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A MYTHICAL MINE.

Story of a Lost Claim in the Superstition Mountains
"Dutch Jacob's" Secret

Phoenix People Now Hunting for the Treasure With Prospects
of Success.

Fifty-six miles a little south of east of Phoenix, or some eighteen miles from Goldfield, in the Superstition mountains, is a mythical mine that may some day prove a reality. More than thirty years ago, or in the early sixties, so the story goes, two German prospectors came to Arizona, and in the secluded spot above mentioned they found six Mexicans working a rich gold mine. They were mining by the crude Spanish method, but the ore was so rich and the gold so plentiful that the Dutch prospectors were determined to get possession of the claim. They did so by the speediest method-by killing the Mexicans; dead men tell no tales.

As civilization drifted into this valley, Dutch Jacob and his partner, both with plenty of gold, became familiar to the people. Later the partner disappeared, and it is generally supposed he left by the same route as did the half dozen Mexicans a few years before.

Finally the now aged Dutch Jacob moved to the vicinity of Phoenix, but he made frequent trips to the Superstition mountains, going alone, and each time he brought back bountiful riches. Finally old Jacob, along in the seventies, lived the life of a recluse, and was seen in Phoenix but once in a year or two. He always turned up at election time, and his only mission on earth seemed to be to vote the Republican ticket, during the remainder of the time few knew he was on earth. He made his last trip to the mine in '84. This time he brought \$500 of gold in two small sacks.

He was now approaching the age of four score, and he became quite feeble. During his declining years a sympathetic Ruth ministered to the tottering Jacob, and in '90 he quit this earth. To this woman, who is now a well-known married woman of Phoenix, he left his little property here, consisting of a town lot. He also divulged the secret of the hidden mine, which she tells as follows:

In a gulch in the Superstition mountains, the location of which is described by certain landmarks, there is a two-room house in the mouth of a cave on the side of the slope near the gulch. Just across the gulch, about 200 yards, opposite this house in the cave, is a tunnel, well covered up and concealed in the bushes. Here is the mine, the richest in the world, according to Dutch Jacob. Some distance above the tunnel on the side of the mountains is a shaft or incline that is not so steep but one can climb down. This, too, is covered carefully. The shaft goes right down in the midst of the rich gold ledge, where it can be picked off in big flakes of almost pure gold.

After Dutch Jacob had been buried the woman took a miner with her and spent an entire summer hunting for the mine, but she was unable to find even the ruins of the house. She tried again next year, but failed, owing perhaps to changes wrought by the heavy rains that annually fall in that section.

Many had hunted for the mine even twenty years ago, and since the death of Dutch Jacob, J.E. Bark, P.C. Bicknell, the journalistic prospector, and many others have made frequent trips in that locality.

A few weeks ago Mr. Bicknell accidentally stumbled onto the stone house with two rooms in the mouth of a cave. He felt as though he now had the secret, but his grubstake was about played out and he returned to Phoenix. As an evidence he brought a hand-made shovel pounded out of an iron rod. This crude implement looked as though it had been used in the work of reducing ore, as it is yet covered with slag and some signs of silver. An old drill rag was also picked up in the cabin.

Bicknell has again gone, and last week Frank Luke and Frank Kirkland, armed with the full story of the mythical mine, started for the Superstitions. They reached Goldfield, which is some eighteen miles from the spot, but the rough country makes the distance twenty-six miles. Here they chartered a horse and a mule and started out in search of the hidden fortune. The day was hot and the mule lazy, so that after going thirteen miles, or half way, Kirkland weakened. His legs grew tired kicking the mule, and they feared as he grew slower they would not be able to return. Frank would not chance walking, so a council was held and they returned to Goldfield, and next day returned to Phoenix, having gone within thirteen miles of the place and been absent four days.

The secret of the mine is still unsolved, and it may remain so for years, or even forever, but one thing is certain, of all the hidden mines of Arizona there is at present the best evidence that the one operated by Dutch Jacob did exist, and that it is an unusually rich claim. The old man in his dying hour made the location so plain to the woman that she has never doubted him. If Bicknell does not now solve the problem the precaution taken by Dutch Jacob will be the only reason.

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A Mine in the Superstition Mountains.

The Half-told Tale of an Old Miser.

Afraid to Return to the Source of His Mysterious Wealth.

Phoenix (A.T.), January 9.-That there exists an undiscovered gold mine of fabulous wealth near a point in the Superstition mountains not more than fifty miles from Phoenix has long been an article of faith among a number of mining men in a position to sift the mass of evidence accumulated during the past twenty years. The facts and individual statements, although emanating from widely diverse sources and furnished by persons who could have had no possible communication with one another, all agree in a remarkable manner as to the description of the mine, and, what is still more convincing, are unanimous in indicating a particular quarter of the mountains in question as the place of its location.

Years ago Indians boasted to the early settlers--notably to the discoverers of the celebrated Antelope diggings--of the wonderful wealth of this deposit, and even pointed out vaguely the direction in which it lay. Pimas, Maricopas, Apaches--all claim a knowledge of it, though nothing can tempt one of them to disclose its exact whereabouts. Mexicans--even Mexicans of means--equipped with elaborate maps of the mysterious region, have more than once made journeys from Sonora in the hope of enriching themselves at this storied Ophir. They even name fortunate countrymen of theirs who in former years, running the gauntlet of Gringo and Apache, have surreptitiously worked the mine for a few weeks at a time and returned to the land of Manana with gold-laden burros. Lacking citizenship to enable them to claim the mine, they merely helped themselves hurriedly to what they could get and departed after covering all traces of their work.

The district designated is not extensive. It lies within an imaginary circle whose diameter is not more than five miles and whose center is marked by the Weaver's Needle, a prominent and fantastic pinnacle of volcanic tufa that rises to a height of 2500 feet among a confusion of lesser peaks and mountainous masses of basaltic rock. One can reach its base only after struggling through a network of boulder-choked canyons and well-nigh impenetrable thickets. In its weird loneliness it seems an index finger marking the location of some hidden mystery. Owing to its resemblance, from one point of view, to a high-crowned pointed sombrero the Mexicans and Indians call it Sombrero butte, or rather El Sombrero, and it is the landmark around which cluster all the tales of treasure referred to, whether Indian, Mexican or frontiersman. Americans have given it the name of Weaver's Needle, in memory of old Paulin Weaver, the well-known trapper and pioneer of the Southwest.

In regard to the mine, it cannot be doubted, in the face of the conclusive evidence adduced, that it really has an existence; though in view of the numerous and unavailing efforts to discover it, made during a period of years, it seems more than likely that it has been forever hidden, by some landslide or cloudburst, or perhaps by the earthquake that gave this range a severe shaking up in 1887.

During the past year all the old stories have been revived and a new impetus has been given to the search, which has been conducted spasmodically ever since the settlement of the Territory, by reason of the deathbed disclosures of an old German, who, in his last hours, confided to the woman nursing him how he and a partner worked that very mine in 1863, until the latter was killed by Apaches.

Jacob Waltz, for thus he signed his name, though he was better known as "Old Dutch Yoccup" to the few whom he came in contact, had taken a fancy to the woman, who had, in fact, taken care of him during the last few years of his helpless old life, and had given her gold nuggets on several occasions. He had been a resident of the Territory for thirty years and had lived for twenty years of this time on a little ranch near Phoenix, where he had a small vineyard and orchard. He was morose, miserly and uncommunicative, avoiding contact with men, and was always suspected of having a buried treasure, for he was known to have sold gold nuggets at different times, though he never went out in the mountains. It was only when he was convinced that he had to let go of life that he endeavored to inform the woman--his only friend--how to go to the mine, and also, it appears, to divulge the hiding place of his buried treasure. But he had cultivated the habit of reticence and secretiveness too long, and death overtook him even while he was struggling to make himself intelligible.

Of course his beneficiary lost no time after the funeral in turning over with the shovel every foot of the old man's little piece of property--which, by the way, he left to her by will--but there are those who have shrewd suspicions that the treasure was found by another. The only gold found on the place was a few particles remaining in the seams of four buckskin sacks unearthed from the bottom of "Old Yoccup's" trunk. His directions, too, in regard to finding the mine were at fault, or else (which is probable, his hearer being a woman and relying entirely on her memory) she got them mixed. She made several trips to the supposed locality, taking with her experienced prospectors, but all to no purpose. Finally she made the story public, and since then scores of prospectors have scoured the "suspected district" in vain.

Here is a short outline of "Old Yocup's" story as told by himself and repeated by his only hearer: At the beginning of the Civil War, being at that time in Arizona, he went over into Sonora to avoid military duty, and there made the acquaintance of the Peralta family, with whom he became quite intimate. Speaking of Arizona, they told him that they owned a large grant in that country, which, however, being nothing but a desert, was valueless, except for a rich gold mine from which they had drawn much wealth. They had worked it in the forties; sending up a band of trusty peons, who always returned in a few months' time, their burros loaded with the precious yellow metal, which was obtained without mill or machinery of any kind. All that was needed was a hammer to break it out of the quartz.

Believing that they had lost the title to their grant as a result of the Mexican War, the Peraltas sold to "Old Yocup" for a trifle the information necessary to enable him to find the mine, and their description of its glittering wealth was sufficient to start him at once back to Arizona. At Tucson he picked up a partner in the shape of another German, also named Jacob, and together they set out for the Superstition mountains, which, even at that early day, enjoyed the uncanny reputation indicated by their name. Arriving at the initial point mentioned in Peralta's instructions--"the first gorge on the south side, from the west end of the range"--they found, as he had told them, a monumented trail which led them "northward over a lofty ridge; thence downward past Sombrero Butte into a long canyon running north, and finally to a tributary canyon very deep and rocky, and densely wooded with a continuous thicket of scrub oak."

Here the woman is at fault. She has forgotten whether the canyon enters from the east or west. Proceeding up this canyon with difficulty, they were startled by a repeated knocking a short distance ahead, as of some one breaking rock, and with rifles ready for instant use they advanced with caution. Presently, on the steep slope about 100 feet above them they spied two Indians busy breaking rock. This was evidently the much desired mine; and if so, it was not time for trifling. They did not propose to be balked of a fortune now almost in their hands by a naked Indian or two. Each picked his man, and taking careful aim, they dropped the interlopers in their tracks. The smoke had scarcely cleared away when they were horrified to see two more Indians, who appeared to come out of the earth. They began to fear that they had got into a hornet's nest, but they were in for it now, and without more ado they dispatched these two by the same road as the others. Then two more jumped up and began running up the hill, endeavoring to hide

themselves in the brush. By good luck they dropped these also, and as no more of them appeared after they remained concealed a reasonable time the Germans climbed up the dump of the shaft--for such they found it to be--congratulating themselves that the golden treasure was theirs at last.

On examination of the bodies of the supposed Indians their exultation changed to horror. The men were Mexicans--naked, it is true, but that is the way the Mexican miners prefer to work underground. They had murdered six men in cold blood! The unfortunates were doubtless some of the Peralta peons, who had been working the mine on their own account. They probably had friends, who, on their failure to return, would come in search of them, and the matter would end in the arrest and conviction of the two Germans.

At any rate, this is what "Old Yoccup" and his partner thought, and on that account they feared it would not be safe to claim the mine and work it openly. They planned, therefore, to get what gold they could in a week or two of work, and then, after covering the mine, leave the country to return at some future time.

Their first care was to go back along the trail and throw down all the monuments that had made it so easy for them to reach the spot. The bodies they threw into the shaft, for they had found a rich cropping of the auriferous quartz lower down the bank where there was more gold than quartz. The shaft, it appears, was about seventy-five feet deep, and made in Mexican style, with flaring walls, rendering ladders unnecessary. After two weeks of work old Yoccup had to make a trip to Florence for supplies. It was a three days' journey. On his return he found his partner lying dead--killed by Apaches. After that he was afraid to stay there alone, but before leaving the spot he dragged his partner's body into the tunnel they had made, which he then walled up and covered over. The shaft, he thought, was not likely to be discovered, as it was high above the gulch and pretty well concealed by the brush.

There are those who believe that "Old Yoccup" murdered his partner after they had worked together covering up the mine, as they had planned. However this may be certain it is that the old man never profited by his gold. His superstitious fears always prevented him from returning to the spot. No doubt he believed it to be haunted, and it was so, for him. For the remainder of his life he was a morbid, fearful and broken-down old man, afraid to look his fellow-man in the eye, and not even daring to enjoy his ill-gotten wealth. It was believed by his neighbors that he saw ghosts, and persons passing his cabin frequently heard his voice in tones of fear and supplication as though he were addressing some menacing presence. He never told the woman who cared for him toward the last how much gold he had brought away from the mine, but whether it was \$10,000 or \$50,000 as some suppose, the amount must be still nearly intact, as he was never known to spend any

money. He gave her at one time \$5,000 to raise a mortgage, and at other times nuggets amounting in all to about \$1500. But that there is more of it somewhere is proved by the fact that he was in the act of telling her where to find it when death overtook him.

It is a curious fact that the Indians describe just such a mine, with a tunnel and shaft, in that same vicinity, with Sombrero Butte as a landmark; and they also say that the tunnel has been walled up and covered over. This is also the description of it given by the Mexicans who have come in search of it at different times. The great clue for which all the search is now being made is a rock cabin in a cave, which, according to "Old Yoccup's" story, is directly across the canyon from the mine, and not more than 200 feet from it. It was here that the two Germans lived while they worked the mine.

It is a coincidence that the writer succeeded in finding a rock cabin in a cave, very near the region referred to; but it was the work of cliff dwellers, and, besides, there was no mine on the opposite side of the canyon. P.C. Bicknell