



The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPAA Portland, Oregon Chapter



November, 2022

SISKIYOU MOUNTAINS, JOSEPHINE COUNTY; 1853:

OREGON HAD INSIDE TRACK ON CALIFORNIA'S GOLD RUSH

Portlanders found out about gold a month before New Yorkers and had a much shorter voyage to get to the gold fields; the state nearly emptied out as everyone who could go went. They got there first, and many of them were lucky.

By Finn J.D. John — November 5, 2009

"Welcome to Oregon: Population 8,779." Has a certain ring to it, doesn't it?

Not even Tom McCall would have welcomed a number that low. But that was the population of the territory of Oregon – including what's now Washington State – according to the census in 1849.

A year earlier, there'd been three times as many people there. But, of course, you know what happened in 1849. Gold was discovered in California and, although there was quite a bit of gold in Oregon too, it hadn't been discovered yet.

So southward flew virtually every Oregon citizen capable of putting dirt in a pan and pouring water over it. Crops rotted in the fields.

For a whole lot of them, though, it was worth it. You see, Oregonians had learned of the gold discovery well before anyone back east. And that was primarily because of a sea captain who made a killing in Portland.

This captain had sailed his ship, the Honolulu, into port the previous July, just a few months after gold was discovered. Portlanders thought it odd that he brought the ship in empty, with nothing to sell to them; a couple months later, ships in ballast coming to Portland to take loads of wheat and other foodstuffs across the sea would be very common, but in mid-1848, they were not.

They found it odder that the captain zipped out and started snapping up every pick and shovel he could find. Then, when it was time to pay for his excavation equipment, they found out what he was up to: He paid for it with gold dust. And he told them where he'd gotten it.

So by the time the New York Herald got the word and announced it for the first time on the Eastern Seaboard

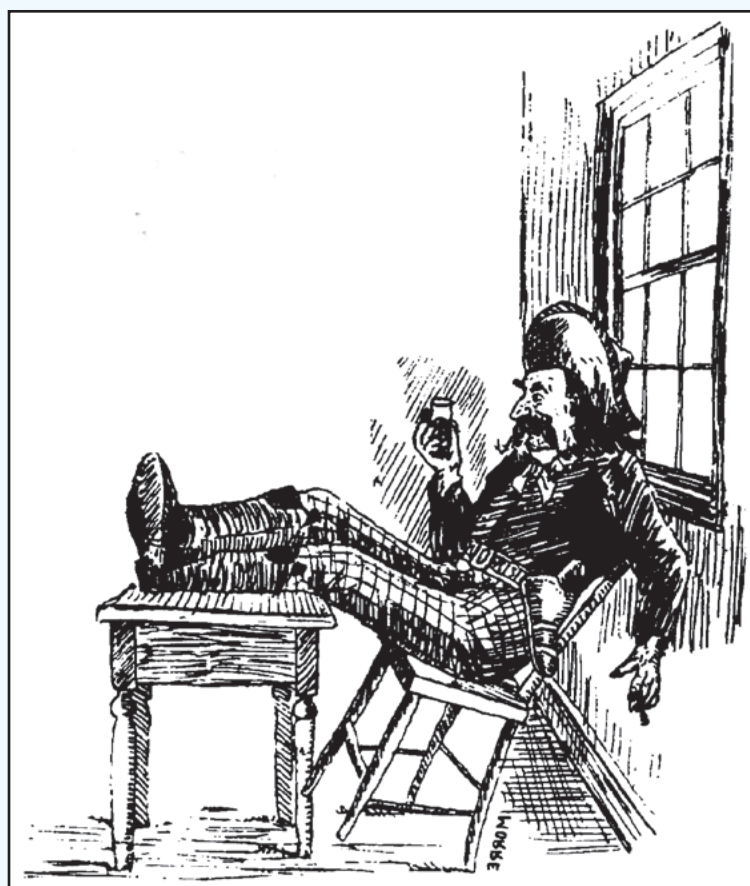


Illustration: Pacific Monthly magazine, 1898

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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 November of 2009.

I highly recommend giving him a listen!

Secretary's Report September 18, 2022

Eastridge Church
14100 SE Sunnyside Rd.
Clackamas, Oregon 97015

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:

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jimerwin223@gmail.com

Secretary:

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mvkirk@frontier.com
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jerryjohns@gmail.com

Hospitality:

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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 - 34 attendees and 4 guests were present.

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

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

Barn Sale - We are needing volunteers again for the upcoming Barn Sale at Jim's house in Estacada. The last sale was very successful and we are hoping this next sale will be also. The sale is October 29th and 30th from 9:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. If anybody wants to bring any of their own stuff to sell just make sure that your name and price is on your stuff and you need to be present. There is a sign up sheet for anybody interested.

Square - We now have our device through Square so we can start accepting payments from credit and debit cards. This is going to be really helpful for our club especially when we are at the Gold Show's, Sportsmen's show's and other venues.

Election Nominations - We had nominations for the upcoming Election in November. We have the President, Treasurer and 5 Board member positions that we need to

fill. We have enough nominees for all the positions except President. It's really important that we get someone to step up and take the President position so that our club can continue and thrive. Mike and Gretchen are more than happy to help someone transition into the position.

Treasure Trove - Dan Roose the owner of Treasure Trove has invited everyone out to his store on Sunday October 23rd for his "Pro's and Con's" event. Gary Sturgill will be a guest speaker and be there doing a demonstration. Go check out Dan's store and do some shopping.

Gold Show 2023 - We are patiently waiting to hear when and where the upcoming Gold Show is going to be next year. It may possibly be in Albany at the Linn County Fairgrounds. We will let everyone know when we find out in the next month or so.

Gold Bags - We have Gold Bags for sale for \$7 if anyone wants to practice their panning skills.

Painting Raffle - We are still selling Raffle tickets for the lovely painting that Ken Diddier painted. Only \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

Raffle - The Raffle was held with \$1 and \$5 tickets. Mark Kirk was the lucky winner of the Gold Bag. Gene Howard was the lucky winner of the Gold Nugget.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Yolande Kragerud, Secretary.



PORTLAND GOLD PROSPECTORS, INC.

PRESIDENT'S BLOG

NOVEMBER, 2022

Thank you to everyone who attended the October Chapter Meeting. It was the second meeting at the Eastridge Church venue.

As mentioned previously, we know it might take some time to work out some of the details, but we are making progress. Thank you to everyone who helped with the set-up and take-down at the meeting, and thank you to everyone who helped with the refreshments and with making sure the Church kitchen was left in good order.

PGPI had a 2nd "Barn Sale" on October 29th and 30th at Jim Erwin's. The primary purpose of the sale was to sell the remaining items retrieved from Richard Ruth's (4) sheds. While we didn't do as well as the first sale, we made a little money, which was split with Elaine Ruth. The remaining items are now stored at Jim Erwin's. We hope to have another sale, perhaps in the spring.

I want to thank Jim again for spearheading this effort, along with Rocky Tester, Cindy Wright, Ken Didier and Kelly Huffman. In addition, thank you to Mark Kirk, Ted Robinson and Bill Woods for their help at the sale. I apologize if I missed anyone. We couldn't do it without everyone's support in putting this event together.

I will be contacting Dan Rouse to see if he is available to give a short presentation at the November Chapter meeting. Dan, who is a member of PGPI, is the owner of Prospector's Treasure Trove in the Beaverton area, which sells equipment for metal detectors, prospectors and rock hounds.

As a reminder, the Chapter will hold its election at the November Chapter Meeting for --Treasurer, 4 two-year Board Members and 1 one-year Board Member. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to fill these positions. No one has shown an interest in being President – yet. I really hope someone (or perhaps it could be Co-Presidents) – steps up to help. Gretchen and I will help with the transition to the new President, to help make sure he/she has the tools and information needed to succeed.

>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 November's meeting! **Thank you and Happy Prospecting!**

Mike

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



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on Aug. 19, Oregonians had already been pouring over the border to the gold fields for a month. By the time the first ships crammed with gold-rushers got to San Francisco Bay eight months later (remember, there was no Panama Canal yet; they had to sail around Patagonia) the Oregonians had already spent most of a very productive summer and autumn scrounging up the “easy pickin’s” and staking out their pick of available claims.



Illustration: Postcard image

When they returned to their neglected farms, these Oregonians brought back millions in gold. But they found the folks who’d stayed behind had done almost as well. One couldn’t eat gold; someone had to grow food, and so many of the people who usually do that were digging for gold that there wasn’t much of it, so prices were astronomical. Ship after ship loaded with Willamette Valley food headed down to San Francisco, and brought back even more gold.

Before 1848, Oregon’s economy, such as it was, was barter-based. The provisional/territorial legislature even voted to make wheat legal tender at one point, and territorial governor George Abernethy gave out special rocks as change at his store – they were known, possibly not fondly, as “Abernethy Rocks.” But once all this gold came pouring in, suddenly business owners needed scales to weigh gold dust, a group of citizens started stamping it into \$5 and \$10 “Beaver money,” and business got quite a lot easier to do.

As the California gold fields filled up with Easterners and treasure-seekers from around the world, most of the Oregonians came home. Some got skunked, but many returned with pockets bulging, and all of them found that they could almost name their price for anything they could grow. Now that mining the mines was no longer particularly profitable, Oregonians found they could do even better by “mining the miners.”

One other thing happened in 1848 as well: Oregon lost its preeminence on the West Coast. In early 1848 there were only 1,000 or so non-Native Americans in

California, and many times that in the Oregon Territory. The following year, the ratios would be reversed. Oregon would never again have a bigger population than its sunnier southerly neighbor.

(Sources: Pintarich, D. “The Oregon Gold Rush,” Great Moments in Oregon History, 42. Portland: New Oregon, 1988; Sullivan, W. Hiking Oregon’s History. Eugene: Navillus, 2006)



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

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