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Hubert Work, Secretary

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
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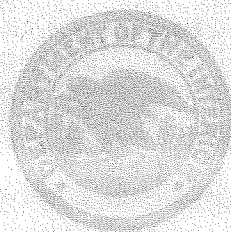
GEOLOGY AND OIL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE
COLD BAY DISTRICT, ALASKA

BY
WALTER R. SMITH

A RUBY SILVER PROSPECT IN ALASKA

BY
S. R. CAPPS and M. N. SHORT

Mineral resources of Alaska, 1924—C



U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

A RUBY SILVER PROSPECT IN ALASKA

By S. R. Capps and M. N. Shoar

INTRODUCTION

In July, 1922, a silver prospect of unusual type was discovered in the upper Susitna Basin. This prospect, named the Mint mine by the owners, is the property of Arthur Moose Johnson, the discoverer, and of his partner, Harry A. Wertz. It is about 9 miles east of Chulitna station on the Alaska Railroad, 274 miles by rail north of Seward, and lies on the west bluff of Portage Creek, about 8 miles above the junction of that creek with Susitna River. At that place Portage Creek has an altitude of about 1,100 feet above sea level. The Mint mine can be reached on foot over a fair trail of moderate grades in about three hours' travel from the railroad. The trail has been improved by a bridge across Indian River, by some cutting of brush, and by numerous notices of direction. In 1924 it was wet and soft in places, but by some relocation and grading it could without serious difficulty and without much heavy construction be developed into a good wagon road. A comfortable cabin has been built on Bear Flats, about 2 miles west of the lode.

The present description of the Mint mine is the result of a visit in September, 1924, by S. R. Capps, who spent about two days on this and adjacent properties. At the same time Mr. Harry Townsend, of the Bureau of Mines, visited the property and made a sketch survey of the lode and the developments and took some samples of the ore body. The writers wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. Townsend for furnishing copies of his surveys and the results of his sampling. The laboratory study of the specimens of the rock and the ore in this section or in polished section was made by M. N. Shoar.

GEOLOGIC RELATIONS

The outcrop of the Mint ore body is on the west bluff of Portage Creek, at a place where the creek makes a sharp U-shaped bend westward. The creek valley in this stretch lies in a steep-sided canyon cut several hundred feet below the level of the upland, and a promi-

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 1, 1926.

A new search for oil in the Navy's Petroleum reserve located in Arctic Alaska with explorations of the adjacent country was announced today by the Interior Department.

Gerald Fitzgerald, topographic engineer, and W. R. Smith, geologist, of the Geological Survey will make the survey and will leave Washington shortly. Both are familiar with the northern Alaska Peninsula having made several trips there to make topographic surveys and examinations for oil.

The region in which the Naval reserve is located is so remote and inaccessible that only by traveling during the winter is it possible to take advantage of the brief open season when the Arctic Circle country is free from snow and rocks are exposed. Throughout the area there are no trees. Even brushes to supply fuel for camp purposes are scarce.

The conditions under which the work will be done are such that no specific program can be laid down far in advance, and the engineer and geologist will constantly have to rearrange their plans to meet the local conditions they encounter. In general, however, their present plan is to go at once to Seattle, whence regular lines of transportation run to Seward, Alaska, the southern terminal of the Alaska Railroad. The party will then go over the railroad to Nenana, where they will buy dog teams, and from Nenana will follow the mail route to Kotzebue. This is a run of about 700 miles and, if the party makes as good time as that of last year, will take about 27 days. At Kotzebue the party will further outfit with supplies and equipment enough to last five to six months, as after leaving the coast they will have no opportunity to obtain any additional supplies. In fact, they will probably

not even see a parson, white or native, until they return to the coast in September.

After leaving Kotzebue the party will work northwestward along the coast, probably as far as Kivalina, and then strike north into the hills that form the divide west at Noatak River. After a route northward through these hills has been found the party will freight its supplies and equipment to some point on Kokolik or Utukok River, or some other northward-flowing stream, and spend the rest of the winter surveying, geologically and topographically, as much of the adjacent region as possible, traveling with dog teams.

When the ice in the streams has broken in the spring, which in that region should be about the first of June, the party will continue the exploration by using canoes, which they will have hauled in with their other equipment from the coast. In this work part of the basin of Utukok River will be surveyed, and a pass to Meade River, which lies to the east, will be sought. If a suitable route can be found, the party will portage to Meade River and attempt to tie their surveys to those of the upper part of the Meade that they made last year and those of the lower part of Meade River that were made in 1923 by the Geological Survey party in charge of Sidney Paige.

If a junction with the Paige surveys is made, the party will descend Meade River to a point near the coast, where short portages will bring them out at the head of Peard Bay. By coasting southwestward they can reach the settlement of Wainwright, where such boats as are in these waters usually call on their way south and thus will afford a means for the party to reach Nome, where regular transportation facilities for return to the States are available.

It is believed that, as a result of these surveys, an area of 7,000 to 10,000 square miles of hitherto unexplored country, a tract about as large

as Massachusetts, will be mapped with the degree of accuracy required by reconnaissance standards, and that the major geologic features will be determined as well as the principle kinds of mineral that are likely to be found in the region. The new surveys should be of value not only in furnishing information about an almost unknown tract of country but in assisting in interpreting and supplementing the data that have been gathered in the explorations during the last three years in northern Alaska, primarily at the request of the Department of the Navy and at its expense.