BAS 030 Naming of the Neversweat

Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

The Neversweat Mine was one of Butte’s icons, its famous seven stacks imprinted on the imagination of Irish immigrants and others long before they arrived in America. The story is commonly told that its name came from the fact that it was a cool mine, not so hot as the equally famous “Chinese Laundry” of the Steward Mine – but there’s no truth to that story.

The Mining Reporter reported a miner’s recollection of the name in its issue for Dec. 29, 1904, quoted as follows:

H. S. Clark, one of Butte's most esteemed pioneers, was telling to a party of friends the other day how the Never Sweat received its peculiar name.

"I think it was back in the year 1875 that it was located," said Mr. Clark. "I was clerk of the court at the time and it was the custom with a number of the prospectors in those days to give me an interest in the mines they located provided I would file the location and pay the fee, few of the prospectors having much ready cash. Some of my interests in the mines I kept for years; some I gave away; some I sold for little or nothing, and some I got a good thing out of. All of them nearly would have yielded me handsomely had I held onto them to later days.

"Among the locations made at that time was the Never Sweat. Joe Ransom and Bill McNamara were the locators and they gave me an interest in the property with them.

"Ransom and McNamara had got a little hole dug, perhaps forty or fifty feet deep, when they came by my cabin one day.

"'Well, how is the mine coming on, boys?' I asked.

"'It's a cinch we will never sweat any taking ore out of that hole,' said Ransom.

"'What have you named it?'

"'Ain't named it yet, and don't think it is worth naming," said McNamara.

"'You'd better name it so I can put the location on record in correct shape,' I said.

"'Well, you name it,' said Ransom.

"'Then we'll call it the Never Sweat mine,' said I, 'as you think you will never sweat taking ore out of it.'

"So that is the name it received and the name it has always had. I think I afterwards got about $1,500 for my interest."

The mine is worth untold millions at this day in 1904.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.