

Treasure City

even richer than the Comstock,
but just for a moment

"Claim-jumping was such a common occurrence that on a certain night sixty lots were jumped in Treasure City. Personal occupation and a well-oiled revolver often constituted clear title."

- Stan Paher



Treasure City in its heyday, ca. 1869. Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

An Impossibly Rich Find

Miners had been combing the hills in White Pine country for several years, but had not found anything significant. Then, in a dispute over some stolen food, a local Paiute Indian called Napias Jim gave one of the miners, A.J. Leathers a piece of silver ore as a peace offering.

Jim led the miner to the top of Treasure Hill, where the impossibly rich ore lay in abundance. Soon developed as the

Hidden Treasure Mine, this mineral belt was between six and seven miles long and about a mile and a half wide of solid silver.

An Ore of a Different Color

Prospectors had previously passed over this hill, not reading the ore as mineral bearing. The ore looked like a specimen of limestone tinged with iron, rather than the silver-bearing quartz that the miners were accustomed to. But the mysterious look of the ore was just the first sign that profits would be elusive.

"By August [1869], there was hardly anything more left to discover."

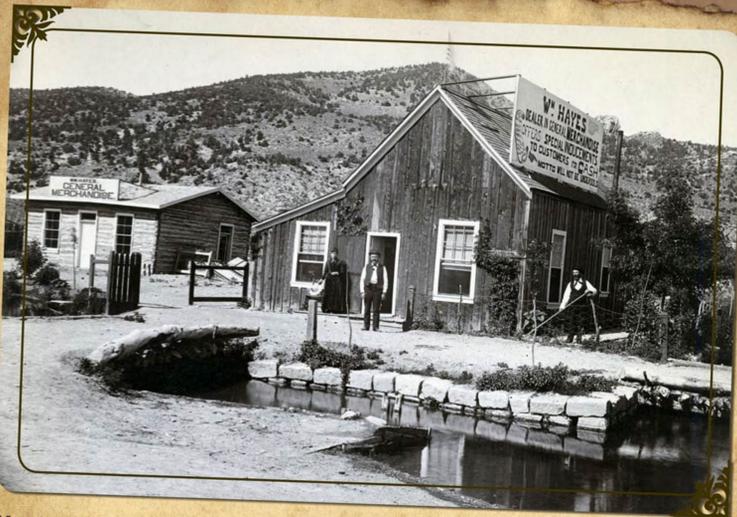
*- Martha Gally,
Shermantown
resident*

Frenzy

Assayers valued the ore at a shocking average of \$5,000 per ton. As claims covered the hill and surrounding area, it became apparent that the pockets of solid ore, while incredibly rich, were few and far between. Just as the appearance of the rock did not meet the expectations of experienced miners, neither did the way it organized underground.

The Treasure Hill mines produced millions of dollars, but many more millions were poured into the district in building the towns, roads,

mills, as well as equipment and labor. With plenty of claim disputes and other legal proceedings, the lawyers of the district got rich quick, too.



Merchants located along the road between Hamilton and Treasure Hill. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

City in the Sky

Perched on the side of Treasure Hill just below the crest, Treasure City was laid out with just one street. No water was available, except for that hauled up from Hamilton and sold for eight cents a gallon. The high winds that swirled around the summit ultimately caused the fire that burned the town to the ground in 1874.

"Teams struggle through the street, over the stones, hauling wood, water, goods and lumber; teamsters curse; dogs fight in the snow-slush; men gamble heavily; houses are built on stilts, and we all take a drink."

- Dr. James W. Gally



Image courtesy Legends of America.