

ALLEGHANY HISTORY

Settlements were started before the present site of Alleghany was chosen as the "town". The first settlements were established in the vicinity of Kenton Camp. Most of these settlements were wiped out by fire. At first, the name of Alleghany was Jericho, and later it was given the final name by Mr. Perry Bonham and Mr. Jim McCormick. The first settlers settled here in April, 1853. Gold was struck in October, 1855.

Alleghany was built in 1856. Joseph Evans was postmaster when the first post office was built in 1857. In the sixties, the Kenton and the Dreadnaught began to produce.



In the seventies, the Oriental, Rainbow, Yellow Jacket, Oceola and Tightner began some surface prospecting for quartz. Last to develop was the 16 to 1, which started in 1910 and has produced about 22,000,000 dollars worth of gold. The Oriental dug 734,000 dollars from an area 14 feet by 22 feet. The Tightner has taken out 3,000,000 dollars or more.

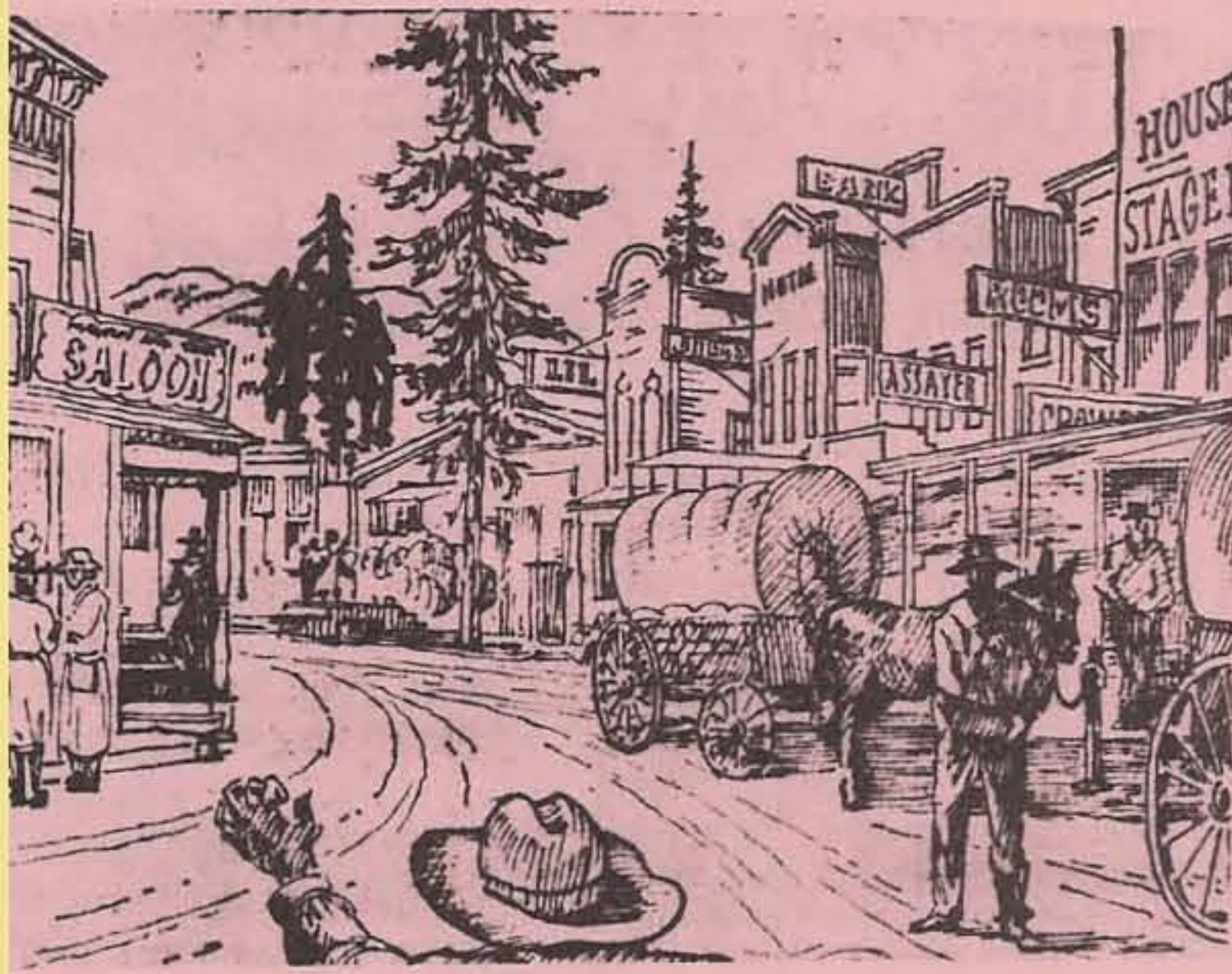
In 1869, Thomas J. Bradbury located the 16 to 1 only 1500 feet from his house. He found later that the adjoining vein was in his own back yard. The 16 to 1 is one of the richest producing gold mines in the world.

The roads were very rough and narrow.

Wagons and the horses had to wear bells to let oncoming traffic know so they could pull off the road to a wider space. Horses and wagons were the town's transportation. North San Juan and Plum Valley were the stopping places on the three day trip to Alleghany. The present Alleghany Supply Company was once a livery stable for freighters alone. When important mail was going out, a Wells Fargo messenger would accompany the mailman. There were quite a few holdups. The Joss House, which was located below Casey's Place, was a private school. The Chinese were very popular in Alleghany, then called Chinatown. Their town was located above the area where Mrs. Swan's house is at present. They made their living by panning for gold, then later they leased mines from the white people. They were quite friendly until one of the Chinese killed a White butcher, then they had to move out of the community,



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later returning in the eighties to be friendly. There were two hotels, a general store, a livery stable, and a butcher shop. The first school was built where Martin Rohrig's house is now standing. The building, which housed the Methodist church in addition to the school, was caved in by heavy snow.

Most people worked placer mines. One mine they worked was the very rich Oriental Mine. In

the Oriental, the men had to chisel the gold out of rocks. Alleghany in the earlier days was strictly placer mining. Harry Apple struck it rich in the Ophir Mine on Kanaka Creek. Next, the Golden King and the Docile Mines, which were located on Kanaka Creek, were worked as quartz mines. They were worked many years and gradually ceased operations. H.L. Johnson hit a rich deposit of gold in the famous

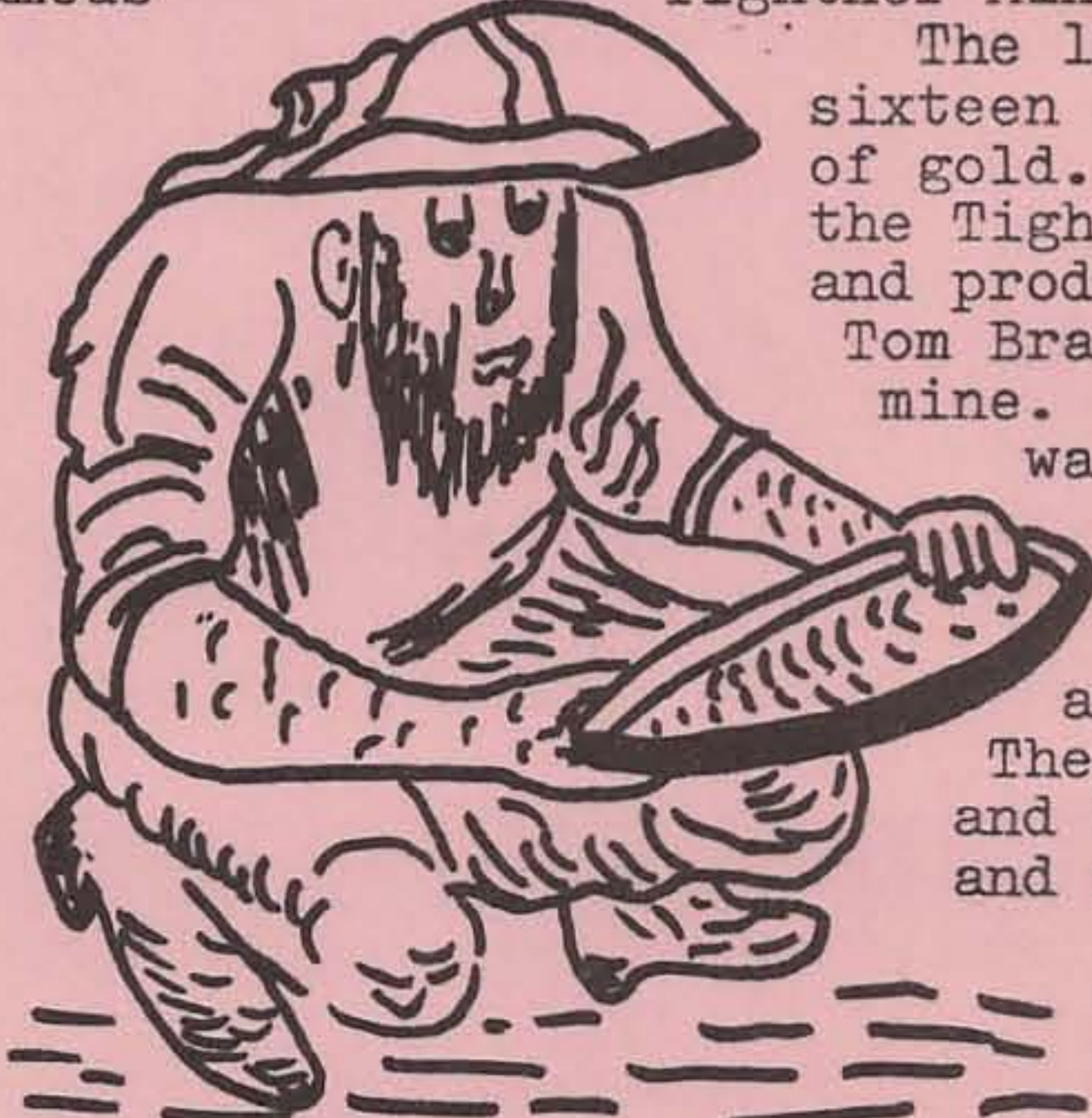


Tightner Mine in 1909.

The 16 to 1 was named by taking sixteen ounces of silver to one ounce of gold. This famous mine hit after the Tightner, and has been working and producing ever since. The famous Tom Bradbury located the 16 to 1 mine. A single chunk of quartz was found weighing 164 pounds. It produced \$26,800 in gold in 1927.

Alleghany was quite an active town in the early days. They had a very active orchestra and band for their lively dances and parties.

Alleghany, for the last century, has been dependent on the gold mines. Before



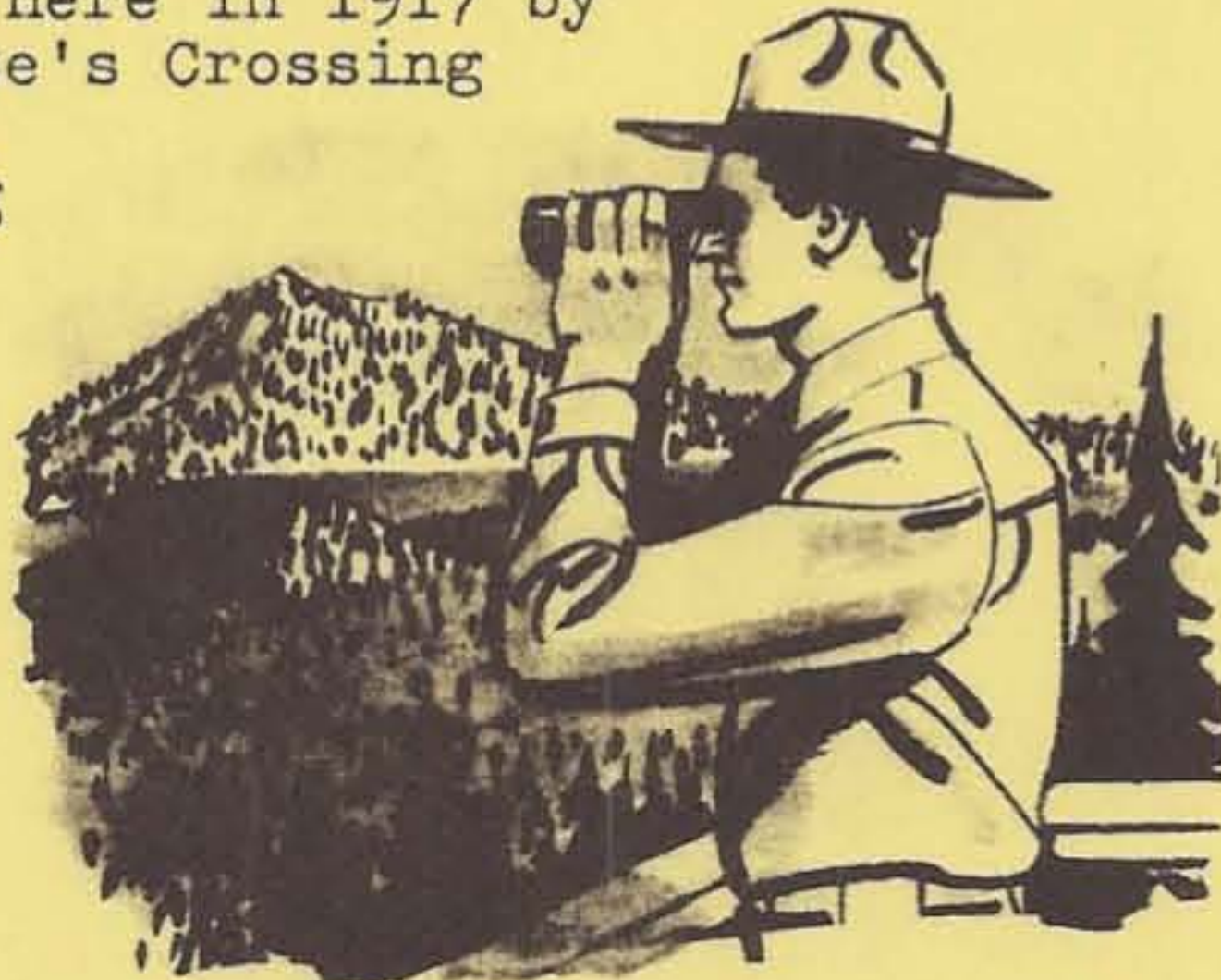
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World War II, Alleghany had over 500 people. Today it has about 150, and the town still depends on gold and mining.

The town was almost completely destroyed by a fire, which left only four houses standing; one of which is the Rohrig house.

The present telephone building is standing where the first house was built in Alleghany over a hundred years ago. The catholic Church was brought to Alleghany from Morris Flat by horses, and was rebuilt here in 1917 by Mike Shea. Foote's Crossing

was built and braced by piling flat rocks up by masons. The Foote's was established as an all year route to Alleghany. It was a masterpiece of construction. The first road into Alleghany was the Henness Pass Road. The late Arthur D. Foote, who contracted the road and for whom it was named, spent his personal fortune to see that the contract was fulfilled. Afterwards, his money was appropriated by the boards of



supervisors of Nevada and Sierra Counties. Over a period of years, the people, mines, and the U.S. Forest Service left. The Foote's road started from Columbia Hill and was completed in 1913.



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The preceding article is from The Golden Hornet, 1958, the annual yearbook printed and published by the students of Alleghany High School, and is reprinted here through the courtesy of Mr. David B. Dickson, who was principal at Alleghany at the time of publication. Information for the original article was gathered primarily at the Downieville courthouse by the students in connection with their history classes. A note of interest: Alleghany had only one senior in 1958, Jerry Huneke.

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