

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WASHINGTON C. KERR, OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA.

IMPROVEMENT IN PLACER-MINING.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **215,004**, dated May 6, 1879; application filed April 7, 1879.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WASHINGTON C. KERR, of the city of Raleigh, in the county of Wake, State of North Carolina, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Placer-Mining; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof, which will enable others skilled in this branch of mining to understand and use the same.

This invention is an improvement in the method of obtaining gold or other precious metals from deposits of metalliferous gravels by the mechanical action of water. It is applicable to many tracts and bodies of gravels which lie above, or remote from, and inaccessible to, ordinary sources of water, such as rivers, creeks, ponds, or lakes, in cases where such deposits are found on the lower slopes or flanks or benches of hills, or swells of land, or ridges and spurs and foot-hills of mountains, where such deposits happen to lie; also in regions where the rain-fall is considerable.

Now it is obvious that when such deposits of gold-bearing gravels are found in such a climate as that of the Southern Atlantic States, where it rains about seventy-five to one hundred days in the year, and the aggregate amounts to some fifty inches—that is, above five thousand tons to the acre—if it were possible to collect the rain-fall of several acres—say, ten acres or one hundred acres—as with a huge funnel spread out toward the sky, and direct the gathered water, as it falls, by a hose attached to the spout, against a wall of such gravels, a great amount of mechanical work might be obtained.

My invention, in fact, realizes this result,

and in the following manner: The rain-water is collected, as it falls, by a system of ditches converging to a point which is conveniently situated above the deposits to be washed, (or from which it may be conveyed by a ditch or pipe or other means, to such convenient situation,) and terminating in a tank or box, to which a hose or pipe or sluice-box may be attached to play upon the gravels, as in the ordinary methods of placer-mining.

By means of my invention numerous small and considerable bodies of gold-gravel, many of them very rich, that cannot now be worked profitably by any of the known methods of placer-mining, will become available.

I do not claim, of course, as new the collection of water from rains, as into ponds or lakes, as I know has often and long been done in placer-mining regions to eke out the supply from springs, creeks, and such natural sources; but,

Having fully described my invention, as above, what I do claim therein as new, and for which I desire Letters Patent, is—

The method herein described for the disintegration and washing of metalliferous gravels, consisting in gathering the rain, as it falls, into channels, ditches, or pipes, and projecting the water, as it collects, by suitable pipes, hose, or ducts, against the gravels or deposits, so as to break up and wash the same, all substantially as set forth.

WASHINGTON C. KERR.

Witnesses:

A. MOORE,
S. M. POOL.