

Pinal
NUGGET

FALL 2019

FREE

Resolution
Copper's
DEIS,
pages 6-7

**THE MINE
WITH THE
IRON DOOR**
pages 2-4

Celebrating Copper

A community publication of Copperarea.com

Photo by Cat Brown

Is the Mine with the Iron Door Located Near Winkelman?

John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget

There are many legends about lost gold mines in the southwest including Arizona. One of these legends is the story of the Lost Escalante Mine better known as the Mine with the Iron Door.

NUGGET

Covering the Copper Corridor Communities of Globe, Miami, Superior, Kearny, Hayden, Winkelman, Dudleyville, Aravaipa, Mammoth, San Manuel, Oracle, SaddleBrooke and Catalina.

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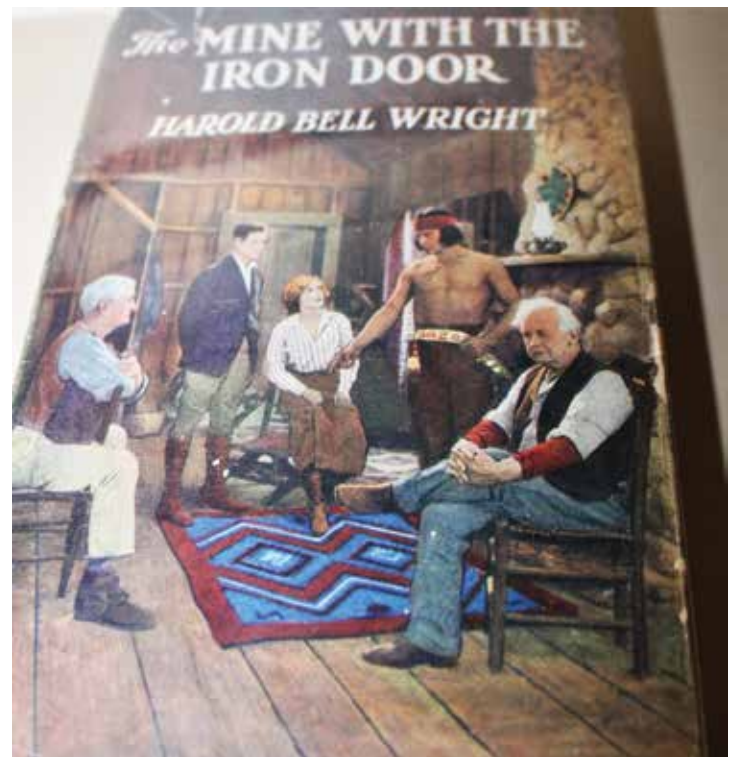
— Anne Murray


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The story involves a cache of Spanish gold hidden behind an iron door, Apache raiders and many failed attempts to locate it. History and the many stories about the Mine with the Iron Door tell us that its location is in the Cañada del Oro area near Oracle, Arizona.

A number of men have claimed to have found the mine or the location of what they believed to be the lost mine entrance. One of these men was the Mayor of Kearny, Earnest McCallister. McCallister said he originally found the opening to a 5' by 40' tunnel back in 1966 along



OUT OF PRINT 
The cover for the book, The Mine With the Iron Door.

the banks of the Cañada del Oro. The owners of the land would not let him dig on their property.

In 1982 he found out the land had been sold to the state of Arizona. He applied for a permit to dig on the land offering to share 50/50 of any gold found with the state. He said that he and his fellow “co-adventurers” could dig it up in a matter of hours. His co-adventurers were James Sosh, Superintendent of the Cities Service Mines Division at Miami; Forrest E. Smith, foreman at the Kennecott Copper Company mine at Ray; Steven Sater who worked at the Ray mine; and McCallister’s son-in-law, Normal Warren of Winkelman.



PROSPECTOR

Lee G. Turner from Winkelman claimed to have found the Mine with the Iron Door.

The land happened to be part of Catalina State Park. The Arizona State Parks Board denied the request in a vote of 3 to 2, saying they could not allow an untrained individual to dig on land they believed may contain prehistoric ruins. The acting Arizona Land Commissioner, Bob Lane, went along with their recommendation but said that McCallister should tell them where the alleged mine was. McCallister told them that suggestion was “asinine.”

Another man who also lived in the Copper Corridor believed he had found the mine in the Mescal Mountains about 8 miles from Winkelman. The alleged discovery was made by Lee G. Turner, a 34-year-old rancher, cowboy and prospector from Winkelman. He announced the finding in 1924. This was the same year that a motion picture was being made of the popular book, *Mine with the Iron Door* by Harold Bell Wright. Wright had written the book while staying at Rancho Linda Vista in Oracle and in the Cañada del Oro area in 1923. The book sparked renewed interest in the legend of the mine. The movie premiered in Tucson on Oct. 16, 1924.

The first news of the mines alleged discovery appeared in an article in the *Arizona Daily Star* in early November. The *Arizona Daily Star* reported in their Nov. 7 issue: “Lee G. Turner, a prospector, brought in a report here last night of mines which have been hidden for centuries in the

hills back of Winkelman. He had deposit maps, gold ore that assayed \$2,300 a ton and photographs of concealed roads, townsites, mill sites, and dam sites – all of them he believes to be centuries old.”

Turner claimed he had been searching for the mine for 16 years. He had been shown the area by Chino, an Apache Indian and brother of the famed warrior Geronimo. He said that the claims were on the same land that the government took from Geronimo which was what made him go on the war path. After his capture, it was this land that Geronimo was talking about when he had told the U.S. government that “he would show the white man enough gold to pay for all the damage his tribe had done if Uncle Sam would allow him to return to his people.”

Dean Byron Cummings, a noted archaeologist from the University of Arizona, was said by Turner to have taken a copy of strange hieroglyphics from the area, which Turner believes are the key to the underground and overhead workings where millions of dollars of virgin gold and silver deposits are located. Turner was in Tucson looking to get in touch with the “motion picture men” to film the historic opening up of the mine. Turner also said that he may travel to Washington, D.C. to visit President Coolidge to make sure that when he opens up the mine that it will not be taken from him, as it is on Federal land.

On Nov. 9, it was reported by the *Daily Star* that Lee



REPORTER

Frank Scully was a writer for the *Arizona Daily Star* and helped tell Lee Turner’s story.

Turner was on his way to Washington, D.C. to see President Coolidge. He was traveling on the Sunset Limited train. He had taken a Papago Indian basket filled with cactus candy to give as a gift for the First Lady and a walking cane made from cholla cactus from his claims for the President. The article said that Turner was insured for \$50,000 and was carrying a pistol for protection. The press also played up Turner’s Indian heritage (he was part Cherokee) in their news articles.

It was also announced that following his trip to Washington, he would be traveling to New York to meet with Sol Lesser, the Producer of the motion picture *Mine with the Iron Door* to see if he would be interested in filming the drive through the last 63 feet of ground into the mine. The *Arizona Daily Star* let its readers know

Continued on page 4

Mine with the Iron Door

Continued from page 3

that an exclusive series of articles would appear in their paper telling Lee G. Turner's story about how he found the mine. And what a story it was!

A former sports writer from New York, Frank Scully, now living in Tucson and working for the *Arizona Daily Star* wrote the series of articles. He also made sure they were copyrighted under his name. Scully had moved to Tucson for his health a few years ago. He had tuberculosis of the bone and often found himself in a wheel chair.

The story started out with Turner talking about his early years in Texas near San Angelino where he was born in 1889. He was raised on a ranch. At age 15 he traveled to Arizona where he went to work for the 3-C outfit on the Apache Indian Reservation near Globe. It was there that he became friends with the Apaches and met Chino who first showed him the location of the mine in 1909.

Turner would claim that

the door at the entrance of the mine was made of copper melted at the Tumacacori mission back in the 16th century, not iron. He told the exciting story of fighting off claim jumpers and attempts on his life. He found seven different graveyards with over 400 grave sites in areas surrounding the mine. He believed that a number of cities were buried in these areas.

Turner was back in Tucson on Nov. 28. He reported that the government had assured him that his claim would not be taken from him. His plan was to begin digging and to have the lost Spanish mine opened in January. "It will prove his theories that the area north of Winkelman was at one time the center of an Aztec civilization known through history as the Seven Cities of Cibola."

Shortly after this, the name Lee G. Turner disappeared from the newspapers. The last article found was on Dec. 9, 1924 and was about

two planes flying over Lee's claims taking aerial photographs. Plans were made to build a landing strip there to fly in passengers and supplies for the mine. Frank Scully left Tucson for Switzerland seeking a new treatment for his TB of the bone.

In 1964 following Frank Scully's death, an article appeared in the *Arizona Daily Star*. It was written by J.F. Weadcock who wrote a column called *Desert Notebook*. After praising Scully, who by this time was well known in Hollywood and a successful writer, he told the story of introducing Scully to Sol Lesser, Producer of the *Mine with the Iron Door*. In 1924 when Lesser came to Tucson and was in the process of making the movie, he asked Weadcock if he knew anyone who could handle the local publicity for the film.

He had Lesser meet with Frank Scully. Scully was hired and contacted all his old friends in the newspaper business in New York and the east coast. He told them what he was doing and asked them to trust him. The story would be made up but would sell newspapers and they "would know the deal was a gag, but no one else would."

Weadcock said, "Scully hired a fellow named Frank Turner who looked more like a prospector than a prospector did." He found a hole in the ground and an old beaten up metal door which was placed

over the hole which was supposedly the entry to a tunnel. The story of Turner and the discovery of the lost Spanish mine began appearing in newspapers around the country.

"Lesser was the one that had found the gold mine – for Scully kept pouring out the copy for Turner to peddle and wound the show up in typical Scully fashion. He had a picture of Turner shaking hands with President Calvin Coolidge on the Whitehouse steps!" By the time the movie was completed and began showing in theaters, "there were few people from coast to coast who had not heard of the 'Mine with the Iron Door'."

*In 1950, Frank Scully had a book, *Behind the Flying Saucers*, published. The story was told to Scully allegedly by two scientists who had witnessed the event. It was about a flying saucer that crashed near Aztec, New Mexico in 1948. Supposedly 16 humanoid bodies were recovered by the military and a government coverup was involved. The best-selling book is believed to be the first non-fiction book written about UFOs and influenced public perceptions about "flying saucers". In the mid-1950s, the story was debunked as a hoax and the two sources who had told the story to Scully were convicted of fraud. Some people believe the debunking is part of the government UFO coverup conspiracy.



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Recreational usage of Apache Leap is under consideration of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
Photo by Cat Brown

Resolution Copper: Permitting Milestones Met

Jennifer Carnes
Pinal Nugget

The proposed Resolution Copper Mine has been a plan in the works for well over a decade. The new mine has met many challenges along the way to actually being permitted to open the mine. For many years the focus was having Congress approve the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act. The land exchange was approved at the end of 2014 through the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act.

Once the land exchange was approved in Congress, the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement began. The EIS is a requirement under the National Environmental Protection Act prior to the land actually transferring title. The Tonto National Forest was the federal agency required to conduct the studies and plans since

they are the land manager for the public lands being exchanged.

The Tonto National Forest then contracted this work to be completed by an independent environmental consulting agency. SWCA received the contract and for the past two years has been studying all of the effects that the Resolution Copper mine would

have on the environment, water, socioeconomic, recreation and all aspects associated with developing a mine in the 21st Century.

The Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Land Management, local governments such as the Town of Superior, Pinal County and Gila

County were also involved in the interviewing and planning in order to complete the draft document.

In August of 2019, the first draft of the Resolution Copper Mine Environmental Impact Statement was released to the public. The 1,400-page document provided a deep dive into the many complexities of the proposed mine project. Impacts such as traffic, housing, education, public safety and economic impacts were discussed as to how this project would affect those community services. The plan also took a required deep dive into where is the best place for the tailings to be located; and asked how will the tailings be constructed, where should all of the mine operations be located, what will type of environmental damages will need to be mitigated prior to and during the operation of the mine?

The Draft EIS called for a series of public meetings to allow for Forest

Service Officials to hear the concerns of the public. Those hearings have all been held and at press time the public may still make comments to the Tonto National Forest by sending in letter via US mail or via online submission: <https://www.resolutionmineeis.us>

The communities of the Copper Corridor have been the host communities to some of the most profitable copper mines in the United States. But this is the first new mine to be permitted in the region's most recent history. For the Town of Superior, the past few months have required the Town staff, elected officials and community leaders to develop a comprehensive response to the monolithic document.

Once the comment period closes, the Forest Service, the agency conveners and SWCA will begin to revise the document in order to come

to a final draft which will complete the Record of Decision. This will then complete the transfer of all the Land Exchange properties. The final Record of Decision is expected to be finalized by late Summer of 2020. It is important to note that despite required mitigations of potential for socioeconomic or environmental risks that the Draft EIS and Record of Decision indicate, the Forest Service Supervisor does not have the ability to deny the exchange of the lands or stop the mine project.

⬇ INFORMATION

Folks from Superior attended an open house and comment meeting on the Resolution Copper Draft EIS.



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In April, Taseko Mines Limited, owner of the Florence Copper Project, announced that a first harvest of 3,700 pounds of copper cathode (32 sheets x 117 pounds), was made at the Florence Copper Project. The copper cathode has been assayed at higher than 99.9% copper by Minerals Technology, LLC, an independent laboratory.

Russell Hallbauer, President and CEO of Taseko commented, "Our test facility is performing very well and we are extremely pleased to have produced such high quality copper

this early in the process. These results have exceeded our expectations. There is no better proof to demonstrate the success of our highly engineered in situ leaching process test facility. With

the facility now at steady-state and producing high quality copper, we will use the balance of the year to refine and improve operating procedures for the commercial facility."

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ASARCO: On Strike



**Mila Besich
Pinal Nugget**

After a year of negotiations with ASARCO-Grupo Mexico, the United Steelworkers voted to strike. The official strike vote was announced late in the evening on Oct. 11, 2019.

ON STRIKE

Unions at ASARCO-Grupo Mexico voted to strike earlier in October 2019.

Employees left their positions for the picket lines at 11 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2019. The strike affects the Ray Pit, Hayden Smelter Complex, Silverbell operations and the Amarillo Refinery in Texas.

In addition to the United Steelworkers, the

United Auto Workers and the unions for machinists, electricians, operating engineers and boilermakers also went on strike.

ASARCO's best and final offer presented to the unions in early October froze pension plans, would have left two-thirds of

the workers without a raise and doubled the cost of the employee costs for healthcare. Despite a growing demand for copper that has increased the cost per pound, the employees have not seen a raise in nine years.

ASARCO released the following statement on

Tuesday, Oct. 15:
"ASARCO LLC (ASARCO) is disappointed with the recent decision from seven of its eight unions to strike at ASARCO's Arizona and Texas operations amid contract negotiations. ASARCO continues to negotiate in good faith

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Strike

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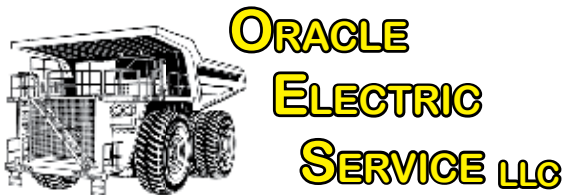
with the USW and the other unions (USW is the designated spokesperson for all the unions) and is committed to reaching a new agreement.

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supplies for the local cities, towns and communities near its operations. As a large employer in Arizona and Texas, ASARCO is a major contributor to the economy through sales tax collections, property tax, mineral severance payments, materials and equipment purchases, and employee wages, salaries, taxes and benefits.”

Editor’s note: While the Pinal Nugget’s annual Copper Edition seeks to report on the celebrations made by copper companies in our Copper Corridor, we would be remiss in not reporting on the ongoing strike by United Steelworkers which began recently.



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Mining Disasters at Copper Corridor Mines

**John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget**

Mining is a dangerous occupation. Although hard rock mining like what is done in copper, gold and silver mines is not as dangerous as coal mining, it has suffered its share of injuries and deaths of workers. Most mining accidents involving fatalities were usually involved one or two workers but on occasion, some of the fatal accidents involved multiple deaths.

The mines of the Copper Corridor suffered their share of mining disasters involving more than two deaths. The Magma Mine in Superior suffered more than its share.

On May 15, 1912, the position of State Mining Inspector was created by the new state of Arizona's Constitutional Convention. One of its duties was to report a summary of

mine accidents and fatalities each year. The first full year of reporting was 1913. The report showed 66 fatalities and 70 serious injuries. From the period 1912 – 1920, 561 mine workers lost their lives and 7,119 injuries were reported.

In the Copper Corridor some of the worst mining disasters were:

- April 1913, Miami, Arizona,

Miami Mine, air blast due to cave in killed 5.

- November 1927 Superior, Arizona Magma Mine shaft fire killed 7.
- February 1945, Tiger, Arizona St. Anthony mine bunkhouse fire killed 5.
- July 1952, Apache Junction, Arizona, loading bin collapse at a rock quarry killed 5.
- May 1966, Superior, Arizona,

Magma mine, explosion killed 3 miners.

- May 1982, Superior, Arizona, Magma mine, cave-in and fall of ground killed 3.
- August 1993, Superior, Arizona, Magma mine, ore raise pass collapsed killing 4.

The Superior Magma Mine shaft fire was the worst underground mining disaster in Arizona history and was the



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second worst mining disaster overall. The worst disaster happened in Clifton, Arizona in 1913, on the Coronado Incline. Mine workers and some civilians were riding on top of two ore cars when a draw bar on a car broke sending the cars hurling down the steep track. The cars ran off the rails and rolled down an embankment killing 9 men. Seven people were injured but survived by jumping off the car before it left the track.

The Miami Mine disaster involved an unusual way that the five underground workers died. An air blast was generated by the fall of three million tons of capping, killing five men and injuring 100. (Capping was the term the old newspaper article used. The capping would have been the earth and bracing materials above the level the miners were working. It

basically was a massive collapse of the ground above the tunnel they were in.) The blast of air was so terrific that on the 400 feet level, it moved ore cars weighing over a ton 25 to 100 feet. It was believed that the blast hurled the five men who were killed into the walls and timber of the tunnel where they were working. Luckily there was no one beneath the ground that collapsed. A coroner's jury found that the accident was due to a miscalculation by mine management in taking too much ore out of the stopes.

Thanks to the efforts of unions, safety rules and regulations have made mining much safer than the early days. Management has improved safety training which has helped to reduce accidents. Let us hope that gone are the days when companies chose profits over the safety of its workers.



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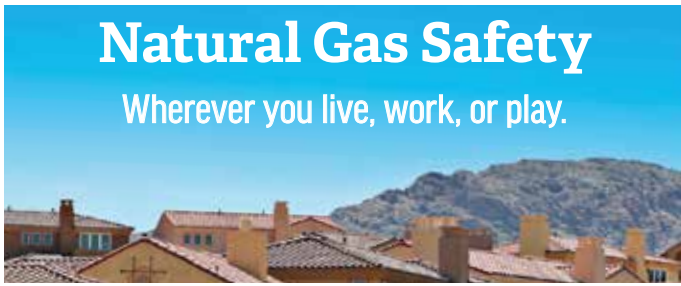
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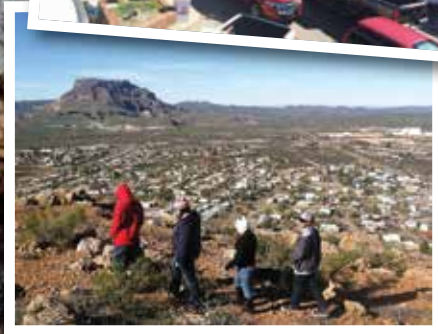
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