





4-24-1914
Interior of the Mine
Gold Hill, Oregon
1914.

Subtopic : New Names on the Land: Sojourners: The Chinese Miners

Themes: People and the Environment, Social Relations



Chinese Mine Boss
Britt Photograph
OrHi 21993

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GOLD HILL MINING AREA

General:

The Gold Hill mining area is in northwestern Jackson County in T. 37 S., R. 3 and 4 W. It lies east of the Josephine County line, south of the Douglas County line, west of the Willamette meridian (R. 1 E.), and north of T. 37 S., R. 1 and 2 W., all within the drainage of the Rogue River. It covers approximately 600 square miles, and includes the old mining districts of Gold Hill, Fooths Creek, Upper Grave Creek, Evans Creek, and Sardine Creek.

The area is semi-mountainous and comprises several wide valleys, such as the Rogue River valley which cuts across the southern part of the area in a general westerly direction. Principal tributary valleys are Kane Creek, Galls Creek, and Fooths Creek on the south side of the Rogue, and Trail, Sams, Sardine, Wards, and Evans Creeks on the north side. Grave Creek cuts across the extreme northeastern part; its tributaries are short and have steep gradients. Elevations range from 1,000 feet to 4,000 feet. The mountain slopes are quite steep and have a heavy cover of brush.

The Siskiyou branch of the Southern Pacific Railway parallels the Rogue River valley as does U. S. Highway No. 99. Numerous secondary roads and Forest Service truck trails extend back into the mountains.

Geology:

Rocks of the Gold Hill area are principally greenstones into which peridotites (now altered to serpentine) and siliceous granitoid rocks were intruded. Small areas of Galice and Chico formations are found in the extreme northwest section. Sediments of the Umpqua formation underlie the central portion of the area, and volcanics of the Western Cascade series blanket the eastern third of the area. These rocks are described under general geology of the county.

Mining:

Placer mining has always accounted for most of the gold produced in the area. Some of the placer mines date back to the 1850's during the earliest days of the southern Oregon gold rush. Accurate statistics on the total production from the area are not available, as in the early days the gold went out by way of California; and southern Oregon's gold was included in California's production. Early operations consisted of hand work "sniping" and hydraulicking.

Dredging has always been an important activity in the Gold Hill area. Winchell (14:163) reports that in 1908 an electric dredge was constructed on Kane Creek placer in the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 36, T. 36 S., R. 3 W. Power was obtained from the Gold Ray Dam and the dredge had a capacity of 500 cubic yards per 10-hour shift. So far as can be learned, the dredge operated only during 1908. On the right fork of Fooths Creek, the Champlin Dredging Company built a bucket-line dredge in 1903. In 1905 electric power was installed. In 1911 the dredge was accidentally sunk. Winchell (14:166) also reports that a dredge was installed near Tolo in 1898 but it operated a short time only.

In recent years dredging has been especially important until stopped in October, 1942, by the gold mine closing order. The Murphy Murray all-electric \$200,000-connected bucket type dredge worked on the left fork of Fooths Creek and on Pleasant Creek near the old Williams placer. In 1941 this equipment was moved to Burnt River in eastern Oregon. The Rogue River Gold Company formerly operated a dredge on the left fork of Fooths Creek below the Murphy-Murray ground. The Gold Hill Placers worked draglines equipment on Sardine Creek. Several "dry-land dredges" were operated at various times. The Southern Oregon Mining Company worked on the old Lance placer in 1940. The Mansfield Mine had a washing plant on the south side of Blackwell Hill. A small plant worked on Upper Grave Creek at Greens placer. The Seaman Bar on the Rogue River and the Bull Frog placer were operated for a short time.

Gold Mining

Arrastra — A circular rock-lined pit in which broken ore is pulverized by stones dragged around the pit.

Monitor Gaint — The nozzle of a pipe used to convey water for hydraulic mining.

Stamp mill. Three five hundred pound stamps mill, to crush and mill the gold ore and free the gold.

Mine Cage used to hoist ore from the mine and lower the men and ore cars into the mine shafts.

Sinking brackets used sink the shafts deep down into the mines.

From Labor News Feb. 1937

Feature	Type	County	USGS Topo Map	Elevation	Lat	Long
Al Sarena Buzzard Mine	Mine	Jackson	Whetstone Point	3454 feet	42.845°N	122.605°W
Anderson Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1732 feet	42.380°N	123.119°W
Ashland Mine	Mine	Jackson	Talent	2503 feet	42.204°N	122.752°W
Barron Mine	Mine	Jackson	Emigrant Lake	3437 feet	42.167°N	122.552°W
Bill Nye Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1574 feet	42.391°N	123.058°W
Bobbit Mine	Mine	Jackson	Carberry Creek	2411 feet	42.121°N	123.148°W
Braden Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1676 feet	42.406°N	123.054°W
Buck Rock Tunnel	Mine	Jackson	Siskiyou Pass	3651 feet	42.091°N	122.558°W
Cinnabar Mountain Mine	Mine	Jackson	Boswell Mountain	2322 feet	42.573°N	122.932°W
Daffodil Mine	Mine	Jackson	Squaw Lakes	2742 feet	42.005°N	123.059°W
Grubstake Mine	Mine	Jackson	Dutchman Peak	4710 feet	42.014°N	122.949°W
Jay Bird Mine	Mine	Jackson	Carberry Creek	2968 feet	42.094°N	123.145°W
Kell Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1712 feet	42.470°N	123.019°W
Lamb Mine	Mine	Jackson	Ashland	4864 feet	42.129°N	122.712°W
Layton Mine	Mine	Jackson	Tallowbox Mountain	2358 feet	42.228°N	123.228°W
Little Giant Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1847 feet	42.382°N	123.121°W
Lucky Boy Mine	Mine	Jackson	Mount Isabelle	2270 feet	42.258°N	123.041°W
Lyman Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1755 feet	42.468°N	123.022°W
Maid of the Mist Mine	Mine	Jackson	Tallowbox Mountain	2319 feet	42.205°N	123.178°W
Mammoth Lode Mine	Mine	Jackson	Richter Mountain	4540 feet	42.762°N	122.951°W
Miller Mine	Mine	Jackson	Applegate	2985 feet	42.354°N	123.217°W
Millionaire Mine	Mine	Jackson	Sams Valley	1689 feet	42.403°N	122.996°W
Molly Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	2066 feet	42.389°N	123.116°W
Mountain King Mine	Mine	Jackson	Boswell Mountain	2621 feet	42.569°N	122.996°W
Oregon Belle Mine	Mine	Jackson	Mount Isabelle	3303 feet	42.291°N	123.103°W
Owl Hollow Mine	Mine	Jackson	Rogue River	2565 feet	42.391°N	123.201°W
Penny Ante Mine	Mine	Jackson	Wimer	2043 feet	42.600°N	123.212°W
Placer Mine	Mine	Jackson	Squaw Lakes	1856 feet	42.109°N	123.104°W
Rowden Mine	Mine	Jackson	Applegate	2106 feet	42.292°N	123.209°W
Shasta Mine	Mine	Jackson	Rogue River	1801 feet	42.401°N	123.212°W
Skyline Mine	Mine	Jackson	Ashland	4772 feet	42.154°N	122.747°W
Sleppy Mine	Mine	Jackson	Sterling Creek	3992 feet	42.213°N	122.881°W
Star Mine	Mine	Jackson	Tallowbox Mountain	2772 feet	42.211°N	123.214°W
Steamboat Mine	Mine	Jackson	Carberry Creek	3254 feet	42.081°N	123.199°W
Sturgis Mine	Mine	Jackson	Mount Isabelle	1899 feet	42.281°N	123.045°W
Sylvanite Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	1368 feet	42.463°N	123.023°W
Tinpan Mine	Mine	Jackson	Gold Hill	3123 feet	42.391°N	123.096°W
War Eagle Mine	Mine	Jackson	Boswell Mountain	2257 feet	42.622°N	122.964°W

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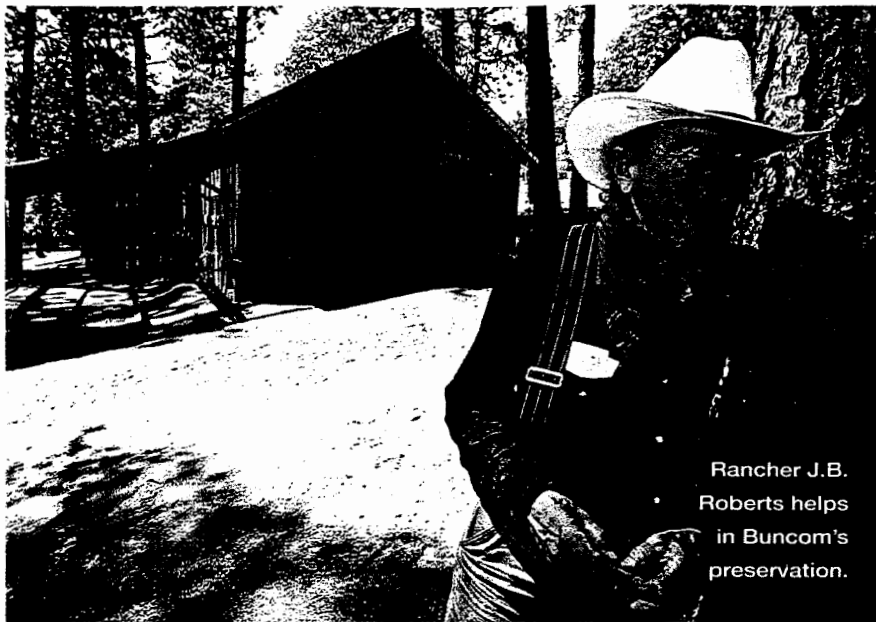
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Oregon gold

Southern Oregon burned with gold fever 150 years ago.
It's still contagious today

By Karl Samson • Photographs by Paul Carter



Rancher J.B. Roberts helps in Buncom's preservation.

It was called Rich Gulch. That was where, in the winter of 1851–1852, gold was discovered in Oregon Territory by miners who had headed north from California. A town sprang up near the site of the strike, acquiring the name Jacksonville. Within five years, it had become the most prosperous settlement between San Francisco and Portland.

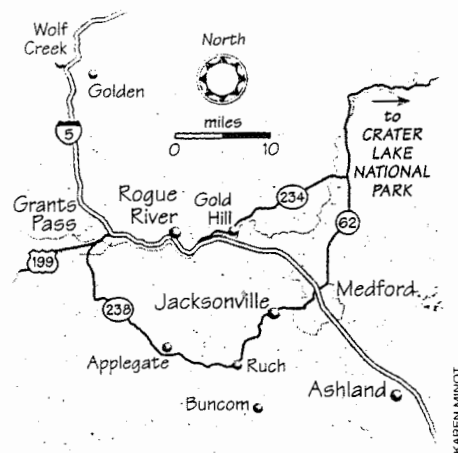
Today, a visit to Jacksonville and the country around it reveals the power that gold possessed to shape the Northwest and the people who lived in it. The world of those early argonauts still lives on here—along historic main streets, in quiet ghost towns, on winding country roads, and, even now, in the glint of gold flakes beneath a burbling stream.

The town gold built and time forgot

Jacksonville's prosperity didn't last long. When the railroad connected Sacramento and Portland in the

1880s, it skipped Jacksonville, and the town's fortunes took a sharp turn for the worse. But decades of neglect had advantages. Bypassed by progress, Jacksonville remained a snapshot of late-19th-century life. Today, it boasts more than 100 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Some, like the Beekman House (which dates from the 1870s), have been restored as historic sites and are open for tours. Other landmarks now house restaurants and inns, and downtown shops play up the town's mining heritage in various ways: Some even will sell you a gold-panning kit.

The people restoring Jacksonville's buildings had a lucky break in one of the town's first citizens. Peter Britt was a Swiss immigrant who arrived in 1852 hoping to strike gold. Quickly giving up on prospecting, he established a photography studio. Britt took numerous photographs of 19th-century Jacksonville—images that provided an



KAREN MINOT

invaluable record for architectural preservationists a century later.

Jacksonville's most famous summer event is named for the miner-turned-photographer. Running from June into September, the Britt Festivals hold music and dance performances in a pine-shaded amphitheater on the hill where Peter Britt's home once stood. There's no better way to spend an evening in Oregon.

Gold Country drives

To learn more about the area's Gold Rush days, you can take a couple of driving tours. Both routes lead to Gold Rush-era ghost towns and let you follow in the footsteps of the miners who once roamed these hills.

Start the first tour by taking State 238 southwest out of Jacksonville. In the community of Ruch, turn left onto Upper Applegate Road. Continue 9 miles up the valley and turn right onto Palmer Creek Road, where you'll find the $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile Gin Lin Mining Trail. Gin Lin was a Chinese mining boss who bought land in the 1880s, after other miners had given up. He hired Chinese laborers to mine the hillsides hydraulically, using pressurized jets of water that exposed old riverbeds where traces of gold could still be found. An interpretive brochure available at the trailhead explains what you will see along the trail.

On the way back down the valley, stop at the McKee Bridge, a covered bridge built in 1917. The adjacent

McKee Bridge Store and Restaurant is a good spot for an inexpensive meal.

To return to Jacksonville, continue down the valley and turn right onto Little Applegate Road. Three miles up this road, you'll come to the ghost town of Buncom. Its post office, general store, and cookhouse have been preserved, thanks to the efforts of Reeve and Lyn Hennion, whose land it stands on, and other local residents. One of them, rancher J.B. Roberts, says that Buncom provides a link to the past in a part of Oregon that is receiving an influx of new residents. "The intent," Roberts says, "was to keep the town as a symbol of what the old-timers hold as part of their lives and what the newcomers are aspiring toward."

From Buncom, follow twist-

ing Sterling Creek Road, back into Jacksonville.

More mining history can be found north of Jacksonville. Start a tour by getting on Interstate 5 and heading north to exit 76. There you'll find Wolf Creek Inn, originally a stagecoach stop and now an Oregon state heritage site that operates as a restaurant and inn. Three miles east of Wolf Creek, up Coyote Creek Road, you'll find the ghost town of Golden, founded in the 1890s. The general store, church, and granary are still standing.

After visiting Golden, head back south to the town of Gold Hill, the site of the tourist attraction known as the Oregon Vortex. This small town

on the banks of the Rogue River is also home to the Gold Hill Historical Society Museum. "Giants," the nozzles used in hydraulic mining operations, are on display here; there's also a stamp mill once used to crush gold-bearing ore.

On the west side of Gold Hill, you'll find a couple of spots along the river for walking. A 1-mile paved pathway runs beside the Rogue River from the edge of town. Farther out on State 234, at the Gold Nugget Wayside picnic area, there's a short riverside trail.

The Gold Nugget area also happens to be an official Bureau of Land Management recreational gold-panning site. Don't you wish you'd gotten a gold-panning kit in Jacksonville?

Travel planner

Jacksonville is located just west of Medford and 275 miles south of Portland via I-5. For general information, contact the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Information Center (185 N. Oregon St.; 800/727-7570 or www.jacksonvilleoregon.org).

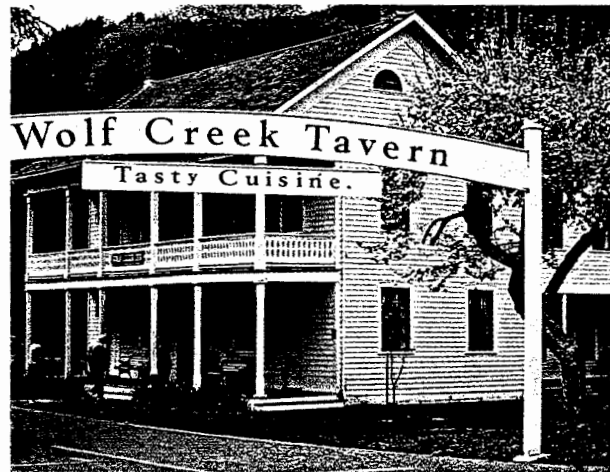
Attractions and events

Beekman House. 1-5 Wed-Sun Memorial Day-Labor Day; \$3. Laurelwood and California Streets, Jacksonville; (541) 773-6536.

Britt Festivals. Shows range from country and classical music to dance performances. Tickets start below \$20. First and Fir Streets, Jacksonville; (800) 882-7488 or www.brittfest.org.

Gold Hill Historical Society Museum. 12-4 Wed-Sun; free. 504 First Ave., Gold Hill; (541) 855-1182.

Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History. Mining exhibits; Peter Britt photographs. 10-5 Wed-Sat, 12-5 Sun; \$3. Fifth and C Streets, Jacksonville; (541) 773-6536.



Wolf Creek Tavern offers good food in a historic setting.

Dining

Applegate River Ranch House. Riverside setting; the red oak-broiled mushrooms should not be missed. Closed Mon-Tue. 15100 State 238, Applegate; (541) 846-6082.

Jacksonville Inn Dinner House. Jacksonville's most traditional restaurant; extensive wine list. 175 E. California; (800) 321-9344, (541) 899-1900, or www.jacksonvilleinn.com.

MacLevin's Whole Foods Deli. House-baked breads and a great Reuben. 150 W. California, Jacksonville; (541) 899-1251.

McCully House Inn. Elegant contemporary cuisine; patio garden seating in summer. 240 E. California, Jacksonville; (800)

Lodging

Applegate River Lodge. A modern log lodge on the Applegate River. From \$125. 15100 State 238, Applegate; (541) 846-6690 or www.applegateriverlodge.com.

Hanna House. Historic home across from Britt Festivals grounds; four suites with kitchenettes. From \$145. 285 S. First, Jacksonville; (800) 373-9775.

Jacksonville Inn. Two-story brick building dating from 1861, with antique-filled rooms. From \$135. See "Dining."

McCully House Inn. B&B full of antiques in one of Jacksonville's oldest homes; excellent restaurant. From \$125. See "Dining."

Wolf Creek Inn. 9 rooms from \$75. See "Dining." ♦

367-1942, (541) 899-1942, or www.mccullyhouseinn.com.

McKee Bridge Store and Restaurant. Old-fashioned, out of the way, and inexpensive. 9045 Upper Applegate Rd., Jacksonville; (541) 899-1101.

Wolf Creek Inn. American roadhouse fare in a lovely, historic setting. 100 Front St., Wolf Creek; (541) 866-2474.