



# The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPAA Portland, Oregon Chapter



June, 2019

Daybreak Park  
May 18, 2019



Sheep Fl. Photos by Jerry Johns



## Secretary's Report May 19th, 2019

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Milwaukie Grange Hall  
12015 S.E. 22nd Ave.  
Milwaukie, OR. 97222

President Mike Lewis called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted.

**Attendance** - 42 attendees and 5 visitors were present.

**Luncheon** - We started off by everyone getting themselves lunch which we provided at this months meeting. It included Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, 3 Bean Salad, Chips and drinks. A big thanks to Carol Johns and some of the other women for putting this together.

**Meeting Minutes** - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Secretary's Report of the previous month as written and published in the May newsletter. The motion was approved by the members present.

**Treasury Report** - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasury Report for May. The motion was approved by the members present.

**Daybreak Park** - We had about 10 people from our club attend the outing and there were also some people from the S.W. Washington chapter. The weather was nice and a few people found some Gold.

**TY ROY** - Our annual outing is coming up quick its June 8th until the 23rd. with some people staying the whole 2 weeks and others just coming for a few days. You will need to get an ATV Permit if you plan on coming. There is a disclaimer form that you will need to fill out if you haven't already. This is always alot of fun and we are hoping to get a good turn out of people this year. If you have your own equipment bring it but if you don't that's fine too because people will share. For those who can't attend this year we will be bringing back dirt for them. Hope to see you all there!

**Membership** - To become a member you only have to attend 3 meetings or a combination of meetings and/or outings. Once you become a member if you join the GPAA then our chapter will get points so when you sign up be sure and tell them you are a member of the Portland chapter.

**Spiral Raffle** - Starting in July we will be selling \$5 raffle tickets to win a Spiral that was donated to our club. We will only be selling 40 tickets so the odds of winning are really good.

**Demonstrations** - At break time Richard Ruth and DeVere Crawford demonstrated Richard's big Dry Classifier and Ken Didier ran his Gutter Sluice for beach sand and Blue Bowl.

**Raffle** - The Raffle was held with \$1 and \$5 tickets. DeVere Crawford was the lucky winner of the Gold Nugget again this month! Gretchen Lewis was the lucky winner of the Gold Bag.

**June Meeting** - Just a reminder that there will be NO Gold Meeting at the Milwaukie Grange in June. There will be a small meeting for those who are up at Tyroy.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by  
Yolande Kragerud, Secretary







Photos by Tim Snyder

## PRESIDENT'S BLOG

### JUNE, 2019

Hello, fellow prospectors!

**Thank you** to everyone who came to the Chapter meeting in May! And **thank you** to Richard Ruth for demonstrating the trommel he designed/ made and for demonstrating his self-contained sluice system. And another **thank you** to Ken Didier for demonstrating how to get gold out of black sand using a self-contained recovery system. The demonstrations were interesting as well as educational. One more **thank you** to Richard for bringing his pop-up canopy – which was very helpful – since it was raining during part of the meeting.

We also enjoyed hot dogs, chips, potato or bean salad, cookies and punch at the May Chapter meeting. Thank you to Carol Johns and Betty Burns for organizing the food. Carol had everything ready to go – Dorothy Ruth and Elaine Ruth also helped get everything set up. Everyone seemed to enjoy the food!

The only negative was that we had a lot of food left over. It would have been great to have a larger turn-out!

Our next outing is coming up on June 8th to 22nd at the club's TYROY claim near Baker City, OR. If you want more information, please contact Jerry Johns at [jerryjohns@gmail.com](mailto:jerryjohns@gmail.com) or me at [gmlewis238@msn.com](mailto:gmlewis238@msn.com).

If you have any pictures from Chapter meetings, outings or other get-togethers, that you would like to share, please send them to Tim Snyder at [wrshpmzshn@gmail.com](mailto:wrshpmzshn@gmail.com).

>PLEASE REMEMBER THE JUNE CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE TYROY OUTING<

I look forward to seeing everyone at the next (regular) Chapter meeting on July 21, 2019.

Thank you and Happy Prospecting!

Mike Lewis  
President  
Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.  
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503-413-9283

## L'Envoi

*by Robert Service*

We talked of yesteryears, of trails and treasure,  
Of men who played the game and lost or won;  
Of mad stampedes, of toil beyond all measure,  
Of camp-fire comfort when the day was done.

We talked of sullen nights by  
moon-dogs haunted,  
Of bird and beast and tree, of rod and gun;  
Of boat and tent, of hunting-trip enchanted  
Beneath the wonder of the midnight sun;  
Of bloody-footed dogs that gnawed the traces,  
Of prisoned seas, wind-lashed and winter-locked;  
The ice-gray dawn was pale upon our faces,  
Yet still we filled the cup and still we talked.

The city street was dimmed. We saw the glitter  
Of moon-picked brilliants on the virgin snow,  
And down the drifted canyon heard the bitter,  
Relentless slogan of the winds of woe.

The city was forgot, and, parka-skirted,  
We trod that leagueless land that once we knew;  
We saw stream past, down valleys glacier-girted,  
The wolf-worn legions of the caribou.

We smoked our pipes, o'er scenes of  
triumph dwelling;

Of deeds of daring, dire defeats, we talked;  
And other tales that lost not in the telling,  
Ere to our beds uncertainly we walked.

And so, dear friends, in gentler valleys roaming,  
Perhaps, when on my printed page you look,  
Your fancies by the firelight may go homing  
To that lone land that haply you forsook.

And if perchance you hear the silence calling,  
The frozen music of star-yearning heights,  
Or, dreaming, see the seines of silver trawling

Across the sky's abyss on vasty nights,  
You may recall that sweep of savage splendor,  
That land that measures each man at his worth,  
And feel in memory, half fierce, half tender,  
The brotherhood of men that know the North.







# BEN SMITH'S MYSTERY MINE

*Here is story of mysterious Ben Smith and his strange gold mine*

*told by a woman who was present when Smith disappeared.*

Photo credits: All photos by author

**by Hope Price**

**A** childhood memory has intrigued and haunted me for nearly sixty years. My story begins just after the turn of the century. I was a little girl at that time and I had never heard of the Blue Bucket mine, or the Emigrant Train's Lost Mine, believed to be somewhere in Eastern Oregon. However, I was one of the very few who had heard the story of Ben Smith's lost gold ledge which he found as he fled desperately from Eastern Oregon towards the deep woods of the Cascade Mountains, and then lost and, as far as I know, never found again.

Did that gold have some connection with the lost Blue Bucket gold? Could it have been the parent head of the gold nuggets found in or near the streams below by the emigrants as they hurried over their shortcut to reach The Dalles before winter caught them? It was just as mysteriously found and lost again to mankind as the famous Blue Bucket mine was.

At the time of which I speak, my father, a professional

nian in Portland, Oregon, was having a log cabin built far up in the Cascade Mountain wilderness between Mt. Hood and Mt. Jefferson, beside a glacial mountain lake. Then it was a deep wilderness with few trails and those mostly trapper trails. The Forest Reserve was still in its infancy. There was no smoothly paved Mt. Hood Highway, leading from Portland to Mt. Hood and winding around carefully graded hills so gradually that you are scarcely aware of the steep climb you are making.

Instead there was the narrow and deeply rutted old pioneer Barlow Road, a privately owned road which passed through the Toll Gate where all who went through, except the Indians, paid toll. The road, first of corduroy wooden planks laid side to side and then through deep sand, wound between banks of giant ferns up and up over great boulders to the steep curving incline that was the dreaded Laurel Hill of that day. This mountain was so covered with laurel bushes that the air was filled with



their pungent aroma intermingled with the smell of the pulverized volcanic dust from the boulders over which the steel wagon tires jolted and ground.

This old road that the pioneers took was made by trail blazing Samuel Barlow said to be the first white man to cross the Cascade mountains. When told of the dangers of starvation in the forests, attacks by the Indians, and the impossibility of passing Mt. Hood, he replied, "God had made no mountain that man cannot get around or under."

Then, gathering his small party about him, he said: "No man having 'cannot' in his vocabulary shall accompany me." At first the road was so perpendicular that the pioneer wagons had to be let down the steep hill by ropes passed around the trees.

**A**ROUND the time of which I write, travelers on that road always arranged to start up Laurel Hill early in the day with the horses fresh as the trip up the hill was considered a hard day's work for the horses. All but the driver usually walked to lighten the load. Often even the driver walked. Camp was usually made at the top of the hill at Government Camp so that the horses could rest and the travelers enjoy the nearness and the atmosphere of magnificent Mt. Hood. Government Camp was so named because long ago U.S. soldiers camped there on the summit to keep the Indians from crossing and killing the early settlers in the valley below.

Everything such as windows for the cabin father was building, had to be packed in by horse from the road to eastern Oregon as there were no roads into the cabin site. No matter how well a window had been packed, when it finally arrived at its destination and was uncrated the glass would be found shattered.

My father, a born pioneer at heart, had to spend most of the time in the city, but he had a trusted man, Joseph Ario, in charge of a small crew; and my mother, older brother, and I were spending the summer there.

As I remember it after all these years, the mysterious Ben Smith appeared one day when my father was away and asked for a job from the men building the log cabin. He didn't have a horse, which was unusual. He gave the name of Ben Smith. This may not have been his right



Hope Price, author of this interesting article, taken in Portland in 1958. Hope Price's memory of earlier era is so keen she hasn't forgotten smallest detail.

name. He was a huge powerful looking man as I remember him, and as help was badly needed, Mr. Ario hired him on the spot.

He was silent and redfaced with blonde hair plastered to his head. He had a trick of disappearing when anyone rode in to look at the cabin being built or to visit us.

Mr. Ario in charge of the crew, was an Austrian with an auburn beard. He was a great favorite of mine, so I often visited the men's camp in the evening after work

*(Continued on Page 45)*

**Toll gate on old Barlow Road in the 1800s, a road that figured in strange story of the disappearing Ben Smith.**





## BEN SMITH'S MYSTERY MINE (Continued from Page 21)

and listened to their talk about the camp fire. Ben talked quite freely to the other men. I soon learned that he was awfully excited about a ledge of almost pure gold which he had stumbled on mysteriously on the side of a mountain somewhere towards Mt. Jefferson. As I remember it, his story, was that he had been pursued by someone, had been lost, and with nightfall coming had climbed onto a high ledge with its back to a cliff from which he hoped he could look way out onto the plains of eastern Oregon far below and see any pursuers.

At daylight — he was astonished to find he had been lying on what looked as though it might be gold, and had managed to break some specimens of it off and stuff them into his pockets and shirt before hastily traveling on. At that time, food, water, and shelter were far more important than something that looked like gold — but which might easily turn out not to be the real thing.

**B**EN finally arrived at a town where he could get it assayed and was told it was extremely high grade gold. He had returned to the mountain country, — sure he could locate the gold ledge again. But it was the old story of lost mines. Somehow everything looked different and he never could find the landmarks he thought he remembered.

Apparently his grub stake of food had given out. Ben worked on the log house most of the summer and I knew he was saving his money to finance another hunt for the lost ledge.

Then one day a man from eastern Oregon rode in quietly and caught a glimpse of Ben. He told my mother privately that Ben was wanted for murder in eastern Oregon. He said Ben had hit a man over the head with a baseball bat at a ball game, in a fit of temper, and killed him. Then Ben had fled towards the mountains with the law after him. It must have been during his wanderings in the mountains, to evade the law, that he found the gold ledge.

Not long after that Ben Smith disappeared from the cabin and I never saw him again. He may have realized that no man saw and recognized him, and he would soon be on his own in that remote lonely place in the wilderness where any-

thing could happen. I often wondered if Ben ever dared go back and hunt for the lost ledge again.

Perhaps it still lies there waiting for someone like Ben to get far off the beaten path and stumble on it. Or perhaps it has been covered with the debris of time, storm, and cataclysm, and hidden from sight in all the years that have passed.

The men working with Ben on the cabin had been brought in from Port-

during my father's absence, returned to Portland, and then went to Austria as interpreter for the Socialist Party. He either was killed or died there. As a girl, I wrote letters to the last place in Europe from which we had heard from him, but they were all returned marked "deceased" in Austrian or German. I had been fond of him and missed him greatly.

It has been said that it is the finder of the lost mine that is lost — not the



Father of the author standing near the mountain home he built for his family.

land, Oregon, and were taken back to Portland after the cabin was finished. They were not woodsmen and had no horses of their own. They would probably have been afraid of getting lost and never finding their way out of the wilderness. Besides, Ben Smith had not given them any directions. Even he himself had not been able to find it again.

Mr. Arrio, who had been in charge

mine. And so it may be with Ben Smith's lost gold ledge. Also it just could be the answer to the perplexing riddle of where the lost Blue Bucket gold came from.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Material for this article is based on personal experiences.



## PORTLAND GOLD PROSPECTORS, INC. EVENTS CALENDAR - 2019

JUNE 8TH – 23rd – TYROY CLAIM OUTING (2 WEEKS)

JUNE 16TH – **CHAPTER MEETING AT TYROY CAMP**

JULY 13TH – LEWIS RIVER CLAIM OUTING (WASHINGTON)

JULY 21ST – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

AUGUST 10TH – LEWIS RIVER DAYBREAK PARK OUTING (WASHINGTON)

AUGUST 18TH – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

SEPTEMBER 14TH – STEVE LEWIN CLAIM (WASHINGTON)

SEPTEMBER 15TH – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

OCTOBER 12TH – CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT OUTING (WASHINGTON)

OCTOBER 20TH – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

NOVEMBER 17TH – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

DECEMBER 15TH – CHAPTER MEETING – 1:30pm – MILWAUKIE GRANGE HALL

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PLEASE REMEMBER ALL OUTINGS ARE SUBJECT  
TO CHANGE DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

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**A large gold nugget from the Kuskokwim Mountains of central Alaska.  
6.6 x 2.0 x 1.1 cm. Weight 77 grams**

Rob Lavinsky, iRocks.com – CC-BY-SA-3.0 [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)]



We understand the **Washington Gold and Fish** pamphlet is still in effect. You must have it with you whenever you prospect in the state of Washington.

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