

The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPA A Portland, Oregon Chapter



Big Wicked Bill

by Stuart Hamblin

January, 2021

Sometimes in the hush of an evening,
When the winds have gone tired and are stilled;
By the fire I sit dozing and dreaming,
Letting Memory bring back what she will.

She often holds back the curtain of time,
And my heart grows warm when I see:
A sleigh running light over glistening snows,
Just as real as it used to be.

I hear the cry of "Mush!" as a whip licks out,
And cracks like the shot of a gun.
A malemute team coming straight towards me,
Eight dogs and all on the run.

The leader is big and he comes running low,
Pulling that sleigh with a will.
Time never can dim the mem'ry of him:
My lead dog, Big Wicked Bill.

The driver seems worried
as he hurries his team,
In fear he keeps looking back.
And as night closes in he hears it again:
The cry of a killer wolf pack.

Then the Northern Lights
come out to play,
Like fingers they feel for the sky.
And the driver screams "Mush!"
to his weary team,
"You mush or we all got to die!"

The moon looks down
on that race of death,
At the wolf pack closin' in.
And the driver knows if his lead dog falls,
The battle is over for them.

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**PRESIDENT'S BLOG
January, 2021**

>>>>NO MEETING IN JANUARY<<<<

While we will not be having a PGPI chapter meeting in January, we are planning a brief Board Meeting on January 17th at 1:30PM at the Milwaukie Grange – provided there is no problem meeting at the Grange. If anyone not on the Board wants to stop by, you are welcome to do so. If there are any specific topics you would like discussed at the Board Meeting, please let me know.

Please remember facemasks and

social distancing are required at the Board Meeting.

Hopefully, we can resume monthly meetings soon.

In the interim, stay safe!!

Thank you,

Mike

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The Georgia Gold Rush

Excerpted from [Georgia Encyclopedia.org](http://GeorgiaEncyclopedia.org)

There are several popular stories of the beginning of Georgia's gold rush;

but in fact, no one is really certain who made the first discovery or when. According to one anecdote, John Witheroods found a three-ounce nugget along Duke's Creek in Habersham County (present-day White County). Another says that Jesse Hogan, a prospector from North Carolina, found gold on Ward's Creek near Dahlonega. Yet another finds a young Benjamin Parks kicking up an unusual-looking stone while on the lookout for deer west of the Chestatee River in 1828. Despite the popularity of these claims, no documented evidence for gold in Georgia is found until August 1, 1829, when a Milledgeville newspaper, the Georgia Journal, ran the following notice.

GOLD.—A gentleman of the first respectability in Habersham County, writes us thus under date of 22d July: "Two gold mines have just been discovered in this county, and preparations are making to bring these hidden treasures of

the earth to use." So it appears that what we long anticipated has come to pass at last, namely, that the gold region of North and South Carolina, would be found to extend into Georgia.

By late 1829, north Georgia, known at the time as the Cherokee Nation, was flooded by thousands of prospectors lusting for gold. Niles' Register reported in the spring of 1830 that four thousand miners were working along Yahooola Creek alone. While in his nineties, Benjamin Parks recalled the scene in the Atlanta Constitution (July 15, 1894):

The news got abroad, and such excitement you never saw. It seemed within a few days as if the whole world must have heard of it, for men came from every state I had ever heard of. They came afoot, on horseback and in wagons, acting more like crazy men than anything else. All the way from where Dahlonega now stands to Nuckollsville [Auraria] there were men panning out of the branches and making holes in the hillsides.

'Til his rifle is empty he drives them off.
Then unafraid they close in for the kill.
Then helpless, he knows his own life depends
On the fangs of Big Wicked Bill.

But still running strong Big Bill fights them off,
Right up to the cabin door.
When I get him inside, I soon realize,
Big Bill won't fight anymore.

"Wicked" I'd named him when he was a pup,
"Wicked", 'cause he loved so to fight.
But because he stood off that killer wolf pack,
I had lived through a terrible night.

If you've never owned a big malemute,
Perhaps you can't understand:
That ol' longing I get, 'specially at night,
Just to feel his big head in my hands.

So at times in the hush of an evening,
When the winds have grown tired and are stilled,
I sit here, just waiting for Memory to call,
Just hoping she'll bring Big Wicked Bill.

To hear Stuart Hamblen perform Big Wicked Bill
Click [here](#)



Tales of the Alaskan Gold Rush

Thousands of disappointed stampedeers were still living in Dawson in the summer of 1899. Some were eking out a living working for established mines, others struggled to make a living doing odd jobs in Dawson. Their dreams of golden wealth dashed, most were either too poor or too ashamed to return home.

In the spring of 1899, rumors of a great new gold strike were spreading through town. When the summer steamships arrived, the rumors were confirmed. Gold had been struck in fabulous quantities near Cape Nome, Alaska. That summer, over 8,000 people abandoned Dawson for the new bonanza.

Credit for the new strike belonged to Eric Lindblom, John Brynteson, and Jafet Lindberg, a trio who became known as the "Three Lucky Swedes," (despite the fact that Lindberg was actually Norwegian). The trio had met in the Circle City mining area of Alaska and decided to hunt for gold along Alaska's western coast. Their rich strike along Anvil Creek in the fall of 1898 inspired excitement among those already in the Alaskan and Yukon territories.

Prospectors set about staking claims along Anvil and several other tributaries of the Snake River. By the end

of 1899, Anvil City had a population of 10,000.

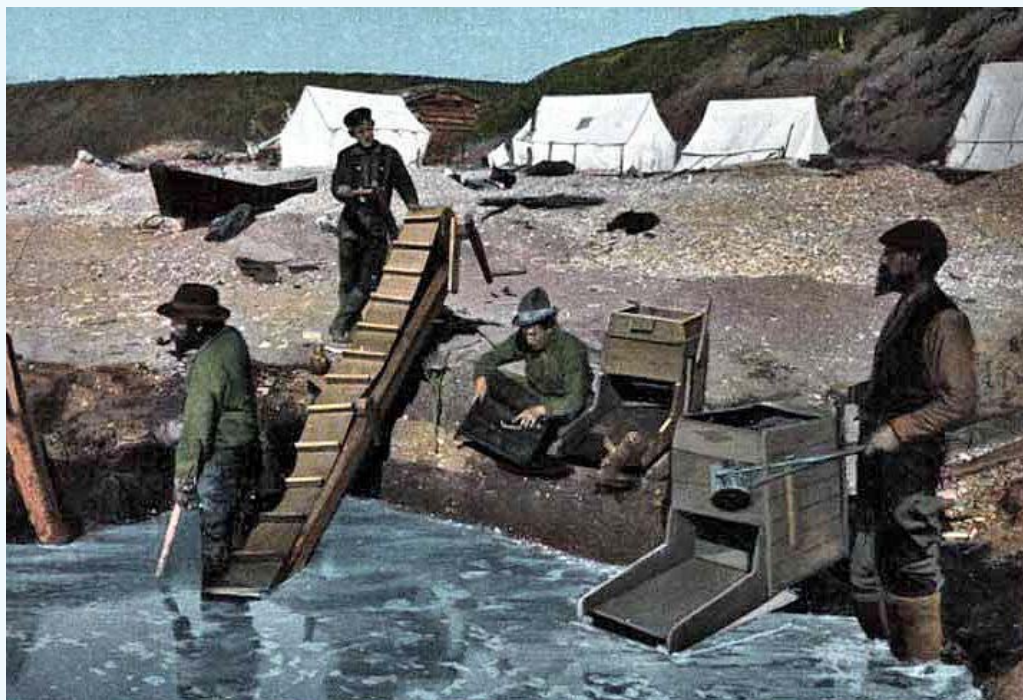
The Anvil Creek strike was good, but it probably would not have outshone the Klondike gold fields, except that it led to an amazing discovery. Many of the stampedeers who arrived too late to stake claims along the mouth of the Snake River set up tents on the beach, where they made an amazing discovery. There was gold on the beach. Miners swarming over the strike termed it a "poor man's paradise."

For the average stampedeer, the beaches had distinct advantages over the Klondike gold fields. They could be reached easily by ship travel, stampedeers to this strike did not have to haul 2,000 pounds of goods over narrow snowy mountain passes. And most importantly, because the beach could not be staked, claims were open to everyone. All these men and women needed were shovels, buckets and a rocker to separate gold from sand. Stampedeers from all over the United States joined those from Dawson and the rush was on again.

A town exploded into life along the beaches. What had been a prospectors' campsite turned, in a few months, into a town of over 20,000 people. Nome sprung to life almost overnight on the frozen tundra. It transformed

into a bustling city filled with congested streets, 100 saloons and dozens of stores, restaurants and "hotels" in tents and quickly constructed wooden buildings.

By 1900, Nome would have looked very familiar to those who had rushed to the gold fields through Dyea or Skagway. The biggest difference was now in Nome, the now-familiar wild melee of thousands of stampedeers sorting through and hauling their gear out of the surf was compounded by stampedeers digging for gold all along the beach.



In the summer of 1900, Nome was the largest general delivery address in the U.S. postal system. In his book, "Alaska's First Free Mail Delivery in 1900," letter carrier Fred Lockley noted that the postal clerks had to use five filing boxes just to sort letters for people named "Johnson."

Reprinted from [Gold Fever Prospecting](#)

John writes in:

Just read the story on your page by Bob Azbill, about his wife finding the nugget in his boot. man, that sort of brought back flashbacks. i was up some years back on a piece of property that i own just up out of Placerville, California. we were new to the area, and decided to go up and do some sampling. we pulled down right next to the water on this really gorgeous sand/gravel bar. after working our tails off for about 5 hours, we didnt find even a piece of flour gold. my partner and i decided to call it a day, and return another time. we jumped into my ford bronco, started it up, gave it alittle gas, and WHUMP!...we were buried to the axles in sand/mud/gravel. we jumped out and threw it in 4 wheel drive, and tried to feather out. we were stuck.

i was really truely tired and agrivated, and ready to get home to a cup of hot coffee, so i gunned the bronco in 4 low, spun all 4 tires and slowly eased out, slinging dirt and gravel everywere. by the time we got out of the hole, i had really tore the gravel bar to shreads. we got home,tired but glad to make it out.

The next morning (we had returned after dark, and i really didnt look at my truck that closely) i discovered that i had slung mud, sand and gravel so much, the truck was coveed in a good 1/4th to

1/2 in layer down both sides.i promptly grabbed the water hose from the porch and began to spray. after i got the truck rinsed down good, i went in for breakfast. my wife stepped out on the porch and saw the mess i had made in the drive. boy did i catch it good! after breakfast, i went out to clean the drive. i started washing the gunk down the driveway, and noticed it was LOADED with black sand, leaving a long ribbon of black behind the junk i was hosing off. my wife came out and jokingly said there was most likely more gold in that then we had found the previous evening. about the time she said that, i looked down and happened to notice a piece of gold about the sizeof a match head laying on the ground just behind the black sand!..WOW! i thought. i went into the house and gathered a broom and a dustpan. i promptly swepted up the mud,gravel and sand. i got about 1/2 of a 5 gallon bucket full . i took it to the back of the house and panned it all out. at the end of my little panning session, i had found close to 2 dwt of small nuggets,flakes and fines. the stuff had all been in the gravel bar we had tore up with the truck.

We went back the next day, worked the bar and made about an oz for a full days sluicing. i ended up buying the property for cash, and it has been a great gold producer every since.

True story!

“Lost In a Lost Cavern”

by Tom Massie

I was on the morning crew of the #2 dredge team and our shift was over after our afternoon lunch hour. One afternoon I noticed an 1800's map nailed to a tree that had all the placer deposits which were found in the area in the 1800's. Looking at the area around Pine Log on the map, I noticed a stream marked “Marble Caves.” Wondering if there were really caves there and where they might be, I figured their general location and decided later that afternoon to hike out and look at them.

I went up the side of the hill, following the creek bed as it twisted and turned through the gully. As I walked, I cautiously ignored two rattle snakes perched beside a small pool of water in the bottom of the stream bed. The stream had dried up but there were pools of water large enough for me to put my pan in and test some of the bench material. Further up, I was tempted by two or three colors here and there... but my main thought was to find the caves.

I hiked all the way to the top of the ridge but still didn't find any caves-or anything that resembles caves. I knew the California and the Moaning Caved were located in this general area but the map was vague and I knew my chances of actually finding the Marble Caves were getting pretty remote.

From the top of the ridge, I could see a gully that ran down the other side of the ridge. Thinking that I could find the caves, and possibly do some prospecting in the process, I started down the gully. I came across an area with outcroppings of quartz so I picked and took samples. I worked my way across the hillside and noticed a small cave opening. It was maybe two feet high and three feet across. Equipped with a flashlight and lots of batteries I was prepared to find the caves, any caves...a cave! Low and behold! I did. I shone the flashlight through the opening into the darkness but couldn't determine just how deep the cave was.

After seeing the two rattle snakes previously, I was real cautious. The opening was too small for me to enter so I had to lie on my back and inch my way in feet first. If there were snakes inside I would rather be bitten on the leg instead of the head. I threw some rocks in ahead of me hoping to scare anything that might be inside. Nothing stirred, So I decided to proceed. I scurried in and shone my light around the cave which seemed to run in a downward slop. As I advanced, I noticed that... yes indeed... this was not just a cave but a rather large cave!

I thought to myself, “My gosh, I've really found it.” I went farther into the cave to see stalactites hanging from the roof, and stalagmite deposits on the floor. I could see large columns and chambers. Sometimes I had to crouch down to barely squeeze through a gap or opening; whereupon I'd fond myself in a large room. Shining my

flashlight up into the air, I could see nothing but darkness, not even the roof. I came across small pools of water, And though this was summertime and the dry season, I could see areas where there had once been water.

Moving from room to room, climbing up and down, and around each corner, not knowing what was there or what I would find, I went deeper into the cave and found some rock crystals and column after column of different rock formations. In one room, I began to notice that the air was getting a little heavy. I could feel that I was getting short of breath, even though I had not been exerting myself very much. At this point I checked my watch - six o'clock. Oh No! I decided that I had better turn back. As I turned to leave it hit me - like I'd been shot by a heavy caliber rifle - that in the excitement of my actually finding the caves, I had not been marking them as I explored. Now looking back at this task before me, I know I was in trouble.

I carefully started trying to retrace my steps, exactly as I had come in. It was easy at first but the further I traveled, the harder and harder it became to make the right decisions about my direction back. I knew that one wrong decision would mean not being able to get out. At one particular junction, I couldn't make up my mind. I stopped, turned off my flashlight to save battery power and sat in the dark. Using all the memory power I could muster, I tried to remember which way I had come.

I came up with a plan. I'd been playing poker the night before back in Pine Log and my pockets were full or change. I decided that I'd drop quarters and nickels and face the heads in the direction I was traveling so that, if I should return back to an area, I would know it by the coins on the floor. I got up and turned my flashlight on. I dropped a nickel on the ground, pointed the head forward and started out. Checking my watch, I estimated that I had entered the cave approximately three o'clock. It was now six o'clock so it should take me about the same amount of time to get back out.

I had been traveling about two hours when I came across a pool of water that I was sure I'd seen on the way in. I ran across particular land marks that were familiar so I knew I had to be getting closer and closer to the end of the cave... I finally reached it!

As I climbed out of the small hole into the moonlight, I was relieved. I had made it. I had finally come out. I staggered back down through the darkness to the camp. On my way down, I thought about were I could find some fishing line to drop behind me for my return trip.

Article by Tom Massie, host of Gold Fever

The new **Washington Gold and Fish** pamphlet is now available. You must have it with you whenever you prospect in the state of Washington.

Download a copy to print here: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/hpa/types/prospecting>



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