

THE GOLD NUGGET

April 2024

Obituary

Dan McConnell

Dan was a long-time member of the Club and served at several positions to include the Refreshment Table as well as the Registration Table. Dan contributed to the Club in many ways although he wasn't able to attend too many of the Outings due to his job with the City and County of Denver. He was also a bee keeper and was often called out to rescue people from the many ways that bees and wasps can take over your home and property. His wonderful wife Becky was usually at his side in all these adventures and was retired from her job as a school teacher. Dan revised many of our record keeping systems while at the Front Table and those revisions served the Club well for many years. Dan was a very quiet man but also a very good man. He had a keen wit and loved the club dearly. He will be missed immensely. RIP



The Prez Sez..! by Bobby Manning



I hope everyone had a good Easter. It is with great sadness that we lost another member. Dan McConnell passed on March 22. Over the past couple of years, I did miss Dan and Becky at the Registration Table. They were there as long as I have been a member of the Club. He did The Club Card and the membership renewal form. To my fellow prospector, although you're not here with us, you did leave your mark with the Club to carry our Club on. So, you'll always be with us. And I'll see you every time we walk through the door to check in. You helped Bob and Shellie to transition into the position at the membership table, SO, THANK YOU FOR ALL

THAT YOU DID FOR OUR CLUB! And I'll see you in another place and another time!

Kevin did get a speaker from the School of Mines to come talk with the club. Our schedule for the summer will be out soon. I do have tickets for a PLP raffle that I will put up at the table with me for the next meeting on the 17th of April at 7:00pm. So if you have any questions or suggestions, please call me or text me at 303-420-8830. So, keep your pan up and fill it with yellow GOLD!!

Vice President's Corner! by Kevin Singel



Happy springtime everyone! While the spring melt can mean high water in the rivers makes prospecting challenging or even unsafe, it also refreshes the flood gold layers in some of our favorite spots such as Arapahoe Bar, Big Bend and places up in the mountains such as Point Bar (aka Point Barr). If you don't know about these sites, you can read about them on my website:

www.findinggoldincolorado.com

The high water that chases us out of the larger waterways also means great water flows in some of the smaller creeks. Go check out the little gold bearing creeks around town and Find Your Gold that way during this season. Remember, you can always ask my advice on where to dig if you catch me at a meeting!

On another note, I want to thank everyone who signed the petition last month which was focused on stopping the creation of a National Monument on the lower Dolores River. The locals opposed this change, and it would have blocked small miners from filing mining claims. The petition got many, many signatures so I think our voices will be heard. This past month I have been able to get out digging in metro Denver (in a small creek) and on the Eagle River. In both cases, I was able to choose mild weather days and had a great time digging for shiny gold flakes! Your Board of Directors has developed quite a list of outings and adventures for us all for this year so I look forward to hearing all of your stories about prospecting at club meetings and at those outings too! Next month, I will definitely be joining the club prospecting event on 4/13, how about you??

Finally, big thanks to Bill Chapman. As many of you know, he has been one of the premier metal detectorists in Denver for many years. His presentation on counterfeit coins last month certainly was interesting! Honestly, if I find a counterfeit silver coin while metal detecting, I think I will be almost as excited as finding a real one. I do hope the Chinese shut down the counterfeiting factories but I still find it all fascinating and would love one of my own. At the April meeting we will have another interesting speaker so I hope you can make it! Peyton Jackson from the Colorado School of Mines will



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be presenting on the Caribou Gold Mining District (western Boulder County) and on Critical Minerals. It should be fascinating and may give you a few clues on an area worth exploring with your gold pan! Well, until the April outing and meeting, have fun, stay safe and FIND YOUR GOLD!

From the Treasurer/Secretary Ledger by John Johnson



We had a good turnout for the February meeting. We gave away lots of gold nuggets and other door prizes as well. Be sure to buy your gold nugget drawing tickets as well as your 50/50 tickets and tickets for the Special nugget drawing. If you have any door prizes you would wish to donate to the Club Door Prize coffers, be sure and bring those to me as well. I look forward to seeing everyone at the March meeting. See you then!

GOOD NEWS ALL MEMBERS!! YOUR 2024 DUES ARE NOW DUE!!! DUES ARE 40.00 PER YEAR AND IS A FAMILY MEMBERSHIP. DUES FOR NEW MEMBERS JOINING DURING THE YEAR ARE PRORATED, HOWEVER EVERYONE MUST RENEW IN JANUARY EACH YEAR. BE SURE THAT EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS LISTED ON YOUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION IF THEY WILL BE DIGGING WITH YOU. PLEASE FILL OUT A NEW GPR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION IS MAILING IN YOUR DUES. IT IS ATTACHED TO THE EMAIL.

Board Meeting Minutes from Mar 2024

X Bobby Manning	X Andy Doll	X Robert Ahr	X Gordon Smith
X Kevin Singel	X Gary Hamilton	X Roger Schlenger	X Bill Manning
X Mike Stevens	X Erik Von Halle	X John Johnson	X Joe Johnston

Quorum Present: Y

Call to Order by: Pres Manning at 6:03 pm.

Reading and Approval of Minutes: Corrections: none Approved as read/corrected: Moved by: G. Smith; 2nd: R. Ahr.

Treasurer's Report: Questions: None Approved: Moved: Bill Manning; 2nd: K. Singel. Approved on voice vote.

Correspondence: phone calls No info emails No info mail No info.

Webmaster: Total hits No info Hits in last 30 days No info.

Committee Reports:

- G. Hamilton spoke to his survey from last month and how the results were tallied. The board discussed the items that results showed were most important to the members who filled out the surveys. One thing that stood out was the desire for more variety in things offered to the membership. A good start toward that goal is the outings calendar having many more planned events this year. A couple of items need to be finalized and it will be posted on the website before the next meeting. Multiple speakers of various backgrounds are also being lined up to give presentations; addressing another suggestion from the membership.

Unfinished Business:

- President Manning has not received confirmation on the possibility of a panning demo at the upcoming Gem & Mineral Show at the Crowne Plaza hotel. Another report on the status is expected by the next board meeting. He also told the board that purchase of the club gold for the year has now been completed.
- E. Von Halle did not receive the Boy Scout Merit Badge Handbook he ordered in time to report to the board on training Scouts on panning and metal detecting for a badge. He did mention looking into possibly becoming a BSA counselor as only counselors can sign off on a merit badge application. He will report again next month.

New Business:

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Although rare, what liquid can fracture and vaporize within faults during earthquakes, to form gold??

2024 GPR Board of Directors :

President

Bobby Manning

Vice President

Kevin Singel

Secretary/Treasurer

John Johnson

2 Year Board Members

Robert Ahr (2024)

Andy Doll (2024)

Gordon Smith (2024)

1 Year Board Members

Gary Hamilton

Roger Schlenger

Bill Manning

Erik Von Halle

Mike Stevens

Past President

Joe Johnston



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- President Manning reported that he renewed the club website hosting service (Host Gator) for another 10 years in order to capture a \$100 savings. He paid the invoice from his own pocket so will submit a request for reimbursement from the Treasurer. A reminder was made to President Manning that decisions like this should be brought in front of the board going forward and he shouldn't be taking funds out of his own pocket for club expenses.

Planned Outings:

As mentioned above, the Planned Outings calendar is filling in nicely and will be posted to the website soon. Several board members are looking into possible mine tours and will report back to the board next month on availability, group size limits and costs per member.

Board Members Items of Discussion:

G. Smith asked J. Johnson and R. Ahr how membership renewal is progressing. About half the membership has renewed so far. The board then discussed instituting a late penalty. More discussion is needed to choose the amount of the penalty and select when it will start so further discussion is tabled until the next meeting. President Manning will make another announcement tonight to remind members to renew as soon as possible and that the board is planning to implement a late penalty.

Tonight's General Meeting Program: Bill Chapman will speak about counterfeit U.S. coins being introduced into the economy and how to detect them.

Announcements: Next Board Meeting April 17 at 6:00pm Next General Meeting: April 17 at 7:00pm

Adjournment: Meeting stands adjourned at 7 pm.

General Meeting Minutes from Mar 2024

1. Meeting was opened at 7:10 pm by Pres. Manning with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Pres. Manning then announced that the evening Program which was: Member Bill Chapman speaking about counterfeit coins flooding the U.S. to destabilize our economy.
3. Pres. Manning then gave the Metals Report: Gold ___ Silver ___ Platinum ___ Palladium ___ Rhodium ___.
4. Web hits for last month: _____.
5. Treasurer John Johnson reports that the Club remains in the black. Report is available for review by anyone who wishes to see it. We have a 'Special Nugget' tonight so be sure to buy lots of tickets. It is a beautiful specimen.
6. Robert Ahr and Shelly Zornes from the Membership Table reported that we had _____ members in attendance. There were _____ Guest(s) present tonight. New members: 1. The total meeting attendance was _____.
7. Pres. Manning read the 'Question of the Month', which was "What gold rush occurred 50 years before the 1848 California Gold Rush ? The winners will receive an extra ticket to the gold nugget drawings later during the evening program.
8. Pres. Manning advised that there was time to enter items at the break for the 'Finds of the Month' table and that the monthly winners from tonight will need to be saved for the Finds of the Year competition in November, 2024. A reminder to all that their gold submissions need to be weighed dry and only one submission per person per category. Be sure to fill out the entry cards completely. Only finds found within the last 30 days may be submitted.
9. John Johnson announces the 'Cache Clue' # 7.
10. Pres. Manning advised that the Club Store had numerous items for sale. Be sure to drop by at the break and support your Club by buying something. We have some more of our gold bags available so be sure to buy your bags.
11. Pres. Manning informed the membership that a couple more outings need firm dates on the schedule for 2024 and it will be posted to the website as soon as those are finalized.

An announcement was also made reminding members to renew their memberships soon as possible and that the board is discussing adding a penalty for late renewals. More information on this will be announced next month.

Roger Schlenger made an announcement about the Gold-A-Palooza being held over the Labor Day weekend and to get with him for more information or tickets. He also said the Army Corps of Engineers is releasing water from Cherry Creek Dam and it is a good time to pan Cherry Creek.

Former President Long had the sad duty of informing the members present that Dan McConnell, who used to run the membership table with his wife Beckie, was in hospice and not expected to live much longer. He asked the members to please put a card in the mail right away and provided the McConnell's address.

12. There was a reminder to be sure to vote on the Finds of the Month and to answer the Question of the Month during the break.



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13. **Pres. Manning** announced the break at 8:12 pm. Meeting was called back to order at 8:33 pm. 14. **Pres. Manning** announced the winners of the ‘**Question of the Month**’. The answer was, “**The North Carolina Gold Rush**”...! There were 23 winners who received their extra ticket for the gold drawing.

14. **Pres. Manning** announced the winners for the ‘**Finds of the Month**’. Those were:

- **Best Coin – B. Denning = U.S. penny**
- **Best Jewelry – Joe Fortunato = ring**
- **Best Mineral – Angie Yen = unusual specimens gathered in Arizona__**
- **Best Artifact – Mitchell Ross = rusted car radio**
- **Best Gold – Kevin Singel**

15. **Pres. Manning** concluded the evening with drawings for the numerous door prizes donated by the **GPR, JJ Long, John Olson and President Manning**, followed by the drawings for the and gold nuggets. **Pres. Manning** also wants to remind members that holders of drawing tickets for the regular gold drawings who did not win and want to redeem those tickets may present them at the end of the Meeting and they will be reimbursed at .01 cents on the dollar, or they shall be considered to have been donated back to the Club. Those assisting in the drawings were **John Johnson, Kevin Singel and John Olson**.

16. **Pres Manning** announced the winning ticket number for the 50/50 drawing. Shelly Zornes had the winning ticket and won \$58 with the same amount going to the Club.

17. **Pres. Manning** reminds the members that sometimes during the meetings, the President’s time is overwhelmingly taken up by the many who wish to speak to him and he apologizes if anyone ever feels like he is unavailable. It is not his intent to be inaccessible and he encourages anyone with questions to contact him by e-mail or phone outside the meetings at any time. His e-mail and phone number are on the web site.

18. **Pres. Manning** thanked **Greg and Nancy Knerl** and all those who contributed to the Refreshment Table. Each member is encouraged to chip in and add to the spread each month. Remember to contribute to the ‘tip jar’ also, which helps to defray costs. This really helps the folks who run the table and those who volunteer up front each month. The Club appreciates the efforts that each and every one of you to make the refreshment table enjoyable.

19. **The April Meeting Program** will be_(not announced)_. Having nothing further at this time, remember to always prospect safely.

20. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

A Miner’s Laugh

An old politician walks into a barbershop for a shave and a haircut. He tells the barber who is an old retired miner, that he is having trouble getting all of his whiskers off because his cheeks are wrinkled from old age. The barber reaches up and pulls a little ball out of a cup n the shelf and tells the politician to simply put the ball inside of his cheek to spread out the skin.

When he is finished, the politician looks at and feels the result and exclaims that this was the cleanest shave he has had in years, but then he asked the barber what would have happened if he had accidentally swallowed that little ball. The old barber/miner looked him square in the eye and slowly drawled, ‘Well then, you can just bring it back it back in a few days like everyone else does!!!’

(Taken from the internet and revised just for all us ‘old miners’)



The finds of the Month Mar 2024:

The Club has decided to change the Finds of the Month Program to eliminate the ‘Bottle’ category as well as combine the gold categories into a single category. Therefore, the following submissions were selected by popular vote at the January meeting:

- **Best Coin – B. Denning = U.S. penny**
- **Best Jewelry – Joe Fortunato = ring**
- **Best Mineral – Angie Yen = unusual specimens gathered in Arizona**
- **Best Artifact – Mitchell Ross = rusted car radio**
- **Best Gold – Kevin Singel**



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Remember that all gold must be dried and weighed. All monthly winners need save their entries for the November 2024 meeting when the years Finds of the Month winners will be judged for the Finds of the Year. So be sure and save them..!

The Pirate's March Hunt by Robert 'The Pirate' Ahr

Hello and good afternoon to the G.P.O.R. membership. So, with the current weather conditions outside I think it would be in the crews best interest that we **CANCEL** tomorrow 's hunt. Until then, you Pirate's stay safe and Healthy and we will see you at the next GPR. meeting on April 17,2024. Remember to bring in and show off all of your finds, there is never a bad find.... any questions, please give me a call.

Remember, when you are metal detecting, trash is a common occurrence. Not all outings result in finds of coins, rings and other jewelry. Treasure is in the eye of the beholder. Always know where you are and be sure that you are legally able to detect where you choose to look. Fill your holes as if you were never there and be respectful of folks who come up to ask what you are doing. And good luck out there!!!

"A 49er's Tale." Part 4 of 4

(This story has been submitted by GPR Club Member Micheill Ross. It is the story about his great-great grandfather during the California gold rush. It is a bit long so he has divided it up into 4 parts. It is a glimpse into the lives of a real-life prospector from 175 years ago. Thank you, Mr. Ross, for this fascinating contribution...JLL)

(A manuscript (lightly edited for punctuation, capitalization, and setting into paragraphs but not spelling and wording) from a 49er named Joe Burgess about part of his time during the 1849 California Gold Rush.)

"At last, when Phil was not more than twenty or thirty yards away, the monster poured out an awful roar and made straight for him!

"Look out! Here we come, boys!" Phil yelled. And I raised my head in time to see him go tearing through the brush, with the grizzly almost at his heels.

"But I soon dodged down again. For after following to the edge of the thicket, the bear turned and came straight back to me. And the first thing he did was to put down his head, growling furiously all the time, and run his big nose over me again. I suppose he wanted to make sure that I was all there.

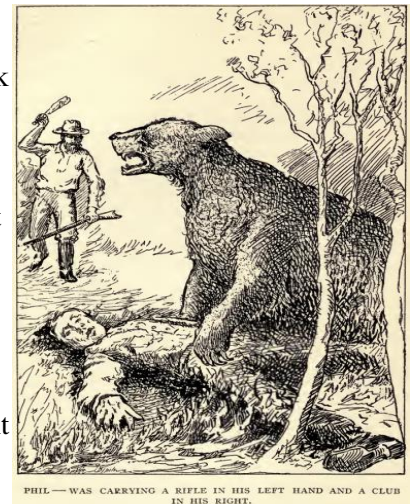
"Phil soon told the hunters that he would try again, and I could hear him coming. Presently the bear left me and made another charge. But again he stopped before reaching the edge of the thicket, and came back and stood over me. He seemed to think that the hunters were trying to rob him of his prey- as they were. And acting on the principle that a man under his paw was worth half a dozen at large, he refused to be enticed away.

"While he was absent the second time, I managed draw my six-shooter, and lay with it in my hand. But I was so weak I could scarcely lift it; and I had no thought of using it unless the grizzly should attack me.

"For half an hour or longer the hunters kept trying to toll the bear out of the thicket. Again and again Phil approached, and the grizzly always charged him promptly. But the hunters didn't succeed in luring the bear out of the brush, or even where they could get a clear view of him. And the moment he turned back he always made straight for me, and stood over me again. He seemed determined that I, his intended dinner, should not be taken from him.

"The big fellow was in a fearful rage by now, and kept growling frightfully all the time. His growls, as he stood over me, were something horrible to listen to. I lay still for my very life. If I had moved or uttered a sound, he would have crushed or bitten the life out of me. I haven't a doubt of that. But at last I heard Phil shout:

"Boys, get ready We can't fool with that "varmint" all day! I'm going to fetch him out this time - all the way out!"



PHIL— WAS CARRYING A RIFLE IN HIS LEFT HAND AND A CLUB IN HIS RIGHT.



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"As Phil came through the bushes again, the bear's growls grew louder, and he advanced a step or two, with his mouth open. Phil, I could see, was carrying a rifle in his left hand and a club in his right. Presently I saw him draw back his arm, and the next moment the club came whizzing through the air and struck the bear on the head!

"With an awful roar, the like of which I've never heard before or since, the monster rushed at him! I raised myself to my elbow and threw my six-shooter, intending to give him a bullet from the rear he went. But my hand was so unsteady, and Phil and the other hunters were in such exact range, that I dared not pull the trigger.

"No stopping at the edge of the thicket this time! Out the grizzly burst, and the moment he showed himself in the open, there was a mighty roar! The whole party had fired a volley into him.

"Some of them afterwards admitted to me that their hearts stood still and their hands shook with fright or excitement at the first plain sight of the great bear; and that if they didn't miss him it was because his huge size made such a thing well-nigh impossible.

"The volley crippled the bear, it seems - broke one of his fore legs; but it failed to kill him. Perhaps the fact that he was disabled saved a life or two. For the brute, roaring horribly all the time, charged his enemies with fury, even on three legs, and put them all to flight - scattered them like so many rabbits!

"Some of the hunters were armed with double-barrel shot-guns, and most of them carried six-shooters, and they kept banging away so fast that it sounded to me as if a battle were raging out there. The grizzly was so big that it was almost impossible to miss him at short range, but nearly fifty shots were fired into him.

"Finally the growls ceased and the shots ceased, and pretty soon I heard somebody say: 'He's dead at last! Ain't he a buster, though?' And then somebody else said: 'Now let's see about Joe!'

"But before they could get to me I had fainted dead away. That was partly from loss of blood, and partly because the strain I had been under was relaxed.

"When I came to, I found myself lying on a litter, and my friends were carrying me down to camp.

"The grizzly was skinned and cut up and weighed piecemeal, and the boys afterwards told me he weighed fourteen hundred pounds. That sounds incredible to anyone who never saw him, but I could easily believe it. As I said before, he was a very monster, as big as an ox.

"But I wasn't done with the grizzly when he was killed, nor even when he was skinned and cut to pieces. For two weeks, which seemed like two years, I lay in a fever and delirium. And every minute of the two weeks that frightful monster stood over me, sometimes growling horribly, and always just on the point of devouring me. He was usually larger than life, and sometimes he seemed to grow and swell and swell and grow till he loomed up as big as a world.

"There was a doctor in the camp - a man who had practiced medicine at home and he assured my friends that I couldn't possibly get well. And it did take me a long time. The boys had saved the bear's skin for me, but I wouldn't have it. The very sight of it gave me the horrors.

"I didn't need anything to remind me of that grizzly. He had left plenty of reminders on my body - marks of both teeth and claws. And thanks to him, I have limped - shall limp from California to my grave."

An unbroken, almost breathless silence had been maintained during the whole of the thrilling narrative. Now a buzz of conversation broke out, lasting several minutes. At length Burgess arose and took up his gold-heavy saddle-bags. As he moved toward the tent with them, he said: "Let's to our blankets, boys. We try the river tomorrow."

So, who was this 49er, Joe Burgess? Well, he was my great-great grandfather, and the story of his encounter with a bear during his time in the gold fields of California was a staple of family gatherings. Part 1 is from a manuscript he wrote in the late 1800s before he died. Parts 2, 3, and 4 are excerpted from a book called "Saddles And Lariats: The Largely True Story Of The Bar-Circle Outfit, And Of Their Attempt To Take A Big Drove Of Longhorns From Texas To California" by Lewis Miller. The author had stated that the character of Burgess was based on Joe Burgess and the bear encounter was pretty much as Joe had related to him. The gold-heavy saddle-bags that were part of the story that was not "Largely True", as Joe did not do well hunting for gold. He did do well with his cattle business as noted in Part 1. Eventually, he moved back to Illinois, started a family, and generally lived life as a farmer. But that spirit of adventure was passed on to one of his daughters, who left a good newspaper job in Chicago and went out to Idaho to establish a homestead and ranch as a single young woman. Successfully. But that is not a gold tale so won't be told here.

If you want to read the "Largely True Story" for yourself, it can be found at

<https://archive.org/details/saddlesandlariat00millrich>

Micheil Ross



The Real, Insane Story of the Nome Gold Rush JANUARY 9, 2023

WRITTEN BY ALEX OF BERING SEA PAYDIRT [Part 2 of 2](#)

Two Lucky Swedes, and a Lucky Norwegian

John Byrnteson came back from his prospecting trip with some idea that there was gold in the tributaries of the Snake River. Did Hultberg confide in him about his prospecting? Did he find some himself?

We don't know. But we know Hultberg's name ultimately wasn't on the list of the Three Lucky Swedes.

One name that was, though, was Eric Lindblom. 41 years old and the oldest of the trio, Lindblom was reportedly shanghaied while drunk in San Francisco, and woke up with a hangover on his way to Kotzebue Sound having unintentionally signed up for a two year hitch on a whaler. The little Swedish tailor made plans to desert the ship before he ever got to Kotzebue. He heard rumors of the gold strike in the Council City district and made plans to head there. Lindblom ditched his crew at Grantley Harbor north of Nome and successfully eluded search parties looking for him for several days. Exhausted and starving he ran into a lone prospector who warned him not to attempt to cross the country to Golovin Bay, as the prospector predicted Lindblom's "bones would bleach in the mountains."

He returned to Grantley Harbor and found an Eskimo family about to embark on a trading expedition to Golovin Bay. They took mercy on Lindblom and hid him under a pile of animal pelts as they paddled out of Grantley Harbor, passing within a few dozen feet of the tailor's old whaling ship.

On his trip along the coast Lindblom said that his rescuers stopped to fish at the mouth of the Snake River. He did some panning and found gold in several tributaries of the very same river where John Byrnteson's party had landed. The group really should've been named "Two Lucky Swedes, and a Lucky Norwegian," because Jafet Lindeberg, the youngest of the group at 24, had just arrived in the US in January of that year from northern Norway. Lindeberg's goal was to earn passage to the Alaska gold fields in any way possible, and he was recruited by the U.S. government as a herder on an expedition to Lapland called The Klondike Reindeer Project. The project's goal was to bring more than 500 reindeer to haul supplies to the miners in Dawson City – many of whom it was feared would starve without government assistance. The Klondike Reindeer project was a disaster, with most of the animals starving to death long before they reached Dawson City, but for Lindeberg it was his ticket to fortune. When he got to Alaska, he resigned his post and became a gold prospector full-time. Lindeberg met Dr. A.N. Kittilsen in Alaska, a government physician and fellow Norwegian who was one of the founders of Council City with Blake and Hultberg. Kittilsen was headed back to the Seward Peninsula and encouraged Lindeberg to travel with him and prospect the lightly-traveled lands around Norton Sound.

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The Rush is On

Apparently, they became aware of their mistakes, because the three men invited veteran miner Gabe W. Price from California to go back with them so they could stake the claims correctly. Price was an agent of Charles D. Lane, a



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multimillionaire miner and investor from San Francisco, and knew the intricacies of mining law. By tradition at least six men were needed to call a miners' meeting, so Price and the "three lucky Swedes" invited Dr. Kittilsen, who originally brought Lindeberg to the Seward Peninsula, and a Lapp reindeer herder named J.S. Tornanses to accompany them on the trip back to the Snake River.

On October 15, 1898 the six men officially organized the Cape Nome Mining District. Under the watchful eye of Price all the claims were carefully staked, measured, and legally recorded. Winter was approaching quickly and the streams had already started to freeze over. But in about five days' time, with the use of two crude wooden rockers and water heated over a wood fire to thaw the frozen ground, they rocked out nearly \$2,000 of placer gold from Snow Gulch and Anvil Creek. At ~\$20 an ounce gold price at the time that means these guys were pulling 20 ounces of placer gold a day out of half-frozen creeks with crude rockers! The men wanted to continue to keep this gold discovery a secret, but of course that proved to be impossible. Gabe Price broke first and wrote to a friend at Council City in mid-November about the new gold camp, and told his boss in San Francisco about the rich claim he received on Anvil Creek in exchange for helping the Scandinavians properly stake claims. Mr. Price's company, which he called the Wild Goose Mining and Trading Company, ultimately became the largest mining corporation in northwestern Alaska. Presumably the Scandinavians were talking too, because word of the strike spread through the late months of 1898 and early 1899. Prospectors poured into the Nome mining camp from the Seward Peninsula region over the winter. By the spring of 1899 over 1500 claims had been staked which, if placed end to end, would have stretched the entire length of the state of Illinois.

Somehow the word of the gold strike traveled over the frozen wasteland and into Canada that winter, because after navigation opened in the Bering Sea in 1899 prospectors swarmed in from the Klondike by the thousands. These were men who had bet everything on striking it rich in the Yukon and lost it all, and were now watching men get rich in a second gold rush that was again passing them by. Of the estimated three thousand men at Nome by July 1899, about one thousand were completely destitute. They put up their tents between piles of driftwood on the Nome beach, the only unclaimed space available to them near the townsite at the mouth of the Snake River. The Scandinavians and other alleged aliens in the district were natural scapegoats for their anger and frustration. The three Scandinavian greenhorns and their friends and associates had grabbed most of the best land in the weeks and months following the organization of the Nome mining district. The general sentiment among the luckless prospectors was that no new prospectors should be so lucky, especially those who weren't Americans. H.L. Blake and other members of the initial expedition party to the Snake River were especially furious. Blake felt that he had discovered the gold in Nome and that the Scandinavians in the group tricked him and took their countrymen back to stake the creeks around the Snake River, instead of sharing the discovery with Blake and other members of the initial party. With anger and desperation in the air the newcomers resulted quickly to claim jumping, which was rampant throughout the winter and spring and became a mania by the summer of 1899. The destitute mob of prospectors that flooded into Nome justified the claim jumping by saying immigrants had no right to stake claims on U.S. soil, or that the Scandinavians had illegally staked too many claims for their friends and countrymen through power of attorney.

Newcomers automatically jumped every claim, as Rex Beach put it, "whose location notice bore a name ending in 'son,' 'berg,' or had three consonants in a row." Claim jumping was little more than blackmail – as the true owner would rather pay off the "rival claimants" and keep mining the rich ground rather than get tied up, potentially for years, in legal battles. Some claims were located and shaken down by over half a dozen jumpers. The battle between early claim stakers and the claim jumpers came to a head on the night of July 10, 1899. The claim jumpers were so emboldened that they called a miners' meeting at the Northern Saloon tent to declare all existing mining locations in the Nome district void and illegal, and to reopen all the creeks for staking. Men were posted on Anvil Mountain four miles away, waiting for a bonfire to be lit that would signal the passage of the resolutions voiding the claims of the Swedes and other original stakers. Once the signal was received the parties of latecomers would race to grab all the best claims in the district for themselves and their partners. But the agitators' plan was foiled by the quick action of Lieutenant O.L. Spaulding of the U.S. Army. He and a half-dozen soldiers forced the meeting to disperse at bayonet point, and the military warned the prospectors that resetting the mining claims and menacing the current claim owners with a mob would not be tolerated. The claim owners applauded the Lieutenant and the would-be stakers were outraged. Each day the situation grew more menacing and hostile and the army had to forbid anyone from carrying firearms, revolvers or pistols in the district.

The Second Strike

But just a few days later right when it seemed that the luckless stampedees from the Yukon had, once again, missed the proverbial boat, a second gold strike was made. And this time everyone could access it legally. The destitute men emptied out of the saloons and gambling halls. The barkeepers and faro dealers were gone, lawyers and barbers closed shop, and



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the men with paying jobs mining the creeks on behalf of the claim owners had deserted their posts. Why? Because there was gold discovered in the sands of the beaches of the Bering Sea. It turns out that underneath all these stampeders' tents the Nome beach was so rich with gold that a man could almost pick it up like small sea shells. The miners called it "the poor man's paradise." Small teams of two or three men lined up almost shoulder-to-shoulder with homemade wooden rockers along the beaches east and west of the Snake River mining the rich ruby-colored sands just a few feet below the surface, and the rest is history. "It has grown as if by magic," Nome's first newspaper bragged about the town in its first issue. "It is true it is built upon sand, but the sand is golden and...it promises to be the greatest gold camp that has ever been known in the history of gold mining."

Special thanks to The Alaska Geographic Society for publishing its book Nome: "City of the Golden Beaches". It was our primary source of information and photos about this point of history in Nome.

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Contact the GPR President

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Coming Announcements and Special Events for May 2024

(WMMI - Western Museum of Mining & Industry, 225 North Gate Blvd. Colorado Springs, CO 80921
(<https://www.wmmi.org/>) (Free to GPR Member with badge)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Mother's Day	13	14	15 GPR Club Meeting	16	17	18 Armed Forces Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Memorial Day	28	29 Pirate's Hunt <i>(weather permitting)</i>	30	31	