

UNITED STATES BORAX COMPANY

510 WEST SIXTH STREET

LOS ANGELES 14, CALIFORNIA

March 30, 1949

Mrs. Ruth Woodman
Rye, New York

Dear Mrs. Woodman:

I am in receipt of your letter of March 20 relative to more of the early history of the Lang borate mine.

I thought that I had included pertinent dates in the information that I had written for you, but if not it was an oversight on my part.

I went to work for the Sterling Borax Co. in the early part of September 1910. At that time Mr. E. M. Stewart, a mining engineer, was Superintendent of the operation. Prior to Stewart's regime I believe a Mr. Garringer, a practical miner and millman, was Superintendent.

Thorkildsen ran the job from the Los Angeles office and was a frequent visitor at the mine. On rare occasions, about every 3-4 years, he was accompanied by Mather. I was rather impressed by Mather's quiet personality, in comparison to Thorkildsen's vivacious and even boisterous manner. Mather seemed always the gentleman, while Thorkildsen sometimes was not.

I recall only one time that Ryan visited Lang and at that time was accompanied by Zabriskie and Rasor and possibly Baker. To the best of my knowledge Smith did not come to Lang during my residence there. In fact I never did see Smith.

During my early years in the camp it was a "stag" camp, and the social life was only the miners' poker games and cribbage games, and infrequent trips to Los Angeles.

And so we diverted ourselves in a boisterous mining camp way; with hunting trips for deer and quail in season within two miles of camp. And then in 1913-1914 some of us were able to afford automobiles; the top brass first, and in the succeeding years even the lowliest mucker came rustling a job in his Model T Ford.

In 1913-1914 too, electric power was brought into camp and a modern mill and an electric hoist for the mine.

With the advent of automobile transportation and electric power, it followed that the married employees would want to bring their wives to camp, so the Company built a few modest cabins for the staff members and allotted land to other employees who cared to build their own cabins for their families.

These latter were rather limited as water was a critical problem in the camp. A small amount of water was caught in the floor of the canyon above the mine, and also from an assessment tunnel one-half mile East of the mine; this was all piped to a tank in camp. But the main supply was hauled in tank cars from the Southern Pacific tank at Lang Station. On account of the steep grades on our railroad, and the small locomotive, this supply was necessarily limited.

With the coming of the families a school soon followed, and with that the inevitable school house dances and card parties and romances. This marked the transition from a frontier camp to a more or less modern camp for those days.

But it was always a good camp, no strife, and a fine spirit prevailed between the employees and their families and the Company staff. Each year yet, twenty or thirty of us gather for an annual picnic at Vasquez Rocks, a scenic spot four miles from the mine --- the "Alumni of Lang".

Trusting that the above will answer some of your questions and give you the atmosphere of the camp. She was indeed a "Good Camp".

Most sincerely,

L. D. Dobson

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