RICH GULCH

A Mining History of Jacksonville, Oregon

A Publication of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association

How Rich Gulch Became a Public Park

By the time gold-mining had ceased at Rich Gulch, most of Jacksonville's old mining claims had been proven up and passed into private ownership. During the 1950s three unproven mining claims, totalling 70 acres, were transferred from the former U.S. Government Land Office to the Bureau of Land Management.

In 1992 the BLM signed an agreement with the City of Jacksonville guaranteeing that these historically significant lands would remain in protective public ownership. This was great news, but since the three parcels did not quite touch each other, trail connectivity was going to be a challenge.

Following the signing of the Preservation Agreement, the Jacksonville Woodlands Association began working on a Rich Gulch Master Plan to convey four surrounding privately held parcels into public ownership. In 1997 the JWA purchased the 10-acre Begley property which was the keystone to connecting the three BLM properties. The parcel was eventually conveyed to the City of Jacksonville.

The Begley tract included the upper portions of the historic hydraulic diggings and well-preserved water supply mining ditches.

In 1998, working with the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, the BLM purchased the adjacent 27-acre Frontino property. By 1999 the BLM had purchased 7.5 acres of the adjoining Burkhalter property. Also during this time, with the assistance of the Oregon Lottery State Parks Fund, the City of Jacksonville purchased the lower half of the Burkhalter parcel. In 1999 Mrs. Vern Beebe donated eight acres of a former mining claim, located at the lower end of Rich Gulch off of Hill Street to the Jacksonville Woodlands Association. Mrs. Beebe's donation was in turn conveyed to the City of Jacksonville.

The acquisition process took six years, but Rich Gulch, totalling 103 acres, is now fully protected through public ownership.

In March 2000, 24.5 acres of Rich Gulch was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, thus adding an extra layer of public protection.

Funding for this project was made possible by grants from the National Park Service - 2003 Challenge Cost Share Program, the Oregon Department of Forestry, Jacksonville Boosters Club, Jacksonville Woodlands Association, and the Meyer Memorial Trust.

The preservation of Rich Gulch is a cooperative project of the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Jacksonville, Jackson County Parks, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, and the citizens of Historic Jacksonville, Oregon.

Jacksonville Woodlands Association / P.O. Box 1210 / Jacksonville, Oregon 97530.

A Mining History of Rich Gulch

Jacksonville, Oregon

A Publication of the
Jacksonville Woodlands Association

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Illustrations/Design
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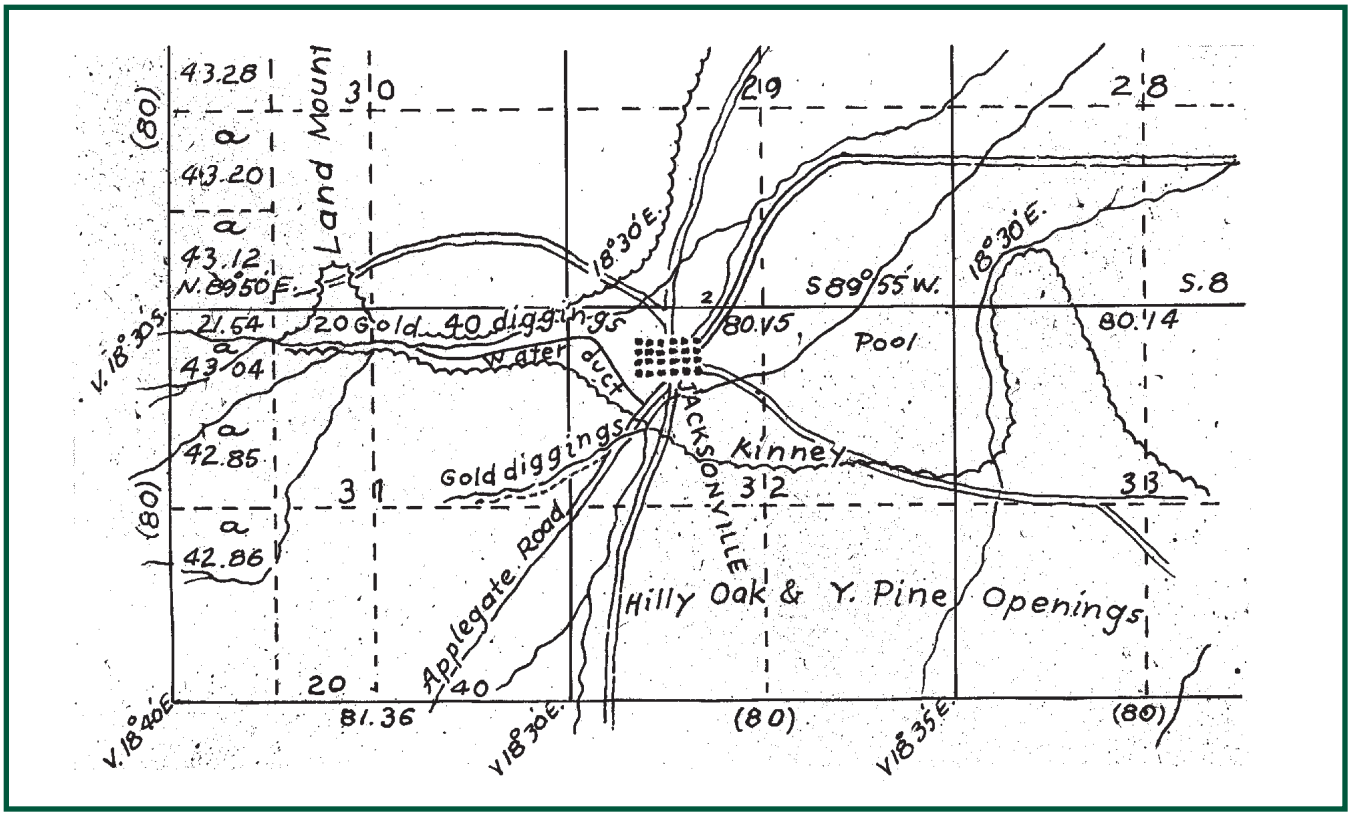
The topics for this book on Rich Gulch are based on lesson outlines developed by Larry Smith during his 33-year teaching career at Jacksonville Elementary School. Original research conducted by historical consultant George Kramer and plant ecologist Gene Hickman. Contributing researcher Kay Atwood. Assistance and resources were contributed to this project by the staff of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Medford, Oregon.

General Introduction to Rich Gulch — Panel 1 / Rich Gulch

"In the early days the whisper of a marvelously rich gold discovery was heard; it passed from mouth to mouth till... soon the silent hills and gulches were touched as if by the wand of an enchanter and whitened with the tents of thousands of eager hunters..." (A. G. Walling, 1884)

Although not the first discovery of gold in Southern Oregon, the discovery at Jacksonville's "Rich Gulch" during the winter of 1851-52 was surely the most influential. In February 1852 two packers, James Cluggage and James R. Pool, on their way to California with goods for the 49ers, heard of a small find on Jackson Creek, near today's Britt parking lot. As the tale goes, Cluggage and Pool stopped to water their mules near Daisy Creek, panned a little, and quickly "found color." Soon the Rich Gulch strike was on. Table Rock City, eventually renamed Jacksonville, sprang up on the valley floor, complete with mining suppliers, a Wells Fargo agent, any number of taverns, and other means of separating a miner from his new-found wealth. Young Jacksonville was soon calling itself the "Queen City of Southern Oregon." By 1859, when Oregon was admitted to the Union, Jacksonville was the largest city in the state.

The hundreds of miners drawn to Rich Gulch by Cluggage and Pool's strike quickly extracted the easy surface gold and by the mid-1860s most had moved on. But Jacksonville, the city founded near Rich Gulch, continued to prosper long after the gold rush heyday.



Original 1855 Survey Plat of area, showing "Diggings." Redrawn by Don Thomas.

Searching For Gold

Goldminers were a fickle bunch, moving from claim to claim always looking for the next big strike. Rich Gulch was no exception—the name was more hope than reality.

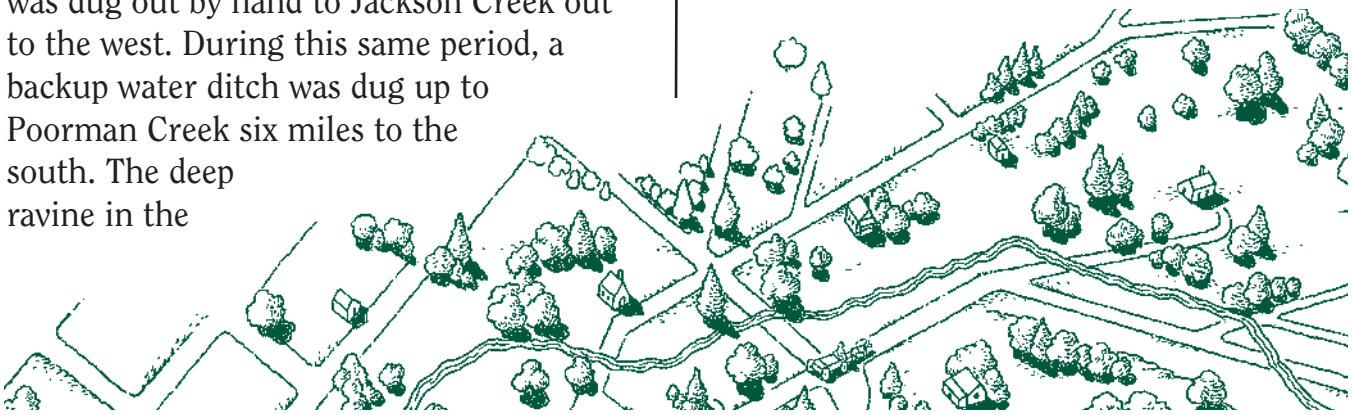
The shortage of water at Rich Gulch, especially during the summer months, was a major hindrance to large-scale mining until the one-mile Petard Mining Ditch was dug out by hand to Jackson Creek out to the west. During this same period, a backup water ditch was dug up to Poorman Creek six miles to the south. The deep ravine in the middle of the gulch was blasted out by hydraulic giants using the water from these ditches between approximately 1860 and 1940.

Woodland Notes

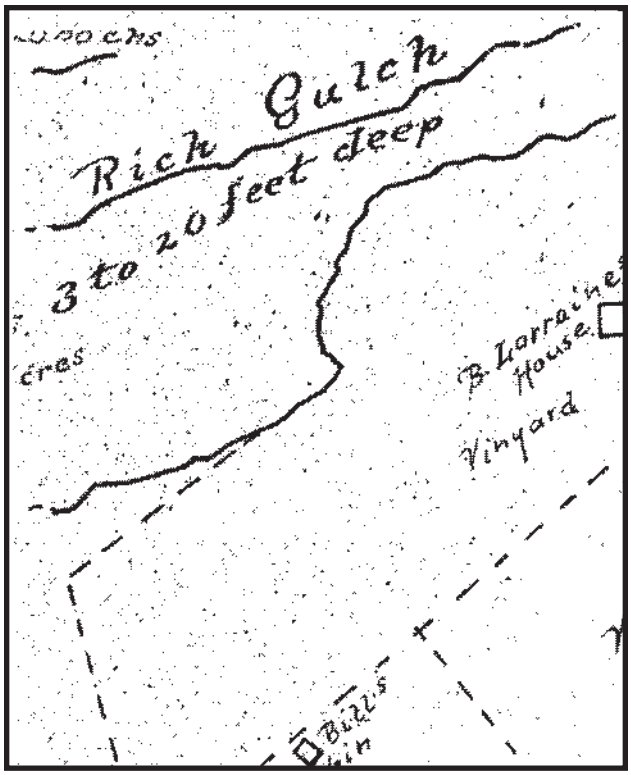
Area: Approximately 300 acres

Flora: Gentner's fritillary, black oak, white oak, Douglas fir and madrone

Fauna: red-tailed hawk, western tanager, black tail deer and pine squirrel



Auguste Petard



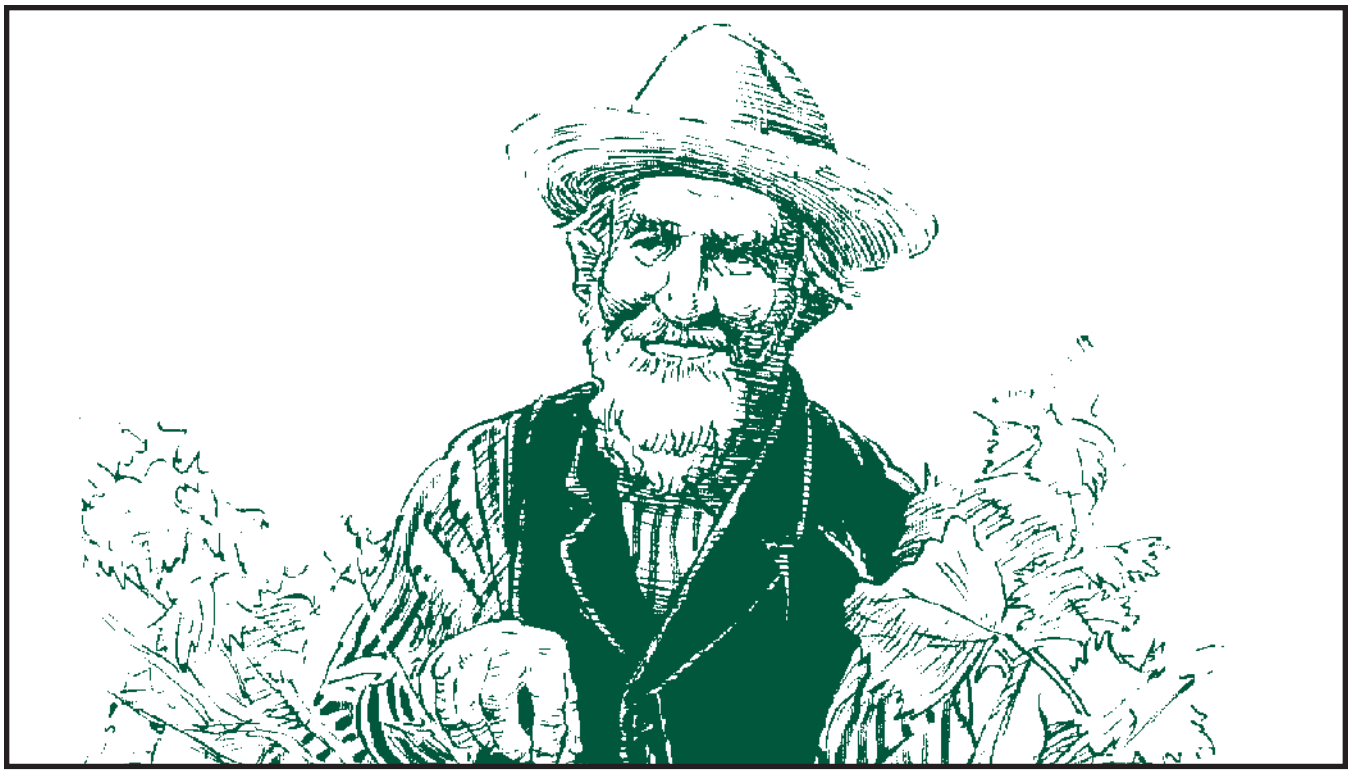
See Lorraine page 10.

After 1900 this portion of Rich Gulch was the focus of Auguste Petard, one of several French-born miners who settled in the Rich Gulch area in the 19th century. Petard purchased the Zigler Ditch, a pioneer mining ditch that took water from Missouri Gulch, and finally on into Rich Gulch. Auguste and his sons built a water reservoir and mined successfully on this site for many years, eventually patenting their claim in 1908. With the water from the Petard Ditch, as the system became known, the family operated their hydraulic mine in Rich Gulch on into the 1940s. Auguste and Marie Petard built their home in Rich Gulch, near the family mine. They planted a vineyard on their property, gaining notoriety for grapes as well as gold. In 1924 they transferred ownership to their oldest son, Auguste II, after their youngest son Albert died of tuberculosis. Marie Petard died in 1928 and Auguste died in 1931 at age 86. Auguste Petard II gave up mining in the late 1940s to concentrate on his vineyards. He died in 1958.

Grapes and Gold

"Climactic conditions together with soil make the Rogue Valley the ideal place to grow the grape," wrote an early expert on viticulture. Many early settlers in Southern Oregon held the same opinion. There were nearly two dozen documented vineyards in production in Jacksonville by the time the Petards arrived in Jacksonville. Auguste Petard had worked in the famous Muscadet in Nantes, France before being smitten with the gold bug after hearing about the great gold strikes in California.

S.O.H.S. #4498



Auguste Petard in his vineyard.

Don Thomas, Illustration

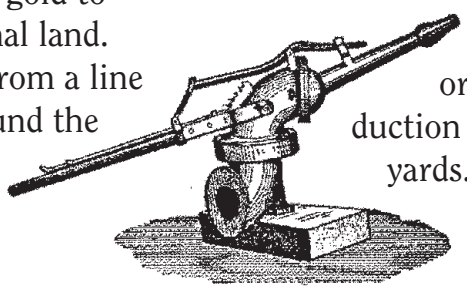
Unfortunately Auguste and his young sons arrived in California fifty years too late. Realizing his tardiness, Auguste decided to check out the gold fields of Alaska. But as fate would have it, while heading north on the train, Petard stopped off in Jacksonville for a brief visit with several of his French friends. The visit lasted a lifetime.

The climate, soil, and surroundings of Jacksonville reminded Auguste of his native France. His long search for a new home was over. Where else in the world could one find a place so fair, yet with a gold mine in the back yard to boot. Mining in Jacksonville yielded enough gold to enable Auguste to buy additional land. Marie Petard, who descended from a line of French kings, must have found the hard work of farming a far cry from her former life in France.

Rebirth of the Grape

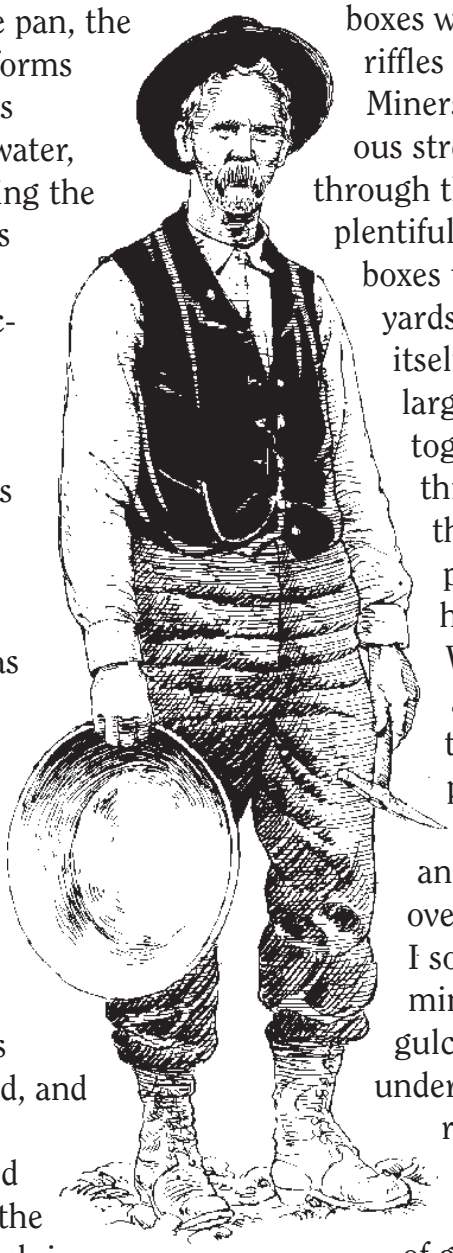
With the development of swift and reliable rail transportation from the Rogue Valley to the metropolitan markets on the East Coast, Southern Oregon's fledgling pear industry, founded by Peter Britt in the 1860s, began to boom. This new and lucrative "pear rush" eventually wiped out Jacksonville's small grape growers as competition for water, land, and labor intensified.

By the 1990s, with foreign-grown pears flooding the American market, and experiencing ever increasing pressure from land developers, thousands of acres of Rogue Valley pear orchards were taken out of production and replaced by new vineyards. The bulldozers were being kept busy.



Early Placer Mining

Miners in Rich Gulch used the pan, the rocker, and the long-tom– all forms of placer mining. Placer miners bathed gold-bearing soil with water, washing away the dirt and letting the heavier gold flakes and nuggets settle for collection. The common image of the lone prospector with a pick, a shovel, and a pan dangling from his pack, accurately reflects the typical placer miner's equipment. Pans were cheap, readily available, and easy to carry.

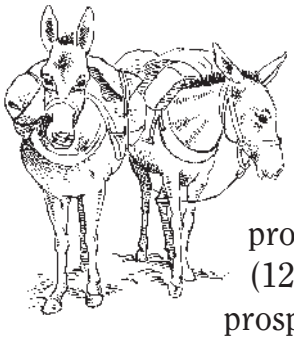


Unfortunately, once a strike was made, panning was too slow. Miners needed a quicker way to collect gold. Rockers and long-toms were wooden contraptions that used the same water-washing technology but could handle more soil at a time. A rocker, shaped like a baby's cradle, was filled with dirt, water was added, and the rocking motion let the soil drain away while the heavy gold was trapped in small ridges at the bottom. Long-toms and larger sluice boxes were wooden flumes, but with riffles or ridges at the bottom.

Miners washed the dirt in a continuous stream-like motion, as it moved through the sluice. Where water was plentiful, miners would set up sluice boxes that extended hundreds of yards, using the force of the creek itself. Mining companies, with large groups of miners working together, could shovel more dirt through a sluice box in an hour than a sole prospector could pan in a year, but it was cold, hard, wet work.

William Earnshaw, who had arrived in Jacksonville in 1860, tells about trying to look for placer gold. "I borrowed an old pick and shovel off a miner and took a milk pan and went over the hills in back of the cabin. I soon found a place where some miners had worked out a small gulch. I dug out a panful of dirt under the side of the bank and carried it some distance to where there was water and panned it out. I got a very small quantity of gold, but thought it wasn't

A sluice box with Long Tom



worth saving, and threw it away, but when I had more experience, I found I had got a very good prospect, for I had got a bit (12½ cents) to the pan. I prospected around several places, but had no success.

"When we could now get water in the daytime it made much better working. Occasionally, we could see gold as we washed the dirt down and generally picked up from twelve to fourteen dollars every day. After we had ground-sluiced our claim as wide as we thought it would pay we had to clean up the bedrock. Our sluice boxes were set at the lower end of the claim and we dug up the bedrock from four to six inches deep and shoveled it into the sluices. We found the gold mostly in the crevices of the rock. Some days while cleaning up the rock, we could get as much as $200. It took us until spring to work out our claim.

"I sold my claim for ten dollars to my friend, Thomas White. After figuring it up, we found our claim had averaged us $20 per day each."

The Chinese of Jacksonville

As the mines began to play out, many Chinese took some of the domestic positions which other citizens considered demeaning work. The Census of 1880 shows Chinese running boarding houses and cooking in Jacksonville. Several worked at the U.S. Hotel for Madam Holt.

During this period they continued to live in old shacks found along Main Street. Bunking together provided some protection for the vulnerable Chinese and also gave a place to share their lifestyle with others who lived in a similar way.

Census figures over the next 50 years show a dramatic decline in the number of Chinese living in Jackson County. In 1880 there were 323 Chinese. By 1900 the number was 43 and by 1940 the number had slipped to only 5 Chinese.

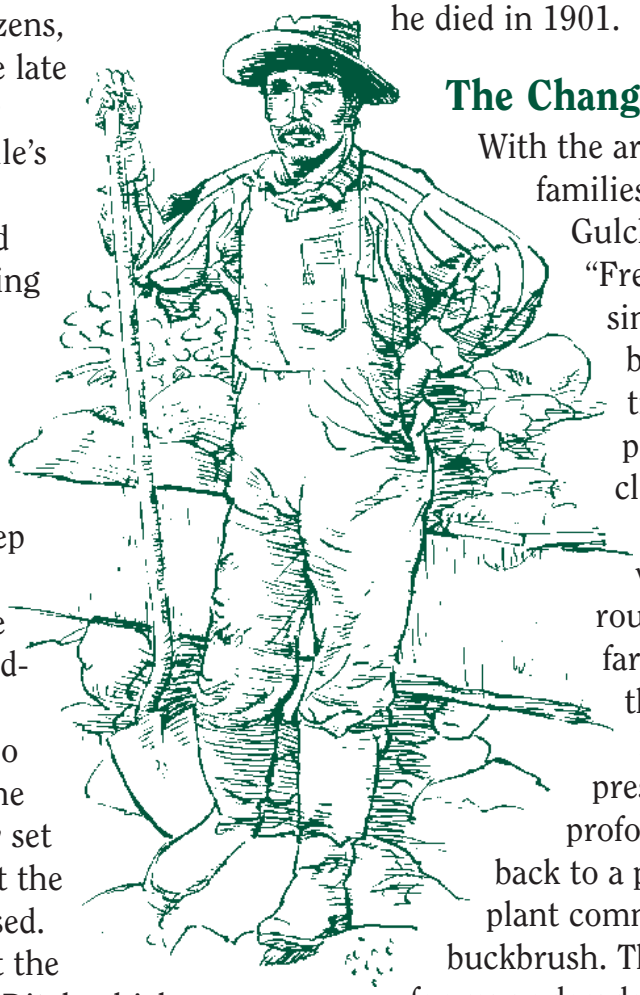
During the period from 1890 to 1940, many of the Chinese left in the Rogue Valley were running the laundries and cooking for hotels and families. In spite of the fact that there was little economic threat from the Chinese, there were discriminatory policies enacted by communities to make their businesses difficult to economically remain. Both Jacksonville and Ashland passed laws to tax Chinese laundries heavily. Both cities collected about $40 a year. "White" businesses were not taxed as heavily.

Bernard & François Lorraine

Most of Jacksonville's 19th-century miners were solitary folk who labored in obscurity, their names long forgotten. But some, who arrived here early and stayed, became prominent simply for doing so, even if they never did hit the big strike. Bernard and François Lorraine, French-born brothers who became naturalized citizens, arrived in Oregon in the late 1850s, and like so many others joined Jacksonville's hunt for gold. Between 1858 and 1868 they filed more than a dozen mining claims.

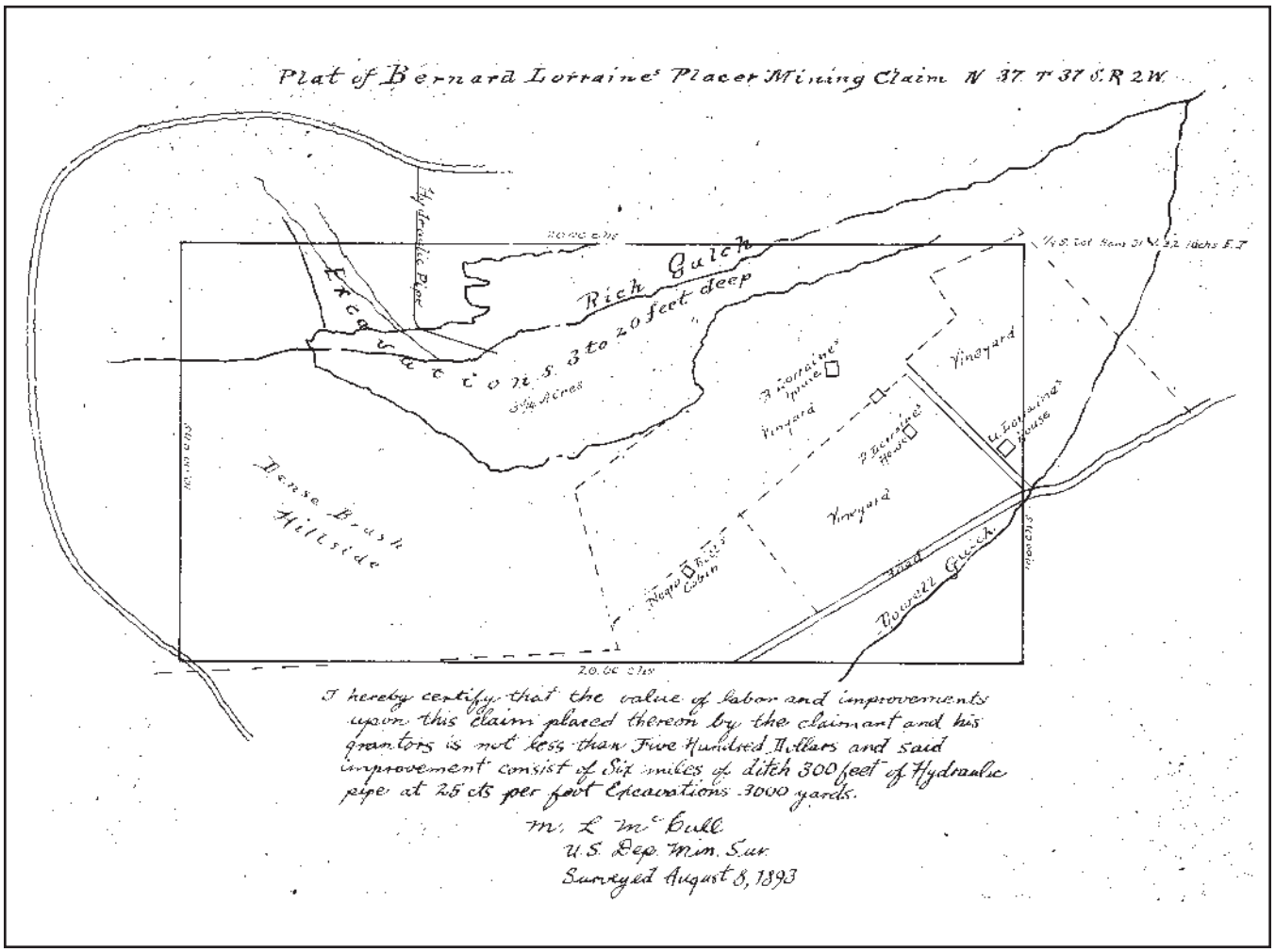
It doesn't seem the brothers grew wealthy, but they must have done well enough to keep trying. In 1876, the Lorraines filed a 20-acre mining claim that included the upper part of Rich Gulch. Bernard also purchased 10 acres to the north and together they set out to find any gold that the miners might have missed. In 1875 Bernard bought the Poorman Creek Mining Ditch which was seven miles of hand-dug trenches. With its steady water flow, Bernard and François started the first documented hydraulic mining operation in Rich Gulch. Besides their mine, the Lorraines built their homes on their land.

Their houses were simple affairs, reported at the time as "12 x 16 feet square with one or two doors and a window in each." In 1885, late in his life, Bernard married May Ann Barlow at Jacksonville's St. Joseph's Church. She died six years later, at the age of 60. Bernard continued mining until shortly before his death in 1896. François, a lifelong bachelor, was 72 when he died in 1901.



The Changing Forest

With the arrival of several French families, a portion of Rich Gulch was renamed "Frenchman's Mine." And since mining was by now becoming more a pastime, the French families put their industry into clearing the forests and planting gardens and vineyards. The surrounding hillsides were farmed until the 1960s and then abandoned. The old Petard vineyard is presently going through a profound change as it reverts back to a predisturbance type of plant community of manzanita and buckbrush. The brushfield will persist for many decades. Hardwood trees such

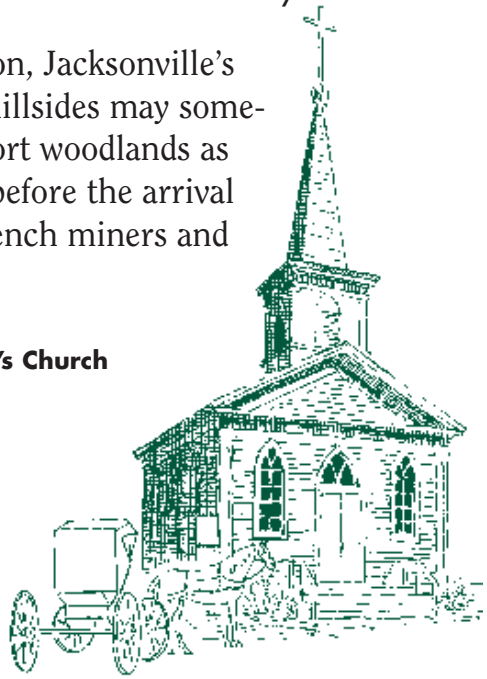


Bernard Lorraine Mining Claim,1884/1893. Plat redrawn by Don Thomas.

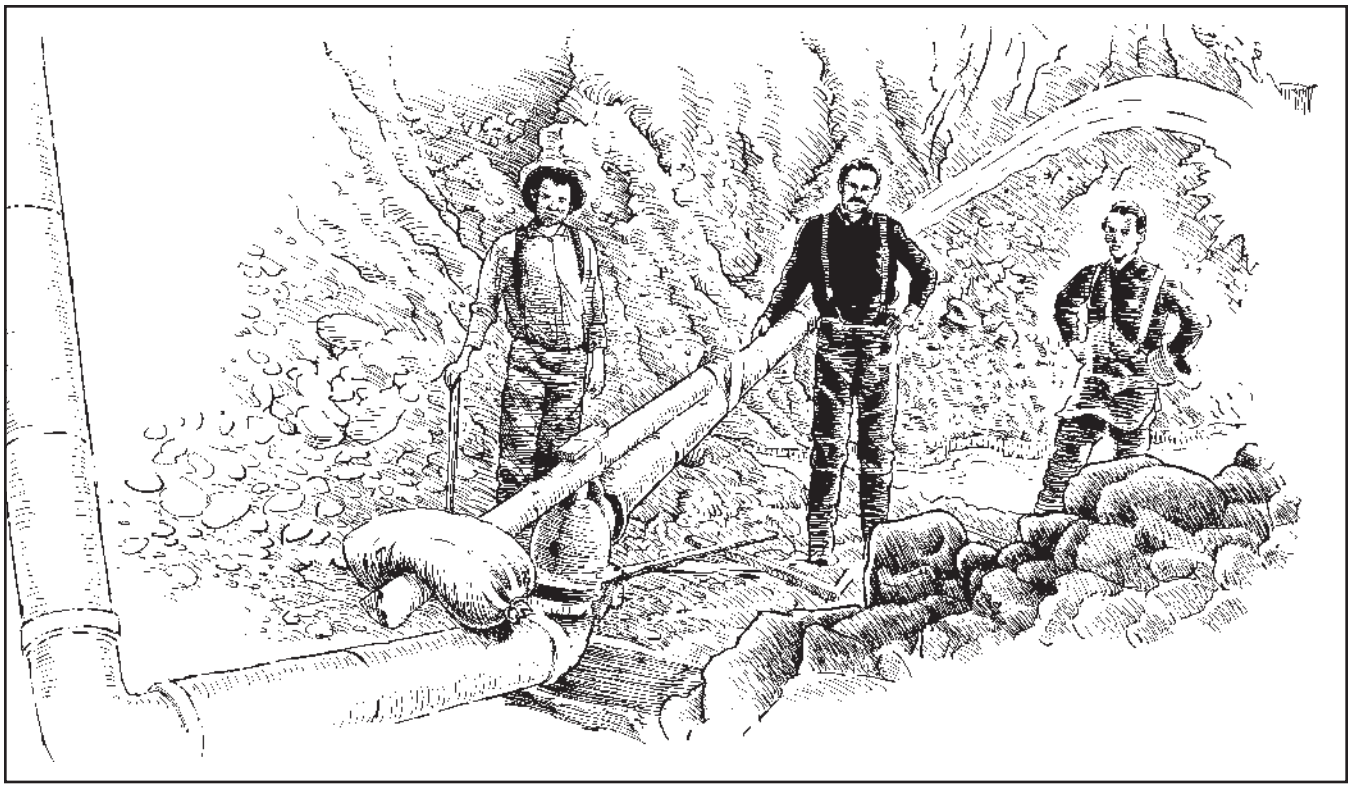
as madrone and both black and white oak will emerge over time. Even now, small scattered ponderosa pines can be seen poking above the white-leaf manzanita. Eventually, as the dense shrub stand ages and thins, hardwoods which have overtopped the shrubs will dominate. Some ponderosa pine will regenerate in sunny openings and a few Douglas fir seedlings will begin growing under the protection of the hardwood canopy.

Now protected by the City of Jacksonville, the BLM, and the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, Jacksonville's historic hillsides may someday support woodlands as they did before the arrival of the French miners and farmers.

St. Joseph's Church



Hydraulic Mining; "Water, we need water!"



"Such a stream moved boulders of immense size, hurls earth and cobbles to a height of many feet, and erodes great hills and mountainsides during a season's work." (A. G. Walling, 1884)

Hydraulic mining, developed in the 1870s was the final technological improvement of the basic placer process that Cluggage and Pool had used on Daisy Creek in 1852, a process that had been first improved upon by the rocker, the long-tom and the sluice box. Hydraulic mining required huge amounts of water to move ever-larger amounts of dirt. Long hand-dug ditches and wooden flumes were built, sending creeks from where they were to where they were needed. Elaborate control systems, including headgates, tunnels, forebays, holding ponds and canals channeled the water to create "head," or pressure, that forced powerful streams of water through a steel nozzle, called a "giant" or a "monitor." A giant, directed against a hillside, moved huge boulders and sent cascades of water and soil down through tailraces, where small traps or riffles collected the heavy gold while allowing the waste to pass through. Long ditches brought water to the Rich Gulch mine from Sterling Creek, Missouri Flat, Poorman Creek. and Jackson Creek. Expensive to build and maintain, "ditch companies" sold water like a commodity, much like today's utilities. Ditches them-

selves were often bought and sold by businessmen, many of whom made far more money than most miners. The Rich Gulch Trail passes over a portion of the Petard Ditch, hand-dug in the 1860s to bring water to Rich Gulch from Jackson Creek, a mile to the southwest.

Mining history often isn't easy to trace. Miners, by nature rarely spoke about their claims, fearing claim jumpers. After the first heady days of excitement most were close-mouthed about how much (or how little) gold they were taking out. A historian, trying to find out who mined where and whether they were successful, must rely on physical evidence left at the mining site or small clues gleaned from government reports and newspaper accounts. Understanding the complex systems they built is an even more mysterious pursuit. Canals and ditches that brought water to the mines are now interrupted by roads and other development. Wood flumes rot, or are scavenged for wood, leaving ditches unconnected. In Rich Gulch, the historic patterns of mining and remining, and then remining for a third time, complicate the investigation.

Mystery Sinkhole

There are many times where something right before your eyes, such as the deep "sinkhole" to the left and across the trail from sign # 5, remains a mystery. Is it an adit (short tunnel) for exploration, large glory hole, a caved-in tunnel, a small holding pond, or something else? Most glory holes have dirt piled around the hole. There are no such piles around this mystery hole. We can guess that it wouldn't be here at Rich Gulch if it wasn't somehow related to mining. And at this point, nearly seven decades after Rich Gulch was abandoned, there is little hope we'll ever know exactly who built it, or for what purpose.

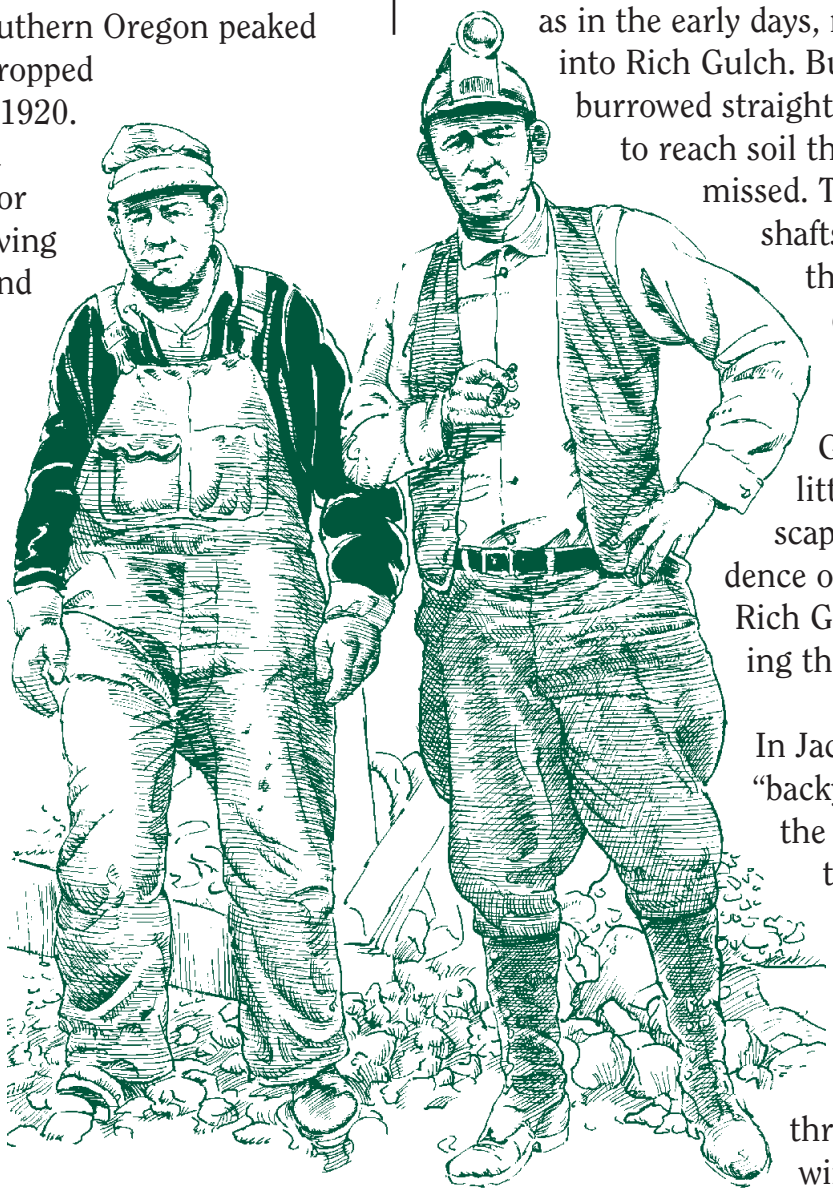
S.O.H.S. # 3260

Glory Hole / Depression Mining

"The backyard miners tended to be an independent crew. They were proud of earning their way through hard labor at a time when this was not the usual thing."

(Dr. Frank Haines, 1967)

Gold mining in Southern Oregon peaked in 1903 and then dropped more than 90% by 1920. Higher salaries and other, easier ways for people to make a living helped miners to find good jobs in the cities. But by the 1930s, as the Great Depression deepened, mining again became attractive, and Jacksonville rediscovered its first industry. "Where else," crowed the editor of the *Jacksonville Miner,* "can a home-owner burrow in his yard and get money for ham, bacon, beans and other condiments?" Mining became even more profitable after 1933 when the government raised the value of gold to $35 per ounce, the first increase since 1837!



Depression-era mining, called "Backyard Mining" because of its small scale, provided hundreds of otherwise unemployed folks with money to buy food. Under the Mining Law of 1872 many could live in the woods, on government land, and harvest its timber for shelter and heat. Soon, as in the early days, miners crowded into Rich Gulch. But now they burrowed straight down, hoping to reach soil the pioneers had missed. Their vertical shafts, some more than 20 or 30 feet deep, were hopefully called "glory holes." Glory holes still litter the landscape, clear evidence of how active Rich Gulch was during the Depression.

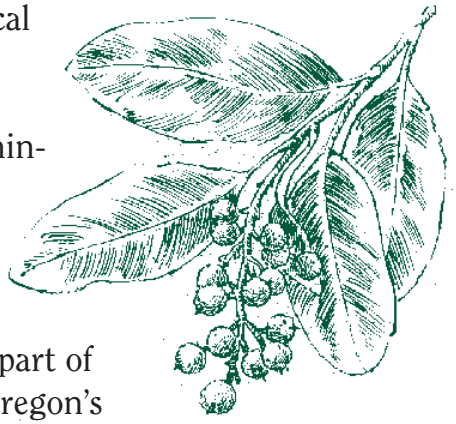
In Jacksonville, "backyarders" worked the land around their homes. For about $100 they could buy picks, shovels, two or three buckets, a windlass pulley, a motor, pipe and screens. Dirt brought up the shaft was washed in sluice boxes or rockers built from scrap lumber. Water in Rich Gulch

S.O.H.S. # 1735

was available from the Petard Mining Ditch. Judging from the huge holes dug in this end of the ditch, even the water course was eventually torn apart as miners looked for gold. Shafts, mining tailings, and raw earth may have been a sore sight, but economic survival outweighed aesthetics during those difficult days. Hydraulic giants, used by the white miners and the Chinese work gangs, changed the face of the hills and the historic vegetation around Jacksonville. Former oak grassland surrounding the incised gulch has changed into dense oak woodland with primarily weedy understories which may remain for decades.

Upper slope Douglas fir forests, logged and burned, are in recovery and returning to conifer and hardwoods. The mined-out, deeply incised gulch is forming two totally new forest ecosystems: pine on rocky rubble or mine tailings and Douglas fir / madrone habitat remaining within the deeper subsoils on the upper gulch.

We romanticize the gold-mining era of our history, but today the ecological devastation caused by hydraulic mining would not be tolerated. Still it is a fascinating part of Southern Oregon's early settlement, and it is hard not to appreciate the determination and hard work of Jacksonville's pioneer gold miners.



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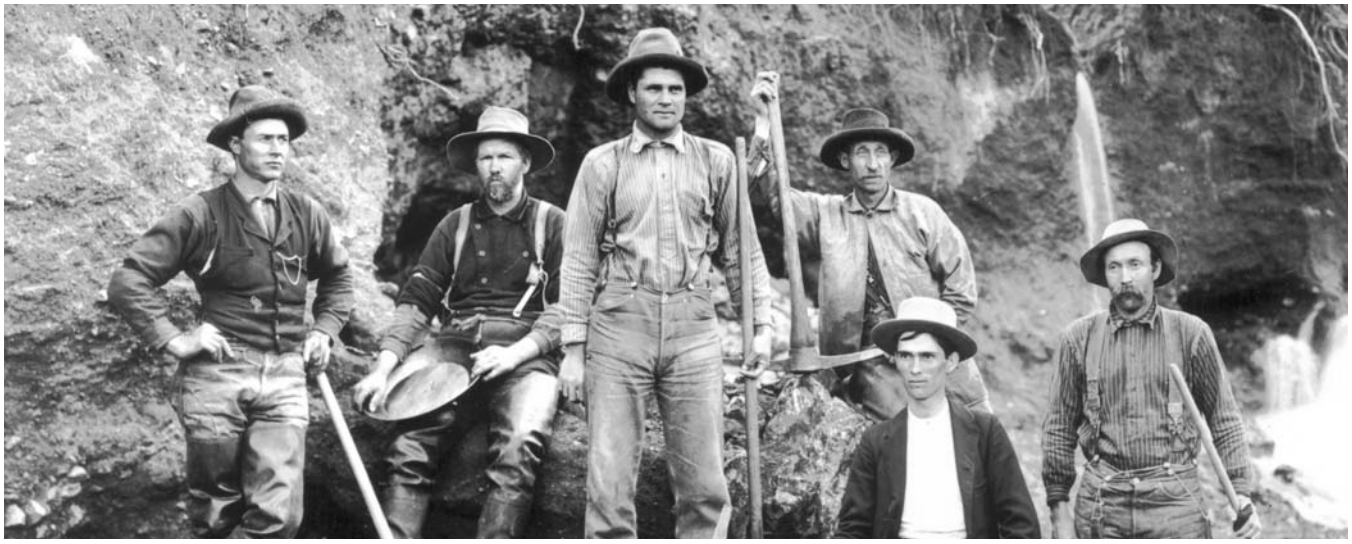


A Hydraulic Reservoir & Summer Swimming Hole

Fred Coffman at age twelve.

The water flow in the Petard Mining Ditch, draining in from Jackson Creek, was not strong enough to operate Auguste's hydraulic monitor giant, so a reservoir or "forebay" was built using an eight-foot earthen dam. Once the creek water was at a sufficient depth in the forebay, the Petards would pull the rock plug located at the bottom of the pool, filling 300 feet of graduated pipe leading to the hydraulic monitor located far below in the bottom of Rich Gulch.

The strong water pressure of the monitor's nozzle was used to spray against the headwall of the gulch, washing away the soft loamy clay soil and hopefully revealing eagerly sought-after gold flakes and nuggets.

Once the reservoir was drained, the mining operation would cease and the Petards would again allow the forebay to fill.

The Rich Gulch forebay was a favorite place for Jacksonville kids to gather for a swim on a hot summer afternoon while waiting for the forebay to fill. Fred Coffman, the son of a Jacksonville miner, remembers learning to swim in this old reservoir. "The water in the forebay was deep enough for us to dive off the dam. We swam in our clothes because girls would sometimes be present. Standing on the dam, we could see the men working the hydraulic giant down in the gulch spraying water back and forth."

Imagine, if you will, 12-year-old Fred Coffman, standing on this old earthen dam, on a hot, lazy Jacksonville afternoon, many years ago, encouraging his friends to swim a lap.

In the early spring, the boys reported seeing steelhead fingerlings swimming in the clear, undisturbed water of the

Petard Water Ditch. Following the abandonment of the Rich Gulch mining operation in the 1940s, the forebay has slowly filled in with vegetation and soil, but the earthen dam, the rock plug, the stone pipe well, the supply ditch, and the general outline of the old hydraulic reservoir are still visible.

The Petard family supplemented their meager farming income with the gold they found in Rich Gulch during their 60 years of placer mining, but the gulch was never as rich for them as the name "Rich Gulch" suggests.

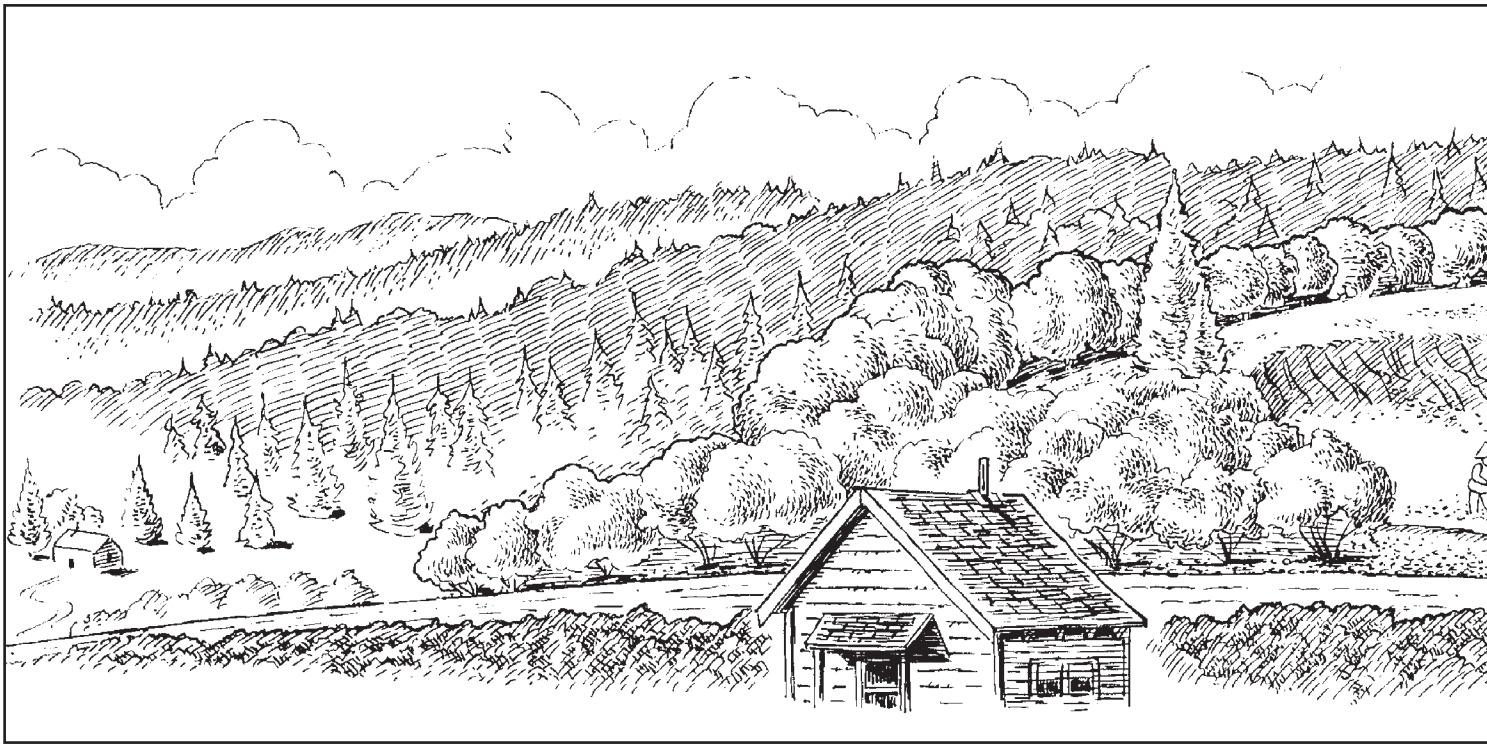
Other Riches of Rich Gulch

A special treat for today's visitor is viewing the Gentner's fritillary in full bloom. This rare lily, with its distinctive red bell-shaped flowers with pale yellow streaks, was placed on the federal Endangered Species List in 1999.

Gentner's fritillary, which grows two to three feet tall with two to nine flower bells, prefers the edges of dry open fir, pine and oak woodlands, thriving on limited disturbances such as historic wildfires and along the edges of hiking trails. Blooming time is usually late March to early May. This uniquely beautiful flower was first described as a separate fritillary species in 1951 by Dr. Helen Gilkey of Oregon State University and named after the Louis Gentner family who had first discovered the plant west of Jacksonville.

Since 1989 the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, in cooperation with the City of Jacksonville, the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Jackson County Parks, the BLM, the Trust for Public Land, and the National Park Service, has been working to set aside and preserve prime fritillary habitat.

Hydraulic Mining: The Cut -

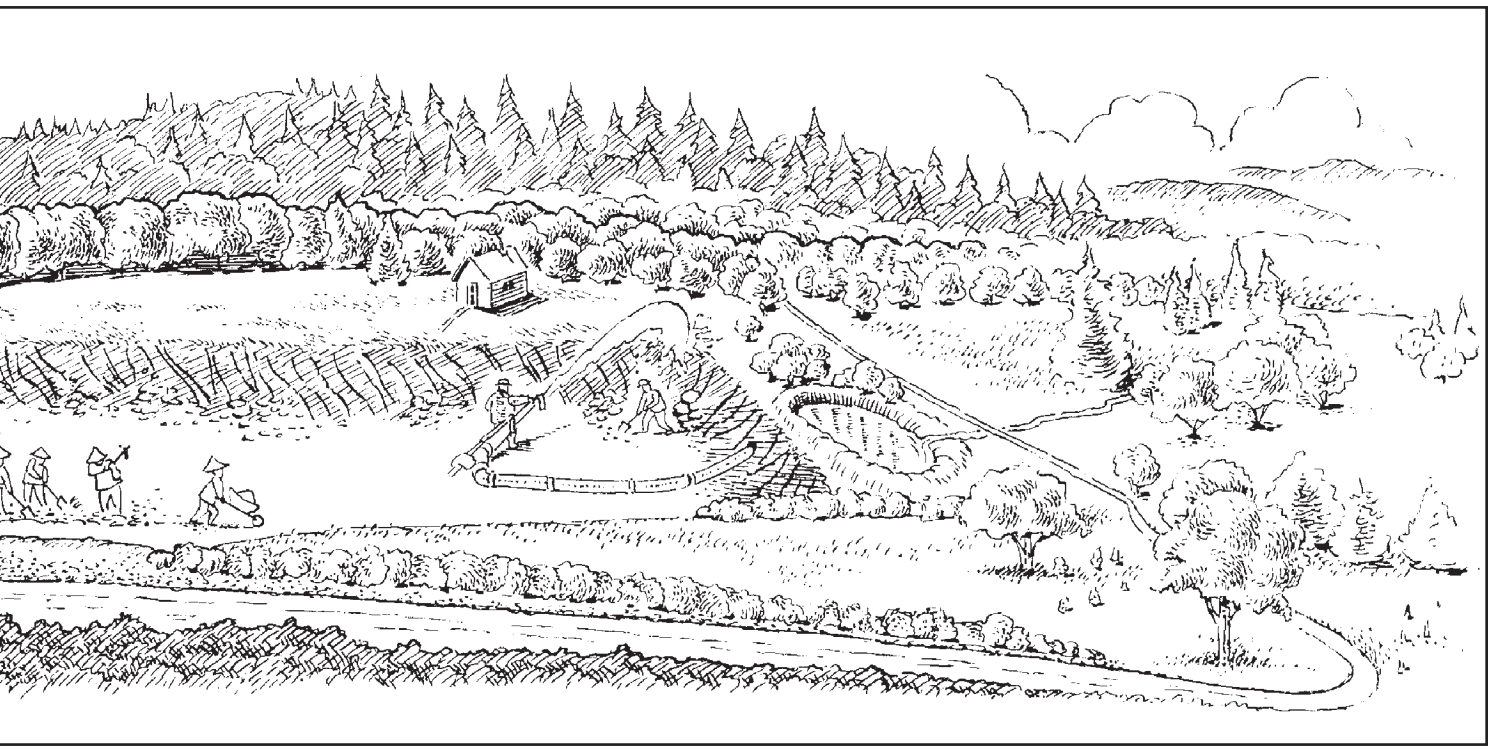


"Such a stream moves boulders of immense size, hurls earth and cobbles to a height of many feet, and erodes great hills and mountainsides during a season's work." *(A. G. Walling, 1884)*

Nobody ever said hydraulic mining was a particularly gentle or subtle activity. Powerful jets of water hit a hillside, transforming it from a solid to a mixture of mud and slurry that was directed through collector boxes so the gold would settle and the water would flow through. The "face" of the mine, where the giant did its work, was called the "cut." These sheer hillsides, stripped of all vegetation, and often even of the underlying soil, remained once the mines played out, or the water source dried up.

Today, decades later, early hydraulic mining cuts like the one in front of you are still sheer walls, easily identifiable by the under-cut crown at the top edge. Scrubby vegetation, some non-native to the area, sprouts up on the mostly barren soil and struggles to grow. Mining cuts rise, seemingly without reason, from the floor of the canyons and gulches throughout Southern Oregon. They visually show the scope of hydraulic mining in the area, not to mention the power of humans and water to change a landscape. The scene spread out in front of you has changed dramatically over the past 150 years–from a

Creating Rich Gulch



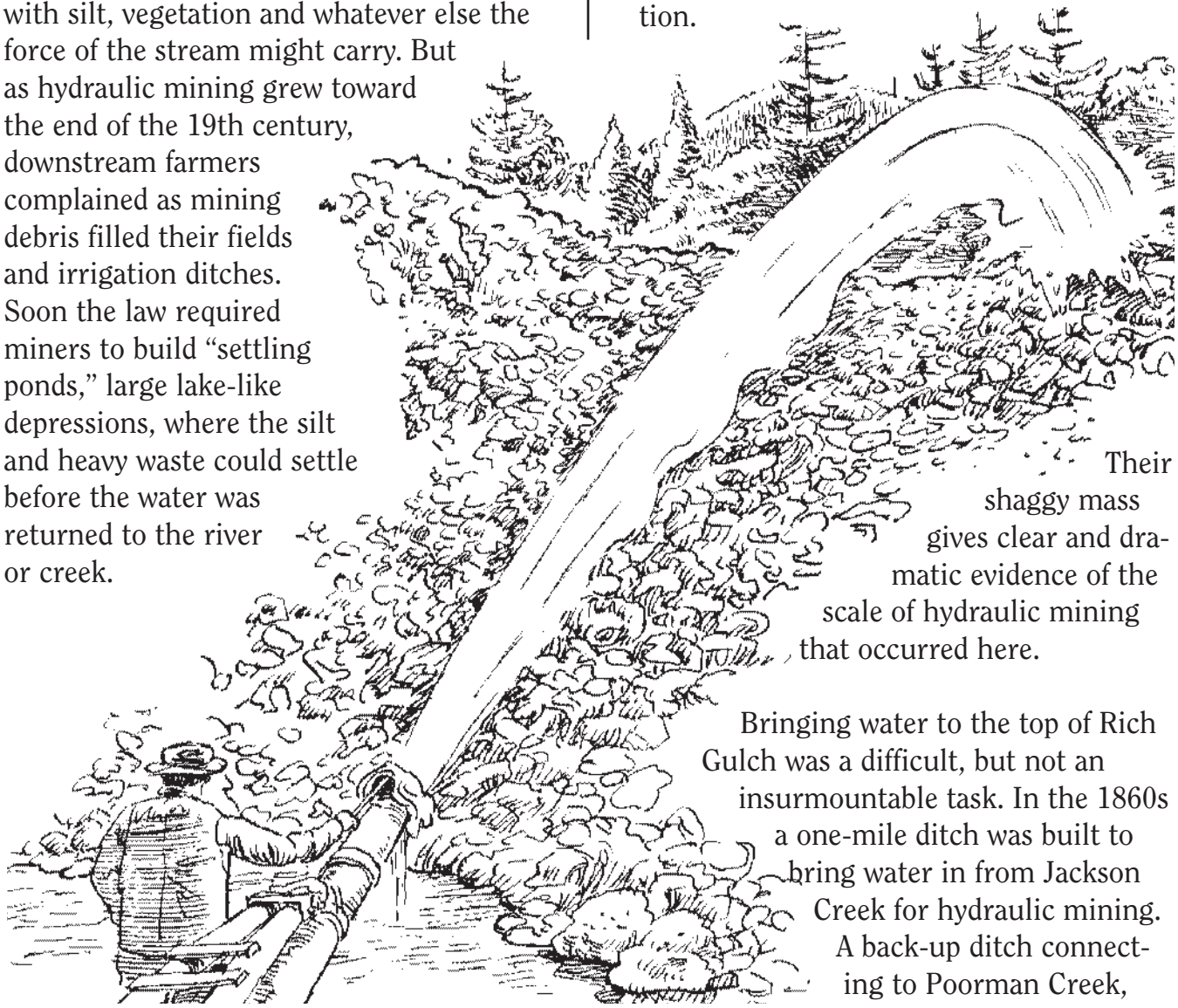
mature oak grassland and coniferous forest, to a severely burned and cut-over landscape, surrounding a hydraulically scarred canyon forming new ecosystems through primary succession.

Mining Changed the Forest

Hydraulic mining dramatically altered the original plant cover of Rich Gulch. In this ecological setting early miners encountered a white oak savanna surrounded by conifer forests. Oak savannas would have extended across the summit of the gulch into the Jackson Creek watershed. All of this changed forever with mining, severe burning, and tree harvesting for firewood and mine timbers. Fires were intentionally set to clear unwanted brush that hid potential mining sites. In the ensuing 60 years, since the abandonment of Rich Gulch as an active gold mine, native cover has struggled to return. A dense u-shaped ring of buckbrush surrounds the head of the Rich Gulch mining cut. This indicates that historically, some effort was made to clear all the tree cover and maintain a large zone of open space about the upper end of the gulch. Here a water storage pond was located which was supplied by a mining ditch running in from Jackson Creek.

Hydraulic Mining: Tailings & Debris

Hydraulic mining left lots of debris, whether gold was found or not. Silt, plant materials, rocks, and spent water were all created by the process of large-scale mining and huge volumes of such "waste" had to be removed from the mining area. Tailraces removed water as slurry, mixed with silt, vegetation and whatever else the force of the stream might carry. But as hydraulic mining grew toward the end of the 19th century, downstream farmers complained as mining debris filled their fields and irrigation ditches. Soon the law required miners to build "settling ponds," large lake-like depressions, where the silt and heavy waste could settle before the water was returned to the river or creek.



Large rocks, though, didn't travel far from the mine without the powerful force of the giant. Tailings, huge piles of washed stones and boulders, soon crowded the miner's work area. Sometime tailings were arrayed in long burrow-like mounds such as these shown here, scattered along the ditches that removed the water. Today, a century later, overgrown with pine and tall shrubs and often moss-covered, tailing piles are uniquely inhospitable to most ground vegetation. Their shaggy mass gives clear and dramatic evidence of the scale of hydraulic mining that occurred here.

Bringing water to the top of Rich Gulch was a difficult, but not an insurmountable task. In the 1860s a one-mile ditch was built to bring water in from Jackson Creek for hydraulic mining. A back-up ditch connecting to Poorman Creek, seven miles to the south, was dug when Peter Britt challenged the miners' water rights. Starting at the base of the gulch, the hydraulic miners slowly inched their way up the gulch over the next 70 years looking for the elusive

S.O.H.S. # 8525

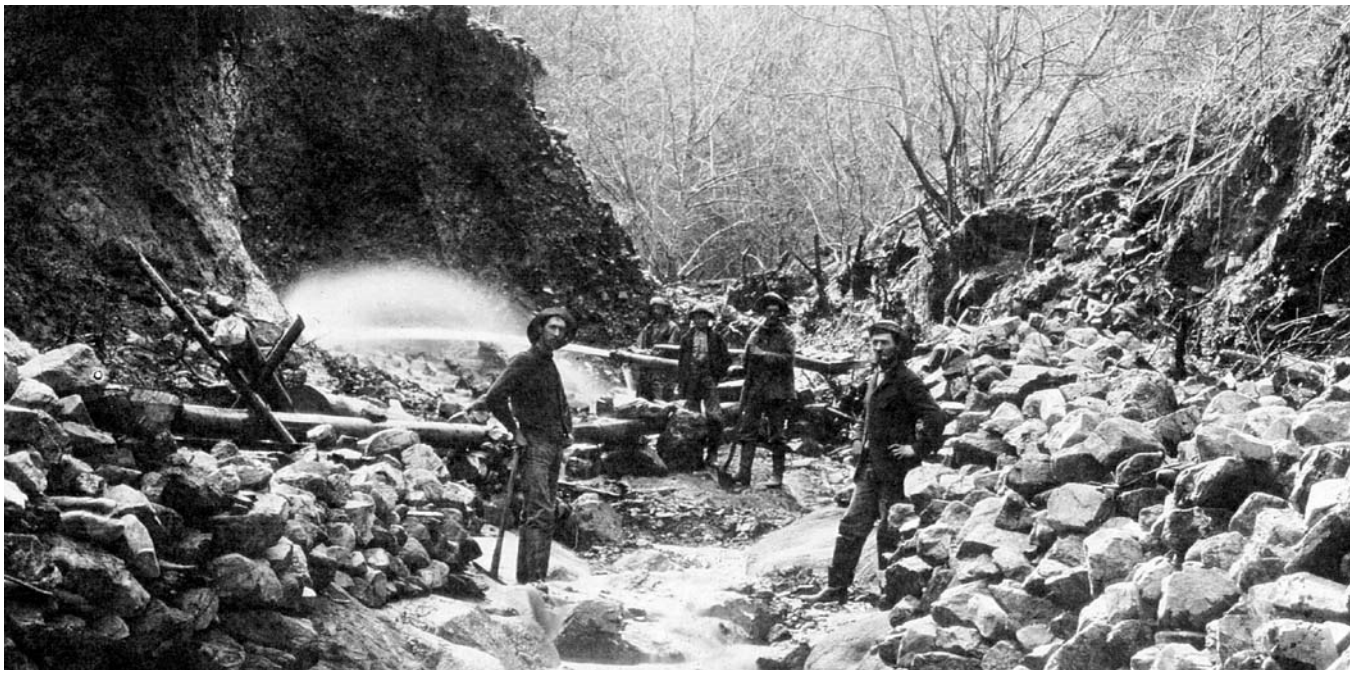
Mother Lode. Thousands of cubic yards of soil and rocks were blasted out and washed into Daisy Creek. Because of the lack of summer water, most of the mining in these parts was done during the cold, wet months of winter. The Petards eventually had their water rights restored.

The water capacity of the Petard Ditch was too small to sustain the hydraulic giant for any length of time, so a "forebay" reservoir was dug to store the water. Once the forebay filled and the plug pulled, the stored water would gush into 300 feet of 6- and 8-inch pipes dropping some 25 feet down the headwall with enough force to run the Petard's hydraulic giant for several hours.

The massive reddish loamy clay head-wall seen directly ahead was the final stopping point. The pay dirt had played out! The promise of great wealth had evaporated! Rich Gulch, as its name indicates was once considered one of the richest gulches in the country, but no longer.

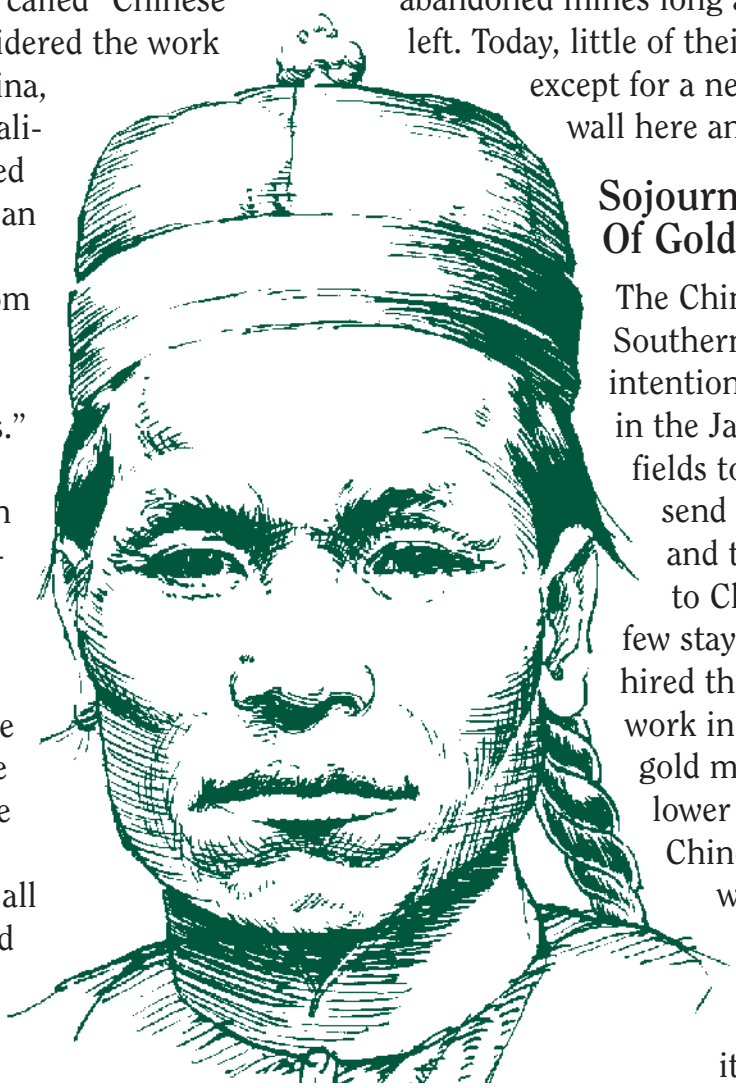
The scarred earth has begun its healing. The shaded floor of the deeply incised gulch and access to subsurface moisture have created a micro-climate within the gulch resembling a subtle riparian ecosystem. Riparian-type plants are normally found only along creek banks, but in this case, mining activity has directly altered the flora of a normally dry valley.

J.C.H.S. Photo



Chinese Walls

In some mines, tailings were stacked in regular wall-like formations, with neatly vertical sides, that might stretch for hundreds of yards. Usually called "Chinese Walls," and often considered the work of sojourners from China, miners of most nationalities recognized the need to organize tailings in an efficient manner. Industrious miners from many places used the same wall-like form as the Chinese "Celestials."



Stories about Southern Oregon's Chinese miners are legion. Made up of mostly young men, many from the Canton region, Chinese miners appeared in the Jacksonville area in the early 1850s, drawn by dreams of riches. Like all miners, they faced hard work and uncertain rewards. Unhappily, they also faced other challenges. In the openly racist practice of the times, Chinese miners were limited to previously worked-over sites by law. They couldn't vote in 19th-century Oregon, couldn't become citizens, own property, file mining claims, or even find refuge in the legal system when badly treated by others. Of course, without any protection, they often were discriminated against. Despite such adversity, Southern Oregon's Chinese played an important part in the development of the Rogue River Valley, working abandoned mines long after the pioneers left. Today, little of their history remains, except for a neatly stacked rock wall here and there.

Sojourners In Search Of Gold

The Chinese came to Southern Oregon with the intention of working hard in the Jacksonville gold fields to earn money to send to their families and to eventually return to China. Many did. A few stayed behind and hired themselves out to work in the few remaining gold mines. Whites paid lower wages to the Chinese workers who were glad to have jobs, most being the very hard, or "coolie" work as it was called, denoting work done by a person of the lower class.

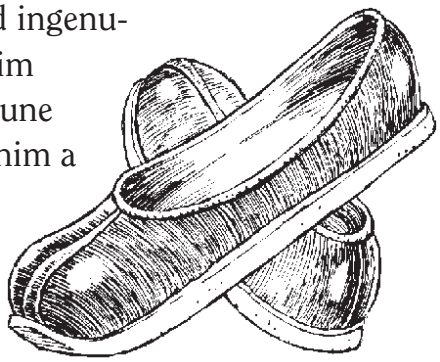
Many white miners were sloppy with their work. When they believed a claim was playing out, they abandoned the claim and moved on. Chinese miners would

Illustration of Jacksonville's Chinese Quarter

either buy the claim, if allowed by Oregon law, or lease the mine and work it over and over until there was no gold left.

Gin Lin, Boss of Bosses

Mostly the Chinese "sojourners" kept to themselves, working long, exhausting days, digging mile after mile of ditches with pick and shovel, stacking rocks and extracting the gold. In dress, language and customs they were different. An exception to this self-imposed cultural wall was Gin Lin, a commanding leader of the Chinese community. Gin Lin provided workers for white miners and owned several profitable mines. In fact, Gin Lin was the first mine owner to install hydraulic mining equipment in Southern Oregon. His industry and ingenuity helped him amass a fortune and earned him a certain respect among his mining peers.



He even cut off his "queue" and made an attempt to fit in with the white culture. Eventually the gold played out and the Chinese returned to their homeland, taking all traces of their culture–even the bones of their dead.

Diversified Plant Life In Rich Gulch

The four large white oak trees aligned along the low summit of Rich Gulch are the old growth remnants of an historic woodland that previously cloaked Rich Gulch. It is unknown how these stately oak trees, estimated at well over 200 years old, managed to survive as the miners harvested lumber, firewood and set fire to what was left. Perhaps this grove of trees was a shady lunch stop for miners or travelers on their way to Jackson Creek.

The verdant sight that greeted early miners as they traveled the Siskiyou Mountains must have been astounding. Looking around Rich Gulch they no doubt saw tall ponderosa pines mixed in with maturing Douglas firs, red-orange madrones and black oaks. Interspersed were areas of large open-grown white oak savannas with plenty of bunchgrass for their horses and livestock.

Historic vegetation has been influenced or altered by many recent disturbances such as logging, clearing, mining, grazing, weed invasion, severe burning and prolonged fire protection. Consequently, the actual cover we see here today may be somewhat different from the potential for the site.

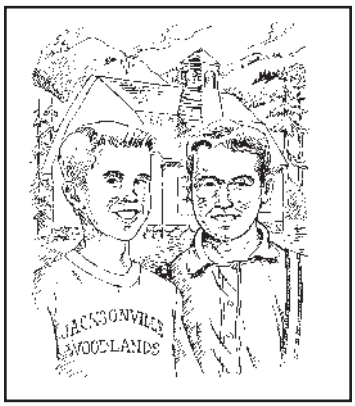
Jacksonville borders the ecological break between a large warm, dry valley, and cool, higher precipitation mountains. Rich Gulch is a small watershed situated almost entirely within the foothill transition between these adjoining climate zones.

Plants are assembled in this landscape in unique groups or plant communities that are adapted to the local environments. The large valley into which Rich Gulch exits was once represented by oak savanna, pine-hardwood forests, wet meadow bottoms and mixed hardwood floodplains, interspersed with narrow riparian zones along creeks.

Five plant communities (ecosystems) represent the potential vegetation for the watershed of Rich Gulch. They are: 1) a narrow riparian floodplain complex of mixed hardwoods and pine in the lower gulch, 2) White Oak/Idaho Fescue-dominated grassland with serviceberry, poison oak and a rare madrone or pine, 3) White Oak/Birchleaf Mountain. Mahogany Idaho Fescue dominated grassland–generally found higher up on the valley slopes, 4) Ponderosa pine/Douglas fir/California Fescue–found on southerly slopes along with cedar, madrone, black oak and deerbrush, 5) Douglas fir/madrone/black oak forest with Douglas fir as the sole dominate–including poison oak, oceanspray, rose and numerous other high moisture-requirement understory species.

The Siskiyou Mountains, in which Jacksonville sits, contain some of the greatest environmental diversity found in the United States. Vegetative diversity here is enhanced by a long environmental history and a wide variety of contrasting environmental factors such as climate, geology, soils, topography, and biological factors. Superimposed over this are the affects of management activities and natural disturbances, particularly fires. This broad array of site factors, coupled with major regional and local environmental gradients, creates a wide variety of ecological niches in Southwest Oregon landscapes. Rich Gulch and Jacksonville are very much a part of this unique environmental complex.

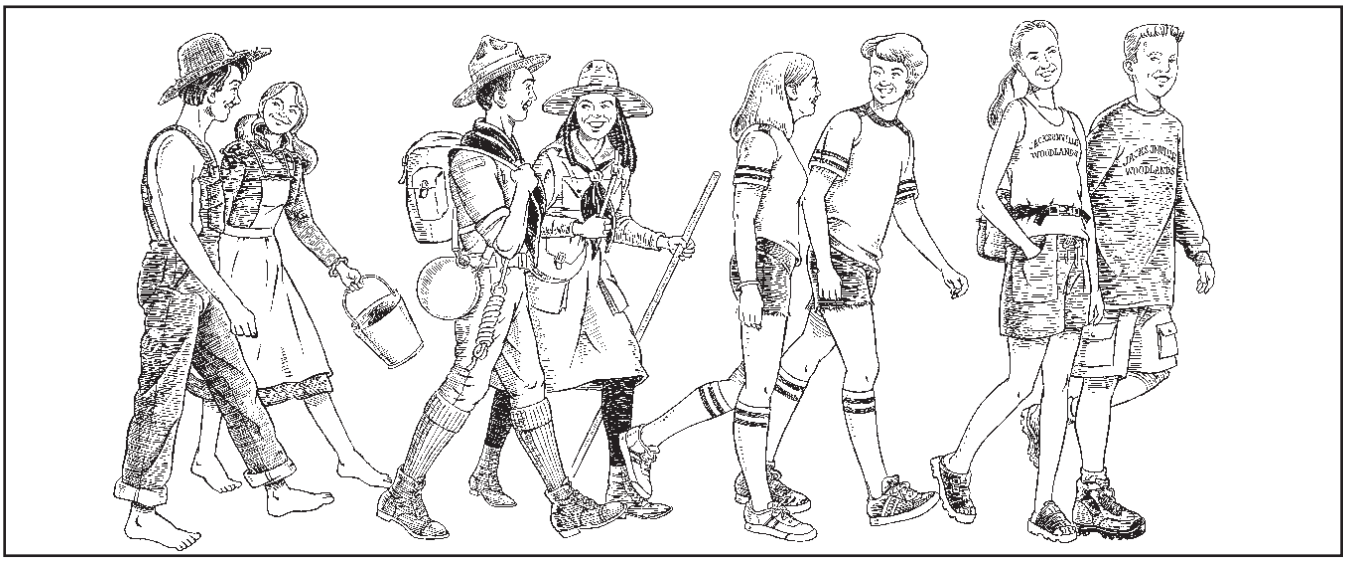
Preserving Rich Gulch



"There are few places where history and modern life are so linked as Jacksonville." *(George Kramer, 2001)*

In the spring of 1989, as Jacksonville emerged from beneath two decades of state-imposed building moratoriums, "for sale" signs began to sprout up on empty land around town. A potential building boom was threatening to destroy the town's historic open spaces! Alarmed at what was about to happen, a group of Jacksonville citizens founded the Jacksonville Woodlands Association that November, which in turn established the Jacksonville Woodlands Historic Natural Park and Trail System. The Association then opened negotiations with the University of Oregon, which resulted in the purchase of the Beekman Woods. The dream of preserving a "woodlands necklace" of open space surrounding Jacksonville gained momentum with the purchase of the Peter Britt estate three years later.

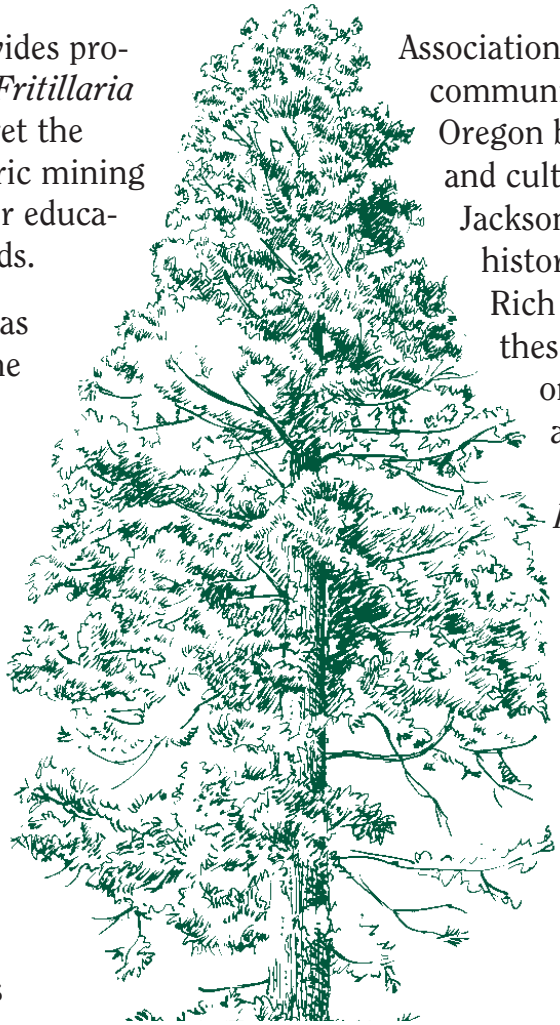
The Jacksonville Woodlands Historic Natural Park and Trail System is an interconnected, fully sustainable land conservation project encircling 70% of the National Historic Landmark City of Jacksonville, Oregon. During the past 13 years the Jacksonville Woodlands Association has taken the lead to stitch together 19 parcels that are now protecting the town's historic wooded backdrop. The JWA has developed 8 miles of recreational and interpretive trails, along with trailside educational displays, brochures, maps, and classroom booklets.



The JWA's mission also provides protection for the endangered *Fritillaria Gentneri* lily, and to interpret the District's many 1860s historic mining sites, and to provide outdoor education programs for school kids.

A cooperative partnership has been established between the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, area students, the City of Jacksonville, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Jackson County Parks and Recreation, the National Park Service, the Trust for Public Land, the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, and a number of private and public foundations.

The Jacksonville Woodlands Association has set the standard for community land preservation in Oregon by protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Historic Jacksonville. As you enjoy the historic and scenic sights of Rich Gulch, be mindful that these trails are maintained only as funds become available from the public.



Please mail your generous contributions to:

JWA
P.O. Box 1210
Jacksonville, Oregon
97530

or use the brochure drop boxes at the main trailheads.

China Quarter / Jacksonville, Oregon 1865

In the 1860s the view from this spot on Main Street would have looked much different than it does today. During the Gold Rush boom of the 1850s, Jacksonville's early merchants and shop keepers located their businesses along this section of Main Street. After the town's commercial center was relocated to present-day California Street, this area became home to the hundreds of Chinese merchants and workers who had been brought in by Chinese labor bosses to work Jacksonville's gold mines, build roads, dig water ditches, and to construct the Oregon and California Railroad. After the gold mines played out and the construction projects were completed, the Chinese moved out and abandoned the China Quarter. The crumbling buildings were eventually torn down, except for Jacksonville's 1880 City Hall—Oregon's oldest town hall.

The citizens of Jacksonville, especially the town's merchants, despised Chinese men because they looked different, and spoke a different language. The Chinese, unlike the White

Example of Chinese Work Shirt

miners, seldom got sick because of their healthier diet and because they boiled their water for tea, where the miners suffered terribly from dysentery caused by outhouse waste leaching into their drinking water. The Chinese seldom purchased supplies in town because they preferred to import their traditional foods from China. Rather than spending money locally, the men saved their earnings and sent it back home to help their struggling families. One particular Chinese custom provoked the strongest wrath of the Whites; it was the digging up of the bodies of their dead comrades from Jacksonville Cemetery and shipping the bones back home. This particular practice caused one newspaper editor to write, "…not even our dirt is worthy of their…carcasses."

Events concerning the Chinese were reported with humor, which sounds agonizing to us now. On May 7, 1879, the Oregon Sentinel ran the following article:

"CHINESE MUST GO"

"Last week, two of our enterprising Chinese have heard of the soft water of Ashland and went to that town to start a wash house. They didn't start it, however, but started back to Jacksonville just ahead of a yelling crowd of men and boys who heard they had come to break ground for a Joss Temple in that pious city. Pursued by the angry crowd, the heathen missionaries struck into a rapid trot dropping bars of soap and other paraphernalia of their calling as they went…"

Nothing in the Chinese resident's life was ever easy here.

Chinese Gang Boss

The Associated Press Monday May 5, 1997

The Oregonian

Class Puts $12,500 To Good Use

JACKSONVILLE - The $12,500 environmental prize that Larry Smith's Jacksonville Elementary School fifth-graders won would buy a lot of pizza and ice cream.

But that would be too easy for a class that won first prize in the National Pledge and Promise Environmental Awards, sponsored by Sea World, Busch Gardens, and several environmental organizations.

5th Grade Class - Jacksonville School

"We're going to build bridges and buy a new piece of land," Missy Barron, 10, said.

The land is 10 acres that will link this historic gold-mining town's Woodlands Natural Park and Trail to two other parcels the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns in Southern Oregon.

The class has invested a lot of work in the project.

"We've preserved the trail, we've water-sealed the bridge, and we've planted nearly 3,000 trees with the help of Washington School, Butte Falls, and Prospect," Tyler King, 11, said.

Under the leadership of Smith, coordinator of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, the children also have weeded out non-native Scotch broom, picked up litter, and sold T-shirts, videos and books.

The effort brought home a trophy—an eagle and globe crafted from recycled paper and soybeans. Sixteen class members traveled last week to Sea World in Orlando, Florida, for an awards ceremony.

The park has been a community-wide project since 1989, but Smith's fifth-graders always have played a key role.

Brian Mulholland was a fifth-grader in 1992 when he talked the city of Medford into selling 10 acres the city had bought as a gravel pit in 1916. The city accepted $1,060, the original price.

Since then, Jacksonville fifth-graders have raised $30,000 for the park, not including this prize. Adult volunteers have raised an additional $270,000.

Dream house yields to children's wish for trail:

Fifth-graders in a Southern Oregon town persuade a California couple to help preserve an historical treasure.

The Associated Press September 12, 1997

JACKSONVILLE - Michael and Patricia Begley wanted to build their own dream house on a 10-acre parcel of land outside this historic gold-mining town in Southern Oregon. But the Los Gatos, California, couple were flooded with letters from a fifth-grade class suggesting they sell the land, which included the best local example of placer gold mining from the turn of the century. The Begleys relented, giving up their personal dream for the children's collective vision of a trail that would link a string of parks around town in a celebration of Southern Oregon history.

"It does seem that this parcel is one of the last pieces of the puzzle," the Begleys wrote in response to the letters from the Jacksonville Elementary School students. "If we set aside our own dreams for the property and try to look at it objectively, we can see that this is a valuable piece of land for the public use."

"I was flabbergasted," said teacher Larry Smith, whose fifth-grade classes have won numerous awards for their work to preserve the woodlands around Jacksonville. "I was so pleased that somebody that is not really connected with Jacksonville caught our vision."

Smith's class won a $12,500 prize last spring in the National Pledge and Promise Environmental Awards, sponsored by Sea World.

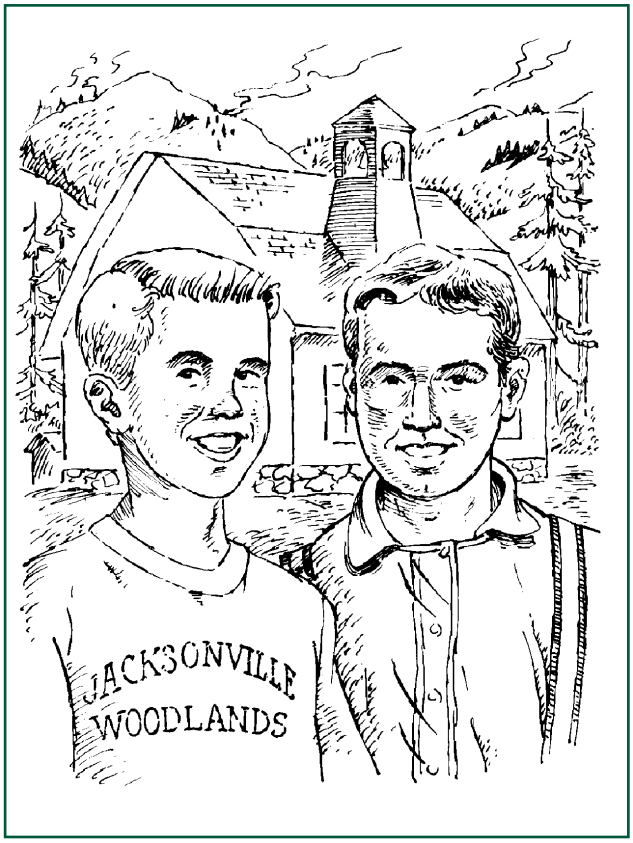
"The class is giving the money to the City Council next week to help buy the 10-acre parcel in Rich Gulch. The Jacksonville Woodlands Association plans to raise the rest of the $88,000 purchase price in the next five years.

The Begleys' property connects the Britt Woods to two parcels of the parkland the U.S. Bureau of Land Management owns, and eventually will be part of a recreational trail ringing the city.

The Begleys did their about-face when already far into their project. They already had showed the city preliminary site plans for developing the property.

Smith said the students' letters were very persuasive. One said: " Mr. Begley, if you sell us the land, you'll be a hero. We'll name a trail after you. We'll put you in a parade."

The land includes the best surviving examples of hydraulic mining around Jacksonville, including remnants of the water ditch, drift tunnels and glory holes that were part of the Frenchman Mine.



Eras of Historic Jacksonville, Oregon 1851-2004

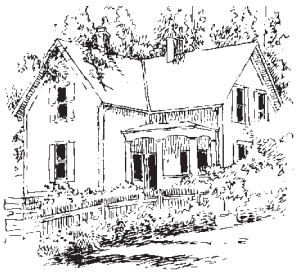
A National Historic Landmark City

by Larry B. Smith

1851-1865 - the Gold Rush Period

- Discovery of gold and the gold rush boom town begins.
- Temporary buildings - Peter Britt, Lewis Zigler, and C.C. Beekman arrive in town.
- Most of the population are single men, but a few families such as the Plymales arrive.
- Public school founded - 1854.
- Sarah Mary Plymale marries Louis Henry Zigler.
- Local government established - Jackson County carved from the Oregon Territory.
- Jacksonville becomes the Jackson County seat of government.
- Laws are passed and lawmen hired to help control frontier justice.
- Oregon becomes a state (1859).

1866-1890 - The Golden Years

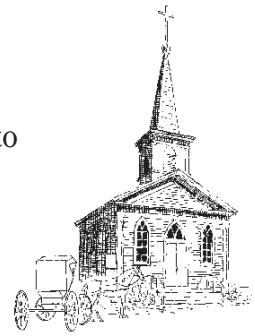


- The architecture of a town is a reflection from its main period of prosperity.
- Becomes the commercial and political and cultural center of Southern Oregon.
- Families moving to the valley, mining begins to decline in importance.
- Schools being built.
- Churches become stronger but remain rather small, several doctors arrive.
- Permanent brick buildings built because of three major downtown fires.
- Jacksonville develops as a farming and agricultural trading center.
- Several newspapers established.
- Several grand homes built.

1890-1925 - Beginning of The Decline

- The railroad bypasses Jacksonville, Medford founded - 5 miles east.
- More and more people move out of Jacksonville, gold mining nearly nonexistent.
- Still the county seat, with Jackson County being the number one employer.
- Town citizens begin to band together and work to survive as a town.
- “How could this have happened to us?”

1926-1945 - "Preserved" by Neglect

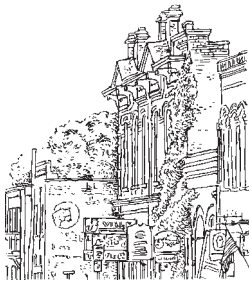


- Jacksonville enters a long slumber. County Seat and the Courthouse move to Medford.
- About 500 people left in town.
- World War Two diverts attention and treasure.
- Jacksonville isn't hurt by The Great Depression because there are no industries to close.
- Renewed interest in gold mining, mainly for "grocery money."
- Undermining the Great Depression. Tunneling beneath the streets.
- "With poverty comes preservation."
- The historic 1854 Methodist Church is closed. The building is given to the City of Jacksonville. The Catholic Church is closed; it is now a mission. First Presbyterian is barely surviving. Jacksonville Assembly of God (Calvary Church) is founded while meeting in the empty Methodist Church building.

1945-1965 - Marking Time

- These are the "Post War Years," Jacksonville School District Number 1 consolidates with the Medford School District. High school closes in 1959.
- There is a renewed interest in the town's history.
- The people realize that the treasures are now above ground and not below ground.The Jacksonville Museum established (Southern Oregon Historical Society founded).
- Renewed building of homes, several subdivisions built. Stage Coach Hills, etc.
- The town is preserved by an "Accident of History."
- The old reservoir on Jackson Creek is abandoned and the City connects to Medford water.
- Peter Britt Music Festivals established - Thousands are soon attending each summer.
- Nationally renowned historic preservationist Robbie Collins moved to Jacksonville.

1966-1986 - Awakenings



- Jacksonville designated a National Historic Landmark City through the efforts of Robbie Collins.
- The town becomes a major "tourist attraction."
- Development pressure conflicts with preservation forces.
- Land values shoot up nearly 1000%.
- Land use laws, zoning and planning and design procedures are enacted.
- 10 year building moratorium enacted because of anoverflowing sewer sytem.
- New elementary school built.
- Historic school building is sold to Cascade Christian High School.

1987-2004 - Land Rush - Building Boom - the Jacksonville Woodlands

- Californians and other "outsiders" discover Jacksonville.
- For a time, 90% of the people moving in are from the state of California.
- Applications are made for subdivisions holding 500 homes.
- Historic charm, and atmosphere now in doubt.
- Jacksonville Woodlands Association founded - concerned effort begun to preserve the historic landscape and wooded backdrop of Jacksonville.
- The Jacksonville Woodlands Historic Natural Park and Trail system established.
- Eight miles of interpretive and recreational trails built.
- Second building moratorium because of an inadequate water system is lifted.
- Growth management plan enacted limiting annual building permits to around 30.
- Developers begin in-filling on empty lots and open fields.
- New water system at a cost of several million dollars.
- Additional land planning rules and design code are put in place.
- Historic 1854 First Presbyterian Church develops plans for its first new building in 125 years after experiencing explosive growth.
- 150,000 people visit Jacksonville each year - 16 restaurants.
- Demographics change as blue collar town gives way to upscale families and retired folk.
- By 2001 Jacksonville's real estate becomes the most expensive in Jackson County.
- $4 million spent rebuilding California and Fifth streets. New sidewalks installed.

The town has now come full circle; from a Wild West gold-mining town, through economic depression, to the most desirable place to live in Southern Oregon. Trails and walkways allow people to easily walk the 1.8-square-mile town. *Jacksonville residents are paying plenty these days to live among antiques.*

CONTRIBUTORS

Gene Hickman

Gene is a registered Certified Professional in Rangeland Management. He is currently a working Plant Ecologist and Range Specialist. Gene recently retired from a career in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. His work experience includes extensive vegetation inventories, mapping and analysis for resource management plans. Gene is the author of numerous papers and publications on Oregon vegetation and ecology and the historic vegetation of the Rogue River Valley. Gene lives in Bend, Oregon.

Larry Smith

Larry Smith has served as board member and officer for the Jacksonville Woodlands Association since its founding in 1989. Larry completed a 33-year teaching career at Jacksonville Elementary School. Larry has been the recipient of several national teaching awards. The topics for this book originated from his Jacksonville history presentations.

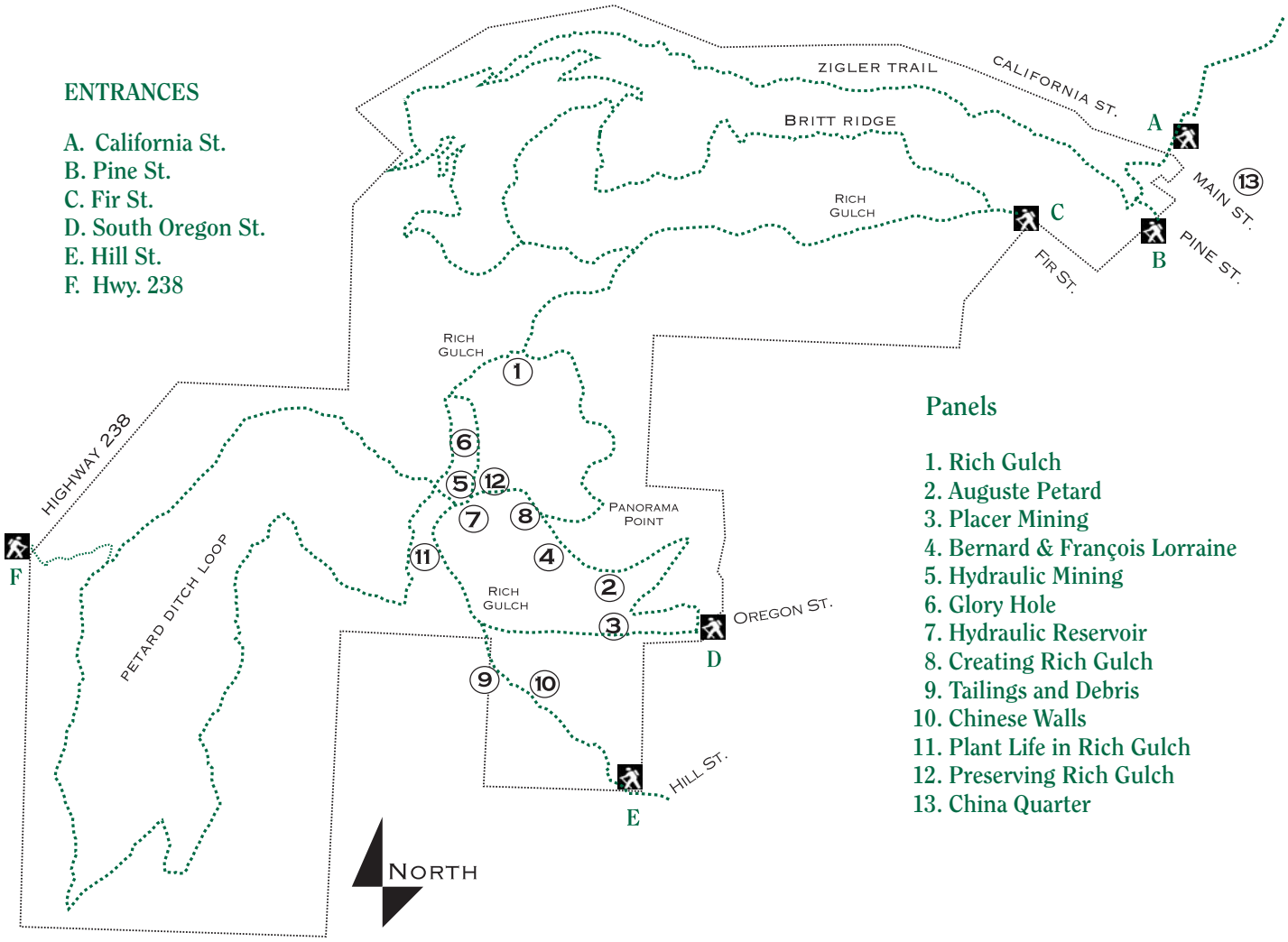
George Kramer

George Kramer is a local historian and preservation consultant. His work includes an historic context statement for the City of Jacksonville, the restoration of a 1911 powerhouse on the Clackamas River, a 1935 Art Deco movie palace in Redding and a history of mining in Southern Oregon for the BLM. George lives with his wife and two sons in Ashland, Oregon.

Don Thomas

Don Thomas is an illustrator located in downtown Medford, Oregon. His past clients include Leo Burnett and FICA. Don does serious illustration as well as humorous. He moved from the Midwest to Oregon 20 years ago after working as an illustrator for many of the national advertisers located in Chicago. Don and Larry Smith have combined their talents and produced many public service projects for the Woodlands Association.

Location of the Woodlands Educational Panels



The Jacksonville Woodlands Association has set the standard for community land preservation in Oregon by protecting the natural and cultural heritage of historic Jacksonville. As you enjoy the historic and scenic sights of the Woodlands be mindful that these trails are maintained only as funds become available from the public.

The BLM's Role

Although the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is known for managing the wildest of wild public spaces, on December 4, 1990, the Medford District of the BLM and the City of Jacksonville joined in a special partnership. The original 70 acres that BLM managed within Jacksonville's urban boundary presented the opportunity to help preserve the rural flavor of the Jacksonville area and to work with the City of Jacksonville to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Medford District of the BLM is responsible for managing five parcels of public land within the Jacksonville Woodlands totaling 105 acres.

A Mining History of Jacksonville, Oregon

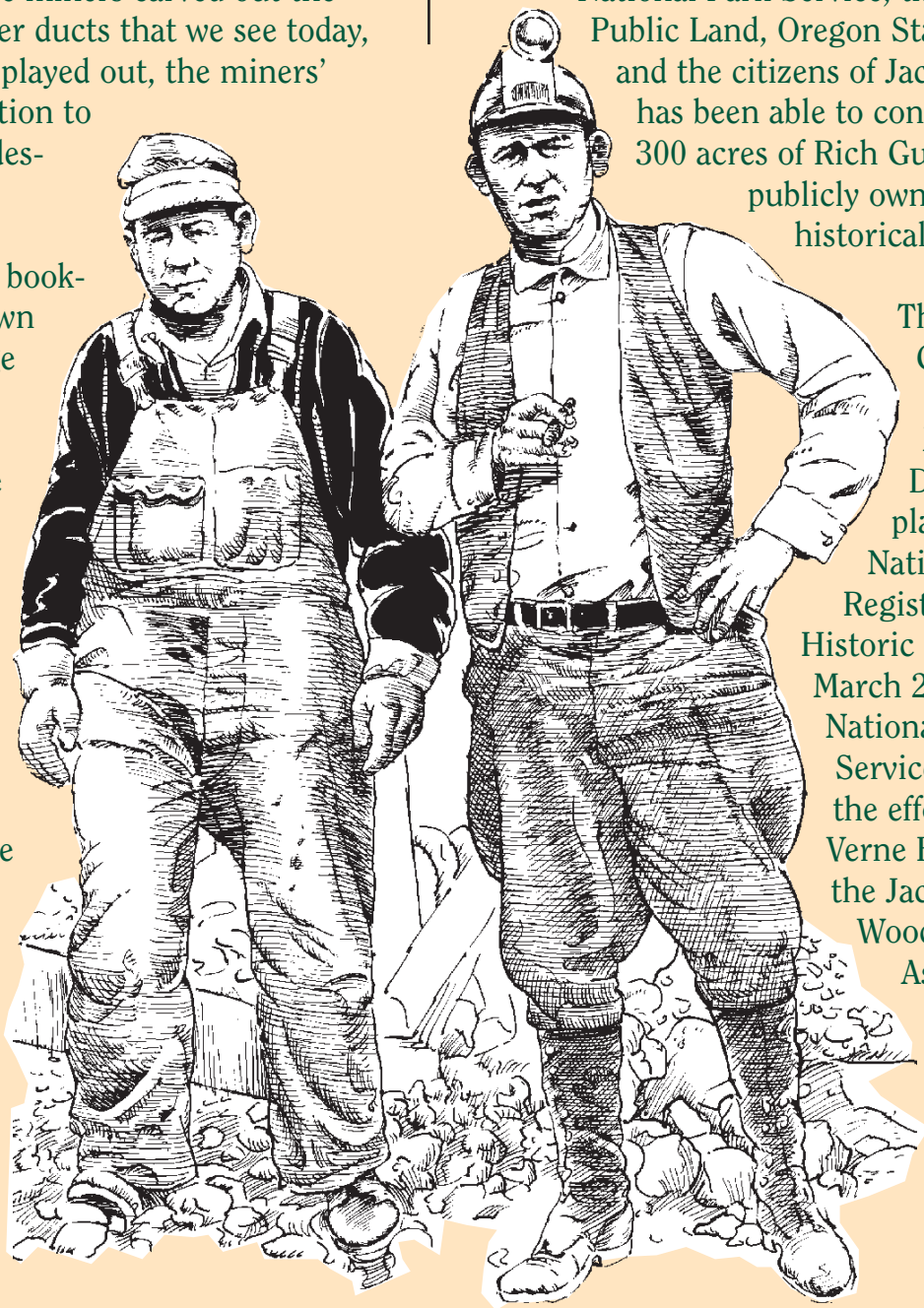
The discovery of Rich Gulch - Jacksonville, Oregon - triggered one of the largest gold rushes in the history of the West. It was the Rich Gulch gold rush that founded Jacksonville.

This booklet traces the mining history of Jacksonville and tells the story of how early Jacksonville miners carved out the gulches and water ducts that we see today, and, as the gold played out, the miners' inevitable transition to farmers and tradesmen.

The text for this booklet has been drawn from the 13 large educational displays that are posted along the trails of Rich Gulch above the town.

Even though it has been over 100 years since the hills of Jacksonville were "whitened with the tents of thousands of eager hunters," the earthen scars and transitional forests are still evident.

Telling the history of Rich Gulch would not be complete without sharing the story of how the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, working in cooperation with the City of Jacksonville, the BLM, the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, the National Park Service, the Trust for Public Land, Oregon State Parks, and the citizens of Jacksonville, has been able to conserve over 300 acres of Rich Gulch as a publicly owned natural historical park.



The Rich Gulch Historic Mining District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, March 2000, by the National Park Service, through the efforts of Mrs. Verne Beebe and the Jacksonville Woodlands Association.