

The Gold Rush, (1925) Production Notes

About 600 men, mostly hoboes, were brought by train into the Sierras to film the Chilkoot Pass scene at the beginning of the movie. They slept in the boxcars, however, there was little complaining since assistant Eddie Sutherland had arranged for the railroad to provide food service from its regular dining cars which included roast beef, ham, vegetables, bread and pies.

The location filming at Truckee was done in April, 1924. Other than the Chilkoot Pass scene, some other scenes that were shot on location include Charlie finding a grave marked "Here lies Jim Sourdough," the bear prowling around the cabin, Big Jim chasing the chicken across the snowy wastes, and Charlie sliding down the "Chilkoot Pass."

Chaplin himself went to scout locations in the in and around Truckee, California, in February, 1924, just below the famous Donner Pass. There wasn't much in the town except a small hotel. Chaplin had his carpenters come in and renovate a suite for him prior to bringing the filming there.

Although there was some melting of the snow and mud to contend with at first, one night about two feet of snow fell, and the storm continued. Chaplin decided to make use of the blizzard and filmed some footage of Black Larsen battling through the snow storm with his sledge.

In the beginning, all Chaplin knew was that the setting for his next movie would be the 1898 gold rush, so he began construction on a set recreating the "frozen north" on his studio back lot. The set would take months to complete and required 239,577 feet of lumber, 200 tons of plaster, 22,750 feet of chicken wire, 22,000 feet of burlap, 100 barrels of flour and 285 tons of salt which served as "snow."

In early 1925, the last sets were built - the streets of the mining town - and the sequence where Charlie shovels snow to earn money for his New Year's Eve party was filmed. In April, Charlie, Georgia Hale and Mack Swain went to San Diego to film the scenes on the on the boat where Charlie and Big Jim are millionaires and the tramp meets Georgia again. Actually, the very last of the filming (other than retakes and miniatures) was the scene where the chasm opens up and Black Larsen plummets to his death.

While the carpenters were making some changes in the cabin set, Chaplin spent the day bobsledding and ski racing with some of the unit. The next day he was confined to bed with a chill. Mack Swain got the flu, and one scene where Big Jim chases the chicken across the snow is actually Sid Swaney standing in for Swain.

The dance hall scenes included as many as 100 extras, including Mexicans and Indians hired for \$7.50 a day. Tiny Sanford, who played the bartender, received \$20 a day, but the highest paid "extra" was the dog on the other end of the rope Chaplin ties to his waist while dancing with Georgia - the dog got \$35 a day. The old man who has a short dancing scene in the dance hall is a 100-year old Civil War veteran named "Daddy" Taylor. <http://www.silentsaregolden.com/index.html>