

**Silver senators, outlaw miners, no jail and lots of
half-ton silver balls made**

The Town Too Tough For Wells-Fargo

by Jack Sword

DISCUSSING his new silver mine, Bill Stewart, Senator from Nevada and millionaire mining promoter, exhaled a lung-full of cigar smoke.

"Senator Jones and I have a mine and a mill to refine the ore," he was saying, "and we're ready to commence shipping bullion."

The Wells-Fargo representative leaned forward. "We're always ready to handle that kind of a load."

"Glad to hear it," Stewart responded. "We've sunk two shafts—the Wyoming and the Hemlock. Veins so large and rich we are confident of outproducing the Comstock Lode." (The Comstock, under Virginia City, Nevada, was a mere mountain of silver.)

Wells-Fargo's eagerness turned suspicious. "Where are the Wyoming and the Hemlock?"

"Panamint City," Stewart answered.

Wells-Fargo sighed. "Senator, we can't handle your silver."

"Why not?"

"Because Wells-Fargo guarantees delivery or pays the shipper the equivalent in cash," explained the agent. "Panamint City is so notorious, we wouldn't even attempt to bring a shipment out."

Panamint was a new mining town in the Panamint mountains on the west side of Death Valley. Since the early 1860's the region had been a sanctuary for refugee badmen from the mining camps of southern California and Nevada. An occasional legitimate prospector would wander through, looking for the fabulous Lost Gunsight silver deposit, discovered but ignored by '49ers on their way to the California gold fields.

One deep gorge, christened Surprise Canyon by its bedazzled discoverer, possessed large quantities of surface silver ore, and also two

rarities for such rugged desert country: water and grass. Outlaws led by John McDonald and John Small, a pair of quick draw artists, took possession of sections of Surprise Canyon and set about converting the claims to money. They contacted Senators Bill Stewart and John Jones of Nevada. After examining ore samples, Jones said he'd invest over \$100,000 if he could make certain he would receive valid title to the claims. He wanted no expensive law suits. He did not desire to pacify some hot-eyed outlaw with a heavy six-gun.

IN THE PANAMINTS, signs went up announcing a meeting to establish the new mining district and write the laws to govern it. On the appointed day miners and prospectors arrived. Occasionally, from a distance, an individual could be noticed studying the camp

carefully, making sure no lawman or Wells-Fargo detectives had set up an ambush. Then he would ride in slowly, his hand near his gun, his restless eyes searching for the first sign of a trap.

Partners Jones and Stewart secured their claims. During negotiations, word of the "strike" leaked. A stampede started. Not all the outlaws would sell, but the Senators held title to enough claims to commence large scale operations. They launched a typical stock promotion of the 1870's with much ballyhoo, "selective" assays and carefully chosen rock specimens, all of which excited investors in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Jones and Stewart pushed a costly 75-mile access road, the last miles through a twisting serpentine draw called Corkscrew Gorge. When the road was completed, a town sprang up in the grassy draw of Surprise Canyon. Bars lined both sides of the single street. That boom-town rarity, a respectable woman, opened a restaurant. Professional gamblers set up in bars and under makeshift awnings along the street. Peddlers arrived with packs of trade goods. Gunmen lounged around, picking deliberate quarrels with anyone incautious enough to display a few dollars. When no victims were handy, the badmen worked over each other. A few Los Angeles merchants opened establishments



offering a more varied and better class of material than the peddler's wares. Adventurers, hopefuls, miners and speculators loaded all incoming transportation. Martha Camp, an experienced and competent Madam, appeared with her girls. Before the excitement of that could die, the *Panamint News* first edition announced to the world that Panamint City had begun a career which would soon make it the West's largest metropolis.

AT THIS POINT, Wells-Fargo sought to collect an overdue bill. Some years before, McDonald and Small had robbed a stage coach express of more than \$4,000. In Panamint City appeared the chief Wells-Fargo detective, accompanied by two sheriffs noted for their fast draw. McDonald and Small, respectable citizens these days, had the choice of jail or repayment.

Senator Stewart, acting as go-between, put up the cash. McDonald and Small gave him a share in some of their claims. Wells-Fargo dropped charges.

"Hold it," said ex-outlaw McDonald as the Wells-Fargo detective reached for the cash. "Give me a receipt first."

"Huh?"

"A receipt," McDonald insisted. "I don't trust Wells-Fargo. I want something to show I've paid the money, or one of these you'll

be around asking for more."

He got the receipt.

Tons of ore were out of the mines now. The Senators readied the mill's first silver run-off. One day a local gunman casually inquired of Stewart when he planned on making a shipment. Suspecting a robbery, Stewart asked Wells-Fargo to assume the transportation problem. Wells-Fargo turned him down flat. Nevertheless, if operations were to continue, the silver had to be got out.

"Too bad we can't mount cannon on the wagon carrying the silver," mused Jones.

"Why not?" exclaimed Stewart.

"Use cannon?"

"No," said Stewart. "Cast the silver into cannon balls."

So the mill poured the molten silver into huge molds and when they cooled, the spheres, weighing nearly 500 pounds each, were loaded in a wagon and sent to the railroad without a guard.

As expected, deep in Corkscrew Gorge masked armed horsemen halted the wagon.

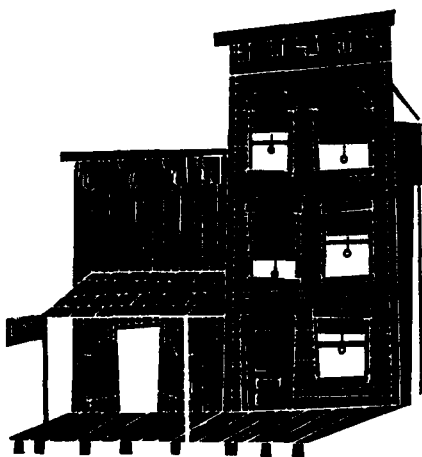
"Where's the silver?"

The driver pointed to wooden boxes. Into them the outlaws ripped, and stared in dismay at the huge silver balls. They pulled a horse along side and attempted to load one on him. Its weight was too much; there was no way to secure it. Hijacking the whole wagon was impossible since the

steep road twisted without even room to turn around directly to the railhead. The hijackers were forced to pass the shipment, a frustration that worsened as the months passed and silver bullion rolled regularly out of Panamint City. Desperate, a delegation called on Senator Stewart. He was not playing fair they told him. Other mines would imitate him, which would put the outlaws out of work. Stewart laughed; and continued turning out quarter-ton ingots.

IN THE SUMMER of 1875 The Nevada-California silver empire built on Nevada's Comstock Lode crumbled. Several leading California banks failed and Jones and Stewart were severely damaged. They hoped that Panamint's silver production rate would pull them through. Ore, however, had always been extremely costly to mine and process and the wide, rich veins of the Wyoming and Hemlock shafts had narrowed to thin "pipes" which threatened to pinch off entirely.

Stage coaches began arriving in Panamint City with empty seats. Space going out cost a premium. One bleak day Martha Camp and all the girls left. Many miners followed, but not for pleasure. They knew that a dance hall girl never dallies with a dead proposition. The *Panamint News* folded; and to clinch Panamint's doom, a Death



Valley cloudburst struck. Massive water rolled through Surprise Canyon, part of Panamint City on its back. In Corkscrew Gorge it erased the twisting road, leaving the town no access to the outside world.

It also finished partners Jones and Stewart. Without capital to rebuild the road, and no new investors, they had to close Panamint Mine with an admitted loss to their share holders of over one million dollars. What was left of the citizenry crept away over the enclosing ridges.

The only outlaws left were Small and McDonald. As a parting gesture, they robbed some store-keepers packing supplies on burros. The take was mighty small and the two quarrelled. McDonald said the hell with silver-plated respectability, shot Small and cleared out.

For years, Panamint City was

deserted. An occasional prospector fought his way up debris-strewn Corkscrew Gorge into Surprise Canyon. He would bring out news that the buildings still stood, that the deserted saloons even had whiskey glasses arranged neatly on the sideboards. A few of the hardest prospectors searched out the still workable silver veins in the abandoned mines. They would dump the low grade ore to one side, keeping only the best to load on their strings of burros, and pack out.

By the summer of 1918, miners had opened an automobile road through Corkscrew Gorge. In Surprise Canyon they had heaped tons of silver ore to truck out, but the heat of a Death Valley summer permitted no motor to climb the grade into Panamint City. The miners were patient—after all these years success would come with cool weather, due in a very few weeks.

Then one muggy afternoon black clouds rumbled over the summit of the Panamints. Shadows stretched quickly over Surprise Canyon. In moments, out of the clouds coiled the mouth of a waterspout. Millions of tons of water slammed into the mountain sides, stripping away thick layers of earth and sand. The flood poured into the canyon, washing away the miner's camp, swirling the tons of silver ore down serpentine Corkscrew Gorge, removing all trace of the automobile road. Brush and trees, ripped from higher ground, formed a temporary dam. Flood fingers reached back toward the devastated canyon. Then the brush barrier broke and monster waves hurtled the silvery waste of Panamint City into the valley below.

The only town in the West too tough for Wells-Fargo had vanished, forever.

Two Atlanta Newsstands Sell The Mercury

Last week, *The News* announced editorially that the AMERICAN MERCURY cannot be bought on Atlanta newsstands, because it has been barred from such month-by-month circulation in this city.

That fact is true as far as North Side magazine stands in drug stores and supermarkets are concerned. From an Atlantan whose business interests are downtown, though, *The News* gets this information:

The AMERICAN MERCURY magazine until a short time ago, was so-called distributed by an Atlanta agency which made it impossible for newsstands to obtain copies.

There are now two newsstands—one at 65 Broad Street, NW, (World News Company) and another at 42 Marietta Street (The News Shop), operated by "Greek boys" who obtain their copies direct from AMERICAN MERCURY and they are selling hundreds of copies each month.

Incidentally, you will not find the vile pornographic literature on their front counters.—The North Side News, January 21, 1960.

Search for truth is the noblest occupation of man;
its *publication* a duty. —MADAME DE STAEL

DO YOU KNOW?

★ Moscow has a school for training African witch doctors. Soviet secret radio stations are working from the Mozambique region to communicate with the Soviet Consulate in Johannesburg. Soviet agents have also been busy buying “timber concessions” in Angola (West Coast) and in Mozambique (East Coast). Concessions on the coast are chosen to serve as secret bases for Soviet submarines for their agents and probably for arms and smuggling.

★ Among Congressmen who went on the pension rolls in 1958, the average payment was \$8,364 per year. Average term of service in Congress was 18 years.

★ The master-plan, about to be applied to Ceylon and many other countries, is that which has already been applied to Indonesia. The white population, because it is a stabilizing factor, has to be uprooted, so that confusion may reign. Confusion is not desired for its own sake, but because it is the indispensable trailblazer of communism.

★ A man seeks, but infrequently finds, the “other half” of himself: the woman who will love and understand him as he longs to be loved and understood.

★ Some 700 officers were murdered by the Communist Party cells in the Spanish fleet at the very start of the 1937 Revolution. They were able to do this because the radio operators delivered the announcement of the Communist Revolution to their comrades rather than to the responsible ship’s officers, which permitted the revolutionists to commit the crime, the officers not expecting it.

★ Freedom is like a handful of sand, the second you relax any of your fingers, it starts slipping away from you.

★ In the United States in a recent year, \$750 was spent on amusements for every dollar given to religion; there was one murder every 40 minutes and 60 suicides a day.

- ★ Any currency that is destroyed, or lost while in circulation goes to the credit of the bankers (not the U. S. government). The history of the Civil War, Cleveland Panic, and the Panama Canal bonds—now due to refunding, and known as “consols”—is that they have already cost the government in interest alone more than their face value.
- ★ Liquor advertising and the harmful practices of liquor traffic have contributed to the lower morals of many of our young people.
- ★ Mortgage debt on owner-occupied houses (in early 1959) totalled the staggering sum of \$106 billion. In 1958 24 per cent of their gross income was used to make monthly interest mortgage payments, and taxes and insurance on property. The average also paid about 30 per cent federal taxes, etc. So 45 per cent of their gross income goes for these two items alone.
- ★ In all of Marx’s insane theories of destruction there is no announced plan of reconstruction!
- ★ The careful student of Marxism soon discovers that the terms “socialism” and “communism” are interchangeable, and, for all practical purposes, mean the same thing.
- ★ Khrushchev recently was given the red carpet treatment in the United States. Do you think the following quotation fits him? “*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*” (Psalms 55:21)
- ★ Nuclear scientists from Russia are in the process of visiting 14 atomic energy installations in the United States. Heading the group is Professor V. S. Emelyanov, head of the Soviet administration for utilization of atomic energy.
- ★ Our young people today are literally bombarded with motion picture advertising promoting greed, rape and profanity.
- ★ Rape cases increased 10½ per cent in 1958. During the first nine months of 1959 they increased an additional 16 per cent.
- ★ Nikita Khrushchev reached power as did all top figures in Soviet Russia, in all the Iron Curtain countries and in Red China by wading through a sea of blood.

"Confidence breeds tyranny. . . . Free government is founded permanently in jealousy. In questions of power and authority, bind your leaders down from mischief. Putting too much confidence in men can lead to disaster."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

San Antonio Selects Socialism's Easy Way

by Clyde Wantland

IN MY HOMETOWN of San Antonio, Texas, we have three daily newspapers and a host of distinguished citizens who range in importance from the six-page advertisers down to the quarter-page institutional boys.

Some years ago our three papers (*San Antonio Express*, circulation 62,500; *San Antonio News*, 68,500; *San Antonio Light*, 105,700) with one accord began quoting these citizens to the effect that our "city hall" needed modernizing. In our 225 years as a municipality we had not gone much in debt and our taxes were outrageously low. Visiting dudes met the natives over at the Alamo. Poor folk fished the San Antonio river at any likely spot. We all parked our automobiles at the first opening. It seemed, however, that there was far more life in progressive Dallas and progressive Houston.

Dallas had air-conditioned her city hall and put her cops in modern limousines. Houston voted an-

other huge bond issue, bought typewriters and business machines for her city hall, outlawed serving native chili in the open and warned her prostitutes they'd better have a weekly health check-up. Meanwhile, 406,000 San Antonians lived as if Garrett's Snuff were still legal tender and all the White Republicans still resided in Kansas.

"Outrageous," cried distinguished do-gooders. "San Antonio must catch up with progress. She needs a new city charter."

Mr. Jack White, proprietor of the White Plaza Hotel, resigned as president of our Chamber of Commerce and was elected mayor on his pledge to modernize city hall. Under his aegis and behind his vigorous campaigning, the three papers (with 96-point type headlines) turned the movement into an Apostolic crusade. With the papers' consent, Mayor White and the council charged a commission of 15 citizens with custom tailoring a new government for San Antonio.