

THE NORTH BUTTE MINING COMPANY

by Joe L. Slouber
Butte, Montana

The North Butte Mining Company was a short lived operation, lasting only for nineteen years, until being taken over by the Anaconda Company. It was started in 1905 by several prominent investors, including John Ryan who was a president of the Anaconda Company, and Patrick Largey, an important Butte businessman. The North Butte Mining Company owned several valuable mines including the Speculator and the Granite Mountain. The company was a major employer in Butte, having over 1600 men working for it at one time.

The North Butte Mining Company is better known for the disasters that happened at one of its mines. On October 15, 1915, at the Granite Mountain mine, twelve cases of explosives waited to be lowered. Fifteen shift bosses were standing around also waiting to go down, when the dynamite exploded. There were several theories, but the most accepted one was that one of the other men had just picked up several tins of blasting caps and one of these had accidentally been dropped and set off the explosion.

NORTH BUTTE MINING CO.

Exits

Men should learn the various exits and raises, or winzes, leading to and from the level on which they are employed.

Lights

Never travel without sufficient Light.

Never leave your candle, lamp or torch near timber or other inflammable material.

NORTH BUTTE MINING CO.

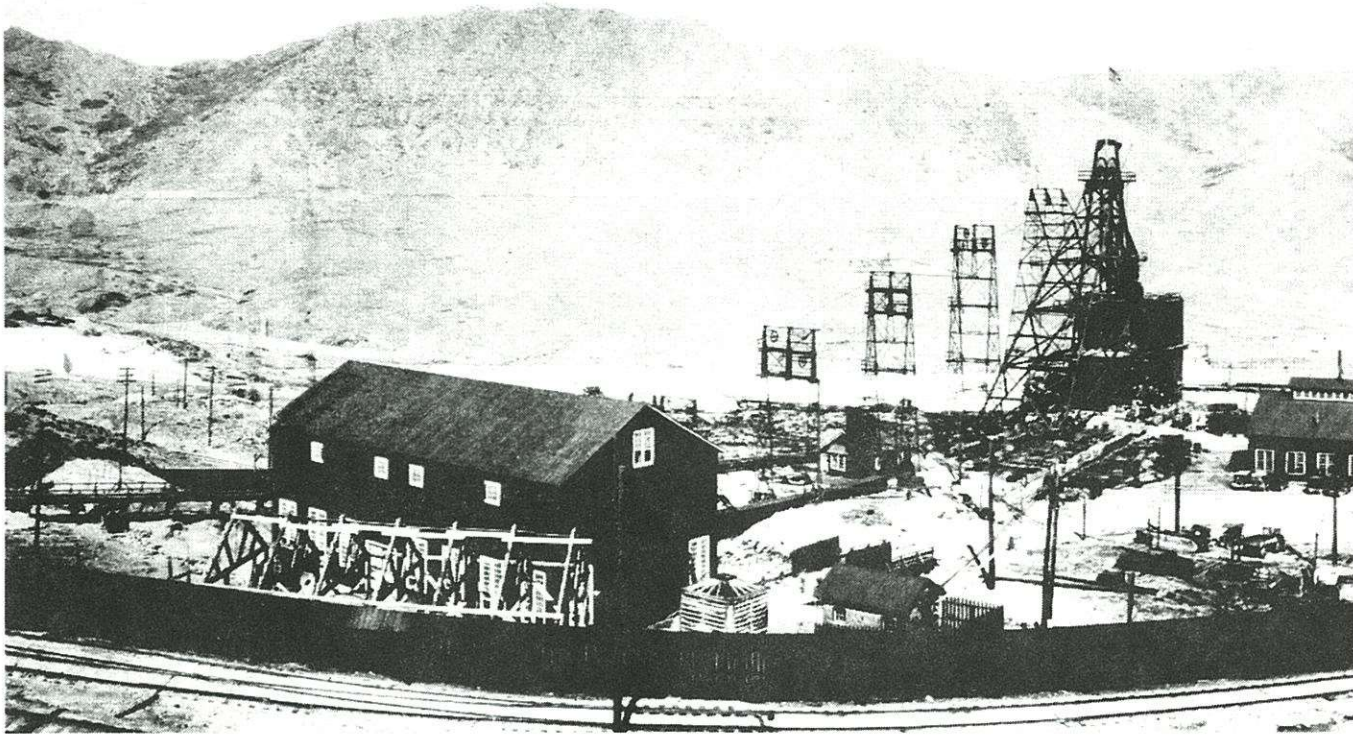
Man-Ways and Chutes

In going up or down man-ways use extreme caution and see that ladders are safe. Defective ladders should be reported. Do not dislodge rock or other material that may injure a person below. Broken chutes which allow rock to fall down man-ways should be reported. Openings to ore or waste chutes and to man-ways must be protected by a covering or by guard-rails. If necessary to remove cover from any opening, see that guard is provided.

BE CAREFUL when timber or supplies are being hoisted or lowered to keep from under same.

EMPLOYEES ARE FORBIDDEN to lower or throw tools, steel or any other material down the man-way, except when a man is stationed below.

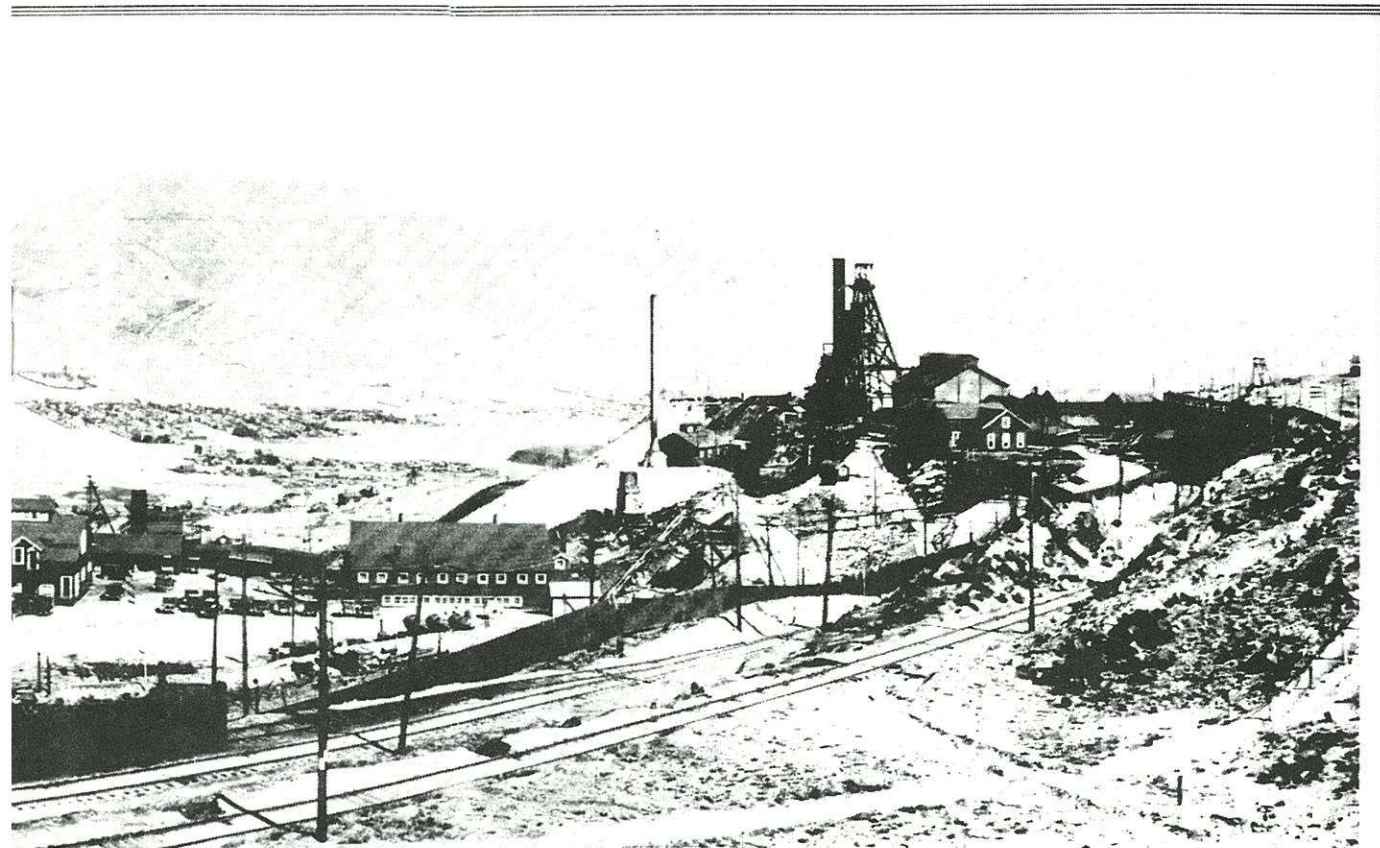
Loaders must not leave chutes until properly closed.



GRANITE MOUNTAIN AND SPECULATOR SURFACE



MAIN RANGE SURFACE PLANT LOOKING WEST TOWARD BUTTE HILL



PLANTS OF NORTH BUTTE MINING COMPANY



AND GRANITE MOUNTAIN GROUP OF NORTH BUTTE MINING COMPANY

On June 8, 1917, again at the Granite Mountain mine, workers had been lowering a heavy cable down one of the air shafts. It got hung up and instead of trying to raise it back up, a man was sent down to try to free it. The cable was only held by one tie, and the man cut it for some reason, dropping the cable down the shaft. An assistant foreman inspected the insulated cable, and getting too close, set the cable on fire with his carbide lamp. In moments the entire 3,000 feet of timbered shaft was burning, while smoke and gas crept back through the tunnels. Most of the mines in Butte were connected, so most of the miners were able to escape. After the rescue crews were able to get down, they found 166 dead miners.

In 1923, the North Butte Mining Company was bought by the Anaconda Company, closing out its short history.

The Anaconda Copper Company continued to operate the North Butte Mining Company mines for many years.

Most all of the artifacts related to the North Butte Mining Company are paper items such as stock certificates, checks, post cards, and small cardboard signs that were placed throughout the mines. The stock certificates from the North Butte Mining Company--although very attractive--are the most commonly found mining stocks around.

