

THE NUGGETEER



March 2021

Vol.1 No.3

A Message from the President Tim's Tidbits

Sorry that I couldn't be at the meeting this month. With the COVID restrictions being eased up we should be able to get back out there and get some Gold. I am more than ready. I will see you all at the April meeting and go over our spring outing plans. Till then, Stay Safe.

Tim Pitney
President COSGPAA

Web address: <http://cosgpaa.org>

Facebook address closed <https://www.facebook.com/groups/733783243720768/members/>

Facebook address open <https://www.facebook.com/cosgpaa>

Tonight's precious metals spot prices per Troy ounce

Year	Gold	Silver	Platinum	Palladium	Rhodium
2020	\$1,638.65	\$17.26	\$879.40	\$2,537.65	\$11,900.00
2021	\$1718.29	\$26.17	\$1,168.16	\$2,384.25	\$25,500.00

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GPAA

COLORADO SPRINGS CHAPTER



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Do you want to join GPAA? You can see David Vigil at Sunny Mountain Prospectors located at:3007 North El Paso Street, Colorado Springs CO 80907

Renewals, multi-year discounts and life memberships available on-line at www.Goldprospectors.org , or call 800-551-9707 , and Please mention that you want to be part of the COLORADO SPRINGS CHAPTER.

MEETING MINUTES



March 3, 2021

Attendees 14 in person; 122 by e-mail



The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm by Chapter Vice-President Joel Swisher and began with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There were 14 members and guests present, including three new attendees: Joey Raymond, Anthony Green and Richard Logue. President Tim Pitney was unable to attend as he was recovering from oral surgery. Joel discussed the easing of COVID restrictions and the Colorado Governor's comments that the state wide requirement for wearing masks would soon be allowed to expire and the state would likely return to more normal activities by summer, with restaurant workers getting vaccinations beginning March 15th.

Joel displayed a vial of Gold pickers that he recovered during a mining trip to a private claim in Arizona. Two members recommended a day trip to Arapahoe Bar on Clear Creek in Golden where battery operated equipment is allowed. Another suggestion for panning and sluicing was on the South Platte River, within the Mary Carter Greenway in Littleton. Both public assess locations have easy access to paved parking and restrooms are available. More details are available on these locations in the book and website "Finding Gold in Colorado". The club was also planning an outing to the GPAA Rail Road Bridge claims on the Arkansas River in Buena Vista for a weekend before the Memorial Day holiday. More details will be provided at the April 7th meeting.

Treasurer Alton Oakes presented the Chapter's financial report and gave an update on the efforts of the PLP (Public Lands for the People) to open access to BLM and Forest Service managed lands for prospecting. PLP is currently selling tickets for their 2021 Grand Raffle – 12 tickets for \$10. Tickets can be purchased on-line at www.publiclandsforthepeople.org or by calling (844) 757-1990. Alton also provided a demonstration of the special technology for fine gold recovery using a "magnetic pan" patented by *Clean Gold LLC*. The system only works in areas with adequate Magnetite concentrations. The "magnetic pan" will work in other areas if you bring your own Magnetite. The demonstration drew a lot of interest and will be discussed at the next meeting after a couple of members said they would try to duplicate the technology with magnetic sign material.

After the door prize drawing, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

The next Chapter meeting will be held Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at the Salvation Army Building, 208 Cunningham Drive, Security, CO, beginning at 7:00 pm.



MORE MEETING NEWS

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS March , 2021

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| • Del Cox | Silver Coin |
| • Del Cox | Silver Coin |
| • Richard Logue | Gold |
| • Joel Swisher | Gold |
| • Del Cox | Gold |
| • Gary Mueller | Gold |
| • Joel Swisher | Gold |



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COLORADO SPRINGS CHAPTER

The Nuggeteer is published monthly following the regularly scheduled chapter meetings. It will be distributed by email and posted to the Chapter web site. To be added to or removed from our email list, please send your request to cosgpaahospitalitycommittee@gmail.com. To add an article please submit it to the editor at cosgpaahospitalitycommittee@gmail.com.

I am doing this Nuggeteer with a different app. Hopefully it will be easier to use. Now any link to email or web address will be active. Just mouse over link and click and the web page will open.

COLORADO SPRINGS GPAA CHAPTER MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the First Wednesday of each month

From 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM at:

The Salvation Army building:

208 Cunningham Drive

Security, CO 80911

All General Meetings are the 1st Wednesday of each month from 7pm to 8:30pm

MEETING DATES

April 7 2021

May 5 2021

June 2 2021

July 7 2021

August 4 2021

September 1 2021

October 6 2021

November 3 2021

December 1 2021 Christmas Party

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COLORADO SPRINGS CHAPTER

OUTINGS AND EVENTS

No outings or events are currently scheduled.

Our first Chapter prospecting outing for 2021 will likely be in late April, weather and COVID permitting.



This is an article from the GPAA web site.

Categories: [FROM THE GOLD PROSPECTORS MAGAZINE](#), [FROM AROUND THE WEB](#) Saturday, March 28, 2020

• **A Day in the Life of a California 49er**

• by [STEVEN NUBIE](#)

• It all started when a sharp-eyed carpenter spotted the glint of gold in a small tributary of the American River in California in 1848. The carpenter was James Marshall who was supervising the construction of a mill for a man named John Sutter near Coloma, California just northeast of Sacramento. Marshall was sure he had found gold and informed Sutter of his find.

Both men agreed to keep it a secret, but word leaked out and an article announcing the find appeared in San Francisco newspapers. No one believed the stories. No one until a shopkeeper from the small town of Sutter's Creek walked through the streets of San Francisco brandishing gold flakes in a bottle and proclaimed Gold! Gold! Gold! The shopkeeper had purchased the gold from Sutter and promised to keep it a secret. He didn't. The stampede to the California gold fields soon followed and Sutter's Creek was the first destination. Sutter's property was overrun as a result and he died in poverty.

• **Who were the California 49ers?**

• The men who flocked to the California gold fields made their first major migration in 1849. Their sudden appearance in California earned them the nickname "49ers" and the name stuck.

The first wave arrived from the west coast of the U.S. but soon people from around the world began to make the journey to California including people from Hawaii which was then called the Sandwich Islands, Asia, Mexico and South America, Canada and all points East of the Rocky Mountains including Europe.

• It's estimated that more than 300,000 people eventually joined the gold stampede to California from all parts of the globe. 98% were men of all ages and from all walks of life. San Francisco became an overnight boom town and the fastest growing city in the world with its population soaring from 800 to 20,000 in less than 2 years with hundreds of thousands of prospectors passing through to get to the gold.

• **How did they get to California?**

• There were basically only three ways to get to the California gold fields. One way was overland on foot, horseback or wagon train across the great plains, two mountain ranges and the Nevada desert. The transcontinental railroad would not be completed until 1869 and the overland journey was harsh.

• People who lived on the west coast of North America had it easier, but few people lived in the western United States at the time. Most chose a second option which was to travel by boat especially from the East coast but there was a problem.

• **Before the Panama Canal**

• The Panama Canal was not completed until 1914. Until that time, the isthmus of Panama effectively blocked all shipping forcing voyages from the east coast of North America to travel down the length of South America around Cape Horn and back up the western length of South America to reach California.

• On average it took a sailing ship, or clipper ship as they were called, 6 months to make the trip from New York to San Francisco going the full way around Cape Horn and South America.

A third travel option was by boat through the Gulf of Mexico to the Panamanian isthmus and across the isthmus either on foot or horseback to a second boat heading up the coast to California. There were occasions where small boats would continue the isthmus crossing across lakes or on rivers but there was no direct route across the isthmus with one mode of travel.

The average time for the Isthmus trip from New York to San Francisco was 45 to 60 days with about 20 of those days involved crossing overland on the isthmus. While the duration was shorter the isthmus crossing was fraught with dangers particularly from diseases like cholera and malaria. Many people died as a result of something as simple as drinking contaminated water or a mosquito bite.

The cost for a one-way trip ranged from \$150 to \$300 including transit across the isthmus of Panama. In today's dollars that's a range of \$5,000 to \$10,000 for a one-way ticket. Unfortunately, those prices skyrocketed as the demand grew for transit to the gold fields to a range of \$400 to \$1200 for a one-way ticket. At today's prices that would be \$13,000 to \$40,000 for a one-way trip regardless of the route.

It's not surprising that people wiped out their life savings, sold their farms and borrowed from family members to make the journey to where fame and fortune would reward all efforts. We'll wrap up the grim outcome for many at the conclusion of the story.

Arrival in San Francisco

Many prospectors arrived in San Francisco with a mixture of relief, exhaustion and confusion. For all, the trip took its toll whether by land or sea. Most were malnourished from the journey and many were sick with afflictions ranging from the common cold to typhoid.

To make matters worse, San Francisco was the only port of call for incoming prospectors and the city was in chaos. San Francisco Bay was choked with clipper ships and some were abandoned where they were anchored.

Many of them were intentionally sunk and many parts of the city on the bay are built on the ruined remains of the tall ships of the California gold rush. In fact, an excavation for the foundation of a new building in San Francisco in 2001 once again revealed a ship from the gold rush buried in the sediment near the bay.

The High Cost of Everything

Many new arrivals were left to sleep in the streets. The city was totally ill-equipped to manage the massive influx, and everything was in short supply from food to housing to safe drinking water. The cost of an egg was \$1.00 equal to \$30 in today's currency and many prospectors headed for the gold fields in desperation rather than hope if only to escape the packed madness of San Francisco in the early days of the gold rush.

Where were the California Gold Fields?

The California gold fields start at Sacramento at the west center of an area that is about 50 miles wide west to east from Sacramento and 150 miles long from North to South. Many parts are in the Sierra Nevada mountain range with the mother lode bisecting the area from the southern tip and continuing about 100 miles north. The creeks and tributaries feeding the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers were heavily prospected and were the contributing geological factors for the original discovery of gold in the region at Sutter's Mill.

How The 49ers Prospected

The primary prospecting method was with a gold pan plus a pick and shovel. The pan was used to not only prospect for the gold but to identify locations with high concentrations of gold. When those locations were pinpointed the prospectors would often build a sluice to process more material.

Given the richness of the California gold fields some sluices were enormous contraptions that were regularly fed with shovel after shovel of sand and gravel.

Gold showed up in all shapes and sizes from nuggets to flakes and fines to dust. The 49ers carefully collected their findings and kept their pouches on a leather strap around their necks.

Where they found the gold

One of the original 49ers was a man by the name of Sheldon Shufelt. His letters are one of the few active records of some of the more intricate details of prospecting in the California fields. Here's how he described their approach to prospecting:

"It is found along the banks of the streams & in the beds of the same, & in almost every little ravine putting into the streams. And often from 10 to 50 ft. from the beds up the bank. We sometimes have to dig several feet deep before we find any, in other places all the dirt & clay will pay to wash, but generally the clay pays best. If there is no clay, then it is found down on the rock. All the lumps are found on the rock--& most of the fine gold. We tell when it will pay by trying the dirt with a pan. This is called prospecting here. If it will pay from six to 12 1/2 per pan full, then we go to work. Some wash with cradles some with what is called a tom (sluice) & various other fixings. But I like the tom best of any thing that I have seen."

Sheldon Shufelt

1849

The gold fields continued to produce from 1848 through 1850 but going into 1851 much of the surface gold had been found and mining became the most productive option.

Because of the lack of easily found gold and the complexity and danger of mining many 49ers turned to wage labor working in the mines. By 1852 even the deep mines started to level off and most prospecting and mining ceased around 1857.

How they lived

For many prospectors the stable, temperate weather in central California was a pleasant surprise. It rained in winter and was hot in summer, but the average temperature and precipitation were much more comfortable than the weather endured by prospectors destined for the Klondike or the desert southwest.

Tents were the domicile of choice and the wall tent was preferred. Their beds were often simple bedrolls consisting of folded blankets and sometimes supported on a layer of pine boughs.

How they dressed

Clothing for the 49ers was a rough and rugged combination of cotton shirts, wide brimmed hats to protect them from the California sun, leather boots, wool socks and denim pants. A German tailor by the name of Levi Strauss opened a clothing store in San Francisco and his rugged and riveted jeans became a mainstay for every prospector.

What they ate and drank

Cooking was done over an open fire and cast iron was the cookware of choice. Some prospectors foraged for food or hunted or fished but in actual fact, most of them starved. The influx of so many prospectors took its toll on the landscape and both wild plants and animals were soon scattered to more remote regions and few wanted to leave the gold to hunt or fish.

There was also a general lack of stores or markets in the gold fields and even the few that popped up charged exorbitant prices for the most basic foods. As a result, malnutrition and scurvy were constant companions. Flour was 50¢ a pound the equivalent of \$15 a pound in today's dollars. The same applied to just about any other food but in some ways it didn't matter. Most of the prospectors were men and few of them knew how to cook anyway. It was a time when women did all of the cooking and there were few women scouring the creeks and hills looking for gold.

A popular food with many of the 49ers was a bread made from a wet, fermenting mass of yeast called a sourdough starter. Sourdough bread was a result and it was a staple that many of the prospectors managed to make and bake usually in a cast iron Dutch oven or simply fried in a pan to make what is commonly known as Bannock bread.

Any sourdough starter was highly prized and kept alive and growing in a small crock. The Boudin bakery in San Francisco is famous for their sourdough bread and the original starter was actually saved from the bakery during the earthquake of 1906 by one of the bakers. The bread made to this day at Boudin is from the same starter used in 1849 and has literally given rise to every loaf of Boudin sourdough bread ever baked.

The general lack of cooking skills led many miners to find food in local restaurants that started to pop up with greater frequency. It was in these restaurants that many Chinese immigrants found their fortunes rather than in the gold fields as they prepared inexpensive meals for the miners consisting of rice, steamed vegetables and whatever meat was on hand. The miners loved it and it's rumored the Chinese cooks called it Chop Suey. It was far from a traditional Chinese dish and was said to be a loose translation for "leftovers on rice." The popularity of Chinese food in San Francisco continues to this day and a lot of it started while feeding the 49ers during the California gold rush.

A taste of success: The Hangtown Fry

When a 49er struck it rich, or let's just say they had a very good day in the gold fields, they would reward themselves with a really good meal. A tradition for many was to order a dish known as the Hangtown Fry.

The Hangtown Fry first appeared in Placerville, California. It was known at the time as Hangtown because a gang of outlaws were hanged there. A successful prospector is rumored to have gone to the Cary hotel in Hangtown and asked the kitchen to make a dish from the most expensive ingredients they had. The cook obliged by frying up eggs, bacon and oysters which were the most exotic foods in the area at the time. If you'd like to celebrate your own good fortune after a day of prospecting, here's the recipe.

Hangtown Fry Ingredients

3 eggs
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/4 teaspoon of salt
1/8 teaspoon of nutmeg
Cracked black pepper
6 oysters
Flour for dusting the oysters
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
3 slices of bacon

Directions

Brown the bacon and drain on paper towels. Reserve the drippings.
Combine the cream, salt, pepper, nutmeg in a bowl and beat until egg yolks are just incorporated and then add the oysters.
Drop the oysters into the flour to coat lightly.
Brown the oysters in the bacon fat on both sides and drain.
Add the butter to the bacon fat and add the eggs to the pan and turn occasionally to make a coarse omelet.
Place the omelet on a plate and top with the oysters and crumbled bacon. Sprinkle with parsley.

Returning home

Unlike some of the more remote gold fields like the Klondike, many 49ers chose to stay in California. Just as many returned home to their families but once again they confronted the cost and risk of travel especially if they lived on the east coast and had to travel by boat.

The greatest risk on their return was once again enduring the crossing of the Panamanian isthmus. In fact, Sheldon Shufelt died at the age of 32 as a result of contracting malaria in Panama on his return trip. He was kidnapped by Spanish bandits on the isthmus but managed to escape but not before he was stricken by the malarial infection. His own words in one of the last letters he wrote tell the harsh tale confronting many returning prospectors.

“Many, very many, that come here meet with bad success & thousands will leave their bones here. Others will lose their health, contract diseases that they will carry to their graves with them. Some will have to beg their way home, & probably one half that come here will never make enough to carry them back. But this does not alter the fact about the gold being plenty here, but shows what a poor frail being man is, how liable to disappointments, disease & death.”

The Bottom Line

It's estimated the total take in gold from 1849 to 1857 from the California gold rush totaled 750,000 pounds. That's according to the History Channel. If you do the math that comes out to 12,000,000 ounces. 12 million ounces multiplied by today's gold price of \$1600 an ounce comes out to \$19,200,000,000. In case you need that spelled out it equals 19 billion two-hundred million dollars.

What is stunning is that very few of the 300,000 49ers managed to break even let alone strike it rich. Perhaps the luckiest and the wealthiest turned out to be the merchants, restaurants and saloon keepers who catered to the miners with overpriced food, goods and services. There were a lucky few who got on the gold and not only managed to keep it but make it home alive. For them the dream came true, and for just as many today, the dream lives on.

Steve Nubie is a freelance writer and GPAA Member who lives in Michigan

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Colorado Springs Chapter Links

Sunny Mountain Prospectors LLC
3007 North El Paso Street
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907
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<https://sunnymountain.net>

Let's support our local prospecting business.

Gold Prospectors of Colorado

<https://gpoc.club>

[\(20+\) Gold Prospectors of Colorado | Groups | Facebook](#)

Meeting location has changed to:

- American Legion Post 38**
- 6685 Southmoor Dr,**
- Fountain, CO 80817**

The Rock Doc

<http://www.therockdoc.net>

Public Lands for the People

<https://www.publiclandsforthepeople.org>