THE GOLD SEEKERS

. . . . . a 200 Year History of Mining
in Washington, Idaho, Montana & Lower British Columbia

by
Pauline
Battien

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By: Pauline Battien

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my four grandchildren:

Douglas Moore, Susan Moore,
Michael Battien and Jennifer Battien

–Who are already participating in history making events;
may that interest continue in future years.

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Cover by Mike Somerlott

Foreward

Minus chapters that one is accustomed to, this history of the mines of Idaho, Washington, lower British Columbia, and a bit of western Montana may seem disorganized. It has been said to be confusing and lacking in continuity – a downright truth if one does not wish to follow history as it was being made. We hope the maps make it easier.

Chronology was attempted but too often it became necessary to go forward with the story while in the specific mining camp; and then hope that you, the reader would return with me to follow in the wake of the horde of prospector-miners covering this area. God's plan for the prospector must have seemed a horrible jig-saw puzzle as he would hear of new camps opening miles from his present location, and it is factual that those poor souls did move about just as the book tells. We follow many of the prospector-miners from place to place and recall suddenly where we last heard his name. Some of those hearty fellows made almost every new camp. We will become just a bit better acquainted with two centenarians of the trade, Joe Moris and Al Stiles.

Material for this book has been obtained over 27 years of research and the writing has taken two years. This makes no pretense of being perfect journalism but it seemed urgent that much of this otherwise lost history needed recorded. It is factual as nearly as any mortal today can write of activity going back 200 years – with most of the action within the past 100 years. It is not intended to be a technical work but instead is narrative style, with facts and legends of interest to the lay person.

The major reason for it's being written was to honor the prospector who searched out the minerals that make our lives just a bit better; and in some cases are vital to our daily living. It also honors those who mined those minerals, one of the hardest jobs the good Lord ever made, and sometimes one of the most heartbreaking. The attempt was to find as many names as possible who were part of each occupation and by the telling, to give credit long overdue.

As we follow our prospectors across part of Oregon Territory, the present Oregon State is not included. Lines were drawn by treaty in 1846, making Oregon Country into Oregon Territory, and a line was formed between the United States and Canada during 1857 to 1861. That line took from 1903 to 1907 for survey and marking.

The portion of Oregon Territory we cover had Colville as the center of business. The huge area contained what is now Franklin, Adams, Whitman, Spokane, Lincoln, Douglas, Ferry, Okanogan, Chelan, Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties of Washington; along with what is now the State of Idaho, and the west side of Montana. As towns and cities, and new centers of government developed, segments of this total were sliced off to form states and new counties.

By 1863, Stevens County was formed and still included Ferry, Okanogan, Spokane, Pend Oreille, Whitman and Stevens. There were many legal battles fought but as areas were amputated from Stevens, counties formed were: Whitman 1871, Spokane, 1879, Okanogan, 1888, Ferry and Chelan 1899 and Pend Oreille 1911. Idaho and Montana eventually took form on the map.

Pinkney City was named as center of business for Stevens County, the name later changed to conform in 1868 with Fort Colville, a military fort. Shortened to Colville, it was still the seat of government in 1871 when there was only 1000 population in the entire area and Richard Steele tells us that only 300 were eligible to vote.

We learn the location of many claims and mines in the entire Territorial area. As new camps opened, the rush was always to be the first there. A few locations would be made and suddenly the whole pack was searching, and digging nearby. Unfortunately we cannot tell about every single prospect and hope "yours" was not overlooked. We do find many of the same "pick and shovel" men in many of the camps; the reason for covering such a wide area of mining history.

The list of references used may have unintentionally overlooked someone, but the hope is that they knew how much help they gave me. The book is indebted to marvelous help from the Spokesman-Review with permission to quote from it's news stories, and with the great amount of photos they permitted me to use. (Rather than use the full name of the credit line it will say S-R.) The same thanks go to the Spokane Chronicle (with S-C on the credit line). Other special thanks go to Richard G. Magnuson for permission to verify facts from his "Coeur d'Alene Diary;" to Dorothy R. Powers and her "Powers to the People" articles, and to Al Nugent, Elmo Thomas, and Ray Horsman for their early help in my learning about mines. My thanks also to the last 100 years of Stevens County newspapers to include the Statesman-Examiner.

Possibly two of the better statements made about this type of life were; Harry Magnuson from Wallace, Idaho who said after hard times hit the area – "Hope springs eternal from the breast of a hard-rock miner." And it is said of the rush to Rossland, British Columbia – "As dividends follow dividend and poor men were suddenly lifted to the plane of millionaires, the world gasped, rubbed it's gold-famished eyes, and made a wild rush to the snow-capped peaks where such delightful things came true." – "Oh! for that one big strike!" – but be aware that prospecting and mining are two of the greatest gambles on earth – even in "Colville Country."

August, 1996

Writing this history was a gamble, but very rewarding to my soul. This fourth printing of The Gold Seekers will be my last. I am approaching 82 years and wish to say, "Thank you," to all who have, and those who will, purchase this book.

May you find pleasure and good information in its reading.

Pauline Battien

The Gold Seekers

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NOTES

Pauline Battien

Starting out as a Tri-County news correspondent for the Spokesman-Review, Spokane's daily newspaper, Pauline Battien became interested in feature writing. Her interest in mining started after reading a news story of Joe Moris, the little prospector who began his mining career at the Old Dominion mine near Colville, Washington.

Researching his story led to many features in local newspapers, magazines and eventually to a booklet on Moris in 1967. As her research continued on mining history, her archives became one of the most extensive in the Inland Empire.

In 1981 she contributed three file drawers of mining history to the archives of Eastern Washington State University at Cheney. Later, she contributed a file drawer of mining history to the Stevens County Historical Society. Now she will donate the remainder of her collection to the archives at Cheney.

After 26 years of research, Pauline wrote "THE GOLD SEEKERS . . . a 200 Year History of Mining in Washington, Idaho, Montana and Lower British Columbia." The book also chronicles the stories and events that surround mining communities of the northwest.

Born at Rupert, Idaho, Pauline Battien came to Colville where she graduated from Colville High School in 1932. In 1938 she married Roy Battien. They have two children, Janet Moore and Scott Battien, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Roy died in 1993. Pauline is retired in Colville where she leads an active life.