

The Prospector

Volume 14 Issue 03

Website: www.PortlandGoldProspectors.org

March, 2014

Chapter Meeting:

March, 16th 2014

At the
Milwaukie, Oregon
Grange Hall
12015 S.E. 22nd

**Meeting Begins at
--- 1:30 ---**

Dates to Remember...



March, 2014
1:30 PM

Our next meeting:

If you bring in 2 cans of food you will receive 1 ticket for our \$1.00 raffle. You can bring in up to 10 cans for a total of 5 \$1.00 tickets. We also have \$5.00 tickets. For better prizes.



From The Presidents Desk

Another month and its meeting time again. Please make a date to come join us this month. We'll be discussing outings and other information you'll need to do prospecting this season. Besides, if you're not seeing old friends, you can make some new ones.

My sincere thanks to all who participate in this organization to keep it functioning and growing. Maybe you have some friends or neighbors that you would like to invite?

In the coming months we will be demonstrating new equipment and how to use it. If you have something you'd like to share please let an officer know so we can schedule you in.

Please feel free to let your officers and board members know what your wishes and desires are – we are here to listen and serve.

Let's make this a great year to have fun and profit by our involvement and find some gold. Even memories become golden with time.

Sincerely,

David Chiara.

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

Secretary's Report February 16th, 2013
Milwaukie Grange Hall, 12015 SE 22nd Milwaukie, OR

Meeting called to order by President Dave Chiara at 1:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Attendance:

53 members in attendance to the meeting.

9 visitors in attendance.

Meeting minutes:

A **Motion** was made and seconded to accept the Secretary's report as written and published in the newsletter.

The motion was approved by the Association body.

Treasury report: Beverly Parker

Treasure report was read.

A **Motion** was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as read.

Motion was approved.

Correspondences: ICMJ 2014 Gold Prospecting Summit

The Mining Journal wrote to share with NW Mining groups the Time and dates for the 2014 Gold Prospecting & Mining Summit. This year's summit will be held in Placerville, California on April 5th and 6th. The 2014 Gold Prospecting and Mining Summit will include two days of instruction by our experts on how to find gold, PLUS over 80 vendor booths featuring the latest equipment, from pans and detectors to trommel's and concentrating tables. If you wish to receive a copy of this e-mail with the details, please contact the association secretary Jerry Johns and he can send you the original e-mail.

Outings/ Association Claims – Ken Burns

A sign-up sheet was provided for anyone wishing to suggest any day outings this year. This year's schedule of events will be coming out in the near future.

Membership - Ken Burns

New Membership cards are available for 2014. If you have attended 3 meetings, outings or events with the association you are considered a member. There are no fees required to be a member of the association. You will be asked to sign a waiver form releasing the association of any liability for injury during any outings.

Library: Joe Weber

The Library is available for all members of the association to use and check out items. This month there are a couple of new DVD's available.

Newsletter: Bill Mutton

Bill has done an amazing job transforming the newsletter since he took over the role last fall. Great efforts are being made to keep it interesting while keeping it to a manageable size. If you find you are interested in learning more about a story, Bill tries to post links to the original stories where the information comes from. Next Month Bill is looking to do a piece on Ghost towns. If you have an article to share with the association, please contact Bill.

Gold Show: Joe Weber

There will be no GPAA gold show this year in Oregon. This show has typically been a major source of income for the association. The association is looking to try attendance at a couple of smaller venues to see if they can make any of these financial profitable.

New Business:

There will be a "Oregon Miners Rally" on Thursday February 27th at the state capital galleria. The rally will be put on by Willamette Valley Miners for positive exhibition of mining in Oregon. They are inviting other Mining groups to come share at this site by setting up a table and sharing about your association, etc.

Annual Audit of books:

Volunteers were sought to help do the annual audit of the association's financial books. The Vice President typically leads the effort and looks for 2-3 additional members to help in the effort. If interested, see Beverly Parker or Robert Burns.

(Respectfully submitted by Jerry Johns, Secretary

Be on my committee – Outings

Need volunteers to help check out, select and run outing events.

Newsletter & Emails

If you have not been receiving the Newsletter by Email,

Please email us at portlandgpaa@aol.com

Don't forget, you can also download the Newsletter from our website.

History of the Month

In the footsteps of Chinese miners

July 12, 2005 11:00 pm

By **LISA BRITTON**

Of the Baker City Herald



Hand-stacked rock tailings line a ditch along Union Creek where Chinese miners worked the land along the stream. To get there, drive south on Highway 30 and turn right onto Union Creek Road near Phillips Reservoir. The walls are located 1.2 miles up the road and can be accessed through a gap in the wood rail fence that lines this section of road. (Baker City Herald/Lisa Britton).

I stumbled into Baker County's Chinese history when I took my first steps through the Chinese Cemetery about 10 years ago.

An eerie feeling swept over me as I realized that the depression I stood in was once a grave for one of the Chinese men who came to Northeastern Oregon to seek a fortune in gold.

Forty-six people of Chinese ancestry were buried in this cemetery between 1894 and 1948. Most of the bodies were later exhumed and returned to China for a proper burial, though one headstone marks the grave of Lee Chue, 1882-1938.

According to the Baker County Historical Society, the remains of one woman and two other men buried in the 1940s are probably

still in the cemetery.

This cemetery, though, is more like the end of the story for Baker County's early Chinese population, men who came to Northeastern Oregon to work as miners, cooks, laundrymen and laborers.

Today, though Baker's Chinatown only exists in photos and maps, the work of these people is preserved in the carefully stacked walls of rock and the miles of ditches dug by Chinese laborers.

The lure of gold

Gold was discovered at Auburn in 1861 and at Granite in 1862, and prospectors started flowing into Northeastern Oregon to stake their claims.

There's no official record of when the Chinese miners arrived, but the 1870 U.S. census shows 29 Chinese immigrants in Baker City, 12 of whom worked in mining occupations, according to research by Priscilla Wegars, who published "The Ah Hee Diggings" in 1995 after an archaeological investigation near Granite.

"They moved in just as soon as they heard gold was discovered," said Howard Brooks, who retired from a 35-year career with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in 1991. "During the late 1850s and early '60s, there was gold found in a lot of places in the west and started lots of towns."

Wegars notes that the Chinese were allowed into Auburn in 1865, and Brooks said that Chinese miners were working at the Virtue Mine, near present-day Baker City, in 1864.

"They worked cheap, and they worked well," Brooks said. "The Chinese generally got half of what the white guys did."

A few Chinese men even owned mining claims, despite a law that forbid foreign ownership, Brooks said.

While some worked their own claims, others worked for local operations or were hired to dig ditches needed to supply water to placer mines around the county.

According to a Baker County Historical Society brochure, by 1879 there were 166 Chinese residents in Baker City and the population peaked in 1900 at 264.

Baker City's Chinatown was established east of the current downtown, bordered by Auburn Avenue on the south, Valley Avenue on the north, Resort Street on the west and the Powder River on the east.

By 1883, the Chinese constructed a religious temple, or joss house, and several businesses had opened to support this segment of the population.

Granite's Chinese Walls

Brooks said that by the late 1860s, most white miners at Granite had abandoned their claims or leased the land to the Chinese.

"The Chinese worked the creeks up there after the white guys took the best," Brooks said. "When the values tended to dwindle, they moved on. Then the Chinese just cleaned every kernel of gold they could find, and they worked really hard at it."

These were placer operations, which involved running water and gravel through sluice boxes to sift out the heavy gold flakes and maybe a few valuable nuggets.

"I don't think there's a stream or gulch that hasn't been worked for placer gold," Brooks said. "Gold—it's a fever people got. And the idea of getting something for nothing."

The Chinese mined the creeks by moving rocks and boulders—by hand—and then working the ground beneath for gold.

Some 60 acres of their handiwork can be seen today along the Elkhorn Scenic Byway, a mere mile north of Granite.

These rock piles are known as the "Chinese Walls" or the "Ah Hee Diggings." Though they can be seen from the highway, curious passersby can turn right off the road, park and explore the area on foot.

These walls, some measuring 15 feet wide and 12 feet high, wind through the evergreens and allow visitors to take a few steps into the past.

Some rocks are six inches in diameter; others surely qualify as boulders that seem too big to budge.

"They had poles and ropes set up and could move big rocks," Brooks said.

According to "Gold and Silver in Oregon," the placer operations on Granite Creek and the North Fork of the John Day River totaled \$2,000,000 by 1914.

In addition to the Granite site, Wegars outlines a number of other places where Chinese occupation has been noted. One of the closest is located at Union Creek, about 20 miles southwest of Baker City near Phillips Reservoir, where a section of ditch is lined with hand-stacked rock tailings.

To get there, turn right off Highway 7 onto Union Creek Road. (If you come to the Union Creek Campground at Phillips Reservoir, you've gone too far.) The tailings are located 1.2 miles up the road.

Though rock piles are visible from the road, the mossy rock-lined ditch is just out of view about 20 feet away and can be accessed through a gap in the wooden rail fence lining the road.

Miles and miles of ditches

The hard work of Chinese laborers still winds through the county with the ditches they were paid to dig, including the Sparta Ditch and the El Dorado Ditch.

The El Dorado started west of Unity and, with a length of 125 miles, is possibly the "longest historic mining ditch ever built in Oregon," according to Wegars. She also states that in 1870, up to 1,000 Chinese men may have been working on the ditch to hasten its completion.

Evidence of Chinese mining activities has also been recorded at Sumpter; along the Snake River; Washington Gulch; Pocahontas;

Grande Ronde Lake; Mud Lake; Boulder Creek; Salmon Creek; Deer Creek; McEwen and Huntington.

The placer mining started to dwindle in the late 1800s, and Wegars reports that by 1910 Baker City recorded only 37 people of Chinese ancestry in the total population of 6,742.

"Figures for 1920 show a continuing increase in the Caucasian population accompanied by a decline in the numbers, and therefore percentages, of Baker City's Chinese residents," Wegars notes.

She credits the decline to the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Laws, which forbid the entry of laborer's wives.

"As these bachelors became elderly and died, the Baker City Chinese community died with them and was nearly forgotten," she said.

But this piece of Baker County's history can be revived, and touched, with a tour through the Chinese Cemetery or a hike among the carefully piled walls of rocks.

It's really not so eerie, I discovered, to pause for a moment in the rock-lined ditch at Union Creek, listen to the gurgle of the nearby stream and try to imagine what this area looked like 100 years ago.

Chances are the Chinese miners fared just as well as their Caucasian counterparts, Brooks said.

"Most people didn't make a fortune, most went home disillusioned and broke," Brooks said. "Very few got there early enough to get the easy pickings."



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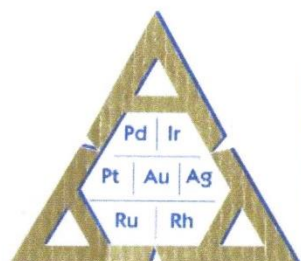
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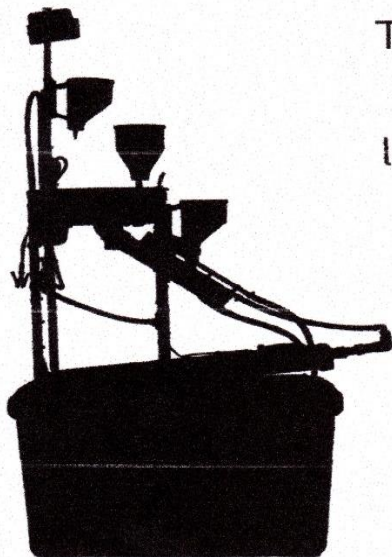


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The WMA is an alliance of miners fighting to restore our legal mining rights. We need all miners to stand together and fight this illegal taking of mining claims and our rights to mine.

If you won't stand up now we will lose all of our rights. We are an organization founded by some of the most experienced miners alive. We are teamed with other organizations fighting to take back our rights for land use, timber management, fishing, hunting and the other activities we, as Americans pay taxes to use.

We are supported by the mining equipment manufacturers; small businessmen; political representatives and of course by our claim holders. As a member of the WMA you will receive:

- Monthly e-mail updates on the legal fight
- Flash messages on critical events
- Access to our published reports on mining districts
- Join the Watershed district and the mining district

Here's a link to more info http://westernminingalliance.org/?page_id=626

GPAA Membership Renewal Credits

| | 1 Year | 2 Year | 3 Year | 1 Year w/o mining guide |
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WHEN RENEWING, PLEASE WRITE A NOTE OR BY PHONE SAY YOU BELONG TO THE PORTLAND PGPI OR GPAA CHAPTER TO REQUEST THE CLUB CREDITS.

These credits are used to buy things from the GPAA Catalog. If you do not have a GPAA Catalog, you can go to <http://www.goldprospectors.org/catalog/index.asp?PageName=Catalog> to see what all they have. If there is anything in the catalog that you would like to have for the raffle Please let one of the board members know.

All members note:

Our club earns purchasing points with renewal of GPAA Membership. Please tell them you're a Portland Gold Prospector member.

**2013
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| Secretary: Jerry Johns 503-649-4702 Jerry.j.johns@intel.com | Treasurer: Bev Parker 503-666-4301 bevpark@comcast.net |
| Claims and Outings: Ken Burns 503-631-3071 cruisehl@yahoo.com | Sergeant at Arms: To Be Determined |

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2 year term

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Portland Gold Prospectors Association Meetings.

If you would like to see the entire Newsletter you can have it Emailed to you
Or go to www.PortlandGoldProspectors.org and you can view or download the whole
Newsletter there. I really want to make it very informative and complete, but it would
Be far too expensive to print out the longer version of the newsletter.