

# Paper Bonanza


by Bob Schroth

While out mine and ghost town hunting I came across several broken down shacks, and many other fairly well preserved relics from a town about to die completely. I was there to do some underground exploring but the urge to stop and do some topside probing turned out to be more fruitful than I ever imagined.

There are several old mines and camps in this part of the Mojave desert. Most traces have been removed by relic hunters or by the towns people themselves because of the scarceness of building material's in the desert. I explored several mines in this district and I was disap-

pointed in what was left in the mines. After a day of hard underground exploring I had netted only one complete Giant powder box and a few scraps of trash left by the miner's. Enough of this I thought and I broke out my metal detector and kept a eye open for old house foundations, and other likely places to find some lost treasures from the mining camp days. This activity was also proving to be a waste of time because all the metal trash, nails, bottle caps pull tabs and wire are the biggest hassle in the metal detecting hobby. I seldom use the discriminator features because I also like to find the iron relics not just coins and rings tokens.

...GRAND...  
**FOURTH OF JULY  
CELEBRATION, 1905**



...Under the Auspices of...  
**TALCHES TRIBE No. 154**  
IMPROVED ORDER OF RED MEN  
BAKERSFIELD, CAL.

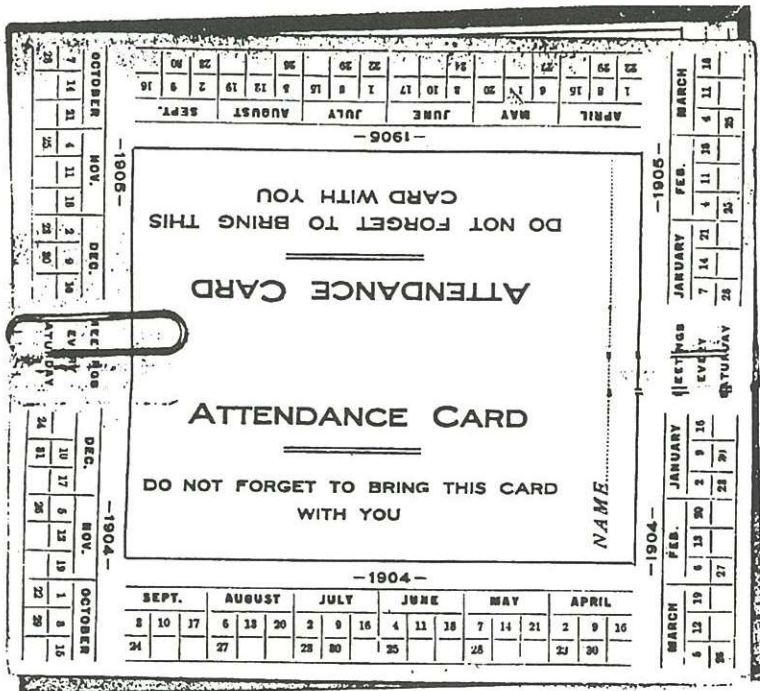
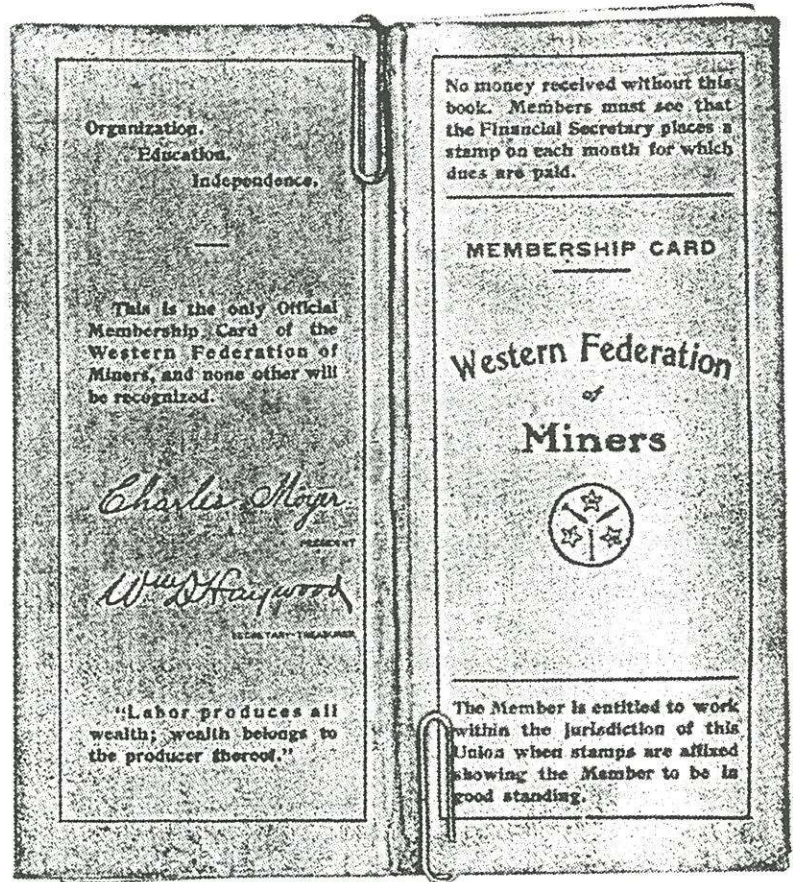
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*June 19th 1905*

*W. O. Emery Co.,  
Friend Emery -  
Our boys on the 4th of  
July committee has written  
regarding what interest  
the miners down there would  
take in a drilling contest, any  
information that you may be  
able to give them I shall be very  
thankfull for, do you think that any  
of the boys would enter. I am, Yours truly,  
Walter C. Platz*

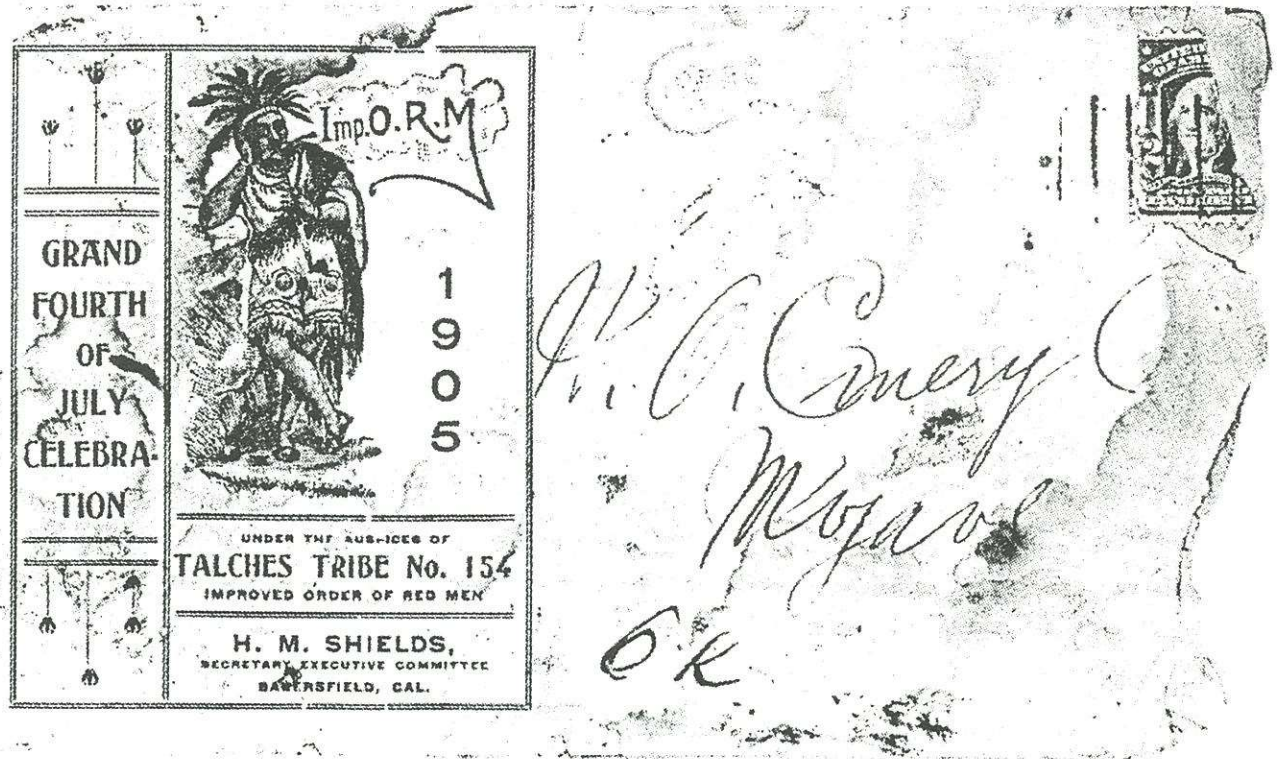
While poking around a broken down house I saw several scraps of paper blowing around, I investigated further, and I discovered a letterhead from a Western Federation of Miner's union! This sparked a major interest right away.

I had just talked to a friend of mine in Randsburg who had found a Paper bonanza recently. I was thinking that this might be a find similar to his. While digging through the collapsing shack. Paper and trash were everywhere. I found several Envelopes with a Western Federation of Miner's return address printed on them. I could only surmise that this was the home of the Union Secretary. I was finding letter's and, membership cards, and bylaw booklets. Unfortunately the paper items were affected greatly by the years gone by and the rats, and worms had taken a major toll on the condition. 9-tenths of the items found were half eaten or had rat dropping on them. I hope to be able to clean the intact papers that were found



and a little more of our mining history will have been preserved. The secretary of this union had correspondence with Union offices all over the west, spanning the years from 1903 to 1911. Places like Green water in Death Valley and Rhyolite, in Nevada were booming during this time. Letters to Union's in Jerome Az. and Gem Idaho are very interesting to read. So a little digging into the past proved to be just that!

I will keep a close eye out for another find like this one, it only took 22 years for this one maybe the next one will come quicker?



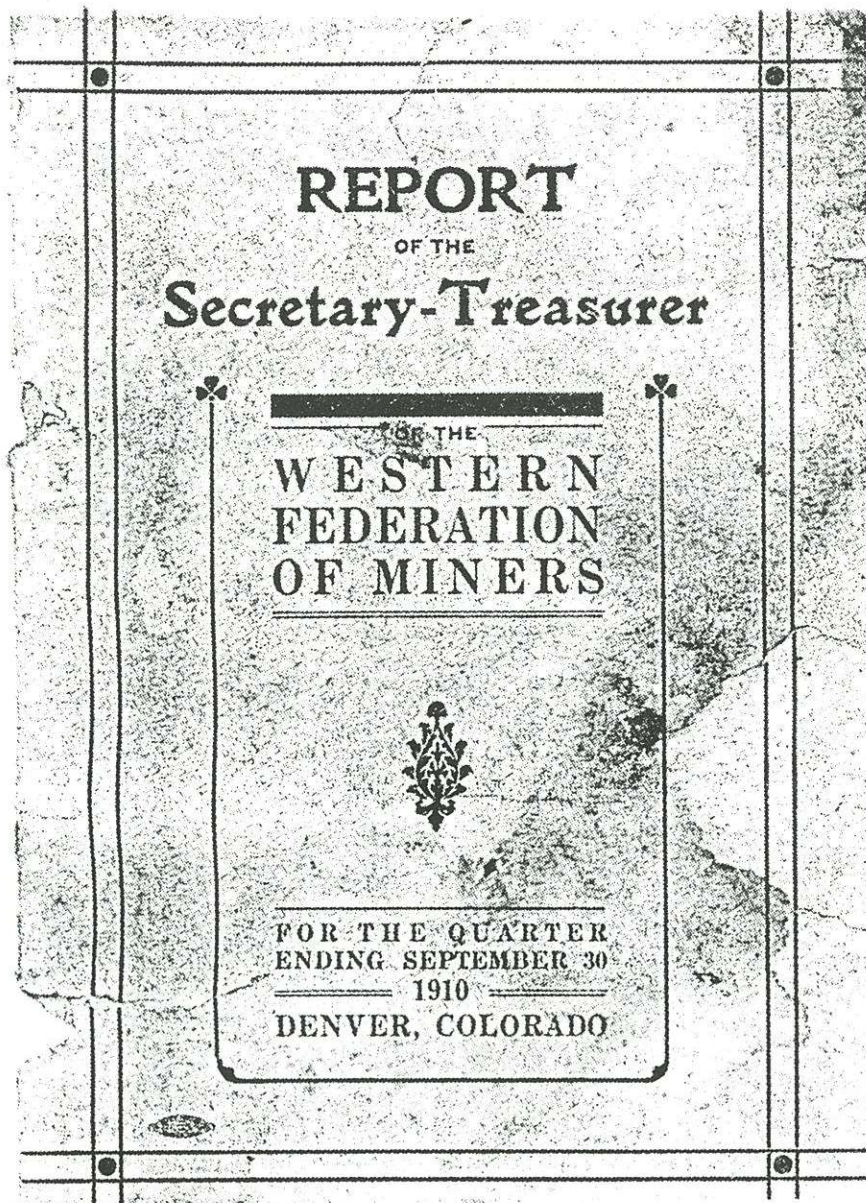
### Comments to Bob Schroth by Deric English

*from Mining-Collect, Feb. 18, 1997*

Bob, How I found out about this place is a long, interesting story, I'll tell you about it sometime. I had written letters to the absentee owners of that house because I knew that it was the home of the former secretary of the Mojave WFM, but as usual they gave more excuses than a one armed paper hanger. I told them what I thought was there and that I would like to save it from destruction, but the house remained vacant and I could not rationalize a reason for trespassing. It makes me sick to think of what was destroyed. They had a horse whim from the 1880's that I tried to buy—now it is ground into the dirt thanks to a diesel cat.


I thought I would let you know where the WFM letters were from: Greenwater #207, Borate (not a union, but a letter from a miner at Borate), French Gulch #141, Jackson #115, Sierra Gorda #39, Amador #135, Randsburg #44, Goldfield #220, Searchlight #164, Snowball (Vivian, AZ) #124, Bonanza (Rhyolite) #235, Manhattan (Nevada) #231, Tonopah #121, Walker (Arizona) #65, Jerome #101, Globe #60, Crown King (Arizona) #89, Cloud City (Colorado) #33, Vulcan (Colorado) #84, Index (Washington) #168, Sheridan (Montana) #128, Butte #1, Park City #144, Bourne (Oregon) #42, and some from WFM headquarters in Denver. There were also some weird letters from various doctors explaining their patients ailments so that they

could continue getting union benefits. The real shame of the entire thing is that these letters were tied in numerous bundles of about 20 letters and placed in a trunk. At this point everything was mint condition. I am doing some detective work trying to locate the renter that got a large portion of these bundles before the rats took possession. Prior to this guy, someone just dumped all of them on the ground and that is when the rats started using them for nesting material. Needless to say, the fear of hanta virus did not impede my quest for treasure. Some items are mint while others are stained, but I took just about everything for its historical information. Well, I probably have told you more than you ever wanted to know, but I think the whole story is somewhat interesting.



C. G. BEVIS, President S. MARSHALL, Financial Secretary

**Tonopah Miners Union No. 121**

Western Federation  of Miners

P. O. BOX 247 Tonopah, Nevada, *July 12<sup>th</sup> 1905*

*Mr W. C. Emery*