

Cairns' Western Trip.

Lewiston, Idaho, Aug. 22, 1908.

We wrote our last from Wallace, but didn't finish. Wallace is a city of 4,000 inhabitants, 2,700 feet above sea level. They tell us here that it is the wealthiest city of its size in the country. It is built on a level piece of land, about one hundred acres, at the confluence of four or five mountain streams that come rattling down for miles from these mountain gulches. The little stream leaves the city through a mountain gorge only a few rods wide to an open country below.

The great mines, lead and silver, are located up in the gulches. Along the sides of these steep mountains you can see flumes for carrying water for the various mining operations, especially to the concentrators, where the ore is milled and separated from the rock, for the ore when it comes from the mine is far from being pure—it looks like a lot of rock. In some mines the ore is so pure it is shipped without milling here. We visited one of those great concentrators. We passed through the mill quite rapidly and therefore have a very imperfect knowledge of the different processes that take place from the top to the bottom of the large building. The mills are built close to the side of the mountain, in fact part of the mill is slanting against the side of the mountain. Above the mill on the mountain side is a railroad track where the ore is brought from the mines on the cars and dumped into great bins. From these it goes to a crusher, where it is crushed so fine that it would all go through an inch ring. From here it goes into a flume where water is running continually. It is moved along this flume by machinery, and the rock being lighter than the ore is separated from it. But some of it needs more crushing yet and a story lower is made finer and washed again, and so on to the bottom, where the last of it is very fine. It all lands at last in a bin on the lower floor, where it is loaded on the cars and shipped to smelters away in other states, where the lead and ore are separated. A ton of this ore when ready to ship, we were told, is worth about sixty dollars, forty dollars' worth of lead and twenty dollars' worth of silver. Notwithstanding all the care possible to save all the value in the ore, we are told that several thousand dollars' worth goes down the little river daily from the numerous mills in the vicinity. It completely poisons the stream. Nothing will live in it. It will kill cattle if they drink it, and vegetation if it comes in contact with it. Many million dollars' worth of ore is shipped from these mines annually. The refuse from the concentrators makes fine road metal and is used largely.

Six or eight miles above Wallace, in one of the gulches—some call them canyons—is a town called Burka. It is the queerest town we ever saw. It is more than a mile long, and is built along both sides of the narrow ravine, between steep and high mountains. A little brook runs through the valley, and two railroads run along, one on each side of the brook. The cars are often so close to the houses that one could reach them from the train. Some places the railroad and the wagon road occupies the same ground. Within less than a mile we saw two fine large school buildings built it is said by the mining companies. They pay big salaries to teachers, but board is \$35 a month.

A number of large and rich mines are located here. We visited two of them, but went into neither. One goes straight down from the surface 200 feet and is very wet; everything that comes up is wet and dirty. The other is tunneled into the mountain side three-fourths of a mile. Here a large room has been excavated, and hoisting machinery installed, and a shaft goes down between one and two thousand feet. The ore is hoisted up into this room and put on little cars and hauled by electricity through the tunnel to daylight. We looked into the tunnel, but could see nothing but a long line of electric lights. Nearly all the power used to operate these mines is electrical, brought from Spokane more than a hundred miles away.

From Wallace we came by rail to Harrison, near the head of Lake Coeur d'Alene, thence by steamboat 25 miles to Coeur d'Alene city at the lower end of the lake, where the drawing of the Indian reservations was going on. The lake is long and narrow, and down among the mountains we enjoyed the voyage very much. From the number of rafts on the lake we judge there is considerable lumbering in the vicinity. At Missoula we registered for a chance in the Flathead but got nothing.

Another short run and we were in the booming, bustling city of Spokane. We stopped only an hour or two there, and then came on to Lewiston, to visit our old friends, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Needham. Expect to see more of Spokane later.

ALEX. CAIRNS.