

Place: **Union Hall**
Meyers Street
Next to Campus Life
In Kettle Falls



Time: 7:00 PM
Third Tuesday
Each Month
(Jan.-Nov.)

The Panorama Prospector

July 2005

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club

Minutes for
June 26, 2005 Meeting

Luci Bristow

The meeting was called to order by President Johnie at 7:00 PM. Steve White talked about Lolo Pass and his finding of smoky quartz. They had a few real experiences but were happy to have been to Lolo Pass.

Our own Sylvia Petty recited a verse by Ogden Nash call "NEXT! What a great job! Johnie asked that I put it in the newsletter. (Please see separate article).

Johnie reported that he awarded Jessie Shewell the club's \$500.00 scholarship on June 18, 2005. Joe Barreca said that the Colville Chamber would like to include us in the Non-Profit Organization list that they give out to newcomers to our community. The club felt this was an excellent idea, so Joe will let them know. Diane Rose reported on the North Idaho Gem Show. They had 20 dealers this year, with most stating they will return next year. They had a good turn-out in spite of road paving right in front of the fair grounds! The show for next year is scheduled for June 3 and 4. Please mark your calendars.

Chuck Prentice reported on the Mineral Show to be held in Madras, OR beginning June 29 through July 3rd, 2005.

Ann Berger gave Johnie some instructions she found on the Internet for dying gem stones. They are available from Johnie.

Our speaker was Chuck Prentice who talked and demonstrated knapping. The talk was interesting and fun. Thank you Chuck!

Some Field Trips being discussed were: Gypsy Peak; Barite from Flagstaff Mountain out of Northport; and Solo Creek. Diane Rose said they were going to Plush, OR for Sun Stones. Any one interested in the Sun Stone trip should let her know.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Drilled with Rifles

By Joe Barreca

Between Kettle Falls and Colville on Highway 395, there is a rock quarry north of the road by mile marker 235. If you look carefully at a spire of rock jutting out of the cliff above this quarry, you will notice a round hole about 2 feet across. That hole dates back to around 1890 and the discovery of the Silver King Mine, the reason Nelson BC is the town it is today.



In summer of 1886, Charlie Brown, son of a Ferryman and merchant in old Marcus, left with a party of 13 men, that included Osner and Winslow Hall and their 6 sons. Ultimately those sons would have enough money to burn from their discoveries that they could afford to waste expensive ammunition trying to drill a hole through this rock by shooting the same spot over and over with their rifles. But things

didn't start out that way. They headed up to the Salmon River prospecting a tributary now called Hall's Creek. They cut over a hundred miles of trail prospecting all summer long without striking a claim. As winter moved in, the food was gone and they started packing up to leave. The boys went out to round up their horses, but they couldn't find them. They sat down and vented their disgust by kicking away vegetation. One of them picked up a rock and chucked it at a pine squirrel as it ran by. Under that rock was a vein of copper-silver ore.

Despite their immediate excitement, they were still had to disguise their discovery and leave without staking a claim till the next year. The Hall boy's mother was Indian as were the two hunters in the party. On their way out they encountered another Indian who was paddling downstream in a hurry with a stash of grub he had stolen from a white man's camp upstream. They convinced him to sell it to them and packed it up for their long trip home.

Back in the Colville Valley, assays proved that their strike was rich and many made plans to follow them when they set out in the spring. With a flourish, they filled up merchant Brown's biggest boats and paddled up the Columbia to the bottom of the Little Dalles where they unloaded again to make the portage around the narrows. But they didn't make the portage. Instead, they hid in the bushes and watched as a hoard of neighbors scrambled to catch up. They packed up a line of horses they had arranged to be waiting there and went around to Metaline on the Pend Oreille horse trail. Their lead and the trail they built the previous summer secured first choice of claims all over what today is "Toad Mountain" (So named because as Charlie Townsend was filling out a location notice on a claim and pondering what to call the region, a big toad hopped out from under the log he sat on.) The Silver King and associated claims soon attracted a crowd of miners, 3 to 400 of whom lined the banks of Ward Creek in 1888 at what became Nelson BC.

The original party of 13 hired a manager, John McDonald, who forcibly bought out the two pure-blood native hunters of the 1897 discoverers. He arranged passage by steamboat, wagons and rail for the ore and raised investment capital in England and Scotland. Millions of dollars poured into development of the mine and millions more into development of transportation and all the elements of commerce in the area. In 1893 the original discoverers and operators of the Silver King were bought out with cash, stock and stock dividends.

Over the next few years they squandered most of the money. By 1897 the mine itself was worked out. Much of the money went to building up the Colville and Marcus areas and the Hall boys gained a reputation for playing fiddle at all the local dances.

"Next!"

by Ogden Nash

As recited by Sylvia Petty

I thought that I would like to see
the early world that used to be,
A mastodonic mausoleum,
the natural history museum,
On iron seat in marble bower,
I slumbered though the closing hour.
At midnight in the vast great hall,
the fossils gather for a ball.
Above notices and bulletins,
loomed up the Mesozoic skeletons,
Aroused by who knows what elixirs,
They ground along like concrete mixers,
They bowed and scraped in reptile pleasure
And then began to read the measure.
There were no drums or saxophones
Just the clatter of their bones.
A rolling, rattling carefree circus
of mammoth polkas and mazurkas,
While pterodactyls and brontosaurus
sang ghostly choruses,
Amid the megalasauroic wassail
I caught the eye of one small fossil,
"Cheer up old man," he said and winked,
"It's kind of fund to be EXTINCT"!



Sylvia Petty finds an egg at the Cleveland Mine

Trapped in Last Chance Gulch

Part 2

by Bob Bristow

In the first part on this adventure, I told about driving my rented Chrysler into Last Chance Gulch in the El Paso Mountains of the Mojave Desert. The car did well until I hit loose pea-gravel far down the canyon. The tow-truck driver had just informed me that the tow truck couldn't get out and would also be stuck.

When we got to the Chrysler, the driver could not turn around. He said he had never tried it before, but the truck was supposed to be able to reel both ways. The truck was so low in the sand that at first it looked like he wouldn't be able to get the pulleys set up under the truck frame. After he successfully got set up, he had one cable attached to a grappling hook up the canyon and another to my car. Then started the slow pulling. He would pull me a few feet, and then pull the truck a few feet with the grappling hook. After a couple of hours, he had gotten to the first road segment that had not washed out. He unhooked the car and drove the truck up the canyon until he got stuck in the next section of sand. I followed him, but before I had committed to the next section of sand, I saw a patch of course gravel a short distance down the streambed. When I came to the point where the old road disappeared under the sand, I turned downstream.

This shocked the driver until he saw what I had in mind. The gravel bar was about 150 feet long. After turning around, this was enough to get up a good speed before going into the sand. The driver jumped up and down waving his arms in encouragement and waved me around his truck. I would have made it but I had to slow down to make the turn around the truck. When I bogged down, I had to wait for him to get unstuck before hitching up and pulling me further. After that stretch of sand, we were able to drive to the entrance to Last Chance Gulch. The driver apologized, but said that even though he had spent much of the time getting his truck out, he had to charge me for the whole time (at \$50 per hour!)

Before heading for LAX, I had to change my clothes. I drove to the top of the hill above the gulch where I could see in both directions and shucked my dirty clothes. Just then, a helicopter from the Naval Air Station came over the ridge about a half-mile away. From that distance, they could see bare skin but not whether I was male or female. They did an instant left turn and hovered over me. When they saw it was

only a man, they waved disappointedly and turned back on course.

A few years later, I had the opportunity to visit Last Chance Gulch again. Luci and I were on vacation rock hunting in the Mohave Desert. We had her SUV and I wanted to show the Gulch that it couldn't beat me. Luci was convinced that we would get trapped again, but I drove in anyway. Parts of Northern California had just had a "100 year" flood and a pile of rocks mixed with brush blocked the lower part of the canyon. However, Luci could see enough for her to fall in love with the canyon and the wild country around it. Figure 1 shows some of the cliffs around Last Chance Gulch. I climbed up to one of the adits on the cliff below the top of the lower canyon. The adit was in unconsolidated conglomerate that ranged from sand to 50-pound boulders. I pulled out one of the larger rocks and scraped a couple of handfuls of sand into my gold pan. I climbed back down to the canyon bottom to wash the sand in one of the small



Figure 1. Cliffs Around Last Chance Gulch

pools left by the flood. I quickly had several nice gold flakes. It would have been fun to pan more gold, but I wanted to explore and find minerals more rare than gold.

I decided to try going in from the lower, south end of the

Gulch. We drove around the El Paso

Mountains, past Red Rock Canyon State Park, and back into the mountains. Driving up to about the Cudahy Camp, we exited up a side canyon to the left. We drove up the streambed over rocks and through sandy washes until we were at the head of a box canyon. Luci decided to stay near the car and pick some of the many beautiful wildflowers that sprang up after the rain. Also, there were innumerable chunks of quartz gemstones all over the ground (agates, jasper, petrified wood, etc.). I scaled the cliff at the end of the box canyon that had been a waterfall during the last rain. Above the waterfall, the canyon was easy going until I came to the second waterfall. Below the waterfall was a water cut alcove that appeared to be dark green basalt mineralized to a hard clay consistency. I could see where someone had dug out small crystal-lined geodes in the soft, but tough, rock. Since they were common geodes, I went on to explore more before doing any digging. Since the falls area was undercut, I had to scale the canyon sidewall. After climbing about a hundred feet up, I was above the top of the falls and was able to follow a narrow ledge over to the top of the falls. While making the

traverse, I noticed a two-inch vein of multi-colored opal that extended at least 20 feet. Above the second falls, there was a third. It was only about 50 feet high and not undercut. As I stood at the foot of the falls looking up to pick out a route to climb, I noticed that the top of the falls was a hard layer of basalt having many gas bubbles. Some of the vesicles looked white and I immediately thought of opals fillings. I hurriedly climbed the cliff and, sure enough, there were opal amygdules in some of the holes. However, without digging, all I could see was common opal. I decided to go on and explore more, saving the opal digging until I came back down.

I was now near the top of the canyon and quickly climbed up to the top of a hill to get a better view. As I crested the hill, an old water tank, a tarp-covered shelter, and an old travel trailer came into view. Then I could see numerous digs in the basalt outcroppings. I realized that I was now in one of the precious opal mines. Since it looked like no one had been here in a long time, I decided to try my luck at precious opal mining. After climbing down into one of the pits, I soon was bagging opal amygdules. One broke open, exposing a nice fire-opal center of transparent orange material. I had collected a bag of perhaps 50 specimens when I heard a vehicle coming down the road into the mine. Peeking over the rim of the pit, I could see eight or nine people get out of a big van and gather around the driver. I could hear her explaining the local geology and how the opals formed.

When I climbed out of the pit and stared down to the van, the owner stopped talking and everyone watched me approach. I told the owner that I had come in from deep in the canyon and had not known it was an active mine. I offered to pay whatever the other had paid. However, she just smiled and said to go ahead and dig. She had an interesting story about how the opals formed, some of which I almost believed! She told her customers that after digging out the opals you had to wait two years for the opal to turn from common to precious. I continued to dig many more opals and the next day brought Luci in by road to find some herself.

Before I could take Luci anywhere, I had to climb back down the waterfalls to the car. On the way, I saw some of the green basalt on the point of one of the cliffs overlooking the canyon. I climbed out to

see if this basalt also had geodes. It did but, again, they were small and rather common. However, I saw a translucent-looking horizontal layer in the cliff beyond the point. It turned out to be a 12-inch thick layer of plume agate. The quartz was so hard that I couldn't break off any with my rock hammer. I didn't have to. There were plenty of pieces on the slope below the agate seam.

Luci and I went on to explore other canyons and into some of the surrounding mountains. We found all the quartz gem material we wanted to carry. I also found two desert tortoise shells.

Much of the quartz material is being replaced by the constant weathering of the cliffs. The cliffs have many horizontal layers of dark material. Most of this material is quartz in one form or another and it litters the slopes below the cliffs.

In the hills near the road to Mojave, I found the best crystals of orthoclase feldspar I have ever seen (Figure 2). There is an outcropping of granite-family rock loaded with the crystals. The crystals in this porphyry are up to four inches long and most are twinned. Most twins are carlsbad and baveno with a few of the manebach habit. Many of the crystals are penetration twins where one set of twins has grown through another.

The bottom line is: This part of the country is still wild and there are lots of gems left to collect.

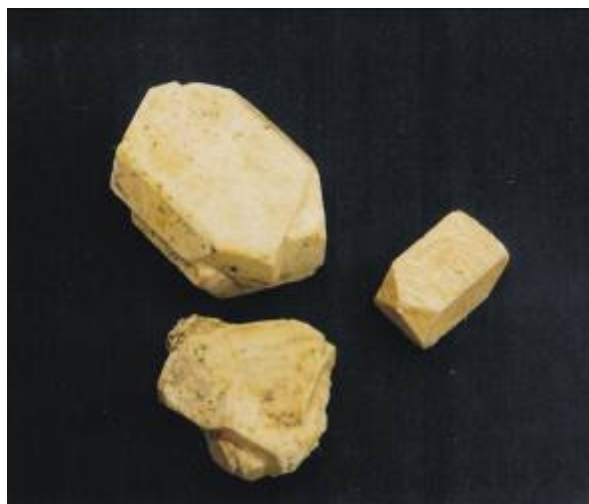


Figure 2. Orthoclase Feldspar Crystals

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A Trip to the Germania

By Joseph Barreca

On July 10th a group of hard-core rock hounds gathered near the Fruitland Store at 10 AM. Gray skies poured down a steady rain as we headed back into the hills following Rex Barrans to the fabled Germania Mine. Through deep puddles, past the abandoned Deer Trail mine and up through muddy new logging roads we wound for an hour. At last we came out on the desolate ruins of the Germania. The buildings were fallen down and overgrown with trees. We parked around a lone elk hunter who had camped there to prospect for this Fall's hunt.



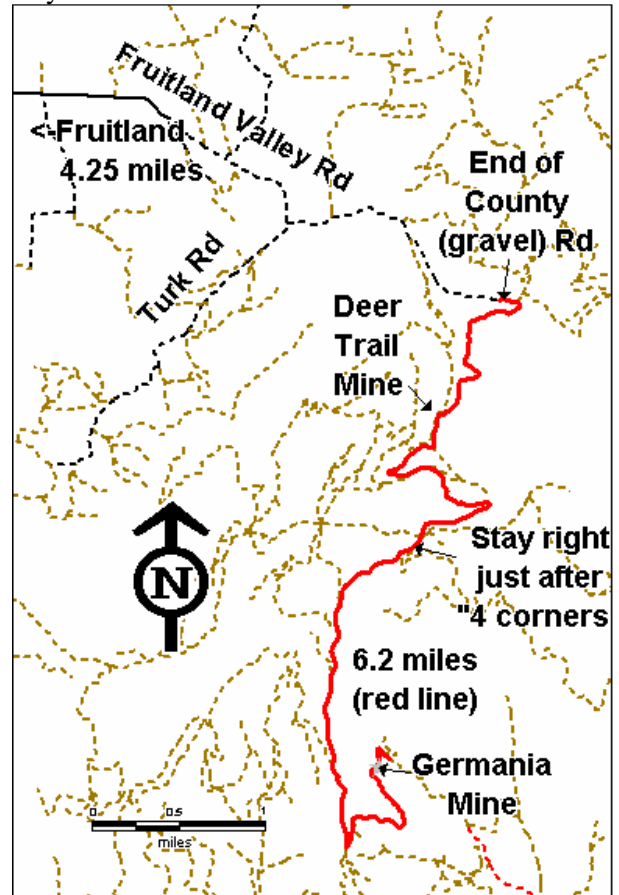
Looking for Tungsten at the Germania

The history of the Germania is compelling. It was discovered between 1894 and 1897 and was worked sporadically for the next 20 years. But it caught the eye of Alfred Krupp when it's wolframite ore was displayed at the St Louis World Fair. Krupp, who later gained fame manufacturing guns for Hitler's Germany, leased 1,000 acres of ore bearing ground around the Germania in 1906. During the outbreak of World War 1, they were said to have shipped this ore by submarine to Germany where it was used to harden steel in the making of cannons. Shipments were cut off after the US entered the war.

It later re-opened and was purchased by General Electric in 1936 and produced 8,500 tons a month in the 1940's with the labor of 100 miners.

The list of mineral found in the Germania is tantalizing. They include Flourite, Hüberrnite, Jarosite, Smoky Quartz, and the Tourmaline Group along with the shiny black Wolframite – the main ore of tungsten – molybdenum, galenobismutite and arsenopyrite. Having seen the ore, there is a lot of the crumbly pyrite that could be galenopyrite. Hüberrnite is a manganese tungsten oxide. Jarosite contains potassium, sulphur and iron and is a rust colored crystal. I was particularly interested in finding fluorite so we could look at it with a black light, but I have not been able to test any yet. Some pieces of rock seemed to have square chunks of feldspar in them.

Overall, this was a tough trip. The tailings pile was steep and loose. Several people lost their footing and their buckets. The minerals were not spectacular to the naked eye. It did stop raining and on the way out, we saw a moose! Here is a map of the way in for the adventurous.





Mineral Identification
Mineral/Mine Locations

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