
The Gold King Mine and Mansion: Relics of Mining History in Mohave County, Arizona

By Douglas E. Kupel

While copper mining is closely associated with the development of Arizona, other mineral resources have played a significant role in the history of the state. Silver discoveries at Tombstone rivaled those at the Comstock Lode of Virginia City. Gold discoveries in the Walker Mining District near Prescott and at the Vulture Mine in Wickenburg were second to none during their heyday.

The Gold King Mine in Mohave County, located south of Kingman, is representative of the smaller gold mining operations of Arizona. Although not as well known as some of the more prominent areas in the state, Mohave County was once a backbone of the Arizona's gold mining industry. One reason was the close proximity of Mohave County's mines to California, which resulted in a steady flow of interest and investment into Arizona from the Golden State.

One of the most dramatic relics of gold mining in Mohave County, and in Arizona as a whole, is located at the Gold King Mine. Known as the Gold King Mansion, this large reinforced concrete office and residential building is a reminder of the importance Mohave County gold mining once had to the state as a whole. It also represents California's influence on mining in the western part of the state. Today, the Gold King Mine and Mansion are significant Arizona mining history sites.

Early Mining History of Arizona

Mineral resources attracted the first European explorers to Arizona. In 1736, Spanish conquistadors discovered a large silver deposit at Arizonac. This discovery, from

which Arizona takes its name, lured miners to the northern frontier of New Spain. Mining continued throughout the Spanish and Mexican eras. In 1846 the United States and Mexico went to war over the annexation of Texas. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ratified in 1848, ended the war. The treaty also brought a tremendous amount of new land into the United States.¹

As a result of the war, the present states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah, and a portion of Colorado were taken from Mexico. These new lands were the culmination of the concept of Manifest Destiny, the idea that the United States was destined to reach from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. In Arizona, lands north of the Gila River became part of the United States for the first time. This area did not include Tucson, which remained a part of Mexico.

In 1848, almost before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. This triggered a stampede of men to the West Coast, a mass migration called the California gold rush of 1849. Many thousands of miners passed through Arizona, but few lingered long. Their goal was to get across the area as quickly as possible and begin prospecting in California.²

In 1850, Congress created the Territory of New Mexico. This territory included all of what is now the states of Arizona and New Mexico. During this early era, Arizona residents were ruled from the territorial capitol at Santa Fe.

The inclusion of the new territory as part of the United States led to demands for



*Gold King Mansion
c. 1930.
(Courtesy of the Mohave
County Museum,
D. Shurtz Collection.)*

construction of a transcontinental railroad. Several railroad surveys identified possible routes. One route followed the thirty-second parallel. Because this route ran through Mexico, its supporters—Southerners who would benefit from a transcontinental terminus in their portion of the country—convinced Congress to purchase additional land from Mexico to accommodate the southern railroad route.

On 30 December 1853, James Gadsden executed an agreement with Mexico to purchase the territory in Arizona south of the Gila River for the proposed railroad. The United States agreed to pay \$10 million for the land. Known today as the Gadsden Purchase, this exchange brought what is now the Southern Pacific route through Arizona into the United States. It also made Tucson, the largest city in Arizona, a part of the Union.

Despite the commitment Congress exhibited by the expenditure associated with the Gadsden Purchase, sectional differences between North and South prevented an agreement on where to construct the

transcontinental railroad. Of course, the railroad route was not the most noteworthy difference that led to civil war between the two regions after the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

As the gold rush played out in California, prospectors began to gradually drift back east to their homes. Along the way they continued to look for gold, hoping to discover the next big strike. During the late 1850s and early 1860s many prospectors passed through Arizona. Charles Poston and others established the Sonora Exploring and Mining Company in 1856, and developed a silver mine in the Patagonia Mountains by 1860.

Military expeditions associated with the Civil War brought others into Arizona, many intent on making a discovery of their own. In 1862, discoveries of gold along the Colorado River allowed the mining town of La Paz to flourish for a short time. Henry Wickenburg discovered the Vulture Mine in 1863. Also in 1863, Joseph R. Walker discovered gold in central Arizona. Miners soon established the Walker Mining District near today's Prescott.

The discovery of gold in Arizona during the Civil War led President Abraham Lincoln and the Republican U.S. Congress to separate the territories of Arizona and New Mexico in 1863. Union officials hoped that this action would break up any Confederate bloc of territory in the Southwest and preserve Arizona's mineral wealth for the Union. Arizona's first territorial capitol was established at Fort Whipple in the Chino Valley, and soon moved to Prescott.³

Although the first mineral discoveries in Arizona were associated with gold mining, as time went on miners developed other metals. First was silver, keyed by the discovery of the tremendous deposits at Tombstone by Ed Schieffelin in 1877. After the silver boom played out, miners turned to copper. Nature deposited massive amounts of the red metal in Arizona. With the increased demand for copper at the beginning of the electronic age in the last half of the nineteenth century, copper mining emerged as Arizona's

leading industry by the turn of the twentieth century. Copper mining continued to boom after Arizona received statehood in 1912, due to increased demand for armaments during World War One.

Mining History of Mohave County

Mohave County in western Arizona is one of the state's original counties, formed in 1864 by the first legislature of the Arizona Territory. The county seat was located in several small communities in the first few years before the legislature designated the railroad town of Kingman as the permanent county seat in 1887. Mohave County shares a geography similar to other gold-bearing areas in central Arizona. Here mineralized rock has been up-thrust to create isolated mountain ranges that have lured prospectors for centuries.⁴

Mohave County is best known for its gold production from mines such as the



*Gold King Panorama c. 1930. Original shaft to the right, Pinnacle Vein shaft to the left.
(Courtesy of the Mohave County Museum, Ross Housholder Collection.)*



Gold King Mine and Mill c.1930. Shows the headframe at the original shaft. (Courtesy of the Arizona Historical Foundation, M. Warren Krause Collection.)

Gold Road, Tom Reed, and United Eastern in the Oatman District. Mohave County ranks second in the amount of gold produced by Arizona counties, with more than \$40 million worth of the precious metal being removed. More than \$37 million of this amount represents lode deposits, of which the majority came from the Oatman District. Other significant gold districts in Mohave County include the Lost Basin, Gold Basin, Northern Black Mountains, Union Pass, Music Mountain, Cerbat Mountains, McConnico, Maynard, Cottonwood, and Chemehuevis.⁵

Beyond gold, a number of other significant metals were mined in Mohave County. These included silver, lead, copper, and zinc. Most of these metals were produced as by-products of gold production, although there was early interest in silver itself dur-

ing the boom in the 1870s and 1880s. Other minerals of commercial interest in Mohave County included bismuth, tellurium, argenteite, galena, cinnabar, molybdenite, tungsten, and mica.⁶

Despite some unique characteristics, mining in Mohave County shared many similarities with the history of mining in Arizona. Gold proved to be the first draw, but could not be successfully mined as long as conflict with Native American tribes continued. General George Crook's campaign to place Native Americans on reservations, that began in 1871, gradually opened up new areas to exploitation by American settlers. This triggered a boom in silver, epitomized by the Tombstone strike of 1877. The silver boom continued until the mid-1880s, when the falling price of silver, due to overproduction and pursuit of the gold standard as the basis for national economic policy, caused a severe decline in production. Silver was demonetized in 1893, nearly ending its production.

Although little copper mining occurred in Mohave County, for the Territory of Arizona as a whole, copper production increased as silver production decreased. This was due to the increasing demand for copper in electrical applications. Inventions such as the telegraph, telephone, and electric motor created a great need for copper wire, a demand that continued to increase through World War One.

With silver in reduced demand and copper in heavy production elsewhere, miners in Mohave County followed general trends in the industry. From 1883 to 1900, gold mining increased as prices for other metals faltered. The discovery of the cyanide process for refining ore contributed to this upswing. From 1900 to 1930, gold mining was subordinate to other metals. Mohave County was the one exception to this trend. Discovery of rich deposits at the Gold Road, Tom Reed, and United Eastern mines boosted production and led to boomtowns at Oatman and Chloride.

The decline of metal prices caused by

the Great Depression in 1929 actually led to an increase in gold mining, both in Mohave County and for the nation as a whole. Gold now had a better value relative to other metals. The establishment of an official price for gold by the United States in 1933 stimulated production, which increased more than twelve per cent over 1932. The gold boom faded as the economy improved late in the decade. During World War Two, the government closed most gold mines as non-essential to the war effort. Miners were needed in other areas, such as copper production. World War Two brought an end to gold production in Mohave County. Gold mining has now faded as a significant economic activity in the county.⁷

Early History of the Gold King Mine

The Gold King Mine is located in the Hualapai Mountains south of Kingman in Mohave County. The Hualapai Mountains are not as well known as the Cerbat Mountains and the Black Mountains for gold production, although the Hualapais share a similar geologic history. The Cerbat Mountains are known for several mining districts centered on the boomtown of Chloride, while the Black Mountains are the location of the Oatman mining area. In the Hualapais, the most noteworthy mining area is the Maynard Mining District. While gold is found there, the Maynard District is more noteworthy for silver, lead, and copper.⁸

Although the Gold King Mine is located geographically within the Maynard Mining District, its history and development have very little to do with the district itself. The Maynard District dates to the Wheeler expedition of 1871, which camped on the east side of the mountains near what is today called Wheeler Wash. A large group of prospectors camped nearby and located surface deposits of silver. They named the district after Lafayette Maynard, a respected member of the prospecting party. For the next fifteen years, until the silver collapse of the mid-1880s, a number of silver mines

were developed in the Maynard District. These included the American Flag, Great Eastern, Enterprise, Old Hackberry, and the Siamese Group.⁹

The next development of the Maynard District occurred shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. Improved economic conditions for silver and gold led to another wave of interest in the area. Thomas Sickles was instrumental in turning mines into silver and gold producers from 1906 until 1909. His best effort became known as the Green Back Mine, which he developed in conjunction with Alonzo H. Wells. The two men recorded the location of the Green Back claim on 21 November 1906.¹⁰

The relationship between the early Sickles claims in the Hualapai Mountains and the Gold King Mine is uncertain. When interest in Mohave County mining picked up in the late twenties and early thirties, the Gold King Mine's owner, Paul M. "Paddy" Woods, used the name "Sickles" for a number of claims in the Hualapai Mountains. On 3 August 1929, P. M. Woods recorded a number of locations that formed the basis of a group of claims he called the Gold King Coalition. He had located these claims in the field and posted them on 30 July 1929.¹¹

Little is known about Paul M. Woods. He was born on 4 April 1879 in Greece. His middle name was Machukos. He became a naturalized American citizen on 10 May 1911. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1917 and received an honorable discharge in 1920. While in the navy he rose to the rank of Chief Petty Officer and served in the commissary. After World War One, he continued to serve his adopted country in the Naval Reserve.¹²

The first news of the Gold King Mine came in April 1929, when the *Mohave County Miner*, a Kingman newspaper, reported that "an important strike" had been made in the "Wallapai" (meaning Hualapai) Mountains. Workers, under the direction of J. W. Mullin, had excavated an adit one hundred feet into the mountain, then sunk a winze seventy-two feet deep. At the bot-

tom of this winze the men discovered a vein of high-grade material three feet wide and eleven feet long. The discovery occurred "in the group known as the Sickles Silver." The newspaper reported that the miners had established a camp, and were in the process of forming a company to handle the property. In addition to the winze, which reached a depth of 150 feet from the apex of the vein, miners were proving up surface and shallow outcrops.¹³

Later in April, the newspaper disclosed that J. W. Mullin had "been in charge of the mines since he took them over sometime last fall." This would date the first activity at the Gold King to sometime in the fall of 1928. Mullin reported that he was pleased with the amount of development he had achieved at low cost. He stated that he would raise a shaft to the surface, where he would install a hoist and compressor. The newspaper also

reported that "a splendid road" had been connected with the county highway, making it easier to ship the ore.¹⁴

By May 1929, the miners had turned their attention to excavating the shaft from the end of the adit. Here the company planned to install a "big hoist" and "a big gas engine and a compressor of capacity sufficient to operate the drills and pumps being installed." Manager Mullin also reported that the company was considering installing a mill to process the ore on site.¹⁵

The promise of the ore body apparently attracted investors. By July 1929, Mullin had passed from the scene. A 12 July article in the *Mohave County Miner* referred to Paddy Woods as the "president" of the company. The green light for additional investment may have come from a positive report by mining engineer E. Ross Householder, who concluded that the mine could be developed



*Men at work at the Pinnacle Vein shaft of the Gold King Mine, c. 1930.
(Courtesy of the Mohave County Museum, Ross Housholder Collection.)*



*Dam at the Gold King, c.1930.
(Courtesy of the Mohave County Museum)*

economically. Householder documented the features of the property with a “movie picture” which the group planned to show at a board of directors’ meeting in Los Angeles.

Work had pushed the shaft of the mine to the 220-level by July of 1929. At the collar of this shaft the company planned the installation of a hoist, compressor and shops. This new equipment would make it easier to push work in the mine to the 300- and 400-foot levels, where lateral work was being planned. The company was also in the process of extending a drift to a new discovery, the Pinnacle Vein. The drift had been extended 160 feet toward the vein, with an estimated 50 feet to go. The miners estimated that more than two hundred feet of vein lay between the drift and the surface exposure of the Pinnacle Vein.¹⁶

Although the newspaper mentioned a directors’ meeting in Los Angeles, the directors of the Gold King Mine chose to incorporate their company in Nevada. Presumably, this

was done for the same reason that companies continue to incorporate in Nevada today: a favorable tax climate and liability protection of individual officers in the corporation. Three men from Reno, Nevada, incorporated the Gold King Coalition, Inc., on 19 June 1929. It appears that J. H. Sullivan, E. Armstrong, and F. C. Morton had little interest in the firm other than serving as the initial incorporators. The firm solicited the services of Kingman attorney E. Elmo Bollinger to process corporate paperwork in Arizona. On 10 July 1929, Bollinger filed incorporation papers with the Arizona Corporation Commission in Phoenix. With the corporate paperwork in order, P. M. Woods staked the mining claims on 30 July and registered them with the Mohave County Recorder on 3 August.¹⁷

At the beginning of August 1929, the *Mohave County Miner* reported that a new shaft to the Pinnacle Vein had reached its destination 190 feet from the surface. Here,

180 feet below the apex of the vein, the miners encountered an ore body thirty feet wide. The total distance of the new discovery from the original shaft was seven hundred feet. At the old shaft, miners planned to erect a forty-five foot high gallows frame. In August, contractor L. H. Foster was in the process of constructing a new road from the Pinnacle Vein shaft to the collar of the old shaft. P. M. Woods announced that the company intended to extend the old shaft to a depth of five hundred feet.¹⁸

During the remainder of August, miners concentrated on uncovering additional bodies of ore by drifting. This work continued to expose high-grade material along the Pinnacle Vein and in the lower levels of the original shaft. By the end of August the vein had been opened for more than fifty feet. This achievement was well received by "three stockholders from Los Angeles" who "inspected the works this week and were delightfully surprised to see the extent of the newly opened ore body in the development tunnel." Despite this progress below ground, bad weather caused by late-season rains delayed work on the surface. The men encountered difficulty in placing equipment on the collar of the shaft. With good values of gold and silver blocked out, the men expressed a desire to get the mine into production as soon as possible.¹⁹

Transportation problems seemed to plague the mine for the remainder of its first year. In September company workers took over the road project from the contractor. Under the supervision of new mine superintendent Pete Vukoye, the men pushed the road closer to the collar of the original shaft. Vukoye planned a new gallows hoist for the shaft, then in the process of being framing up, and the installation of new hoisting equipment that would extend the depth of the shaft from the 220-foot level to the 600 level.²⁰

Mention of the Gold King Mines in the *Mohave County Miner* stops in September 1929. This evidently corresponds to a cessation of activity at the mine. It is not known if

the absence of activity is related to seasonal conditions, a lack of funds, or the stock market crash in October. The next mention of the property in the newspaper occurred on 20 June 1930 in an article noting that Paddy Woods had "been getting finances in shape for further operations of the Sickles property." He arrived in Kingman that week with a small group of men intent on "getting affairs at the mines [sic] shaped up" and deepening the shaft. Despite the small number of men employed, the newspaper noted that "arrangements have been made to carry on with a large force of men later in the year."²¹

By the end of June 1930, the *Miner* reported that miners had pushed the shaft down from the season's starting point at the 220-foot level to the 230-foot level. This information was conveyed by P. M. Woods, whom the newspaper described as "manager of the property, who is here now in personal charge of operations." Woods stated that the intent of the company was to carve a station at the 330-foot level before pushing downward to five hundred feet. In the same article, the newspaper observed that mine superintendent Pete Vukoye reported that the mine's ore assayed at \$1,100 per ton.²²

In July the newspaper reported that Paddy Woods was "getting good results from the expenditure of money on the property. The mine is equipped with machinery and has a private road leading to it from the main highway." The newspaper went on to state that "wonderful ore" had been discovered and that "the showing recently opened is largely gold bearing and the values are exceptionally high." The discovery was credited to the installation of "suitable machinery such as a hoist, compressor, combustion engines, and air machine drills," including the completion of the forty-five-foot gallows frame that had been started the season before.²³

The annual report of Gold King Coalition, Inc., filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission on 13 August 1930, gives a good indication of the financial health of the company. President P. M. Woods, who

listed his addresses as Kingman, Arizona, and the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, valued the mining property in Mohave County at \$1 million. Mining equipment and accessories were valued at forty thousand dollars. The report indicated that 605,000 shares were paid up and issued, at a value of \$1.00 each. Company officers besides Woods included Vice President H. P. Duey, acting Secretary Dorice Clark, and Treasurer G. M. McCleary. H. P. Duey also listed his address as the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, while Clark listed 854 North La Jolla and McCleary listed 422 Van Nuys Building, both in Los Angeles.²⁴

The filing of the annual report pointed out a paperwork problem for the corporate officers of the Gold King Coalition. It turned out that they had never appointed an official statutory agent for their operation in Arizona. The board of directors rectified this situation in August 1930 at a meeting in Kingman. The board designated Kingman attorney E. Elmo Bollinger as its statutory agent. Directors voting at the meeting included P. M. Woods, Dr. H. P. Duey, and R. L. Dimmick.²⁵

A project such as the Gold King made a big impact on all segments of society in Kingman and Mohave County, from professional men like Bollinger to laborers working in the mine. Rancher John Odle recalled that Woods owned a "high-priced Cadillac" and would stop by to say hello on his way to the mine. He didn't stay long, Odle recalled, because the rancher's "goats would jump up on his car." Stories circulated in the Johnson family reveal that company secretary Dorice Clark, later Dorice Clark Woods, literally rode shotgun in the 16-cylinder Cadillac, with a 12-gauge on her lap, bringing the mine payroll across the desert from Los Angeles to the Gold King.²⁶

Construction of the Gold King Mansion

With the ore in the mine now well defined, the company turned its attention to the surface components of the property. These soon included the two-story, reinforced

concrete structure now known as the Gold King Mansion. In July and August 1930, the company installed "a new electric lighting system" at the mine. This provided light "to the camp, hoist house, and underground workings."²⁷

At the end of August, the company announced that it had started building "the first of a series of model bunk houses, using reinforced concrete construction." The company seemed to have the best interests of its workers at heart. Mine superintendent Pete Vukoye stated that each bunk house would "contain an adequate sleeping room to accommodate several miners, a modern bathroom, and be provided with electric light." In addition, "each is fire proof and so built as to be cool in summer and warm in winter."²⁸

A construction photo of the first (and only) reinforced concrete bunk house at the Gold King Mine has survived. Because the stairs are not complete in the photo, the picture was most likely taken during the late summer or early fall of 1930. Only one-half of the present building was complete in the construction photo.

It appears that the owners of the Gold King Mine scaled back on their plan to have individual bunkhouses for their miners. By October 1930, Superintendent Pete Vukoye reported that the shaft had reached beyond three hundred feet. He noted that he was "getting satisfactory results with a small force of workmen." Rather than build more individual bunk houses for the miners, it appears that the smaller number of men required fewer facilities. The company apparently decided to roughly double the size of the original reinforced concrete bunkhouse by 1933, giving the building its present configuration.²⁹

Rancher John Odle, who arrived in the area near the Gold King Mine in 1933, recalled the completed appearance of the mansion. He observed that the company's use of the building did not match its original purpose of worker housing. He stated that "it was quite a place; they would take pro-

spective stock buyers up there and wine and dine them and put them up in the house." Odle also noted that "all the windows had copper screens and, on the east side, there was a concrete fishing pond."³⁰

Despite its great promise, production at the Gold King may not have lived up to its billing. This may have been due to a number of factors, including an illness in the family of Paddy Woods or the general economic climate of the times. Records at the Arizona Corporation Commission indicated that a family illness in 1931 caused P. M. Woods "to neglect his business to some extent" and that "he has been absent from his office a great deal of the time." The firm filed its annual report for 1931 on time, but listed assets of only \$673,414, down from the \$1 million of the year before.

The company failed to file an annual report in 1932. On 10 July 1933, company officials filed a combined report for the years 1932 and 1933. This filing listed P. M. Woods as president, Dr. H. P. Duey as vice president, and Dorice Clark Woods as secretary and treasurer. By that time the total assets of the company had rebounded to \$721,497.³¹

The combined 1932-33 report was the last filed by Gold King Coalition, Inc. The



Detail view of the Gold King Mansion under construction, c. 1930. (Courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Area Office)

general increase in gold mining after 1933 must have had a positive effect on production at the property, although there is little evidence of work at the mine after that date. In July 1935, mining engineer S. S. Jones prepared a map of the mine tunnel and the Pinnacle Vein to accompany a report on the property. This was evidently the last work at the Gold King in the thirties; a 1937 map of the county does not show the mine.³²

Later History of the Gold King Mine

After an apparent decline in the second half of the 1930s, the Gold King experienced a period of revival from 1941 to 1947. This may have been associated with increased metals prices due to the conflict in Europe, which broke out in September of 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Although the United States would not join World War Two until after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, much of the economy was already on a war footing.

In July and again in November of 1941 the Arizona Corporation Commission fielded inquiries from persons interested in the status of the Gold King Mine. Chief Clerk Florence K. Lange reported that although the corporation had failed to file annual reports for the years from 1934 to 1941, the commission had not taken any action against it. Once the back fees were paid and the proper reports filed, the corporation would be considered to be in good standing.³³

By the fall of 1942, mine owner P. M. Woods found an individual willing to resume production at the Gold King. That man employed "a small crew" to open the mine in October 1942. An article in *The Mining Journal* noted that "the property, which was operated at one time by the Gold King Coalition, Inc., with Woods as manager, has been idle for some time."³⁴

This decision could hardly have come at a less opportune time. On 8 October 1942, the War Production Board issued Limitation Order L-208, halting gold production at "non-essential mines." The pur-

pose of the order was to make manpower available for the production of materials more central to the war effort. Despite the severity of the order, there were exceptions for small gold mines and for mines that developed other values. The Gold King met both of these exceptions, since it had been idle and since it produced good values of lead and zinc, both needed in the war effort.³⁵

In December 1942, Elgin B. Holt, field engineer for the Arizona Department of Mineral Resources, reported on conditions at the Gold King. Elgin stated that the mine was being worked by Frank Ahlburg, a lessee to owner P. M. Woods of Los Angeles. Actual work on the property was under the supervision of Roy Waughtel. According to Waughtel, five drifts had been run on different veins at the Gold King. These averaged eight feet in width, and were reached by a main tunnel 160 feet long. The main shaft of the mine reached a depth of 360 feet.³⁶

Frank Ahlburg had remodeled an old mill at the property into a thirty- to forty-ton gravity concentration plant. He started operations on 1 November 1942, but closed the plant on 20 November because sufficient values were not being recovered. Ahlburg planned to convert the mill to flotation treatment, and in the meantime kept up development work with a crew of three men.³⁷

Roy Waughtel continued to operate the mine throughout World War Two, producing small amounts of gold, silver, lead, and zinc. Waughtel's main interests were in mica and tungsten, which were in high demand because of the war effort. He took over the Mica Giant Mine owned by T. Max Smith of Tucson and located close to the Gold King. In 1943, Waughtel filed on a water right three miles from the Gold King. He used the Gold King as a staging area for the mica mine.³⁸

Following the war, Ahlburg organized the Moss Canyon Mining and Milling Company to resume production at the Gold King Mine. Ahlburg conducted some development work on the mine in 1947, but the post-war eco-



Gold King Mansion in 1983. (Courtesy of the Mohave County Museum, D. Shurtz Collection.)

nomic climate for gold production proved difficult. The death of mine owner P. M. Woods in 1948 created uncertainty about the title to the property. Work stopped soon after.³⁹

In 1952, the Arizona Corporation Commission revoked the corporate status of the Gold King Coalition due to its inactivity. By 1957, Mark Gemmill of the Arizona Department of Mineral Resources classified the Gold King property as idle. The Gold King Mine passed into the realm of history.⁴⁰

Noted Mohave County historian Roman Malach wrote a brief history of the Gold King Mansion in 1972, stimulating interest in the old property. Malach reported that every door and window, and all of the wood trim had been removed at that point. An ornate decorative fireplace mantle was partially vandalized but still present. In 1980, *Desert Magazine* author Joe Blackstock visited the mansion. He observed that the ornate mantle had been removed, along with other plaster work.⁴¹

In 1979, casino developer Don Laughlin engineered a brief paper revival of the Gold King property. Laughlin employed John W. Cochrane to record a number of claims in the vicinity of the old Gold King Mine. Laughlin and Cochrane located the Gold King and Gold King No. 2 claims on 11 August 1979.

On 12 December 1980, Bill and Bette Crumbaker located nine additional claims, each called the Gold King, surrounding Laughlin's 1979 claims. The Crumbaker claims may be related to the Laughlin activity. On 21 December 1983, John Cochrane located an additional sixteen claims for Don Laughlin in the vicinity of the Gold King. The last assessment for all of the Laughlin and Crumbaker claims occurred in 1985 and the claims are now closed. It appears that these claims were made more for real estate speculation than for mining purposes.⁴²

While Malach's and Blackstock's articles stressed the beauty of the mansion and its unique history, their publication encouraged additional visitation to the remote site. Many visitors did not respect the history of the locale. In 1986, officials of the Bureau of Land Management reported considerable vandalism of the site to the Mohave County Sheriff. The sheriff's office failed to pursue the report, citing a lack of manpower. BLM employees responded with a clean up project in 1987, linking with volunteers to remove graffiti and clean up the property.

Another episode of vandalism occurred in 2000. This time, three volunteers from the Arizona Site Stewards program observed the perpetrators. They were apprehended and fined.⁴³

Today, the BLM and the Site Stewards are taking active steps to protect the property. These include this documentation of the Gold King Mansion. With proper care and supervision, the Gold King Mansion will see a new era of riches in the future—one of heritage and respect. ■

Douglas E. Kupel is an environmental historian for the City of Phoenix Law Department, where he conducts historical research for water rights litigation. He has conducted extensive research in the area of water history, specializing in Indian water rights and municipal use. He is the author of several articles in the Journal of Arizona History, and published an article on the Magma Mine in the 1999 Mining History Journal. The University of Arizona Press published his book Fuel for Growth: Water and Arizona's Urban Environment in 2003.

Notes:

¹ The best short summary of gold and silver mining in Arizona is the context study prepared as a component of the Arizona Historic Preservation Plan. See Melissa Keane and A. E. Rogge, *Gold and Silver Mining in Arizona, 1848-1945* (Phoenix: Dames & Moore, 1992).

² For maps of the early boundaries of Arizona, see Henry P. Walker and Don Bufkin, *Historical Atlas of Arizona* (Norman: University Press of Oklahoma, 2nd ed., 1986).

³ For a good summary of the Walker Mining District and the establishment of the capitol at Prescott, see Thomas E. Sheridan, *Arizona: A History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 70-1.

⁴ For the early history of Mohave County, see Dan W. Messersmith, *The History of Mohave County to 1912* (Kingman: Mohave County Historical Society, 1991).

⁵ Eldred D. Wilson, J. B. Cunningham, and G.M. Butler, "Arizona Lode Gold Mines and Gold Mining," *Arizona Bureau of Mines Bulletin* no. 137 (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1934; revised 1967): 17; 73-5.

⁶ Roman Malach, *Mohave County Mines* (Kingman: Mohave County Board of Supervisors, 1977), 7-8.

⁷ Wilson, et al, "Arizona Lode," 16-7.

⁸ Messersmith, *History of Mohave County*, 109-11.

⁹ F. C. Schrader, "Mineral Deposits of the Cerbat Range, Black Mountains, and Grand Wash Cliffs, Mohave County, Arizona," *United States Geological Survey Bulletin* no. 397 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1909): 139-42. See also Roman Malach, *Mohave County Place Names* (Kingman: Mohave County Board of Supervisors, 1976), 28. There are a number of other Gold King mines in Mohave County and

in Arizona that are not associated with the Gold King Mansion that is the subject of this study. These include a Gold King Mine in each of the following Mohave County mining districts: Lost Basin, Gold Basin, San Francisco, Minnesota, Aubrey, and Chemehuevis. A Gold King Mining Company owned twenty-two claims in the Peck and Crown King mining districts south of Prescott in Yavapai County at the turn of the twentieth century. Another Gold King Mine was located on the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation in the Baboquivari Mountains, and still another was located near Wickiup.

- ¹⁰ *Mohave County Book of Mines* V, 613, 21 Nov. 1906. *Mohave County Miner*, 17 Nov. 1906, 16 Oct. 1909.
- ¹¹ *Mohave County Book of Mines* 3L, 36-49. L. H. Foster, "Group Map, Gold King Coalition, Inc., Maynard Mining District, Mohave County, Arizona," July 1929, microfiche, E. Ross Householder Map Collection, Rack 10, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix. Woods's locations consisted of the Sickles No. 1, Sickles No. 2, Sickles No. 3, Big Wonder No. 1, Big Wonder No. 2, Big Wonder No. 3, Big Wonder No. 4, Big Wonder No. 5, Coverall, Wedge, Eastside, Southeast, Big Matt No. 1, Big Matt No. 2, Big Matt No. 3, Big Matt No. 4, Big Matt No. 5, Comet No. 1, Comet No. 2, Comet No. 3, Comet No. 4, Comet Extension, Rock Cabin, Rock Cabin Extension No. 1, and Rock Cabin Extension No. 3.
- ¹² Interview with Sarah Michael Johnson, 22 June 2002. Interview with Michael D. Johnson, 29 June 2002. E-mail from Leo Banks, 17 June 2002.
- ¹³ "Fine Ore Body is Opened on Gold King," *Mohave County Miner*, 12 Apr. 1929.
- ¹⁴ "Gold King Hits Ore in the Drift," *Mohave County Miner*, 19 Apr. 1929.
- ¹⁵ "Gold King Has Good Ore Body," *Mohave County Miner*, 17 May 1929.
- ¹⁶ "Developing of Gold King is Progressing [sic]," *Mohave County Miner*, 12 July 1929. No copy of Householder's movie could be located at the Mohave County Museum, although it may survive elsewhere.
- ¹⁷ Gold King Coalition, Inc., files, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix. For the mining claims, see Note 11.
- ¹⁸ "Drifting and Sinking on the Gold King," *Mohave County Miner*, 2 Aug. 1929.
- ¹⁹ "Gold King is Highgrade in the Drift," *Mohave County Miner*, 23 Aug. 1929. "Drifting Continues at Gold King," *Mohave County Miner*, 30 Aug. 1929.
- ²⁰ "Vein of Gold King Widens," *Mohave County Miner*, 6 Sep. 1929. "Nine Feet at Gold King Assays \$28," *Mohave County Miner*, 13 Sep. 1929.
- ²¹ "Gold King to Be Started Up," *Mohave County Miner*, 20 June 1930.
- ²² "Shaft of Gold King is Down to 230 Level," *Mohave County Miner*, 27 June 1930.
- ²³ "Gold King is Sinking Below Tunnel Level," *Mohave County Miner*, 11 July 1930. "Good Showing of Ore in Sickles Group," *Mohave County Miner*, 18 July 1930. See also the *Mining Journal* (Phoenix), 15 July 1930, 28 and 30 July 1930.
- ²⁴ Annual Report of the Gold King Coalition, Inc., 13 Aug. 1930, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix.
- ²⁵ Gold King Coalition, Inc., file, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix.
- ²⁶ Alice Sennott, "Vandals Now King of Mansion," *Mohave County Miner*, 28 Feb. 1996. Interview with Sarah Michael Johnson, 22 June 2002. Interview with Michael D. Johnson, 29 June 2002.
- ²⁷ *Mining Journal*, 15 Aug. 1930, 25.
- ²⁸ *Mining Journal*, 30 Aug. 1930, 27.
- ²⁹ *Mining Journal*, 30 Oct. 1930, 26. *Mohave County Miner*, 3 Oct. 1930.
- ³⁰ Sennott, "Vandals."
- ³¹ Gold King Coalition, Inc., files, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix.
- ³² S. S. Jones, "Map of Mine Tunnel, Gold King Mine, Maynard Mining District" and "Map of Pinnacle Workings, Gold King Mine, Maynard Mining District," 19 July 1935, microfiche, E. Ross Householder Map Collection, Rack 10, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix. County Highway Map, Mohave County, 1937, Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Agency, Phoenix.
- ³³ Gold King Coalition, Inc., files, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix.
- ³⁴ *Mining Journal*, 15 Oct. 1942, 17.
- ³⁵ "Nation's Gold Mines to Cease Production," *Mining Journal*, 30 Oct. 1942, 2-4.
- ³⁶ Gold King MILS file, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix.
- ³⁷ Gold King MILS file, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix.
- ³⁸ Gold King MILS file, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix. *Mohave County Book 4 of Mill Site Claims and Water Rights*, 94-5, 15 May

1943.

- ³⁹ Gold King MILS file, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix. Interview with Wayne Waughtel, 29 June 2002. Interview with Michael Johnson, 29 June 2002.
- ⁴⁰ Gold King Coalition, Inc., file, Arizona Corporation Commission, Phoenix. Gold King MILS file, Arizona Mines and Minerals Museum, Phoenix.
- ⁴¹ Roman Malach, "Mansion in the Mountains," *Mohave*, Dec. 1972, 56. Joe Blackstock, "The Ghost Mansion of the Hualapais," *Desert Magazine*, Dec. 1980, 51.
- ⁴² Mining claim geographic report for Meridian 14, Township 19 north, Range 15 west, Section 14, run date of 18 June 2002, Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office.
- ⁴³ Gold King file, Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office.