



# The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPAA Portland, Oregon Chapter



December, 2021

A few years ago the club received a collection of articles related to treasures around the country. In this month's issue I've included a few of them that may be of interest. They aren't recent articles.

## Mineral Discovery Hamstrung In Western Oregon

Statement of S. H. WILLISTON  
President, Oregon Mining Association

**T**HE mining industry in the State of Oregon comes under the category of small business as none of the mines in the State employs in excess of 100 men. The mining industry of the State has had two tasks placed before it. One is the procuring of strategic and critical minerals during the war period. That job has been finished and the State has provided appreciable amounts of strategic and critical minerals for the war

mineral district.

### Order Killed War Mineral Production

You will note that this withdrawal of mineral lands for prospecting and mineral location was made in the summer of 1943 when the general outlook in regard to the prosecution of the war was far less promising than it is today. At that time, every effort was being made to expand mineral production in all categories, especially in the strategic and critical minerals most important to the prosecution of the war. It was at this very moment when it was thought that additional mineral supplies were most crucial that the Land Office, at the direction of an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, closed all of these mineral lands to location.

If an individual producer had at this time shut down an operating metal-producing property and had refused to produce addi-

tional metal, the action would have been considered treason, and the property would have been confiscated by the Government and operated by the Government. If any labor union had refused to produce mineral necessary for the war effort at this time, public sentiment would have been so overpowering as to force them to withdraw from any such action. Yet at this very instant, a branch of the Department of the Interior withdrew these lands and prohibited prospecting, development, or mining upon them. If it is treason for an individual or treason for a labor organization, what should it be called when ordered by a branch of the Federal Government?

### Passage of Cordon Bill Necessary

Unless this action of the Land Office, by direction of the Department of the Interior, is altered or unless Senate Bill 1982, introduced by Senator Guy Cordon of Oregon is passed, it is going to be impossible for the mining industry to enlarge in any way its activities in Oregon's important southwest

mining district. Further, unless the Congress of the United States freezes the Government stockpile of strategic and critical metals, it will be impossible for any metal mining operation in the State of Oregon, with the exception of gold, to operate at all in the post-war period.

# Secretary's Report November 21, 2021

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Milwaukie Grange Hall  
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The meeting was called to order at 1:30 P.M. by President Mike Lewis who also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Attendance** - 35 attendees and 1 guest were present.

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

**Treasury Report** - There was no Treasury Report read this month.

**Club Bylaws** - Jim Erwin had the first meeting at his house about the changes involving the club Bylaws. One of the things discussed was that we need a Membership Chairman who would be in charge of communicating with the GPAA and bringing in the monthly sign up sheets and keeping them updated. If anyone is interested in doing this let Jim or Mike know. There will be a few more meetings in the near future with the next meeting at Mike's house.

**Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show 2022** - We are still needing people to volunteer for the show which will be on February 16th until the 20th. We will need about 4 people to volunteer per shift with 3 shifts per day. We will have an 8 X 10 foot booth and be doing panning demonstrations and selling various stuff like Gold Pans, Vials, Snuffer Bottles and bags of Dirt. We will also have a Gold Nugget to raffle off. We are hoping to increase our membership by getting the word out about our club and also make some money. Parking for the event will be \$12 per day. There is a sign up sheet for anybody interested in volunteering.

**GPAA Gold Show 2022** - The Portland Gold Show is April 8th, 9th.

and 10th. Kevin Hoagland from the GPAA is looking for 10 people to manage the Portland Oregon and Puyallup Washington shows. The Puyallup Show will be on March 25th, 26th. and 27th. You will be compensated for mileage, hotel and food but not sure how much at this time. Anyone interested can contact Jim for more details.

### Surprise from one of our Members

It's always a nice surprise when Morris comes to one of our meetings considering he lives over in Eastern Oregon and it's a long drive for him to get here. As usual, he brought us a bunch of Huckleberry Jam which is so delicious. He also brought a bunch of buckets of TyRoy dirt for anyone that wanted some and a bunch of empty buckets for people to have. He kept us entertained by telling us a couple Gold stories. We all appreciate everything that he does for our club. We were sad to hear of his wife's passing last month and are keeping him in our prayers during this difficult time. There is a card for him for anyone that wants to sign it.

**Election** - Election Day is here! Everybody grab a Ballot and vote.

The results are:

President - Mike Lewis.  
Vice President - Cindy Wright.  
Treasurer - Jim Erwin.  
Secretary - Yolande Kragerud.  
Claims Director - Jerry Johns and Mike Lewis.

2 Year Board Members:  
Mark Kirk, Kelly Huffman,  
Charlie Foster Richard Ruth.

1 Year Board Members:  
Rocky Tester, Samuel Garcia, Steven Kragerud and Joe Weber. Board Members at Large - Larry Sharp and Gene Howard.

*Secretary's Report cont. on pg. 3*



# PRESIDENT'S BLOG

December, 2021

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday!

Gretchen and I are camping at the coast near Neskowin, just north of Lincoln City. We had a quiet Thanksgiving as we were both under the weather. However, we feel much better now and have been enjoying the variety of weather – including torrential rain, wind and sun! The dog is enjoying time at the beach, and we have been visiting places we haven't seen in a few years.

Thank you to everyone who attended the November chapter meeting, and thank you for participating in the election. The Officers and Board Members are looking forward to a more active chapter in 2022.

As discussed at the November chapter meeting, there has been some interest shown in participating in The Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show, which will be held at the Portland Expo Center from February 16-February 20, 2022. There will be a sign-up sheet at the monthly chapter meetings for people interested in working at the PGPI booth at the show. Jim Erwin is coordinating this effort, subject to having enough volunteers.

Also as discussed at the November chapter meeting, one of our main sources of income for the chapter is the GPAA Gold and Treasure Show, which was canceled for the last two years, due to Covid. It will also be held at the Portland Expo Center on April 9th and 10th, with set-up on April 8th, 2022. There

will be a sign-up sheet at the monthly meetings. Jim Erwin, with assistance from Jerry Johns, is also coordinating this effort. Please note we are the lead chapter since the show is in Portland in 2022. The Southwest Washington Gold Prospectors chapter and the Mid-Valley Gold Prospectors chapter are also helping with the show. The next meeting on the 2022 GPAA Gold and Treasure Show will be **January 23, 2022 at 1PM**, at the Southwest Washington Gold Prospectors meeting location: Minnehaha Grange Hall, 4905 NE St. Johns Road, Vancouver, WA 98661

Lastly, if there are enough people interested in having a potluck in 2022, we are looking at the March meeting to hold the event. There will be a sign-up sheet at the monthly meetings. We will also need assistance in setting up and taking down the tables, chairs, etc. I will discuss this more at the December chapter meeting.

I look forward to seeing you at the December chapter meeting.

Happy Prospecting and Happy Holidays!!

Thank you!

*Mike*

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*Secretary's Report cont. from pg. 2*

**Chinook Winds Resort Raffle Tickets** - We are still selling tickets for the Raffle. The drawing will be held at the annual Banquet which will probably be held in March next year. Tickets are \$1 or 6 for \$5. This is a great package deal which includes lodging, meals and golf. Grab up some tickets while they last!

**Raffle** - The Raffle was held with \$1 and \$5 tickets. Rocky Tester was the lucky winner of the Gold Bag. Zeke Krueger was the lucky winner of the Gold Nugget.

Please keep Oly Swenson in your prayers as he is recovering from a stroke. We are hoping that he has a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Yolande Kragerud, Secretary.





# Mexico--Treasure hunters' paradise

By JACK RUTLEDGE

MEXICO CITY—(AP)—Buried treasure. Gold, silver, emeralds, jade, pearls, forgotten mines, pieces-of-eight, doubloons, ancient coins.

Mexico has them all, well hidden but waiting some smart—or lucky—adventurer willing to gamble.

Mexico's very past makes it a natural breeding ground for lost treasures:

The Aztecs and Mayans with fantastic fortunes accumulated before America was discovered; the Spanish conquistadors who looted and sometimes lost their loot; the galleons with cargoes of gold, silver and jewels sailing from home but sinking off the country's treacherous coastline.

Later, the hectic days of the Revolution when the wealthy hid their fortunes and died before telling kin where to find them; the bandit era during which even Pancho Villa is believed to have buried fortunes.

And throughout these centuries, men found rich mines, jealously guarded their locations—and died or disappeared. The mines are still there.

The magazine "Mexico This Month" recently devoted almost an entire issue to lost treasures. Here are just a few:

**MOCTEZUMA'S** lost treasure—Axayacatl, father of the last Aztec emperor, accumulated the fantastic hoard. Moctezuma sealed it up in his palace. When the Spaniards invaded Mexico and took the Aztec capital, they found the treasure,

stole much of it. Fleeing before frantic Aztecs, the Spanish soldiers lugged all they could carry. But many were so greedy their loads were more than they could handle, and they drowned in the surrounding canals. The Aztecs recovered much of it, buried it. This hoard, and more of the Aztec treasures never discovered, is still there. Somewhere. Some say in the Valley of Toluca.

**QUETZALCOATL'S** fortune—This dates back into legendary days before Moctezuma. Quetzalcoatl was an Aztec god whose wealth could not be estimated. It was buried in a place described as Atecapanamocho, to this day a mystery. But it is thought to be near Tula.

**THE CONDOY TRIBAL** treasure—The powerful chief Condoy buried his tribe's fortune in a cave during a major battle with the Zapotecs. He lost, the treasure was lost, too. It is in Oaxaca, somewhere in the mountains known as Zempoaltepeque.

**THE SACRED WELL** of Chichen Itza—To appease the Rain god, the Mayans hurled human sacrifices carrying valuable ornaments and jewelry into a deep sacred well. Some of this treasure has been found, and is in the Peabody museum of Harvard university. Much remains undiscovered.

**TREASURE** IS believed to exist near all the old ruins—and many ruins have not even been found in Mexico's jungles and isolated mountain areas.

But not all of the nation's hidden wealth dates back to archaeological or conquest days.

Pirate chests exist, and many have been found. During the Revolution, wealthy men buried their possessions, dropped them in wells, or sealed them in the thick walls of their haciendas.

More definite, and easier to find but harder to recover, are the treasures that went down to the sea in ships—and then sank.

**Harry E. Rieseberg**, self-identified as a deep-sea treasure salvor, lists these, among others:

The steamer "Golden City" sank off the coast of Baja California Feb. 22, 1870, with \$500,000 plus a valuable general cargo.

The "Golden Gate" lies some 400 feet off Manzanillo, under 20 fathoms of water, with gold bullion and silver specie originally totalling \$1,500,000. It sank in 1862. About \$500,000 was recovered by a small expedition, the rest remains under 15 feet of sand. Included in the treasure are \$35,000 in rare octagonal \$50 U.S. gold coins, minted just once and discontinued. They're said to be worth about \$165 each now.

**BUT LONG** before these days, older treasure-laden ships went to the bottom along Mexico's Gulf and Pacific coasts. There was the Spanish galleon "Bueno Jesus" enroute to Madrid in 1596, deliberately sunk near Puerto Morelos, Yucatan, to prevent capture by pirates. It is supposed to hold millions.

Texans will be interested in close-to-home buried treasure—in the so-called "Graveyard of the Rio Grande."

The border stream was once not only navigable but heavily used. And many a ship went down in its twisting, treacher-

ous currents.

The sidewheeler steamer "Lea" sank in 1880 during a storm, foundered not far from Brownsville, Tex. It carried \$100,000, is supposedly still there.

The sternwheel steamer "Carrie A. Thomas" sank on June 15 of the same year when she struck a snag about

24 miles below Rio Grande City. It had \$80,000.

The "Jessie" out of New Orleans, stranded and later sank on a bar at the mouth of the river. It had a cargo of \$70,000 in gold and silver.

Buried treasure. Gold, silver, emeralds, forgotten mines...

Mexico has them all, well hidden but waiting.



# SECRET OF SKELETON ROCK

A blind man tried to find his cache, using the eyes of a young companion. He failed—and the Army payroll is still in some sand-filled crevice

By ELTON CAREY

Photos Courtesy Author



Skeleton Rock, twenty-five miles south of Prineville. At right, top of rock where skeleton was found.



IN 1925, when I was fifteen, my older brother Wayne and I rented a ranch from our uncle and proceeded to go into business, raising hay and grain. The place we rented is located on the upper Crooked River, in Crook County, Oregon, about twenty miles south of Prineville, which is the oldest town in the central Oregon country.

At this place the river runs through a wide fertile valley. About midway on this ranch is a creek running into the river from the south, called Sanford Creek. Both the creek and the river are quite heavily lined with a lush growth of willows. Set back a little from this juncture, and rising directly from the valley floor, is a very steep fat-topped hill. On the back side of the hill from the river there is only a short steep pitch of about fifty feet and then the hill slopes out into the foothills.

The top of this hill is covered by a jumble of lava rocks which have split into tiers as if they had been piled up by a stone mason. In some places the tiers have tilted and formed crevices which have since partially filled with sand to form little paths. The top is about an acre in size, and is nearly oval in shape. Coming up from the shallow side, the rocks have split to form a steep trail which goes up and directly across the middle of the rock. The rock is also split on the steep side and it is possible to climb from the steep side to the flat below. It is about 150 feet to the bottom.

One day in August my brother and I were finishing the last of the hay hauling, when late in the afternoon we saw an old covered wagon coming up the road. A covered wagon was a thing you seldom saw in that country, even in 1925, so we watched with much curiosity when it turned in at our gate.

When it approached where we were working, we saw that one man was very old, with a long white beard. The driver was a man about my brother's age. When they reached us the young fellow came over and asked if they could camp by the hill across the river. My brother said, "Sure, camp any place you want

and stay as long as you wish." The stranger thanked us and they drove on across the river.

After they had driven away, we discussed how odd the old man had acted. He did not look around him like a person in a strange place usually will, nor did he show any interest in what was going on.

We finished hauling the last of the hay to the stack and went on home.

It was in the morning, two days later, when we got back over to the place. When we came up to the gate we saw that the campers were preparing to leave, so we rode over where they were.

After we talked a little, the young man motioned us to follow him and led us out of the old man's hearing. And then he told us this story.

IT WAS back in the year 1870, when a young man named John Holt, and a friend called Jack, decided to make their fortunes in one bold try. So together they held up the mail stage carrying the army payroll to the forts in southern Oregon and northern California. In 1870, the army had its camps and forts spread from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. And from the Canadian border to the border of Mexico. Many of these outposts, such as Fort Klamath and Camp Pendleton in Oregon, were supplied by army wagons or by stage lines which carried weary travelers and the United States mail. The roads ran through country which was uninhabited or very sparsely settled. Under such conditions the stages were always subject to Indian attack, or became the prey of that era's holdup artists.

There was a shipment of gold on the stage, besides the payroll. Altogether it was supposed to amount to about \$50,000. In the course of the holdup Jack shot and killed the guard.

They loaded the mail sacks and the strong box on their horses and headed across country to the west. They planned to lose their tracks in the Crooked River breaks, then cross the desert country to the west and drift into the settlements

in the Willamette Valley where strangers and gold were nothing new. The one thing they failed to consider was Indians.

Late in the afternoon on their second day of flight, they were riding along slowly, resting their horses, when they came out onto the top of a hill overlooking a deep canyon. They could see patches of willow and brush in the bottoms and were glad to be nearing water and grass for the horses. Farther down, the canyon widened out and they knew they were coming to the Crooked River Valley, where they might be able to lose their tracks. An army patrol would soon be in pursuit of them.

Their elation was short lived, for when they started down into the canyon they were brought up short by the blood-curdling yells of a small war party of raiding Indians, who liked nothing better than to catch a couple of white men out by themselves.

The two men took one look back at the Indians and knew their only chance lay in getting down into the brush of the creek bottom and following the creek toward the river in hopes they could find a place to hole up.

Though their horses were tired, they gained a little on the Indians in their run down the hill. Their horses were better than the Indian ponies and were grain fed for this ride.

Though the outlaws had some close calls, they managed to keep ahead of the Indians and get into the creek bottom, which they followed to the valley where the creek and the river joined.

Just short of the river was a round steep hill jutting up from the valley floor. On the side next to them a horse could be ridden up to the caprock which covered the top of the hill. If they were lucky maybe they could save the horses.

Both the Indians who were following them and some who were flanking them began shooting wildly, fearing their prey might get away. The horses seemed to sense the urgency of the riders, for they put on a last burst of speed as they raced up the slope to the rock wall; but just short of the wall John's horse was shot. He snatched the saddle bags from his saddle and followed Jack up to the rock wall which covered the top of the hill.

The horses were abandoned and the pair started climbing up the crevasse which led over the top. Just before they reached the top, Jack was hit by a bullet and John had to help him over the top. He then ran down and brought up the mail sacks and the gold, but before he got over the wall again he received a



flesh wound in the thigh. It was not a dangerous wound, but was quite painful.

They were able to stave off the Indian attack which followed, and the Indians drew back and surrounded the hill but did not attack again. Before the day was gone, Jack died from his wound. John hid the gold and the mail sacks, and also hid the body of his partner to keep the Indians from knowing he had been killed. When darkness came he slipped out of the rocks and escaped up the willow-lined river.

The next day he reached the small settlement now called Prineville, where he had his wound dressed; but before he could acquire a horse and go back for the holdup loot an army patrol rode in. When they learned a wounded man was in town, they became suspicious and he was placed under arrest.

When John came to trial, there were witnesses who recognized him as one of the holdup men who robbed the stage and he was sent to the pen for life.

John was a good prisoner who found life behind bars not too hard, but when he was about sixty he began losing his eyesight. At the age of seventy he was completely blind.

In 1923 John Holt was given a pardon and at last found himself free to go pick up the treasure he had buried nearly forty years before.

When John finally found a man he could trust, they got together a wagon and team, and in the month of August, 1925, they arrived at the place on Crooked River where he had lost his partner and almost had lost his life.

**THE MAN** John had hired was the young fellow who told us this story. When he and the blind man got up on the rock the young man was unable to find the place the old man described as where he had buried the treasure and the body of his partner. After two days of searching they were giving up for they could not be sure if this were even the right rock. And the young man was beginning to doubt the old man's story. So they got in the wagon and drove away, and we never saw either of them again.

Of course my brother and I lost no time in getting up on the rock with a pick and shovel. After a thorough search we decided to dig in one of the crevices half filled with sand and grown over with rye-grass. We had dug only a foot or so when we began to find human teeth, then we found rib and arm bones, but no bones from the lower part of the skeleton.

We found pieces of rotting wood, and steel straps made from old horseshoes which could have been used to strengthen a strong box, but when we had dug as deep as we could go in the crevice we still had found no treasure. We searched other places over the top of the rock but never found the other half of the skeleton. Of course we didn't find the treasure either. But I still believe it is there—for someone. While our uncle lived, we never told the story for he did not want people digging all over the

place.

It was thirty years later, after I moved to Arizona, that I read in a book, *Frontier Wars of America*, where in 1870 a stage carrying the army payroll to southern Oregon and northern California, was held up and robbed of the payroll which was never recovered. This account seemed to confirm the old man's story. So some day I hope to go back and again search the rock which was called Skeleton Rock after we found the bones buried there.

The spot is partly surrounded by water now, for the government built a large dam a few miles below, and water backs up beyond the rock. However, the part I am interested in is still there, well above the water line, with its horde of gold buried in some crevice. Maybe when I find the other half of a body, covered with rock and sand, I'll learn the secret of Skeleton Rock.

### Defeating the King of the Prairies

(Continued from page 15)

not ones to let panic take over for long. He forced himself to completely relax for a few moments and calmly survey the problem. There seemed to be no other way to extricate himself except by brute strength. In a deliberate manner, gritting his teeth, he exerted every ounce of strength to force his broad shoulders back past the entrapping outcrop of rock. It took him a long time. His shoulders were torn and bleeding. Often he was forced to rest, clenching his teeth against the pain and attempting to control his gasping breath.



"Wolfer" Allen Stagg who, in later years, never tired of telling about nervy little "Rim-Fire."

Later, in the laconic manner of the day, he told friends only that, "I had to work for an hour or two before I could get out."

**WOLFING** had its moments of humor too. Stagg, in later years, never tired of telling with admiration, a tender-foot's experience at Still Hunting.

"Rim-Fire" was what they called him, a skinny, meek-mannered compuncher who showed up at the XIT one day in 1897 in search of a job. As a joke, Stagg took the timid-appearing little man with him one day on a Still Hunt.

They hadn't ridden far when a newly-dug wolf den was sighted. Its opening was small—too small for Stagg's broad shoulders. Much to the wolfer's surprise, Rim-Fire volunteered to crawl inside for a look-around.

Chuckling with the anticipated result, Stagg obligingly lit a candle for his small companion, then watched him wriggle into the dark opening and vanish into the darkness. Explosive results weren't long in coming. Rim-Fire's legs and feet suddenly erupted from the hole in a frantic retreat.

"My God, there's a wildcat down in there!" he gasped.

Stagg, trying to control the laughter welling up inside him, explained with a straight face that the animal was a lobo wolf, not a wildcat, and that if they didn't shoot it now, it would change dens during the night and escape.

Rim-Fire was made of much sterner stuff than his outward appearance indicated. After staring speculatively at Stagg for a few moments, he grimly relit the candle, grasped the rifle and crawled back down the hole.

In a few minutes Stagg heard the muffled report of the gun. Shortly afterward Rim-Fire's posterior reappeared at the den opening. Without a word he lit the candle again and crawled back into the blackness. Another shot was heard.

"That damned lobo is still alive and staring at me."

Back again went the plucky little man, but this time without the rifle. When he reappeared he was dragging, by its hind legs, a huge, snarling wolf which probably outweighed him by twenty-five pounds. The lobo had been lying with its back to Rim-Fire, staring at the intruder over its shoulder. The two shots had merely broken its hind leg.

By the time Stagg had recovered his wits, Rim-Fire had set upon the wolf with rocks, quickly killing the animal.

To Stagg, who later became a lawman and witnessed countless deeds of courage, the episode of little Rim-Fire always stood out in his mind as the ultimate in pure, dogged bravery.

"I knew there was no danger, but he didn't," he often recalled. "I thought his act was about the nerviest thing I ever saw. He didn't know what would happen to him in that hole."

Due to the relentless Stagg and other wolfers, the lobo problem swiftly decreased in northwest Texas.

"In 1896 I killed eighty-four lobos and can take credit for cleaning up the wolves along the Canadian River," said Stagg matter-of-factly.

Although a few lonely wolves still inhabited the breaks for a number of years, they never again imposed a great dollars-and-cents threat to cattlemen along the Canadian. The last lobo reported killed in the area was in 1917.



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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