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Trip to Morenci September 29-30, 1950 to attend

A. I. M. E. Geological Meeting

Friday Sept. 29th. Papers on general Morenci geology by Louis Reber, and on leached outcrops at Morenci by Lewis A. Smith. Limited discussion. Trip through pit in afternoon with special attention to leached cappings. On Saturday, Sept. 30th general discussion from 8 - 9 AM, then trip to Metcalf area to see breccia areas along highway.

Pit now treating 52,000 tons per day with additional 75,000 tons per day waste stripping. Pit limits have been widely extended by exploratory drilling to north and west. Ore also reported to extend in considerable amount into granite area east of Chase Creek, and north of Hanna ground. Also state that pit will eventually extend through Humbolt area, but will be held until last extraction; now leaching in that area/ Considerable oxide ore being found north of main pit area where stripping now in progress which is being specially stockpiled for possible later leaching either in leaching plant or dump leaching.

As before little attention paid to rock relations in pit area. So called granite porphyry probably intrudes fine grained rock in lower part of pit on 4500 bench (present lowest). On 4700 ? bench fine grained dark rock about in center of pit contains good chalcocite mineralization. Esperanza breccia structure not observed - probably would be exposed on higher benches than seen. Copper Mt. fault not clearly observed, but is possible some old stoped areas may have

been along fault. Oxidation in pit appears now to extend to greater depth than previously; explained by Reber as influence of Copper Mt. fault cutting across pit. Many well mineralized stringers south of approximate Copper Mt. fault area in contrast to leaner material seen on previous visits.

Emphasis on leached outcrops in observations with detailed chart prepared to show progress of leaching to produce various types of chalcocite enrichment. No importance given to structure. Great deal of detail work done on actual minerals in leached materials, and emphasis on amount of enrichment possible in relation to reactive or non-reactive gangue. Sericite non-reactive, clay minerals, practically non-reactive, and fresh orthoclase said to inhibit any enrichment processes. (?)

Large breccia area opposite Metcalf area shows granite (?) with quartz stringers in fragments, quartzite, possible all sealed with fine quartz porphyry matrix. Locally some late iron oxide quartz mineralization with some copper oxide mineralization. Mineralization generally weak, and considerable specularite appears in western part of mineralized area where cut by arroyo. Also strong fault zone cutting through breccia near western limit but was not traced to east. In general, probable increase in amount of mineralization necessary with depth to make breccia of possible economic importance in areas seen.

Apparently now converting electric-battery locomotives to diesel electric types for haulage across benches. Using 42-T drills, drilling up to 100 ft. day, something over 60 ft. normal. 50 ft. benches, with holes

drilled to 60 ft.; use bagged powder and two strands Primacord with charge at bottom of hole; crushed ore for stemming. All holes near ore sampled, using leached material as guide. Cutoff and grade not given. About 900 men working in pit, twelve days on then two off.

4/11/52 RBH - visit with LR + LS at Tucson
Removing 5000-9000# Me₂S per day
at Monerai - heads ± .0075% Mo
Copper grade ^{down} to 0.25 - 0.35% Cu when
Mo content is high enough in
particular parts of pit.
Exploration continuing to N of pit -
drilling continuing.

GENERAL NOTES

Trip to Morenci Open Pit Wednesday, Oct. 29, 1947, and conversations with Dr. Louis Reber and Mr. Louis Smith, geologists, Phelps Dodge Corporation, at Morenci, Oct. 30th.

4850 Bench.

Near center of pit from north to south, top of bench shows old stoped area, probably top slice, which is reported to have reached maximum area of 400 x 400 feet. This area appears to be about in location of breccia area observed on higher bench in 1945. At shovel, which was at north edge of breccia area, there was much dark rock with heavy iron (Magnetite ?) and some later copper mineralization. General country rock in this area is feldspathic porphyry (called quartz monzonite porphyry by Morenci geologists). There is abundant copper oxide mineralization, probably post-stoping, but there is also abundant good chalcocite mineralization, and this part of the pit is reported to assay 1.5% copper. Details of structure could not be closely observed because of the old stoping, and muck near sill of bench. However, this is very likely the downward extension of the brecciated area seen before. The dark rock was reported to be a basic dike rock, but from the type of mineralization, etc., it could be highly altered and mineralized limestone included in the breccia

area. The Morenci geologists did not seem definite about the type of rock, although they stated this rock occurred in definite dike-like form in the pit. Possibly the occurrences they mention are not exactly similar to the material seen. Toward the south end of the bench the feldspathic porphyry contains quartzite inclusions as observed on benches above in 1945. Toward the north end of the bench the rocks are entirely quartz porphyry, called granite porphyry, which is apparently believed to be the same as coarsely crystalline granite reported to have been found in the east end of the pit on the lowest bench.

4950 Bench.

Near the north end of bench "granite porphyry" contains much quartzite in area which is showing considerable copper oxide mineralization - classed as brochantite and antlerite, with some malachite and chrysocolla, and little azurite. This area is apparently in a rock breccia, and is possibly a mineralized breccia structure. Mineralization in this part of the pit is generally oxidized, and no detailed observation was possible. However, it appears not unlikely that there is another breccia structure in this part of the quartz porphyry. No similar structure in the quartz porphyry was

observed in 1945. Further toward the south in the feldspathic porphyry, large areas of quartzite and quartz porphyry are found. These appear to be large inclusions, and are probably close to the mineralized breccia noted on the 4850 bench, lying on the west side of this structure. This bench is also now almost entirely in oxide material, but there was a sulphide "cupola" approximately above the breccia area. Toward the south end of the bench there is a strong fault structure, called the Copper Mt. fault, which strikes northwest and dips 70° to the northeast. In the footwall of this fault weakly mineralized, oxidized quartz porphyry is found, and very little ore is reported below the oxidized zone in this rock. On the hanging wall of the fault there is feldspathic porphyry, and ore is reported to be found in this rock northeast of the fault zone.

Conversations with the Morenci geologists indicate a complete neglect of study of the geologic structures in the pit, or definite ideas about the intrusive masses, and their mineralization. They have, however, done extensive work on the leached outcrops, and have many specimen suites which show progress of leaching and resultant oxidation products. They are convinced that the chemical activity of gangue minerals, principally feldspars,

may determine possibilities for secondary enrichment. A sericite gangue is believed to be neutral, but an unaltered feldspar gangue, such as at Ajo, would materially retard, or possibly prevent, secondary enrichment processes. Moist climates and abundant iron content might not be sufficient to offset this gangue effect.

In the specimen suites observed, many of which are from narrow veins structures, emphasis is given to the kind of rock and structure of the limonite as a determining factor in the amount of enrichment that can be expected below. "Fluffy" limonite of a dark maroon to brownish color is believed best, and is believed to have originated from oxidation of a pyrite-chalcocite enriched-mineralization. Dark cellular boxworks retaining pyrite shapes with little dark brown to black oxide remaining in the boxes is believed to derive from thin chalcocite coatings on pyrite. Although they do not believe that color is a good indicator, all of the oxides in specimens reported to represent good underlying mineralization are dark brown, dark maroon to black in color when thoroughly oxidized. In oxidation of mineralization which contains a relatively high iron to copper ratio, succession shows development of borgstromite

(iron sulphate) which migrates outward from mineral grains, and with further oxidation may develop a orange coloration. Two classes of jarosite, one unstable and soluble in water, are reported to develop directly from pyrite. (This may be another mineral.) Stable jarosite may also develop from the high iron minerals, and remain in cavities as well as stain the surrounding rocks. It should be noted that all of the successions which have been developed take little account of the structural conditions in the orebody, except where the specimens have been collected from high grade veins which have been followed down. It is not known how many of the specimens of reported complete oxidation are from actual surface exposures, and how many simply from apparently completely oxidized portions of the mineralization. The Morenci geologists appear to have been largely influenced by Roland Blanchard in their belief that gangue alteration may be a major factor in secondary enrichment processes.

Currently further exploration by churn drilling is being carried on north of the pit in quartz porphyry, and some spotty low grade ore is being found. The pit is producing about 50,000 tons per day with a grade of 1.22% copper. The cut off grade is now 0.4% copper, and some material as low as 0.3% may be taken. Production continued for twelve

day period when the plant is then down for two days. Silica for smelter flux is now obtained from a cut in quartzite near the smelter. Churn drill hole stemming is crushed ore from the concentrator

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(Probably an irregular intrusive lens 1950)

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stemming is crushed ore from the concentrator



EXPLANATION

TERTIARY	
	GILA CONGLOMERATE
LATE CRETACEOUS OR EARLY TERTIARY	
	QUARTZ MONZONITE PORPHYRY
CRETACEOUS	
	SEDIMENTARY BEDS
PALEOZOIC	
	SEDIMENTARY BEDS
PRE-CAMBRIAN	
	GRANITE
ORE BODIES	
FAULTS, FISSURES AND VEINS	

SCALE 0 1000 2000 3000 feet

Plate XVI. Geologic map of part of the Clifton-Morenci district, showing distribution of principal ore bodies. (Modified from Lindgren.)



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PALEOZOIC	
	SEDIMENTARY BEDS
PRE-CAMBRIAN	
	GRANITE
ORE BODIES	
	BRECCIA
	DISSEMINATED CHALCOCLITE BODY
	MANGANESE BLUE
FAULTS, FISSURES AND VEINS	
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Plate XVI.—Geologic map of part of the Clifton-Morenci district, showing distribution of principal ore bodies. (Modified from Lindgren.)

I-A I-B

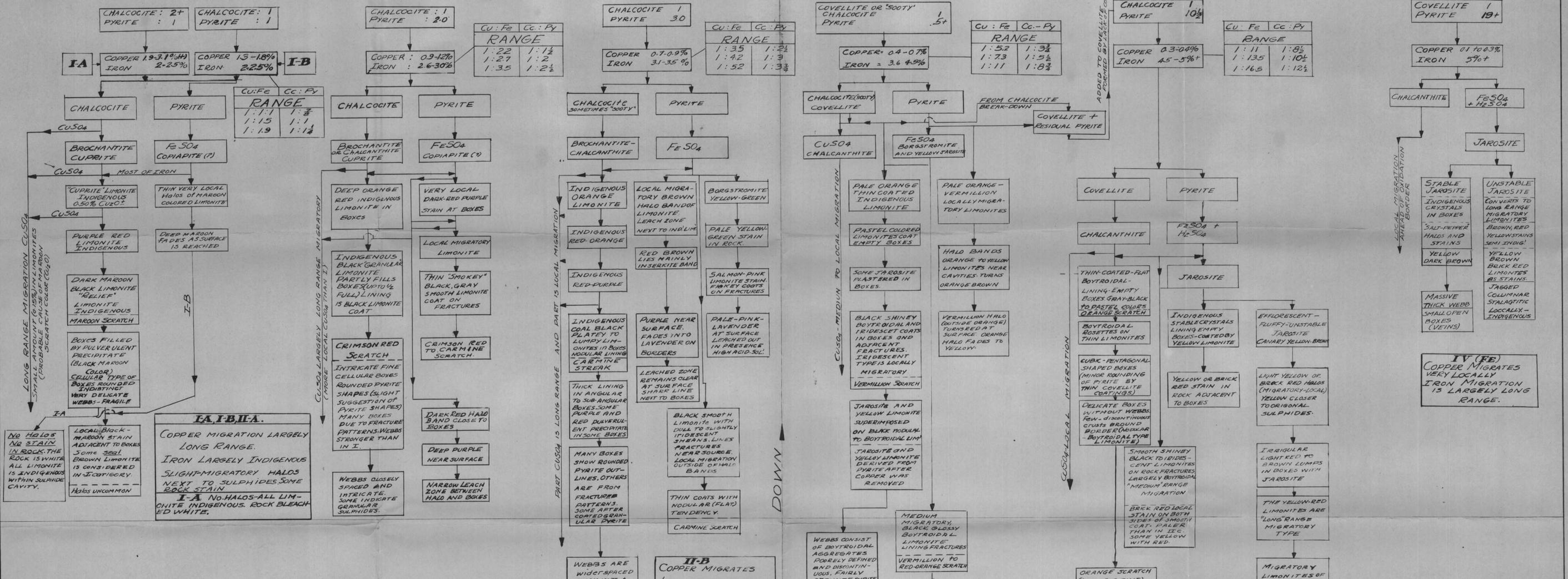
II-A

II-B

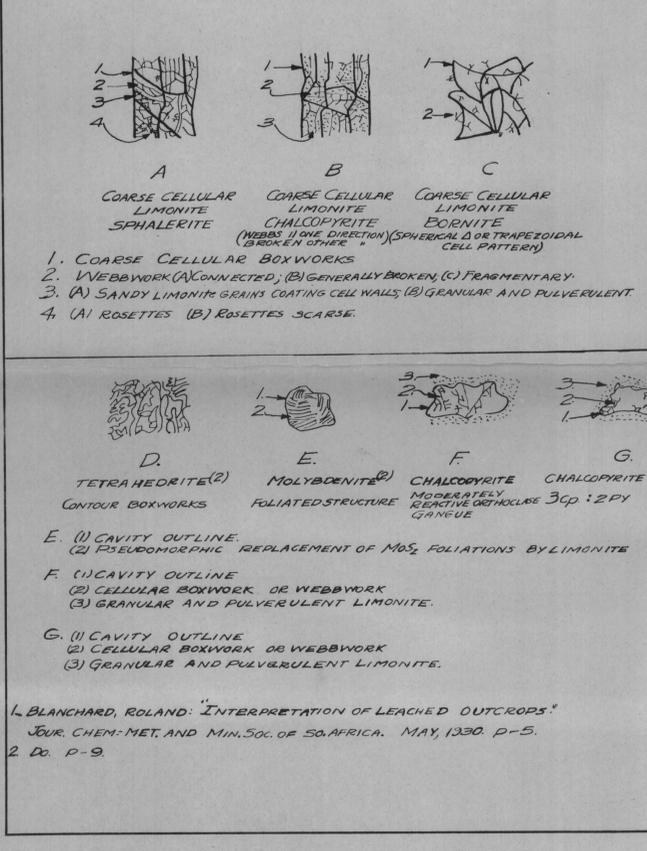
II-C

III

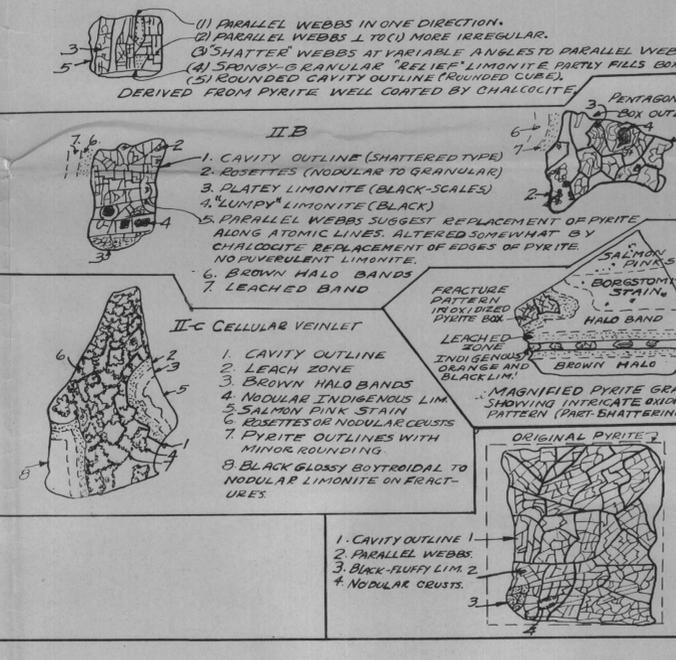
IV



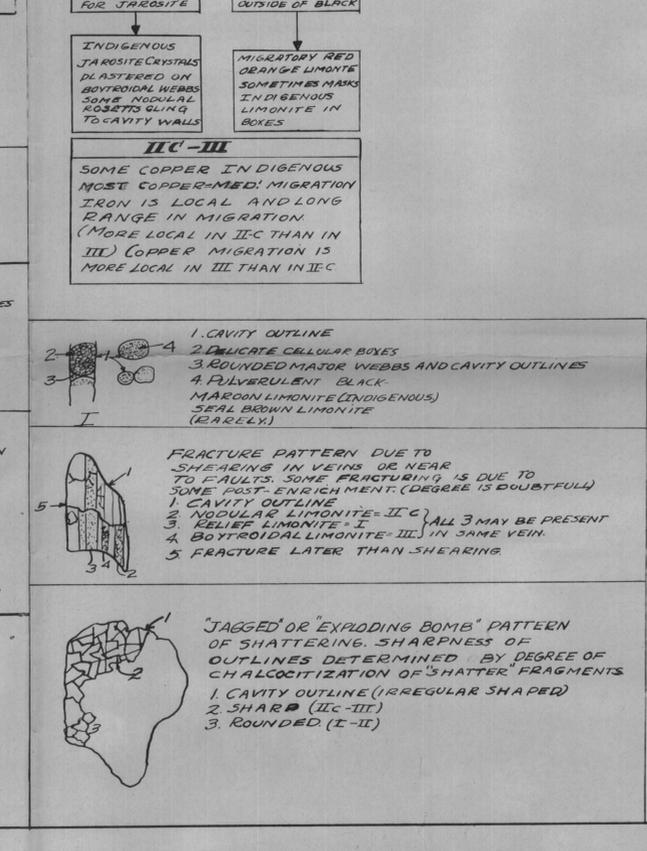
CHARACTERISTIC CELLULAR LIMONITE BOXES (1)



CELLULAR LIMONITES II-A-IIB



CELLULAR LIMONITES II-C-III



OXIDIZED CAPPING CHART FROM SULPHIDES TO THE SURFACE-REVERSE ORDER NON-REACTIVE GANGUE

