

LITERARY COLLECTIONS/GENERAL

Gratuitous Serendipity is an intriguing compilation of actual accounts of events in one man's life that both changed his life and changed the world (just a little).

Gratuitous Serendipity will leave you wondering, just how much each of us play in the role of creating and influencing history. Some stories just take a different look at the world around us, and how information can be put together in a slightly different way. Often, just by looking at something different, the same data can produce significantly different results.

Gratuitous Serendipity is about being in the right place at the right time, and taking action. By the end of this book, you will have a different appreciation of how influential you can be on the events of today that will become tomorrow's history.



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Cover credit by:  
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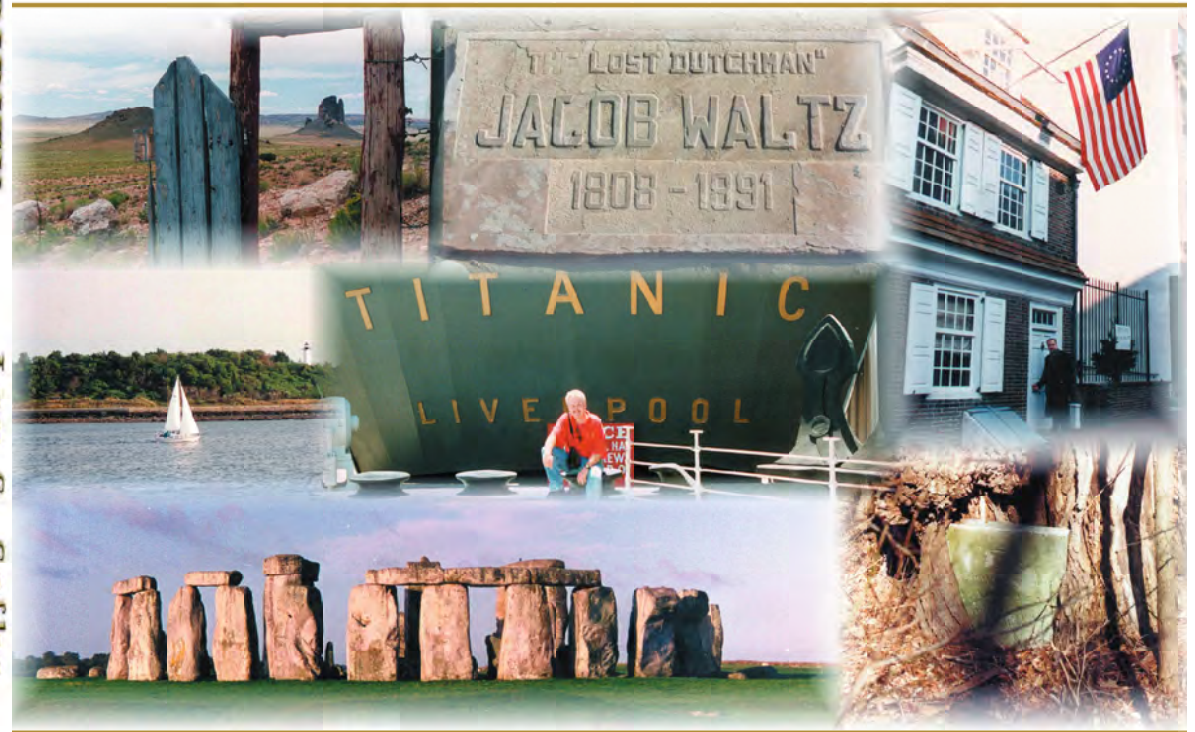
\$10.95 U.S.



GRATUITOUS SERENDIPITY  
Lon S. Safko

# GRATUITOUS SERENDIPITY

## The Right Place, The Right Time



### Lon S. Safko

**GRATUITOUS  
SERENDIPITY**



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The Right Place, the Right Time

*Lon S. Safko*

iUniverse, Inc.  
New York Lincoln Shanghai

**GRATUITOUS SERENDIPITY**  
**The Right Place, the Right Time**

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iUniverse  
2021 Pine Lake Road, Suite 100  
Lincoln, NE 68512  
[www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com)  
1-800-Authors (1-800-288-4677)

ISBN-13: 978-0-595-34186-3 (pbk)

ISBN-13: 978-0-595-78958-0 (ebk)

ISBN-10: 0-595-34186-1 (pbk)

ISBN-10: 0-595-78958-7 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America

To my loving wife Sherrie, without whose support and encouragement, I could never have realized and achieved my full potential.



**Gratuitous**—gra·tu·i·tous—adjective

Unnecessary and unjustifiable,

Received or given without payment or obligation,

Not requiring any benefit or compensation in return.

**Serendipity**—ser·en·dip·i·ty—noun

A natural gift for making useful discoveries by accident.

**Gratuitous Serendipity**—a natural gift given without obligation for making useful discoveries by accident.



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## *Preface*

This is an eclectic collection of short stories that range from watching the sunrise over Stonehenge to Saving Betsy Ross for our history books, from experiencing a traditional Navajo Sweat to the discovery of the Lost Dutchman Gold Mine, to the sinking of the Titanic, to locating the family plot of the first Afro–American landowner.

These are actual accounts of my experiences that lead you through discovery while all along showing you the serendipitous nature of being in the right place at the right time.



## *Acknowledgments*

I would like to thank Carl Oechsner, a teacher who came into my life and changed the way I looked at the world, for all of his support and research on deciphering the meaning of the tombstones in the story *The First Black Landowner*. You can also find more history about Ossining, New York, in his book *Ossining, New York: an Informal Bicentennial History*.

I would like to thank Kimberly Amaral for her *El Niño and the Southern Oscillation: A Reversal of Fortune* which I found on the Internet and used as a reference for the background for the El Niño effect in the story “El Niño Sank The Titanic.”

Thank you, Frank Fiore, my friend who has encouraged me, set the example, and showed me how to write this book.

Thank you Steve Gardner, my friend who encouraged me to “publish something,” and was always there to support me.

Thank you to my two partners, Geoff Clough and LT Tang, for their friendship, their loyalty, and their unwavering support.

Thank you, Ed Safko, my brother and his family, who were always there as my “port in the storm.”

A special thank you to Jeannette Abi-Nader, H.M., Sr. who had the courage to tell me there were errors and the talents necessary to correct them. Thank you for making this book the best it could be.

And again, a special thank you to my incredible wife Sherrie, for all of her support over the years. Sherrie would often say that, “I’ll watch you play the game of life, and each time you tire and head for the sidelines, I’ll kick you back into play!” Thank you. If not for you, I would have picked up my ball and simply

gone home long before the game was won. With All My Love, Forever, And For Always.

# *THE RESCUE OF BETSY ROSS*



As with all stories of rescue, no one individual can be responsible for the entire adventure. My adventure starts at the age of four back in the city of Yonkers, New York and spans two centuries.

While taking a short cut along the Hudson River on my way back to my hotel after a meeting in New York, I passed an old building on my left. As I passed this structure, I had a flashback, a glimpse of a fleeting memory. This glimpse was similar to the level of recall you have when waking after a deep sleep and struggle to recall your dream, grabbing little bits and wisps of thought here and a mental image there.

I saw myself four decades earlier at the age of four, standing with my dad looking into a glass case at a small book. Yes, it was a small Bible. Now I can see a small plaque that had my name on it. It was a dedication plaque. I now can hear my dad reading the inscription that said: “1863, New York State Bible Society, Civil War Bible, donated by Lon Safko, August, 1959.”

How strange to see and hear this fleeting drama from so many years earlier. I hadn't any recollection of this building or its contents before. I turned my rental car into an about-face and headed back toward this place and memory.

The building seemed dark and deserted but appeared to be a public place judging from its parking lot. It was a museum. It was the southern estate of the long deceased Phillips family.

The Phillips family was a large landholder throughout the seventeenth century and up to the Revolutionary War. During the 1600s, England issued land grants to wealthy English and Dutch families in the New World. The land generally represented areas that have become counties. These grants contained literally hundreds of square miles of some of the richest farmland in the country.

These families were landlords who would lease the land to settlers, take a majority share in their crops, split their takings, and pass a portion back to England.

This estate was the southern most residence and office of the Phillips. It would later become the residence of the original Phillips son who became known as “The Young Gentleman,” or in Dutch, Young Kers. This later became the name of the city, Yonkers, New York.

I parked my car and walked toward the building trying to get a view through the windows. I was looking for signs of life. It seemed odd that there was no one to be found since this was a public museum. I walked completely around the building when I happened upon a window I could get close enough to see through to the inside.

It became obvious that the structure was closed and under renovation. The floor in the room I was observing was removed and an excavation was underway. Some dirt was removed and carefully piled on the floor near its opening.

I continued my search for signs of life when I came upon the old carriage house that was now an administrative office. I walked up the steps and briskly knocked on the door hoping someone was inside who could shed some light on my intangible visions.

After the third knock, the door opened, and standing before me was a man in his late thirties who asked if he could help me. Now it was my awkward moment to try to explain why I was there and why I needed help. No pun intended.

This individual introduced himself as Sibley Smith III, and invited me to come in and to take a seat in his office. Once seated, I began to explain the vision I had and asked if he could help me decipher it in any way. He asked me the date I had

remembered and turned to a large bookshelf that contained volumes of old, hard-bound books. He selected the one that was labeled 1959.

He flipped through the pages of this old journal to the chapter marked August. Then running his index finger down page after page of calligraphic hand entries, he exclaimed, "Aha! Here it is!"

It seemed that my father, who was a bit of an explorer himself, had discovered the pocket edition of a New Testament that was given by the New York Bible Association to young men going off to fight the Civil War in the 1860s. Dad, not knowing what to do with it, donated it in my name to the then most prominent museum in the area.

I then asked who Sibley was and what was the status of the museum. Finally, here is where the tale begins.

He explained that after he left the Navy where he was stationed at Virginia Beach, and earning a Ph.D. in American History, he didn't feel there was much opportunity available to him. After sending out many résumés, he was offered a position here at the Phillips House as curator. He took the position, but longed for an opportunity to become more involved in the "renaissance" that was occurring in the rewriting of history. He explained, "History is written by the victors. History is often a compilation of some fact, some folklore, and some lies." A group responsible for American history has recently decided that "Truth must prevail above all." I supposed we needed more history and less "his story."

He further explained that too often we find history obscured by fun stories not history. He then motioned me to walk with him outside. We walked across the parking area toward the museum's main structure. We walked around the building to where a brass cornerstone was installed twenty years earlier. Upon closer inspection, it was evident that the last two digits of the erected date were chiseled off! I asked if this were an act of vandalism but he said that it was done deliberately.

He went on to tell me how the original structure was erected in 1680, then added to in 1720, and again in 1740, or so. He explained that they thought the building was built in 1680 plus or minus ten years. The Historical Society's dictum is, "If you can't prove it, it's not History. Chisel it off!" These guys were serious!

We turned and walked our way back to his office discussing his participation in this renaissance and what the current search for truth entailed. He said that there was an official panel or committee that met once a month in Historic Williamsburg, Virginia of which he was a proud member. Currently, they were verifying Betsy Ross' place in American history.

Sibley asked if I were familiar with the story of Betsy Ross. I proudly announced that I was and quickly summarized it for him while he shook his head from side to side. I then realized that my understanding of this particular piece of American history was not as good as I had hoped, or there was bigger trouble brewing. The latter was true.

Mr. Smith explained that the familiar story of Betsy Ross presenting a flag of her creation that was eventually accepted as the official flag of the then thirteen original colonies of the United States of America, lacked factual proof to substantiate it. He and the Historic Committee felt that it was only hearsay and was slated to be removed from our history books forever.

Somewhat aghast, I asked why it was hearsay. Sibley explained that during the Revolutionary War, there were hundreds of flags being used simultaneously. Every Calvary, every general and troop had their own; the Continental Congress had several, and every state had one. They felt that an obscure seamstress from Philadelphia with a flag of her own seemed unlikely to be chosen over all of the others.

I then asked how Betsy's story and her flag weave its way into the fabric of American History. (Like that metaphor?)

Sibley explained that during our Centennial in 1876, the granddaughter of Betsy Ross, then President of the Philadelphia Historic Society, published an article detailing the story of her grandmother's triumph of the flag. He emphasized that the only evidence of Betsy's Flag was a story published by her granddaughter, not necessarily an unbiased witness.

The Williamsburg Committee contacted the heirs of the Ross family and broke the bad news of their relative's impending dismissal for all times. The committee asked for simple proof. Just a letter or note from George Washington, or any

member of the Continental Congress, accepting the flag, a receipt, a diary entry, anything that could elevate this story to history. Nothing was offered.

The committee handled this case the way a court of law would. They felt that if no hard evidence could support the case, they would begrudgingly accept circumstantial evidence. After careful consideration and investigation, the verdict was close at hand, "Betsy's history!"

It seems that the committee interviewed many seamstresses and asked their opinion on the construction of the original flag's design. And time after time the answer was the same; "Not likely." Most every seamstress interviewed shared some compelling common sense. They said that if that flag were accepted as the "official" flag of the new United States, there would have to be many of them made, hundreds. And, "if I have to make them, I would never have used a five-pointed star."

They said, "Have you ever tried to cut a perfectly balanced five-pointed star? I would have used a six-pointed star. It's just two triangles." Seamstress after seamstress said the same thing, six points, not five. Oh no!

It seemed that circumstantial evidence was condemning Betsy to obscurity. At this very moment I had another flash of memory. This time back to a rainy day when I was twelve. I received a Readers Digest book of things to do on a rainy day, and seeing that it was appropriate, I took the book from my shelf and began performing some simple crafts and other time-consuming suggestions, such as growing a palm tree from newspaper, play dough from flour and water, and how to cut a perfect five-pointed star from a single piece of paper with a few folds and a single cut.

I then interrupted Sibley mid-sentence and asked him, "If I could show you that you could cut a five-pointed star more easily than a six, could that be considered substantial enough evidence to save Betsy's place in history?" He silently thought for a few moments and asked me to continue.

I asked him to hand me an 8 1/2 by 11 piece of paper and a pair of scissors. I folded the paper once, twice, thrice, and a fourth time and snipped it once with the scissors. Then I handed the folded clipped paper to Sibley and asked him to open it. He slowly opened the origami surprise to find a perfect five-pointed star.

He excitedly asked; “Can you do that again?” With that he handed me a second piece of paper.

He watched intently as I made four folds and cut one edge—another perfect five-pointed star. Then, jumping to his feet he asked, “Can you teach me how to do that?” “Sure,” I exclaimed. “It’s easy.” I then showed him again and again. He asked if I could write him a letter and enclose instructions for duplicating this exercise. I told him when I returned to Arizona, I would be happy to satisfy his requests.

If you want to learn how to create your own five-pointed star like the one in the story, go to [www.LonSafko.com](http://www.LonSafko.com).

Sibley received my letter and instructions a few days later as promised. A week or so later, while at a committee meeting in Williamsburg, Sibley presented this new found circumstantial evidence in favor of Betsy Ross’ contribution to American History.

This new evidence was carefully considered and voted on. The verdict was returned quickly: Betsy Ross could keep her place in history. As circumstantial as the proof was, it was the only evidence, and it was in Betsy’s favor.

I have had the honor of since sitting in Betsy Ross’ home in Philadelphia. Maybe it was all in my mind, but while there, I felt like a welcomed visitor, maybe even a friend.

P.S. The Bible was then residing in a box in a storage warehouse managed by the New York State Department of Parks and Recreation in Albany, New York. Similar to the last scene of Indiana Jones’s Ark of the Holy Covenant the bible was placed in a plain wooden box with cryptic numbers stenciled on the end and placed in a basement with thousands of other boxes just like it.

The Bible was returned to me and now resides in a place of honor under a domed glass in my living room and serves as a constant reminder of the importance and value of truth in historic literature.

# *THE FIRST BLACK LANDOWNER*



It was a late autumn afternoon in upstate New York. The air was fresh and crisp, the sun was shining, and leaves rustled underfoot.

It was Sunday, my chores were done, and I had an afternoon to explore the countryside. I always liked to explore in the fall. When the leaves have fallen from the trees, it is easier to see the clues of a society no longer with us in New York.

If you are careful to look beyond the forest and beyond the trees, you might just see a fieldstone wall, or better yet, parallel fieldstone walls. This usually meant an abandoned road. If you look closely at the average age of the trees, you can often identify a strip of younger trees, less than 100 years old, winding its way through a forest of older stand trees of oak, maple, and ash.

One afternoon I was driving through the back roads of Westchester County carefully watching for signs of a wall or foundation, when I glimpsed a low fieldstone wall off in the distance, through the trees, under some heavy brush. I quickly pulled my car to the side of the road and headed out as I have done often in the past. I wound my way through the forest, feeling the intermittent warmth of sun on my face, consciously noticing the smell of the partially wet leaves, and listening to the crunch of the brittle, brown twigs beneath my feet.

As I approached the location where I was able to once again glimpse the shallow stonewall, I realized that before me stood an obstacle, a swamp. This organic

soup spread out in front of me for more than 60 feet into dense raspberry bushes and Virginia creeper. Circumnavigating this, I knew, would be no easy task.

I proceeded around this marsh to the north, always keeping my bearings on the location of the stonewall. Stonewalls mean history. As I made my way around this wetland, I came upon the north end of the wall where it met two parallel walls, a road. The trees between the walls told me that this route had not been traveled for more than 150 years, the age of the trees. These were old walls. This was old history.

I made my way along the wall heading due south. I pushed my way under and around sticker bushes and vines until I thought I could no longer follow the wall. More often than not, these historic indicators simply end without any history being found. I often doubt whether or not the effort involved is worth it.

I followed the wall south until I found something that indicated that the search was worth the effort. I came upon a set of stone steps leading toward the west. This is a good thing. It usually indicates the wall to be the foundation of a home, hotel, or public house (pub). After 100 to 150 years, there is little left but the stone it was built on.

As I turned west and headed up the few steps, I was faced with something I really didn't anticipate, headstones. It wasn't the foundation of a home it was a walled cemetery. The headstones continued to the south and two rows to the west. It was apparent that these stones were very old. Some stones were leaning; some had fallen down and were worn by the environment to the point of being unreadable. This was a find indeed.

I photographed the graveyard as best as I could through the thick overgrowth and shadowed lighting with the hopes of gathering enough information to entice the assistance of a friend, Carl Oechsner. Carl was a friend, a published author, my eighth grade social studies teacher, and a historian for the town of Ossining, New York. The very town the outskirts of which I was in at this moment!

I made my way back to my car and found a photograph-developing store and waited for the results. With pictures in hand I met with Carl. He was intrigued, but needed way more information to research this find. Although he was the offi-

cial historian for this town, he could not venture even the slightest guess as to the owners of this plot.

Carl continued to listen to the details of my discovery and quickly determined that to gather the information he needed, we would have to travel back to the graveyard to collect information off the headstones. I reiterated the unreadable condition of the grave markers. He said he had two solutions for this dilemma. I would have to meet him at the graveyard after dark, tonight.

“Wait a minute,” I exclaimed; “meet you in the graveyard tonight after dark? I don’t think so.” He assured me that this was the only way to gather the badly needed information. I trusted Carl, so I agreed to his odd request.

Later that evening, the air was cool, the ground was damp, and the moon was an eerie crescent playing hide-and-seek behind the November clouds. When I arrived at the parking lot, Carl had already been there waiting for me. I motioned him to follow me through the woods, around the swamp, ultimately into the forgotten graveyard.

Navigating your way through a dense, overgrown forest of stickers and vines in the light of day is one thing, but trying it in the absolute darkness is another.

I made my way to the north end of the wall and motioned for him to follow me south along the face of the wall in the hope of reaching the steps. Shortly after we arrived at the steps, I pointed west to the dimly lit headstones, leaning and pointing in a distressed manner. I turned to Carl and asked; “Why are we here? Why now?”

With that, he removed his backpack and hurried to the first gravestone. He took a flashlight and shown it from the top, washing the light across the face of the stone. Like magic, the name appeared with the birth and death dates. It was as plain as could be. Carl explained that even though what turned out to be over 200 years of snow, wind, and rain eroding the face of the stone, there was still enough indentation of the original chisel to show darker than the face.

I was excited about this sleight of hand, but how are we going to document this information? How could we gather all this documentation, especially the graphics at the top of the stone? The graphics most often seen in older cemeteries were

an angel or cherub. The different designs indicated who did the carving. It was sort of a trademark. I had never seen this particular graphic before. It was obviously much older than any I had studied in the past.

I heard Carl rustling around in his backpack searching for something. Hopefully, it would answer my question of how we were to document all this data on all of these stones without the ability to photograph them. With that, Carl handed me a crayon. "A crayon? What am I supposed to do with a crayon?" I quipped back.

He quickly retorted; "Oh yea, you need this as well." He then handed me two feet of butcher's paper. I sharply asked; "What? I'm not taking notes on butcher's paper in a graveyard at night in the dark!" Carl then explained that I wasn't supposed to take notes using the crayon, I was supposed to take rubbings of the stone. He showed me that if you place the paper across the face of the stone and rub the crayon sideways across the face, it would mark the high spots and leave the low spots white. This technique was similar to the flashlight.

It was amazing. Every detail, crack, and every intentional chisel mark showed up, documented on paper. We spent the next several hours rubbing the tombstones until we had every one as best as possible. The name Heady appeared. It was the family name of those who now lay beneath us. When we finished this, we found our way back to the cars and agreed to speak again when Carl had found some background on the owners of these headstones.

More than a month went by before I received a telephone call from Carl. I was beginning to wonder if the records of Westchester County actually went that far back. The dates on these stones went back to the late 1700s. And to make matters worse, this was more than likely just another farmer and his family, with very little record keeping.

Then I finally received the call I had been waiting for. It was Carl and he asked that I meet with him the following day. I thought this strange because if it were, as I expected, just another farmer, he could have simply explained that over the phone.

The following day we met for lunch when he cautiously and meticulously relayed the details of his investigation on my find. He was visibly excited about something.

He said that after spending many hours researching this plot of land at the county land records office, the town offices, the public libraries, and wherever else, he had solved the mystery. He found the following:

During the late 1700s, the owner of this land was a semi-wealthy ship captain. This captain piloted some of the first barges up and down the Hudson River, moving coal from New York Harbor to Albany for heat and the meager industry now building up along its banks.

One night just before Christmas, the river captain was running his usual cargo north up the Hudson River when a winter squall fell upon him. His ship was being thrown from side to side in this fierce storm. The captain's son, about twelve years of age, was journeying with the captain to Albany to learn his father's trade and was below when the storm hit. Frightened and wanting to be at his father's side, the boy ventured from below deck and made his way to the bridge of the frigate.

Once on deck, the waves tossed the ship and pelted him with frozen walls of water, one that took him from the deck and into the icy Hudson. Seeing what happened, the black manservant (slave), of the captain jumped overboard into the black, cold river in an attempt to save the captain's son from certain death. The man found the boy, got him to the safety of the deck, but to the terror of the captain, the boy was dead.

The captain was simultaneously filled with pain and gratitude. To show his gratitude to his servant, he granted him his freedom and a parcel of land to farm a living. This man took his belongings and headed off to the fertile mountainside to farm.

He eventually got married and had a small family. He became one of the first black preachers, built a church, and preached the word of God and hope to the inhabitants of that wilderness area. When his son grew to be a man, he continued in his father's footsteps and became a preacher as well. The father, the son, and the son's entire family are all buried on that, their family plot. The fourth generation later moved on, subdivided the property and it was resold many times. During these times, the cemetery fell into disrepair and was overgrown for more than a hundred years.

When I found the preacher's stone, it had become engulfed by a very large menacing tree that gripped the headstone, grew around it as if the land were embracing his memory.

Carl documented this story and it is now part the history of Ossining, New York, as well as the three-hundred-year-old Afro-American culture and history. This spot is now designated as the official location of the first black land owner in American history.

# *THE SECRET OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE*



This story begins nearly two hundred years ago; however; my story starts in 1994.

In the 1700s there lived a soldier named Peralta in the Spanish Armada. He was a commander or conquistador and explorer. His mission was to search the northern Spanish territories that are now the southwestern United States, for El Dorado, the City of Gold.

When Cortez conquered the Aztec nation, there were stories of gold throughout the kingdom. Peralta was commissioned with finding the source of this gold.

Peralta commanded many missions from his base in the new Spanish capital of Mexico City. Peralta traveled up through the Sonoran Desert, into Tucson, up the Salt River Valley to Phoenix, on up the Verde (Green) Valley to Flagstaff, then east into Albuquerque across the high steppe desert to New Mexico, into the western panhandle of Texas, then down and back to Mexico City.

Peralta, his son and eventually his grandson, Miguel, befriended many Indian tribes in their search for this yellow treasure, and often conquering some tribes to take the gold and the secrets of its whereabouts.

The location of the gold mines were handed down through three generations resided on clay tablets, appropriately called the Peralta Stones. These hieroglyphic symbols, encrypted maps served the Peralta family for three generations. Know-

ing the definitions of the symbols carved into these clay tablets would lead the owner to some of the southwest's richest gold discoveries of all time.

The gold was mined by Spanish soldiers throughout the southwest, but mainly in what is now mineral rich central Arizona. The process was arduous at best. The soldiers would have to suffer the peril of the inhospitable southwest dry desert heat, rattle snakes, cactus, Gila Monsters, manual labor, and Indian attacks.

The story remained pretty much the same for nearly 100 years. Whatever gold ore was mined, was first crushed, sluiced in a Spanish *arrastra*, and carried in saddlebags by burrows back to Mexico City where it was split three ways. One third was sent via Spanish Galleon across the Atlantic to Madrid, Spain, the home of the Spanish Empire. The second portion was given to the Catholic Church to be used in its missionary work throughout the world and the Mexican Territory. And, the third portion was payment to the Peralta family and his men.

During the 1850s, Miguel Peralta was mining gold from the hot soil of the southwest. A German immigrant by the name of Jacob Waltz (pronounced Valtz), hearing that the streets of the America were paved with gold, saved enough to book passage to New York and eventually worked his way to St. Louis.

Once in America, Jacob soon realized the streets were not paved with gold, yet; there was an abundance of gold in the hills of California. Jacob left St. Louis for the Gold Rush of California. He found himself in the infamous Vulture Gold Mine near what is today Prescott, Arizona. The Vulture was one of America's richest producers of the desired yellow metal. The Vulture also attracted its namesake's human counterparts. It employed some of the lowest individuals from every corner of America.

I visited the Vulture and also had the opportunity to visit the partially marked, but mostly unmarked graves of the men caught pocketing the small yellow stones, and many men who were only suspected of stealing from the Vulture. In the southwest desert in the 1800s, justice was the man with the fastest gun. There were many graves.

Jacob quickly realized he was not going to strike it rich by working someone else's mine. He continued to California. After working several mines in California and

staking his own occasional unsuccessful placer mines, discouraged, Jacob decided to return to St. Louis defeated.

Jacob's travels took him from southern California, across the Colorado River into what is now Yuma, Arizona, then down through Ajo (Ah-Hoe), and into a sleazy cantina (bar), somewhere in the Sonoran Desert. It was here that Jacob's life took a dramatic turn that no one could anticipate.

Several months earlier, the Spanish crown advised Miguel Peralta that they were in negotiations with the United States to purchase the land north from Tijuana and Nogales. He was advised to take a troop of soldiers to the best of his mining areas, one last time, to gather as much gold ore as possible before the sale was finalized. From that date on, Peralta would no longer be allowed into the U.S. to mine gold for the Spanish crown.

Peralta took four hundred men and burrows into his El Dorado to gather his gold. During Miguel's journeys into Arizona, he had good relationships with most of the local Indian tribes such as the Pima, Anasasi, Hopi, and Navajo Indian tribes. The only exception was the Apache Indians. The Apache Indians were not of the agrarian culture like the other tribes. The Apaches were a band of roving, stealing, warring people. They took what they needed from other tribes. The Pima, who lived in proximity with the Apache, were fearful of their constant attacks.

Miguel took his troop of four hundred men and rode off on his last mission to Arizona. The area the Peralta family mined was rich and consisted of eighteen separate horizontal mine shafts. These shafts also existed within an area the Apache worshipped and considered holy and sacred. It was in the area of the Apache Thunder God.

As the men rode again into the mining camps, the chief of the Apaches met with Miguel to warn him of his unwanted intrusion into their sacred area and was told to leave immediately. Peralta understanding the last of his opportunity and explained they were only to remain a short time and would leave forever. One month lead to another, and another until they were there for nine months. The relationship between Peralta, his men, and the Apaches worsened.

One morning during the ninth month, Peralta sent his courier between the camps set up at each of the eighteen mines for a progress report. When the courier arrived at one of the camps he was horrified to find that all of Peralta's men had been murdered in their sleep. All were dead. Peralta, learning of this massacre, gathered his men, filled every saddle bag with some of the richest gold ore ever mined, and quickly headed back toward Mexico City by following the Verde River to the Salt River.

When Miguel reached the junction of the two rivers, he looked behind and found that the entire Apache tribe of warriors with the intent to kill them was following him and his men. Peralta gave the order to ride as quickly as the horses and burros could run. Peralta reached what is today called the Massacre Grounds located at the north end of the Superstition Mountain range. Want to guess why it's called the Massacre Grounds?

Peralta and his men were chased into an area that starts out flat but gradually changes to an uphill slope leading to a blind canyon. It was here that Peralta and his four hundred men were trapped. The Apache who were stealthy desert warriors and knew how to fight and survive in this deadly environment, quickly defeated Peralta and his men. All of Peralta's men were massacred, and the Apaches chased down nearly every burro, not for the gold ore, but for the meat. The Apache considered burro a delicacy. The chief of the Apaches instructed the Apache men to gather all the bodies, all the saddle bags, all the helmets, swords and any trace of Peralta's men and place them in the gold mines. They then covered the entrances of the mines with rocks, stones, and cactus to conceal any evidence of the gold mines in the hope of erasing the white man's lust for gold forever from their minds, and all but eliminating these mines from history.

Peralta, who miraculously survived, was now on his way to Mexico City to explain to the King of Spain of his defeat and loss of life and gold. Feeling battered and bruised, Peralta found himself in the same cantina with the battered, bruised, and defeated Jacob Waltz.

This one fateful evening, Peralta, while drinking excessive amounts of Tequila, was drunk and found himself in a life and death struggle with a man with a knife. Jacob seeing Peralta outmatched, quickly broke a chair over the head of the man with the knife, saving Miguel Peralta's life. Jacob took hold of Peralta and ran from the cantina.

When daylight broke and Peralta realized the events of the last evening and how this stranger came to his rescue and saved his life, Miguel rewarded this Samaritan. Miguel explained his family's heritage and mission to the crown. Peralta also explained the land purchase and the fact that he could no longer exploit these riches. Miguel then gifted the family Peralta Stones with an explanation of their hieroglyphic symbols and the true value of the clay tablets. Waltz thanked Peralta, not realizing their true value, rode to the north, while Peralta rode to the south. The two would never meet again.

Jacob followed Miguel's directions north until he found himself in a small ranching town along the Salt River called Swilling's Mill that is known today as Phoenix, Arizona. Only half believing, Jacob set up camp along the Salt and planned his trip into the mountains to see if what Peralta had told him was true, or only another empty dream. Jacob had nothing to lose. As Janet Joplin once sang, when you've got noth'n, you've got noth'n to lose.

Jacob followed the symbols on the tablets one after another. Each one proved to be authentic and that encouraged him to go to the next and the next. Jacob disappeared into the mountains for several days. When he emerged, he was seen riding into town from the north, down what is now Central Avenue straight to the Assay Office where he threw two saddle bags of gold ore, worth then, over \$15,000. In today's dollars, the worth was approximately \$200,000 in rich gold ore.

The news of the "Dutchman's Gold Mine" quickly spread throughout the territory. Jacob built a beautiful new home along the Salt River at approximately 64th Street. He then sent for his lifelong friend Jacob Wiser (pronounced Viser), to come from Germany and join him in Phoenix.

Several months later, Jacob Wiser met his boyhood friend in the middle of America's southwest. To Wiser's amazement, Waltz spun his stories of failure and success and newly acquired wealth. Waltz explained how everyone in the territory befriended him. Everyone was now his best friend. Everyone wanted to buy Waltz a drink, and another, and another, hoping Jacob would become drunk and tell them where his mine was located. He was threatened and followed. Waltz would sometime ride out of town knowing that there was a slew of people follow-

ing him and hiding in the shadows. Waltz would ride for days, often in circles, and then return home without ever stopping at a mine.

Wiser convinced Waltz to show him the location of his treasures. One evening, cloaked by darkness, the two German immigrants rode off into the darkness and into the mountains. On the second night, while the two were in camp, arrows screamed through the darkness breaking the peace of night. The two jumped to their feet and ran into the desert night.

Several days later, Waltz made his way back to the city and to the help he needed. When Waltz ran from camp, he was barefooted. After walking miles through the treacherous desert terrain and cactus, his feet were bloodied and full of needles. Waltz was lucky. Wiser took an unfortunate arrow to his chest. He stumbled out of the desert and made his way to a home where a Mexican housekeeper found Wiser all but dead and nursed him for several days. Wiser died of the wound. Jacob Waltz never recovered emotionally from his loss of his lifelong friend, Jacob Wiser.

From that point on, Waltz became a hermit. Jacob never felt he could trust anyone who didn't have an ulterior motive. Waltz seldom spoke, seldom left his home.

During the spring thaw of 1870 the Salt River flooded its banks. The water rushed faster and higher each passing hour. Jacob sought refuge in the top of a small tree in his front yard one night when he was unable to escape this fierce flood.

When dawn broke, the residents of this small city along the Salt River was shocked to find that all traces of the city had been washed away. All was gone. The city was rebuilt through the leadership and vision of one man by the name of Frank Duppa and was renamed "Phoenix," after the Greek legend of the bird that rose again out of its own ashes to fly again in full glory.

Julia Thomas was the owner of a sundry or dry goods store that Jacob shopped at often. A receipt was found in Julia Thomas's records where Jacob purchased a wood burning stove that later was believed to have been found at the site of the mine. Historically, Julia Thomas was a women proprietor and owner, and black, which was very unusual for the late 1800s.

Julia, seeing the immense damage the city had suffered, asked two brothers who were friends and customers of hers, to please check on old Jacob Waltz to assure her of his safety. When the brothers arrived at the site of Jacob's home, they found the home was completely gone. They also noticed in the top of that small tree, was the seventy-two year old Waltz, tied to the branches with a bed sheet. Waltz was unconscious and near dead. The only belongings Jacob was able to save was the Peralta Stones and two saddle bags of ore.

Julia took Jacob into her home and nursed him for more than nine months. Jacob never recovered from this tragedy. On his deathbed, Jacob, in gratitude for her saving his life, gave her the saddlebags from under the bed, worth \$15,000, the Peralta Stones, and an explanation of how to interpret them. Jacob Waltz died in 1871.

Julia Thomas and her two brothers decided to head off to find the gold. Julia sold her dry goods store and cashed in the gold found in Jacob's saddlebags and headed off for the Superstition Mountains to find their fortune.

Their first expedition was in mid July, which was not a good time to go off into the desert in Arizona. The three nearly died. Sometime in August they staggered out of the mountains with empty hands. The threesome continued to search for the now "Lost Dutchman Gold Mine" for several years until they were completely broke. Julia spent the remaining years of her life barely surviving by selling maps to the lost mine. Julia died penniless.

The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine remained a legend for the next 100 years. Over 350 people lost their lives in those mountains seeking the riches of the Dutchman. No one has ever located the mine or been able to decipher the symbols of the Peralta Stones.

I first became aware of the Lost Dutchman in 1993. I was showing my stepson the little remote town of Tortilla Flats, Arizona. It had a general store, a post office, and, of course a bar. It also had a flock of Snowbirds or winter visitors.

There was a plaque on a fence that read, in two paragraphs, a brief history of Jacob Waltz and of his famous mine. It explained how Jacob would sneak out at

night and venture up into the Superstition Mountains to fill his saddlebags with rich gold ore.

My son and I considered ourselves amateur explorers and have had some successes at locating many old abandoned gold mines of the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds. He challenged me with “Why don’t we find it?”

I explained the little history I knew at the time and the impossibility of successfully locating this site when so many others have failed. The luxury of naive youth prevailed; I agreed to at least try. I believed it would be fun and educational as well.

We started by locating most every book on the subject from the local libraries. Between the Gilbert, Mesa, and ASU libraries, we were able to accumulate 28 books on the Lost Dutchman.

We split the stack in half and hit the books. What we found were major discrepancies between stories. As the tale had been spun and spun again, it was embellished, and altered, and changed sometimes to the point of not recognizing the players. We were faced with a problem. What data were real? Where do we start?

I decided to add a yellow pad to our search materials and suggested that we both keep a record of events, descriptions, and directions from each book we read. When we were finished, we compiled these lists and found the common threads or common clues and recorded the number of times that particular piece of information remained part of the story. I felt that if it had a relatively high “hit” rate, it might be true. If it only appeared once or twice, it most probably was an embellishment.

This system of analyzing the data proved very interesting. There formed a pattern of historical events that I described earlier and, more importantly, we found a description of directions that proved significantly recurring. By recompiling this information, we created a step-by-step path to the Lost Dutchman’s Mine. There were problems though.

The descriptions all stemmed from Julia Thomas’ memory of Jacob’s dying words. Julia was not an explorer or even a miner. The mile markers were riddled

with descriptions such as: the eye of the needle, the blacktopped mesa, and the Thunder God. If you knew where to start, you might know where to finish.

Over the last one hundred years, the fortune seekers all headed for their starting point, the Superstition Mountain Range. I felt that due to 100 years of unsuccessful attempts, and 350 souls perishing in those mountains in search of gold, that maybe that was not the correct starting point. The descriptions though, indicated that the Eye of the Needle was clearly Weaver's Needle named after one of the southwest's first Anglo explorers, Pauline Weaver (Mr. Pauline Weaver.)

Here we go. Here are the directions that we compiled and verified:

At the Superstitions, follow the old Military trail north until you come to the Eye of the Needle.

Proceed along the trail until you can see the Sombrero (Mexican hat);

Continue along the trail, north until you see the Black Topped Mesa.

Continue along the Military Trail until you have reached the Apache Thunder God.

Go to the base of the mountain of the Thunder God; once at the base, follow the canyon in a northerly direction until it splits;

Take the "lesser of the two canyons" and continue.

You will have reached the base of the mine when you see the cabin of Peralta, the horizontal shaft, and the Old Spanish *arrastra*,

Near the top of the hill is the mouth of the mine.

You will know it for sure, as from the mouth you can see the Military Trail, but cannot see the mouth of the mine from the trail, and the mouth is at 4:00 to the Eye of the Needle.

That's it.

We began searching the maps of the Superstitions for topography that matched. We found the Eye of the Needle (Weaver's Needle); we found a Black Topped Mesa, and we knew where the Military trail went through. The north end, where the trail entered the Superstitions, was the Peralta Massacre Grounds, and the south end was what is now called the Peralta trailhead.

After hiking through this extremely hostile environment, sometimes from sunrise to sunset and often well into the dark, we were discouraged with our progress. We were happy: however, to return each day to the safety of our truck, but, it just didn't fit; it didn't feel right. I knew we would have to take a different approach. I scoured the notes from our readings to find any new clue that would position this site with greater accuracy.

I reread a repeated quote that, when Jacob rode off to fill his saddlebags, he was seen to ride east toward the Superstitions. When he returned, he was seen returning from the north down Central Avenue. It seemed to me that if his bags were empty and he knew he was being followed, he would ride in a false direction. When his burro was laden with the heavy ore and he had lost all followers, he would return by the shortest route possible from the north.

This revelation prompted us to jump in the truck and head to the Arizona State University library, second only in size to the Library of Congress. My son and I ran to the map division of the library. I was in search of two things; any antique maps of the territory and A.S.U.'s division of local stereoscopic photogrammetry. Is that a mouthful?

With a formal training as a civil engineer and an extensive knowledge of maps, I knew I had access to something the prospectors of the late 1800s didn't have access to; satellite photography of Arizona.

The Geologic Survey has photographed the United States many times over as a continuing process started by Thomas Jefferson, our nation's first land surveyor. Jefferson was commissioned with determining, now that we had won our country, just what it was we had won.

Stereographic photogrammetry is just a fancy name for two high altitude, high-resolution photographs taken simultaneously from two slightly different angles so

that the photos could be placed in a reader and detailed maps could be generated from them.

We went first to the antique map section to search for landmark names. I deliberately wanted to look at some of the first maps drawn during the earliest times, as some names could have changed over the century since that map had been created. I was right. There were significant differences between the maps of the 1850s and maps of the 1990s. Things changed.

The most important change I found was the name of the noncontiguous mountain range surrounding the Phoenix Valley. An 1850 map labeled the entire range the "Superstitions." These mountains got their name from the eastern section of what today remains the Superstitions due to the Apache Indians. Whenever an Anglo/European settler or occasional Pima Indian wandered into the Superstitions, often they never returned. Usually they were ambushed by Apaches, killed, and stripped of anything of value. No one was really sure what happened. They went in but never came out.

It seemed that the westerly part of the Superstitions had changed its name to the McDowell Mountains. In 1858, after repeated and desperate requests to Washington for support from the U.S. Cavalry to protect the territory settlers and ranchers from Apache Indian attacks and to protect the Pima Indian tribe from continuous attacks, the U.S. Cavalry built Fort McDowell on the north side of the now McDowell Mountains along the Verde River.

Could this be a new clue? Could everyone have been starting from the Superstition Range's location at the time of Jacob Waltz's death, not when he arrived in Phoenix? Could it be in the "old" Superstitions? We then took the antique maps and compared them to today's stereo photographs to see if any of the landmarks agreed, but where to start. Well, we decided to start at the beginning with the Military Trail. But the Military trail runs along the Verde and Salt Rivers, 30 miles to the east. Military Trail? What about the now Pima Road? Pima Road was a trail used by the military to ride to and from Fort McDowell and the Pima Indian tribal camp. Even though it wasn't an interstate trail, it was a military trail.

What about the Eye of the Needle? We found that the Miner's Needle had changed names when Weaver's Needle became more famous. It was now called

Pinnacle Peak. The first and second landmarks fell into place, the Military Trail and the Eye of the Needle. But were we stretching?

The third landmark was the Sombrero. We couldn't find any reference on any map to a Sombrero. However, when we drove along Pima Road the first time we had physically searched for the mine, we clearly saw the Sombrero, just north of Pinnacle Peak atop the McDowell Mountains.

The next landmark was the Black Topped Mesa. It was called Black Top Mesa! Right on the map! There it was! We immediately planned for the following Saturday, a field trip to actually locate these landmarks.

The following Saturday we packed the four-wheel drive and headed out. We had decided to bring a different friend to share the adventure every time we visited the Lost Dutchman. We drove along Pima Road all the while looking out the right windows to locate any landmark possible, first Pinnacle Peak, then Sombrero Mountain, and then 15 miles later, Black Top Mesa. But where was the next landmark, the Apache Thunder God? We eventually ran out of Pima Road.

We turned to the east-northeast. Often when the clues run out, you are left only with gut feeling, intuition. We continued to an area where we believed the Apache Thunder God could be located, but where? We didn't even know what we were looking for.

We parked the truck and headed out on foot. We split up and separated ourselves by about a half mile so we could cover more ground. We scoured the canyons in a northwesterly direction for hours without any success, just washes, rocks, cactus, and heat, a lot of heat.

After many hours of climbing and hiking, we found ourselves on the top of two mountains separated by approximately three quarters of a mile. As I looked to the northeast I could see my son and our friends and got their attention through a war hoop I learned while working on construction sites as a surveyor to signal over the sound of the heavy construction equipment.

I got their attention and began to signal them to return to the truck, our home base, as we were unsuccessful in locating the Apache Thunder God. I was very hot, very dry, and very hungry. As I motioned for them to return, I looked past

them and noticed something off in the distance. It was about a full mile beyond where the two were approaching. It was a rock about the size of a Greyhound bus standing on end on a very steep mountain. There were no other rocks in sight let alone one balanced on its end on the side of a steep incline at the top of a mountain. And its natural features looked like the face on the nickel! The unmistakable nose, the cheeks, the hair in a ponytail, even the feather!

This was it! Unquestionably! The Apache Thunder God! I motioned for them to turn around. I was frantic. Look, look, I yelled. They couldn't hear me from this distance. I was persistent. They finally turned, looked, and began jumping up and down. That's it!

We met back at the truck and put it into four-wheel drive and headed for that hill. We drove as far as the truck could take us. We got out and hiked the rest of the way on foot. This really was it! It was unmistakable.

When we reached the top of the hill overlooking the Thunder God, we found what we later identified as a 1,000 year old Indian settlement of the Hohokam tribe that had vanished from Arizona nearly 800 years ago. It was 20 or so stone foundations of rooms they probably used in religious ceremonies celebrating the Thunder God. The settlement and Thunder God have since become a historic landmark. From this view, we could see the Military Trail along the Verde River. The Military Trail! We hit pay dirt!

I located a previously undiscovered stone in the ground on top of that mountain that had four strange indentations deliberately carved into the stone, one hole in the center, and the three equal distances from one another. The stone itself had been discovered in the past, but its purpose was not determined. I later identified its purpose for the historical society. With my engineering/surveying background, I quickly recognized it as a surveyor's benchmark.

By setting up a transit on this spot, Peralta could sight every one of the 18 Peralta mine locations. A transit essentially is a telescope mounted on a graduated horizontal dial. Placing this transit over a known point, setting the scope to a landmark starting point, and turning the scope a predetermined angle or number of gradations, Peralta could find the exact location of any other object.

We worked our way back down into the canyon to follow the remaining clues. We proceeded up the main canyon and found a very distinct branch and continued in a northerly direction taking the lesser of the two canyons. We hiked for several hours more but ran out of daylight and stamina. As close as we were, we were forced to return home and postpone the most exciting segment of our journey for another weekend.

Several weekends had passed before we could schedule another time that agreed with all of our schedules. But, we were ready.

We finally got the truck back out to where we left off. We proceeded north up the lesser of the two canyons for what seemed forever. We climbed higher and higher into the hot, cactus covered hills, winding as we went.

We came upon what seemed to be the end of the canyon when we first noticed it. It was an *arrastra*, a Spanish *arrastra*. An *arrastra* is a circular trough about 10' in diameter and about 1' deep. In the center is a wooden stake where a mule or burro would be leashed. This animal would walk around and around this trough dragging large stones that would roll across the ore smashing it into smaller and smaller pieces until the ore was nearly dust where it then would be sluiced or panned. Sluicing is a process of placing the dust in a container and stirring it up while water would run over the dust. The water would wash away the lighter materials leaving only the heavier gold in the bottom.

This was it. Where was the Spanish cabin? It was nowhere in sight. We combed the area until we found it, or at least the rock foundation of what was once a cabin. Another important key was the horizontal mineshaft. As we made our way around the base of the hill that rose some 200 feet higher than our already high elevation, we approached the northwest side of the hill. There it was, the 200-year-old Peralta gold mine shaft.

I entered the tunnel and began walking. In the ceiling of the shaft you could see a vein of rose quartz with a coloring of the black hematite. This was the indicator of a vein that gold resided in. I went deeper into the shaft until day all but disappeared. I did have the foresight to bring a small flashlight. I went approximately 180 feet into the darkness of that 200-year-old shaft. I was surprised at how hot and humid it was inside. I also was surprised at how many mosquitoes were in there. It was infested. Except for a small amount of rubble on the cave floor, there

was not much to see. We reversed direction and headed back out into the daylight. Our eyes were squinting to see in the bright desert sun again.

We walked around in awe as we surveyed the collection of landmarks and reveled in the history surrounding us. When we regained concentration, we knew what was left. We needed to locate the main mine opening 150 feet above us on the steep hill.

I was the first to climb the hill while the others checked the maps. It was a difficult climb up the side of that steep grade. The rocks were loose and every step caused a cascade of loose rocks below. Only one could climb at a time. Even standing at the base of the hill was dangerous due to the falling rocks.

The loose stones were the result of more than one hundred years of mining. This is called a tailings pile and is found at all mining sites. It is the material drawn out of the mine and deposited down along the hillside similar to the mounds of soil next to an anthill.

Out of breath and precariously clinging to the loose rocks around me, I inched my way further and further up the side of that mountain moving ever closer to a landing just ahead. I approached the crest of the landing working my way on all fours. I crested the hill, stood up, and found myself looking into the barrel of a 44-magnum revolver with a very angry man with no teeth at the other end. I froze. Behind him was another man with a look as angry as the first.

I knew I needed to think quickly or think my last. I quickly yelled; "Hey guys, how the hell are you? Just out taking some pictures of the desert landscape and happened upon this hill. Anything here worth shooting?"

After careful consideration and a very uncomfortable silence, the gun slowly lowered and the owner said; "No, not much worth shooting here." I finally was able to begin breathing in some very badly needed air. I casually pulled up a rock and asked what they were doing there, knowing full well they were mining.

He approached me and introduced himself as Bill Scovel; the man with the trigger finger was Ed. He asked if I knew the significance of this site and I felt it better at that moment to play stupid rather than play dead. I said; "No is there any significance to this area?"

He asked if I had ever heard of the Lost Dutchman. I explained that I have heard of him and was aware of the history of his find some 35 miles to the east in the Superstition Mountains. Bill asked if I wanted to hear a story and I asked him if I could invite my now all but disappeared friends up to share in his story. Bill agreed and we watched as the two made their way up the hill continuously sending stones down on one another. After several minutes we were all together at the top of the hill when Bill, with Ed cautiously watching us from the side, began his tale of the Lost Dutchman. My friend secretly videotaped this entire encounter.

He shared the Peralta family history; he told us of the knife fight in Sonora; he shared the research he had done over nearly a twenty-year period of his life that eventually led him to this site. He verified everything we had learned during the previous weeks that led us to the same conclusion. We never let on that we knew exactly why he was there and that we were there for the same purpose.

Bill explained that just several months earlier, he had staked a claim with the Department of the Interior to claim the mineral rights to whatever he found. He explained that all he needed to do was pay a nominal \$25 fee and work the site. If he did not work the site for one year, the rights would revert to the Department of the Interior and would then be available for another stake.

I asked two remaining questions that were still unanswered for me. Could you see the Military Trail from the mouth of the mine, and what was that Eye of the Needle at 4:00 o'clock stuff all about? Bill asked me to carefully step approximately ten feet to the east and he pointed down the canyon to a location about two miles away near a water source. He explained that was the interstate military trail that ran along the Verde River. From the Military Trail you could not identify the mouth of the mine, but the trail was clearly visible from the mouth of the mine.

Bill then asked if I knew where north was and could I face north and point in that direction. I turned to face north and quickly pointed in that direction. He then said that if I were to assume north as noon, where would 4:00 be located and could I point in that direction.

I turned to approximate four o'clock on an imaginary horizontal clock face and pointed. Bill asked that I look far off in that direction. He said, "Look over forty

miles in that direction and tell me what you see.” I looked and I squinted, and looked some more. Finally, way off in the distance, I saw it. As plain as could be at exactly 4 o’clock on my imaginary dial, was Weaver’s Needle. As plain as could be! I found it! The Lost Dutchman’s Gold Mine!

But, where was the mine? There was only this small level area and a slight indentation in the mountainside. I asked Bill if this was really the location. Was this really covered up by the Apache Indians? Bill explained that in 1872 there was a large earthquake that hit central Arizona and obviously collapsed the opening to the mine. This quite possibly could have collapsed the entire mineshaft.

I asked why he was so sure that this was the location of the Lost Dutchman Mine. Bill paused, looked around at the rubble surrounding his feet. He picked up a rock and his mining hammer/pick and gave it a whack! He turned his back toward the sun, held this random stone up, and began to move it in front of his eye as if he was hoping something would reflect from it. After a moment or two, Bill handed me the rock and said; “You tell me, is this the right location?”

I took the small broken stone from Bill’s calloused hands and looked carefully at it myself. To my amazement, it reflected a brilliant gold yellow flash as I turned it from side to side in the sun. It was gold, flecked gold! Randomly selected from the ground cover of thousands of similar stones, that stone resides in a place of honor above my fireplace.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon exchanging ideas and clues on the history of the Lost Dutchman. Bill explained many other ancient Spanish landmarks such as the “Los Gatos” or “The Cats,” a rock in the shape of a cougar or puma, or mountain lion, and many others. Bill then climbed down the hill with us and drove us to a second location several canyons to the north where he took us into another horizontal shaft near a mobile home he had been living in since his retirement from the Department of Public Works at the City of Tempe.

Bill showed us where Jacob Waltz lived while mining his ore. He showed us pieces of the wood stove that Jacob bought from Julia Thomas over 100 years earlier. Bill showed us a half dozen “nuggets” of pure gold he had found at that very site.

We spent the rest of that afternoon and well into the night exchanging stories and building a friendship. From time to time I would hike far up into those mountains to check on Bill and to bring him food and to monitor his progress. Bill's tenacious. Once he exclaimed to me that he would relocate that gold vein if he had to remove that entire mountain stone by stone. I believe he will.

In February of 1994, I arranged for the local NBC affiliate to film the entire story. It was great. We filmed Bill, the mineshafts, everything. The last I heard NBC was negotiating with National Geographic to produce a special. I lost contact with NBC. I haven't yet seen a National Geographic special. It was, however; certified by the ex-governor of the state of Arizona who is the leading historian on Arizona history and especially the Lost Dutchman legend.

I wish Bill all the luck in the world. It was a great experience.

# *JOURNEY*



My story is one of journey, both in time and dimension. A journey within one's own mind, a quest to excite the senses. The search of our five known senses and the exploration of new ones.

To inhale a soft breeze, smell the scent of salt, and view the color of green, to hear sounds normally inaudible, in deafening proportions, life has taken on a new perspective.

The soft cry of a graceful seagull can resemble thunder crashing through the canyons. The gentle and silent breeze can caress you as a cascade of cool water during a spring thaw. In this world of eccentricity, you can feel the warmth of sunlight embrace your body, much like the pulsating warmth of your own heart.

It is also a festival of light. While traveling through this new region of the mind, cities, towns, and villages can be viewed differently. The familiar locales dwindle and fade into obscurity where once again they become part of nature and the contour of the land.

This is a place where the immense meets the boundless. The only distinguishable line between the two is the shore, or the reality of your mind.

In this existence where responsibility seems to become oblique, your mere thoughts are louder than words. The feeling of serenity is overwhelming, where you and nature become one and you take temporary command.

But, this feeling of unity is a pseudo-confidence. At any time, Mother Nature can change her mind and release all the fury of a hurricane or the destructive power of a tidal wave. Mother Nature has compassion as all mothers do. She can teach us that we must observe and respect her. While in this state of anxiety, the senses take on a totally new context once again. The potency of input becomes appalling. Serenity is replaced by restlessness, almost fear.

The inertia of the waves beneath me as they pound against the protective hull, the yawing of my ship as the wind beats against the cloth sails, the rudder being pulled from my strained hand—these sights and sounds are that of the inevitable destruction of my world.

The snapping of the taut sails in the wind is as a great pine crashing to the fern covered floor below.

I feel the cold spray of salt water as liquid mountains hurl themselves at my bow and with the feeling of each impact; I sense the bitter taste in my mouth of salt and fear. The reality of the shore seems a millennium away.

When the stress heightens to a point where my ship cries out for mercy, and when the mast and rigging can tolerate no more of Mother Nature's abuse, her compassion is revealed.

The sun breaks through the dark clouds, the wind diminishes, and the waves come to rest. The sails become limp with fatigue and the seagull's plaintive cry is heard once more.

# *STONEHENGE*



Dee...Dee...Dee! Dee...Dee...Dee!

My alarm on the nightstand went off about 4:00 am London time. I was still on Arizona time. It was raining hard and the sun had not yet risen.

I made my way to the shower and quickly got dressed into my suit for a meeting later today. I grabbed my briefcase and headed to the parking lot to locate my borrowed British automobile.

I ran through the rain as quickly as I could to the car door, inserted the key, opened it, and jumped in. I found myself sitting in the passenger side of the car. If I weren't so tired, or wet, or knew I would have to get back out of the car and go around to get behind the wheel, I probably would have thought this funny.

I reached for the key and found the cigarette lighter. I reached for the radio and hit my hand on the door. I knew this was going to take some getting used to. I finally found the windshield, no, the windscreen wipers, headlights and headed out into that rainy British darkness.

I found my way through the many roundabouts and through the narrow village streets with the rain pounding on the windshield as only it can in Great Britain. I made my way to the M-3 or, M-1 or, M-something and headed east. It really is unusual to drive on the left. All the while you feel that the oncoming traffic will suddenly appear in your lane.

I drove for over an hour along the M, further out into the countryside. I knew I was driving deeper into the rural part of England not because I could see through the night or the rain, but by the number of lights reflecting back to my eyes.

I carefully searched every sign looking for the one that was mine, the exit to take to my final destination. Mile after mile passed without change before I saw my exit. I turned off the M down onto a two-lane paved road that winded itself over the rolling hills in an east-by-northeast direction. It was similar to driving a gentle roller coaster over those many hills.

After traveling out into the farms of northern England for another hour, I saw the final sign I was seeking: "Stonehenge." As I pulled my small auto off the road into a parking area, I wondered how I might see this strange relic of antiquity with the rain and all. I gathered my thoughts, along with my camera and noticed the hard driving rain was becoming a softer rhythmic pitter-patter that seemed to complement the rhythm of the wipers. The rain slowly became an occasional thump of a large raindrop beating whole notes to the wipers quarter-time melody.

How perfect, I thought. The rain had stopped at the most opportune time imaginable. I stepped from the car to find myself transported to another place in another time. It was still very dark, but now I could hear the bah of one sheep; no, three; no there were maybe a hundred as my ears became more sensitive to the many sounds that cascaded throughout the countryside. There must be hundreds, I thought, some faint, maybe at a distance, some louder, much closer, I assumed. The air was filled with a strong aroma of wet wool.

I walked along a barbed wire fence that separated me from the sheep in the darkness until my eye caught something to my left. It was the first spark of the morning sun rising over the silhouette of a large softly rolling hill. As I watched, the spark became a flash of light, now accentuating the textures of the grass on the hill. I could see only textures. There were no colors visible.

As that flash of orange/pink light shot across the grassy meadow, it was interrupted by something to my right. It was something large and cold and geometric. It was the stones of Stonehenge. The textures of the huge granite monoliths became evident. It was nearly breath taking. It was I, a thousand sheep in the meadow, Stonehenge, and the first crack of morning.

The sun was rising fast enough to actually see the shadows move across the meadow. The dark outlines of the sheep became shorter and shorter as the sun rose on its azimuth. The color of the grasslands began to appear; the sheep were off-white with black faces that were all staring at me. The granite became gray with the hand-hewn indentations and imperfections accentuated by the severe angle of the sunlight.

The sun continued to rise giving more and more color to the landscape. I now could feel the slight warmth of sunlight on my face, removing the cool damp moisture of the earlier rain. Because of the sunlight caught in the droplets of rain, the grass glistened as if covered with broken glass. Some droplets reflected the colors from thousands of tiny spectrums. Minute reflections were now visible from the backs of the sheep as the wet wool reflected pinhead size rainbows back to my eyes. The sights, smells, and sounds were surrealistic.

The sky was changing from black to an indigo, with orange and pink swatches that streaked across the sky. The rain clouds changed into individual bursts of warm orange cotton candy.

My eyes then wandered back to the main subject matter, Stonehenge itself. As I watched, the shadows given off from the large obelisks slowly moved across the meadow, getting progressively shorter and shorter. I could almost see the Druid people moving about within this structure, busying themselves for the winter solstice, or herding their sheep through the meadow.

I could almost imagine the Druids struggling with crude instruments that consisted of mainly stone tools, tree branch levers, hemp rope, and snow, expending massive amounts of human labor, dragging and lifting these multi-ton objects off the grassy ground. I contemplated Von Danekan's theories of extra terrestrials' assistance in the creation of the sundial. I tried to imagine using today's heavy equipment, cranes, and bulldozers to lift and construct this mega-monument. I became lost as these images swirled around in my mind.

I suddenly heard the loud bah of a sheep that transported me back to the English countryside. This friendly sheep was right in front of me with his nose nudging my arm. I was startled to be brought back so abruptly. It was daylight. The sky was a rich blue. The clouds turned to occasional puffs of pure white wool. It was still only the sheep, Stonehenge, and I. I paused for one last look, knowing I

might never have the opportunity to view this spectacular sight again. I knew I would never share such an emotional, almost religious connection to these blocks of stone.

For me, it was moving. As I drove off to retrace my steps to the tiny village of Farnborough, I had a sense of peace and security in the knowledge of what man can do and that a synergy exists in man, where we are more than just the sum of our social parts.

# *THE SWEAT*



It was still very dark as I backed my Blazer from my driveway. It was pre-dawn. I noticed that the air was cool with dew. I felt the moisture on my skin. I realized how unusual this was for the southwest. It was obvious that the summer months had waned and the cooler, more pleasant months of winter were close at hand.

As I ventured out into that pre-dawn night, I calculated my journey from the Phoenix area to the heart of northern Arizona's Navajo Nation's reservation, or the Res as it is often referred to in the southwest. This journey was one that would encompass several hundred miles and place me in the Res around 10:00 A.M. if I hurried.

As I drove off into the night, I wondered what was in store for me over the next eight to ten hours. Why was there so much mystery surrounding this Sweat? I continued to go over and over in my mind the little information that was shared with me the week before.

In a few short hours, I was to participate in a genuine 10,000-year-old La Coda religious ceremony. This ceremony has been passed down, generation after generation of Navajo Indian Medicine men. This day I was chosen to be one of only a few white men to ever witness this ceremony, let alone participate in it.

The medicine man I was to meet this morning was a tenth generation Navajo Medicine Man. His father was one of the Tribe's most famous medicine men ever and was employed by the United States government to negotiate tribal peace during wartime. I was emphatically instructed not to ask questions of the Navajo. It was improper.

After many hours of driving, I arrived at the freeway exit along the famous and historic Route 66. I turned north out into the desolation of what is the Navajo/Hopi Res. The Navajo Res is situated southwest of the Four Corners. The Four Corners is the only place in the 50 United States where four states touch, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. It is also the place where the Bubonic Plague or Black Death has resurfaced along with the always fatal Hampa Virus.

If God were to allow the resurrection of such demons, this is where he would choose. The landscape in the early morning sun was surrealistic. The dry, high steppe desert appeared nearly devoid of any life. The most astonishing features of the landscape were its many extinct volcanoes. Strange individual mountains spring up from the desert floor in one of two science fiction colors, a fiery brick red, or a black as dark as pitch, both colors representative of hell itself.

The map told me that I had reached the end of the paved road and that I must now venture off into the desert and across the Res. I made the appropriate turn and headed out into the desolation. The creosote bushes, juniper, and the cactus were the only signs of life.

In the rearview mirror, there trailed a billow of dust reminiscent of the old westerns where the Calvary was riding in great numbers just over the hill. The road was rough and full of ruts that required my constant driving attention. I could taste the dust in my mouth as it wafted through the dashboard vents, filling the inside compartment of my truck.

Mile after mile I drove without a sign of life, only the reminders of an era of extreme volcanism and the terrible catastrophes they bring. The many *calderas* ranging in size from hills to mountains, staggered across the landscape in no apparent order. The road winded its way deeper and deeper into desolation between these monuments of disaster.

I carefully followed my map that was faxed to my home computer just the evening before. It seemed strange to be following the information on a document that was received over the telephone lines into my home personal computer, converted into a fax format, and printed out on a laser printer. There was a feeling of contradiction between this high tech representation of information that led me into a world that has changed little over the past 10,000 years. I imagined step-

ping back in time and picturing this desert landscape as it was before Christopher Columbus ever reached the Americas. I suddenly realized that I was to participate today in the same ritual that this ancient culture was performing five hundred years earlier. Little has changed in this world of volcanoes.

There were no signs of man's influence on nature to be found in any direction. No telephone or cable TV lines, no homes or paved roads, no street signs or traffic lights, only the crude fax I was holding in my hand and the dry dirt road ahead of me.

After what seemed to be an eternity, I came to the end of the road I was following. In front of me was an octagonal log cabin of sorts or Hogan as the Navajo call their homes. It was made of rough-hewn logs with adobe clay as mortar with only a few small windows and a door. I knew I had reached my destination.

I stepped from my now dust covered truck and closed the door behind me. The first thing I noticed was that my ears began to ring from silence. There was nearly an absolute absence of noise. It was disquieting. Once my ears adjusted to the lack of input, I could only hear the very faint sound of the cool breeze as it passed over the juniper bushes around me. Occasionally, I could hear the restive cry of a hawk passing overhead. Although the cry was barely audible, it seemed to be a scream in contrast with the silence.

The sun was bright and warm upon my skin. It made the cool 58 degrees air temperature more comfortable. The dust began to settle back to the desert floor from where it came. It left its layer on the truck and me as if to coat us and make us one with the land. As I cautiously approached the Hogan, the door suddenly opened and a woman received me. She obviously was a Native American. She was wearing a plaid shirt with jeans. She was small in stature with jet-black flowing hair and the traditional wide cheeks of the Navajo with rich brown skin and eyes without color—just black hollows, but she had a certain warmth.

She greeted me with a friendly smile and a hello. She told me her name was Teresa and she had been expecting me and was glad to see I was able to follow her bother's map.

Teresa invited me into her home. It was very simple by modern expectations. It was a simple, round room. On one side there was a bed, a standard double bed.

As my eyes slowly moved in a clockwise direction I noticed a dresser, then a kitchen table with two chairs, a kitchen sink without running water, and a drain that exited through the wall with a two-burner propane stove. There was a desk and finally a television. It was playing the Sunday morning football rivalry. I think it actually was the Red Skins.

In the center of the room were two chairs that swiveled. I know they swiveled because just as I noticed them, the occupants turned and faced me. On the left was Sam, the medicine man I had heard so much about. Sam had a Graham Green quality about himself with his black hair pulled back in a ponytail down to the middle of his back. In the other chair was a boy of about 10, Sam's son. The boy had all the traditional Native American features in a way that was softened only as youth could. His cultural beauty was stunning. I stared and studied his face for minutes, until he said hello and quickly turned back to watch his football game.

I remarked about having a television when I saw no electric lines. Teresa explained that although they observed the Navajo way of life, she did indeed have electrical conveniences for her TV, VCR and especially her portable computer she uses when teaching at the university at Flagstaff.

Teresa then asked that I follow her outside. Before I allowed her to exit the only door in her Hogan, I presented her with a basket of bird feathers and fruit as I was instructed. She and her mother used the feathers in making ceremonial dance apparel. The fruit was difficult to get on the reservation and was always welcome, and the basket just comes in handy out there. She thanked me and motioned me to follow. I followed her around the back of the Hogan and up a slight grade through the desert. I could now smell burning wood, a campfire, or such.

As we broke through the desert brush, I could see another Native American who was tall and slender, approximately in his late thirties. I found it difficult to distinguish their ages, as I was unfamiliar with the characteristics of age in their culture.

This man did not notice us at first as he was stoking the fire. He was placing large roots and stumps of the native pinion tree and juniper bush on the then raging fire. The flames rose 15 to 20 feet into the desert sky.

As we approached, I could feel the intense heat of the fire that felt comforting after the cool breeze of the desert that I had experienced throughout the morning. After a moment, he turned and greeted us. His name was Gary and was engaged to Teresa. They were to be married the very next weekend.

From a large plastic tank he carried on his truck, Gary began siphoning water into a fifty-gallon drum conveniently placed just outside the circle of clearing near the fire. It ran through my mind how names like Gary, Teresa, and Sam seemed out of place in this land that time has passed. When I asked one of the very few questions I had dared to ask, Teresa explained that they were only names they used while off the Res while in the world of the white man. Her name was the equivalent of Soaring Eagle.

Teresa motioned me to sit on the ground at the edge of the clearing. In the shade of the desert juniper, she explained a portion of her history as a medicine woman. She told me how she grew up in a home where her father was a very powerful and respected member of her Navajo/Hopi tribe. He was well respected by the United States government as well. Her father was concerned with how the traditions, ceremonies, and language had been slowly becoming a way of the past and quickly being lost.

I briefly explained how my grandmother could speak Ukrainian. My mother could understand it only. I could only repeat a dozen or so words that were mostly food and cusses. I was somewhat embarrassed by our generation's lack of interest in keeping each of our own cultures alive. I quickly realized how each of us was allowing our traditions to become homogeneous and soon there would be no tradition.

She explained how her father was torn between teaching her the art of the Navajo Medicine Man and the contradiction of the Tribe's acceptance of a woman in such an important role. He chose to teach her brother, Sam, the secrets and the rituals, and teach her the medicine. She learned how to identify each plant that grows in the desert. Which one could harm you, and which ones could heal you. She learned how to brew the teas from the leaves and roots, and eventually, she learned the prayers that accompanied the healing. When she had reached her teens, she had become a true Navajo Medicine Woman.

Both she and her brother practiced the art for the tribe, but also were driven by the need to share their culture with other Indian tribes throughout the U.S. She shared, on a limited basis, some of her culture with the white man. She taught a course in Herbalology at the university. Her field trips included drives into the Res where she walked and identified the local flora and medicinal properties.

As I listened and looked through the agitated flames I could see a smaller adobe structure opposite the fire. It was made from tree limbs and mud. It stood no more than four feet high, and eight feet wide. It was made from mud and looked much like an igloo without the front antechamber. This must be where the sweat takes place. I expected a much larger structure. This was called the Sweat Hogan.

Teresa concluded her current thought about the time her brother Sam and his son arrived at the camp. She motioned to the boy to assist her with some yet undefined task. From behind the Sweat Hogan, she and the boy pulled a roll of animal skins. They place this roll over the door and secured it with some bailing wire that had been placed at the top of the Hogan. She dropped the skins and carefully rolled them back up to the top of the Hogan exposing the opening within.

While feverishly working the fire with a pitchfork, Gary signaled for her and the boy to step back. He then pushed the pitchfork into the base of this inferno and pulled from it a stone. This stone was approximately ten to twelve inches in diameter, and appeared to be volcanic in origin, and very hot. It crackled.

Gary retrieved five or six more of these heated stones from the fire and placed them along the inside wall of the Sweat Hogan. He then unrolled the skins to seal the opening tight. Teresa completed the last detail before the ceremony could begin. She snapped off a sprig of juniper and placed it on the inside wall of the Hogan just above the heated stones. This was to become aromatic to clear our lungs and our minds of pollution.

We all sat on the ground in silence. I listened to the breeze through the brush between the crackle of the fire. I could smell the smoke mixed with the scent of sage and juniper. I watched the flames lick the desert sky and a hawk slowly circle overhead as if to question our motives. The sky was huge and blue with only the full moon breaking its continuous color. The moon shown bright as it slowly

moved down the western horizon between two large, jet-black volcanic *calderas*. I was relaxed but anxious.

Teresa broke the silence by instructing me to get my stuff. I was instructed to bring shorts, a towel, and a jug of water. I quickly followed her instructions and returned to the clearing in minutes. She wished me well and told me that women do not participate with the men. The men were to strip to their shorts or loin-cloth and when the men were done, the women could have their ceremony that was practiced in the nude.

Teresa turned and headed down the path and quickly disappeared from sight. We men, Sam, Gary, the boy, and myself, sat in a circle when Gary reached into a knapsack and pulled from it an elaborate peace pipe. The pipe was hand carved in the form of an eagle. The majestic beak of the bird was the opening and it had one wing on the left that extended out four or so inches. In the shoulder blades, there was a vertical tube where Gary placed some dried leaves of unknown origin. He handed this elegant eagle and a disposable butane lighter to me to extend the honor of lighting the peace pipe.

He further instructed me to puff in as a steam locomotive would puff steam. Don't inhale, just hold it in your mouth for a moment, and release it. Nervously, I agreed. I felt that I could not dishonor my host by refusing. I carefully lit the lighter and puffed. I never did conclude what exactly was in that bowl we were smoking. I guessed it might be some mild marijuana mixed with some other indigenous dried leaves. I was sure it was not tobacco; however, I never felt that I was under the influence of any narcotic.

When the pipe had completed three circles around the party, it was extinguished and placed back into the knapsack. I was, in fact, extremely relaxed but still anxious. At this point, the animal skins were carefully rolled to the top of the Hogan, and Gary bent down and entered with a motion to me to do the same.

It was really small in there and very hot. It was too small for us to sit Indian style. We sat with our backs against the wall and our knees curled up against our chests. Once all members were secure inside our Hogan, the animal skins were dropped and it became blacker than night. With my hand held directly in front of my face, I could see no movement.

The heat was intense. It must have been nearly 130 degrees F, but it was a dry heat. I was more anxious than ever. The only sound I could hear was the crackling of the stones as they slowly cooled giving off their heat to the surrounding adobe. Within just a few minutes, I felt myself beginning to sweat more than I thought I could. The sweat began running down my face and into my eyes. As quickly as I wiped my brow, the sweat would run down into my eyes again. I could actually hear the others sweat. I could hear it dripping. I could hear it sizzle as it hit the heated rocks. There was no odor whatsoever. The only smell that could be detected was the slight scent of the juniper branch placed above the rocks.

Just then the silence was broken with Gary's voice in a native chant. I was reminded of my youth while sitting in a pew in my family's Catholic Church listening to the priest saying mass in Latin or when I attended Synagogue, and heard the Torah recited in Hebrew. It was Greek to me.

Gary continued to pray in his native Navajo. It was melodic and mystical. Hearing these chants in total darkness with the intense heat was intoxicating. It continued for twenty or so minutes until I felt I could stand the heat no longer. Right at this point the chanting stopped. It was replaced by total silence once again. Several moments later, Gary instructed us to exit the Hogan.

As I exited the superheated adobe building, I felt the rush of cold desert air against my wet skin. It was exhilarating and shocking. When we all had exited and were standing facing each other, Gary instructed us about the next part of the ancient ritual. He explained that the Sweat was to purify the soul and to purify the body. The sweat would rid the body of any unwanted toxins as they are brought to the skin. To remove these toxins permanently they needed to be removed from the skin or they would be absorbed back through the skin in to the body.

While still wet with sweat, I was instructed to lie down in the desert, roll around in the dirt until I was completely covered, and literally wash my body with dirt. This seemed an unlikely way to cleanse my body of impurities, but I cooperated. I watched as the others lay down and covered themselves in dirt. I did the same. At first the light brown powder turned into a dark brown paste or mud. As I added more and more dirt and rubbed my body with this dust, it became lighter and dryer. Eventually, I was dry with just a thin layer of dust that could be wiped

away. I was surprised. I lay there on the desert floor for nearly a half hour feeling the warmth of the sun and the coolness of the desert breezes. I became aware of every sound, every sight, every feeling, and every part of my body. I lay there anticipating what was next.

Gary arose from the dirt and added several new logs to the fire and stirred the existing ashes. When he was satisfied with the intensity of the fire, he removed three or four more heated stones and added them to the ones in the Hogan. When he was satisfied with these newly added stones, we were instructed to reenter the Hogan. The young boy did not join us this second time in the Sweat.

Once the animal skins were in place it became obvious that these lava stones were heated hotter than the first time. It was the first time I saw a stone hot enough to glow. It was fluctuating between bright red and white-hot. It screamed, as it cooled, like hot steel or hot glass. We settled in. This time Gary began chanting almost singing the words.  $\text{AN}^{??}(C) \text{IAN}^{?}\text{IAN}^{?}\text{a}\text{A}\text{A}\text{Noei}\text{AL}^{?} \text{AN}^{?}\text{AN}(C)\text{A}^{\wedge} \text{A}^{\wedge}??\text{A}\text{~}^{?} \text{Ah}\text{Ag}^{?}\text{a}\text{A}\text{a}^{?}\text{E}\text{ANa}\text{A}\text{a}^{?} \text{IAN}^{?}\text{C}(C)^{?}\text{AO}^{?} \text{AOc}^{?} \text{Ae}\text{A} \text{N}(C)\text{a}\text{A}\text{a}\text{CC}^{?}\text{Ci}\text{AL}^{3/4}\text{a}^{\text{e}}\text{AL}\text{As}\text{C}\text{A}\text{so}\text{AL}$

When we tolerated as much heat as one could stand, Gary instructed us to again exit the Hogan. We crawled out into the cold desert air, lay down, and washed ourselves in the dust from the desert floor.

My awareness became even more acute. I was sensitive to the ancient surroundings now more than ever. I felt for the first time that I belonged there, that I was part of the nature that surrounded me. For the next forty-five minutes I lay there appreciating how I fit into my own life. My purposes became clear. Solutions were simply remembered.

After a third session in the sweat with more enlightening chanting and discussion, we were instructed to exit the Hogan for the last time. We took turns siphoning the cold water from the fifty-five gallon drum into a five pound coffee can. Once we had our can full, we poured the icy cold water over our heads to cleanse ourselves of the sweat, dust, and burdens we had brought with us. Solemnly we walked in single file down the path back to where my vehicle was parked.

I changed back into the clothing I had been wearing earlier that morning. Once dressed, I sought out the others and thanked them for sharing such an intimate and ancient experience. They smiled and invited me back any time I wished.

As I drove off the reservation and back into the civilization I was so accustomed to, I reflected on the events of this day. I realized that once you have spent most of a day in total darkness, sweating in a hot Hogan, chanting with nearly naked Native Americans, your perspective would be forever changed.

# *EL NIÑO SANK THE TITANIC*



For Immediate Release  
Contact: Lon S. Safko  
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Dateline: March 6, 1998, San Diego, California—Amateur meteorologist, Lon S. Safko announced today that he my have discovered what he believes to be evidence linking the reoccurring weather event known as El Niño and the sinking of the R.M.S. Titanic on April 14, 1912 which resulted in the loss of more than 1,500 lives. The two biggest phenomena of the 1997/1998 winter season collided today in what can be described as astonishing, and an insight into the connection between El Niño and the Titanic.

The 1998 El Niño, which recently has been associated with severe storms and damage along the west coast of the United States and Mexico, has been blamed for everything from beach erosion to power outages, from disruption in telecommunications to air traffic delays, and now has an additional legacy, the sinking of the Titanic.

El Niño, a meteorological event causing warmer and wetter climates and global atmospheric weather patterns that repeat approximately every 14 years, has brought some of the most severe winter weather in recent history to the United States.

The R.M.S. Titanic which set sail on April 10, 1912, on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York, collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic, foundered at 2:20 A.M., on April 15, 1912, resulting in the loss of 1,522 souls.

Lon S. Safko, an amateur meteorologist, discovered evidence today leading to the connection of these seemingly unrelated events. While researching historic atmospheric data maintained by N.O.A.A. (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration), Safko recognized a direct correlation between the current warming trends experienced in the air and sea surface temperatures of the North Atlantic and the melting of the Arctic's icebergs which break off and float southward into the cross-Atlantic shipping channels.

Safko stated that: "It occurred to me that if this El Niño condition was evident during the 1911/1912 winter season, the North Atlantic would experience a much higher occurrence of rough icebergs in the shipping channel." Further research revealed that the North Atlantic did in fact experience an El Niño during the winter of 1911/1912 resulting in water temperatures as much as five degrees Celsius warmer than normal. Safko also recalled transcripts of testimony given during the United States Congressional hearing following the foundering of the Titanic, that other ship captains traversing the North Atlantic that season reported a significantly higher occurrence of ice. Safko further believes that this could, in part, account for Captain Edward J. Smith's complacency that fateful evening as the previous 14 years of commanding transatlantic vessels had exhibited much dryer, colder, ice-free, non-El Niño conditions.

Safko is currently exploring the possibility that La Niña, an equal and opposite event that affects cold and dry global weather patterns, could possibly be linked to the great drought of 1938, which is now known as the Dust Bowl of the Midwest.

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### ***El Niño Background***

El Niño is a disruption of the ocean-atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific having important consequences for weather around the globe. Among these consequences is increased rainfall across the southern tier of the U.S. and in Peru, and destructive flooding and drought in the west Pacific, sometimes associated with devastating brush fires in Australia. Observations of conditions in the tropical Pacific are considered essential for the prediction of short-term (a few months to one year) climate variations. To provide necessary data, NOAA operates a network of buoys, which measure temperature, currents, and winds in the equatorial band. These buoys daily transmit data, which are available to researchers and forecasters around the world in real time.

In normal, non-El Niño conditions, the trade winds blow towards the west across the tropical Pacific. These winds pile up warm surface water in the west Pacific, so that the sea surface is about 1/2 meter higher at Indonesia than at Ecuador. The sea surface temperature is about eight degrees C higher in the west, with cool temperatures off South America, due to an upwelling of cold water from deeper levels. This cold water is nutrient-rich, supporting high levels of primary productivity, diverse marine ecosystems, and major fisheries. Rainfall is found in rising air over the warmest water, and the east Pacific is relatively dry. The observations at 110 W show that the cool water (below about 17 degrees C, the black band in these plots) is within 50m of the surface.

During El Niño, the trade winds relax in the central and western Pacific leading to a depression of the thermocline in the eastern Pacific, and an elevation of the thermocline in the west. The observations at 110W show, for example, that during 1982-1983, the 17-degree isotherm dropped to about 150m in depth. This reduced the efficiency of upwelling to cool the surface and cut off the supply of nutrient rich thermocline water to the euphotic zone. The result was a rise in sea surface temperature and a drastic decline in primary productivity, the latter of which adversely affected higher trophic levels of the food chain including commercial fisheries in this region. The weakening of easterly trade winds during El Niño is evident in this figure as well. Rainfall follows the warm water eastward, with associated flooding in Peru and drought in Indonesia and Australia. The

eastward displacement of the atmospheric heat source overlaying the warmest water results in large changes in the global atmospheric circulation, which in turn force changes in weather in regions far removed from the tropical Pacific.

***El Niño and the Southern Oscillation: A Reversal of Fortune***  
***By Kimberly Amaral***

Flooding rains and warm weather in Peru wipe out the anchovy harvest. Torrential downpours and mudslides besiege southern California while the Northeast United States has fewer hurricanes and a mild winter. Droughts strike Indonesia, Africa, and Australia, all within the period of the same few months. Could all these events possibly be related?

Absolutely. In fact, it can happen about once every four to seven years with varying intensity. And it all can be attributed to the same event: the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

El Niño (meaning “The Little One” in Spanish for its tendency to arrive around Christmas) is characterized by a dwindling, or sometimes even a reversal of trade winds. Normally the winds blow east to west across the southern Pacific. These winds travel along the surface of the sea and bring warm surface water along with them to the western coasts.

As the warm surface water is pushed away from the coasts of Peru, colder, nutrient-rich water rushes up to take its place. The result is some of the coolest water found in the lower latitudes (sometimes dipping to 68 degrees F), and a plentiful plankton-filled feeding ground for the anchovy population on which Peruvians count for much of their economic survival. In the west, the warm water that’s pushed along raises sea levels. By the time winds reach Micronesia, the sea level has risen about three feet, and the water has warmed about seven degrees F.

But, during an El Niño, these trade winds relax, or even reverse, as was the case during the devastating 1982-1983 El Niño. Warm water sloshes back east in a vast, slow wave. Along the Peruvian coast, warm water builds up, driving the thermocline (the buffer zone between the upper layer of water and the frigid ocean below) down. The cooler, rich waters drop along with the thermocline, driving the anchovy population down with it, or killing off a large portion. (During the 1972 El Niño, the anchovy population dropped from 20 million to 2 mil-

lion). This in turn reduces the number of marine birds who feed on the anchovy. The birds' excrement (guano) produces deposits on the islands off the Peru coast, which, in the form of fertilizers, is another important economic asset of Peru.

Since the turn of the century, scientists believe that these phenomena occurred independently of any other weather patterns. But, in the last few decades, they have learned that pressure changes and wind currents also play a vital role. Part of this deals with the Southern Oscillation.

The Southern Oscillation is a seesaw of air pressures on the eastern and western halves of the Pacific. Normally a persistent high-pressure zone dominates the atmosphere above the eastern South Pacific, while a low-pressure zone dominates the west. These two systems are coupled. When the pressure rises in the east, it falls in the west and vice versa. To measure this coupling, meteorologists take the pressure at Easter Island (about 2,700 miles west of South America), and subtract it from the pressure at Darwin in northern Australia. From this they calculate the southern oscillation index.

Under normal conditions, this difference in pressures drives the trade winds from east to west along the equator. At the same time, high above the ocean surface, this wind circulation is completed as it continues to blow around from west to east. This convection of air is called the Walker Circulation (named after Sir Gilbert Walker, who first identified it in the 1920s).

But every four to seven years, the southern oscillation index drops sharply. The east end of the pressure seesaw goes down, the west end goes up, and the Walker Circulation collapses and sometimes even reverses direction. With the collapse of the winds comes the characteristic warm flow of water to the east. All of these elements combined form the phenomenon we call El Niño. A typical El Niño event lasts for 14-22 months; it decays when there is no longer enough warm water to sustain the cycle. There are, of course, exceptions to this: a wave of warm water from the 1982 El Niño, measuring only eight inches high in 1994 and traveling about five miles an hour, survived for 12 years.

Many have wondered what causes this abnormal string of events in the first place. Some attribute it to activity that occurs on the ocean floor. One scientist, Daniel Walker, proposed a connection between underwater earthquakes and the incidences of El Niño. Walker, a seismologist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa,

found that the timing of five Los Niños since 1964 coincides closely with the occurrence of earthquakes on the East Pacific Rise, a mountain chain on the ocean floor that passes just west of Easter Island. Walker says that if the volcanic heat were to reach the ocean surface, which would warm the air surrounding it, it could trigger an ENSO event. Most other scientists consider this an unlikely possibility: heat could not reach the surface quickly enough, and a rise of heat from the Pacific floor would have been noticed before.

“It’s a coupled ocean and atmosphere problem. The ocean is sensitive to the winds and the winds vary due to ocean temperatures,” says John Toole, an associate scientist in physical oceanography at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. Toole worked for several years on the Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere Programme (TOGA), a ten-year, international effort to understand tropical ocean and global atmosphere variability.

“I think the root cause of (El Niño) is buried in the ocean,” says Toole. “The long time scale for El Niño is fundamentally linked to the width of the Pacific and the time it takes for that information to propagate across the Pacific...The Pacific tries to respond on an annual time scale (with the sun), but it can’t because it’s too wide.” This, he says, causes anomalies like El Niño.

El Niño is not the only variation from the norm to occur in the Pacific. Sometimes, an anti-El Niño event, known as La Niña, will occur, where there is a cold phase along the eastern Pacific.

Like the rippling effect of a stone dropped into a pond, these events have also proven to have far-reaching global effects. El Niño events tend to dry out Australia and India while bringing heavy rains to the west coast of South and Central America. They also nudge the jet stream off course, supplying California with a more-than-healthy supply of rain, and suppressing Atlantic hurricanes. Scientists have also found a distinct correlation between the rise and fall of sea surface temperatures in the Pacific, and corn harvests in Zimbabwe. The link between the two is so tight, they could accurately predict Zimbabwean harvests for the last 20 years using El Niño data for the previous year.

The effects of El Niño have even been felt as far south as Antarctica. More than 6,000 kilometers away, Weddell seals feel the brunt of ENSO events. James W. Testa of the University of Alaska in Fairbanks noticed that the number of births

declines every four to six years, coinciding with ENSO events. He suggests that the seal declines may result from changes in the fish populations, caused possibly by shifts in ocean currents.

Much can be gained, then, if El Niño could be predicted accurately. Peru, for instance, could anticipate a rainy season, and plant crops like rice adapted for the weather. So far, several scientists have been successful in developing models to predict another El Niño onslaught.

As part of the TOGA study, scientists have developed computer models for predicting when the tropical Pacific will swing toward warm or cool temperatures. Ants Leetmaa of the Climate Analysis Center is developing a long-range forecasting strategy for the U.S. weather service. Using a tool called a coupled global circulation model, he simulates how streams in the oceans and atmosphere shuttle heat and moisture around the planet. After plugging in the necessary data, the model spins through 270 simulated days. This model can predict sea surface temperatures over the next six months.

Mark Cane and Stephen Zebiak of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Geological Survey have developed a model they think can predict an El Niño event at least six months, and perhaps even a year, ahead of time. Cane and Zebiak first map out what goes into the making of an El Niño. They then plug in the essential elements: sea surface temperatures and wind data, and estimate thermocline depth using information about surface winds. Their model correctly predicted El Niño events for three-fourths of the time over 15 years. And, as for the remainder of their findings? They weren't exactly wrong, just cloudy.

Tim Barnett of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California has also developed an effective prediction model. His statistical approach looks for unusually high pressure moving eastward along the equator. After assembling 32 years of data on the western and eastern Pacific, his model correctly predicted the 1982 El Niño.

Currently the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is operating a network of buoys to measure temperature, currents, and winds near the equator. These data can be used in predicting short-term climate variations. Research is ongoing to understand exactly what brings on these variations in ocean and

atmosphere, and how we can accurately predict it. But until then, the people of Peru will keep a watchful eye out each Christmas.

For Further Reading:

Cane, Mark A. "Oceanographic Events During El Niño." *Science* December 1983: 1189-1194.

Gannon, Robert. "Solving the Puzzle of El Niño." *Popular Science* September 1986: 82-85, 118.

***El Niño Years:***

(Generally from October to September)

	1902–1903
1900–1901	1905–1906
<b>1911–1912</b>	1957–1958
1914–1915	1963–1964
1918–1919	1965–1966
1923–1924	1969–1970
1925–1926	1972–1973
1930–1931	1976–1977
1932–1933	1977–1978
1939–1940	1982–1983
1940–1941	1986–1987
1941–1942	1991–1992
1946–1947	1993–1994
1951–1952	
1953–1954	

***La Niña Years:***

(Generally from October to September)

1903–1904	1942–1943
1906–1907	1949–1950
1908–1909	1954–1955
1916–1917	1964–1965
1920–1921	1970–1971
1924–1925	1973–1974
1928–1929	1975–1976
1931–1932	1988–1989
<b>1938–1939</b>	

***La Niña***

La Niña is the cold counterpart of El Niño, the other extreme of the ENSO cycle where sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific drop below normal. This phase is characterized by warm winters in the Southeastern United States, colder than normal winters from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Northwest, and unsettled winters in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic states. Las Niñas occur after some (but not all) El Niño years.

The 1988 La Niña has been tied (inconclusively) to the Bangladesh floods and droughts in the Midwest United States.

The sea surface temperatures dropped almost two degrees C. below normal in some parts of the Pacific during the 1988-1989 La Niña.

***The 1930s Dust Bowl***

“Dust Bowl” was a term born from the people who lived in the hard times of the drought-stricken region during the Great Depression. The term was first used in a dispatch from Robert Geiger, an AP correspondent in Guymon, and within a

few short hours the term was used all over the nation. The “Dust Bowl Days,” also known as the “Dirty Thirties,” took its toll on Cimarron County. The decade was full of extremes: blizzards, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and dirt storms.

### *The Storms*

From 1934 to 1936, three record drought years were marked for the nation. In 1936, a more severe storm spread out of the plains and across most of the nation. The drought years were accompanied with record breaking heavy rains, blizzards, tornadoes, and floods. In September 1930, it rained over five inches in a very short time in the Oklahoma Panhandle. The flooding in Cimarron County was accompanied by a dirt storm which damaged several small buildings and granaries. Later that year, the regions were whipped again by a strong dirt storm from the southwest until the winds gave way to a blizzard from the north.

After the blizzards in the winter of 1930-1931, the drought began. First the northern plains felt the dry spell, but by July the southern plains were in the drought. It was not until late September that the ground had enough water to justify planting. Because of the late planting and early frost, much of the wheat was small and weak when the spring winds of 1932 began to blow. The wheat was also beaten by dirt from the abandoned fields. In March, there were twenty-two days of dirt storms and drifts began to build in the fencerows.

In late January 1933, the region was blasted by a magnificent dirt storm which killed much of the wheat. In early February, the thermometer dropped seventy-four degrees in eighteen hours to a record low at Boise City. The mercury stayed below freezing for several days until another dirt storm scourged the land. Before the year was over, locals counted 139 dirty days in 1933.

Although the dirt storms were fewer in 1934, it was the year which brought national attention to the Dust Bowl. In May, a severe storm blew dirt from Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas as far east as New York City and Washington D.C. In spite of the terrific storm in May, the year 1934 was a pleasant respite from the blowing dirt and tornadoes of the previous year. But nature had another trick up her sleeve, the year was extremely hot with new records being made and broken at regular intervals. Before the year had run its course, hundreds of people in Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas had died from the heat.

In 1935, the weather in the Dust Bowl again made the national headlines. This storm was followed by another and yet another in rapid succession. In late March, a severe storm lashed Boise City so hard that many people were stranded for hours. No one dared to leave a store and head for home although it might be less than a block away.

On Sunday April 14, 1935, the sun came up in a clear sky. The day was warm and pleasant; a gentle breeze whimpered out of the southwest. Suddenly a cloud appeared on the horizon. Birds flew swiftly ahead of it, but not swiftly enough for the cloud was traveling at sixty miles per hour. This day, which many people of the area readily remember, was named “Black Sunday.”

By May, it seemed like the wind and dirt had been blowing for an eternity. Rain was an event occurring only in dreams. It was a year of intense dirt storms, gales, rollers, and floods mixed with economic depression, sickness, and disaster. It was a year of extreme hardship, but surprisingly the vast majority of the people stayed. By 1935, the unusual had become the usual, the extreme became the normal, and the routine became the exception.

During 1936, the number of dirt storms increased and the temperature broke the 1934 record high by soaring above 120 degrees. On one pleasant June day in 1936, the ground began to tremble. A sharp earthquake shook the land from Kenton to Perryton and from Liberal to Stratford. By the fall of 1936, the rains began to return and the heat wave was broken. The following year, 1937, was another year of unprecedented dirt storms. Day after day, Dust Bowl farmers unwillingly traded farms as the land moved back and forth between Texas and Kansas. And of course there were the usual floods. 1938 was the year of the “snuster.” The snuster was a mixture of dirt and snow reaching blizzard proportions. The storm caused a tremendous amount of damage and suffering.





## *Epilogue*

I truly hope you both enjoyed and learned from my experiences. This book also shows that everyone is, at one time or another, influential in changing our history. Sometimes we just don't realize it. When you put this book down, and go out into the world, make yourself aware of the history happening around you. Remember, everything that's happening today will be tomorrow's history. Do all you can to be a positive influence, for when we look back on our history, it will represent the very best we all could be.



## *About the Author*

### **Lon S. Safko**

Has been founder and Chief Executive Officer of six different start-up companies from engineering to computer design, from home building to on-line marketing, from professional speaking to 3-dimensional paper models for education. Lon is a certified real estate instructor, has been the number two person in marketing & public relations for San Diego International Airport and the Port of San Diego.

Lon has been speaking professionally for nearly two decades and has been featured in *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *PC Novice*, and *Popular Science Magazine*. He has been recognized for his innovation by being the recipient of the Westinghouse Entrepreneur of the Year, the Arizona Innovation Network's Entrepreneur of the Year, and The Arizona Software Entrepreneur of the Year, twice nominated for the Ernst & Young/Inc. Magazine Entrepreneur of the Year, and the Public Relations Society of America's, Edward Bernays Mark of Excellence, Best-In-Class.

Lon has been decorated by the Department of Veteran Affairs and recognized by the Phoenix Mayor's Office and has been a Certified Apple Computer Developer, NeXt, IBM, and Hewlett Packard Business Partner. As president and CEO of Safko International, Inc, a high tech company, Lon was responsible for the first commercially available voice recognition, environmental control, head movement computer control for the physically disabled, Balloon Help, and the archetypes for the Apple Newton and Microsoft's Bob Operating Systems.

Lon directed a high security project for the United States Department of Energy, Westinghouse Electric Company, Hanford Nuclear Reservation, and Artificial Intelligence Computer System for Nuclear Trend Analysis & Quality Assurance.

Lon grew up and spent 30 years in Sing Sing, (hometown, Ossining-on-the-Hudson, New York). He is a certified member of the Mensa I.Q. Society, scoring in the top .5% in the world, and is a published author.

978-0-595-34186-3  
0-595-34186-1