

The Copper mines of Chengwatana were started by a Mr. Smith from Pennsylvania. The mines were started in 1881. My mother and father were married that year and my father started to work at the mines that year. My mother did the cooking for the men. That is about all I know about that period. I do not know how long it lasted. But it was started up again \pm in about 1899 by the same Mr. Smith. I started to work there in 1902. I worked there at different times until the spring of 1907. Then I went to Proctor and started to work on the railroad.

People working at the mines during my time that I can remember was my uncle Henry Hoefler, He was the manager. Pete Holems and Pete Weland-Wesland also worked there. They were from the Iron Range, and were miners up there. Mr. Guptal was the Engineer. Other workers were Casper and Ed Kruse, no relation; my brothers Albert and Ed, and my brother-in-law August Zastrow, and some other men I can not remember their names.

When I first started working there we were about 3 miles down from the old dam. There were several holes dug from earlier days-, but I only know where 2 of them are. The one I started in we went down 100 feet. The shafts were all 12 x 12 feet in solid rock. From the bottom of the 100 ft. shaft we put a drift under the river 100 feet long and in the opposite direction 100 feet. We found copper but it was not real copper ore. The floating that we found was in nuggets, and it was not enough to pay. So the place was closed and we moved up the river to about 1 and 1 half miles from the old dam. We started an old shaft which was 65 feet deep. And from the bottom we went down on an incline 550 feet., We found copper all the way but it was always floating copper. One morning we went down to the bottom and found a sheet of pure copper almost as large as the bottom of the shaft. 12 x 12 from a quarter inch thick to 2 inches thick. There was a big time in Pine City then but it did not last long. The best copper found was close to the top. The farther down the less copper was found.

The assayer, the one who analyzes the metal in ore-bearing rock always said that there is copper there but it is down a long way.

Added notes-

Old Charley Tripler hauled our coal and wood and the other team work. George Kunz hauled timbers for the mines and a Peter Edin maybe some living around Pine City today.

Map of Copper mine

