District live in shacks or trailers, having chosen a life away from civilization.

Unfortunately, this now open country, so near the international border with Mexico, has become a primary U.S. entry corridor for illegal aliens and drugs. The roads that served the miners so well, are still unpaved and not well maintained. The alien and drug problems, along with the poor road conditions, have discouraged visitors to the area.

7. This paper discusses the events listed between 1877 and 1912. For the events from 1912 on, see Al Ring’s 2002 History Convention paper, “Ruby: The Montana Mine Becomes the Largest Producer of Lead and Zinc in the State of Arizona.”
8. According to Mary Noon Kasulaitis, the Montana mine and nearby Montana Peak may have been named for the Spanish word for mountain (montaña). But they could have been named for the state of Montana, because in close proximity to the Montana mine, were several other mines named for states of the U.S., the California,

Idaho, Wyoming, Vermont, Utah, Virginia, and New York mines. See Ms. Kasulaitis' article, "George W. Cheyney and the Early Days of Montana Camp," *The Connection* (Arivaca, October, 2000).

Mary Noon Kasulaitis is a direct descendant of Dr. Adolphus Noon, who came to the Ruby area in 1879 and became one of the prominent pioneers of the Arizona Territory. Ms. Kasulaitis is a librarian and historian, who manages the library in Arivaca, near Ruby, and writes a regular column on area history for the *The Connection*, Arivaca's newspaper. Fred Noon was Ms. Kasulaitis' father. See note 9.

Montana Peak was originally named Oro Blanco peak and appears so-named on some of the older maps of the area.

9. Fred Noon, Arivaca Yesterdays, *The Connection* (Arivaca, n.d.). Fred Noon (1908-1996) was a third generation native of Oro Blanco. He owned and managed the Noon Ranch, and wrote articles on Arivaca and Oro Blanco history in the local papers (*Connection* and *Arivaca Briefs*) from the 1940's through the 1990's. For several years in the 1970's, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Arizona Historical Society. He had an intense interest in local history and had a great memory for all those folks and stories from his childhood.

10. State of Arizona Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records, Deeds of Mines, 1881, Book 14, pp. 159-161.

11. James Brand Tenney, *History of Mining in Arizona, Vol. 1, Tucson, 1927-1929*, University of Arizona Special Sections Library, AS198.

12. Carl Chafin, ed., *The Tombstone Years 1879-1887, The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons, Volume II, Post-Erp Era, June 28, 1882 – March 31, 1887* (Tombstone, Arizona, Cochise Classics, 1997), pp. 401-403.

13. Fred Noon, *The Connection* (Arivaca, June 1991). The earthquake was centered near Bavispe, Sonora, south of Douglas. The quake killed 42 people in that village. The earthquake was felt 400 miles away, including as far north as Phoenix, Arizona and Santa Fe, New Mexico. At the epicenter in Sonora, a 35-mile long fault appeared and the ground alongside raised 12 feet. This same quake broke huge slabs of rock off the walls of Sabino Canyon in Tucson.

14. *Arizona Daily Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona, May 7, 1895).

15. Much of the material on George Cheyney comes from *Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona* (Chapman Publishing, 1901), available at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson Arizona, and Mary Noon Kasulaitis' October 2000 article (See note 8)

16. A good source for Louis Zeckendorf biographical data is *Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona* (Chapman Publishing, 1901), available at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson, Arizona.

17. Manuscript MS0021, Arizona Historical Society (Tucson, Arizona).

18. Carol Clarke Meyer, "The Rise and Fall of Ruby," *The Journal of Arizona History* (Tucson, The Arizona Historical Society, 1974), pp. 12, 13.

19. Letter from Robert A. Johnson to Warren E. Culbertson, October 15, 1988, personal papers of Warren E. Culbertson, Old Glory gold mine. The author retains a copy of this letter.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Tom McCurnin, "Ruby Arizona," (University of Arizona, December, 1997). *A term paper from a University of Arizona graduate student who made numerous trips to Ruby. A copy of the paper can be found at URL: <http://www.ghosttowns.com/states/az/rubypapers.html>.*
2. Bob and Al Ring, "Life in the Oro Blanco Mining Camps in 1900." *Presented at the Spring 2000 Arizona History Convention in Yuma, Arizona. The Arizona Historical Society in Tucson, Arizona maintains a paper copy file of convention papers.*
3. Bob and Al Ring, "The Forgotten Gold Mines of Oro Blanco," publication in preparation. *The complete history of gold mining in Santa Cruz County's Oro Blanco Mining District.*