

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

11. Kessler North Trail - Part I: The McDougald Trail

One of the mining claims filed at the head of the South Fork of Big Cottonwood Canyon near the end of the 1870 season included the name of J. D. McDougald. The following June this man was involved in eight more claims in the Big Cottonwood Mining District before he disappeared from the scene. Half of them were filed in collaboration with Henry Goodspeed, who has been mentioned in connection with the Goodspeed Trail and the Reed and Benson mine. Three of the claims were in the vicinity of Kessler's Peak, as it was known at that time, and one of those was named the McDougald Lode. It was located high on the northeast slopes of the peak and must have shown considerable promise for later that year, 1871, a trail was constructed to the site from the

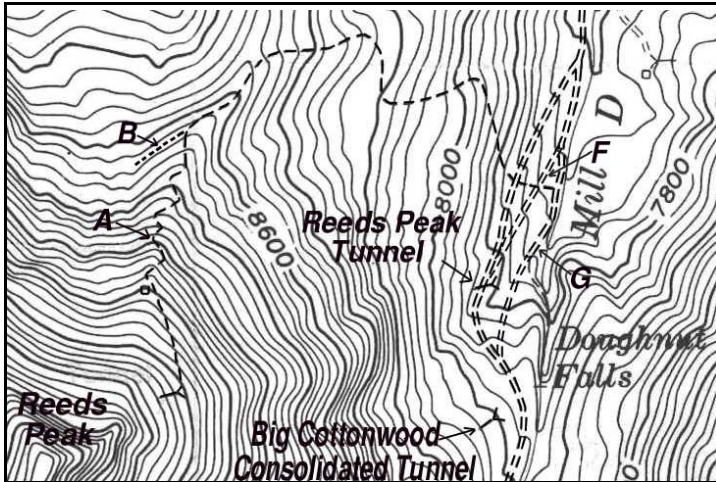


Fig. 1. The McDougald Trail still appears in the 1955 USGS Mount Aire, Utah map. Its base is shown here extending below the present road and the 1915 road from the Reeds Peak Tunnel to the original Reed and Benson road where the trail began in 1871. Point A is where the Kessler North Trail leaves the McDougald Trail to cross the north face slide area. B points to an old logging road.

original Reed and Benson road (G on the map) and Goodspeed filed a claim for a McDougald Mill Site. While the mine was never mentioned in local mining news articles, it often appeared as a location reference in other claim notices. In 1876 Goodspeed filed a claim for the McDougald Tunnel, to be located well below the mine and to run 3000 feet northwest to work the lode at depth. Several years later he filed the tunnel claim again, this time as vice president of the McDougald Mining Company. This action suggests that there had been no recent work done and the claim was filed to retain control of the property. But by this time Goodspeed was heavily involved in the Reed and Goodspeed Tunnel farther up the South Fork and probably had little time or incentive to pursue the McDougald operation. Indeed, he finally did relinquish control, but there seemed to be little interest among other miners until 1888 when the

McDougald Lode was relocated as the Miners Delight. Two years later it was relocated again by other parties as the Eagle Nest Lode, a wonderful name in light of its location perched on the edge of a ledge high on the cliffs. Again in 1892 it was relocated as the Henrietta Lode, after which time it sank into the doldrums that infused the entire mining industry at that time.

In 1907 the McDougald properties were taken by a group of Park City men in the name of The Reeds Peak Mining Company. The name came from the peak above the original McDougald mine. Although the Reeds Peak name did not appear in any source material before this time, Will C. Higgins, the publisher of the Salt Lake Mining Review, referred to it a few years later in an article on the Big Cottonwood Consolidated Mining Company. He mentioned the company's property was "overshadowed by Reed's Peak, and higher in the clouds by Kessler's peak." The peak terminates the ridge north of Kessler Peak; it is often visited by Kessler climbers and gives a great view of the north slopes and the canyon below. The name surely came from Franklin Reed, a New England banker who was Goodspeed's collaborator and financier in many of the latter's mining ventures, including the McDougald Tunnel.



Fig. 2. Remains of a cabin along the McDougald Trail between the present North Trail and the mine.

He also happened to be Goodspeed's father-in-law. Although Reed died twenty years before the formation of the Reeds Peak Mining Company, someone remembered him well enough to apply his name to the company.

The new company focused its efforts in the lower tunnel. About that same time a newer section of the Cardiff Fork road was built that passed just above the lower tunnel, F on the map. This road became the new base of the old McDougald Trail. The upper tunnel was worked by leasers who continued to use the trail and constructed a cabin a short distance below the mine. In 1915 when the Cardiff Mining Company realigned the road below the Reeds Peak Tunnel it again cut through the McDougald Trail, leaving it with a very steep drop onto the new road. Since nothing was done to improve the trail at the road, it suggests the upper mine was no longer being worked. The Reeds Peak company operated for over a decade with no remarkable strikes or success. In 1920 it merged with the Big Cottonwood Consolidated Mining Company to form the Reeds Peak Consolidated Mining Company, after which time both sank into oblivion.

Over the years since that time the trail to the upper mine was used by an occasional hiker, as evidenced by some aspen graffiti that can be found along the way. Then Nature took over and the trail all but disappeared until it was wrestled back into the hiker's realm and reintroduced as the lower portion of the now popular Kessler North Trail. Most hikers today don't recognize the continuation of the old McDougald Trail as they pass it and continue across the steep north slope of the Kessler massif.

That point is indicated by the letter A on the accompanying map. The original trail can be followed through two more switchbacks before it reaches the remains of the miner's cabin, then continues up a very steep, cliff-hanging traverse to the mine, now a favorite spot for mountain goats living in the area.

There are several points of interest along this trail. One of the best views of Doughnut Falls can be seen at the upper end of the long climbing traverse above the Cardiff Fork road. Farther up the mountain, where the trail levels out briefly before entering a series of switchbacks climbing the narrow, but steep ridge, one might notice an old road heading in a westerly direction along a contour line below the trail. It is badly cluttered with downed trees, but can be followed until it reaches the north face slide area, at which point it vanishes. In 1902 a U.S. Land Office surveyor was surveying a north-south quarter section line on the north slopes of the Kessler massif. When he came upon this road he identified it in his notebook as an "old wood road." The closest sawmill to this road was the one Nelson Wheeler Whipple built on the South Fork stream almost directly below this point, one he named Mill G in keeping with the alphabetical designations of sawmills in Big Cottonwood canyon. The road may well have been used by woodsmen supplying his mill with logs. However, the McDougald Trail below this point is only a trail, while this road, in spite of being unused for more than a century, still has the

appearance of a road rather than a trail. Although the slopes below have been searched, no evidence of a continuation of this road has been found. Where it went is an unanswered question and remains one of the mysteries of the Wasatch.



Fig. 3. The McDougald Trail becomes a real cliff hanger as it approaches the mine that was briefly, but appropriately known as the Eagle Nest.

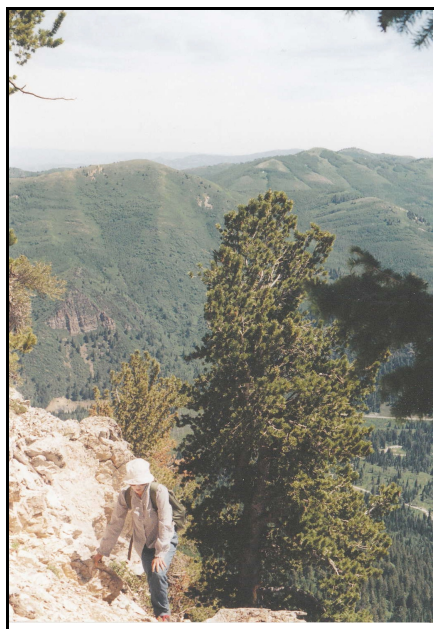
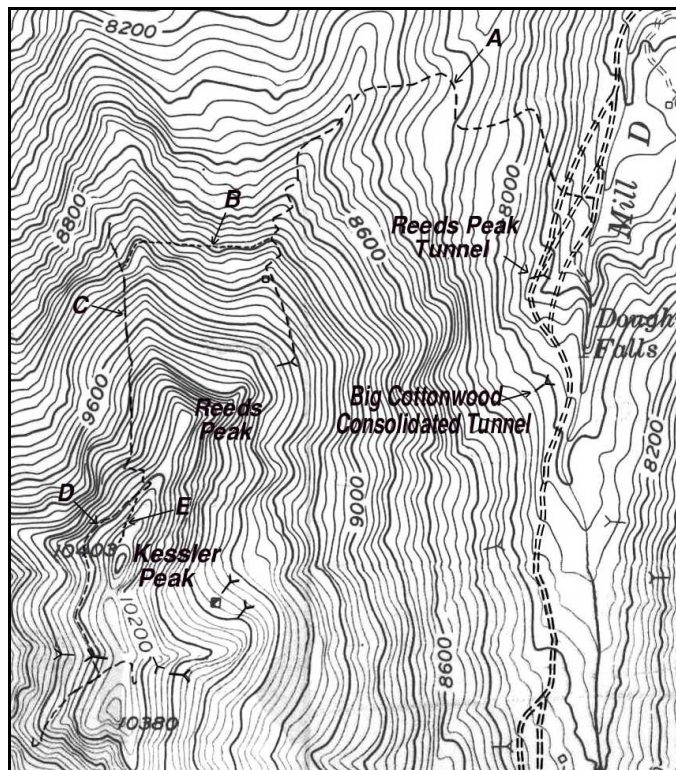


Fig. 4. A hiker climbs up the final portion of the McDougald Trail to the mine. The Big Cottonwood road can be seen in the canyon far below. The tree hides Butler Fork on the other side of the canyon.

Faint Trails in the Wasatch

12. Kessler North Trail - Part II: The Rest of the Story

As was mentioned in an earlier article in this series, a number of successful claims on the ridge south of Kessler Peak early in 1871 precipitated a flurry of activity over the entire massif. While the general area can be described as steep, the north and northwest slopes go well beyond that description. As a result only a few claims were filed in that area. Two were of importance to the Kessler North Trail.



1. North Trail to Kessler Peak. Trail segments include (A) the McDougald Trail, (B) former game trail across the north face, (C) Little Cora Trail, (D) Chieftain Trail, and (E) hiker's ascent to the peak.

of the ridge to intersect the shaft. While the tunnel was not deep enough to fully develop the claim, it did show enough promise for the owners to sell the claim to the Elgin Chieftain Mining Company of Elgin, Illinois, for \$15,000. All four claimants were originally from Elgin, Illinois, explaining that connection. The following summer, 1872, William F. Lynch, Secretary/Treasurer of the Elgin Chieftain company, filed a claim for the Elgin Tunnel, located about 200 feet down the west slope from the mine, to develop the Chieftain claim. The trail was extended down the west slopes to provide access to the tunnel site, and thereafter all work on the claim was through that tunnel.

In August 1873 three men filed a claim on the Little Cora Lode located about a third of a mile farther down the northwest slope from the Chieftain mine. The Chieftain Trail was extended down to that claim, where work continued sporadically over the following years. Although Little Cora received scant attention in the news media, it was used as a

On 19 August 1871 the Chieftain Lode was filed by four men including Robert and William Chisholm. Robert Chisholm was an early prospector in Little Cottonwood and one of the principals in the Emma mine during its early days. His son, William, joined him in that venture and both continued to be active in mining ventures in the Wasatch and the Oquirrh mountains in the years that followed. The Chieftain Lode was promising enough to encourage the owners to build a trail to their claim. Since trails had already been built to the Carbonate group of mines, it was logical that the new trail would start there. Indeed, the trail to the Chieftain claim, whose discovery shaft was just below the pass between Kessler and Reeds Peaks, started at the Carbonate tunnel, it being the higher of the two tunnels on the west side of Carbonate Pass, and made an almost level traverse across the incredibly steep slopes on the west side of Kessler Peak until it reached the pass where it dropped down the west side of the ridge to the shaft. Anyone who has been on those slopes will know what a difficult and dangerous task this must have been, especially where the trail crossed the couloir below the summit of Kessler Peak.

The first development effort on the Chieftain claim was the driving of a tunnel from the east side



2. Remnants of the lower log cabin on the Kessler North Trail, located on the Winslow Silver Mine claim.



3. Remains of the upper log cabin on the Kessler North Trail, located below the ridge line at the pass between Kessler and Reeds Peaks. The adjacent mine shaft is the original Chieftain mine.

location reference as late as the turn of the century. Both the Little Cora and Chieftain claims were surveyed by a U.S. Surveyor in August of 1876, the only claims on the northwest slopes of Kessler Peak to be surveyed in the nineteenth century.

All of the above explains the origin of most of the west half of the Kessler North Trail. Over the years the animals made use of both the Little Cora and the McDougald Trails and also created a trail across the north face of Kessler to connect the two mining trails. When the Kessler North Trail was wrestled back from Nature in the 1980's decade, this animal trail became the crude, but effective link between the east and west sides. It joins the Little Cora Trail several hundred feet above the mine. If the trail is followed downslope from the connecting link the mine and remains of a cabin will be found. The trail originating at the Carbonate mine ends here. Small wonder the surveyor

described the claim as “difficult of access.”

Going up the Little Cora Trail, one passes another log cabin remnant and an adjacent shaft. This was the Winslow Silver Mine, recorded by three men in August 1879. The cabin probably is of more recent vintage; many of the mines in the Wasatch were worked by leasers during the first half of the twentieth century.

Continuing up the west side trail another mine shaft and cabin is found just as the trail reaches the pass between Kessler and Reeds Peaks. This is the Chieftain discovery shaft. Again, the cabin is of more recent vintage. When the claim was surveyed in August 1876, the surveyor made the note that there was no building on the property save a small log cabin partially destroyed by snowslide.

From the pass the trail, now the original Chieftain Trail, follows the ridge toward the south for a short distance before it continues along the west facing slopes. Here a faint trail can be seen going up over the ridge toward the east, only to disappear on the steep east slopes. This was the trail to the Chieftain tunnel. Being used only a short time, over a hundred and thirty years ago, it has not survived Nature's trials. From this point the Chieftain Trail followed a contour line to the Carbonate Tunnel below Carbonate Pass. The North Trail goes only a short distance along this vintage trail before it starts to climb toward the peak; this last ascending section is of recent vintage, having been there for about thirty years. At this point the very faint Chieftain Trail can be seen crossing the talus slopes. As recently as the 1970s decade most of it could be followed, but it has not survived the intervening years.

Today the Kessler North Trail is the generally accepted route to Kessler Peak. Yet few hikers realize its many faceted origin: McDougald Trail, animal trail, Little Cora Trail, Chieftain Trail and a final hiker's route to the summit. All these bits and pieces make up the Kessler North Trail, and a part of our Wasatch heritage.



4. The Chieftain Mine Trail as it approaches the ridge line above the pass between Kessler and Reeds Peaks. Reeds Peak is seen in the background. The hiker's ascent to Kessler Peak begins at the right edge of the picture.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

13. Big Beacon



Fig. 1. The tower once used by a rotating aerial beacon stands atop Big Beacon peak.

Big Beacon is the peak directly above Fort Douglas, on the south side of Red Butte Canyon. It is listed as Mount Wire on the USGS maps, named after Lester Farnsworth Wire, a Salt Lake City policeman who was supposed to have invented the city's first electric traffic light installed at Second South and State Streets. After his death in 1958 his sister, Miss Edith Wire, requested the mountain be named after her brother. Once the Board of Geographical names approved the request, the Department of the Interior notified officials of Wasatch National Forest of the acceptance of the name. And so it appears on the maps, but is little used by the public.

The Big Beacon name, of course, comes from the airway beacon tower that stands on the summit and is linked to the development of air mail service in the United States. In 1918 the U.S. Post Office and the U. S. Army jointly inaugurated air mail service between Washington, D.C. and New York City. Although the army soon left the program, the Post Office Department continued to expand the service until it had an air route mapped and operating, albeit somewhat sporadically, between New York and San Francisco. To allow the mails to be flown at night, it began a program of installing beacon lights at intervals of 15 to 25 miles along the route as well as lights at all airports and emergency landing fields. The segment between Salt Lake City and Rock Springs, Wyoming, was given fourteen beacons, with the first one on Red Butte mountain, as the peak was called at that time. Heading east, beacons were placed at Parleys Summit, north of Kimballs Junction, on the north side of Silver Creek canyon, near Coalville, on Porcupine Mountain about 15 miles east-northeast of Coalville, and then on into Wyoming. Typically, the beacons had 24-inch searchlights mounted on towers fifty feet high, but the tower on Red Butte mountain, being on such a high, exposed site, was of considerably less height. The beacons between Salt Lake City and Rock Springs were installed during 1925

and were used for the first time on the night of 29 January 1926. It caused some consternation in the city when residents saw this bright flashing light on top of the mountain. "It aroused many Salt Lakers to curiosity and wonder and several inquiries from the east bench [were made]," reported the Salt Lake Tribune. But the people grew accustomed to it and the light flashing on the mountain night after night soon became a reassuring sight.

Now one might ask, "Why Big Beacon? Was there a Little Beacon too?" Yes, indeed there was. Little Beacon is about one mile south and 1400 feet lower than Big Beacon. It got its name because it, too, was given a tower, but instead of a beacon on top, this tower carried a wind-driven generator. Here, as at many other remote locations, the electricity used to run the beacon was generated by the wind and was stored in batteries capable of driving the beacon for thirty hours. The beacon was turned on automatically by a light sensitive "sun valve," and was turned off the same way each morning. The dynamo automatically stopped when the batteries were charged so the lights were always assured of an ample flow of electricity. The batteries and the beacon were connected by a power line that ran up the slope between the two sites. The beacon on Red Butte mountain was operated in this manner for three and one-half years before commercial power was made available, at which time the Little Beacon tower was dismantled.

As aviation technology advanced over the years airplanes flew higher and advanced navigation aids were installed. No longer did aviators have to depend upon lights on the ground to guide them on their way. And so as the beacons approached forty years in service they were decommissioned. While the beacon, its controls and

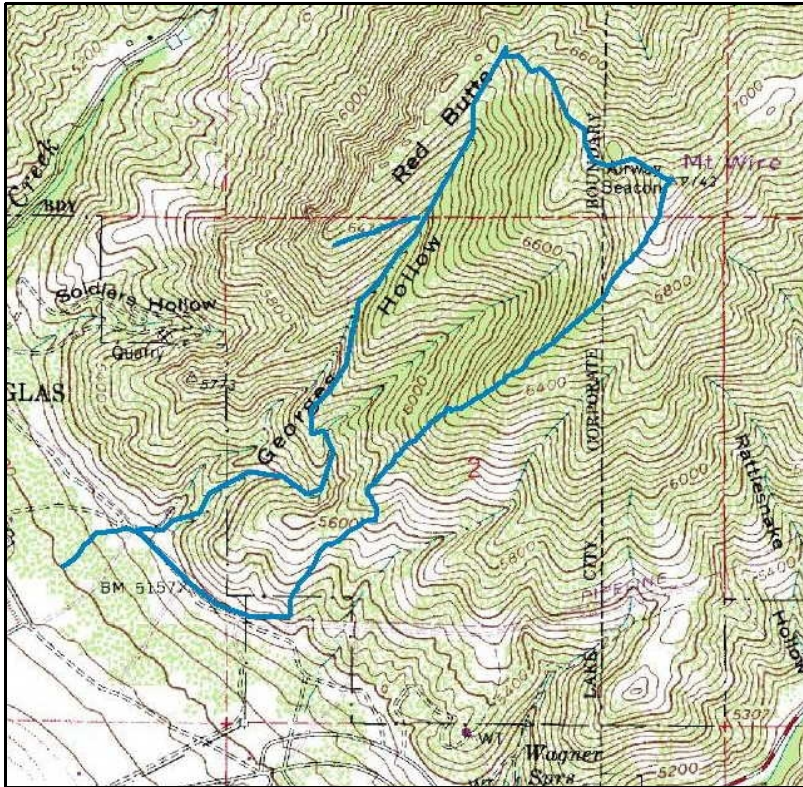


Fig. 2. Two popular routes to the summit of Big Beacon. The right hand route goes up the southwest ridge line. The left hand route goes up Georges Hollow to the ridge overlooking Red Butte Canyon, then up the ridge to the summit. Little Beacon is in the lower right. The stub of the trail at the far left leads from Colorow Drive, which is not shown on this map.

the power line leading to the summit were removed, the tower was allowed to remain, a sentinel overlooking Fort Douglas, the University and the city below. In recent years it has been joined by two microwave reflectors symbolizing a new era of communications, far removed from the rotating beacons that once marked the airways in the dark of night.

Big Beacon is a good hike for spring and fall. The two routes shown in the figure make a nice loop. Both are accessible from Colorow Drive in Research Park, just north of the Huntsman building. If the loop is made in a counterclockwise direction a nice side trip can be taken by following the crest of the Red Butte from the saddle northwest of the Big Beacon summit. Near the end of that ridge are a few interesting artifacts – graffiti from more than a century ago. One of them is an inscription “J B Hartzog 1890.” Who was J. B. Hartzog? Perhaps a soldier from Fort Douglas down below the Red Butte, but a search of Fort Douglas rosters from that period has failed to

show his name. Nor does he appear in city directories of that era. So, J. B. Hartzog, whoever you are, or were, whenever we pass by and see the name you carved in the red sandstone slab we wonder about you. How’s that for some sort of anonymous immortality?

From the end of the Red Butte ridge one can drop straight down the slope a short distance to find several sandstone quarries. They still have heaps of sandstone blocks, cut nice and square, waiting for someone to take them to building sites in the city. Unfortunately, cement and bricks became available and made sandstone blocks obsolete as building material. And so they remain, patiently waiting, but destined never to find themselves in a foundation or wall as might have been intended. The men who worked the quarries remain as anonymous as Mr. Hartzog. But they built the road up Georges Hollow to provide access to these quarries as well as others farther down the slope. To be sure, at the lower side of the quarries is a road that makes a descending traverse towards the east, going down the slope to meet the Georges Hollow road. It goes through a rather dense stand of trees before reaching the intersection, so would not be apparent if one were going up the Georges Hollow road. This traverse is shown on the map in the figure.

[Author’s note - The identity of J. B. Hartzog was later discovered and is reported in FTW 29.]



Fig. 3. The J. B. Hartzog inscription at the top of a sandstone slab on the Red Butte. The opposite side of Red Butte Canyon is seen in the upper half of the photo. The inscription was enhanced in this digital image.

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14. Parleys Canyon Loop

Here is a different outing for early Spring or late Fall hiking, one that has a little history and lots of variety in terrain and difficulty. As a personal aside, it is a route that the author and his wife, who have been described as inveterate off-trail hikers, found more than a decade ago and have hiked it several times a year since then. Initially the starting point was at the south end of Scenic Drive above Foothill Boulevard, but when landowners there posted the property that had to be crossed the starting point was moved to the parking area at the north end of Wasatch Boulevard, where the hiking-biking trail starts across Parleys Canyon. With this change the route includes paved hiking trail, old paved highway, animal trail, rock scrambling, minor cliff climbing and an old

mining road. The round trip is about five miles with a little over one thousand feet of elevation change.

The map in Figure 1 shows the route. Starting at the parking area mentioned above, point A on the map, it goes across the canyon on the paved hiking-biking trail. Immediately after crossing the bridge over I-80, scramble up the bank to the remnants of old highway US 40, point B on the map. This road has a bit of history behind it. The original Parleys Canyon road was in the bottom of the canyon next to the stream. Due to frequent flooding it was a difficult road to maintain, although it was adequate during the days of horse and wagon. But when automobiles came into use they had a major nation-wide impact upon existing roads. Many civic organizations came into being to promote good roads. One of them, the Lincoln Highway Association had as its goal an automobile road extending across the country from New York City to San Francisco. It received support, financial and otherwise, from prominent people in and out of government, and especially from the automobile industry.

The route chosen for that highway entered Salt Lake City

by way of Parleys Canyon, making the road in that canyon a prime candidate for improvement before transcontinental motorists started driving through the state.

Planning began in 1913 and some road crews were at work before the end of that year. At the mouth of the canyon the road was moved away from the stream, well up onto the north slope. A new road was constructed from Twelfth South (today's Twenty-first South) and Twenty-third East Streets, running southeasterly to the mouth of the canyon, the street known as Parleys Way today. Once in the canyon the road followed a contour line until the canyon bottom rose to meet it. Prior to this time access to the canyon road was by way of a road that ran southeast from Seventeenth East and Twenty-first South Streets, known today as Parleys Canyon Boulevard, then turned and dropped down to the creek at about 2050 East. Because of limited funding the road construction, estimated to cost \$25,000, was not expected to be completed for several years. The road commission did get some aid from members of the local Rotary Club who were anxious to get the highway project started. On Good Roads Day in 1915 more than one hundred Rotarians turned out to help make the grade at the mouth of the

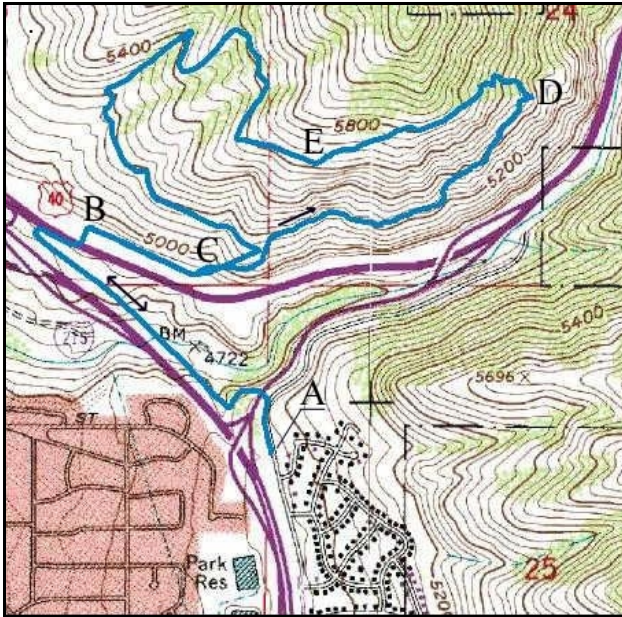


Fig. 1. The route of the Parleys Canyon Loop described in the text is shown in this figure.



Fig. 2. Remnant of old US highway 40 above I-80 at the mouth of Parleys Canyon.

canyon. Two local companies, presumably run by Rotarians, provided tractors and graders. They helped in later years in other parts of the canyon, but this effort established the road whose remains are found at the mouth of the canyon today. The initial two-lane road was twenty feet wide. In the early 1950s the road was rebuilt to a four lane divided highway.

Heading east on the old highway a wide, flat, open area will be found at the base of a major gully, point C on the map. Here one can leave the highway and head up the slope in a northeasterly direction. Keep climbing until a faint trail heading up canyon is found. A less faint trail going down in a southeast direction may be found first, but this is not the right one. The upper faint trail is an old animal trail that gets more or less faint each year depending on how much use the animals give it. It becomes increasingly difficult to follow as the June grass grows, but with care it can be followed all the way to point D on the map. Usually it is easy to see where it crosses the talus and rock slopes in gullies. As a general rule, if the trail is lost it can be found again higher up. Along the way one has views of the old highway that was originally part of Wasatch Boulevard coming up the other side of the canyon. It crossed to the north side by way of Stillman Bridge, a splendid concrete arch bridge that was built in 1937 and destroyed in the 1960s when I-80 was built.



Fig. 3. Original Wasatch Boulevard running up canyon to the Stillman Bridge site on the south side of Parleys Canyon. I-80 is directly below.

Point D on the map is very close to the contact between the sandstone and limestone layers. Here one must climb, either a rock climb up the end of the cliff, or a scramble up the loose rock at the back side of the cliff. It is several hundred feet to the top, where another, much better animal trail will be found heading west. It holds its elevation for a distance, then drops down a wide grassy bowl where it again can be obscured by June grass. It continues to drop toward the top edge of the cliffs until it reaches a small gypsum quarry, point E on the map. This was the Gypsum Placer, recorded in March 1900 by Joseph J. Snell and others. They must have considered it valuable because they built a wagon road for almost a mile along the mountain side to reach it. The road can be found headed in a northwesterly direction from the flat at the quarry. It traverses to the end of the ridge where it turns and goes northeast until it reaches the base of a drainage, then heads in a northerly direction to cross yet another drainage. Here many roads can be seen as this was once a popular area to test or demonstrate four-wheel drive vehicles. After the second drainage a very prominent road



Fig. 4. Small gypsum quarry high on the slope above the mouth of Parleys Canyon. The quarry road heads northwest to left of center.

will be seen going up and down the crest of the next ridge. The wagon road drops down the slope before reaching the crest of that ridge, running in a westerly direction and descending at a constant rate until the ridge drops down to meet it. It then crosses the ridge and heads in a northeasterly direction on the other side until it reaches the bottom of the next gully. There it turns and goes down the gully until it arrives at the Bonneville Bench where it joins a bench road. Follow that road toward the south. After passing several limestone quarries it turns into a trail that traverses above Parleys Canyon. Immediately after crossing the deep gully above the point where our route left the old US 40 grade a trail will be found descending the slope. This is the one that may have been seen on the way up. It appeared two or three years ago, probably built by someone who had thoughts of making it part of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. It will lead down to the wide, flat, open area along the abandoned highway, from which point one can retrace the route back to the starting point.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

15. Mineral Fork - Part I

The reader is probably surprised to find that after many articles pertaining to Cardiff Fork, we have finally left that locale to address the adjacent fork to the west. However, Cardiff Fork should not be dismissed lightly. It is one of the prime jewels of Big Cottonwood Canyon, if not all of the Wasatch. It should be appreciated and preserved at all costs. There is so much to see and enjoy there; much more than has been addressed in these articles. Perhaps at a future date we can return and explore more of its charming, hidden and fading faint trails.

It is not likely that Mineral Fork received much attention during the early years of the logging era. Mineral Fork is about midway between Mill B, at today's S-turn, and Mill A at the mouth of Mill A Gulch. Initially both mills had ample timber in their immediate vicinity, so there was no reason to haul logs up or down the canyon from Mineral Fork until their local supply diminished. It is not known when, or even if, that happened, but there is some evidence that it did. If so, it was probably the loggers who blazed the first trail into the fork. It started a short distance above the confluence of Mineral Fork stream with Big Cottonwood Creek, headed down canyon to the tributary stream, then climbed parallel to the stream until it turned onto a steep traverse in an easterly direction. After passing the apex of the second switchback on today's road it turned right and went straight up the slope. When it reached an elevation slightly higher than the present road above its fourth switchback, it followed a gentle climbing traverse in a southerly direction.

Much of this portion of the trail can be followed today. The lower part can be found about 100 feet below the road's first switchback. While much debris was pushed over the side when the road was graded, the trail can be seen going down toward the Mineral Fork stream and can be followed until it enters the willows along Big Cottonwood Creek. At the second switchback in the road the trail can be picked up heading in an easterly direction from the apex of the switchback. It turns and climbs steeply until it meets the road again just below the fourth switchback. Above that point traces of it can be seen above today's road until it drops to the level of the road and disappears.

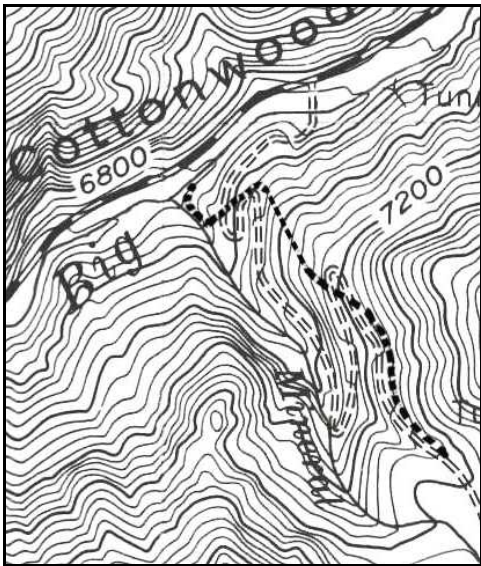


Fig. 1. The mouth of Mineral Fork. Today's road is shown as double dashes. The original trail into the fork is shown as a heavy single dashed line.

Where the fork widens somewhat, the trail split and continued on both sides of the stream. The map in Figure 2 shows these two branches. Where the present road turns to cross the stream the east side trail continued in the same southerly direction. It is easily followed until it makes a sharp turn to the left to become the Silver Mountain Mine Trail. The Mineral Fork Trail continued in a southerly direction from this point, but having been little used over the past century or more, it has all but disappeared under the debris brought down from the cliffs by repeated flooding.

The trail on the west side of the stream is not as obvious. Its lower section can be found heading down canyon after the road crosses the stream. It can be identified by its deep U-shaped profile, created by the dragging of logs, rawhides and stone boats. From the road it heads down canyon, northerly, through the forest, gradually bearing toward the east until it crosses the stream and merges with the trail on that side. The upper portion of the trail, above the road's stream crossing, was largely destroyed when the present road was graded.

All the earliest mining claims in Mineral Fork were located high on the west slopes of Kessler Peak or on the ridge to the south, with access afforded by the Carbonate Trail coming up from the South Fork. It was not until October 1871 that a claim was recorded as being down within Mineral Fork itself: the Marine Lode situated on the "west side of canon. above a group of pines..." The following year several other claims were located down within the fork and in August of that year, 1872, the name Mineral Fork appeared for the first time. Until that time it was known as "the second south fork of Mill B."

In October 1872 a correspondent identified only by the initials “F.H.G.” described a trip into Mineral Fork. Upon reaching the mouth of Mineral Fork, he wrote, “I ascended a small hill about a mile distant, then I came upon a nice level road on which I found men, horses and wagons hauling timber from each side of the mountain. Further up I reached the Marine cabin. The Marine, Panacca, White Swan and Clara are the principal mines in this fork. ” This account agrees with the trail described above, although some may not agree the steep part is but a “small hill.” It ascends about 600 feet before following a relatively level route. The distance is considerably less than a mile, but after climbing the 600 foot “small hill,” it probably felt like a mile. The reporter didn’t give the destination of the timber being hauled, but at this point there was not enough mining activity in Mineral Fork to warrant much in the way of logging, so it is likely the logs were headed for the sawmills. It is unlikely wagons were used on the steep part of the trail, but its deep U-shape is characteristic of logging slides.

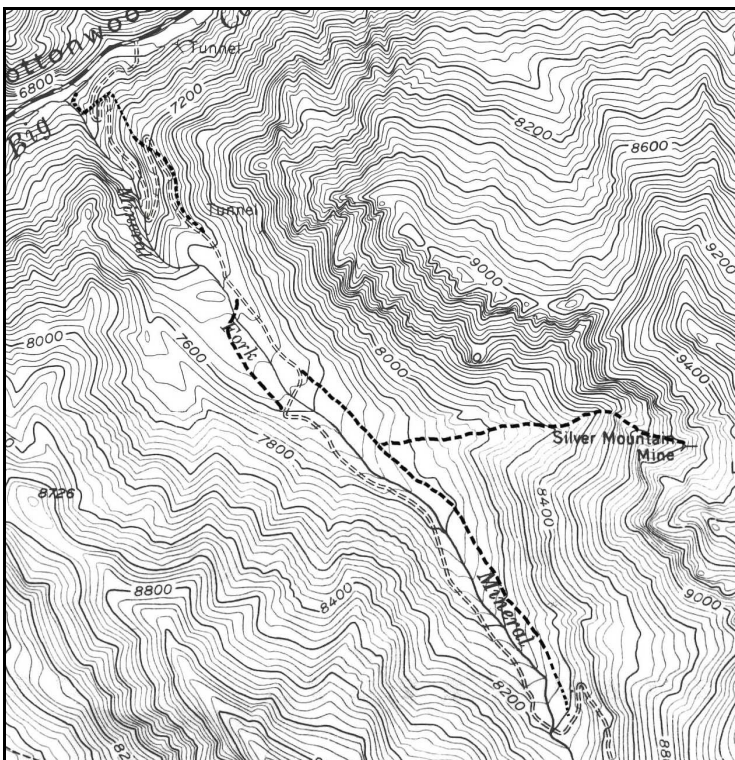


Fig. 2. Trails (single dashed line) and modern road (double dashed lines) through Mineral Fork.

As for the other “principal” mines, Clara was on top of the ridge south of Carbonate pass. It was recorded in June of 1872 and saw some minor activity through 1875. Panacca, recorded in July 1872, also was on ridge, but further south at the east side of the bowl at the head of Mineral Fork. Here the ridge drops sharply on both sides and exhibits a notch marking a fissure that runs northeast-southwest from Montreal Hill in Mill D South Fork to the ridge behind Sundial in Mill B South Fork, crossing the head of Mineral Fork in the process. It would become known as the Silver King fissure. Panacca actually did have a shaft up on that impossible ridge, although the mine was being developed by tunnels from both the Mineral Fork and Mill D South Fork sides. It drew a lot of interest and had investors from as far afield as San Francisco. The correspondent “F.H.G.” continued, “The Panacca, above the Marine, is the best mine in this fork, with a shaft 20 feet deep, ... and one tunnel on each side of the mountain 30 feet each, running NE and SW. I am told that this mine is partly sold for \$100,000. The Panacca was discovered last summer by Mr. C. E. Boren, whom I found at the Marine cabin, and who is always willing and able to give all information in regard to his rich discovery.” No part of Panacca was ever sold for \$100,000, but there was a report of a company being formed to exploit the lode, a company whose capitalization was said to be \$100,000, surely the source of the reporter’s comment. Also, the Panacca was discovered and recorded by Anton Williams and Olaf Peterson, but Williams immediately sold his share to three other men, one of them being Boren, who was obviously excited about the prospects of the mine. But its promise was compromised by the difficulty of access and by the end of 1874 it had ceased to be a marketable asset.

The White Swan was about a half mile southwest from the Panacca, in the head of Mill B South Fork. It was on the southwest end of the fissure and, like the Panacca, also suffered from difficulty of access. While it drew some considerable attention, interest in it waned by the middle of 1873. But these two mines drew attention to the fissure and its potential, triggering a series of attempts to exploit it over the next seventy-five years, activities that wrote the history and shaped the appearance of the upper part of Mineral Fork. The story of the claims, mines, companies and some of the people who lived it will be covered soon, but first we turn our attention to an important mine farther down in Mineral Fork, on the western slope of Kessler Peak. The Silver Mountain mine and its trail is the subject of the next episode of Faint Trails in the Wasatch.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

16. Mineral Fork - Part II - Silver Mountain Mine Trail

The first mining claim to identify its location as being in Mineral Fork, or the Second South Fork above Mill B, as the fork was first called, was the Osceola Lode, situated in the gully on the west side of Carbonate Pass. It was much closer to the crest of the ridge than the bottom of the fork and, being above a line of cliffs, was not readily accessible from below. It was immediately followed by the Silver Mountain Mine No.2, the No.2 appendage being used to differentiate it from a Silver Mountain claim already filed in Silver Fork. Its discovery shaft was on the lower part of the grassy slope that carries the Argenta Trail, but still above a line of cliffs that separated it from Mineral Fork proper.

An interesting fact about this claim is that two of the names on the record were Simon and Jacob Bamberger. Simon Bamberger went on to gain wealth and notoriety with various mining ventures, the construction of an interurban railroad between Salt Lake City and Ogden and the development of the Lagoon recreation park. And he served as governor of Utah from 1917 to 1921. At this time, January 1871, he had only recently arrived in Salt Lake City and opened a small hotel, the White House, at Second South and State Streets, a hotel that was frequented by miners. When he gave some of them material aid they returned the favor by including him in their claims. This is most likely how he came to be one of the locators of the Silver Mountain Mine No.2. He immediately bought another claimant's share, probably again exhibiting his support of his mining clients, then turned around and sold all his interest to his brother Jacob. He took no further part in activities at the mine, but his brother did, as we shall see.

While the Silver Mountain Mine showed some promise, it was worked indifferently for nearly ten years, probably due to its difficulty of access. In 1877 Edwin B. Wilder, the deputy U. S. Surveyor who surveyed the claim, wrote the comment, "The only outlet at present for the transportation of the ore is a trail over which the ore and supplies for the mine are taken in 'boats' drawn by mules etc." Five years later, while surveying a claim immediately adjacent and overlapping the Silver Mountain No. 2 Lode, he wrote, "the ascent of the mountain from Argenta alternates from 20 to 33 degrees and [is] almost impossible" This was the Argenta Trail he was writing about, which was still the primary access to the Silver Mountain mine in 1882. Actually, the average slope between Argenta and the pass where the trail leaves the woods and gives the first views of Mineral Fork is 23.5 degrees. But some sections are much steeper than that.

In November of 1879 the Silver Mountain Mining Company was incorporated to work the Silver Mountain

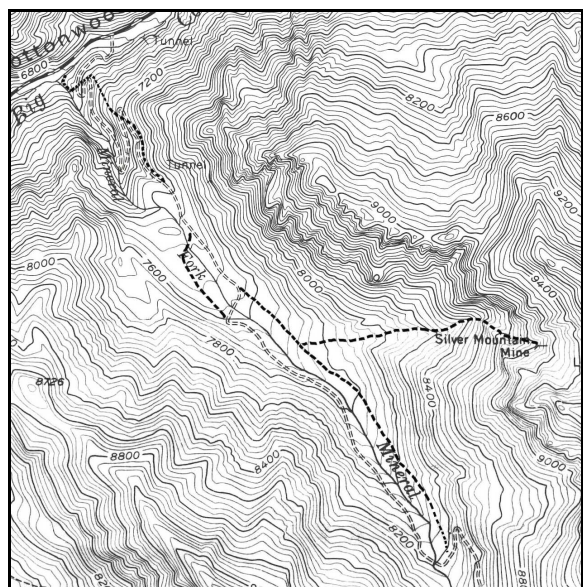


Fig. 1. Mineral Fork trails and road (double dashed lines) through the middle part of the canyon and to the Silver Mountain trail to the mine.

No.2 mine. The company also received the Osceola Lode as well as two other claims in the immediate vicinity, Lone Pine and Frisco. Jacob Bamberger was the big subscriber for stock, holding over one-fourth of the issue, followed closely by John A. Groesbeck. These two men were primarily responsible for the company's operations over the next half dozen years. The following July they filed a claim for the British Tunnel to work the lode at depth, the mouth of the tunnel being at the base of the cliffs below the mine. Until this time the claim had been worked through a short tunnel and incline adjacent to the discovery shaft. Work on the new tunnel was carried on until the Spring of 1883 when a large ore body was struck. Immediately contracts were let to construct a road from the tunnel down to the trail in Mineral Fork. The road, actually no more than a trail, was not completed until mid-August; then a cloudburst washed out a half mile of its length and another two week's work was required before it could be used to haul ore. In spite of the lateness of the season, fifty-five tons of ore were shipped to market before the end of the year.

The washout of the road was not an isolated event. In the 1980's decade, when Utah experienced much flooding during heavy Spring runoffs, this trail was washed out again. Water, diverted from the stream by debris, ran down the trail causing deep erosion ditches. However, over the next twenty years Nature repaired much of the damage by filling the ditches with soil. This cycle could well have been repeated several times during the twentieth century.

On the map in Figure 1 the Silver Mountain Mine trail is shown breaking away from the early Mineral Fork road and heading off toward the east to the site of the tunnel. It is still easily followed for about a half mile through the forest before it climbs out of the woods to follow a climbing traverse on the north side of the gully, finally reaching imposing cliffs on the left and a waterfall over some lower cliffs directly ahead. After climbing to the top of the waterfall the trail can be found on the north side of the drainage, rather heavily overgrown at first, but being in the clear farther up. It climbs steeply to the base of the dump at the tunnel. One of the mysteries of this trail is how teams or pack animals were able to get up or down the cliff next to the waterfall.

Almost immediately after the strike was made, an amended notice for the tunnel was filed, expanding the intended operations by listing several other claims to be worked through it. They included the Carbonate No.2, the overlapping claim mentioned above, which actually covered the mouth of the new tunnel and most of the cliffs in the vicinity. When the claim was surveyed these cliffs gave the surveyor considerable grief. He described the claim as being “located among a series of high precipitous bluffs, extending in every direction, with a small circuitous trail, inaccessible for a horse. ... when the rocky bluffs do not predominate, small patches of timber are met with; water for drinking and culinary purposes is obtained from the melting snows.” The survey was



Fig. 2. Waterfall on the Silver Mountain Mine trail. The trail can be seen along bottom of the cliff at the lower left. Hiker (see arrow) is climbing the low cliff to gain the top of the waterfall.



Fig. 3. Mine dump at the Silver Mountain mine's tunnel.

made in July of 1882, at a time the Silver Mountain tunnel was in 285 feet, but a year before the new road was begun. The surveyor didn't suggest a source for culinary water after the snows melted.

At the same time the road was being constructed the company erected structures at the tunnel to serve as boarding houses and shops. As ore was hauled out, supplies were brought in to sustain a force of a dozen men who would continue working the mine during the winter. By the end of 1884 the tunnel had reached a length of 600 feet, with a 350 foot adit following the vein. By this time the mine had produced 1170 tons of ore. The company continued to work the mine and ship ore through the rest of the 1880 decade, then turned the mine over to leasers. By the turn of the century the mine had ceased to be of interest.

Today the dump at the mouth of the tunnel is the most prominent reminder of the Silver Mountain mine's existence. In the woods on the south side of the dump remnants of a few structures are slowly returning to Nature. On the north side of the dump the gully continues upwards through a cleft in the cliffs to give precarious access to the grassy slopes where the original discovery shaft and incline were located. Not too many years ago the remains of a log cabin could be found on a level spot on the north side at the top of the gully.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

17. Mineral Fork - Part III - Silver King Fissure

In a previous Faint Trails episode mention was made of the Silver King fissure that runs in a northeast-southwest direction from Montreal Hill in Mill D South Fork, across the head of Mineral Fork and into Mill B South Fork. The extent of this fissure can be visualized from the most recent USGS map of the area, the 1998 Dromedary Peak quadrangle, where private lands and patented mining claims are shown in a gray color. A

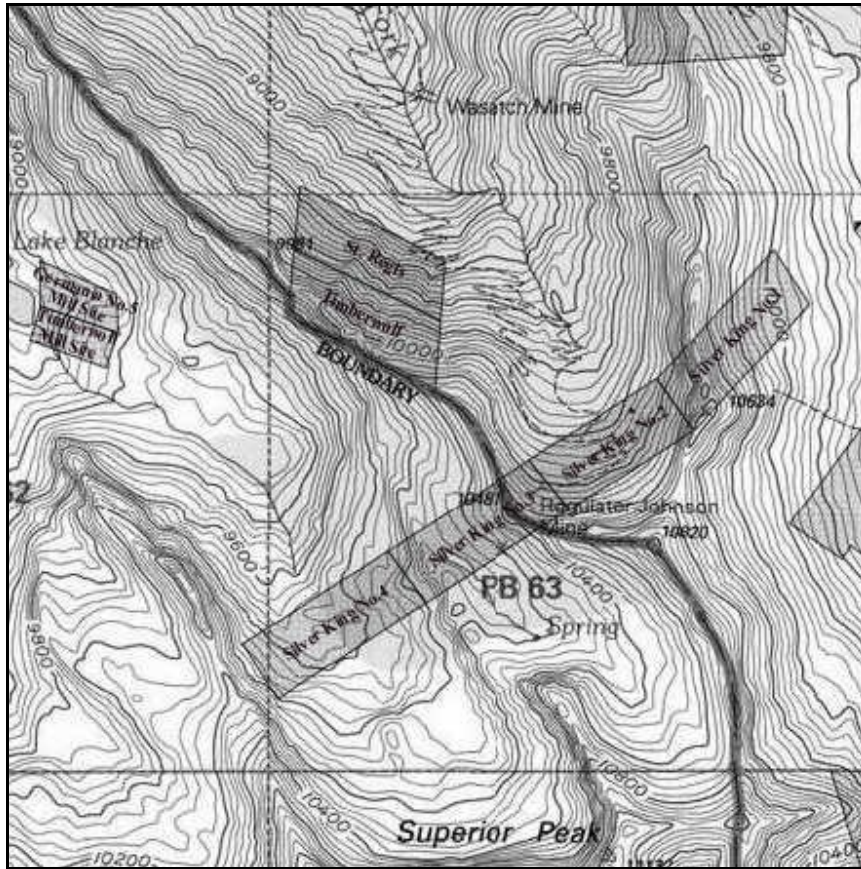


Fig. 1. Part of the 1998 USGS Dromedary Peak quadrangle showing the upper extent of Mill B South Fork and Mineral Fork, and the western slopes of Mill D South Fork above Montreal Hill. The dark areas, representing patented mining claims, are explained in the text.

segment of this map is shown in Figure 1, covering the upper portions of Mill B South Fork and Mineral Fork, and the western slopes of Mill D South Fork above Montreal Hill. The fissure runs along the center of the long strip of patented mining claims, in this case four 1500 x 600 foot claims positioned end to end. At the risk of getting ahead of the story, let it be said that the claims shown on the map are Silver King Numbers 1 through 4, running from northeast to southwest. The dark boundary slashing diagonally through the figure is the eastern boundary of the Twin Peaks Wilderness Area. The two patented claims nested against the wilderness boundary are the Timberwolf and St. Regis claims and the two small areas at the east shore of Lake Blanche are the Germania No.5 and Timberwolf Mill Sites. The claims on the ridge were two of five filed late in the summer of 1899 by Byron Cummings and Felix J. Stark. In mid-summer 1896 Stark had filed

four claims in the vicinity of the Sister Lakes – i.e., Lakes Blanche, Lillian and Florence – in partnership with one Alex Mitchell. At that time Stark was acting warden at the Utah State Penitentiary. Now, three years later, he was a stockbroker in Salt Lake City who teamed up with Cummings, an unlikely partner in a mining venture. Cummings came to Utah in 1893 as an instructor in Greek and Latin at the University of Utah. There he introduced an athletic program, encouraging interclass sports. He organized the first Ute football team and was responsible for creating a suitable athletic field which in 1904 was named Cummings Field in his honor. He must have been quite an athlete himself as two of the Maxfield sisters remembered how he would start running at their place, near Mule Hollow in Big Cottonwood Canyon, to see how quickly he could get up to his mining cabin at Lake Blanche. Cummings became dean of the College of Arts and Sciences before leaving in 1915 to go to the University of Arizona where he built a reputation as an archeologist. His many specialties did not include mining and geology, yet here he was involved in these claims in Mineral and Mill B South Forks. He and Felix Stark also were incorporators of the Germania Gold and Silver Mining Company in December of 1899, a company that took custody of all five claims. In 1901, as president of the Germania company, Cummings filed claims on four mill sites around Lake Blanche, two of which are the mill sites shown in the figure.

In the earlier Faint Trails episode mentioned above, the Panacca and White Swan claims were said to have been two of the very early principal mines in the Mineral Fork vicinity. The Panacca was located at the northeast end of the fissure, overlapping Silver King Nos. 1 and 2 as shown in the figure, while the White Swan was at the southwest end, overlapping Silver King Nos. 3 and 4. While both mines caused some initial excitement, by 1875 they had ceased to be of interest. But they left behind considerable work -- tunnels on each side of the divide between Mineral Fork and Mill D South Fork for the Panacca and a tunnel, incline and shaft in Mill B South Fork for the White Swan. These improvements were used and expanded by all subsequent miners who came to exploit the Silver King fissure.

In 1878 and 1879 four new claims were filed along the fissure, much as shown in figure 1. They were, from the northeast end, Evening Star, Mono No. 2, Imperial and Golconda. Almost immediately three of them were sold to Adolph Hauerbach, trustee, for exorbitant sums ranging from \$200,000 to \$300,000. The fourth claim had been filed by Hauerbach himself. He was an excellent example of local businessmen who had established reputations in fields far removed from mining, but who ventured into that arena with varying degrees of success. Hauerbach "was well known in Salt Lake as a watchmaker of marked genius," according to the Salt Lake Tribune. He learned that trade in his native Denmark before immigrating to the United States. Over the years he held mining interests in Park City, Bingham and Dugway, as well as the Cottonwoods. In this case Hauerbach the trustee transferred the properties to the newly formed Imperial Mining, Milling and Smelting Company of Big Cottonwood, a corporation formed to exploit the four claims. The company was formed by the same men who filed the claims, so they in effect transferred the claims to themselves and were paid by themselves, if any money actually changed hands. While the company worked the claims throughout the 1880 season, nothing more was heard about it or its operations after it closed the mines for the winter. By that time the Mineral Fork trail had certainly been extended up into the east side of the bowl at the head of the fork to access the tunnel. It may well be that these people built the first road into Mineral Fork. While there is no definitive source data, it is speculated the road generally followed the route of today's road, making switchbacks to limit the steepness of the grade. Above the third switchback, where water from the springs above comes cascading down the slope, the road climbed steeply to meet the original trail as shown in Figure 2. This section of the original road still can be seen and followed. The workings at the southwest end of the fissure were accessed by a trail up Mill B South Fork.

The next recorded activity on the fissure came in January 1884 when one Luke Francis Flood filed claims for Queen of the Hill and Silver King Mine No. 2, they being located in Mill B South Fork and Mineral Fork about where Silver King Nos. 3 and 4 are shown in the figure. Luke Flood was an old time Big Cottonwood prospector, having been involved in at least a dozen claims between 1872 and 1875. Then he and an accomplice removed property from a mine that didn't belong to them and used a revolver to overrule the owner's objections. This drew the attention of the sheriff, who arrested Flood and his employee and took them into town where a justice ordered Flood held in bonds. Nothing more was heard about Luke Flood until he filed the two claims in 1884. In doing so he introduced the Silver King name to Mineral Fork and to the fissure that had attracted so much attention over the years. The name remained to be used for many years after he was gone. He called it Silver King Mine No. 2 because there already was a Silver King mine in the mining recorder's books. Flood worked the claims for two years, then sold them before disappearing from the scene, never to be heard of again. The new owner was another long time miner who brought with him a name that has become a legend -- Regulator Johnson, the subject of our next episode.

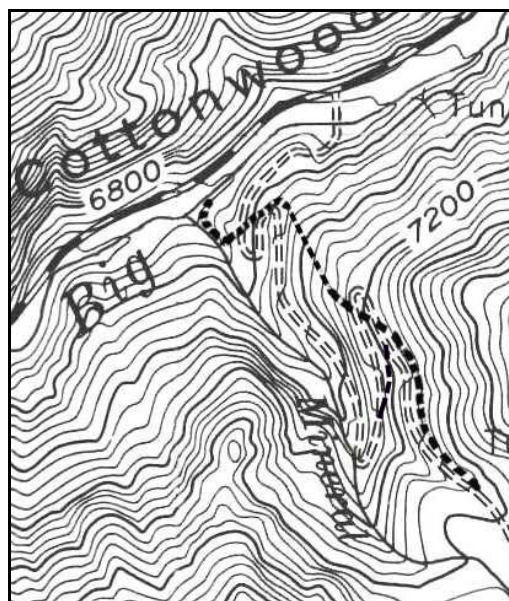


Fig. 2. Double dashed line shows the possible route of the first road into Mineral Fork, with the heavy dashed line from third switchback climbing steeply to join the original Mineral Fork trail.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

18. Regulator Johnson

The name Regulator Johnson is well known due to its appearance on the 1955 and 1998 editions of the USGS Dromedary Peak quadrangle, where a mine tunnel in the southwest corner of the Mineral Fork bowl is labeled as the Regulator Johnson mine. The name gained greater popularity by its use for an expert ski run at the Snowbird ski resort in Little Cottonwood Canyon, about a mile south of the mine. Many hikers have gone up Mineral Fork to the Wasatch Tunnel, then climbed the endless number of switchbacks on the road up the bowl to the mine, of which very little remains. And many skiers, literally from all over the world, know of and have skied Snowbird's Regulator Johnson run. Yet few, hikers or skiers, know the origin of the name.

John S. Johnson was a Norwegian who immigrated into the United States in 1865. By 1870 he was a naturalized citizen, living and working at Alta as a miner. In those early days he was known as John Johnson, but there were several other John Johnsons in the mining business and at this late date it is difficult to separate their individual activities. Our John Johnson resolved that problem around 1873 when he began to use his middle initial. However, it can be stated that in 1870 he was involved in at least four claims, all of which became prominent mines of their day. He quickly sold his share in three of them, but kept his interest in the Regulator mine, located on the north slope above Grizzly Gulch. (You can see what's coming, can't you?) In May of 1871 he filed a claim on Johnson No.2, located on the east side of the Regulator, the No.2 being appended to differentiate it from an earlier Johnson claim. While he continued prospecting, filing claims and working in other mines, he was best known as the owner and operator of the Regulator and Johnson mines, hence becoming known as Regulator Johnson. While the Regulator mine was not one of Alta's major ore producers, it was consistent in shipping small lots for nearly thirty years.

Meanwhile Johnson appeared in the news for other reasons: in June 1879, while working in the Evergreen mine, he was removing an old blast when it exploded, mutilating his hands and one side of his face, his left eye reported being blown from its socket. He was brought into the city for hospital care. About this same time, probably before his accident, he acquired a bride, Louisa M., a young woman eighteen years his junior, and moved into a house on Second South Street between Sixth and Seventh East in Salt Lake City. There is some evidence that he may have worked as a saddler for a time during his recuperation. In March of 1884 he appeared in the news again when a devastating snow avalanche at Alta killed eleven people including his younger brother, O. J. Johnson. The deceased's body was taken to the city where his funeral was held at Johnson's home. Burial took place at Mount Olivet cemetery, in a family plot newly purchased by John S. Johnson.

In January 1886 Johnson took the first step to return to his former occupation of mining when he bought a one-third interest in the Silver King No.2 claim in Mineral Fork. In July of that same year he bought the rest of the Silver King No.2 and all of the Queen of the Hills claim from Luke Flood, who was introduced in the previous Faint Trails article. These claims were located in Mill B South Fork, at the southwest end of the fissure. Johnson immediately filed a claim on the Silver King No.2 Eastern Extension at the head of Mineral Fork,



Fig. 1. This map shows the Regulator Johnson mine in the upper bowl of Mineral Fork. The X to the southwest is the Silver King No.2 mine in Mill B South Fork. The square is the tunnel on the Silver King No.2 Eastern Extension claim.

adjoining Flood's Silver King No.2 on its northeast end. It encompassed the portal of the tunnel begun to exploit the Panacca claim back in 1872 and further worked by the Imperial Mining, Milling and Smelting Company in 1880. After working these mines for two years he filed another claim, Louisa, extending to the northeast from his Silver King No.2 Eastern Extension, giving him the entire length of the Silver King fissure. From all indications he worked these claims for several years. Then in 1891 he put three claims on the fissure out on lease, an action that was repeated in 1894. Typically the lease also included an option to purchase. While the first group of leasers did not exercise that option the second group did. The purchasers wrote a series of promissory notes with the claims as collateral, then defaulted on both interest and principal payments. They surely failed to make their purchase payments to Johnson because he was unable to

meet his obligations on loans he had made with his Salt Lake City home as collateral. As a result he lost his home in a foreclosure sale, although he continued to live in it until 1897. On 22 March of that year his wife, Louisa M., aged 37 years, died. She was buried in the Mount Olivet plot, joining her brother-in-law, O. J. Johnson.

Following this last tragic event Johnson left his Salt Lake City home for points unknown. He reappeared two years later, in 1899, to join the purchasers of his Mineral Fork properties in forming the Big Cottonwood Mining & Milling Company to hold and operate the claims. But litigation over the defaulted promissory notes soon caused the properties to be lost and the company ceased operations. One of the most visible remains of the operations during the 1890 decade was the first switchback road going up into the Mineral Fork bowl. In 1899 it was used as a reference for a claim near the “Zigzag road.”

The year 1900 found Johnson living at Alta where he formed the Regulator Mining Company to operate his properties in Grizzly Gulch. This was a time when Alta began to enjoy a revival of its mining activities. One of the new companies was the Continental Mining & Smelting Company, formed to exploit existing mines in the Grizzly Gulch area. In 1903 the holdings of the Regulator company were purchased by Continental, and Johnson’s fortunes began to improve. In 1906 he returned to Mineral Fork and began working the claims on the Silver King fissure again. In 1911 he filed a series of twelve additional claims that encompassed the entire Mineral Fork bowl and in 1916 formed the Big Cottonwood Silver King Mining & Milling Company and transferred all the claims into it. While only the four claims on the fissure, Silver King Nos.1 - 4, were patented, the company continued to exist and exercise control over all the claims as late as 1943. While Johnson may have worked the claims during the first two decades of the twentieth century, they were later worked by leasers. John S. Johnson died on 12 July 1925 at an age of 83 years.

There is some question as to whether Johnson ever worked the Regulator Johnson mine. When a claim was surveyed for patent the surveyor always made note of what work had been done and how much could be credited to the present owner. When the Silver King No.3 claim was surveyed in August of 1914 the surveyor made no mention of workings at the Regulator Johnson mine location. While Johnson may have worked there after 1914, it is likely most of the work was done by leasers.

In 1936 the newly formed Wasatch Gold Mines Company took over all existing leases on the Big Cottonwood Silver King properties. After improving the road the new company began driving a tunnel from the base of the Mineral Fork bowl to intercept the Silver King fissure at depth. This became the Wasatch Tunnel, the popular hiking destination at the end of the Mineral Fork road. The upper tunnels were put out on lease. The new tunnel was driven about 3,175 feet before intersecting the fissure. Then a drift followed the fissure until a total length of about 1500 feet was reached. In 1940 the company changed its name to the Mountain Mines Company and continued operating until the late 1940s. Minor leasing operations continued into the early 1950s.

One other facet of John S. “Regulator” Johnson’s life should be mentioned. In 1904, after he sold the Regulator Mining Company’s properties, he purchased a lot in Salt Lake County’s Ten Acre Plat A. This was located between State and Main streets at approximately 2900 South. In 1909 he had the property surveyed and subdivided into 104 building lots. To provide access to all those lots he inserted two cross streets between State and Main. He named the streets Cordelia and Louise, introducing both into the County’s street list. We don’t know who Cordelia might have been, but Louise was in memory of his wife, who used Louisa and Louise with equal ease. He dedicated the property as Johnson’s State Street Addition in 1910 and built a modest house on the corner lot at 2906 South State street, making it his home for the remainder of his life. Today Louise Street, now Louise Avenue, extends a few blocks east and west of his subdivision, and also runs between 2700 and 3400 East streets, a mute tribute to an unknown woman, the wife of an equally unknown man.

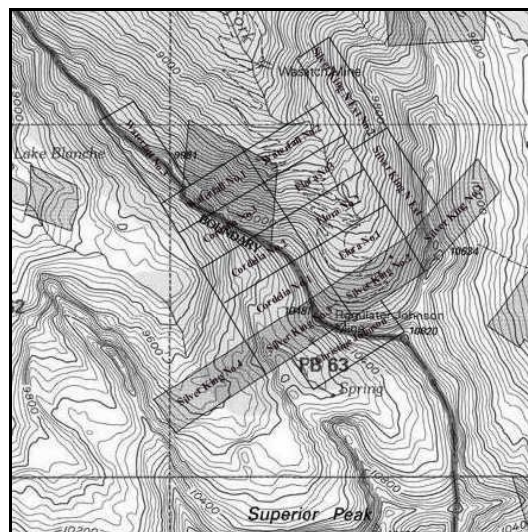


Fig. 2. Four patented and twelve unpatented claims held by John S. Johnson and the Big Cottonwood Silver King Mining & Milling Company in Mineral Fork.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

19. Mill B South Fork - Part I

Mill B South Fork was the first of Big Cottonwood Canyon's tributaries to receive a Mill Fork name. This came about in October 1865 when Brigham Young wrote a contract with the Maxfield brothers, Richard and Robert, to provide logs to Mills A and B for a period of two years. It specified "they are to take timber from Mill B up the Main Canyon towards Mill A before taking any other unless they prefer to make a road in to the first South Fork above Mill B" While this did not actually assign a name to the fork, it did establish a naming convention which has carried forth to this day. Mill B South Fork was extensively logged during the operating years of the Big Cottonwood Lumber Company, with logging trails branching out in many directions. The main logging trail ascended along the west side of the stream for nearly a mile before crossing to the east side. When the miners came into the canyon they embraced the logger's trails and extended them up to the Sister Lakes – Blanche, Florence and Lillian – and beyond. While today's trail up the fork follows the logging trail in only a few places, the observant hiker can see many indications of those early operations.

In 1905 the Brown and Sanford Irrigation Company proposed damming the Sister Lakes to form reservoirs to supply its irrigation canals during the late summer dry periods when stream flows are very low. It took several years to wade through bureaucratic paperwork before construction of the dams began in 1908. The work was hampered by the shortness of the season at that elevation and the need to transport construction materials up the long, steep trail. There was nothing they could do about the first problem, but to alleviate the second they constructed a new road into the fork. It started at the Big Cottonwood Canyon road at milepost 6.7, about one-half mile above the S-turn, crossed the creek and headed down canyon while it climbed until it turned into the fork. It stayed well above the Mill B South Fork stream until it got to the point where the logging trail crossed over to the east side. Above that point it generally followed the existing trail. Whether this road was actually used for wagons is not known, but it must have been more than a simple pack animal trail, for prospectors began referring to a road in Mill B South Fork in the spring of 1910. Also much of it

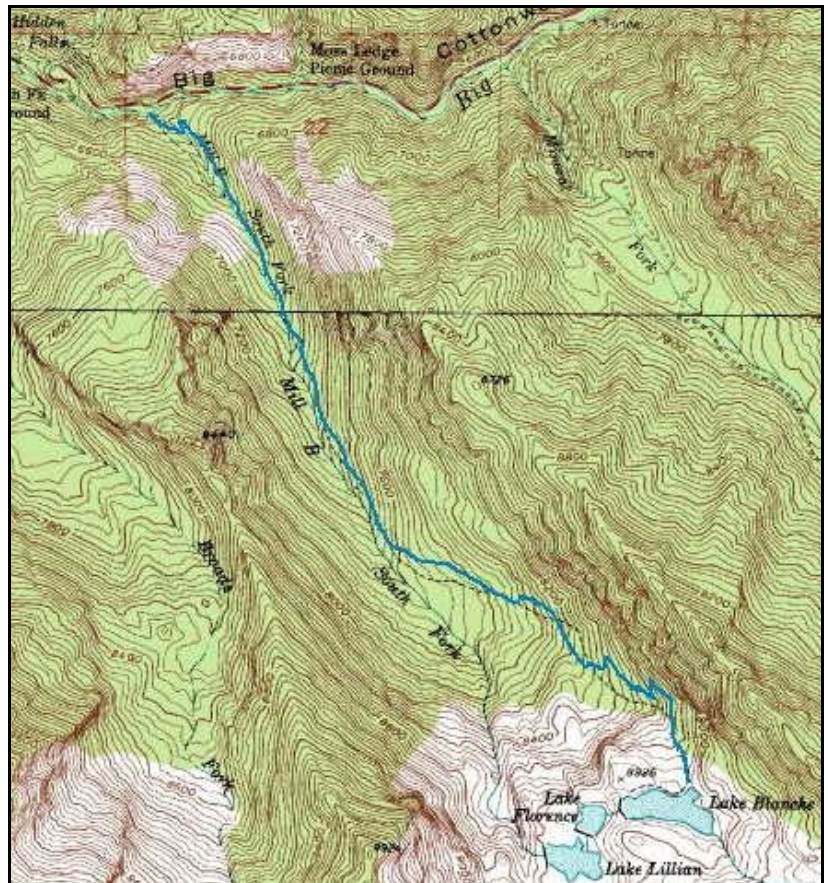


Fig. 1. Mill B South Fork trail as it exists today. Dashed line is the trail as it was in the mid-twentieth century; the lower part, above the horizontal line, generally followed the logging trail while the upper part followed the construction and mining road. The map is from the 1955 USGS Dromedary Peak quadrangle.

still exhibits a greater width than would be expected for a simple trail. The lower part of this road was considerably improved to provide access to tenting sites above the mouth of the fork at a time when many people moved to the mountains to escape the summer heat in the city. The road was nearly forgotten by the mid-twentieth century, but was brought back into use when the footbridge was built over the stream and a switchback cut into the steep east slope of the fork to go up to connect to the old road. If one is observant at the point where the trail turns back toward the south to continue up the fork, faint remains of the road can be seen going in a northerly direction. It can be followed until it reaches a point above the main canyon where it turns and descends



Fig. 2. Lower part of Mill B South Fork trail showing the switchback introduced when the footbridge was built across the stream. The trail at the top of the switchback follows the early construction and mining road, which started at the Big Cottonwood Canyon road about a half mile above the S-turn.

(Figure 1). The present trail and the old road merge again for the final short distance to the lakes.

About one-third of the way between the Mill B South Fork trailhead and the lakes, or about one mile from the trailhead, is an area with very red soil. This received early attention by the miners. In July of 1872 a Salt Lake Tribune correspondent identified only by the initial "Y," reported "an immense bed of ochre has been discovered in South Fork, Mill B, its value not yet known." Ochre is an earthy metallic oxide, in this case an impure iron ore, that is extensively used as a pigment. The value of this ochre bed must not have been significant for nothing more was heard about it until 1898 when five claims were filed in the area. Individual claims were filed again in 1901 and 1903. While some indications of excavation can be seen, the ochre bed was not further developed or exploited.



Fig. 4. Remnants of picnic table and bench near the top of the switchback trail.

in an easterly direction. It ends in an erosion area where the Big Cottonwood creek was pushed against the south slopes by mid-1930s canyon road construction. But remnants of a stone retaining wall remain near the point where the road crossed the creek to join the Big Cottonwood Canyon road.

Some of the tenting sites can be found near the top of the switchback trail. Also faint remnants of lesser roads can be seen going up the slope and several places still show excavated areas that provided relatively flat surfaces for tents. Rotted remains of rough log tables and benches also remain, one of them in the acute angle of the upper end of the switchback.

Over the past forty years the upper part of the Mill B South Fork trail has been repeatedly altered, removing it from the route of the road, especially through the numerous switchbacks in the last half mile below the lakes. But the original road can be seen going off into the brush at a number

of places. It is still shown on the USGS Dromedary Peak quadrangle



Fig. 3. End of the mining road on the south side of Big Cottonwood Creek about a half mile above the S-turn.

The very popular hike up to the Sister Lakes is about 2-1/3 miles long and climbs 2500 vertical feet. While some of the trail passes through stands of trees, much of it is exposed to the sun after the early morning hours, making for a hot ascent. But the reward comes when one climbs the last several hundred yards through a quartzite corridor and the entire panorama of exquisite alpine splendor is exposed to view. This is what the early Wasatch aficionados, Alfred Lambourne and Henry L. A. Culmer, called the Hidden Valley. Towering over the first lake to come into view, Lake Blanche, is the pyramidal Sundial peak, the official symbol of the Wasatch Mountain Club. It was named by Lambourne who in a bit of priceless prose called it a gnomon, one whose moving shadow upon the snow measures as upon a dial the passing moments of the untold centuries.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

20. Mill B South Fork - Part II

Visitors to Lake Blanche may wonder why the lake is hidden behind the stone wall at the end of the Mill B South Fork trail. When the lakes were first dammed to create reservoirs in 1908-1910 the dams were not as high as they appear today. At Lake Blanche the dam was built without a spillway; it did not need one because the terrain at the northeast end of the reservoir was such that when the reservoir was full the water would escape and flow down over the cliffs to join the stream below. However, when it was decided to raise the level of the reservoirs to hold more water, this natural spillway could no longer be used. It was closed with a new dam, the stone wall we see today, and the dam at the lower end of the lake was given a traditional spillway. This reconstruction took place between 1912 and 1934.

On the USGS Dromedary Peak topographic map the Sister Lakes are identified as Lakes Blanche, Florence and Lillian, going from the upper lake to the lower one. This is in accordance with the many publications by Alfred Lambourne in which he cites the names of the lakes and their origins. However, not everyone agreed with him. In an 1892 article entitled "Mountain Scenery of Utah," Henry L. A. Culmer, who was a party to the naming of the lakes back around 1890, switched the names of the lower two lakes, making Florence the lower one. Years later, when the final cement capstrip was put on top of the raised dams in the early 1930s, the name "Florence" was inscribed in the cement on the lower dam. As if to add another level of confusion, the capstrip of the dam for the middle lake was inscribed, "Lake Minnie J.A.K." In a 1937 memo reporting a visit to the Sister Lakes the State Engineer used this name for the middle lake, probably after seeing the name in the cement on top of the dam. This was the name Lambourne had given to the lake in Little Cottonwood Canyon now known as Cecret Lake, but that name failed to survive. The names of the Sister Lakes and their locations were given permanence when they were placed on the USGS map in the middle of the twentieth century.

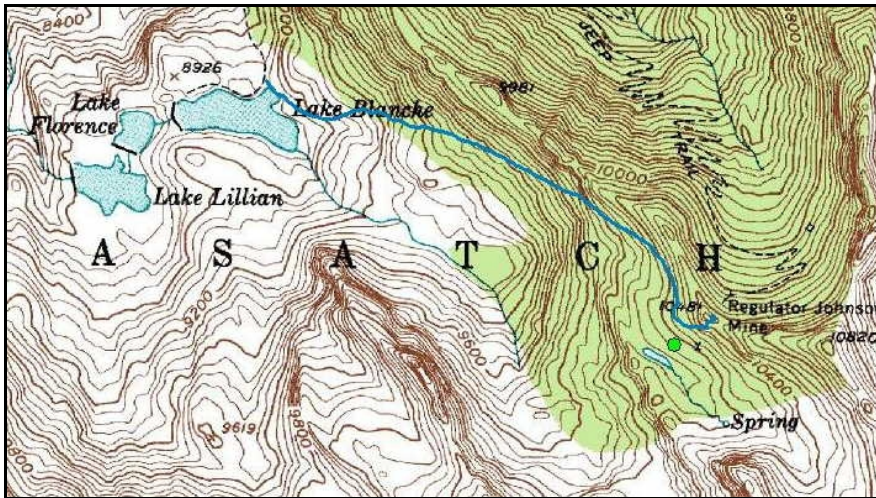


Fig. 1. This map shows the trail from Lake Blanche to the Mineral Fork pass, about one mile in length. It climbs 1500 feet to an elevation of slightly over 10,400 feet in the pass. The small lake once known as Ada May is below the pass. The circle above the lake is the location of the stone cabin remains.

In previous episodes of this series of articles mention has been made of the Silver King fissure, extending southwest from Montreal Hill in Mill D South Fork to Mill B South Fork. Two of the four claims that cover the length of the fissure lie in the latter fork: Silver King Numbers 3 and 4. Access to them was by way of a trail running from the northeast end of Lake Blanche up into the southeast basin and ultimately to the pass into Mineral Fork. Except for its lower end this trail is perfectly obvious and easy to follow. From the east end of the wall at Lake Blanche there is a prominent trail that continues in the up-canyon direction. There are lots of trails around and above the end of the lake, but if one keeps to the left, close to the cliffs, the proper trail can be followed through some thickets and around a buttress before heading up the slope. This lower part is little used and tends to be obscured by brush and downfall. However, once a hundred or so feet higher than the lake the casual hikers' trails are left behind and only this one survives. If it has been lost, it can usually be found to the north, as the tendency is to go too far to the right. It goes nearly straight up the slope at least two hundred feet above the lake before it veers off to the southeast. In this area one might see an old mine dump off to the left (north), a remnant of the Germania Gold and Silver Mining Company workings. Its location is nearly directly above the Germania No.2 Mill Site patent along the east shore of Lake Blanche, as mentioned in a previous Faint Trails article (FTW 17).

As the trail climbs higher it offers some spectacular views of the very rugged terrain ahead, toward the divide between Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, as well as back toward the lakes and the Salt Lake Valley beyond. It crosses a rocky talus slope where erosion has all but destroyed the trail, then makes a sweeping bend over an

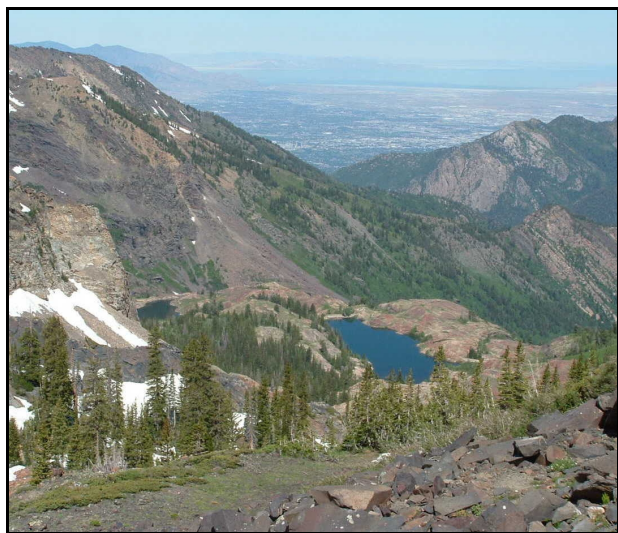


Fig. 2. View to northwest from the Mineral Fork pass trail. Lakes Blanche and Lillian are visible below.

open grassy slope before coming to an apparent dead end at a thicket of fir trees. The trail once continued through this thicket, but has been badly overgrown. It is possible to go below the trees on a fairly good animal trail provided by mountain goats that frequent this area. Climb back up at the other end of the trees and the trail will be very apparent. Here it goes around a rock outcrop on a cliff-hanging ledge supported by a man-made stone wall. Beyond this point there are indications of stone walls, but much of the trail has been eroded away. It once climbed to the pass above through a series of short switchbacks. A small lake will be seen below, the one the miners named Lake Ada May back in 1874. Although it was shown on a very distorted map of the mining district that same year, the name failed to survive the test of time.

The Brown and Sanford Irrigation Company's effort to raise the height of all three dams on the Sister Lakes has been mentioned above. It was a tremendous undertaking, one that spanned two decades before the task was completed in 1934. It was reported that during the later years of that period construction materials were taken up the Mineral Fork road to the site of the so-called Regulator Johnson mine, then carried over the pass and down to the lakes by pack animals. This certainly explains stone supporting and retaining walls for the trail below the pass. And if one climbs up into the pass the faint remains of a long switchback trail coming up from the Regulator Johnson mine can be seen.

The pass into Mineral Fork is formed by the Silver King fissure. Looking east from the pass the fissure can be seen at the opposite side of the Mineral Fork bowl, where it cut a deep notch in the ridge. Directly below the notch the switchbacks of the Mineral Fork road, once called the Zig-Zag road, climb the bowl to the Regulator Johnson mine below the pass. The site of the Silver King No.2 upper tunnel can be seen on the east slopes of the bowl at the end of a stub road from one of the switchbacks. The road is very prominent because it is heavily used by All Terrain Vehicles coming up Mineral Fork, the only place in the local Wasatch mountains that is still open to them. Faint remnants of earlier generations of the switchback road can be seen crisscrossing the current road.

On the west side of the pass the Silver King Fissure can be seen crossing the low ridge on the other side of the tarn and slashing the steep wall of the ridge behind the Sundial. Directly above the lake the remains of a fairly substantial cabin can be seen. It had three rooms and still holds the rusted remains of a cot bed. The tunnel on the Silver King Number 3 claim has collapsed a long time ago, but its location can be seen above the cabin remains. When this claim was surveyed in 1914 the tunnel had a length of about 165 feet. How much work was done after that time is not known, but trails to the site have not survived. Some work was done on the fissure farther west on the Silver King No.4 claim, but that area is difficult of access and no sign or indication of a trail into it can be found.



Fig. 3. Remains of a stone cabin on the Silver King No.3 claim. The small lake once known as Ada May is directly below.