

When Spaniards Carried Sacks of Silver From Black Mountain

One of the most picturesque legends of the Highlands of the Hudson, a tale that was told by old residents now almost all passed on, and which from its circumstantial narration suggests some foundation of fact, is that of the mysterious "Spanish Silver Mine." This mine, said to have yielded almost pure silver, was supposed to have been located on Black Mountain, a craggy summit 1,200 feet above the Hudson River, and about four miles southwest of Bear Mountain, headquarters of the Harriman State Park.

Silver and even gold have been sought in the Highlands, for there was Baron Hassenclaver, who came over from Westphalia about 1730, with a grant to seek precious metals, and had to satisfy himself with iron, which he took out of a shaft that still bears his name, near Lake Tiorati, in the center of the Harriman Park. But he was a real enough person and one of his sons was an engineer officer under Washington, who demolished an iron furnace at Ringwood, N. J., because the owners were Tories.

Tale Passed Down

As for these Spaniards of the Black Mountain mine, there is only a tale, passed down from the father of Harvey Brooks, an old resident of Queensboro, a one-time hamlet back of Bear Mountain, and very likely deriving from Harvey's grandfather or great grandfather, and told by him, not long before he died, to Major W. A. Welch, general manager of the Park, who makes chills run up and down the backs of boys and girl campers in the Park, when he tells the grisly legend to campfire audiences. The story is known to and partly believed, anyway, by others of the hills folks.

Harvey Brooks long occupied the old Queensboro Manor House, where the Long Mountain road turns off the Seven Lakes Drive, the main motor highway in the Harriman Park, and his father lived there before him, as inheritors of part of the ancient Ferris patent, granted by the British Crown, about 1660. Now it is known as Camp Quannacut and is occupied by a group of girls. Harvey is gone to his reward, but here is the tale as he told it to Major Welch:

Early in the Eighteenth Century the Highlands of the Hudson were a wild and shaggy wilderness, densely covered with forests of white pine and hemlock, the haunt of bears and wolves. Back of the river they were almost unknown, except to Indians and a few white hunters and trappers. The Dutch settlers, with an eye to good farmlands, and with no love for these rough hills, after settling Rockland county's gently rolling slopes, had passed above the Highlands to the more easily cultivable lands in Dutchess and Orange counties, about Newburgh and Beacon.

LEGAL NOTICE SCHOOL DISTRICT TAXES TOWN OF SCARSDALE

The undersigned, Receiver of Taxes, for the Town of Scarsdale, gives notice that he has received the warrant for the COLLECTION OF SCHOOL TAXES for 1926, and that he will sit for the collection of such SCHOOL DISTRICT TAXES at his office in the VILLAGE HALL, Post and Popple Roads, in the Town of Scarsdale, aforesaid, daily, Sundays and holidays excepted, from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M.; Saturdays 9 A. M. to 12 noon.

Rates of Penalties if Paid:

During September	None
During October	2 per cent.
During November	5 per cent.
During December and January, 1927	7 per cent.
During February and March	10 per cent.
After, until sale	12 per cent.

Dated, Scarsdale, N. Y., August 15, 1926.

ARTHUR HERBERT,
Receiver of Taxes.

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There were a few cabins along the river at points that are now well known landings, and the beginnings of a hamlet, with a rude inn, at the western side of the southern gate of the Highlands, where Dunderberg Mountain slopes steeply to the Hudson, opposite Peekskill. This was known as Caldwell's from a family which settled early in these parts and whose name is further perpetuated on the Harriman Park map, by an iron mine which one of its members opened later near Lake Tiorati. Caldwell's is now known as Jones' Point, a station on the West Shore Railroad, off which a hundred of the Shipping Board's idle steamers lie anchored.

The reason for the establishment of Caldwell's, and of the tavern, where strong schnapps were procurable lay in the fear which the crews of the river sloops had for the tides and sudden storms of the Devil's Horse Race, the narrow and deep part of the Hudson Gorge, between Dunderberg and Storm King, where Dwerf, Lord of the Dunderberg, held sway and exacted severe reprisals unless the captains lowered their topmasts and dipped their flags in the passage. A good deal of Dutch courage was required for the passage and Caldwell's was the last oasis until Newburgh was reached, so they put in to this landing for the requisite rites and preparations.

Strange Ship Appears

Around about 1720, early in the summer, a strange ship came up the Hudson, of a build different from such English and Dutch ships as were

commonly seen, and anchored off Caldwell's. From it landed a party of dark, bearded, fierce looking men, well armed, but who also carried picks and shovels and sacks. They told no one their business, asked no questions, but seemed to know what they were about. They started west along an old Indian trail that led through the defile between Bear Mountain and West Mountain. No one saw them during the summer, but in the fall back they came, each staggering under a heavy load in his sack. But before boarding their ship, they stopped for Caldwell's cheer, and, in his cups, one of them showed the contents of his sack, which, according to report, was rich silver ore. They made sail and went down the river.

During the winter, the hunters and trappers searched the woods of the inner hills and, on the north slope of Black Mountain, found a rude log cabin. As Harvey Brooks got it from his father, it was a two room, saddle-back affair, and the porch in the middle was oriented so as to point toward the summit of the mountain, as if there was something which the builders wanted to keep under observation. The hunters suspected a mine, but search revealed not the slightest trace of any opening.

Spaniards Return

A year or two afterward, the Spaniards came back again in the same ship, and again made their way back to Black Mountain. Their fierce appearance seems to have discouraged any interference with them during their summer's operations, and they worked unmolested and again came out in the fall, with filled sacks and sailed away. Next year they came back again, but the curiosity of the settlers was now so intense, that the miners

were evidently disturbed into an earlier departure, but still with filled ore sacks. A fourth time they sailed up the river, in the summer or two following, and this time, six marched through the forest to Beechy Bottom, and their cabin on Black Mountain. There was a quarrel at the tavern with the people of the hamlet who were getting insistent as to their business but they broke away after some fighting, and were not followed.

Four Disappear

But that fall, only two of the six came out and returned to their ship, on which a few of the party had stayed, and all sailed away, never to return. Soon after, a search party explored Black Mountain. They found the cabin, and inside it were the bodies of two of the men, long dead. In the ribs of one was a Spanish dagger. The other had a broken skull. There was no sign of the other two. It was then getting dark, but the cupidity of the seachers for that silver mine was so great that they climbed higher on the

(Continued on page eleven)

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