

The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPAA Portland, Oregon Chapter



September, 2022

RANDOLPH, COOS COUNTY; 1840s, 1850s:

Is Treasure Of Lucky Beach Gold Miners Still Out There?

By Finn J.D. John

May 1, 2022

IMAGINE YOU'RE A gold prospector from the Willamette Valley, on your way to the California gold fields in the first year of the 1848 gold rush.

You're a little late to the party, and you've chosen to try to reach the gold fields in a somewhat unusual way: By going over the Coast Range to the beach, and traveling south along the coast.

As you make your way southward by the great ocean, you reach a broad expanse of black sand. And when the sun hits it just right, you can see it's actually glittering ... with tiny flakes and grains of gold.



An aerial photo of the town of Gold Beach, at the mouth of the Rogue River, probably made sometime before the Second World War. The Rogue is the source of the gold-bearing black sands on the nearby beaches, after which the town was named. (Image: Postcard)

You're all alone on the beach. There aren't even any other footprints. Apparently nobody else was crazy enough to try to travel to the gold fields via Coos Bay. Everyone else in the area, such as there are, has decamped inland to the gold fields.

It's just you, on the uninhabited edge of a continent, crunching a trillion dollars' worth of gold under your feet.

SUCH WAS THE situation in which the Grouleaux brothers, Charles and Peter, found themselves in in the spring of 1849, near the mouth of the Coquille River in what today is Douglas County.

(By the way, the Grouleaux brothers are called "John and Peter Groslius" in some sources.)

Naturally, the brothers abandoned all ideas of going to California now. They settled in and got busy separating the yellow gold from the black sand — pounds and pounds of it.

They had brought plenty of provisions with them for the journey, and the hunting was good; so they were able to live all summer without leaving their diggings. As their flour sacks were emptied of food, they were promptly filled with "flour gold" from the beach. And at the end of the summer, they returned home to the Willamette Valley, their pack animals creaking under the weight of hundreds of pounds of pure gold. They were now both rich men.

Lots of miners had come back from California with gold, so the brothers' sudden wealth didn't attract much attention. Nor did their calculated vagueness when telling friends and neighbors where they'd spent their summer arouse any suspicions. All miners were like that. Nobody wanted to tell a bunch of potential claim jumpers where they had their stakes planted. Possession was nine tenths of the law, and anyway plenty of people in 1849 were perfectly willing to commit a secret murder on a lonely stretch of trail to seize control of a lucrative claim.

Continued on pg. 3

Editor's Note:

I was recently introduced to the Offbeat Oregon podcast narrated by Finn J.D. John. It is a very informative and entertaining series of stories of Oregon's History. This article was published in May of this year.

I highly recommend giving him a listen!

Secretary's Report August 21, 2022

Milwaukie Grange Hall
12015 SE 22nd Ave.
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

2022 Portland Gold Prospectors Board of Directors

President:

Mike Lewis 503-413-9283
gmlewis238@msn.com

Vice President:

Cindy Wright 503-701-3073
wc1378@q.com

Treasurer:

Jim Erwin 503-519-6200
jimerwin223@gmail.com

Secretary:

Yolanda Kragerud 503-775-0886
YKragerud@yahoo.com

2 Year Board Members:

Mark Kirk
mvkirk@frontier.com
Kelly Huffman 503-688-3544
huffy54.outlook.com
Charlie Foster 503-630-7669
fostercr@rconnects.com

1 Year Board Members:

Rocky Tester Samuel Garcia
Steve Kragerud Joe Weber

Board Members at Large

Larry Sharp Gene Howard

Claims

Jerry Johns 503-686-9422
jerryjohns@gmail.com

Hospitality:

Elaine Ruth 503-663-9087
richard.ruth5@comcast.net

Newsletter and Website:

Tim Snyder 503-481-1133
WrshpMzshn@gmail.com

Meeting was called to order at 1:30 P.M. by President Mike Lewis who also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendees - 36 attendees and 6 guests were present.

Treasury Report - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasury Report that Jim read for the month of August.

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

Barn Sale - The Barn Sale is being held on August 27th and 28th. It's going to be held out at Jim Erwin's place in Estacada. We still need volunteers to help with pricing items and then working at the sale. We are selling a bunch of Richard Ruth's stuff that Elaine has kindly offered to give us half the money from the Sale. There is a sign up sheet for those interested in volunteering. There will also be a drawing for a Gold Nugget for those that volunteer to help with the event.

New Meeting Location - This is our last meeting here at the Milwaukie

Grange. Our new location starting next month in September is at the Eastridge Church which is located at 14100 S.E. Sunnyside Rd. in Clackamas. This is going to be so nice for us and I myself am really excited for the new change for our club. There are flyers printed out for anyone that needs one with the address and directions of how to get there.

Upcoming Election - It's getting close to that time of the year again. Nominations will be taking place in October for President, Treasurer and 4 one year Board Members positions. The election will then take place in November with the new positions starting in January 2023.

Raffle - The Raffle was held with \$1 and \$5 tickets. Unfortunately, there has been a delay on our order of Gold from our supplier. The winners will get their prizes at our next meeting in September. Jim Erwin was the lucky winner of the Gold Bag. Willy was the lucky winner of the Gold Nugget.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Yolande Kragerud, Secretary



Continued from Page 1

So when the next spring came, the brothers were easily able to slip away from any prying eyes and hurry back to the beach to spend another season making themselves richer.

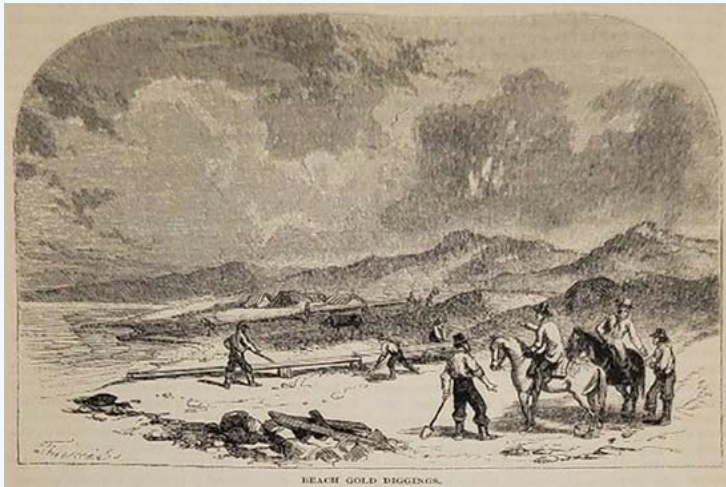
And the same thing happened again the next year. In fact, it wasn't until 1853 that someone got wise and figured out where the brothers were going.

Whoever it was that figured that out was much less discreet than the Grouleaux brothers had been. The word was out almost at once, and a colossal gold rush ensued as miners flocked to the beaches.

"Soon a thousand men milled about on the black sands, staking claims for miles up and down the beach," Ruby El Hult writes in her book. "Cabins, stores, saloons and gambling houses were hastily erected, becoming the boom town of Randolph. Whiskey flowed so freely that the stream along which the best diggings were located became known as Whiskey Run."

Very quickly after that, the Grouleaux brothers sold their claims to two of the newcomers, the McNamara brothers. They cheerfully remarked that they had made enough money off the beach in their first four undisturbed years to last a lifetime.

(They didn't mention any figures, but the McNamara brothers pulled \$80,000 worth out the first year after they bought the claims, and that was after the Grouleaux boys had spent five years skimming the cream.)



This image was published in Harper's Monthly Magazine in 1856, showing gold miners working sluices on the beach near Randolph. (Image: Harper's)

THE BROTHERS PACKED their animals up and set out northward on the Randolph Trail, a beaten path along the Coast Range foothills to Coos Bay that followed roughly the same route as Seven Devils Road today.

But they had \$40,000 worth of gold in their saddlebags, and the two of them were almost celebrities in Randolph. Both of them were very nervous about the possibility that they might be robbed on the trail.

Highway robbery was common there, since the bad guys knew that successful miners had to use the trail to carry their gold out.

So the boys scouted a good spot that they thought they could find again, and cached the gold in two gunpowder cans under a cedar stump.

Then they continued on their way.

Well, you probably have already guessed what happened next. In fine buried-treasure style, they lost track of where they stashed the two cans. Neither of them returned for many years — they already had five years' worth on which to live, and it just didn't seem worth the trouble.

It wasn't until 20 years later, in 1873, that Peter, by then the only surviving brother (Charles had died in England), came back to the Coquille to "withdraw" his gold.

Peter found the entire landscape so utterly changed that he had no idea where to even start looking for the distinctive cedar-tree stump under which he'd stashed the cans. There were places where the Randolph Trail had changed completely, with old sections overgrown and barely discernible; there were other parts that had been burned over by a forest fire, which had destroyed all the snags, stumps, and other dry wood in its path.

Peter got some friends to help him, promising to split the gold with them, but their efforts were in vain. Other members of the Randolph community joined in as well. But, nobody found the gold, and after a decade or so, the whole thing simmered down into one of those little bits of local legend.

FIFTY MORE YEARS went by. Then, in 1922, Peter Grouleaux's granddaughter, Lillie Tully, came to town. She had a try for the gold as well, enlisting the help of a local timber cruiser. But after a year or so of hunting, they too were disappointed.

A few years later, in 1931, a rumor started circulating — a very credible one, later given added weight by an article in the Portland Oregonian newspaper — that the treasure had been found. According to the rumor, a young couple out prospecting had spotted a rusty gun barrel sticking out from under an old stump and investigated. They'd found two old gunpowder cans containing 150 pounds of fine gold. After that, the two had left the area as quickly as possible, because the gold had been on private land and they were afraid if anyone knew where they'd gotten it, the landowner and possibly Lillie Tully would try to claim it.

So, was this rumor true? Maybe. The amount of gold found doesn't quite line up -- 150 pounds of gold at 1853 prices was worth \$51,000, not \$40,000. But even if the rumor was true, it likely wasn't the same gold. Painted metal cans of the type gunpowder was sold in

Continued on Page 4

Continued from Page 3

don't last 75 years in the Coast Range; the containers would have rusted to nothing in just a few decades.

In any case, it remains possible, if not particularly likely, that the contents of the original powder cans are still there, buried under the forest duff in a random spot in the middle of the forest — a cache of fine flour gold that would be worth \$3.7 million today.

But rather than tromping through the forest looking for this bonanza, modern-day gold miners would probably be better advised to head for the beach from which it originally came. The black sands of Oregon's beaches are still full of fine flour

gold, especially in places that are far away from streams and creeks that supply the water needed to pan or sluice them. It's hard work, and not very remunerative; but you can still get gold out of black-sand layers all along the South Coast today, especially in the more southerly, out-of-the-way beaches near Ophir, Pistol River, Port Orford, and of course Gold Beach.

(Sources: *Lost Mines and Treasures*, a book by Ruby El Hult published in 1957 by Binford and Mort; "Beach Gold Diggings," an article by Cain Allen published on the Oregon Historical Society's Website in 2006)

A PICK, A SHOVEL AND PERSEVERANCE

Sam Garcia and his wife recently made a trip to Baker City (OR) for some family business. Since they were relatively close to the PGPI claim near Baker City, they decided to make a trip over to the claim to check it out. Sam took a pick and shovel and some gold pans. He needed the pick and shovel to get material from the pile of paydirt left from this year's outing in June. He found a way to work with the material (which included clay...) so he could pan it out. He definitely found some color, including a gold nugget weighing 18.8 grams! Sam will be at our next chapter meeting – and will be talking about this remarkable and exciting find. Yes, there is gold at the PGPI claim!!!



From Jim Erwin

A few years ago, I was involved in the Fly Fishing industry where I helped a friend who was a factory representative for several fly fishing related companies.

I have accumulated tons of fly tying items, and quite a few rods and reels. I am trying to get rid of those items and will have a booth at the Fly Tying Expo, in Albany March 10 and 11, with set up March 9.

If anyone is interested in helping with this, I will pay lodging and meals for helping in the booth.

Please let me know by calling 503-519-6200 or emailing me at jimerwin223@gmail.com.

Also, please consider helping with Richard Ruth's barn sale at my house August 27 and 28th. We will have set up Monday August 22. We need help and would appreciate members helping on any of the three days. . You can notify me at the above, or call Mike at 503-413-9238 to volunteer.

PGPI ELECTIONS 2022

Elections are coming up in November, with nominations at the October Chapter Meeting. (Only members of PGPI can vote) The following positions are up for nominations:

President – 1-year term*

Vice President – 2-year term

Treasurer – 2-year term

4 Board Members – 2-year term

1 Board Member – 1 year term*

*The one-year term will go back to a 2-year term at the end of 2023 to return to compliance with the PGPI By-Laws.

Please give consideration to running for one of the positions referenced above so we can keep the chapter active. Thank you.

PORTLAND GOLD PROSPECTORS, INC.

PRESIDENT'S BLOG

SEPTEMBER, 2022

On August 27th and 28th, PGPI held a "Barn Sale" at Jim Erwin's. The primary purpose of the Barn Sale was to sell the items retrieved from Richard Ruth's (4) sheds. The proceeds from the sale of those items will be split 50/50 with Elaine Ruth, Richard's widow. We had a good turn-out of buyers and enough help from the club, which is **TRULY APPRECIATED**. The use of Jim's barn was great because everything was inside – so regardless of the weather, we were ready to go. We did very well on the sale – the proceeds will be discussed at the September Chapter Meeting.

THANK YOU AGAIN TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED WITH THE SET-UP AND SALE, AND THANK YOU TO JIM FOR GETTING THIS PROJECT GOING, THE USE OF HIS BARN, GETTING THE TABLES TO DISPLAY EVERYTHING AND FOR HIS (AND CAROL'S) HOSPITALITY.

THANK YOU TOO TO ROCKY FOR RUNNING MATERIAL THROUGH HIS CUBE AND TO CINDY FOR PANNING OUT THE MATERIAL. People attending the sale really enjoyed both demonstrations!!

➔ Because we have left-over items, Jim has advised that he will leave the remaining items setup for another "Barn Sale" on October 22nd and 23rd. More to come in October regarding the sale in October.

➔ Please remember that we have a new meeting venue starting with the September 18, 2022 Chapter Meeting: **EASTRIDGE CHURCH, 14100 SE SUNNYSIDE ROAD, CLACKAMAS, OREGON 97015**. Depending on which direction you are coming from, go out SE Sunnyside Road in Clackamas to SE 142nd. Turn South on SE 142nd – The church is at the first driveway on the west side of SE 142nd

We hope everyone will come to the new meeting location, starting with the September Chapter Meeting.

Chapter meetings are on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 1:30PM.

>Please remember that Tim Snyder, who creates the chapter's monthly newsletters and handles the club's social media accounts and website, is interested in any stories related to prospecting from anyone in the club for publication in the newsletter. You can forward your story/information to Tim via email at wrshpmzshn@gmail.com

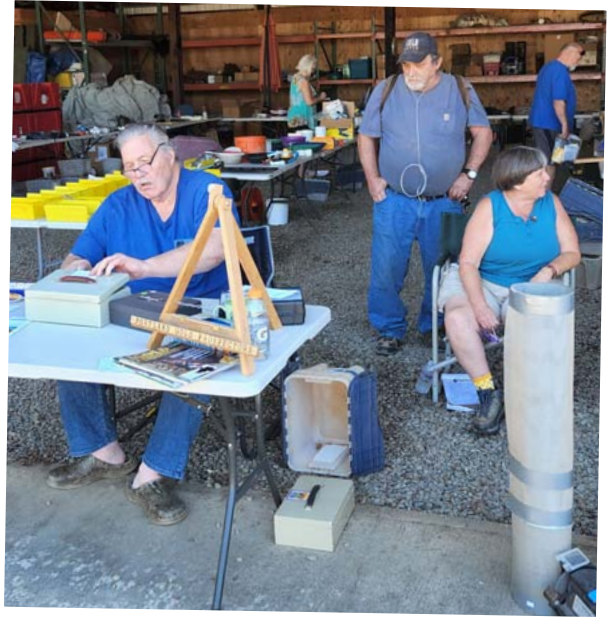
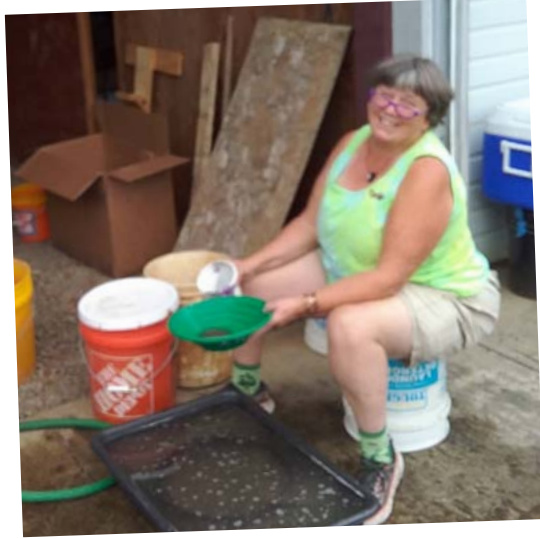
>We also want to invite anyone at our meetings who has an interesting story to tell or something about prospecting to demonstrate or wants to show what they have found while prospecting, etc.– to let me know so we can either make time during the meeting or schedule time at the next meeting.

Hope to see you at the September's meeting! Thank you and Happy Prospecting!

Mike

Mike Lewis, President
Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.
503-413-9283
gmlewis238@msn.com

Photos from the Richard Ruth Barn Sale August 27 & 28



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>



Sponsors and Member Businesses



**SUMMIT
TRAILER**

Greg Swanson
greg@summittrailerfmfg.com 503-804-8239

4530 NE 148TH AVE
PORTLAND, OR 97230 971-279-2176

971-279-2006 summittrailerfmfg.com

**Prospector's
Treasure Trove**



www.prospectorstreasure.com



**OREGON TRAIL CHAPTER
KOREAN WAR VETERANS**

4TH TUESDAY
OF THE MONTH
12:00 NOON
DENNY'S CLACKAMAS

P.O. BOX 25
GLADSTONE, OREGON
97027
15815 SE 82ND DRIVE



Menziesii Metals
Jewelry & metalwork
Cindy Wright
West Linn, Oregon
503.701.3073
Etsy; MenziesiiMetals



intel
Sponsors of Tomorrow.™



Chinook Winds
CASINO RESORT

1777 NW 44TH STREET • LINCOLN CITY, OREGON 97367-5094
CASINO - 1-888-CHINOOK • (541) 996-5825 • FAX (541) 996-5852
HOTEL - 1-877-4 BEACH 1 • (541) 994-3655
WWW.CHINOOKWINDSCASINO.COM

GOLD RUSH
Trading Post