7-15-1983

Buried Treasure in Western Oklahoma

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol2/iss4/3
BURIED TREASURE IN WESTERN OKLAHOMA
— a tale of "what if"

by Donita Lucas Shields
Spanish Peaks, Colorado, in the 1850's. The location of the hidden wealth, but none of the bags that contained the gold. Then power­

tery still remains.

These lost treasure stories seem to follow homa. No one can verify these legends, but the them.

Washita, and Custer counties. Each legend

'these bloody attacks. Either they or

their relatives returned years later to recover their buried caches. They always brought

with them crudely drawn maps marking the location of the hidden wealth, but none of the
gold has ever been found. Today, those trea­

ures still remain to intrigue everyone who is interested in buried mysteries and lost caches.

A 1905 edition of THE CHEYENNE STAR contains information concerning a large quantity of gold buried on Sandstone Creek southeast of Cheyenne. Rev. Davis, a well­

known, responsible person, received a map from a Mexican claiming to have been one of three survivors of an Indian massacre in 1859.

This story described how Indians attacked Mexican prospectors when they were returning home with their gold. The three survivors buried the treasure before making their escape. Davis' map showed the lay of the ground and trees where the battle took place. The spot was clearly marked where the Mexi­

can buried the gold.

Rev. Davis spent years searching for the exact location. During his diggings for the cache, he found several human skeletons. The trees had been disturbed, and he also found bits of canvas which he thought might have been

the bags that contained the gold. Then powerful underground springs forced him to stop digging.

Davis attempted to draw out the water and continue his efforts. Unbiased parties saw his map and the pieces of canvas. His story was claimed to be an authentic one. However, the newspaper failed to publish any follow-up information concerning his success. The mystery still remains.

Another 1905 article in the same newspaper was told by people living near Antelope Hills at Crawford. They had always heard stories about successful prospectors returning from Spanish Peaks, Colorado, in the 1850's. The miners were traveling with heavily laden pack mules and were attacked by roving bands of Cheyennes and Comanches. The Mexicans hid their gold in one of the caves in the Hills.

The men fought with the Indians until they ran out of ammunition. Two brothers-in-law survived the ambush. After returning to Mex­

ico, they gave a crude map to a young relative.

This fellow did not make the journey to Ante­

lope Hills until he was an old man. Residents of Crawford watched the elderly Mexican dig­

ging for the treasure, but fifty years of erosion changed the terrain of the Hills. The gold was never found.

According to Truman Morgan, whose par­

ents homesteaded southeast of Elk City in 1892, a $40,000 payroll of gold coins was bur­

ried near Soldier Springs. Morgan remembered two stories concerning this money, which was being transported in leather saddlebags by a troop of soldiers.

One legend related that the soldiers feared an Indian ambush and prepared themselves by burying the gold near the main springs which flowed from a red sandstone bluff. During the night Indians attacked and killed all of them except two. These men returned years later to recover the money, but they could not find it.

For years farmers living near Soldier Springs have continued the fruitless search. Today the sandstone bluff and springs are obliterated by years of eroding soils, but old­
timers vividly remember the cliffs with soldiers' names carved upon it.

Morgan's second version of the lost payroll stated that Indians attacked the soldiers before they buried the gold. The men separ­ated after several were killed. Four of the troopers survived the Indian attack and raced upstream for more than two miles to the head of Soldier Creek. Here they buried the gold and then marked the spot with two cottonwood tree limbs.

Many years later two of the surviving sol­

diers returned for the payroll. Again the terrain was completely changed by erosion, and they found nothing. The $40,000 cache of gold still remains somewhere along Soldier Creek.

An 1895 edition of the CLOUD CHIEF HERALD-SENTINEL contained information concerning mining claims that were staked fourteen miles southwest of Arapaho. Early miners set up camp at the mouths of Boggy Creek and Turkey Creek. This article claimed that $500 of gold had already been mined and a Colorado mining company had sent carloads of machinery and several men to work the new gold field.

The article stated that miners found graves of seven skeletons and a Spanish inscription that translated "Gold discovered here in 1676 (or 1876)." Gold seekers also found two ancient crucible ladles used for smelting, a set of apothecary balance scales, various rusty tools, an old saddle and bridle, the remains of a rotting wagon, and eleven Mexican silver coins dated in the 1840's.

According to this article, there was addi­tion­al evidence of old mines and crude smelting ruins farther west in Roger Mills County. Someone had found lumps of gold as large as grains of corn in a creek which Spaniards once called Kasharado. No one knew where this creek was located.

An edition of the Cloud Chief paper dated August 30, 1895, contained a story told by Pedro Jaungonzales, who was then 75 or 80 years old. He claimed that Indians captured him when he was a boy and brought him to this area. He escaped from his captors and wandered into a Mexican fort where miners lived while digging and smelting gold.