

# MONTANA GULCH IS TOMB OF COMSTOCK, WHO SOLD FOR \$11,000 FAMOUS COMSTOCK LODE IN NEVADA THAT YIELDED \$350,000,000

## SUPERIOR MAN IS SAMPSON'S RIVAL

**KILLED FIGHTING BUCK DEER WITH HIS BARE HANDS AFTER STRUGGLE.**

**Met Animal in Field and It Attacked Him; Caught Hold of Antlers and Twisted Deer's Head Until it Fell; Then Cut Its Throat; Is Local Wrestler.**

It was Sampson, who in his youth, slew a lion with the jaw bone of an ass, but from the Superior country comes a story that almost rivals the exploit of the Swoboda of old Israel. Just as the victorious hosts of Britain are sweeping the plains of Palestine, scene of Sampson's muscular glories, Charles Corn, the strong man of Mineral county, with his bare hands kills a big buck deer which gave him battle.

The story is undoubtedly true because Corn, the killer, tells it himself. One day last week, when he was going over one of his fields, he came face to face with a big buck deer. The buck, throwing discretion to the winds, gave the two-legged intruder battle.

### Rode on Buck's Antlers.

Corn has a local reputation as a wrestler. The challenge of the buck roused his wrestling instincts. As the animal rushed towards him he grappled with the buck's antlers. The force of the buck's rush threw Corn off his feet and lifted him in the air. He kept tight hold of the antlers, and could feel that the weight the buck was carrying was wearing him down. All Corn had to do was to hold on tight. His was the predicament of the man who caught the bear by the tail. He wanted to let go but deemed it inexpedient.

The buck was winded. The great burden he was carrying on his antlers was exhausting his store of energy. Finally he stopped. Corn could feel himself getting down towards terra firma. The buck was all in when Corn's feet touched the ground. His strength intact, Corn gripped the ground with his feet, as wrestlers do, and began his side of the singular contest. After threshing about the ground for some time he managed to get the hammer lock on Mr. Deer. The antlers gave him leverage and when he put forth all his strength, and gave the antlers a swift twist, the deer followed his head, turned with it and fell.

In an instant he had his knee on the buck's neck, while he held the deer's head in the fashion that cowboys affect in holding down a horse that is about to be branded. While he held the animal securely on the ground, out of the reach of its thrashing feet, he drew his trusty bowie knife, and slit its throat.

Then he went back to his farmhouse, secured help and brought in his trophy of the chase. He called his friends in to witness that he had gone out unarmed, and that aside from a slit jugular there was no wound on the carcass of the buck. He showed them, in the snow, the track of the deer, and his own, where the deer had allowed him to reach the snow with his feet. His bloody hunting knife corroborated part of his story, and the severed throat of the fine buck made good his version of the killing. They believed him, as do most of his neighbors of the locality. While the story may be doubted by those who do not know the man, in that section of Montana, it is believed.

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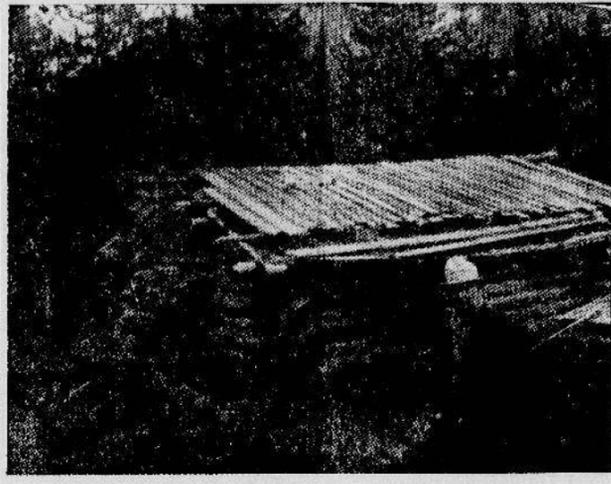
In some unknown spot in Alder gulch, near Virginia City, in Montana, or on the banks of Grasshopper creek, near Bannack, is an unmarked, forgotten grave that contains the bones of a man who perished, friendless and alone, by his own hand more than half a century ago, but whose name will live in the history of the west as long as civilization endures. That man was Comstock, a first owner of the famous Comstock lode at Virginia City, Nevada, which has produced more than \$350,000,000 in gold and silver.

Comstock realized only \$11,000 from the famous mine that bears his name, and which became the most widely known mining property in the world. In a few months he had lost every dollar he had, and discouraged and disappointed at having allowed the greatest strike in mining history to slip through his fingers, he wandered off into the mountains on a prospecting trip. Finally reaching Montana, this man who a short time before had in his undisputed possession wealth enough to have made him the richest man of his time in America, sat down on the side of a creek, and placing his pistol to his temple, blew his brains out.

### Tossed Away Vast Wealth.

Comstock, had he risen to his opportunities, might soon have flashed across the skies of Paris and London, the greatest speculator of the century, running printing presses night and day to supply the demand for stock in Nevada mining claims for miles around Virginia City. As it was he believed when he sold out that he was getting more than his interests were worth. Others who followed him undervalued opportunity also, and yielded in time to the old law of the survival of the strongest, but none could give again so much for so little as did Comstock.

Comstock was not the real discoverer of the Comstock lode. Two brothers, Hosea and Allan Grosh, sons of a Pennsylvania Universalist minister, found rich silver ore on what afterwards was known as the Comstock lode about 1855 or 1856 and realized that they had made rich discoveries. But they had no capital and were forced to spend most of their time at placer mining to get enough gold to buy food, in the meanwhile neglecting the rich quartz deposits. There is a story to the effect that a stockman and trader named Brown had agreed to supply them funds to develop their monster vein. Selling out his store, he was about to join them when some desperadoes murdered him. Then Hosea Grosh crushed his foot by a glancing blow of a heavy pick, and a month later he died in their rude cabin from blood poisoning. Allen



## A Relic of Prospecting Days

In the 60's Montana gold camps knew many prospectors of the type of Comstock, who made the biggest strike in mining history, only to die without a cent a few months later.

Montana's early gold seekers built for themselves cabins like the one pictured above which stands today on the banks of Yogo creek, in the Little Belt mountains, an interesting relic of a day that has passed forever. This cabin was built by Toe-String Joe, a prospector who was in the first rush to Yogo. He killed a man at Yogo and was taken over to White Sulphur Springs. A friend there furnished him with a fast horse, and Montana knew Toe-String no more.

A murder was committed in this cabin only a couple of years ago, and the slayer, a prospector, who killed another miner, is now serving time at Deer Lodge.

decided to cross the Sierras to California to raise money with which to mine and mill the rich quartz ore they had found. Overcome by terrible mountain storms, he managed at last to reach a mining camp, but died there 12 days later.

### Enters Comstock.

When Allen Grosh started on his fatal journey, he cast about for some one to leave in charge of his effects. Comstock, a prospector, seemed the most available man. It is said that a written contract was drawn up, by which Comstock was to have one-fourth interest in one claim for keeping it from being jumped in the absence of Grosh, and was to live in the rough stone cabin that had been built.

luck—Peter O'Riley and Patrick McLaughlin. They took up an unpromising looking claim for a placer, but could only make \$2 a day out of it. Then they decided to start digging a trench straight up the hill from the bottom of the gulch to cut through some hard blue clay and yellowish gravel that they had noticed.

### The Big Strike.

At a depth of four feet they came upon a deposit of dark, heavy soil which sparkled with minute flakes of gold. Running for a gold pan, one of them tested the dirt. The pan held many dollars in gold. They had discovered the top of the famous Ophir claim, the north end of the Comstock lode.

Just as they were finishing the last cleanup for the day Comstock appeared. He had been looking for his lost horse and now galloped down the ridge, and as he noted the gold in the pan, he shouted, "You've struck it, boys."

Comstock was a foxy individual, and he did some quick thinking. "Look here," he said to the two miners, "this spring here was Old Man Caldwell's. You know that; there's his sluice box. Well, Manny Penrod and I bought his claim last winter and we sold a tenth interest to Old Virginia the other day. You two fellows must let Manny and me in on equal shares."

O'Riley and McLaughlin objected strenuously at first, but they were a little afraid of Comstock, and besides 50 feet of a placer claim was more than they could work in a season, so it did not amount to much after all. So when Comstock added, by way of a clincher to the argument, that five persons, of whom he was one, had located 160 acres on the bench as a stock range, and he thought they were within its boundaries, they gave up like lambs and agreed to everything that Comstock proposed.

### The First "Freeze-out."

Now occurred the first freeze-out that the district had known. Comstock rode swiftly to the camp of Gold Hill, told Old Virginia, a well known prospector, of the tale he had told the two Irishmen, and offered Old Virginia his horse and a bottle of whisky for Old Virginia's alleged interest in the property. After drinking half of the whisky, Old Virginia signed a bill of sale.

Comstock's own account of the whole matter is an artistic piece of lying. He said in his account of the strike: "I had owned the greater part of Gold Hill and had given the prospectors working there their claims. At Ophir O'Riley and McLaughlin were working for me. I caved the cut in and went after my party to form a company. With my party I opened the lead and called it Comstock lode." Comstock goes on to explain how he acted as good angel to

## BUILT TELEGRAPH LINE TO HELENA

**JAMES M'SHANE HANDLED CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT IN MONTANA IN 1864.**

**Virginia City Pioneer Became Notable Figure in Railroad Construction World and Left Five Sons in U. S. Army; Won Admiration of President Wilson.**

James McShane, one of the men who constructed the telegraph line from Virginia City to Helena in 1865 and 1866, died last week at Omaha at the age of 78.

McShane, who will be remembered by pioneers of the state as having been associated with his uncles, Count John A. Creighton and Edward Creighton, and with Senator Millard and John S. Collins in the construction of telegraph lines all over the west, was born at Springfield, Ohio, in 1841. In Nebraska he went to Omaha and made several trips across the plains with wagon trains in the interests of the Pacific Telegraph company.

In 1864 he came to Virginia City in charge of a wagon train, and during the next three years was engaged in building the line to Helena. In 1869 he was present at the ceremony of driving the golden spike at Promontory, Utah, which marked the completion of the Union Pacific to the coast.

In 1867 Mr. McShane left Virginia City and joined the Union Pacific as a construction contractor to begin a period of nearly 50 years' work in railway construction that covered Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, the Dakotas and Kansas. In every one of these states his name is known as one of the most potent forces among the builders of railroad systems which made possible the rapid spread of civilization in the west.

Mr. McShane left a widow and 13 children. Six of his sons are in the service of the government, five being in the military branch. The family prizes a personal letter written to Mr. McShane by President Wilson when the chief executive saw the record of the sons. James McShane, a son, is a resident of Miles City.

the camp and gave rich mines away right and left.

The little drama was, in truth, very simple. Comstock, one of the most ignorant and bombastic of men, had managed by loud talk and pure impudence to make himself the most important personage of the epoch. He had never really found anything but he claimed everything in sight. In a few weeks, when miners came from all points of the territory, the most important man in the region was thought to be Comstock.

### Comstock in His Glory.

Comstock was exuberantly happy for a few weeks. His Indians did most of the work and all he had to do was to watch the sluice boxes and show visitors around. A party of ladies from Carson valley were on the claim one day, and as was the custom in placer camps, each lady was the gold as a memento. Comstock expected to wash it out, keeping the gold as a memento. Comstock took a fancy to one of the number and slipped in a large handful of gold dust, giving her more than \$300.

Comstock was wildly avaricious when mining, and as wildly extravagant with his gold when obtained. He bought whatever took his fancy and gave it away the next minute. His only pleasure seemed to be the spending of money, and most of his comrades were like him in this respect.

McLaughlin sold his interest for \$3,500; O'Riley was more fortunate and hung on till he received \$40,000, but he spent it all in stock speculation and died in an insane asylum. McLaughlin died a pauper and was buried at public expense.

Comstock sold all his interests two months after the ledge was struck, and a couple of years later, as has been told, killed himself in Montana.

### Virginia City Named.

Comstock called the camp that arose around the big strike "Pleasant Hill Camp." Then it became Mount Pleasant. In a month's time there were a dozen tents, dugouts and shanties on the present site of Virginia City. The name Winnemucca was then suggested. But one midnight Old Virginia, going home with the boys and a bottle of whisky after a boisterous evening, fell down when he reached his cabin and broke the bottle. Rising to his knees, with the bottle neck in his hand, he hiccupped, "I baptize this ground Virginia Town." A drunken shout of approval arose, and it was decided to return to the saloon and celebrate the new name for the rest of the night. The name was broadened to Virginia City and became the most famous mining camp on earth.

Old Virginia was thrown from his horse in 1861 and was killed.



Rawhide Rawlins

# When Pete Sets a Speed Mark

HISTORICAL RECOLLECTIONS OF RAWHIDE RAWLINS

"Sizin' Pete Van up from looks," says Rawhide, "you'd never pick him for speed, an' I, myself, never see Pete make a quick move without a boss under him. If Pete's entered in a foot race most folks would play him with a copper, but Bill Skelton claims Pete's the swiftest animal he ever see, barrin' nothin'. At that Bill says he never saw Pete show speed but once, an' that's back in about '78.

"They're in the Musselshell country, an' one mornin' they're out after meat. They ain't traveled far till they sight dust. In them days this means Injuns or buffalo. This makes 'em cautious, 'cause they ain't anxious to bump into no red brothers with a bunch of stolen hosses. When Injuns are traveling with this kind of goods it ain't safe to detain 'em, an' Pete an' Bill both are too genteel to horn in where they ain't welcome, specially if it's a big party. Of course if it's a small bunch they'd be pleased to relieve them by the help of their rifles.

"They start cayotin' around over the hills till they sight long strings of brown grass-eaters. This herd ain't disturbed none—just travelin'. This means meat an' plenty of it, so gettin' the wind right, they approach.

"The country's rough, an' by holdin' the coulees they're within a hundred yards before they're noticed. It's an old bull that tips their hand; this old boy kinks his tail and jumps stiff-legged. This starts the whole bunch runnin', but it ain't a minute till Pete and Bill's among 'em.

"Pete singles out a cow an' Bill does the same. Pete's so busy emptyin' his Henry into this cow that he forgets all about his saddle. He's ridin' an old-fashioned center-fire. His hoss is young an' shad-bellied, an' with a loose cinch the saddle's workin' back. The first thing Pete knows he's ridin' the cayuse's rump. This hoss ain't broke to ride double an' objects to anybody sittin' on the hind seat, so he sinks his head and unloads Pete right in front of a cow.

"Bill, who's downed his meat, looks up just in time to see Pete land, and he lights runnin'. Bill says the cow only once scratches the grease on Pete's pants. From then on it's Pete's race. It look's like the cow was standin' still.



"Anybody that knows anything about buffaloes knows that cows can run. Pete don't only beat the the cow, but runs by his own hoss, 'Pete's so scared," says Bill, "that I damn near run my own hoss down tryin to turn Pete's back." "Judgin' from this, I'd say that Pete might make a good race yet if you'd scare him bad enough."

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