

# Mostly about People

By Wally Traling



## Gold! Right Under Yer Feet!

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This is gold country and you probably didn't even dream it.

J. P. Hall, former publisher of the California Mining Journal, who died Saturday in an auto crash, lived here many years, and gold was on his mind much of the time.

Not to mine it physically. He mined it academically.

He tried to help the modern miner legislatively.

One time he told me about local gold hunting and I took notes. Greedily. But nothing's ever panned out for me.

"There's some gold in the San Lorenzo river, especially after the rainy season.

"Some dust has been panned out of creeks in the Scotts Valley area," he said.

A small creek on the western boundary of Felton Acres has been "attacked" many times since 1856 when excited talk caused the staking of nearly 100 claims along its banks.

One party reportedly took out some \$500. But he spent \$1000 doing it.

Some years back the little creek (Laurel) that trickles down to Neary's lagoon from Mission Hill was the object of secretive prospecting.

Hall said that a couple of Watsonville lads discovered some high grade rock recently over the county line in Monterey county and pulled out gold quartz which ran \$2000 a ton.

He said some men were digging out about \$20 to the ton up in Pasatiempo before the golf course went in.

Well, even since the golf course went in, I personally have dug up tons of earth on the front nine. Results? Lost balls!

One resident along Summit road reported in 1957 that he was getting about \$1 per pan near Loma Prieta, the 3806-foot peak behind Santa Cruz. "That's kinda rich to believe," Hall said.

When gold is mined out of rock it's called "lode" gold; Thought you city slickers would like to know.

California's "Golden beaches" are not called without reason.

When you go sunbathing on our local beach front, you are actually rolling in gold.

"That's right," Hall said, "It was once assayed at around 62 cents per ton.

"The surf acts as a sort of mining pan, shoving the sand back and forth. The gold collects mostly around where the sand is black.

For most people mining now days is sort of a substitute for taking tranquilizer pills, but back in the good old gold rush days men dug like gophers for it.

Hall spoke briefly about the Empire Star mine in Grass Valley, now closed, but which was kept active for 104 years. "She slants down to about 5000 feet and miners who worked at the farthest end, walked four miles to work. Another mine dropped straight down 7600 feet."

When panning by a river, the idea is to find some gravel and scoop it up with water in the pan—swoosh it around and empty the pan bit by bit. The gold will sink to the bottom and when most of the contents is gone what you may have left is black sand and maybe some gold flakes. This black sand is usually gold coated with iron. It has to be ground to separate the gold and iron.

Hall said "likely spots for gold deposits are in the outer bend of the river, in potholes where it has collected, or in rock crevices."

Jewelers will sometimes buy your gold. It's worth \$35 per ounce.

And if you find a nugget you can often get two to three times its worth from a jeweler.

Happy nuggeting.