

Foots Creek Mystery

Small Barrel Would Fit into Imprint at Back of Second Hole

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The uppermost hole had been dug straight down for a distance of eight feet. What- ever the trio had been looking for wasn't there.

The second hole was located four feet below the first and was dug for a distance of six feet straight into the side of the hill. At the back of the hole was an imprint where something round and 16 inches across had been. A small barrel or oilcan would have fit perfectly into the imprint.

Miller immediately speculated that the barrel had contained contraband gold dust 30 years earlier in an armed robbery at a nearby mine. He called police.

Confirms Report

A state police officer confirmed what Miller reported — two holes, an imprint where something had been removed from one of them—but nothing else.

Police noted that this particular plot of land belonged to the Bureau of Land Management, and they sent a report of their meager findings to the FBI. For two months the story was kept quiet, in hopes that something would turn up.

Nothing did. And Monday, this reporter and an off-duty Medford policeman went to the area.

We talked to both Boone and Miller, but neither could offer any more information than they had already given to police. Miller, however, did elaborate on his robbery theory.

Holds Up Dredge

About 30 years ago, he said, an armed bandit held up a Foots creek gold-mining dredge and got away with an undetermined amount of raw gold. The dredge had been operated by one D. H. Fair for the international Guggenheim mining interests. The robbery has never been solved and the gold never recovered.

Miller thinks the gunman may have buried the gold on the nearby hill, planning to return for it at some later date. It would appear then that the man and his friends, or his friends alone, finally came back for it last November.

Pursuing this line of thinking, most of the residents of Foots Creek shudder to think what might have happened had they tried to find out what was going on while the

men were still digging.

We were informed by our police officer friend that gold is still easy to sell. It will bring as much as \$100 an ounce on the black market, he said, whereas the U.S. government only pays about \$35 an ounce.

A trip to the diggings themselves revealed something that had apparently gone unnoticed before. Our friend discovered that the lowest of the two holes is located dead-center between two dead pine tree snags, one on either side of the gully.

This would indicate that all the men had to do was to locate the appropriate gully and then follow it up the side of the hill until they came to the two dead snags, and then start digging.

On their first try they missed their goal because they apparently sighted up the wrong snag on one side. The second time they were right on target.

Three Days of Work

Judging from the piles of dirt and amount of blasting that had been done, the two men put in a good three days work before finding what they were looking for.

But, different from most men who hunt buried treasure, they found theirs.

Police doubt that they will ever find what came out of the side of that hill; they are not even positive that any laws have been broken. But, whatever it was, it will leave the residents of this roadside community talking and speculating about it for a long time to come.

Weather Program Set for Children

The children's department of the Public Library of Medford and Jackson county will present a program on weather Thursday, Jan. 26, at 3:45 p.m. The department points out that the program is especially designed for children between the ages of 5 through 8, but that all children are invited. Included in the program will be a discussion of the work and functions of the weather bureau by bureau personnel. Weather equipment and books will be on display. The program will last about one hour and will be held in the library meeting room.

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SHIPPERS DELAYED—Holding his chewed up shipping ticket in his mouth, the two-month-old English bulldog caused shippers at a Chicago airport quite a delay in delivering him to his rightful owner, Sgt. James Lavigne, of Hanscom, Mass. The pup had chewed up the address. The shippers finally located the kennel in San Antonio, Tex., that shipped him, then the puzzle was solved. The pup, which was shipped before Christmas, has just arrived in Hanscom. (UPI Telephoto)

Drive Launched for Bonds To Improve U.S. 101, Other Routes

Salem — (UPI) — The Oregon Coast Association and other promotion groups have launched an ambitious drive in the 1961 legislature for bonds to improve U.S. 101 and all highways leading into it. Verne Ayers of Newport, association manager, suggested the state could bond itself to provide up to \$100 million for highway improvements throughout Oregon. This would require a vote of the people.

About 200 persons representing all sections of the coast attended a conference presided over by Coos County Judge James Harrison. A number of legislators, mostly from coastal districts, pledged support.

Also testifying were spokesmen for groups promoting the

Astoria-Megler bridge; highways 20, 26, 42, and Winnemucca-to-the-Sea.

Ayers said the association will contact leaders of other highway groups for a joint meeting to formulate an overall coast program.

Conference leaders also called on Gov. Mark Hatfield who said although he leans toward the pay-as-you-go philosophy, he would consider such a bonding program because the improvements are "long overdue."

Hatfield said it would require a "real selling job" with the public. Ayers explained that under present law, Oregon could issue bonds totaling \$45 million for highways. Then if the voters approved an increase in the bonding capacity from four to six per cent of assessed property valuation, another \$53 million could be raised. This would produce nearly \$100 million for highways, he said.

Program Offered

Tillamook County Judge Otto Effenberger presented a five-point association program urging that: (1) The 1961 legislature propose the bond issue, and that it be big enough to modernize and remove U.S. 101 bottlenecks; (2) The State Highway Commission be expanded from three to five members; (3) Special funds be provided for purchase or improvement of the Columbia River ferry system at Astoria, doubling its vehicle capacity; (4) Highway 101's name be changed to "Pacific International Scenic Route," and (5) \$750,000 be given the State

Fish Commission for propagation of salmon and steelhead on coast rivers.

Among legislators at the meeting were Sens. Andrew Naterlin of Newport; Daniel Thiel of Astoria; R. F. Chapman, Coos Bay; and Reps. William Holstrom of Gearhart, Carl Back of Port Orford, W. O. Kelsay of Roseburg and Harry C. Elliott, Tillamook. Elliott is a Republican and the others are Democrats.

Holstrom, a booster of the Astoria bridge, expressed optimism and said "we are closer today than we were a year ago." He said some "new legislation" may be introduced in Washington but added that anything now would be "pre-mature."

Key Democrats Doubt Hatfield Will Be Candidate

Salem — (UPI) — Two key Democrats have expressed skepticism over Gov. Mark Hatfield's declaration he will seek reelection in 1962. One dared the governor to "keep his promise to run, in order to keep his failures in office clearly drawn as a campaign issue."

"Hatfield can't dodge his own record," was the verdict of State Democratic Chairman Robert Straub (D-Eugene).

Republican legislative leaders summed up Hatfield's announcement as "excellent."

House Speaker Robert B. Duncan (D-Medford) joined Straub in expressing doubt that Hatfield's announcement was final or binding.

"Probably Sincere" Hatfield probably is sincere at this time," Duncan said, "but much can happen by 1962."

House Minority Leader F. F. Montgomery (R-Eugene) said he hoped Hatfield would have two full terms to complete his long range programs. Senate Minority Leader Anthony Yturri (D-Ontario) termed the decision "excellent" and praised Hatfield for "programs free of political implications."

Secretary of State Howell Appling Jr. said he was "delighted" and added Hatfield would "certainly have my support." Appling himself has been mentioned as a candidate for governor.

Valley Man Named to Gas Dealers Position

Maynard Hadley, owner of the Desert Service station, 6770 Crater Lake highway, was elected to a one-year term on the executive board of the Oregon Gasoline Dealers' association at a convention in Salem recently.

Virgil W. Rukke of Portland, and Al Lindley of Eugene were elected president and vice president, respectively, of the association at the three-day convention.

OIL EXECUTIVE DIES — Chicago — (UPI) — S. A. Montgomery, 64, vice president and board member of the Standard Oil Co. (Ind.) died Tuesday.

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