

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this book to the many people who have made it possible for me to have written it, as well as to those who have the inborn desire to prospect and/or mine.

Also, I sincerely thank everyone that is or has been a PCM member. Even though I have mentioned the Sanders brothers in a few of the following pages, I need to say that if it was not for their financial, physical and mental assistance PCM would never have gotten off the ground. And, without PCM, Inc. (Preservation of the Caballo Mountains) Sierra County would not have a significant mining or a property rights voice in which to battle Satan's Green Synagogue.

Please note that I am not a writer. Plus, I am guilty of using incorrect grammar and make up descriptive words to suit me. Although what I have written herein is based upon my notes and memories I have striven to remain reasonably accurate. I've no doubt made errors and possibly even added my own brand of mythology to an already confusing legacy of intriguing yarns. The main purpose of writing "Lure of the Caballos" besides enlightenment is to entertain when there is nothing better to do with your precious time.

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## PART I

### LURE of the CABALLO'S

Essentially this is what I call a doc-u-drama relating to the adventures of the classic prospector trying to find his pot of gold in the dry, scorched sands of the desert southwest. This would-be miner is your typical American prospector, who believes that hard work and a little luck that he too can taste the sweetness of success. After all, isn't that what America is all about?

He set's out on this endeavor by entering Nature's foreboding environment in the Kingdom of Metals. He knows that this place is fraught with curses and strange devils. But, so what? He's never let anyone or anything whip him yet. Besides, this adventure shouldn't be that much tougher than any other challenge he's met.

Sure enough, he discovers the promise of wealth beyond belief. However, the Govt has set up a variety of road blocks, complete with speed bumps, pot holes and land mines that can shatter anyone's dreams.

As his digging continues, he smells the fragrance of the honey ahead, and with his eye on the prize there's a faint but urgent whisper to hurry. As he's about to break into King Solomon's mine - low and behold from out of nowhere comes a pack of rats the likes of which not seen before. These hideous beasts oozing a green goo fouls the air with the stench of death, and everywhere they go their trail of slime leaves rotting ruin and despair behind. As he retreats these menacing ghouls gather in strength between him and the promised land.

Now what's he to do? He tries yelling for help, but no one hears. He knows the green devils mean him no good, so he seeks a safe home, but they've already ate Rome. With only a few options left, he tries to trade his shovel for a can of rat control, but its been banned years ago. Their vicious attacks have left festering financial wounds, so he trades his pick for a pen and writes herein.

Perhaps, all those reading this tale of hope and woe will grasp the task of driving away the hellish green fiends. Then with our Rights in hand we can again dance upon this land.

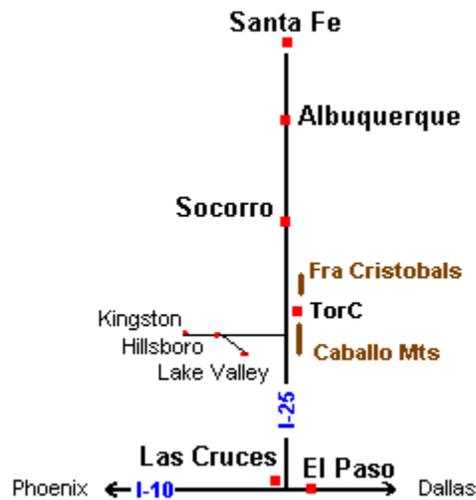
Even though this book is about my quest in the Kingdom of Metals, practically every aspect of these contents has, does and will affect all people no matter where they live, work, or play.

Primarily, I've tried to illustrate with words what the metals have done for man, for there is no segment of this century that has enjoyed them not, except the poor and backwards fragments of humanity.

In addition, I'm trying to warn all that will listen about the dangers we all face. The State and Federal Govt's are working overtime writing strangling laws and regulations causing strife to American's way of life.

Some people, in the face of reality, will not believe that a new plague has descended upon this land, as they listen to the environmental band. However, eventually they will watch in utter disbelief as these swarms devour everything green including their dreams.

Consequently, if you own land, home or business, no matter where or what kind, or work for no matter who, your life and your children's future depend on what you do to stop the deluge of the polluting green goo.



## CHAPTER 1

### The Beginning

This saga actually starts when I was about 5 years old, while walking along a stream near the Northern Washington Idaho border, with my Uncle and Mother. Uncle Martin, who loved prospecting suddenly bent down and scooped up a rock from the fast running creek. Even with an untrained eye I could see the gold speckled throughout the rock. From that moment on, I was hooked. And now, with the final act of my spellbinding adventure drawing near to a close I've often wondered if Uncle Martin didn't pass me the ancestral torch, or worse, the family curse?

Fortunately, life has allowed me a vagabond's freedom to see and live in a variety of States. Upon reaching the ripe old age of 40 and having accomplished most of my goals (fast cars, great female relationships, raising and training Arabian Horses and man eating Cats, playing with the toys of the construction trade, cutting and polishing gemstones, as well as gold and silver smithing) I was eager for something new and inspiring.

Over the years my life style acquired the desire of touching and tasting all things. Consequently I had become a "Jack of all trades, and master of none". Even though Lady Luck had graciously given me all I had asked for I still had that childhood itch that needed a scratch. Early in March 1982, living in Texas, and a sole proprietor of a tiny construction business, I decided to pursue the glimmering idea of discovering a silver mine. Not having a real vacation in years I and a friend (Mike McCoy) decided to go prospecting for a week in the New Mexico mountains. We had no idea where to begin, and decided to let fate take us by the hand. Looking back on that decisive day, there's no doubt that I was being led by scents carried on ancient winds.

With the disease of romanticism roaring through my veins I was ready for anything. Realizing that I wasn't getting any younger and mining meant work, I decided to go for broke or forever hold my hopes.

We drove for what seemed like an eternity through the endless stretches of West Texas, stopping only for a couple hours snooze along the road. When the morning sun began to peak over the distant mountains tops, and anxious to get to we knew not where, we put the pedal to the floor. The first place we stopped was at the ruins of Lake Valley. I didn't know it at the time, but this was the Famed Bridal Chamber mining community, about 80 miles North of El Paso.

This ghost like community watched silently as the two keen-eyed dudes used their metal detectors over every ruin, and suspicious patch and crack. Surely, the old timer's left something behind. It didn't dawn on us at the time, but this abandoned town was probably gutted prior to our dads being in their prime. Never mind reality we were having a kick-ass time, and every rock and gulch held the promising pleasure of hidden treasure. Naturally, we didn't find a single coin, nor any old bags stuffed with yellow dust. But, so what, this was only our first day, and what could we expect? With dusk beginning to settle, we decided to blaze another trail. By night fall we stopped at a roadside park, complete with flowing creek on the outskirts of Kingston.

In our haste we sure pitched a sorry excuse for a tent. Thank God darkness had wrapped us in a dense black coat, so no one would notice us two boobs in the woods. A campfire was started, though the cold winds blew it out faster than we could light it, so we tried to sleep. However, the freezing air and the soaking snow made our first night a dreadful ordeal. At sunrise with my teeth chattering, body shivering and the old head roaring, I said enough of this roughing it nonsense as I washed my face in the ice cold creek. I had just received my first lesson. I just wasn't as rough and tough as I thought. So, we hurriedly packed our gear and headed back to Hillsboro for a shower and feast. There was no doubt about it I was a city slicker, and didn't like being without creature comforts.

Armed with full bellies, we headed up to the continental divide. The smells and the scenery of these high desert mountains were pure delight compared to the squalor of urban asphalt and concrete clutter.

This was hog-heaven as we hiked the wooded mountain sides and waded the creeks. Hours raced by, with not a clue as to why we were there, except it seemed like the right thing to be doing. When the sun began to hide the huge pines began casting dark intimidating shadows, and we beat a hasty retreat back to main street. One thing for sure, I didn't want a repeat of last night's treat.

The next crack of dawn we enthusiastically headed-out again. This time we went West up the steep winding road that was an adventure in itself. We were always dodging occasional oncoming cars that for some reason or another always tried to straighten out the curves. After getting several miles out of Kingston and about the 8000 foot elevation we noticed an obscure, dirt road, that seemed to be beckoning us. Boy was I dumb, because as we went down this narrow rough road I had no idea what kind of obstacles we'd encounter. Fortunately, my fairly new 4 WD Chevy navigated this pot holed, boulder laden, and darn near washed out excuse of a road.

The old road came to an abrupt stop at a flowing creek, with just enough room to turn around and park. We started looking around as to why this grizzly path was here. Sure enough, we spotted a obscure abandoned mine opening. I could feel my adrenaline starting to flow, and silently said, now this was living and what I came to do. We packed up a little food, flash lights, our trusty hand guns, and advanced upon the mysterious dark hole.

As we cautiously entered the long deserted mine opening my mind was saying, what if we encounter rattlesnakes or worse, a lurking Bear in the darkness?

Every niche and cranny was exciting as we continued our fascinating excursion deep into the bowels of this old mine. Deeper and deeper into the gloomy tunnels we walked, often taking a right turn then a left, but not to worry, we'd not get lost.

I was constantly on the look-out for relics and obvious minerals. And, if by chance one of the old timers just happened to have left a lump or two of gold hanging on the walls, that was OK by me, after all I wasn't greedy. Our flash lights were poor excuses of adequate lighting, and we managed to get semi-lost in what quickly became a maze of huge endless corridors. But in contrast, we were having the time of our lives. Eventually, it was decided that perhaps we best start trying to find our way back out of this mining maize, that I was later to know as the Patented Gray Eagle. While



taking what seemed like the correct tunnel and waiting for Mike I looked up and saw to my astonishment small diameter interwoven branches holding back what appeared to be tons of debris. As Mike approached I said that we'd better be careful, and showed him why. With the words barely out of my mouth Mike shined his lantern down on the floor, and if I'd taken another step I would have plummeted down a shaft that we couldn't see the bottom of. Triumphantly, we got out there without mishap and headed back to Hillsboro.

It was beginning to dawn on me that what I wanted to achieve was going to be just a bit more than I knew how to handle. So, I started asking around town as to who had mining properties. That's when I met Sonja, the Postmaster and an after hours Realtor. After explaining to her that I was interested in possibly buying a mining claim she told me of a couple, which were: The Wicks for about \$20,000 and the Gray Eagle for \$180,000, both patented properties. Naturally, I was interested, but knew I couldn't afford the Gray Eagle. So Mike and I took off to look at the Wicks, which was about halfway between Hillsboro and Interstate 25.

We spent the day going over the Wicks area, including the thorough investigation of the old stone buildings in the Wicks Gulch. We panned for gold in the creek and found plenty of color, which naturally urged me on. Upon returning to Hillsboro, I told Sonja that the Wicks was interesting, but I wanted to see other properties. Therefore, she told me how to contact her father (Mr. Bee Franklin), who had a few mining claims.

When we met this elderly gentleman, we were both captivated by his style and charm, as well as his mining yarns. Eventually, he tells us about his numerous silver prospects in the Black Range Mountains, and agrees to guide us to the sites.

I didn't know it at the time, but Mr. Franklin (Bee) was becoming my tutor in the mining game. After several days of looking at his properties high in the Black Range sky, I knew that I simply

had to have more of this kind of pie. Time was passing, and Mike and I realized that we both had to get back to Austin. As far as I was concerned, and Mr. Franklin agreeing, I would work at least on one of his mines when I returned.

Once back in Austin, it didn't take long to get rid of all my stuff, acquire a travel trailer and drilling equipment, before heading back to those enchanting mountains. One thing for sure, I was going to give this quest my best and put it to rest.

## CHAPTER 2

### Prospectors and Miners

When I sat out to seek my fame and fortune I had no idea of the amount of bumps in the night that I'd trip over, nor the amount of blunders I'd commit. I had read many a book on mining, treasure hunting and done a little prospecting, but never found a book describing what mining is really all about. Therefore, before getting too far ahead of myself, and due to the varied misconceptions, and distortions it seems prudent to unmask a few basic concepts of what mining means to the Individual, the Land, the County, the State, and this great Nation.

What is a Miner? In my opinion, it is anyone who digs in the Earth, to derive sustenance, pleasure and/or income. This definition includes the following: Farmers, Plumbers, Rockhounds, Spelunkers, Treasure Hunters, Archaeologists, Geologists, Paleontologists, Sand & Gravel Operators, Road Builders, Quarry Operators, Construction companies, Oil, Gas & Water Well Diggers, etc., to name what comes to mind at the moment. It should also be pointed out that miners are also all of Nature's creatures, including bacteria that munch-out on all minerals including your teeth. Naturally, the dictionary doesn't say this, but over the course of time, anyone with good sense will recognize the truth in my description.



**What is a Prospector?** First of all, there are many kinds of prospectors. Take for example a colony of ants, which remind me of human cities with their many scouts always prospecting for food. And, when a source of sustenance is found out of their tunnels come the hoards to capture and use this new, although temporary resource. Or, the salesman who is a prospector and is always seeking the next sale around the next corner, street or the next building.

My first job was looking for used tin cans, which were recycled and sold to nurseries for plant containers. My next profession was prospecting for customers who would buy metal forming machinery. I would prospect for these illusive customers over several hundred to thousands of square miles. However, the “prospector” I’m referring to is the one who actively tries to locate metal/mineral deposits, so that miners can apply their trade of excavating and extracting.

Anyone can be a half-ass prospector. Though, the really good ones will be those of any age, who have the will and the guts to set foot in the mysterious screaming quite of the Mineral Kingdom. They will of course have at least one of the following attributes: the taste for adventure, a good nose to smell out the illusive metals, be endowed with inner sight or the instinct as to where to search, or guided by destiny. Consequently, “prospectors” looks a lot and digs a little, whereas the miner digs a lot and looks a little.

Any serious student of mining will eventually learn that no one should ever attempt to impede mining, nor prospecting, because man’s future survival is at stake. The young should be taught how totally dependent humans are upon mining, but unfortunately, they’re not. All anyone has to do is look back into history to recognize that man graduated from sticks and stones to metal. And, in so doing he made a gigantic leap in his query to subdue the elements enough to find some degree of pleasure and comfort in this place we call Reality.

With each metal discovery and subsequent use thereof his standard of living has risen exponentially. Obviously, people should support mining, and I believe they would if they only knew what they stood to lose if they continue closing their eyes to the miner’s plight.

Man through the centuries has learned how to extract and utilize most of the metals. The question is: are WE willing and able to make the next technological quantum leap, by helping the little guy discover the much needed bonanzas?

There are only a tiny fraction of Americans mining or prospecting today. Why? Because, the incentives are not in place. This minute segment of society is now susceptible to all sorts of diseases fostered and prompted by our elected representatives, who do the bidding of the plague infested environmentalists, ecologists, archaeologists, paleontologists and conservationists.

Make no mistake about it, if the environmentalists (Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, etc., etc., etc.) continue getting their way, none of us will be able to enjoy the ‘multiple-use’ concept of Federal (Public) Lands, nor the metals they contain. These Lands are OURS and do not belong to any one special interest group. Nor, do these lands belong to the Gestapo squads supposedly enforcing the myriad of rules the self-serving Govt bureaucracies has in their infinite wisdom seen fit to shackle us with.

The environmental community appears to me to be exactly like the medieval priests. These elitist priests who’s authority emanated directly from the church and/or government applied their ghastly trades upon the people. Like today, those ancient people had little if any say in matters of how they were to be governed. These priests fed the people all kinds of myth, and of course all manner of remedies, which they monopolized and sold to the masses to guard against the made up myths. And when a commoner attempted to sell any of the priests remedies, like garlic these entrepreneurs

would often be branded as witches. Once called a witch these people were then fined, jailed or burned. Even though the methods of today's elitists are different from ancient times the end results are amazingly similar.

Prospectors and miners are truly becoming an endangered species. And without public support, they will go the same way as the dinosaur. People without jobs know it's tough in the real World, so when the small independent miners and prospectors are gone most of the rest of the population will learn what hard times really mean. And, if the Miners lose their independence to pursue the American Ideals, then so will everyone else.

This great Nation was founded upon the ideals of Freedom, not the thesis of slavery. The Metals liberate man from tyranny and ignorance. Surely, by simply looking around, the elements are making life easier. Just imagine what our lives could be like if our most basic industry, mining, was strong again.

It is often stated that this Nation is entering a new era, where we're going to have to be smarter and more technically oriented in order to compete in the new Global Order. Well, I say that not everyone is, can be, nor will be a Astro-physicist, Rocket scientist, or Brain surgeon. Some us will be street sweepers, nurses, farmers, mechanics, ranchers, clerks, plumbers, as well as Miners. A case in point is: thousands of steel workers were laid off in 1992, some of those people learned the sophisticated arts of computer programming, industrial Cad-Cam applications and still cannot get a job. Even Silicon Valley (previously a silica waste land called a California desert) has laid off thousands of PHD's. However as of 1999 silicon valley jobs are temporarily plentiful. However, to sum up this line of reasoning, there's rock hard evidence that the vast majority of us will not be financial wizards, political barons, nor mineral miners. But, without exception everyone prospects for some kind of life or stomach filling promise and are thus prospectors.

Just try to conceive of what it would be like if mining came to a halt! If the small miners are regulated out of existence it sure won't take long before Neanderthal's will again rule the face of Earth with sticks and stones. Most people will likely say, in response to the foregoing that we're far too advanced technologically to ever become stone throwing spear chucking nomads. I simply say, hogwash. Those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat the horrors and chaos of the past. Perhaps there is no better time and place to say herein, that we, and I mean all of us are dangerously close to entering a new deeper dark age if we are not very careful.

Before prospecting and mining can occur there has to be available Land. There are 3 basic land use classifications necessary for mining that every would-be prospector/miner should know, which are: 1) Private, with or without mineral rights (non Patented), 2) Public Lands (govt managed), open to mineral entry, and subject to the 1872 mining Law and the 43 CFR amendments. This would include surface (Placer) and sub-surface (lode) mining rights. The maximum size of a lode mining claim is 1500' x 600' (20 acres), that are marked by corner monuments. A mineral discovery is required, although there is no limit as to how many claims a person may file upon. Placer claims are also 20 acres, but square. 3) Patented mineral rights: These are few in number as compared to public lands. This type of land has been granted and deeded from the Federal Govt to private ownership. This was done to protect the owner by granting ownership to allow exclusive

rights to mine the proven minerals into perpetuity. Unfortunately, all these classifications by the summer of 2000 are under siege and in total danger of becoming relics of the past.

It probably is wise to keep in mind that minerals (metals - either base or precious, in chemical combination with other metals and/or organics) are commodities and subject to the whims of supply, demand and politics. Therefore, when a mineral discovery is made usually one or more claims is filed upon to further develop the property. In so-doing, vast sums of money, labor and time is spent proving-up and extracting the sought minerals. When profits have been realized and the property represents a continued source of minerals the claim owner sometimes applies for a patent. However, in this day (1993) and age (environmental elitism) I wouldn't hold your breath waiting for the Govt to grant a Patent. Once a mine has been patented, the original mining claim reverts to private ownership, and can be mined anytime at the owners discretion. Although, if the environmentalist's succeed in their plans, all mining by the little guy will cease.

What are the requirements of Land to justify the costs in time, labor and money to extract/exploit potential minerals? 1) ORE in commercial amounts, and Accessibility (roads). 2) Benign laws, regulations and political climate. 3) The close proximity to Smelting, Refining and Markets. 4) Water for Drilling, Classification, Clarification, Beneficiation and Concentration.



The general rule for Milling and Placer operations is 2-3 x weight of water to weight of Ore (rock). Examples: a small miner wants to process 200 tons per day of rock (ore and gangue), this would require approximately 600 tons of water. Although water is recyclable it should not be considered as renewable, because only some of the original water is reclaimed. Usually, in semi-arid climates evaporation is a major source of loss. The following figures all prospectors should know: a) 1 gal of H<sub>2</sub>O weighs about 8 pounds; b) 1 Acre Foot of H<sub>2</sub>O = 325,829 gallons or 1,300 tons; c) A 200 ton per day operation would require approximately 90 acre feet of water per year; d) A 15,000 ton per day operation would require approximately 7000 acre feet of H<sub>2</sub>O per year; e) the cost to buy one acre foot of water is roughly \$5000.00 (1993).

It is conceivable that Sierra County could have 5-10 small operations (200 tons), a few Placer operations (100 tons/1000 tons), and 1-3 larger (15,000 tons) operations going at same time. This could represent a water requirement of 20-30,000 acre feet of water per year. Unfortunately, there is not enough water to go around if the above scenario were to become the norm, and many miners would go begging. Those lucky enough to have gotten in on the ground floor before several mines opened, would still have had to buy their water rights from existing owners. The alternative would be to let someone else who has the water do the concentrating, milling, etc.

Why did the people leave the Eastern cities, during the 1800's and early 1900's? While doing historical research it became abundantly clear that most people were living in abhorrent ghetto conditions. Likewise, diseases were rampant, partially due to unsanitary water, fly infestation as a result of horse manure and just plain too crowded. Hence, the "go west young man" slogan began. Maintaining personal health and having an opportunity to own Land that were powerful motives to head out and away from the East.

Getting sick today is certainly unpleasant, but for the life of me I don't know how anyone coped with being treated by a surgeon or physician of that time? Even though going West meant hardship and facing barbaric Indians, at least there was abundant land and the possibility of striking it rich. The alternative was a miserable existence, which many people today (1993) are still experiencing.

To my way of perceiving history the 1800's prospectors/miners, ranchers and farmers were the advance scouts for an emerging American civilization. Based upon hundreds of historical accounts, there simply is no-doubt that the pioneers (Anglo Conquistadors) set the stage for our collective migratory inclinations, and our insatiable thirst for mind-boggling adventure. As these hardy adventurer's settled and tamed the West the fruits of their toil, whether on top or below ground, all too often became the prizes of Eastern financial and industrial conglomerates.

The rewards for heading West were represented as staggering bonanzas and pristine living conditions. However, the dangers were just as awesome. Try to imagine, back then, from the Indians point of view the white hoard spreading West. Clearly, The Indian's way of living became at cultural odds with these land devouring pioneers. So, if the Indians didn't scalp these future would-be miners Mother Nature often served-up hardship and death to all who dared tempt Her.

Based upon old accounts of the early would-be miners, and knowing what I do today, I simply cannot fathom how these men managed in the face of such adversity. I have often wondered how these miners could get anything done while their eyes were constantly revolving around their heads just to avoid an Indian arrow, little alone chip rock.

When the news reached the eastern seaboard that mineral bonanzas were common occurrences the Eastern financiers began financing teams of men thirsty for riches, and so began the phrase "grub-staking". This practice continues today, but is now referred to as 'Funding', although seldom these days for mining.

These early miners through much turmoil, torment and bloodshed set the stage for rules of conduct and behavior. And to some degree many of these rules although modified are still utilized today. Examples would be: Water rights, and the 1872 Mining Law, that essentially said - "first

come, first served". This type of thinking and behavior became what is known as what some refer to as the "Custom and Culture" of the West. To put the aforesaid another way - it is an unwritten law and a common practice that those who blazed the trails West acted upon instinct handed down since time began, which is - take and hold. Another way of saying the same thing would be - the inherited Traditions of the past, which affect the present, will surely continue to influence the future.

There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the Miner created the economic fuel that drove the financial engines of the Eastern markets. As the West became populated and new markets emerged in the settlements, it sure must have caused the Eastern financial interest's pause and concern. Could the giant eastern monopolies let these new players rival their long dominated inheritance?

Big business is always saying that competition is healthy, yet it appears that the multi-national corporations have always stomped upon any perceived threat. Take for example how the Seven Sisters got the Govt to decimate Iraq during Desert Storm. Furthermore, is it just coincidence that a World Class deposit of Tungsten was found prior to the Korean War, or that vast oil beds were suspected of lying off the Gulf of Vietnam prior to that tragic debacle? What really caused the British Empire to declare war over the Falkland islands? And, what about the worlds dominate diamond player indicating in June 2000 that they won't buy diamonds from so-called illegal (non-govt sanctioned) rebel forces in Africa's Sierra Leone and Angola?

Obviously, the only logical way the Eastern establishment could hope to maintain a monolithic hold on this potential Western mineral empire was through Govt control. It appears to my eyes, ears and nose that the Eastern Interest's did not and do not intend to compete with Westerners for the bountiful Western Resources. Therefore, to control these upstarts the Easterner's made laws and rules, and in my opinion planted the seeds of the BLM, environmental, conservation and archaeological movements, to be used when the needs arose. Anyone, living during the 1960's watched the greenie movements ripen and bloom. The wiser Westerner's watched in horror as the well camouflaged ploys forged regulation after regulation aimed at slowing or stopping the Westerner's Right of Passage into the new Real Power of this Country.

In an attempt to circumvent the Eastern Establishment's rules you may remember the "Sagebrush Rebellion." Of course this grass roots movement was squashed by what is still heard today, "he who owns the gold makes the rules". This translates out to, as the early Easterners clearly recognized, the West's Resources (Minerals, Timber, Land) were and are a very real threat to an impoverished East. Anyone with normal 20/20 vision can see that all the East has is abundant people, financial wealth, and the halls of Congress.

It may well be, one day, that Westerner's (Miners, Ranchers, Loggers, Farmers, Merchants, Hunters, Trappers, Explorers, and modern pioneers) will band together to stop the Easterner's tyrannical injustices. I certainly hope so, for to not come together is just too horrible to contemplate. Prospecting is first and foremost for Mineral discoveries. Land development is the second stage, followed by Mining (extraction), beneficiation (milling & laboratory analysis), winning (smelting), and marketing being the last phase of exploitation.

Just one Prospector, properly outfitted (instruments, knowledge, creature comforts & equipment) can pump thousands of dollars into any local economy and possibly influence political trends. Consequently, it would behoove the multitude of local merchants in any community to allow prospectors a flourishing climate. Thereby, maybe at least one prospector will make a strike, thus creating abundant wealth that mining has always brought throughout recorded time. Generally, one discovery brings in hundreds of mineral scouts and largely enhances the odds of more discoveries. Just one small mining company (200 tons per day) can affect a local community's economy by millions of dollars per year. So, what could several small mines, or a couple of large mines do to a small town, or a State in these troubled times? Oh, I know, when I wrote this in 1993 times were different than the summer of 2000. But, keep in mind, what goes up always comes down. Also, when the giant corporations need people they hire by the thousands, which creates the trickle down wealth syndrome. But, when times start getting tough, as they always do then these same nice giants fire by the thousands. The buzz words of the 70's, 80's and 90's for communities is to only allow clean industries to create employment. Well, in 2000 believe it or not the majority of communities are impoverished regarding good paying jobs. And, naturally, because mining is a nasty word very little is being done, except of course only by the big boys.

There are those (today) who say digging holes (big or small) in the ground disturbs the environment, ruins the water, destroys the pristine beauty, and displaces fauna and flora. These same people forget that they owe their very existence to what comes from the ground. They also, just as obviously forget that all their comforts and goods came from the ground, and the more it costs to mine always affects the standard of living for all. I guess that I've been luckier than most, because I've traveled throughout the entire United States, and cannot draw any close resemblance of 'Miners Holes' to the foul smelling and disgusting appearances of our cities. Yet, everyone says that the big city is where the good-life is. Nonsense, this is pure propaganda. One day, and I don't know when, people will fear the city for the infestation of rot they truly are.

Yes, mining abuses have been and probably are being committed, but so-called abuses have been the norm since time began. Currently our bathrooms, kitchens, and asphalt highways contribute more to the mythical ecological pollution than all the past and present mining operations put together. Likewise, it is impossible for any living organism to exist without creating waste. Clearly, the only logical solution to the real or imagined environmental problems (air, water & land) is through employing new technological use of the metals. Penalizing prospectors and miners, via absurd laws and rules is most assuredly inviting a multitude of socio-economic disasters, that at the very least will raise the price of all things beyond the grasp of the common man or woman. Therefore, my premise is, the more mines the better all of our lives will be, no matter where we live, work or play.

When the Spanish came to New Mexico, via the Rio Grande River Valley they were no different than American prospectors. They too were searching for mineral deposits that would improve not only their own personal wealth, but also Spain's deplorable economy. Upon arrival it didn't take these mineral Conquistadors long to discover that the indigenous, stone age Indians had a rudimentary knowledge of the metals.

Some Indians had learned the art of applying various colored minerals to their clay bowls. Other tribes utilized native silver, gold and gemstones for ornamental purposes. Thus, it would seem

obvious that the American Indians were the first known miners in New Mexico, not the Spaniards as the pretentious modern history book portray.

History suggests that the early Conquistadors utilized the Indians knowledge to locate these metal deposits. It's also equally clear that the brutal Spaniard's made the Indians labor to extract the precious commodities. Consequently, during the 1680's the Indians declared war on the Spanish, driving them out of New Mexico. Evidently, after the Spanish beat a hasty retreat South, the Indians covered all traces of the mining activities, so that they would not have to endure the hardships of slavery again. It is my opinion that this is the time period when most Indians developed the superstition that Gold belonged to the Gods, and should remain in the ground. Nevertheless, the lure of Gold and other precious commodities was just too strong and the Spanish started returning in 1692.

European type civilization came to New Mexico because the necessary ingredients for Freedom of Self Expression were and some-what still are, readily available to those courageous enough to grab-a-hold of Mother Natures Merry-go-round. Furthermore, I believe, these daring souls created our present nomadic tendencies, that is often referred to as the American Way of Life.

Transportation in the 1800's and early 1900's was the major limiting factor to mining endeavors. Thus, for all intent and purpose most all mines worked only the 'oxidized' portions of the numerous Lode Deposits. This was definitely the case of the Spaniards. Complex ores (sulfides) were only partially exploited. Why? Because the smelters penalized the miners for the sulfidic minerals regardless of the quantity of gold and silver. This penalty was due to damaging effects of sulphur on the walls of the furnaces. Today, many of these rich old mines are flooded and the current capital costs are prohibitive to re-open them. However, as technology advances, troubles of the past should provide us with a very bright future. Even though the early pioneers plundered the mineral riches - only the cream (the simplest of Ores) were taken, so there are many fertile and abounding treasures just begging to be re-examined.

Technology and guts will re-open many old mines, as well as discovering new "el dorados". Yet, this will only happen if a conducive political environment exists. Therefore, Sierra County or any past mining community cannot afford to let special interest groups or Govt agencies stifle individuality and creative freedom(s) if the local human community is to survive.

Lately (1982-93) there has been an unprecedented deterioration of personal liberties regarding prospecting and/or mining on Public "Multiple-Use" Lands. Groups of environmentalists and archaeologists are hell-bent on restricting or completely stopping individuals (the little guy) from utilizing their own Lands. I'm not sure as how to fight this new Green Pestilence that has financial resources beyond my mere pocket change. Yet, the choices are radiantly clear -- either roll over and play dead, join them, or stand and fight. The trouble is—us commoner's (every day American's) are up against new versions of Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung, who are armed to the teeth while chanting "Mine and Cattle Free by 93".

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which seemingly conforms to political whims has even created their own private gestapo to police our lands, under the cover of monitoring drug activities. I personally think the drug issue is a hoax by the BLM. Why could I possibly imagine such?

Because controlling illicit drugs is the duty of the DEA, not the BLM. Nevertheless, I've been told by BLM management (Linda Rundell - 1992) in Las Cruces that the DEA is under-staffed and under-funded, so the BLM, under the auspices of President Bush's War on Drugs, started hiring and training this new SWAT patrol. Even the Forest Rangers and National Park personnel carry guns under the authority of Federal Police. I have to ask—are these federal agents really protecting or just intimidating the people? Is it possible that they are the front line defense (foot soldiers) of some planned future event?

It is my opinion that it is the duty and/or obligation of our local elected officials to ensure the people that mineral exploitation will remain protected and free. This type of attitude for mining will ensure all American communities an opportunity of participating in the rewards well into the next century. The alternative is a deplorable expiration of our life style, that has lighted the way for the weary, enslaved and destitute for people the World over.

## CHAPTER 3

### In Search of Silver

Upon arriving back in Hillsboro, I parked the travel trailer behind Bee's home. Because my anxiety level was seeping from every pore it was all I could do to rest a couple of days after the long drive. By the third day my feet were just-a-itching and the only cure for them was to be scratched by hauling the equipment up to Bee's Mine.

With Mr. Franklin leading the way we slowly snaked our way up the precipitous mountain sides. Sometimes I didn't know if I was going to make it, because the air compressor weighed as much as the pickup. As all four tires spun trying to climb the steep narrow trail, I could just see the dern thing pulling me backwards over one of the cliffs. Finally, after a lot of praying and great relief we arrive at his "Pocket" mine site.

After the equipment was all set up, and the site readied, we started the grueling business of drilling, blasting and mucking. For several weeks, we ground our noses on this stone in hopes of locating the rich pocket of silver that a group of physics had told Bee was there. The name of the tune we were playing was work, work and work. For the most part I was drilling straight up within the adit Bee had previously started. With muck and grime constantly running down the hammer and into my eyes I eventually became disgruntled, and decided to abandoned this illusive prize. Hence, we decided to try another of his properties. However, this meant going back to Austin and getting my backhoe.

Upon returning with the Backhoe, and after digging a rather large hole it soon became apparent that I was not going to find silver at this spot without spending considerable sums of money that I didn't feel I could afford. So, I kind'a kicked-back and took stock of the recent events.

I began hearing tales of lost mines and Spanish treasures from several people, including an elderly gentleman known as "crazy Bob". He told me one evening, for no apparent reason, and out of the clear blue that he was the person who orchestrated the caravan of trucks that hauled out the gold bars from the Caballo Mts. He also told me about some stolen loot that was buried below the fireplace in a Hillsboro home. Perhaps, this man's stories is how he acquired his dubious nickname, as well as his tendency to wreck his cars just about as fast as he could buy them. Whether or not his fanciful tale of buried loot is real or not, is for Helen Evans to decide, because it's her place. Till now I've kept that information to myself, on account of I'm sure she wouldn't want a bunch of goggle-eyed treasure hunters banging on her door at all hours of the day. Likewise, I just can't imagine anyone bothering this gracious lady who has only the kindest words to say about everyone. Furthermore, as far as I'm concerned if the world had a few hundred Helen's we wouldn't be in the mess we constantly find ourselves.

For the reason that I had to have explosives, it was inevitable that I met Mr. Sunny Hale of Hillsboro. This man always wears a smile and never says a mean word. From what I can piece together -- Sunny has lived in the area a long time, and has worked a-many-a-prospect, including the old Ingersole mine. I've always admired his tenacity of attempting to make ends meet and yet seek-out his personal glory hole. Years later, while he was cutting a road and trying to expose

mineralization on someone else's claims he and his dozer plunged through what was supposedly solid ground into an old mine chamber. When he was telling me the story he was laughing, causing me to bust-a-gut and get a much needed belly-rub. In spite of his humor, I'll just bet-ya that he filled his drawers waiting for the remainder of the ceiling to fall in leaving him buried and a goner for sure.

As the weeks continued to pass, Bee started teaching me the rudiments of dowsing. And to my surprise I could locate buried steel objects. Even though these brass rods would indicate something buried I could never, sufficiently prove to my satisfaction that they pinpointed to anything, other than pieces of iron. Perhaps it's my skeptical attitude, but to this day I will not use them to justify digging any hole. To my way of thinking and limited mental capacity it only seems logical that if dowsing is really legitimate, there would be no goodies left for anyone to find.

A few years later I was reading a book on Spindle Top, which delegated a couple of chapters to dowsing. Apparently, around the turn of the century about half the oil wildcatters, as well as influential oil companies employed dowsers, and the other half used geologists in order to find and drill for oil. As it turns out, both sides had about the same rate of success. Based upon the overall results, it would seem that throwing a dart into topo wall map would result in similar success and failures. What I found of particular interest was where Spindle Top was located, which was previously thought of as worthless ground by the so-called experts of the day. Yet, without dowsing and only a hunch and a lot of ridicule the wildcatter made it into one of the all time great gushers.

Eating in restaurants was a way of life with me. And one Day (1982) while dining at the S-Bar-X in Hillsboro I met Ron and Shirley Hammond, who were managing the bar and grill. As our friendship grew we went on several gold placer hunts. I would use the backhoe and Ron used the wet and dry washers to process the gravels. We looked high and low over several thousand acres of promising land. We almost always found color (specs of gold), but I could never warrant any serious excavations. Most of the areas we dug showed from 1 to 4 dollars a yard in small gold nuggets. Perhaps, someday, a few of these areas may become profitable if gold gets over 600 dollars an ounce. One thing for sure, all the frosting was devoured long ago, and the scraps the old miners left will require expensive and sophisticated equipment to make any tangible profits.

On our best excursion, near the Rattlesnake Mine, while working a small dry steam bed we found in the drywasher a half to one ounce nugget of what appeared to be Iridium. Some of you who know the PGMs will say how could I make such a observation? When I picked it up, it was unusually heavy, then I checked to see if it was magnetic, and it wasn't. Next I bit it to see how soft it was, and it didn't dent. Could it have been a glob of stainless steel? I would have said it was stainless, but it was just too heavy, and I've been around the various stainless grades of steel for years and it just didn't resemble it. At the time it didn't mean much because I didn't know much about the Platinum Group Metals. However, I don't intend to forget the area, because one day it may well be worth re-examining to find the source of the nugget.

Just prior to Ron & Shirley moving out of State, Ron asked me to join him as he staked mineral claims on the Ladder Ranch. I bring this up, only because, at the time it was owned by Robert O. Anderson, and now (1994) owned by Ted Turner and Jane Fonda. When R.O. Anderson owned it he employed horseback riding Cowboys, who ran Ron and me off the property with guns in hand,

while charging at a full gallop. Consequently, I never went back with Ron to stake mining Claim or build the monuments.

We did go back, but not quite on the Ranch property one time to locate a show of mineralization we discovered while prospecting the area. This time I had the air compressor and drilling equipment and we were going to find out once and for all, what, if anything resided in this dark green rock. Sure enough, as the drill steel penetrated deeper and deeper pure copper wires became noticeable. We were both excited, however within just a few minutes of drilling, the sky turned a menacing black, producing a frigid rain that turned to hail. These little balls of ice felt like I was being attacked by a flock of woodpeckers, so we decided to hold-up in our pickups till the squall blew over.

As I was sitting there waiting and enjoying a cigarette I noticed a trickle of water beginning to flow. Realizing that my drill steel could get stuck I decided that I'd better pull the drillhammer and steel from the spot and just start another hole when the storm blew over. By the time I got out of the pick-up the water was ankle deep, and when I got to the drill about 50 feet away the water was knee deep. Realizing that all-hell was about to break loose, I was barely able to save the hammerdrill by uncoupling the drill steel, rushing as fast as I could, grabbing and throwing the air hose and drill in the back of pick-up. And, by the time I was in the front seat, the water was looking like a raging river. Needless to say, I was getting concerned. There was no land in site in which to drive to, except the cliff walls or further down the canyon, to which we headed for as fast as we could. That was a ride I'll never forget. I couldn't see where to drive. I didn't know if I was driving into a hole, going to hit a huge boulder, or what, I just knew I had to get to high ground somehow, and fast! The pick-up was beginning to bob like a cork, and the water was splashing over the hood like a boat in a storm. Fortunately, we made it to an isolated mound that in this circumstance resembled an oasis. But, was this piece of high ground going to remain safe? The question was really academic, by virtue of there simply was no choice. It was stay here and maybe drown or try for higher ground and surely drown.

That was my first and last necessary lesson about flash floods. Apparently, the previous summer a couple of people in the same general area were killed in a similar flash flood. Reflecting back on the incident there's no doubt in my mind that Lady Luck had saved our hides.

On a previous trip to this flood prone canyon Ron showed me a cave that had a silver plate and candle holder removed by people he knew. However, this was not the day to explore, in view of the fact that we didn't have proper gear or lights. I always meant to go back to both places, but as usual, something always took precedence of my time. On the way back out of the gorge I drove over what looked like a huge rattlesnake. As I got out of the pickup to get a closer look at the coiled rascal I noticed that it didn't any rattlers, but it had a triangular head and ready for business. Not knowing what to make of the creature, I poked at it with a stick, and naturally it struck at me several times, showing me its lovely fangs. The question still haunts me, was it a Rattler without rattles or a Puff Adder even though Adders are not known to be in New Mexico.

Close to where we almost drowned, Ron eventually staked and sold his placer mining claims to Mr. Glen Swab. A few weeks later Ron went back to same area and re-staked lode claims over the placer claims, and sold these to Mr. Swab. These claims became known as Golden Gulch, which

Mr. Swab worked, for the placer gold. He eventually sold or leased his Claims to Pete Olsen, and became known as the "Genie Mines". From what I understand Mr. Olsen had recently been released from jail for some-kind of fraud, and he apparently set-about doing the same thing again.

Not too long after the Genie Mines' scandal I heard that Mr. Olsen died. Then, shortly after Pete's death his wife, a banker and somehow mixed-up in a colorful set of circumstances also died. And the drama continues, because, as I'm led to believe, Mr. Swab got his mining Claims back and later sold or leased them to Mr. Barberra, and became known as Dyna Pak. It didn't take long for Dyna Pak to fold, with Mr. Barberra fleeing the Feds for swindling millions of investor dollars.

Another interesting tidbit, was, when a man I met told me about how easy it was to scam placer miners by analyzing their black sands for gold. These "black sands" are often associated with placer gold and difficult to get rid of without losing significant quantities of flour gold. I might as well add that placer miners are notorious for believing that they are somehow losing their gold when they fail to make any money for their efforts. And that the black sands must be carrying what would make them rich if they could just separate the dern stuff. While in some instances this could be accurate, but generally these prospectors or would-be miners just don't want to admit that their digging in the wrong place. So, by advertising in mining journals people from all over the United States would send him samples, which he charged \$15.00 per pound to analyze. He was raking in about two grand a month and all he did was look at them, write them back, saying the sands didn't have anything and keep the money. Despite, the fact that he needed the money, this activity became too much for his conscience to bear, so he stopped the scheme.

## CHAPTER 4

### Infatuation

Shortly after the flash flood incident Mr. Franklin introduced me to his properties in the foothills of the Caballo Mountains, about 25 miles East of Hillsboro. Having nothing else that looked promising I readily grabbed onto this gracious invitation to work in this new environment.

Over the weeks that followed Mr. Franklin told me many a strange tale concerning lost mines and treasures in these rugged Caballo's. And with the same enthusiasm, he seemed convinced that his Caballo mining Claims contained an entrance, or at least a cavern that would lead to the lost gold and silver of the Conquistadores. Little did I know that this is where I was to meet my future partner Mr. Jack Crandall.

Mike McCoy, had came back to the area, for he also had the bug, and helped in Bee's mine excavation. As the grueling work continued in this new hole, I really learned the basics of underground drilling, blasting and mucking, much to the credit of Mr. Franklin.

The trip from Hillsboro to the Caballo's amounted to fifty plus miles everyday, and as time wore on I decided that it would be better to move the Travel Trailer to the KOA Campgrounds on Interstate 25. By doing so it would make the trip about 5 miles to Bee's mine, and save wear and tear on the pick-up. Plus, I wanted a new surrounding in which to explore when the time permitted.

I enjoyed the Black Range and all the rich history. But, most of the promising areas were claimed. Plus, most of the area is dense forest and scrub brush managed by the Forest Service. Furthermore, it snowed in these mountains too much, which did not suite my distaste for cold weather.

While excavating in Bee's hole one day, he asked if I'd get my backhoe and help a fellow miner out of a jam. After he told me who it was I eagerly agreed. Here was my chance to meet the legendary one-armed bandit - Fred Drolte. According to rumors and the book "100 tons of gold" Mr. Drolte was many things besides being a treasure hunter. Supposedly, he was somehow mixed-up with the CIA, gun running, and various other nefarious adventures, none of which I know are to be true. What was requested of me was to use the backhoe to keep a big cherry picker propped-up that was in danger of toppling over. Fred used this cherry picker to hoist men and equipment up and down his 200 foot deep prospect shaft. Before I had met Mr. Drolte there was considerable scuttlebutt that he was rude and didn't pay his help. All I can say about the man, is that he was very courteous, friendly and professional to me, and I never saw this unsavory side of his supposed nature.

There are multiple versions to this following story, so, knitting them together is a composite of many a strange tail. It starts out that Drolte hired a contract driller to sink core holes in hopes of locating the Spanish gold mining tunnels that he was convinced were in the vicinity. The local gossip that is firmly etched in the minds of many is that the driller encountered difficulty in drilling a particular hole. And, when he pulled the drill stem out of the ground for inspection he saw the carbide cutting head was clogged with smeared gold. No wonder he wasn't making any footage!

But, because Drolte hadn't paid him he covered over the hole, causing hundreds of people to go bonkers searching for this illusive site. Adding a dab more spice to an already hotly contested concoction of half truths, this driller supposedly saw a ghost of a red-haired woman. As I hear it, this apparition so scared the beegeeses out of him that he fell off his drilling rig in an attempt to get as far away from this spook as possible. For what ever his reasons he told a few people of the incident and the news spread like a wild-fire through-out the story tellers landscape.

Every serious treasure hunter will eventually hear how Drolte had hired squads of men armed with fully automatic rifles to guard his mine. Evidently, he wasn't about to lose his treasure to anyone who thought they could come in and take over, or rob him when he made the discovery. To my way of thinking Mr. Drolte was no different in his actions than all the other paranoids who have searched in vain. All prospectors, including me, and treasure hunters seem to share the optimist's chant of being absolutely convinced that any day the ground will open into the system of ancient underground treasure chambers.

Of course this isn't the only time armed men have been seen in the Caballo's. As far back as legends go there have always been desperado's, bandido's and renegade Indians, either stashing or finding buried goodies. But then again, why shouldn't the stories be true? Where else could one hide their loot other than the safest depository known -- "The Caballo Mountains Bank."

Not long after working in Bee's mine I met Mr. Wells Horvereid and his wife Florence, and became good friends. Wells, could tell a story like no other man I've ever met. So, in due course, his ability to re-count the plentiful Caballo legends would always captivate my mind and time.

Wells' was no green-horn, for he had been in the area seeking the treasure many years before I arrived. Digging holes to him became a second language. I guess the one thing that Well's in his quest has going for him, that most others don't, is that he at least learned where not to look for the fanciful caverns with the stacks of gold bars.

On one of the numerous story telling excursions regarding Mr. Drolte, Mr. Horvereid starts telling me about the time when a bunch of guys he heard about, got together and played a shenanigan on Drolte. Supposedly, this group of pranksters quietly climbed down his shaft in the thick of night and put old semi-decayed wood planks under the muck. The next day, the drillers find some of the old boards, and Drolte goes bananas. Everyone is ordered out of the shaft and he inspects the muck and rotted boards. Unfortunately for Fred, he was never to know that the source of these boards were put there in jest.

After a few months of working in Bee's mine, and not seeing any motivational results, I blew my top, and decided to quit this den of frustration. However, this left Jack and Mike to continue working by themselves, but I couldn't help it, I'd had enough. Besides, I came here to find a silver mine and have fun, not to explore the meaning of work.

While staying at the KOA it didn't take long to meet Jimmy and Silvia Smith. Wherefore, I found myself spending more and more time listening to Jimmy's stories of lost mines, and gold bars stacked like cordwood inside the Caballo Mountain caverns. I personally rank Jimmy near the top in his ability to spin one yarn after another. Many of which, always indicated that somewhere in the

Caballo's was a huge room used for smelting, piles of rich gold ore, huge stone pots, gold stained ladles and smelted bullion laying around in a so-called cathedral room. From what I could piece together, the area of best potential always seemed to be around the Southern End of Caballo's.

When I first arrived, and became indoctrinated it seemed that the Western Caballo foothills contained the greatest concentration of treasure hunters in all of Sierra County. Each of these individuals or groups of people were holding mining claims, nestled around Granite Peak. Of course, each believing that they alone held the mysterious entrance to the caverns that are filled with the stuff dreams are made of.

Quite near Granite Peak lies an area known as the Reefer Rocks, which sort'a resembles a monster's backbone. One day, several of us decided to excavate an area that was mighty suspicious, mainly because it was a hot bed of many a tale. We dug on an area that had obviously been back filled with decomposed granite. As we continued digging it looked as though steps had been hewn into the solid granite. Despite the tremendous effort we eventually reached what appeared to be solid bottom, with no-where to go. Yet, why was it back filled and who could have done such a massive undertaking, and when was it done? Perhaps we should have looked for false doors, but we didn't, and simply filled the deep hole back up.

This was about the time that Jimmy said I could investigate his mining Claims around the Bat Cave area. I had to admit that of all the prospects I'd seen, Jimmy's definitely offered the best promises of goodies for an observant individual, so I took on the challenge. Jimmy's best selling feature were the stories connected to Bat Cave, and that he had found evidence of gold in a vein of some kind of black soft material.

Not too long after visiting the Bat Cave area for the first time a Mr. Pittman told me that while he was investigating Bat Cave he found a small entrance that appeared to look as though it would get quite large, and that there were goodies inside it. I've looked the inside of Bat Cave over pretty good, but never found this small opening, even though I was given explicit instructions and directions. However, I did not have a shovel, and if any really serious scrutiny is going to take place, the shovel is an indispensable tool.

For an inexperienced nincompoop, like myself, climbing up to the Bat cave was an exploit, and carrying a shovel always seemed a bit foolhardy. Once inside Bat Cave there are deep holes, with old ladders, some of which are partially filled with bat guano. No one who's ever been exposed to this stuff forgets the foul obnoxious odor. One day an acquaintance who had a garden asked me to bring back some guano for her garden, and being the nice guy I am, I agreed to do so. So, after exploring this cave I proceeded to scoop-up all the rice-like kernels of guano into a plastic bag that I could. As I scooped the stench became unbearable and I quit digging with only about 10 pounds of the poop. The smell was so overpowering that I wrapped the bag several times before putting it in my backpack. Like I said, getting up to Bat Cave is one thing, but climbing back down is truly something else again. You can't see where your feet are going and the cliff walls are smooth with few toe and finger holds. Naturally I managed to bump my backpack a couple of times on the rock face and it began emitting a reeking fragrance that would gag a maggot. Several times on the way back to the pick-up I was tempted to throw my backpack away; but no, I made it this far, and I said I'd do it. When I got back to town and gave her the crap I threw the ruined back pack, coat and shirt

in the garbage, and had to wash my pick-up bed with soap and water several times before the smell was tolerable. A few words of warning about this god-awful substance, which I didn't know at the time. I've heard that the rabies virus can live in guano and that it can and does harbor an amoebic critter, that if it gets in your lungs can cause serious mischief to you health. Hence, I stay away from the evil smelling stuff. Yet there are people who actually mine the substance for a living. I can only imagine what their homes and cars must smell like.

While on the subject of bat crap, it seems appropriate to give a treasure clue that as far as I know no-one has ever mentioned before. While inside Bat Cave I found it rather odd that Bats do not seem to frequent this cave, yet where did all the guano come from? And, to top it off, why is the bat crap only in the deep holes, not on the cave floor? Did someone purposely put this foul smelling stuff there to ward-off seekers of treasure? I find it particularly strange that people have dug all kinds of holes in Bat Cave, but, never dug in the repulsive kernels to see what might lie at the bottom.

While scurrying around like a pack-rat on Jimmy's claims, just below the Bat Cave, I found some old decaying paper wrapped dry cell flash light batteries. The only reason that I found them stuffed into a crevice was because I was slowly climbing down a steep incline. Apparently, there's a story connected to these, which, if anyone ever found these batteries, belonging to Doc Noss, they were at the opening to a main entrance into one of the main Chambers of the Caballo Caverns. Needless to say I gave the area serious inquiry, but as usual I came up empty handed. Close by, 10 to 15 feet away I noticed what looked like a huge flat round rock that was really two, one on top of the other. They were about 5-6 feet in diameter, and each about a foot thick. I tried to move them with crow bars and picks, but no-way were these going to even budge. What also made them particularly interesting was that they were within 10 feet of a cave known only to a handful of people. I asked myself why are these just sitting here all by themselves atop a natural outcrop of solid rock? Not being able to budge them I decided that I'd pop them with a kenny pak or two. I detonated the top rock a couple of times and low and behold, after cleaning away the muck, there laid a clean horseshoe nail, that was obviously between the two flat rocks. How in the world did this nail get there? Well, it's still a mystery. Did I ever blast the other rock, no, I didn't have any more Kenny Paks, and I never found the time to get back there. Still, I know where the place is, and perhaps, one day? There's several engaging places on Jimmy's claims, but in respect to him, that's for him to divulge, not me.

The trouble with chasing treasure is that it is like the flu, easy to catch, but tough to loose. Catching this bug sort'a reminds me of Jimmy's dog "Deedee". This exceptionally intelligent dog would bust her ass to catch the sticks I'd throw before they'd hit the ground. One particular time, as she was racing to catch the falling stick her front paw landed smack dab in a pile of dog doo-doo. She turned around to see if I was watching, with a particular pitiful on her face that implied - now what do I do? She kept holding up her paw showing me the terrible dilemma she was in, and at the moment I just couldn't help splitting-a-gut, then with a water hose I rinsed her paw off. Occasionally, I'd say to Jimmy and Silvia that if I were a dog I'd sure marry Deedee. This dog was not only pretty, but the smartest one I ever saw.

Staying at the KOA had many advantages, because I'd often meet the most unusual people. A few people I eventually became semi-friends with seemed to have actual routes buying and selling

Indian artifacts. Of course most of these people were very secretive, till I got to know them. I was amazed at the time just how much money could be made in the clay pottery. I never could figure out why anyone would either dig or buy pieces of broken clay pots. Or for that matter - buy clay figurines, because they all would break. To me this clay stuff was just so much garbage. Nevertheless, there seems to be truth to the saying "one man's garbage is another man's treasure."

Over the course of time I would talk to Mrs. Langford who worked at the KOA. A lot of people thought she was grumpy, but she always had a smile for me. Anyway, she told me about the time when she was a young girl, and that either friends or relatives of hers brought in a quart jar filled with gold. She went on to say that these guys had a mine at the southern top of the Fra Cristobals, complete with shaft, windless and headframe. Her story intrigued me to say the least, but this land was controlled by R.O. Anderson and his cowboys. Plus, it was common knowledge that no one was permitted on the mountains. Perhaps, if the time is ever available and the circumstances are different, I'll just take a jaunt up there. Thirteen years later (1995) I was talking to Mrs. Langford and I asked her about this story. Unfortunately, she did not recall ever saying such. Even though I kept notes, perhaps my memory was wrong and someone else told me about this vein of gold. Furthermore, this land is again off limits by the Turners. Regardless of the merits of this particular story, this entire Spanish land grant was based upon a significant mineral discovery.

One afternoon, while visiting Jimmy, a woman that I had never seen before, also stopped by to meet with him. After the formalities were out of the way she began telling the most outlandish story I had ever heard. She recanted how she and two men had found an underground cavern that a jeep could be driven in, located in the foothills of the Caballo's. As she continued telling the yarn, I essentially accused her of telling a gigantic golly-whopper. Disregarding my comments, she continued by saying I could verify the story by asking the people who were with her. Well, I did just that. Part of her account was substantiated, but not enough to pinpoint where the entrance was, and she wouldn't go back to the spot.

As I continued investigating one lead after another about the yarn I met an 85 year old man living near TorC, who told me about a Silver Mine in Cable Canyon. He started by telling me of his youthful adventures of rounding up horses on the Caballo's for his dad. Apparently, he noticed the old mine entrance when chasing a pack of horses along the crest, and that I could find it if I'd just follow the old mule trail from the West side. Because I came to New Mexico to find Poor Man's Gold (Silver), this new allegation totally bewitched me.

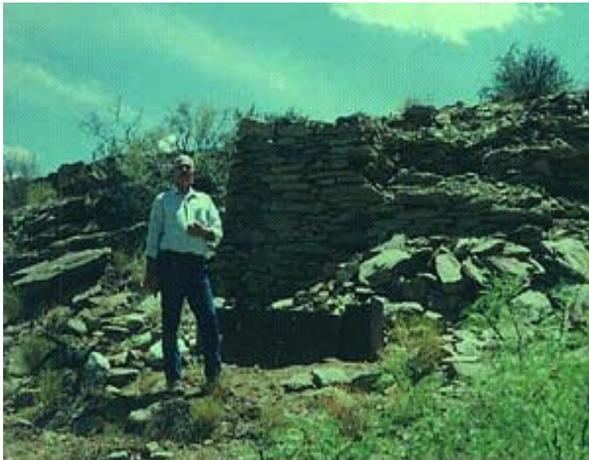
By now my funds were getting tight and with no sustainable prospects in sight, I contacted an ex-employer who graciously put me on the payroll. However, I would have to move to a more central location, like Los Angeles. Naturally, this was not what I wanted, but I also didn't want my remaining funds to evaporate. I desperately wanted to stay in New Mexico, and as close as possible to the Caballo's, so Albuquerque was chosen.

While in Albuquerque, and not on the road selling, I spent every possible moment in the library researching everything I could find regarding mining and treasure in the Caballo's. Eventually, I couldn't stand it anymore, and during early spring I moved back to my hearts desire.

Weekends were Nirvana because I was on the mountain, looking for the supposed silver mine, or visiting as many other areas as possible. Somehow I had to find something that would justify my insatiable appetite for being here. I often asked myself - Why couldn't I discover something or see an Indian magically appear from out of nowhere, like others reportedly had?

By now I had heard the tales that the Apaches would grind up limestone and mix it with animal blood and water for a mortar mix. And when dried it would look just like a natural cliff wall, totally obscuring any possible entrance. While interesting and intriguing, I never looked for this type of place, because my eyes weren't capable of seeing such. Heck, I seldom ever found an arrow head, even though while climbing the mountains my eyes remained glued to where my feet were going. Yet Mike McCoy could spot them right beside me, and if they had been snakes I'd surely have been bit a dozen times.

While on one of my excursions I met Brack Callahan, and we seem to hit it off as friends. We made several trips into various inaccessible parts of the mountains. On one such jaunt to the East side he showed me what looked like an old miner's camp ringed with old car bodies. I guess these mashed 1920's cars were to stop erosion from the creek that circled around most of this mound. Then one day while meandering the hill sides we stumbled onto an old iron riveted smelter with pieces of ore and globs of silver, including large pieces of lead carbonate.



Myself in front of old smelter remains

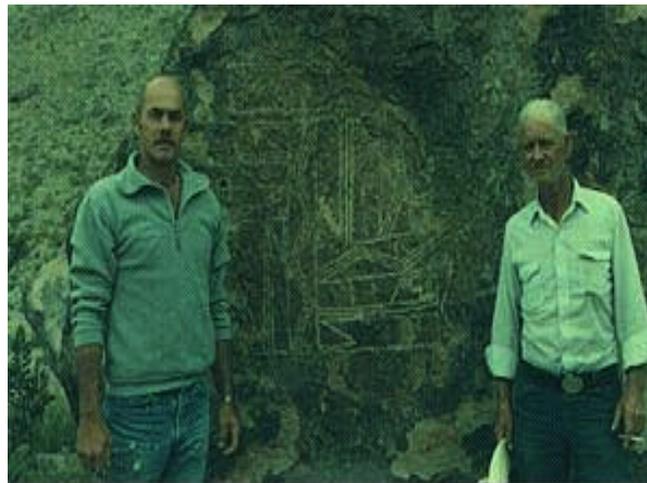


Rex in front of part of old riveted smelter

The carbonate really fascinated me. Where could it have come from? We looked for several days in vain for the source of this cerussite. On another trip to the same general mysterious area Brack pointed out where hundreds of glass clear double terminated quartz crystals were laying around by the thousands on just this one particular hill. It appears that every time it rains a new crop of what looks like "Herkermer diamonds" are exposed. This is certainly a place that begs for intensive exploration, because it suggests that an old eroded pegmatite is near by.

I also investigated a story an older gentleman (Mr. Raines) told me about in Greens Canyon to the South, in the little Caballo's. I shouldn't even be putting this account herein because it is so absurd, but what the heck, it just exhibits to what ends I'd go to find something of substance. He said that when he was younger, he entered a cavern that would periodically open up enough to squeeze

through into a tunnel system that ended in Rincon about 30 miles South. He also said that once in the cave structure I had better cover my mouth and nose with a handkerchief wetted in vinegar. Because, I would pass by a pit that was erupting molten sulphur, and the toxic fumes would do me in if I wasn't prepared. To prove his story he showed me a clay Indian pot which was the only thing he found. Eventually, I found the cave, that had burlap sacks stacked along the walls with soto sticks for making torches. I spent several hours in this cave and never saw any evidence that it did or would open in any manner, even though it was obvious that it was part of fault system. I even placed pieces of wood and stone in several crevices to mark any movement in the event that it did occur when I was not present. Of course, when I returned several days later, there was no movement noted.



Myself with Mr. Raine's who showed us a canyon where many of these Indian drawings exist.

Again, as usual, I find myself asking why do these people tell such mammoth fibs? My only guess is that they get a kick out of fooling greenhorns, or gullible idiots like me. And, I suspect that they have told the story so many times they begin to believe it themselves, which makes them just that more convincing. Plus, as bad as I hate to admit it, I wanted to believe these likable old-timers. Later, I would find myself saying, I sure hope I don't end up a broken, frustrated old treasure hunter, with nothing else to do, but try and attract some babe in the woods, to listen to my wild adventures.

Even though it was frustrating to track down these outrageous, polished, and mysterious fabrications they did prove to be of value in the sense that I learned the country side. Plus, I was rewarded by finding mineralization, which would add to my internal data bank, and provide food for thought regarding the geology of the Caballo's.

On a May day searching for my unfound silver mine, I stumbled upon my first sizable mineral discovery. Obviously, this was an old prospector's diggings. I took samples of the galena vein and went to Socorro to have assays run by Mr. A.B. Baca. The initial assays showed promise, so I began looking for better mineralization. Eventually I found such, and had more assays ran. These

new assays showed that gold was present, leading me to believe that I'd better start claiming this particular area.

I often wondered how this Cable Canyon got its name. The only logical answer I've been able to deduce was due to the old steel cable, about an inch thick, that stretches for several hundred feet in upper reaches of the canyon. Apparently, it was used to raise and lower ore or supplies. However, it's such a crudely spliced cable it would seem that it was more work to use than any possible benefits it might have produced. However, there was no doubt in my mind that this cable was an important clue, if I could just somehow unravel the mystery. By this time I had found a few more promising veins, but were these what I needed?

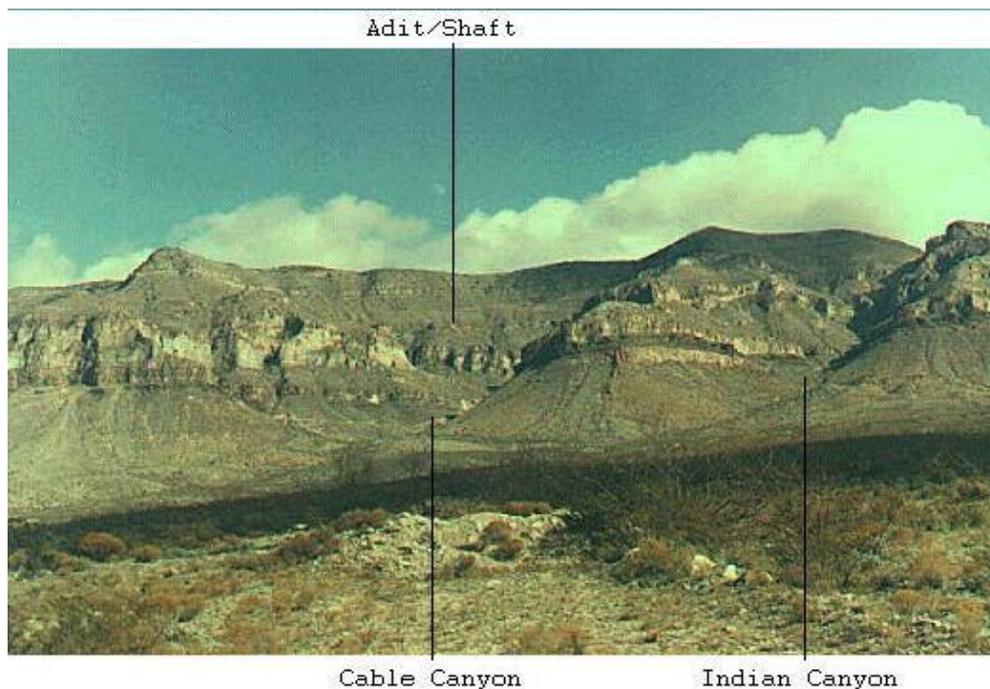
## CHAPTER 5

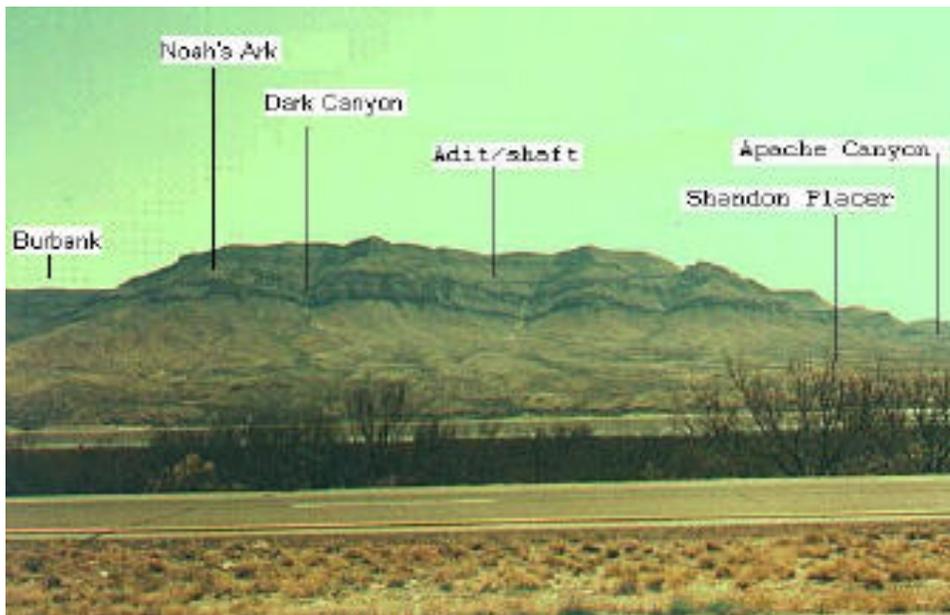
### The Cable Claims

I had looked the area over reasonably well and deduced that I needed three legitimate mining claims. One thing for sure, I didn't know at the time was that I was about to buy a one way ticket on Life's super rollercoaster. Unlike most thrilling rides this one doesn't stop till it has climbed Mount Everest and plunged to the depths of Hell, before attaining a possible fulfilling and pleasurable end.

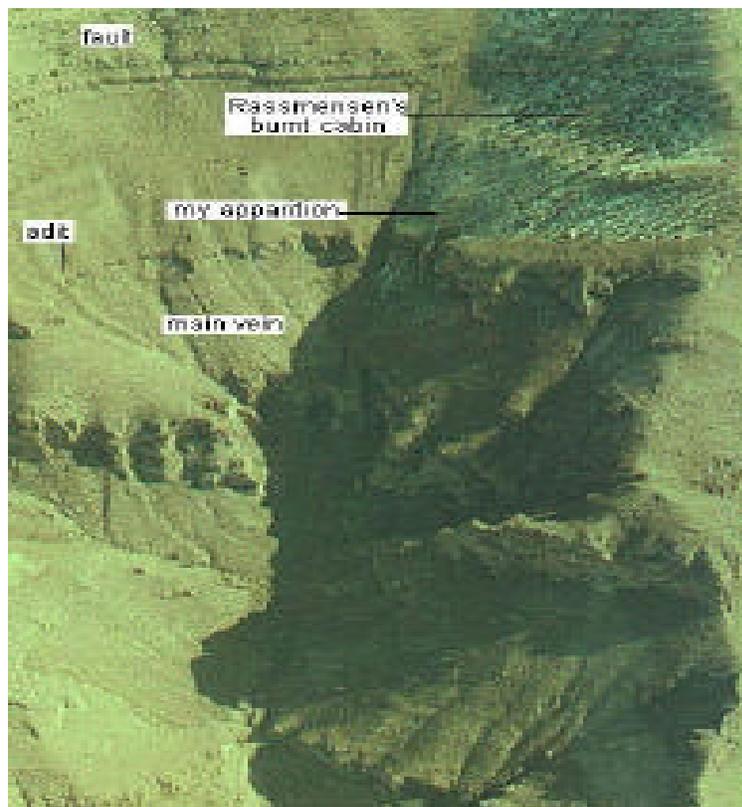
The first thing I had to do, was get some help. So I asked Chet from Hillsboro to help me stake the first two Claims. It was a blistering early June day (1983) when we started building claim corner monuments. As I was looking through the rangefinder watching Chet traverse the rugged terrain, several hundred feet away, I noticed something odd and out of place. I returned my view towards Chet then back to what appeared to be an Indian with a serape blowing in the wind.

The range finder was only a low power lens so I couldn't make out with clarity as to what I was really seeing. After switching back and forth, several times between Chet and the strange phenomenon it vanished, never to be seen again. To this day I think I saw the ghost of a Spanish or Indian Woman with a serape blowing in the wind. But there was no wind. Of course, it's possible I was suffering from heat exhaustion, and only thought I saw something. For whatever reason, the phenomenon that other's had seen had now been bestowed upon me. But was this an omen or a blessing?





Looking East across I-25 & Rio Grande River



The apparition reminded me of a dream I had previous to coming to New Mexico. In this twilight world of sleep I was riding a horse, in some desolate and barren place. Finally, I came upon an old Indian woman wearing a serape sitting beside a freshly made campfire. I stopped to ask this woman which way was the mine and she pointed, and I continued on, without looking back. If there was a connection, I've failed to understand the symbology, because I have searched where the incident took place countless times and found nothing to suggest that she may have magically marked the spot. Although, I did observe an old crumbled log cabin in the immediate vicinity of where the spook stood. Regardless, and as interesting as the event was I had to get on with the business at hand - staking mining claim boundaries.



Rex standing inside a 1 room log cabin

As the days passed I kept gathering samples that looked richer and ran as many assays as possible with Mr. Baca. One of the samples produced a 96 mg Au bead. This was astonishing, because it meant the equivalent of 96 ounces of gold to the ton. Many of the other assays indicated from 0 to 3 mg of gold. Mr. Baca was so excited with this he insisted that we go to the School of Mines and show them. We did, though they dismissed it as being a fluke or a farce. Admittedly, I had to somewhat agree, for to get this much gold was either happen chance or the sample had somehow become salted.

When Mr. Baca and I were at this Bureau showing them the 96 mg gold bead, the assayer running the lab took the bead and put it in boiling Nitric acid, and because it did not dismantle it was confirmed as being gold. Even though I certainly didn't know a lot about assaying I knew something was amiss. Any capable assayer knows that this is not a proper method of analysis. All gold prills are first cleaned then weighed, then rolled as flat as possible, and subjected to various strengths of hot nitric acid. If the prill does not decrepitate, it still is not assumed to be pure gold. To be sure of the gold content, the flattened bead is mixed with 20 times the weight of the bead with silver, and wrapped in test (pure) lead, scorified, and then cupelled again. The resultant bead is then digested in hot nitric acid. The insoluble portion of the bead is then again wrapped in lead and

cupelled again. This finished bead now represents all gold and possible contaminates of PGMs. Nothing remotely similar to this procedure was done before the Bureau's assayer made the statement. Obviously, this assayer either didn't want to be bothered or he did not know the proper procedures.

As I continued to watch this assayer perform assaying and weighing of cupelled beads belonging to other people I asked who's samples he was running. He told me that they belonged to Mr. X, of which there were multiple dozens and perhaps as many as a hundred. Several years later I was told that the Bureau cannot run more than 3 or 4 assays for residents of New Mexico. Yet, they were doing differently when I was there.

Over the course of time I had become quite skeptical of anyone and everyone claiming to be an assayer, as well as their procedures. Therefore, as assays were performed I paid very close attention, watching with great care, to assure myself that I was not somehow being duped.

I had grown to like Mr. Baca quite a bit, mainly because he had extended to me, as graciously as possible a lot of his knowledge, expertise, and history. Besides, he seldom charged me a cent for his efforts and expenses. I guess he thought I was a bit short in the pockets, and his wife even made me sandwiches at no charge. Most of the assays I conducted were under his supervision, and by the time of the 96 mg bead I was doing most of the work. So, if salting was going on, it was in my opinion accidental as a result of re-using his graphite crucibles. However, I always made it a point to scrape the insides of these crucibles before I would use them, to provide me with reasonable assurances that contamination was not much of potential factor or threat.

Of course, these assays being so positive, only bolstered my enthusiasm. I remember laying in bed at night wondering if someone would try to steal the Claims. This borderline paranoia caused me many a sleepless night. In addition to worrying about my new found wealth I was also counting my millions that surely was going to be deposited into my bank account. The elation and satisfaction of a job well done had completely purged all sense of reality.

By now, approximately 100 assays had been completed, with about 50 percent showing excellent promise. In contrast, I thought it strange that I wasn't getting any silver, because Galena usually always has some silver. Being perplexed, I dissolved about 10 pounds of ground-up galena ore in nitric acid and precipitated the lead out with common table salt. I filtered this precipitate as best I could, and wound up with about 1 pound of, hopefully, Lead and Silver Chloride. I let this dry in the sun and took it and other samples to Mr. Baca. The result was a 330 mg bead of supposedly silver. Mr. Baca confirmed such by using aqueous potassium dichromate, which gave a reddish brown coloration to the bead. He said that it was supposed to be red and was puzzled by the brownish tinge. Years later I dissolved this bead to satisfy my curiosity, sure enough it was silver contaminated with gold and the PGMs, no wonder it didn't have the bright red color that pure silver would have produced.

As time passed I sought out other assayers, and the results were as varied as the number of assayers. There were shows of silver and no gold to nothing at all. I was becoming confused and upset over the differing results. Who was I going to trust to accurately fire assay? Later in the game

I learned that assaying is not a science, but considered an art. The trouble with art is that results are seldom reproducible, which leaves the door wide open for charlatans and poor quality work.

Unfortunately, for me, my job selling machinery was getting a little sick. The business just wasn't out there to be had, which began causing my employer a lot of anguish. I had performed well in the past, but times were different now for the machine tool market. What business there was, was drying up faster than a well in the desert. I had left the machinery market in 1978, on account of I could see that the whole industry was dying and knew that I'd better do something else before the axe fell.

The steel industry was already a dinosaur, with the Asians eating on the few remaining bones. Recognizing the early death signs of the machine tool industry, I opted to get into the construction trade where I could play with some of the toys of the big boys. Many years later I was to learn why America's most basic industries were quietly dying when I too started feeling the weight and wrath of the politically correct "New World Order".

With my money getting tight, and of increasing concern, how was I going to do everything that was so badly needed? Fortunately, my Uncle from California came to my short term rescue. I had requested that he come to see for himself what I had discovered. Even though I was approaching economic catastrophe, I was still quite proud of myself, and still experiencing the wonderful and buoyant feelings of success.

## CHAPTER 6

### Burdens

I had three claims located, monumented and filed by the time Uncle Dick arrived. We wasted no time in getting up the mountain, where I showed him what I had found and where the good assays came from.

We gathered more samples and went to Baca's, so Uncle Dick could see for himself what spectacular results I would sometimes get. I didn't tell Mr. Baca who Uncle Dick was, but said I wanted him to witness the process and the results. Just before Uncle Dick arrived I went to Albuquerque and bought new supplies. So, all I needed was Mr. Baca's furnace and oven to conduct several fire assays. By the end of the day I was deeply troubled and saddened by the poor results. We only got about 1 mg size gold beads, and here I was touting myself, like a damned fool. I should have received an Emy award for playing the role of an idiot in front of the man I respected and admired most in life.

I pondered long and hard over this occurrence, for something had dreadfully gone wrong. Maybe I was being a simpleton expecting amazing results. Nevertheless, why shouldn't I expect good results? The only conclusions I could come to was: 1) that Mr. Baca needed someone around him for company and would somehow salt my samples, or 2) the new fire assay fluxes were inappropriate, and/or 3) the samples didn't have goodies in them, either because there never was any or I had managed to pick barren rocks. Maybe the goodies were spotty and I had to learn what to look for, but why was I able in the past to manage to pick mostly good samples? As disappointing as the assays were they were still impressive by modern standards. Besides, I had gotten many zero's in the past, so I still had a chance. In actuality a 1 ounce of gold to the ton is in itself extraordinary.

Previous to embarking on the Cable Claims Quest, I had always taken great pride in being self-sufficient. As well as able to accomplish any improbable task I set my sights on. It never entered my mind that mining should be any different. By accepting aid from Uncle Dick so that I could continue my dream had I unwittingly begun a journey of backbreaking burdens of maintaining my integrity? Had I just crossed over the line that separates men of honor? Or was I only on a slippery slope that required a helping hand?

I know that when a man loses his honor he also loses his good name. And, when this loss occurs there can be no respect from anyone. I can only hope that I never compromise my standards; because once that line is crossed I doubt if One can ever get back.

## CHAPTER 7

### Partner

It soon became readily recognizable that the Cable Claims had many a handful of questions that required answers. So, I invited Jack Crandall to visit the area. On his initial trip (July, 1983) he brought his VLF EM-16 (very low frequency electromagnetic mineral surveyor operating at 16 kilohertz).

After we got to the area where the spectacular assays came from, Jack made an incredible discovery. To our surprise, the area produced readings to say the least that were unbelievable. The data generated by the EM-16 was so astounding that we decided to team up and become partners. Naturally, my aspirations were refortified, and from that moment on I unleashed my total commitment.

As time permitted, Jack would use his other geophysical instruments (Neutron activated gamma ray scintillometer, and ground penetrating & profiling radar units) to locate subsurface voids and metallic veins. Working feverishly we accumulated much needed data. As a result we felt that we could now effectively communicate our findings to major mining companies.

When we weren't in the mountains we would be conducting microscopic and spectroscopic analysis. His spectroscope allowed us to conduct hundreds, actually thousands of semi-qualitative assays. This instrument continued to convince me that I was not a fool and the Cable Claims was truly a remarkable discovery. The only trouble with this spectroscope it could not recognize any gold unless the tiny sample actually held the equivalent of 2+ ounces of gold to the ton of ore. Needless to say we did not always show the presence of gold. And, like my assays we seldom ever got silver results. But the PGMs kept showing up. No-doubt, that without Jack's instruments I would have folded my tent and limped back to Texas with my tail between my legs like any other whipped pup.

By now I was becoming more comfortable with using various acids to digest the pulverized rocks, precipitate the lead and use the microscope to look at the remaining insolubles. Of course, I really did not know what I was looking at most of the time. Still, it was a lot of fun and this activity gained me hands-on experience.

It was common knowledge that the Spaniards and the "Old Timers" would use mercury to collect gold, so I embarked upon this time-tested methodology. The results were at best hap-hazard and confoundingly frustrating. By reading what books I could on the subject of mercury I found out that sulfides, especially galena poisons the mercury. Thus, rendering it unusable as an efficient means of collecting free gold. Nevertheless, and faced with few options I continued grinding the rocks with a mortar pestle, and panning with mercury with a tad of nitric acid. I did accidentally discover, that by adding nitric acid to the crushed samples while panning, that I was collecting microscopic particles of gold on the outside of the mercury. However, I couldn't get the mercury to take in these particles, and I would always lose these iddy-biddy (individually microscopic) flakes of gold that made the mercury shine as though it was a massive hunk of pure gold.

During my appetite of reading I had stumbled upon of an old Indian folk remedy for getting rid of constipation. Supposedly, the Central American Indians would swallow liquid mercury like we would take a laxative. Did the Yanqui Indians die, there was no mention of it and I doubt it or they would have eventually learned that the shinny metal was bad for their health. Today the greenies say Mercury is considered as a toxic substance, but I find it strange that I and others played with it as kids, and we're still around. Still and all, the fumes are another matter. The term "mad as a hatter" originated when the people that steam pressed the mercury laden beaver hats to maintain the proper shape often became irrational.

No doubt the ecologists have been using the mercury ploy to convince politicians that mining is toxic to the ecology. Of course it is conveniently forgotten that mercury is a common element and is constantly being discharged into the air and water by Mother Nature. Another interesting tid-bit is that farmers, world wide, have been planting seed that is treated with mercury to halt the growth of funguses. Seldom do we get ill eating the generated produce from the obviously contaminated farmlands.

During our collective explorations of Cable Canyon we found that people had prospected the area, but not as much as I thought they would have. Practically all the mineralized structures we found were not even chipped by the prospector's pick.

Over time I found galena crystals in veins and on the hanging walls of slip faults that had oxidized. When I had previously prospected the same area I didn't recognize these blebs of discoloration. But, like stumbling over a gigantic rock these obvious geological apparitions eventually stood out like sore thumbs. Nearby, on another adjacent area which I dubbed the peacock vein I discovered hidden galena veins within the dense silica rich altered domolomite, which is referred to as jasperoid. When I would break open these camouflaged veins within the jasperoid the freshly exposed Lead crystals would eventually oxidize forming brilliant displays of royal colorations that resembled bornite or iridescent peacock feathers. Why prospectors failed to find these veins is still a mystery to me, unless they too experienced some of my bizarre assays and abandoned the area.

Eventually Jack and I finally found the area that fit the description of the lost silver mine. However, it had a huge pile of gigantic boulders on top of it. These rocks were obviously blasted from the cliff to cover the entrance. We found it by searching for float, which is scattered mineralized rocks that cascaded downhill from the source. By backtracking we noticed that these scattered mineralized remnants were actually forming an old mine tailing pile that was grown over with grasses and scrub brush. Years later we heard allegations that a family had worked a silver mine high in the canyon that would feed the family as long as they lived. Nevertheless, and as what usually happens in mining, the family got into a dispute and settled it by dynamiting the entrance. Whether or not this is true, we did find in the canyon under considerable brush a full length RR rail. Obviously, the only practical use of such is in a mine. In addition we found old hand steel drill bits and related equipment hidden under boulders, as though more work was planned. Plus, we found old hand tools commonly used with black powder that were carefully concealed between boulders, as though they were going to be used again. Then we found in the brush a 12 foot ladder; but where did it fit? Search as we might, we never found why it was used.

Every time we made a journey into Cable Canyon we would stumble upon something new and exciting. One such excursion we located a 70 foot adit driven apparently by hand in the Percha Shale. We cautiously entered the opening on our bellies, hoping that we had found a lost mine. To our surprise and dismay, it contained nothing but small piles of debris that had fallen from the ceiling and not a safe place to be in. We couldn't understand why anyone would go to the trouble of driving this adit (tunnel) in shale, only to stop at an igneous intrusive dike. It simply made no sense and to this day, we have not figured out the real reason. Once inside we expected to find critters inhabiting the tunnel, but there was not a single sign of any kind of life.

On another of the many hundreds exploratory excursions, Jack and I discovered another tunnel in the Percha shale on our Cable Claim #3. We found this particular tunnel only by chance as we were collecting jarosite samples from a small cave, actually a large vug in the fusselman. We had noticed what looked like a typical tailings pile, but quickly dismissed this idea cause it was obvious that rains had washed this percha shale over the fusselman. But while examining the erosion of area we noticed what looked like an old mining timber barely sticking out of the percha soil. As we dug away the dirt that was covering the timbered entrance our excitement grew. Now, surely we had at last found a real mine entrance. We dug enough of the dirt away so as to be able to crawl into the opening. Once inside we could see that the bark covered pinion timbers were in perfect condition, like they were just put there. Again, like the other, although partially timbered, it too was driven back about 70 feet from the Fusselman ledge, with nothing else inside except fallen roof debris and piles of boulders.

I made it a point to try and understand the reason why someone would make such tunnels. My first thought was that the old timers had found placer gold, somehow, somewhere in the Shale. But all my examinations came up dry. Years later, we heard several tales as to who made them and why. Here's a few unsubstantiated reasons: 1) Old man Rasmensen used them to store supplies; 2) Rasmensen found Spanish gold bars stored in them, and after emptying them left them exposed; 3) the Spanish used these as temporary storage for smelted bullion; 4) or dowsers locked onto goodies with their rods that made people drive the tunnels; 5) or someone was looking for gold at the base of the shale where in contact with the solid fusselman dolomite. All of these and others are plausible but so far not provable.

In 1993 a group of psychics told me that the tunnel which we later would use as an exploration project, was driven so the generated tailings muck would cover an entrance to the caverns at the base of the fusselman cliff. Could this be true? I don't know, but it's as good as reason I've ever heard or have been able to imagine. These same psychics also said that just inside the adit and down about 20 feet, about even with the supposed opening buried by the tunnel muck was a ancient machine that would give great (healing) power to whomever had it in his possession. They said that another similar site as this one was discovered in Russia and that the Govt hushed up all further information about it. While some of the psychics seem to have merit, I've yet to see any verifiable results of their fourth dimensional gifts. Consequently, I listen to their brew and concoctions, but I tell them politely that their valued information only goes into my data bank for future consideration. However, if they want to dig I'll watch and if anything is discovered they can have a piece of the action. Needless to say, so far, none has been willing to dig on their beliefs.

These mysterious tunnels after being exposed to the air, should have invited a whole host of critters into taking-up residence. Yet, to this day, no creature seems interested in them enough to even visit. Likewise, I'm forced to question why don't flies stick around like they do in all other dark cool places? I've see a couple flies come in, but they don't waste any time beating a hasty retreat. The only thing that makes much sense, is that radioactive gasses (radon) are present or some other obnoxious (toxic) substance that Jack and I cannot see, feel or smell, but the critters can. In 1996 I make a trip to the adit and discover that squirrels or pack rats have visited, but no signs that they wanted to take up house keeping.

As Autumn began announcing itself out of the blue I get a phone call from a lady friend (Diane Conner) that I hadn't seen or talked to in quite a while. She said she'd like to visit the Mountains and see what I was doing as soon as she made landfall. She too was on an adventure few people are strong enough to endure, that being in the merchant marines. This new profession of hers was about as different as night is to day from her previous professional expertise of a full scale bookkeeper.

Her arrival, was surely made in Heaven, because, Diane was to become a lady friend I never in my wildest dreams would have thought possible to experience. If not for her trust and confidence in me, as well as, her compassionate and magnanimous support, I would have become bleached bones long before being able to write what you are reading. I can only hope that she has made an intelligent bet, and that she will be appropriately rewarded for her efforts.

## CHAPTER 8

### Hells Door

As ole man Winter began to knock - Mr. Dan Medley, President of Gold, Silver Exploration started conducting analytical examinations on our rock samples at his El Paso laboratory. This was my first real chance to watch how assays were really conducted on a professional level. Dan's chemist (Mr. Cardinal) was able to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Cable Claims surface mineral expressions (PbS) would constantly indicate the presence of the PGM's (Platinum Group Metals). Of course this was music to our ears and further encouraged Jack and I to work harder and harder. I could just see it, any day now we could probably retire to the Bahamas as rich men.

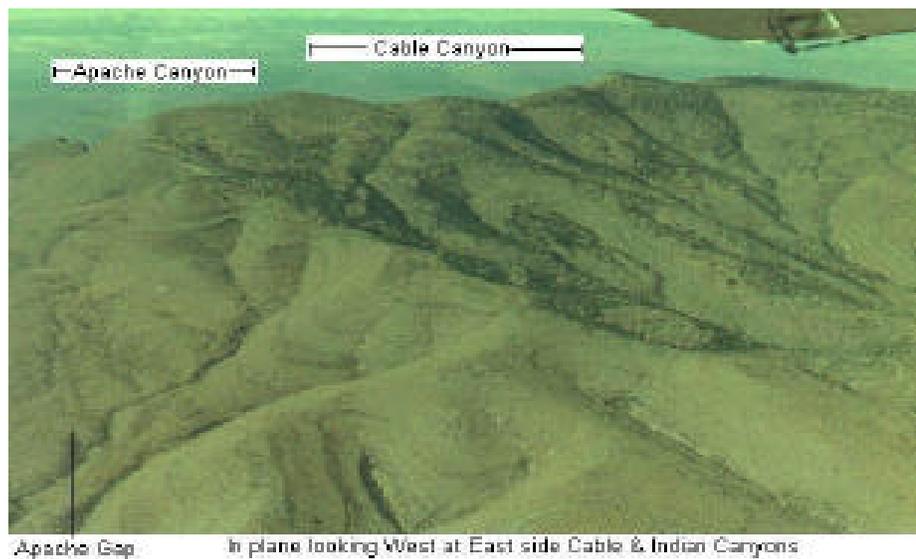
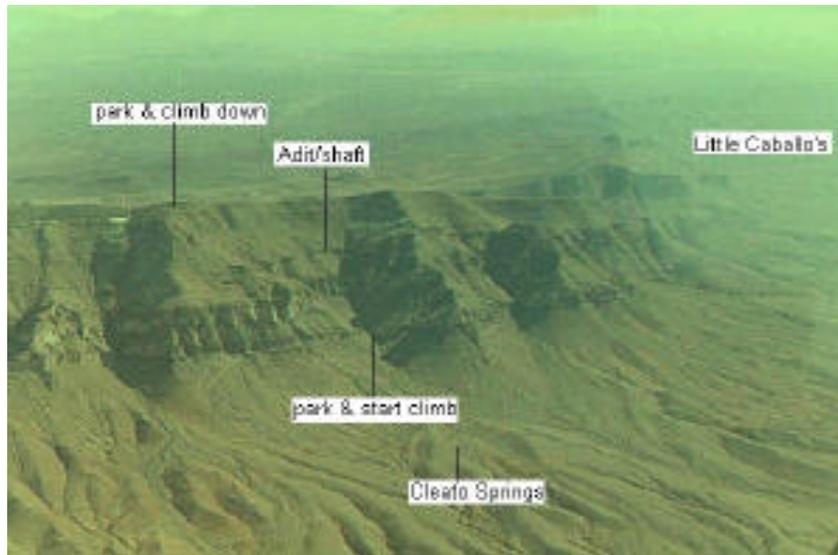
One day while visiting Dan's El Paso lab, Mr. Cardinal said, nonchalantly, that his job was not to prove that my rocks had goodies, but to prove that they didn't. However, he was confounded, because no matter what he could not make the numbers go away that were being produced by the DCP (Direct Current Plasma Spectrometer). Some of the numbers generated were spectacular, such as: 1 to 10 ounces of combined PGMs, which was beyond belief. We were rich, Rich, RICH!

Even though I was primarily interested in being part of the analysis conducted in El Paso, Jack and I continued making the grueling trips up the mountain. Constantly collecting hundreds of pounds of rocks from various places, and kept conducting our own spectroscopic studies. Jack's small but efficient spectroscope most of the time indicated the presence of many base metals and every once in a while some gold, and occasionally Platinum.

No matter how many trips we made, we were always discovering new veins. Most of which were not previously discovered, which further suggested that we were in truly virgin territory. Yet, many mysteries continued to baffle me.



Looking East from plane. The Jorando Valley & San Andreas Mts



Wanting to see the Caballo's from a different perspective I rented a plane on January 4, 1984 and started taking aerial photos of the entire Mountain range. As we flew over the mountains I kept wanting the pilot to get closer, but he would not hear of it. He said that the only reason he was getting as close as he was was due to the heavier winter air. I saw many places that really required closer observation, like a dark foreboding hole in the top of one of the little Caballo peaks. Plus, a place on the East side of Cable Canyon that looked like from a distance of a huge opening that had been caved for a very long time. This new data and visual perspective was beginning to allow me additional insights as to why the subtle mineralization hadn't been discovered before.

On one of our outings we met a young man that agreed to do some core drilling for us in exchange of Jack's geophysical work on his claims in the Black Range. Trouble was we needed a road so that he could get his portable drill rig into Cable Canyon. So, during the Spring of 1984 I began using a front-end Track Loader to try and develop a road. I spent a whole month in freezing weather conditions trying to build this road up the ancient mule trail that skirted a sheer cliff.

When I had it semi-finished we found out that the young man had reneged on his deal after Jack had spent many a cold soaked and bone-weary day conducting a geophysical grid in horrible weather conditions. Yep, another expensive, and bitter tasting lesson learned. However, the advantage was to be a long term relationship with Mr. Bill Gray, who not only true gem, but a rare find in these troubling times.

This road I was building was also covering up a supposed lost entry into the mountain, that many old-timers said was right in the mouth of the wash. This entrance, as has been related to me, is small, but opens up into a large room, which has another small opening that actually became an entrance into the main caverns. I did find a small room before I started building the road, but it certainly didn't have any evidence that any other passages were connected to it. Furthermore, I did not actually cover over where this room really is. It's still there and accessible. Fortunately, when I made the road all I did was use existing dirt and rock without actually disturbing any of the area that was not already previously disturbed by the old 1930's iron (paint pigment) mine.

Finally, once on top of the cliff I noticed the remains of a perfectly round camp fire that the loader uncovered. I got off the tractor and investigated, but found nothing to indicate when and by who this very old fire had been built by. What I mean by old is probably in the 1930's. Some may ask - why would I presume this fire to be in the 30's and not much older. Well, because I only cut down about 6 inches in this particular spot. And, from my perspective and obvious physical evidence there has been enough sloughing of debris and dirt due to summer monsoons to quietly bury this fire without washing it away.

Many people come to the Caballo Mts each and every year, and I suspect that at least a few of these people are sometimes desperate. I often come to this conclusion because they illogically think they can find the treasure, and get out of their financial messes. Many others, I presume heard a story that for some reason or another completely captivates them, and became compelled to go off in search of that particular fable. No-doubt there are hundreds of people either local or from the dark side of the moon that have managed to discover some kind of old map, or tale, etc., which was handed down through families that gave them an itch that just has to be scratched. So far, there has only been a few recorded treasure finds, and these were not huge discoveries. But, who do you know would blab or tell the World if they really did find a stash or cache of buried bandido loot, an old Spanish mine, church treasures, or Indian artifacts? As my partner would sometimes say: "loose Lips Sink Ships."

Most people are wise enough to realize that if you did find the stuff dreams are made of - that the State and/or a hoard of others would have their sticky hands in the pie. So it is quite understandable that maybe some discoveries go unreported.

When I first arrived in TorC, it didn't take the vultures long to spot this neophyte. Perhaps, it was my fairly new pick-up with Texas license plates that made me stand-out like a chicken to be plucked. Frequently, there were old gentlemen who would actually come up and get right in my face wanting to tell me where there was a treasure or lost mine. Of course, only they knew where it was, and for a price they'd tell me where to find it. The wiser one's would be willing to show me on a map their amazing and mysterious discovery after I put up some front money to show my good

faith. Ah, but then there are some really shrewd old-timers' that can spin a yarn that will make the mouth of a swamp rat water. Usually these characters have mining claims and are dowsers. To set the hook they'll even show you how good their dowsing is by letting you see some of their secret dowsing instruments. These contraptions range from pendulums that they dangle over a map, to witching willow limbs, rods that look like fishing poles, bent brass rods, Spanish dip needles, and of course the latest, fancy space age gizmos that originated on Pluto.

Now, to set the record straight I don't mean to say that there isn't something to the art of divining/dowsing. But I've never met a person who was financially successful at dowsing for themselves. For the most part I consider dowsing as borderline psychics, whom seem to be living in a world of strange powers that the rest of humanity cannot control. For the most part, there is no doubt in my mind that some of these people are either a bit tetchy, live in never-never land, or are out and out frauds. Every time I meet one of these guys I'm reminded of what Barnum and Bailey said: "there's a sucker born ever minute". I've also heard the expression, "tell them what they want to hear then stick'm in the ear." So a word to the wise, it would pay to be at least a little cautious, because there are charlatans quite willing and able to liberate the fool from his money. I suspect that these characters feel the ignoramuses don't need it anyway, because they are just getting ready to throw it down a rat-hole anyway. Then, of course there's the other famous saying "where fools rush in wise men fear to tread." But then again, as my Partner sometimes says "its best to be a little foolish and a little wise than all wise or all foolish".

There are many a strange folk in the Caballo's, and some folks might well consider me to be one of them. Take for example the guys in the middle 1980's that were looking for a kidney shaped lump of gold weighing hundreds of pounds in the well worn area of Granite Peak. Why Kidney shape, and why was it where they said it was, several feet deep inside solid rock? I don't know and haven't met the person who did. They drilled, blasted and mucked for months on this project obviously convinced that any day they'd have their hands on the prize. Naturally that didn't happen and they packed up and left. Does that mean the gold wasn't there, certainly not. Drilling, blasting and mucking is not only dreadfully hard work, but also time and money hungry. So, only the brave or foolish set out to beat the odds, but usually wind up quitting in utter financial despair. On the other hand, and in fairness to anyone seeking the Caballo Treasure(s) I also keep in mind that the person who takes no risks is seldom ever rewarded.

Previous to me meeting Mr. Crandall, I learned that he too quietly and discreetly roamed the Caballo Mountains looking for possible signs that would allow him to get into the mythical cavernous tunnel system. He met and worked with "Whitey" an elderly gentleman, now deceased, in the Apache Gap area. Years later Jack showed me where he found a crack in the mountain that appeared to have some kind of box at the bottom of it. I'm sure that one day, life permitting, he will try to satisfy his curiosity, and see if he can get to the bottom of that deep dark crack.

Occasionally, we would scout for mineral shows in Apache Gap with his EM-16. Even though we found a few very promising spots they too will also have to wait till we get the Cable Claims further developed. During this general period of time I met Rex West who was associated with Wells Horvereid, and who had worked with Doc Perrick in the Caballo's for many years.

Rex told me many a story connected to Doc, and I told Rex and Wells that I had gone to Flagstaff a few days after Doc got himself stabbed to death. I wanted to see if I could recover a book of photographs that Doc supposedly kept as a diary of the Indian and Spanish drawings he found and would destroy. It was common knowledge, that when Doc found Indian or Spanish signs he would photograph them and then dynamite the site to spoil anyone else's chances to find the treasures that Doc felt rightly belonged to him.

Doc had worked in Nonnie Pierce's cave a lot. And just before Doc got himself bumped off, and while heading to Las Vegas (lost wages) he told a number of local folks he was going to beat the roulette wheel. When his pockets were full of winnings he would then return with equipment, and get the goodies he supposedly saw while looking through a small hole he found by moving a rock that pivoted in Pierce's Cave. Apparently, sometime in 1982 Doc had been working with a Mr. Cummings (not me - I don't have a "g" in my last name) in Pierce's Cave, but they got into a disagreement and had a falling-out.

As one of the recent stories goes, Cummings hires a local man to haul him to and out of an prearranged spot near Pierce's Cave. This melody goes on to indicate that when Cummings, late at night, was coming down the steep mountain side, this mysterious local resident driver who was waiting for Cummings could hear the big burlap sack being drug on the ground making metal noises. Naturally this could only mean gold and jewels. These same noises could be heard coming from the sack, as the car hit road bumps heading towards the lake. I've been told that the driver was given some of what was in the bag for driving him and keeping his mouth shut. Then Cummings leaves town mysteriously, as though he's broke, just like many of us have done and seem destined to continue doing.

Did Cummings find goodies? I don't know. But one thing seems true, because I saw a guy with the same name on TV while in Turkey looking for the Lost Ark. Was it the same guy? I heard it was, and that expedition couldn't have been cheap. So, if it was the same Cummings then maybe he did find Doc's treasure. The Caballos take a lot of money, and usually will make a person poor real quick. It might well be accurate to say that more monies have been spent looking for the treasure than has or will ever be found.

Some folks will say that it's wrong to look for treasure, or that these people are living in a fool's paradise. Maybe so, but, one sure bet is that these people sure do help the local economy. Besides, and from my perspective - what's the difference in spending money looking for treasure or birds?

Quite near where Cummings made his trip out of the mountain can still, just barely be seen a faint outline of a zig-zag mule trail. Of course no-one can really see it till the sun's just right and you know where to look. As speculation says it was supposed to stop at the entrance to the main exit of one of the Spanish Mines, where they worked the Indian slaves. A few people that know of the trail have tried to walk it, but it takes at least two people outfitted with radios to actually stay on this almost invisible trail.

Another interesting tale of some merit, next to this zig zag trail is of a local man. I believe his name is Chavez, who was lowered into a cave somewhere on the East side of the Mountains. To the best of my memory, and keeping in mind that rumors have a way of getting garbled, this man while

walking the maize like corridors found rotted leather bags filled with gold coins. Naturally, he promptly filled his pockets to capacity. If I were him at this point I can only begin to imagine the excitement he must have felt. As he tried to backtrack he managed to become lost, and after a few days his flash light and food became exhausted. I can only imagine what it must have been like to wander underground blindly. The terror he experienced must have become almost unbearable.

Luckily, just before he was about to give up hope he saw a pin-point of light, which he painfully crawled to. However, the solid rock opening was dreadfully narrow, and wouldn't let him out till he dumped his bulging pockets. His panic must have been similar to the old desert prospector who lay dying of thirst and willing to give away all his bags of gold for just a swallow of water.

With great difficulty he finally emerged near a jutting group of granite rocks on the North side of the mouth to Cable Canyon. When he got back to town and tells of his ghastly ordeal, it naturally drove many of those who heard the amazing story half-mad with desire. Especially when he was able to show a single gold coin still in his pocket.

Without wasting time, back they go to the locality he theoretically emerged from, combing the region relentlessly. Due to their greedy haste of not immediately finding the small opening they bring in a dozer, thinking that it would uncover the hole. However, all their efforts were to no avail, and quite possibly only succeeded in burying the hole. I've been told numerous times that this man (Chavez) adopted a fear of the Caballo's to the point it caused him such mental distress that he sought psychiatric help.

Several times I've seen Fox, Bobcats and a Lynx go into these rocks and never come out. I and others have investigated these rock pillars extensively, but have found no trace of where these beasts go. In addition, in the late 1990's Rex shows me where there's an old carving on one of the granite monoliths. So, Maybe it is possible that there is indeed some truth to this tale. One thing for sure – you can still see where the dozer made the cuts.

As is the norm - one day I heard a story that a psychic had told some friends that on the South side of Cable Canyon, at the top of the Bliss formation, was a small cave with a small stash of gold dust in a saddle bag buried in the floor. These friends had already found the place exactly where the psychic said it would be. They didn't do any excavation in it because they said it was too dangerous. I said, let me see. So, up we go and sure enough there's a cave that I should have found long ago. I crawl in and it opens up into a somewhat large room. I carefully sit down on some huge loose boulders and look the area over. Yep, the floor is of dirt and could be dug, although it's full of cactus rat thorns. I start to talk to my comrade outside, and my voice sounds like I'm in a deep well. The resonating vibrations of my voice shake the huge boulders above my head, and I say to myself, better get out of here while the gett'ns good. I'm fairly bold, but this hole, although very interesting, does indeed take someone braver than me to explore little alone dig in.

While our roving adventures were going on I was also well involved with and utilizing the A.S.A.T. laboratory in Silver City, directed by Mr. Walter Lashley. I had met many a so-called assayer who preferred to keep their knowledge a secret, but Walter seemed willing to share. Due to my self admitted ignorance I was struck by this man's command of chemical nomenclature and apparent brilliance. Walter could seemingly remember everything, something that I have great

difficulty in being able to do. To make sure that I wasn't being duped I would endlessly ask him questions, and without fail Walter always had a reasonable and logical answer, many of which I would check out in available chemistry books.

Hundreds of hours were spent at this lab facility. And with Walter's generous guidance I gained much desperately needed knowledge as to how to conduct a variety of fire assay techniques, wet-chemical digestions, distillations and micro-chem analysis. Of course I might add that these lessons did not come cheap.

Armed with a battery of captivating assays and bizarre geophysics indicating that the Cable Claims hosted a monumental discovery I met with a potential out of State investor. We worked out an agreement, but was subject to a geological report that the investors wanted, to be conducted at their expense to determine what the Cable Claims potential could be.

Eventually, the two contracted geologist's arrived from the Denver School of Mines and we proceeded directly to the Claims. Due to my curious nature I asked these men, who were supposed PGM experts as many discreet questions as I could think of as we made the fatiguing climb. The problem with asking questions is that it shows a degree of ignorance, but the main reward is I'll spot any flim-flam on their part. In general, these two were reasonably nice guys, or at least they humored me graciously.

They asked me to take them to where I felt the best potential was for collecting samples. Finally, it was becoming clear that these guys were not going to conduct a reasonably thorough geological survey as I was led to believe. They did say, several times, that I had "good rocks" but without elaboration. They spent only part of a couple of days on the claims before they headed back to write a report. Much to my dismay the potential investor's backed-out of the deal because, these geologist's couldn't find any evidence that the PGM's were present in the assays of collected samples sent to a laboratory. From the getgo and before I left the potential investors we had an understanding that assays could be sent to any lab they choose except one. Guess what, these geologist's used that one I had said not to use.

When I finally received their report I was a bit bent, because the geologist's had said on numerous occasions that the Cable Terrain was conducive to mineral deposition. However that was not reflected in their report. Nor did they even begin to indicate that ore could be present. Instead of a geological report it looked more like a one sided management report focusing mainly on the assayers work, in lieu of their own. Most surprising of all was the lack of analysis indicating the amount of Lead present. Worse still was the complete lack of analytical work showing the remarkable abundance of antimony (that consisted of multiple percentages) in all the PbSCaF type veins. Congratulations Joe you've just been inaugurated into the "experts hall of inequities".

Due to our combined ignorance on the subject of the Noble metals, Jack decided to go to California. Because he's a professional "Book Scout" he set out to locate as many books on the subject of the PGMs as he could possibly find and afford. It was becoming quite apparent that we could not play in a game without knowing more about the subject and the rules.

## CHAPTER 9

### Noss, La Rue & Navarez

Probably the most worn-out, yet fascinating story of the Caballos' is of Doc Noss. It's said that Doc was a man of many talents, although, some say he was a charlatan who perpetrated the biggest scams imaginable. He was known to be a foot Doctor, and presumably made a portion of his living by this profession. Doc's epic seems to start in the Southern end of the Caballo Mts. Where Noss found a way into the caverns and discovered stacks and rows of various shaped gold bars. Some were actually the types of bars we all recognize, but many were of various lengths that were made by pouring the molten gold into hollowed-out soto stems or ocotillo branches. Thus, I presume that's how the expression "piled like cord wood" originated.

Doc allegedly sold many a bar on the black market, and because he feared that someone might find his discovery he supposedly hauled many a gold bar in his Model T to Victorio Peak. Theoretically, while stashing his booty in 1937, inside "Vickie Peak" he found another group of caves with riches beyond belief. According to written chronicles the actual discovery in "Vicky Peak" began when Doc and his wife Ova accidentally found an underground room while trying to get out of summer thundershower. These exciting cavern chambers were supposed to have Indian paintings and a shaft with a pole ladder. In 1938 Doc started bringing out a variety of goodies that treasure hunters will foam at the mouth while contemplating such a strike.

At the base of Victorio Peak is Hembrillo Basin where an ancient ruins of a Spanish Fort is reported to exist. Theoretically, old cannons have been found and can be seen half buried in the sand. Of course this area is now basically off limits to prospecting, because White Sands Missile Base controls and patrols the area. I have talked to many people that have snuck into the region and have been told that not only are cannon present, but an old gatling gun, and modern pieces of armament. Consequently, maybe this area was an ancient protected mining operation.

The fable goes on to say that a misplaced round of dynamite caused Doc's cave to be sealed, either by accident or design. And, in 1940 Doc makes attempts to reopen what became known as the Noss cave. It is recorded that he hired D.C. Turner, B.B. Ownby, B.D. Lampros, and Benny Samaniego to re-open the shaft that led to the caches.

If there's no truth to the myth then it is rather strange that Benny Samaniego bought a new home in Las Cruces just two weeks after the dynamite caused the cave in. This purchase can be verified in the Las Cruces County Courthouse records. And, at the time of his death his estate was said to be worth \$73,000 dollars, a tidy sum in those days, especially for a man reported to have been a roust-a-bout, and of dubious character.

In 1941 a group of more than 20 formed a company to re-open the Noss Shaft. But, by 1942 the War stopped the re-opening attempts and the Govt took over Hembrillo Basin area.

On March 5, 1949 Doc Noss was shot dead in front of his Partner's (Charles Ryan) home in Hatch, NM. In the book 100 tons of gold, there is a picture of Doc slumped against his pick-up, with apparently more than one bullet in him. One of the stories I hear most often is that Doc was

considered to be a crazy half-breed, especially when he drank whisky. Apparently, when Doc showed up and after some kind of argument the Ryan's fearing for their lives decided to shoot first and ask questions later. Mr. Ryan was later acquitted of all charges on a plea of self-defense.

Theoretically, in 1958, Air Force Capt. Leonard Feige and airman Thomas Berchett found rows of stacked gold bars in a cave in the San Andreas. In 1960 Feige and the Airman tried unsuccessfully to relocate the Cave of Gold. To corroborate their account, Feige was given a polygraph test and passed it without a hitch. Later it was reported that the Govt found the cave, and all the gold mysteriously vanished. In 1961 Ova Noss, high on a hill watching through binoculars, said that the Army was excavating her mining claims, which they denied her entry into. Adding insult to injury the Army denied that they conducted any mining or treasure hunting.

Mrs. Noss, seeing that she has a serious problem with the Army hires F. Lee Bailey. He accuses the US Govt of covering up the Army stealing her gold. Eventually the Army at White Sands admits to doing a mining operation at Victorio Peak, and will quit operations. Later, F. Lee Bailey representing clients in operation "Gold Finder" presents gold bars, at different times, apparently from the Noss treasure to the US Treasury and to Los Alamos Laboratories. It is said that these bars assayed out at 60 percent gold.

In 1977 the Army agrees to let Treasure Hunters into White Sands area. Ova Noss, while on top of Victorio Peak, in front of friends, the press (Dan Rather) and the Military, accuses the Army of stealing all the Treasure and transporting it somewhere else.

I've heard many un-verified reports that the gold bars from the Noss Cave, stolen by the Army, were smuggled through Asia's 'Golden Triangle' in CIA planes to be traded for drugs with the tribal chieftains.

While Doc. Noss was excavating Victorio Peak he's supposed to have found many artifacts. Some say even a Crown made of gold, studded with diamonds and a big blood red ruby. Still and all, as far as I'm concerned, his most important discovery, if it is real and not some hocus-pocus he made up, is the Manuscript written by Padre La Rue in 1797 to Father Rheuschome, of Madrid Spain.

There are many versions of the Father La Rue legend and where the gold he sealed up is actually at. I've met people who believed that they were working at the correct sites in the Organs, Fra Christobals, and the Caballos, as well as, accounts of it being in the San Andreas Mts. As legend has it Father La Rue was placed in-charge of a colony near Chihuahua Mexico, and the myth begins. Among Father La Rue's people was an old soldier, who told La Rue about a rich deposit of gold that he'd found on one of his scouting trips. The place was high in a mountain range about two days journey North of Paso del Norte. Eventually, La Rue's crops began to fail, so the Padre asked his followers if they would like to try their luck elsewhere. They agreed to move after being told about the gold to the North. La Rue moved North without the knowledge or permission of the Church, and found the Gold. They worked the mine and built a small settlement. The Church not hearing from La Rue, sent the Army out after him. After several years the military located La Rue and was ordered to surrender. But La Rue decided to hide all the Gold, as well as the mines, so the Army destroyed the village and all inhabitants.

The following Padre La Rue Fable is quoted from the book 100 tons of gold. “Seven is the holy number. There are seven days in the week, seven phases of the moon, every seventh year as Sabbatical, and seven time seven years was jubilee. There are seven ages in the life of man, seven divisions in the Lord’s prayer, seven bibles, seven church’s of Asia, seven graces, seven deadly sins, seven senses, seven sorrows of the virgin, seven virtues, seven joys of the virgin, seven precious things of the Buddah’s, seven sleepers of Ephesus, seven lamps of architecture, the apostles chose seven deacons, Enoch, who was translated was seventh from Adam, Jesus Christ was the seventh in a direct line. Our Lord spoke seven times on the cross on which he was seven hours. He appeared seven times and after seven times seven days he sent the Holy Ghost. There appeared seven golden candlesticks, and seven golden stars in the hand of Him that was in the mind, seven lambs before the seven spirits of God; the book with the seven seals; the lamb with seven horns, and seven eyes, seven angels bearing seven plagues, and seven viles of wrath. The vision of Daniel was seventy weeks; and the Elders of Israel were seventy. There were also seven heavens, seven planets, seven stars, seven wise men, seven champions of Christendom, seven notes of music, seven primary colors, seven sacraments, of the Catholic Church, and seven wonders of the world. The seventh Son is still endowed with preeminent wisdom; and the seventh son of a seventh son is still thought to posses the power of healing diseases spontaneously. In seven languages, seven signs, and language in seven foreign nations, look for the seven cities of gold seventy miles North of El Paso del Norte in the seventh peak Soledad, these cities have seven sealed doors, three sealed towards the rising sun, three sealed toward the setting of the sole Sun, one deep within Casa del Cueva de Oro, high noon, and receive health, wealth and honor.”

Of course the epic doesn’t end here; In 1992 the Ova Noss Family Partnership is granted time to try and gain access to Doc’s caved tunnels. To my knowledge, via hearsay, they are still there (1994) excavating and finding evidence of Doc’s past presence, as well as, discovering more subterranean tunnels. Nothing I’ve said herein has been taken from the Noss Family Partnership’s web site. In fact, I would bet that what they say will be much different than what I’ve said here. I don’t know what’s been happening as of late (1999 & 2000), but perhaps by visiting their web site you will get an entirely different and updated point of view. ([www.victoriopeak.com](http://www.victoriopeak.com)) Incidentally, I have not taken a single solitary item from their web site. In fact I have not read it, so as to not alter or taint any of what I have heard and written here.

It is well documented that the Spaniards came to New Mexico seeking the “Seven Cities of Cibola”. Where they believed the streets were paved in gold, and the doors of houses studded with gems. However nutty this sounds, it is strange that this story started in Spain about 400 years prior to Columbus setting sail to the New Lands. When the Spanish failed to find the mythic cities, it seems that the seven underground cities of gold started a new fervor.

The following is rewritten verbatim from “The New Mexico Magazine”, by Otto Goetz in 1940, because I feel it helps to explain why so many people search the Caballo’s for the illusive treasures. Furthermore, it may well express what I could only allude to by referencing gossip. I do know a few people who actually have old maps and copies of the weigh bills describing the whereabouts of this and numerous other treasures, but I still prefer to quote Mr. Goetz. I’m not sure, but this man could have been the Mayor of Hot Springs (TorC) in the 1920’s due to the similarity of names and a hand drawn map of area that I have bearing his signature.

“The Conquistadores were not the originators of the fascinating sport of treasure hunting, as so often assumed; they merely inherited the habit from the mother land. Ever since Ferdinand and Isabella drove the Moors from the Iberian peninsula, the search for hidden wealth left by the followers of Islam buried beneath the ruins of their homes, was a favorite pastime for nobles and peasants.”

“The immense stories of precious metals and jewels found by Cortez Pizarro and their companions in Mexico and Peru, made the Castilians of Mexico eager believers in the fantastic report of Friar Marcos de Niza on the Seven Cities of Cibola and their inhabitants; They have emeralds and other jewels, although they esteem none as much as turquoise, wherewith they adorn the walls and porches of their houses, and their apparel and dresses, and they use them instead of money. They use vessels of gold and silver, whereof there is greater use and more abundance than in Peru.”

“It was therefore, an easy matter for Coronado to enlist the most enterprising and brilliant cavaliers for his expedition to the unconquered eldorado of the North, New Mexico, an adventure which promised wealth and military glory to all.”

“Nearly every hamlet in the Southwest has its legend of hidden hoard and can boast of having at least one buried treasure within its immediate vicinity. None of these has been, or still is, sought after with greater tenacity than the Caballo Treasure; not a day passes but that some searchers are on the ground, parties of two or three, line prospectors, often formidable expeditions equipped with all the necessary paraphernalia and instruments, divining rods, electric and all kinds of pseudo-scientific instruments, picks, shovels, and rope, even trucks and pack animals. So plausible sounds the reclatero (chart, directions), and moreover dovetails into history of the country, that these searchers are beforehand certain that they will be able to find the hiding place. Yes, one can imagine the circumstances under which the hoard was accumulated; for unlike other hidden wealth of the Southwest, the Caballo treasure was not concealed on one single occasion, but is the regular cache of loot of diverse raiding expeditions made by wild tribes of Indians and their Spanish or half-breed allies, who infested the Camino Real.”

“The Caballo Treasure is perhaps the least known of the many hidden hoards of which New Mexico can boast. There is reason for this. Although many copies of the original chart are in existence, each holder deems himself the possessor of a valuable secret, an embryo millionaire. Why should he divulge the information, and thus rob him of his own opportunity? No, is not reasonable. Better wait until he himself can look for this fortune, the existence of which he has no doubt.”

“That the loot was brought to this hiding place on different occasions is corroborated by this chart. Speaking of a very deep cave it says: “Inside you will find arms, crockery, clothing and harness and eighty atajos (string of mules) of bars of silver. There should also be more than ten atajos of finished silver and many other articles”. When we consider that such pack trains consisted of at least eight animals, and that a mule load averaged around two hundred pounds, it is possible to arrive at some rough calculation as to the extent and value of this treasure.”

“The chart is the confession of one Pedro Navarez, a renegade Spaniard or half-breed, who joined the murderous band of Indians either from a motive of revenge or avariciousness. Nor was he the only one of his race who did so. For the chart states: “And as far as more permanent marks in this range are concerned, you will find in some places the ruins of our dwellings, in which only we and the Indians lived.” A detachment of soldiers finally captured Pedro Navarez in the latter part of 1649; he was taken to Mexico City, tried and condemned to death. Facing the termination of his earthly existence, he turned to religion for consolation and confessed his transgressions to the priest of St. Augustine Convent. This cleric whose name is lacking in the narrative, evidently wrote the original chart. One, Vicent Vasques, sacristan to the priest, having access to the document, made copies, distributing them with the expectation of sharing in the ultimate recovery of the loot.”

“Assuming that the depredations of Pedro Navarez stretched themselves over a period of ten years, and that his career as a bandit began in 1639, it fell into a period in which the newly-settled province of New Mexico experienced a great influx of settlers and the bringing of stores and provisions and all the other paraphernalia necessary for the organization of a newly-formed government, its armed forces and religious system.”

“While robberies and murder took place on many points of the route, the section we have under consideration is described in the chart as follows: “Mexico City, Convent of St. Augustine, February 5, 1650. Ask in Paso del Norte where the Caballo Range is. You will find it in four days by horse at a good pace up the river and not very far therefrom. Some of these mountains are of equal height, they have two large passes, and a small amount of juniper timber. Coming on the King’s Highway from Paso del Norte one will see on the left the mountains, and to the right a plain, which the naked eye cannot circumscribe, and a small hill at a great distance from the road.”

“This brings us to the southern foothills of the Caballo Mountains, about the latitude of Upham, which would be the South boundary; the latitude of Engle, the North Boundary; and the East slope of the Caballo Mountains, between these two lines the region in which to look for the treasure. But let the chart speak for itself again; “These marks are to the right, at the point of the compass where the sun rises, and this range has two wide gaps, which end in arroyos, one running towards sunrise, the other towards sunset, and the two have many ash trees, one more than the other. In the gap where the sun rises look for a spring, it is very large; a city could be built in the plain. The spring is not very far within this gap, and it is well covered with juniper poles, stones, earth and boards and large and small stones on top. Look carefully, because it has great riches, you can take out much gold below the water.”

“It is to be noted that this spring was extinguished; still there must be traces of an underground water supply, which would make itself noticeable in the vegetation.”

“The narrator then continues: “And from this spring count two hundred and fifty varas towards the brow of the mountain, being more on level ground; here you will find a stone with a large cross chiseled thereon, which is not of this region but was brought here by pack mule. From here count one hundred varas and examine a small piece of ground closely; it has few rocks; look closely at its condition. Here you begin to take out silver bars; there should be eighteen atajos. Remove the boards and the burlap and take out eleven atajos more in finished silver. These marks are to the right before entering the gap, at the point of the compass where the sun rises, and when you have

completed this work return to the spring in order to climb the mountains to the left, here look for a deep cave.”

“This is the cave in which the ninety atajos of silver heretofore mentioned, are hidden. After describing the cave and its contents, the narrator continues: “I warn you not to make a mistake, for there are two other caves, but this is the deepest; and the three are where the sun sets, and I also tell you that there are some smaller caches and little springs, but all of them are covered.”

“Strange, some will say, that with so many looking for this hidden hoard no one has ever located it. No, not at all. On the contrary it would be surprising if a searcher should discover its hiding place by the ancient description given.”

“Erosion, deforestation, fire, and drought change the aspect of a locality; even the topographical shape. Trails made by man or beast destroy the vegetation; the winds blow out the soil loosened by foot and hoof. Rain gathers in these depressions and finally flows therein, creating a wash, gully or arroyo; on more sloping ground a canyon. The trees of this region may have been cut for building purposes or firewood, destroyed by a forest fire or perished through years of drought. The barren hillsides then become the prey of rains and floods, rocks and earth being washed down cover the springs and meadows. End-blown dust and sand lodge in clumps of bushes, building up hills. And last, but not least, we must remember that during the great Indian revolt of 1680 the natives not only destroyed the mines but also the springs in order to rob the invaders of the most necessary sustenance of life, water, and thus impede their progress.”

“For these reasons a chart made nearly 300 years ago can be of but little assistance in finding a certain locality described therein, and at best can only serve as a guide for general direction.”

“Perhaps, the most reliable landmark will be the placer fields; the narrator seems to have feared such an eventuality when he says; “And if any of these marks have become obliterated, proceed with care in carrying out of this task. Return to the spring and climb the mountain to the right in the direction in which the sun rises. Not very high up you will find a small rolling mesa, the placer. One can cut copper with an axe, and I believe from here comes the spring.”

“The Caballo Mountains do contain placer ground, such as the Shandon gold fields. Old timers in Las Palomas still talk about the Indians coming to town many years ago trading gold nuggets for provisions and other supplies, even fire water. That was in her days of glory, when Las Polomas was the gateway for all traffic East and West passing through the Caballo Gap. The large plaza in which the settlers drove their livestock for protection during the Indian raids, at one time was entirely surrounded by houses, now is overgrown with weeds, and most of the buildings have tumbled down. The highway from Hot Springs to El Paso passes the town a mile and a half to the West, leaving the peaceful village to dream of by gone days.”

“Situated as they are, The Caballo Mountains made an ideal hiding place for the Indians and their allies. To the East lay the King’s Highway; West the Rio Grande, with its less frequented trails on either side of the river. From their summits any approach from North or South could easily be detected. How many have stood on these mountains searching for probable locality which would

correspond with the description of the ancient chart? How many times at night around the camp fire have eager searchers prematurely divided the Caballo Treasure?"

"The conversion of Pedro Navarez must be taken seriously. He seems to have been anxious that posterity should find his ill-gotten gain. The chart concludes with this benevolent admonition; "Other signs you will also find, in some places painted figures, with many writings engraved with copper, and deer skin clothing. Therefore search well for all these marks; thousands of families would be helped thereby."

"Still there are people who know the mountains well, in whose families copies of the ancient chart has been handed down from father to son for generations, who could not be induced to hunt for the treasure. No, they even would not act as guides in what they consider sacrilegious undertaking. They often have seen the strange and mysterious lights which appear from time to time in the mountains. Are these not the camp fires of the watching Indians, who guard the tesero de los muertos (treasure of death), and will never permit its removal? And then, who knows, they may be the spirits of the slain, and death awaits all who should ever see the hidden hoard."

"But the lure of buried treasures persists. And the Caballo Mountains will be the mecca of treasure hunters as long as a copy of the confession of Pedro Navarez remains in existence."

## CHAPTER 10

### Early Adventures

The Caballo's are fascinating from many standpoints. To the East is the Jorando del Muerto (Dead Mans Walk), and as far as I'm concerned this is an apt name for this valley floor. Some people say that this valley was where the current Rio Grande River used to flow 10,000 years ago. Anyway, there are many residing mysteries in the Jorando, with many small mines and several small to large caves.

Quite near one of the Fluorite mines, right beside the road on the way to Radio Towers on Timber Ridge (Caballo's) is a limestone cave that many people say goes down 1400 feet. I've gone down maybe a couple hundred feet, but decided that it simply wasn't worth the effort, mainly because others have already been down it. Besides, if you were down in it when a freak summer storm dumped its bucket in the Jorando, you may as well kiss your sweet ass good-bye. Those that claim to have descended its treacherous depths say there are two small lakes (mud pits) at the bottom with holes going deeper.

Basically, I try to stay out of the Jorando, because if anything happens to you or the vehicle you've got serious problems. Depending upon one's health and physical stature a man could easily die before he could walk out to the main black top road heading back to town. Of course, if you knew how to get to Rod Hille's ranch, you'd be OK; but if you didn't lady luck better be riding on your shoulder.

Despite the risks, Rex, Jack and I have made many trips into the area. One such trip and to just to get away and see sights not seen before Rex and I were traipsing around in Mescal Canyon when we noticed a stack of rocks about 8 feet tall, behind thick brush and on a year-round creek. Upon closer examination we noticed that it was hollow and we could stand in it. What was it? It looked like a fireplace or maybe an old smelter from the front, but it had no back and no mortar, and was built against a cliff wall. Search as we did there were no clues. Years later, we were to learn that structures like this were where the old Spaniards would camp and place their religious symbols. Back then, the Spanish were very superstitious and would use Madonna dolls for protection against the evil spirits, while traveling on such dangerous journeys.

On another day while swapping stories a local resident and hunter told me about a cave on the Jorando that apparently only a few people know about. While hunting antelope he accidentally stumbled upon a large opening going almost straight down. What makes this one fascinating is that there is a 4 foot long by 2feet diameter stalactite lying beside the entrance. In addition, I was told that those who do know about this entrance are sworn to some kind of secrecy. There seems to be a story connected to this site that indicates there are several corridors stretching throughout the Jornado, and that the military know about this cave entrance. Maybe one day this gentleman will find the time to show me the spot so I can investigate it. My interest peaked when he said that he'd heard rumors that it goes for miles and those who have been in it are afraid to talk about it. I tried to find this gentleman in 1996 but was unable to locate any address for him. Perhaps he moved or died. Regardless, it looks as though this will be another one of those things I never put to rest.

If you ever visit TorC and stay long you will eventually hear about Benny Saminego, who found Spanish Body Armor in a cave out in the Jorando. There's pictures of Benny riding a Palomino, wearing the Armor down main street in Las Cruces, during a parade. Where Benny really got the armor, is anybody's guess, because he took that knowledge to the grave. Although, I'd bet that it is entirely probable that he retrieved it from the Noss Cave and not from a Jorando cave. I've heard several rumors that Benny was badgered even on his death bed as to where the armor came from.

Another hunter told me about seeing two big caves, while he was hunting in the Jorando that are up high about a mile North of Polomas Gap, but I haven't had the time to check these out. People might ask why haven't I investigated these caves? The answer is simply a lack of time, plus the mountains are at least 20 miles long and several life-times could be spent in just a few square miles.

The Indians (Nana, Victorio and Geronimo) waylaid many a wagon train in this valley. They would get up high on the mountain and see for miles any approaching calvary, mule trains or lone riders. Consequently, those who traveled the Jorando were easy prey, due to the abundant places to stage a raid or ambush. So, no doubt, the Apaches most likely hid a lot of booty in several Caballo Caves. The problem is, how to find these illusive holes. To add a dash of danger there are numerous stories of the Indians grinding rocks and putting rattlesnake venom in the mud used as mortar to seal up entrances. And, for those people who persist in digging, they get a poisonous surprise and die.

The Jorando has no potable water in many a mile, and people had to travel through either Apache or Polomas Gaps to get to the Rio Grande River. However getting there was and still is treacherous to say the least. When I'm in the Jorando or the Mountains I constantly find myself marveling at the endurance and guts these people had to have to make such insidiously demanding journeys.

As we travel West out of the Jorando and up to the Caballo's crest there were at one time several 6 foot sculptures of religious figurines, supposedly placed at strategic places. However, don't waste your time looking for these rock sculptures because they have long been carted off. On the cliff above the Bat Cave is about a six foot opening that has what looks like one of these figurines still in place. When anyone looks at it, it sure does look like a carved figurine of Madonna. However, when up close, a few hundred feet and aided with binoculars it does not look like much except a weathered rock. A person I've known for quite awhile told me that he'd been to the site hanging from rope and it is a sculpture.

When traveling along the crest South of the radio towers towards Taggart's claims, and looking East and down the mountain side you can see what is known as Giaga's Hole. From what I can deduce - a Spanish man near the turn of the century dug this hole seeking one of the many treasures. Several people are said to have tried descending its treacherous depths. But, most have quit in fear for their life. I've heard that it just keeps going down and down, and there are loose rocks that surely will fall if you just breath heavy. And if the rocks don't get ya you're sure to get at least stuck or stranded and die long before help could arrive. A few people have also said that if you do get to the bottom you'll have to dodge the rattlesnakes. Others have said that there is some kind of gas that makes you deathly ill. I've never met anyone who claims to have actually made it all the way to the bottom, even though several have tried. Maybe you the reader will be successful at putting to bed the myriad of half truths regarding this hole.

It is impossible to not discover hundreds of blind holes throughout the Caballo's, some of which are exceedingly dangerous to poke around in much. I don't waste a lot of time in some of them that look dangerous or appear to pinch. Of course, there's always the ever-present chance of having a friendly face to face conversation with the King of all Holes - Mr. Rattlesnake himself. Jack, while exploring one of these numerous dreadful tunnels was walking down a steep timbered incline, when he felt something gooshy under his foot. It didn't take him long to realize that he had done every prospector's nightmare. That's right, he stepped smack-dab on one these friendly cusses. The problem is -- which way to move, and there aren't many alternatives, and only a split second to undo the potential horror. He had the option of moving quickly forward, but that posed several interesting possibilities for he could fall or step into a whole den of the rascals. Or, he could try to jump backwards uphill, and sideways was not an option, but whatever he did it had to be done instantly. Needless to say he made the right decision, because he didn't get bit, nor hurt. I've seen what these snakes can do to flesh, and it isn't pretty. Moreover, the lingering effects can last for years.

There are many other tales of traps set by the Spanish. Such as big rocks ready to trip and roll down on the unwary explorer. I've never seen any of these traps, but I have heard boulders crashing while in a cave. Strongly suggesting that I'm right beside another cave, but can't see or get to it.

In the other basin (valley) to the West lies the Rio Grande River, that has historically been the life blood of central New Mexico. This river supposedly, during the days of the Conquistadores was able to be navigable at certain times of the year with large boats. This same valley became known as the Rio Grande Rift in the early 1980's, although many local people still have not heard the news (1993). Indians of many cultures have historically inhabited the banks of this river, and many pueblo like dwellings can be unearthed. However, they are usually left alone due to the heinous Federal archaeological restrictions. Pottery is abundant along the banks if you know where to look. Just don't get caught picking-up or digging-up any of the broken chard's, because big-time fines are levied. In fact, according to newspaper accounts (summer of 2000) the BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) is fencing off many such places so The People will not be able to even visit these places. What's this say about a Govt for and by The People?

This Rift structure apparently runs from Mexico, following the river to North of Denver. Some people even suspect that it extends all the way into Alaska. This Rift Valley was once a vast sea where under water active volcanic activity took place exactly like what scientists are discovering all over the world oceans.

Rifts are notorious for their associated mineral deposits, hot springs, as well as volcanic activity. And Sierra County certainly is no exception to this norm. The town of Hot Springs, formally Geronimo Springs, and before that called Stinkin Springs, and now called Truth or Consequences.

TorC got its name from the abundant flow of geothermal waters. These springs reach a temperature as high as 140 degrees, although most are about 105 to 110 degrees. The famous Apache Indians (Geronimo, Nana and Victorio) gathered here on a regular basis. All Indians were welcome and no hostilities were displayed while taking the ceremonial and therapeutic hot baths. But, I'd bet that many fights most likely took place after the bathes and out of the immediate area.

I've never read of any accounts that white man could share the springs. But, albeit that no white man was stupid enough to try such folly.

History indicates that the Apaches would not toil in the soil like the Pueblos, Zuni, or the Navajo. Instead they were Warriors and took what they needed. Consequently, all Apaches were either feared or hated. Today, they would no-doubt be considered as common thieves or murderers. Still many cultures throughout world history have practiced this type of life style. I'd be willing to bet that some nations consider Americans to be of the same caliber as Apaches. After all, our methods of acquiring and keeping what we consider to be of National Security isn't all that different than the Apache. Mother Nature even seems to have rules indicating that the weak shall succumb to the demands of the strong. Man has been trying for millennia to form cultures that preserve a way of life, and I suspect that each culture is a grand experiment. And all humans are going to try and maintain their place on top of the food supply, or they too, like the Dodo bird will eventually perish.

Furthermore, when a serious look at human behavior is investigated, it seems to be perfectly rational why the Apaches hated the Conquistadores and Anglos. Obviously, these early arrivals were threats, to not only their way of life, but cast serious shadows on their supply of food. Often, I have heard it said, by those with a hidden agenda that the Land belonged to the Apache, but in reality it belonged to whomever could take and keep it. So, I ask the reader, what's the real difference between the predatory practices of the Apaches and Anglo's? Or, for that matter, what's the real difference between the predatory practices of the Apaches and all forms of current govt bureaucracies?

## CHAPTER 11

### Assayers and Geologists

The summer of 1984 saw me spending a great deal of time at the El Paso Lab, and in Silver City with Walter Lashley. The body of evidence was building in support of my treatise that the Cable Claims is the discovery of many lifetimes.

At the same time the young metallurgist in El Paso was studying the variety of Cable Claims samples, with a battery of techniques, such as: normal fire assays, DCP Spectrometry and the Scanning Electron Microscope.

While experiments were being done in El Paso I would hop scotch between Silver City and El Paso. While at ASAT I was learning a diversity of wet-chemical extraction techniques, like proving Osmium and Ruthenium were an important constituent of Cable's PbS ores via distillation methodologies and the normal "trials by fire".

I was constantly force feeding myself with as much data as possible, as to why so many headaches plague the prospector. And soon it became abundantly clear that inaccurate laboratory analysis is probably the leading reason why field exploratory work often ceases prematurely.

For some unknown reason it appears that Labs or Assayers are considered infallible, like medicinal Doctors. The simple truth is that Labs are staffed by humans and are just as adept at making errors, or plagued with incompetence as any other business. Take for example the time when we kept getting faceted diamond shaped precious metal prills from standard fire assays. These assays were being done by a chemist who's responsibility was to extract Rhodium from a major company's silver electro-winning process. This well meaning chief chemist brought some of his purified silver crystals to be inquarted into our fire assays. We kept getting, from our rocks, significant shows of Rhodium, and I became suspicious because I had never ever seen these results before. I asked this chemist if he had tested his silver to see if it was contaminated with any Rhodium. His reply was that it was his business to be sure that he removed all the PGMs from the silver. I said OK, but let's just run a test fusion, so that we can be positive, and not be led to any false conclusions. Reluctantly he agreed. Well, it turned out that his so-called pure (.999) silver had significant amounts of Rhodium present, and did his face turn red. The point is, not to chastise or throw rocks, but to never take for granted anything in assaying.

Most modern-day assay laboratories still practice what I consider obsolete "Fire Assay" procedures. Which are commonly perceived to be the most accurate way of recovering the precious metals. Normally, should a common fire assay fail to produce a precious metal prill, then it is usually construed that the sought metals are not present.

From my perspective the Stone Age Art of Fire Assaying has its basic foundations laid down by Medieval Alchemists. And is thus a poor excuse for Science in the late nineteen hundreds. Nevertheless, it is still religiously practiced, although few modern assayers truly understand the practice chemically.

Obviously, Fire Assaying has a place in testing and in the production of metal. But the assumption that the Nobel Metals can or will withstand the “Trial By Fire” premise is simply inappropriate today. One such example would be Osmium, which is one of the eight precious metals, which will almost always volatilize during such a procedure unless of course it is alloyed with iridium and/or gold. Even then significant amounts of osmium can volatilize, and be lost and considered not present.

A prospector should also keep in mind that when analytical results are completed – the results do not mean that commercial recovery methods will produce the same results. In fact, quite the contrary. Almost always considerably less metals are produced than assays indicate are present.

Utilizing laboratories for rock/mineral analysis is usually very mysterious to the uninitiated. Despite what many may or will say about assaying - the real problem is ignorance. For this “art form” can and will take the would-be miner into several paths of oblivion. So, it is the wise prospector that quickly learns as much as possible about laboratory techniques. However, this is usually very expensive and consequently is seldom practiced by the miner or for that matter ANYONE.

Normally, it thought that if the results are good then that’s great and has to be correct. Unfortunately, good results are not a bit better than bad reports unless the samples are subjected to multiple exact same procedures. But, this is seldom the case.

It is customary in the mining profession that when a mineral anomaly is located that a geologist is called in to render a professional geological report. The geologist in good faith usually does indeed provide valuable geological data pertaining to structures and mineralization. Although, based upon the performances of most geologists I’ve seen they will only lead the ignorant down from the mountain to the valleys of desolation. Of course, if a geologist reads this I sure that quite a different opinion will be evident. In fact, if a student of rock mechanics just happens to read the foregoing it’s likely I will get a ear full. But, that will be OK, for the rocks should drop where gravity intends.

The geologist should after inspecting the mineralization, terrain and collection of representative samples only render a report based upon the facts that are visible and apparent. This so-called professional should also issue an opinion relating to mineral deposition probabilities. What he should do and does do seems often to be two different things. Unfortunately, most ignorant spell-bound prospectors want to believe in a savior. And, just what is a savior? Naturally it’s the geologist who is schooled in the disciplines of rock formations. To this last sentence I say horse-pucky. To me, these often bearded wonders are usually just simple imitators of knowledge. Every geologist I ever met or watched came to a property, made field notes, if paid enough, and took samples. Then, went away without saying much except rendering his bill. While he’s away he seems to be concocting some kind of magic, but in reality he’s only waiting for the white robbed alchemist (assayer) to tell him how he’s to proceed to the next step.

I believe, what is all too often the case of giving his geological report credibility he builds his case upon the assays. So, if the assays are inferior then his report will justify why the property should be abandoned. However, let’s assume the assays are favorable. Now this hide binding pseudo-rock mechanic will advise that an in-depth analysis should be undertaken. This is, of course

means expensive core drilling, which the geologist will over-see and personally log the correlating data.

The prospector, not knowing any better has now entered the lair of the Saber Tooth Tiger. In my opinion, the geologist should have only two functions, which are to conduct an extensive and intensive field study, as well as collecting representative samples from all suspected or known mineralized outcrops. Then, in the presence and supervision of the prospector, these samples are logged, dated and noted on a topo map of exact extraction location. The next step is to send off the properly split samples to at least three laboratories for a variety of analysis. The assayer's reports should not be sent to the geologist and the geologist should not be at anytime privy to the analysis least he become biased. However, this is seldom if ever the case, or at least I've never seen such.

The really good Geologists like to work with facts, which are usually scanty at best. The real rock hardened geologists will write their report based upon experience garnered on the property, such as formations, mineral expressions (structures), and only use the lab analysis as reference to the sample collection sites. Thereby letting the mineral property owner or investor(s) decide the merits of the situation.

In my humble opinion - any geologist that writes and/or completes the report after the assay analysis is a charlatan and you should run as fast as possible away from such a practitioner of geology.

Now that the prospector has accumulated a little data, and assuming that he decides to continue his quest, he needs more and better data. This could be accomplished by conducting a geophysical study to determine if hidden mineralization has likely occurred. Plus, an in-depth analysis of the many minerals that the terrain contains to obtain an over-all picture of any residual metal signatures. This is often called a geo-chem grid study that seeks specific traces of elements that can signal that the goodies could be in the area. In other words, the prospector is really a detective that leaves no stone unturned.

Once the prospector starts the arduous journey into the mysterious jungle of laboratories, and if he was quick witted and not scared off by the many webs and snares that lie in wait, he should have learned what to be painfully wary of.

And, as he proceeds down the halls of science he should learn that: 1) There is NO one way to accurately assay for ALL the Metals; 2) Analytical methodologies are as varied as there are assayers; 3) That secrecy is abundant; 4) There are several Fusion and Chemical types of assaying; 5) There are multiple types of analytical Instruments that have both positive and negative attributes; 6) The Science and understanding of the metals is still in its infancy, despite how sophisticated our technology is; 7) That unskilled, unscrupulous and incompetent assayers are abundant, and difficult to spot, and 8) that errors are rampant, and accuracy is elusive.

Assuming that the miner was not mortally wounded in the laboratory labyrinths. And, he successfully emerged with conclusive data indicating he has truly found a potential glory hole. He must now determine the extent of mineral value, how to extract the metal values, and whether to market the metals or the property.

I look at assayers and geologists with the same eye as I would financial consultants. I once asked a man I respected quite a bit, who was in the steel fabrication business, if he would base his financial future on what his estimator bid the job at? This CEO said -- heavens no! Estimators, financial planners, geologists and assayers are at best merely aids to accurately determine what course of action should be taken. So, when the prospector gets reports, regardless of what is stated the responsibility always lies with the person who is at risk.

It is wise to keep in mind that many people seek to blame someone else for actions that have gone sour. Or attempt to place their responsibility onto someone else for their decision making process. Correspondingly, the prospector or would-be miner is at the mercy of his own ability to comprehend the data in any and all reports.

In a sense all prospectors and would-be miners will at some point in time have to strap on the burdens that responsibility demands. Therefore, he must be prepared to run what I call the miner's gauntlet. In order to survive he had best be prepared intellectually in as many vocations as possible. Thus and in my feeble minded opinion no one can enter the Kingdom of Metals without earning the right of passage. In most honorable professions this is called paying one's dues.

Before going on, it seems appropriate that all who read this, especially miners, should recognize the individual kinship that man and Earth have in common. Most people are not aware that their bodies are chemical processing plants. These walking factories grind up the minerals (commonly called food), then dissolve them with stomach acid. Next, this paste (complex matrix) is sent to the concentration camp where the bacteria slaves separate the waste (gangue) from the precious elements (ions/enzymes). If food is constantly being consumed the circuit works 24 hours a day, allowing for the enzymes (goodies) to be transported through specialized filters (membranes, kidneys and liver), and transported away via the blood veins (roads). When each solubilized metalloid (organo complexes) reaches its targeted cells (cities) new life begins.

I'd also like to point out that waste generation is a natural process and everyone participates in this offense to some extent. Example: Miss wise environmentalist sits down and eats her morning breakfast of eggs, bacon and toast. At some point in the day the inevitable has to take place, with no exceptions. The stomach hydrochloric acid when in contact with any sulphur product has to release hydrogen sulfide gas, and results in the passing of wind, that smells like rotten eggs. Any organic (food) compound containing sulfur (beans/eggs) will work nicely for this phenomenon to occur. This same odor is generated when galena (lead sulfide) is subjected to any strength of hydrochloric acid. However, it should also be noted that this same gas while smelling offensive also serves as a precipitator of metals in an acidic solution. Therefore, the main purpose of stomach acid is simply to tear apart the various mineral complexes and let the generated gasses precipitate out of solution metallic ions. Some of these metals are then further processed, and that which cannot be readily utilized is discarded, most often referred to as feces or waste byproducts. I wonder if it would be appropriate to get an exhaust smog tester for Miss ecoist to see if she is passing wind, thereby polluting our common environment?

The environmentalists have said that cows belch and fart too much polluting gas. I'd just betcha that when all the environmentalists and their comrades are accounted for they produce more foul odors than all the cows and industry put together.

By Fall, and the desert air turning a-bit brisk I received my geological report from Bill Van Dran a young Geologist that I had previously contracted with. His report was matter of fact, somewhat sterile, and suggested that the Claims deserved a more serious look. Later, I made a video of him reporting what he'd personally seen on the Claims terrain. As well as his verification that a geophysical anomaly was indeed present. And, that some samples he gave to an assayer of his choosing showed results better than he thought possible.

With "Jack Frost" making room for Ole Man Winter I took a major oil company's geologist to the Cable Claims to collect samples and conduct a preliminary study. Some of his encouraging words were "you've got good rocks and a proper setting", but didn't have much else to say, except telling me of his many global geological adventures.

After the geologist had taken the samples to the oil company's laboratory(s), I occasionally communicated with their chief chemist. This chemist readily admitted to finding gold and silver, but never mentioned in a positive manner if the PGMs were found. Every-time I called, the receptionist, who always seemed to know who I was and treated me sort'a special, would patch me straight through to the chemist without ado. Boy, those millions in the Bank, were looking mighty good.

After several weeks of being in contact with this oil giant, I knew that just any day now they would be slobbering at the mouth for our Claims. However, did I get a surprise, when one afternoon I called the chemist and was interrupted by a manager who told me not to call the company again, with no reason given. I was speech-less. I didn't know what to say, so I simply said that I was sorry for bothering them, and hung-up the telephone. I've had body blows before, but this one left an impression, that hasn't been forgotten.

After getting over the initial shock I asked myself over and over why did this company behave this way? Did I somehow make a nuisance of myself, or perhaps they had had their belly full of an ignorant prospector? Or, could it be that they were disappointed in their lab reports? Is it possible, that they found spectacular amounts of goodies, then subsequent assays failed to show any precious metals? If this last scenario was the case, that would have indicated that I had salted the ground, and that I was a fraud? But, this was not too likely a chance because they chose their samples and not always from where I suggested. Their behavior is still a mystery, although I certainly have my suspicions as to why I was treated in such an unprofessional manner.

In the mining game there are many con-men, and everyone entering this endeavor should not sleep too soundly or at least sleep with one eye open. In the old days it was sometimes a common practice for the charlatan to take a shotgun loaded with flakes of gold and blast the rocks. The modern rascal, who knows anything at all about chemistry would most likely take a syringe filled with an aqueous solution of goodies and then squirt the liquid onto the rocks. This type of action would allow the solution to penetrate deeply, via the minute cracks, and no-one would be able to

see what had been done to produce outstanding results. Of course dilution can or would occur if it rained before samples were cut and assayed.

There is an old saying that you can't beat a con-man at his own game. However, the astute prospector can certainly be aware of the hazards. There is one thing the lonely prospector and little miner can take heart in, that being -- he doesn't steal for a living, instead he is the giver of hope and new life.

In today's world it looks like the thieves hideout is no longer in some box canyon, or in dark foreboding alleys. Just the opposite, they walk the streets boldly and have glorious towering monuments erected. Some people might call them banks, city halls, county courthouses or capitals.

Have you ever noticed how banks and other institutions proudly display the Eagle swooping down on some poor unsuspecting victim with their outstretched talons? I for one always have an uneasy feeling when I go near one of these respectable establishments. Kind'a like the saying "come on in and visit for a spell says the spider to the fly". Based upon the spiders subtleties I guess the Eagle Logo at least warns those who have open eyes to the dangers. Yet, as in nature the ugliest predator does not why hide or stalk, instead lies right in the open for the world to see. What better camouflage could there be to snare the ignorant?

Nature in Her wisdom has seen fit to mark all things, as well as want those things to naturally cluster in close proximity. Take for example the minerals. They always seem to form a particular crystalline structure. Therefore the keen eye of the prospector will notice these patterns and deduce the probability of its character. It would also seem reasonable to assume that those who prefer the shady side of life also stand out like crystalline beacons to the person who has removed his blinders.

When I would conduct micro-chem studies, I always found it fascinating that the precipitating crystals would form in well defined and consistent geometric patterns. This type of crystalline growth behavior is one of the ways to isolate and recognize a particular metal salt. Those of you that fly a lot or have scrutinized aerial photos will probably have recognized that human cities also seem to have consistent recognizable geometric cluster patterns, which are amazingly similar in appearance to the precipitated metallic salts. This same pattern is also born out and mimicked by the human body, for there is no part that does not have a particular geometric (crystalline) format.

It may appear to those who read this chapter that I've been unduly harsh on Assayers and Geologists. What I attempted to do was warn the ignorant and the too trusting prospector to at least be careful and/or skeptical. In fairness, there are good to excellent assayers and geologists, who are just as hard to find as commercial metal deposits. From my viewpoint I see a definite correlation of seeking a physician for open heart surgery and the assayer/geologist. Therefore, the would-be miner had better get the best or suffer the consequences. I doubt that exemplary assayers and geologists will be offended by my remarks, in fact they probably will agree with what I've said in most part.