About 1903 a shaft 103 feet in depth was sunk in gneiss about 1 mile southeast of Mountainville. The materials about the opening include pegmatite carrying much coarse hornblende and some quartz, magnetite, pyrite, and feldspar. It was claimed that some valuable rare minerals were obtained, but careful examination has failed to detect their presence.

About 1840, according to report, an organization was formed to mine gold at Powder Valley. A shaft was sunk midway between the old mill and the mill pond. "Nuggets" of gold were said to have been found. The promoter disappeared when the venture failed. The topographic sheet of the region published in 1883 shows "Shaft" north of the place pointed out by old residents as the site.

Gold is also said to have been found in the Backenstoe graphite mine, 1 mile east of Vera Cruz station. This mine is described under Graphite.

Items such as the following appear in the local press from time to time but nothing further results. This was published under date of May 22, 1923. Most are as unlikely as this one where the country rocks of the region mentioned are Martinsburg slate and Beekmantown limestone.

"People living in the vicinity of the farm of Thomas P. Roth, at Kernsville, North Whitehall township, say that traces of gold have been discovered on the Roth farm through efforts to locate an old mica mine. Soil and stones have been assayed and it is reported that placer gold was present. Mineral rights have been turned over to the Ontario Mines Co. C. T. Hickey is in New York looking up the necessary machinery to begin operation. The gold is believed to extend over a large area, including the Trexler and Hardener farms and the territory up and down the Jordan creek."

Though very accurate assays of some of the pyrite so common in the rocks of the region may show traces of gold, it is extremely improbable that gold in paying quantities occurs in the rocks of the county.

**PYRITE**

In the discussion of the origin of the limonite on previous pages attention was called to the large amount of pyrite found in the lower workings of these ores, and an explanation of its origin was given. Pyrite has probably not been more generally noted in the mines because the quantity of water struck in the lower levels caused the mines to be abandoned before the pyrite was reached. H. M. Chance* and Charles Catlett** have ably described the occurrence of pyrite in association with limonite in the Appalachian region and have discussed the problem of its origin.

It seems probable that the limonite of the Cambrian (Hardyston) sandstone and part of the limestone regions of the county has been formed by the oxidation of pyrite that was precipitated from solution in ascending artesian waters. If this theory of the origin of the limonite ores is correct deposits of pyrite must be widespread in the region.

Crystals or rounded concretions of pyrite are common in all the rocks of the region, but in only a few places have deposits of possible

---

** Idem, pp. 916-920.