**Gold and Mount Ord, part 1**

*By Jim Christensen*

The Mazatzal Mountain range runs from 4 Peaks in the south up to Payson in the north. About halfway between 4 Peaks and Payson is Mount Ord, which sits next to Highway 87. Mount Ord has a long history of of both lost gold mines and real gold mines. Several of the stories of lost mines on Mount Ord revolve around cavalry soldiers.

Camp Reno was established in 1867 near Tonto Creek and which also put it near Mount Ord. Soldiers stationed there were shown gold ore by a prospector who said he found it on Mount Ord. Shortly thereafter, nine soldiers deserted to look for gold. They made their way to Mount Ord and found a quartz ledge rich with gold. Loading what ore they could carry the decided to return the way they came and slip around Camp Reno during the night on the way back to civilization. However, the deserters were ambushed by Apaches just as they were reaching the vicinity of the Camp. Soldiers in Camp Reno could hear the gunfire and a cavalry patrol was dispatched to investigate. The patrol found the site of the battle but only one deserter remained alive and his pockets were filled with rich gold ore. The wounded soldier gave a partial account of the situation but died before giving detailed directions to the ore.

Camp Reno was abandoned in 1870 and as the final detachment was being withdrawn south to Fort McDowell they met 2 recently discharged soldiers who were heading north to do some prospecting. The discharged soldiers were warned repeatedly by their comrades of the Apache menace but they continued on north to Mount Ord and were then to vanish for 5 years. Years later a shepherd using Mount Ord for summer grazing came across 5 skeletons surrounded by scattered cartridge casings indicating the remains of a shoot -out. Two of the skeletons were apparently soldiers and were identified by buttons and clothing fragments. The other 3 skeletons were assumed to be Apaches. In the remains of the soldier’s uniforms were found chunks of quartz heavily laced with gold.

While most lost mine stories are considered tall tales only suitable for telling around the campfire, in the next installment of this story we’ll look at the real mines of Mount Ord, which actually support the existence of these rich deposits of gold.

**Gold and Mount Ord, Part 2**

*By Jim Christensen*

The Mazatazl Mountain range runs from 4 Peaks in the south up to Payson in the north. About halfway between 4 Peaks and Payson is Mount Ord, which sits next to Highway 87.

Mount Ord has a long history of both lost gold mines and real gold mines. The lost mines stories revolve around prospectors finding a quartz outcrop on Mount Ord heavily laced with gold only to be killed by Apaches on the way out of the mountains. When the remains of the prospectors were found, only the gold ore remained as silent testimony to their success.

However, there are gold mines on Mount Ord which did have high grade gold ore that fit the descriptions of the lost mine stories. Primary of these is the Little Daisy, supposedly located in 1865, which fits into the time frame of the existence of nearby Camp Reno. As per Department of Mines documentation, the original glory hole pocket of this mine had gold ore that ran $10,000 to the ton, which at the old price of gold at $20.00 per ounce is 500 ounces of gold per ton of ore and that would be equal to $750,000.00 per ton at today’s price. This bonanza ore fits nicely with the description of the gold ore recovered from the unfortunate prospectors in the lost mine stories. Once the glory hole pocket at the Little Daisy was cleaned out, the remaining adjacent surface ore ran from $2000.00 to $2500.00 per ton ($187,500.00 per ton at today’s price), still bonanza material. In addition to this ore which was located at what would become the main mine shaft, there were several other scattered rich locations on the Little Daisy claims, one of which still had the remains of an arrastre in place when we visited it in 2003. In 1980, according to the Department of Mines records, the dump material from the vicinity of the arrastre was being processed and it ran 90 ounces to the ton. This high grade 90 ounce ore was discarded by the original arrastre operators as not containing enough gold to justify processing, indicating that there was more than one bonanza glory hole waiting to be found in the same area.

Just to make things easy for the original prospectors, the Little Daisy deposits wouldn’t have been difficult to find as they were located on the lower slopes of Mount Ord. No need to climb steep grades or cross endless deserts, here was an area of rich gold deposits awaiting them in easily accessed canyons.

Now, the only part of the Little Daisy mine that doesn’t fit the description of the lost mine stories is that it’s located on the south side of Mount Ord, while the lost mine stories put the gold ledges on the north side of the mountain. Maybe there’s still a bonanza gold ledge waiting to the found on the north slopes of Mount Ord!

Note: The road into the area of the Little Daisy on the south side of Mount Ord has been locked and gated off by the Forest Service for 10 years. A forest fire burned the entire area which was then hit by massive flash flooding which destroyed the entrance road that ran parallel for some distance along a large wash.