

Lightning and Lowhee Creeks, tributaries of Swift and Cottonwood Rivers. Nothing was wanting but the disappearance of the snows to enable the prospectors to descend these several valleys, and to complete the series of discoveries which in the course of that notable season made most of them famous.

**POPULATION, 5,000; GOLD YIELD, \$3,000,000.**

"The actual mining developments of 1861 began with the arrival of additional forces from every mining district in the country, forming at the end of May a population of from 1,000 to 1,400 miners, a large proportion of whom was occupied with transportation trade in its various branches, and in road-making. Further accessions later in the season furnished a total prospecting, exploring, and actual mining population of about 1,500. The country now for the first time became known as Cariboo. This was simply the extension to the entire region explored of the name of the Cariboo Lakes, situated on the north fork of the Quesnel, from which the explorations may be said to have started.

"The Fraser excitement was never a more universal topic of conversation in California than was Cariboo at Victoria in the autumn of 1861; it seemed hardly credible, even to those accustomed to see rich diggings and lucky strikes. The news spread farther, and thousands of people from California, Canada, England, and every other quarter of the globe ascended the valley of the Fraser early in the season of 1862. Owing to the unexpected distance, and the difficulty of reaching Cariboo before the completion of the wagon-road, many turned back without entering the mines; while others consumed on the way the provisions intended for the relief of those who had wintered in the mines, consequently there was almost a famine at Cariboo.

"Exploration in 1862 was, nevertheless, vigorously prosecuted by an actual mining population estimated at 5,000 in Cariboo district. Although extending over an area of fifty miles square, the operations were chiefly on contiguous ground, and resulted in the production of a total yield from Cariboo thus far of about \$3,000,000."

**KEITHLEY AND ANTLER CREEKS.**

Keithley and Antler Creeks seemed to have been the most important in the earliest Cariboo times. Afterwards they were greatly surpassed by William and Lightning Creeks.

"On Keithley Creek mining was so successfully carried on in 1860 that several stores were erected there, and near its mouth the town of Keithley came into existence in 1861, as supply depot for the entire region of the north branch of the Quesnel. The gold on the creek consisted partly of solid nuggets paving the bed-rock within a few feet of the surface. A party of five men, in June, 1861, divided \$1,200 between them as the product of a single day's labour, and their daily average for some time was said to be a pound weight in gold. In September, 1861, several companies were making from \$50 to \$100 a day to the man in the bed of the creek, and \$100 in the dry-diggings on the hillside. In 1867 the lead was lost; yet the Chinese on the creek continued to make money, the claim at the mouth of the creek paying from \$12 to \$16 a day to the digger. After 1875 the yield fell off.

"Antler Creek, the original objective point of the gold-seekers who explored Cariboo in 1861, was the first in that part after Keithley Creek to attain a decided reputation, and the first to establish the character of the Cariboo region. Its fame, like that of Keithley and William Creeks, also rested upon the circumstance that the present stream had in one or more places cut down into the ancient channel. The *London Times'* correspondent wrote that the bed-rock was found paved with gold. Every shovelful contained a considerable quantity, in some cases as much as \$50. Nuggets could be picked out of the soil by the hand, and the rocker yielded