

THE GOLD NUGGET

March 2024

The Prez Sez..! by Bobby Manning



I have been at work at a remote location so I didn't have time to do all that I needed to do. I am trying to get a schedule together for some outings for the year and not doing very well at it. I need to get a new lay out from Andy so I can put it altogether and get it out. If there is any outing you would like to do, feel free to call me and tell me what you would like to do and we will try to get it done if at all possible. My # is 303-420-8830. The thing I would like to do is to do a cleanup in April. We could have a cleanup contest at Gold Strike Park. When I was there last, I noticed that there was a lot of trash. So, I think that it would be a good time for our Club to go down to do a little cleaning up. Then we can do a little looking for gold when we are done so bring your prospecting gear with you. It should turn out to a good time. For every bag you bring, for example, you would get tickets for the next gold drawing. We could do this on the 16th of April at around 10 am to 1 pm and then we could play in the water and find some gold. For this month's meeting, Bill Chapman will do a talk for us about counterfeit coins. I think that you'll find it very insightful. I will get the schedule for the year out soon as I had to scan the whole thing into my computer. Of course, I am having lots of trouble with the Word Program that I now have in my new computer. So, it really feels like spring right now so the water could get an early run off so I hope that any of you venturing into the water on these warm days will take the proper precautions to be safe. It was good to hear that Joe Johnston came out of his surgery well and is on his way to a speedy recovery! So, keep your pan up and fill it with yellow gold!

Vice President's Corner! by Kevin Singel



As you all know, I am an advocate of getting out prospecting all through the year. I got out on the first of February digging on my claim and it was an 'interesting' experience. In the end, my two buddies and I only got about two hours of digging in at my claim on the Blue River. After a couple weeks of very cold weather, the river was more frozen up than I have ever seen it. We were able to find a few spots where small springs flow out of the bank, into the river. This warmer water means there are small ice-free areas right along the river bank. We were happily panning away for about two hours until things changed. I was shaking a full pan when I heard some low frequency clunking sounds in the ice over the river. I quickly got concerned recognizing that big chunks of ice were coming downstream and bumping along the underside of the river ice. I told the guy near me that I thought we should be cautious and call a halt to our day in case an ice dam broke upstream or some other dangerous situation developed. I then walked upstream a few hundred yards to where the other friend was digging. I was amazed to see he had managed to get a sluice set up, but focused on our safety, he agreed and packed up. As we walked back to the first friend, the water did start to rise and was soon flowing over the top of the river ice in various areas. In other areas, the ice seemed to be lifted up a bit by the rising water. As we hiked up the hill to our trucks, I felt like I had made the right decision to be cautious and live to prospect another day. I am sure you can see why! So, get out there folks, but pay attention and BE SAFE!

If you have gotten this far, I want to ask a favor. In another article in this newsletter, there is a request that you respond to a petition to abandon the proposal to create a new National Monument on the lower Dolores River (approximately from the town of Delta, downstream to the Utah border). The advocates of this monument talk about transitioning the local economy from farming, ranching, and mining to touristic activity. While existing mining claim owners would continue to hold their claims, no new claims would likely be allowed. The area is absolutely beautiful but does not need additional protections in my view. So, go to the link mentioned in the other article and add your voice. We are asking our elected representatives to ignore the request to create the monument. It's that simple.

On a happier note, I hope you enjoyed our speaker in February, John is a great guy and knows his stuff so I am sure it was cool (I was sorry to miss the meeting). We have speakers arranged for March, April, and May as well. I hope you enjoy having more live speakers and I would love to know what topics you are interested in. Another member of the board is working on a survey of the membership. In the survey, I hope you will tell us about topics you would like to hear about, or what prospecting-related questions you have, so Bobby and those of us on the board what sort of speakers to pursue. Until next time, keep prospecting 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 Feb 2024

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

Quorum Present: Y.

Call to Order by: Pres Manning at 6:13 pm.

Reading and Approval of Minutes: Corrections: none Approved as read/corrected: Moved by: M. Stevens; 2nd: R. Schlenger.

Treasurer's Report: Questions: Update info on CD to be correct__ Approved: Moved: G. Smith; 2nd: Bill Manning.

Correspondence: phone calls emails 1 mail

Webmaster: Total hits 165728 Hits in last 30 days 226.

Committee Reports: None

Unfinished Business:

- Inventory of club gold still needs to be completed by Pres. Manning. Expectation is it will be done by next meeting. The club calendar is a priority needs to be finalized for at least the next few months in order to promote the outings in ample time for members to make plans
- R. Ahr brought up his willingness to conduct a seeded metal detecting hunt as a club outing in July or August. Will need to finalize those plans at the next meeting. Also, a potential tour of the Argo Mine was discussed.
- K. Singel was not in attendance due to a family emergency and forwarded an email to Pres. Manning regarding their merit badge on prospecting/metal detecting and if GPOTR might be interested in participating. E. Von Halle is researching the merit badge requirements and will report back next meeting.
- Pres. Manning is pursuing a letter received from a community center in Illinois that is interesting in starting a metal detecting club and had seen our website. He plans on sending some samples that can be used in a hunt along with some hints and tips. He is also looking into the possibility of a panning demo at the upcoming Gem & Mineral Show at the Crowne Plaza hotel. He should have that locked down by the next board meeting.

New Business: The extra cost to the club per year to rent the side room for our board meetings is more than a yearly subscription to Zoom, or one of the other remote meeting tools. No action was taken this evening and further discussion needs to happen at the next board meeting on what direction to take going forward.

Planned Outings:

- A sign-up sheet for volunteers to work the panning booth at the Aurora Water Festival will be at the front table tonight. At least six volunteers are needed. It will be held on May 16 from 8:30am to 1 pm.
- There is also interest in having another trip to the ore spill site near Manitou Springs. A date just needs to be selected and placed on the club calendar.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What gold rush occurred 50 years before the 1848 California Gold Rush???

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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Board Members Items of Discussion:

- R. Ahr: Club has about 60+ blank badges for new members signing up. Board members asked if they had any connections to companies that can make new badges for the club when we start to run out. Also, we need a supply of year decals for the badges so Robert was asking for suggestions.
- G. Hamilton: Brought a survey to be handed out at the meeting and get members input on directions for the club and ideas for activities going forward. He will also be checking into local museums and other potential activities to help fill the club calendar.
- R. Schlenger mentioned the 2024 Gold-a-Palooza at Jesse Petersen's place. The club won't sponsor a booth at the event, but Roger can mention the dates to the membership once they have been set.

Tonight's General Meeting Program: John Olson will give a presentation on electroplating objects with gold and in a tag team event, Bill Chapman will speak about plated five-cent pieces (known as "Racketeering Nickels") being passed off as five-dollar gold pieces in the 1880s.

Announcements: Next Board Meeting March 20 at 6:00pm Next General Meeting: March 20 at 7:00pm

Adjournment: Meeting stands adjourned at 7:03 pm.

General Meeting Minutes from Feb 2024

1. Meeting was opened at 7:12 pm by Pres. Manning with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Pres. Manning then announced that the evening Program which was John Olson demonstrating gold electroplating followed by Bill Chapman giving a talk about gold plated "Racketeering Nickels".
3. Pres. Manning then gave the Metals Report: Gold 2026, Silver 22.85 Platinum 884 Palladium 938 Rhodium 4250.
4. Web hits for last month was 226.
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 34 members in attendance. There was 1 Guest Present tonight. New members 1. The total meeting attendance was 36.
7. Pres. Manning read the 'Question of the Month', which was "... **The Aztec word for gold is: teocuitatl, which translates to what?** 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' # 6.
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 as of tonight so be sure to buy your bags.
11. Pres. Manning informed the membership that the Outings schedule for 2024 is being determined and will be published soon. Announcements will also be made with the Newsletter postings.
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. Additional items that were discussed included...A sign-up sheet to volunteer for the Aurora Water Festival panning booth in May is at the front table. At least six volunteers are needed. Board member Gary Hamilton came up with a questionnaire for attendees to fill out giving feedback to the board about their preferences and suggestions for club outings and things they would like the club to consider. The surveys were collected and will be compiled by Gary for the next board meeting.
13. Pres. Manning announced the break at 8:13 pm. Meeting was called back to order at 8:39 pm.
14. Pres. Manning announced the winners of the 'Question of the Month'. The answer was, "...Excrement of the gods"!!! There were 19 winners who received their extra ticket for the gold drawing.
15. Pres. Manning announced the winners for the 'Finds of the Month' for Feb. They were:
 - Best Coin – Shellie Zorn
 - Best Jewelry – Mike Stevens
 - Best Mineral – No entry
 - Best Artifact – Shellie Zorn
 - Best Gold – Bobby Manning
16. Pres. Manning concluded the evening with drawings for the numerous door prizes donated by the GPR, JJ Long and Gordon & Yvonne Smith, John Olson and Bobby Manning, followed by the drawings for the multiple door prizes and gold nuggets. Pres. Manning also wants to remind that holders of drawing tickets for the regular gold drawings who did not win and want to redeem



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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 and John Olson**.

17. **Pres Manning** announced the winning ticket number for the 50/50 drawing. President Manning had the winning ticket and won \$39 and the same went to the Club.

18. **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.

19. **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.

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

21. **Meeting was adjourned at _9:10_ pm.**

A Miner's Laugh

An old miner walked into a Chinese curio shop in San Francisco. While looking around at the exotic merchandise, he noticed a very lifelike, life-sized, bronze statue of a rat. It had no price tag, but was so incredibly striking the old miner decided he must have it. He took it to the old shop owner and asked, "How much for the bronze rat?" "Ahhh, you have chosen wisely! It is \$12 for the rat and \$100 for the story," said the wise old China-man. The old miner quickly pulled out twelve dollars. "I'll just take the rat, you can keep the story".



As he walked down the street carrying his bronze rat, the old miner noticed that a few real rats had crawled out of the alleys and sewers and had begun following him down the street. This was a bit disconcerting so he began walking faster. A couple blocks later he looked behind him and saw to his horror the herd of rats behind him had grown to hundreds, and they began squealing. Sweating now, the old boy began to trot toward San Francisco Bay. Again, after a couple blocks, he looked around only to discover that the rats now numbered in the MILLIONS, and were squealing and coming toward him faster and faster. Terrified, he ran to the edge of the Bay and threw the bronze rat as far as he could into the Bay. Amazingly, the millions of rats all jumped into the Bay after the bronze rat and were all drowned. The old miner walked back to the curio shop in Chinatown. "Ahhh," said the owner, "You come back for story?" "No sir," said the man, "I came back to see if you have a bronze Democrat!"

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

(I'm sorry but that is funny, no matter what party you represent. But if I offended you, I am old and don't care that much anymore...! Get over it...! JJ)

The finds of the Month Feb 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 – **Shelly Zornes** with a 1953 Penny she found in Denver while metal detecting.
- Best Jewelry – **Mike Stevens** with a gold ring he found in Denver while metal detecting.
- Best Mineral – There was no submission for this category for January.
- Best Artifact – **Shelly Zornes** with an old faucet handle she found while metal detecting.
- Best Gold - **Bobby Manning** with a sample of gold in platinum that he found at his work.





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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..!

Halt the Designation of the Dolores River National Monument



Started February 20, 2024 Petition to Representatives of Colorado.

Why this petition matters



Started by **Sean Pond**

This petition is born out of a deeply personal concern for the residents of Gateway, Paradox, Bedrock, Nucla and Naturita in Colorado. The proposed designation of the Dolores River as a National Monument threatens to impose severe economic hardships on our communities. We are not just bystanders; we are people whose livelihoods and way of life stand to be disrupted.

The monument designation would lead to an immediate cessation of mining activities that many local families depend on for their income. It would also put an end to hunting and cattle grazing - practices that have been part of our heritage for generations. Our freedom to enjoy motorized travel and outdoor activities in these lands will be curtailed.

Moreover, this decision has been made without giving those most affected a chance to voice their opposition. The proponents have attempted to push this through without adequate public discussion or transparency.

This is not just about preserving nature; it's about preserving our rights as residents and stakeholders in these lands. We believe in conservation but it should not come at the expense of local economies or traditions.

We urge you all - especially those from Colorado - to join us in opposing this monument designation until proper consultations are held with all relevant parties involved. Stand with us today by signing this petition against the unilateral imposition that threatens our way of life.

You can find this petition on the internet at the following site, merely copy and paste into your browser and this should bring it up.

https://www.change.org/p/halt-the-designation-of-the-dolores-river-national-monument?recruiter=false&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_inital&recruited_by_id=d4df5490-d06e-11ee-ba61-b7f98089a257&share_bandit_exp=initial-37897782-en-US&utm_content=fht-37897782-en-us%3A8&fbclid=IwAR0K3QNBi-mWk429BntuN3iS_jyGWE11oJuG7cpXvGQAqTCRpD_UIYiOcQ



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The Pirate's Feb 24 Hunt by Robert 'The Pirate' Ahr

Hello and good afternoon to the G.P.O.R. membership. I'm a little late with this Email. But I had a little problem with my vision today. Couldn't see getting out of bed this morning but all better now. So with the current weather conditions outside I think it would be in the crews best interest that we **CANCEL** tomorrow's hunt. Well we will have to wait to see how the weather of Colorado will treat us in March... Until then you Pirate's stay safe and Healthy and we will see you at the next G.P.O.R. meeting on March 20, 2024... Remember bring in and show off all of your finds, there is never a bad find.... any questions 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 3 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.)

"Nobody who has never been in a similar situation can begin to understand what my feelings were as I lay helpless and felt that big nose gliding up and down my body, in a fond, eager way, and sniffing at me hungrily. It was like a cat running her nose over a fat rat that she has killed, trying to decide where to take the first bite.

"That nose kept gliding over my body till it came to my head. Then I could feel the monster's hot breath against my face. Soon the nose glided on to the wound on my neck and back, and the bear began to lick my blood greedily. He must have been very hungry.

"But I had no intention of lying there and meekly allowing myself to be devoured alive. Weak as I was - and thigh was bleeding all the time - I promptly resolved to make at least a show of resistance. Even if I couldn't save my life, I hoped to give the bear a death-wound while he was killing me. My bullet had wounded him slightly, in the shoulder, but only enough to irritate him. Up to this time I had tried to remain as motionless as a dead man. But

now my right hand began to steal toward the handle of my six-shooter. I had not strength enough left to use a knife.

"But the movement was promptly detected, and the monster stopped licking my bloody neck and roared a deep, warning growl right into my ear. My blood froze in my veins - froze with horror.

"Instantly I turned to a corpse again. The grizzly stood over me, waiting for another movement to confirm his suspicions that I was still alive. What he might have done soon I shudder to think. But while he was still watching me, in a threatening attitude, his attention was diverted by a shout not far away. My friends had turned and seemed to be coming back.

"Now my hopes sprang up once more, and I abandoned my desperate resolve to try to kill the bear myself. If I only dared utter a cry for help! But perhaps the hunters would come to the right thicket this time.

"The grizzly was fully aware that enemies were approaching. He raised his head and stood waiting and listening. Closer and closer came the hunters, still moving from thicket to thicket. Soon the huge brute standing over me began to growl and show signs of anger. Now I lay as nearly motionless as possible, lest he should vent his rage on me.

"Gradually, while I waited and listened with awful anxiety, my friends drew nearer and nearer, till they were at the outer edge of my thicket. The bushes were high enough to conceal the bear, and I dreaded that some of the hunters might plunge in and get killed. Yet I dared not open my mouth to save them.

"But there was a path and a narrow open way leading into the thicket - the path by which I myself had entered - and one of the hunters followed it in till he caught a glimpse of the bear.

"'Here he is, boys!' I heard him sing out. 'He's a grizzly, and a whale of a big one, if there ever was a big one!'

"Exclamations of awe and horror were uttered as different members of the party ventured in far enough to catch sight of the great beast.



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"But what can have become of Joe?" I heard somebody ask. And pretty soon another man called out: "Yonder he lies! I can just catch a glimpse of him through the brush! The grizzly is standing right over him!"

"And then somebody else said: 'The bear has killed him. No wonder he didn't answer when we called!'

"Yes, he's dead. No doubt about that, I guess - poor Joe!' another hunter exclaimed.

"More exclamations of horror followed the discovery of me, as each took a peep through the bushes at me. I could hear every word distinctly; and yet with that monster standing guard over me, and now growling furiously, I dared not move or utter a sound.

Presently somebody said: "Let's get our guns ready and take aim and all fire together!"

"Possibly you can imagine my feelings when I heard that proposal to fire a volley at the bear. I knew there was no telling how or where a party of excited hunters would shoot. Instead of being rescued, I found my self in as much danger from my friends as from my enemy the grizzly. And yet I dared not speak or move or make any sign; for the bear was now in such a rage that if I had exhibited the slightest evidence of being alive, he would have bitten the life out of me then and there.

"Finally, after an age of suspense as it seemed to me, I heard Phil Gregory's voice call out:

"Boys, that won't do! Joe may not be dead! We must get that "varmint" away from him before we shoot!"

"Oh, Joe's as dead as a door-nail!" somebody else declared. But the others agreed with Phil that it would not be safe to shoot where there was any danger of hitting me. For that I was truly thankful, though I dared not open my mouth to say so.

"Now followed several minutes of consultation among the hunters. They spoke loudly, excitedly, and I could hear every word as plainly as you boys can hear me. All sorts of plans were suggested. But at last Phil Gregory proposed to enter the thicket till the bear started after him. Then he would retreat, and when the grizzly had followed him out of the brush, the other men would fire a volley into the brute. Everybody promptly pronounced that a good plan; and I could hear them discussing the best place to stand.

"At last, when all were in position, Phil started into the thicket. I dared not look, but I could hear him talking to the men behind him. And I knew he must be coming from the more savage and furious way the grizzly kept growling.

"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, and the bear began to lick my blood greedily. He must have been very hungry.

And Part 3 of the manuscript ended here. For more of Joe Burgess' Grisley Bare encounter, tune in next month for Part 4 of "A 49er's Tale."

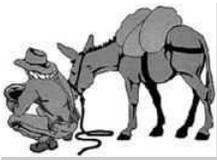
The Real, Insane Story of the Nome Gold Rush JANUARY 9, 2023

WRITTEN BY ALEX OF BERING SEA PAYDIRT [Part 1 of 2](#)

On July 10, 1899, the gold prospecting camp called Nome City almost exploded into violence.

A miner's meeting was called to order in the Northern Saloon – where almost 600 angry men gathered in the large tent intending to declare all of the existing mining claims in the Nome district void and illegal, and to reopen some of Alaska's richest gold creeks for a restaking free-for-all. The bristling crowd thought it unfair that the inexperienced, young Scandinavians known as the "Three Lucky Swedes" – in a span of just 7 days – staked most of the best claims in the Nome mining district, and left thousands of men claimless in the scrappy town at the edge of the Bering Sea. Most of these men were destitute stampeders chasing news of gold strikes west from the Klondike to the Seward Peninsula – losing everything they owned in the process. Landing about as far north and west as you could get in Alaska without dropping into the sea, these failed prospectors were hungry and angry that these "aliens from Sweden" had "tricked" the Americans and stolen all the rich gold claims out from under their noses.

The meeting ultimately failed, and just a few days later, right when mass violence seemed inevitable, the saloons were suddenly empty. Shopkeepers closed their doors, and barbers hung up their clippers. Each man was out gleefully mining record quantities of gold – thanks to a near-miraculous second gold strike in the Nome mining district. So, what happened?



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The Common Story

For a historical event that's inspired movies, TV shows, and documentaries – and still draws men to upend their lives and move north to strike it rich – the discovery of the Nome goldfields is still shrouded in mystery. When one thinks of the rush for Alaskan gold at the turn of the 20th century the Klondike usually comes to mind. You might picture old-timey prospectors trudging over a snowy mountain pass with a rucksack and a pick, or the saloons of Dawson City. But the Klondike River and the gold district named for it are not in Alaska as is commonly believed, but in the Yukon Territory, Canada – though many men traveled through Alaska to get there, and continue to mine the area over the border in towns like Chicken to this day. That makes Nome the “real Alaskan gold rush” of the turn of the 20th century. From a human perspective it was bigger and madder than the Fairbanks rush just a few years later.

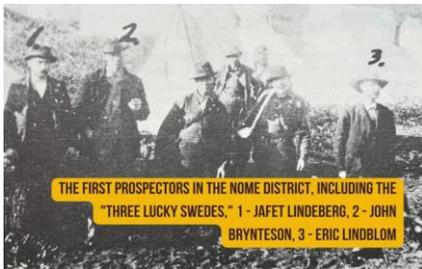


The telling of the story of the Three Lucky Swedes finding gold on Anvil Creek in 1898 is usually so simple it's almost parabolic. Here is the gist:

John Byrteson, Erik Lindblom, and Jafet Lindeberg – three Swedes with just a few months of combined gold prospecting experience – partnered up on a prospecting venture out of Golovin, Alaska. They made their way west along the coast of the Norton Sound of the Bering Sea, panning along the way, and discovered extremely rich deposits of gold on Anvil Creek late summer of 1898. The three Swedes, now considered quite lucky, proceeded to stake a huge number of mining claims that would gross them \$20 million dollars in gold over the next 20 years – a veritable fortune by those days' standards (and not a bad one today). But the devil is in the details, as they say, and the full story is far, far crazier than the shortened version suggests. The story of the Three Lucky Swedes was really a product of two very lucky gold strikes. The first one made them rich, and a near-miraculous second one saved their lives from an angry mob of luckless prospectors. Additionally, the lucky Swedes were preceded by a very unlucky Swede that made their discoveries possible.

The Unlucky Swede

Nels O. Hultberg was a Swedish missionary at Cheenik who caught gold fever and was instrumental in establishing the first permanently-settled placer gold mining camp on the Seward Peninsula at Council City after his prospecting party struck gold on April 23, 1898. Producing \$12 million in gold over the next 30 years, the Council City strike was fruitful, but was merely a taste of the great riches found in the creeks of Nome just 80 miles to the west six months later.



During that summer, still in the throes of prospecting fever, Reverend Hultberg and fellow Council City founder, a mining engineer named H.L. Blake, put together another expedition party to look for gold. This party included a Swedish coal miner named Mr. John Byrteson and three other companions. The six were traveling west

along the coast of the Seward Peninsula in a small boat when a storm came up and forced them to take cover inside the mouth of a winding river. The boat swamped in the breakers just as they entered the mouth and most of their supplies were lost in the surf. Unfortunately striking great riches of gold doesn't make men very happy, and Hultberg and Blake were had been fighting almost constantly since the party left Golovin Bay on July 31st. Little did the party know – suffering through the misery of pancakes and cold water in the morning as all the coffee had been lost in the storm – they had landed at the mouth of the Snake River, and were camping right on top of some of Alaska's richest gold-bearing ground. Blake and Hultberg were arguing so much that they had little time to look for gold. But Reverend Nels Hultberg did find some time to pan a little material on a tributary of the Snake River called Anvil Creek – and found excellent gold prospects. But when he came back down to meet up with the party, Blake says, Hultberg told him “dey is not any gold up dare” in his thick Swedish accent. Apparently Hultberg wanted to keep the information to himself.

The party proceeded west when the storm subsided – leaving the richest valley in northwestern Alaska without staking a single claim.

(Part 2 of this story next month as we follow Two Lucky Swedes and a Lucky Norwegian.!!)




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Contact the GPR President

(Layout Design Subject To Additional Cost)



Coming Announcements and Special Events for Apr 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 <u>April Fools' Day</u>	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 <u>Tax Day</u>	16	17 <u>GPR Club Meeting</u>	18	19	20
21	22 <u>Earth Day</u>	23	24 <u>Pirate's Hunt</u> <u>(weather permitting)</u>	25	26	27
28	29	30				