Annual “Best Finds” Issue
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Volume 53
April 2019

• My Old Kentucky Cache
• A Five Alarm Find
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FEATURES

Annual Best Finds, 2018 Edition
Get started on this year’s adventure!

My Old Kentucky Cache
There’s treasure out there, and this proves it!
By Terry Causey

The Enchanted Ghosts Of New Mexico
Enjoy a journey into the past in America’s “Land of Enchantment.”
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A Five Alarm Find
“Sometimes the path to healing in the aftermath of tragedy is tempered with stories of the good in humanity.”
By Amy Maruso

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Our Cover: Author Terry Causey holds a couple of coins from his “find of a lifetime” silver cache which included a whopping 64 coins! Read Terry’s feature article starting on page 45.
Q. My find measures 1-¼” x 1-¼” of what looks like brass. It says Loyalty on the left and courage on the right and was found on a 125 year old homestead near my town.

A. Your find is the distinctive unit insignia of the 5th Cavalry, United States Army, as authorized in 1923.

The above design (yours) remained in use until 1960, when it was slightly modified. Here’s the newer version for comparison:

For more information about the 5th Cavalry and this heraldic insignia, check out the following links:  http://www.first-team.us/assigned/subunits/5th_cr/, http://www.first-team.us/assigned/subunits/5th_cr/5crndx10.html
Q. I found this decorative half moon piece of brass at an old house site in Williamsburg, VA. It is 2-¾" across the bottom. On the back it has a hinge in the middle of the straight part and a clip in the middle of the back. Any idea what it is?

A. It would be helpful to see a photo of the back of this item; however, based on the descriptive details that you’ve provided, I suspect that it’s half of a late 19th or early 20th century lady’s dress buckle or sash buckle. If so, the missing portion would likely be a mirror image of your find, so that when the two were joined together by the clip on the back, the complete buckle would have looked something like this.

Q. Unknown cartridge shell found in Vermont. Please see photos for dimensions. Thank you for your time and for your valued help with this identification.

A. What you’ve got is a c. 1870’s-80’s Swiss Vetterli 10.4 x 3 mm or “Swiss .41” cartridge. As indicated by the double rimfire marks, the Swiss Vetterli rifle had a dual firing pin. The cross headstamp is emblematic of Switzerland. Although they were originally military, many of the Vetterli rifles were later marketed to sportsmen in the U.S., often selling for less than $20, bayonet included. The cartridge case as found has relatively little monetary value, unfired and non-dug Vetterli cartridges can be worth $15+ apiece.

Here are a few links to further information about these arms and ammo:
http://www.swissrifles.com/vetterli/,
http://www.swissrifles.com/ammo/#10.4,
Q. I recently bought several exonumia items from a metal detectorist. This piece was in the lot and is kind of interesting . . . not sure if it is considered a medal, or fob, or what?

It is made of brass. It measures 31 millimeters wide, and 34 millimeters tall (including the hole for suspension). DEERE & MANSUR COMPANY / DISCS, / PLANTERS, / ETC. / MOLINE, ILL. // (image of a deer/buck) What can you tell me about this piece?

A. Oddly enough, we don’t recall seeing this particular piece before, although there’s a bitmetal watch fob of similar design that turns up on eBay now and then fetching anywhere from $25 to $75:

Based on the small loop and single-metal composition of yours, I’m wondering if it might date from the Deere Centennial in 1937, when there were fobs of that sort. At any rate, here’s a link to some interesting history on the Deere & Mansur partnership: https://www.deere.com/en_US/docs/Corporateshare/visitors/publications/plowshare_issue23.pdf

Q. This tag is 3-¼” at the bottom 2-¾” high, brass. I found this today in Newburgh NY. It reads The Grand Pacific Hotel 392. I can’t find any similar tags on eBay or google. Can you tell me anything about this tag? I was also wondering if its from the hotel that was in Chicago?

A. We’ve always assumed these keys were from the Chicago hotel, but who knows? There were quite a few other Grand Pacific Hotels in the late 1800’s to early 1900’s, in places as far-flung as Seattle, Washington; Leadville, Colorado; Missoula, Montana; and even Suva, Fiji in the South Pacific. Oversized and “toothy” key tags of various shapes, designed to prevent guests from losing them or forgetting them at check-
out time, were popular around that time. A few like yours, with key, have turned up on eBay over the years, bringing anywhere from around $50 to nearly $90. All that I can recall were nondug, however. Here’s a link to another example: https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/old-metal-brass-room-206-key-grand-pacific-hotel

Q. I think this is a military bridle rosette, but am unable to find anything with this shape. It appears to be brass, 1-½". Any info would be great, thanks.

A. Although your find bears the same Great Seal as early 1900’s U.S. cavalry bridle rosettes, as well as the Army general service buttons introduced in 1902, it’s actually a patriotic watch fob dating from around 1917-18 (i.e., World War I) and of commercial manufacture rather than official military issue. Similar fobs often retail for $25-35, and while much higher asking prices can occasionally be seen on sites such as eBay, they do not realistically reflect the fob’s value.

Q. I found this token that is approx 1-½" and appears to be the same image front & back but can’t determine what it’s made of - older plastic, gutta-percha? Thanks for any info on this!
A. This is a late 19th or early 20th century cycling motif poker chip. They were produced in a variety of materials (clay, resin, compressed fiber, etc.), and of course, like other poker chips, they varied in color, too. Here’s a link to a set of similar chips: https://www.worthpoint.com/worthpedia/96-antique-embossed-bicycle-girl-497928924

These generally fetch 50¢ - $1 apiece, but those prices are based on sets rather than singles.

Q. These buttons are found on a small rise with a scatter of oyster shells. One of the buttons says: “Treble Gilt Wellington & Waterloo.” That button also has a crest of sorts, two swords across a shield. The other button says: “Wellington.” Neither button has anything on the back side. These are two separate buttons with lettering only on one side. I am hoping they are good finds. I certainly appreciate your assistance in identifying these buttons. Thank you.

A. These are civilian, commemoratively backmarked, plain-faced buttons of British manufacture, issued sometime after June 1815, when an allied army led by the Duke of Wellington defeated the French Army led by Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. In the past we have seen varieties of these listed for $50+ in nice, non-dug condition. However, we would expect these to fetch somewhat less. Even so, they’re neat relics!

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History in Chicago have combined evidence to learn more about the ship’s cargo and where it came from. Their study detailing the findings was published in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

Fishermen found the wreck in the 1980s. A cargo including thousands of ceramic pieces, cast iron and luxury trade goods, like elephant tusks and resin used for incense, is all that remains of the wreck after the wooden hull disintegrated.

In 1996, when the wreck was recovered by archaeologists, they thought it might have been from the mid- to late 13th century, based on the dating of a single resin sample. It was most likely sailing from Quanzhou in southern China to Tuban on the island of Java.

In the late 1990s, more than 7,500 pieces—half the cargo—was donated to the Field Museum. In 2014, an archaeologist with the museum, Lisa Niziolek, began corresponding with ceramic experts in China and Japan and discovered that some of the Java wreck ceramics were more similar to pieces made in the 11th and 12th century. That, combined with inscriptions suggesting that some of the pieces were “Made in Jianning Fu,” brought up the question of more accurate dating.

Zhang decided to submit more samples from the collection for a more precise method of radiometric dating. Fortunately, this story has a happy ending for everyone involved.

Dotson revealed that when the original owners of the unit found out that it had been sold—with their cash still inside—they quickly contacted their attorney to negotiate a deal with the new owner.

First, the original owners offered $600,000 to return the money, but then settled on a deal that saw the man return the money for a $1.2 million reward. While he didn’t keep the full amount, the man still came out with $1,499,500 in profit on a measly $500 investment.

From Yahoo.com, submitted by Lisa Lommasson, Pebble Beach, CA.

TREASURE TROVE REVEALS ORIGINS OF 800-YEAR-OLD SHIPWRECK

The discovery of a shipwreck, thousands of luxury items and the equivalent of a centuries-old “Made in China” label sounds like the makings of a mystery. And it has been for decades, as scientists tried to understand more about an ancient ship that sank in the Java Sea, off the coast of Indonesia.

Now, researchers at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago have combined evidence to learn more about the ship’s cargo and where it came from. Their study detailing the findings was published in the Journal of Archaeological Science.
called accelerated mass spectrometry.

“Our findings place the sinking of the Java Sea Wreck vessel about 100 years earlier than initially thought—closer to the second half of the twelfth century instead of the later thirteenth century,” Niziolek and Feinman wrote in an email. Why is the difference of a hundred years so significant?

During the 12th century, maritime trade was increasing and changing to more open economic trade, she said.

“Consequently, the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279 CE) court encouraged Chinese traders to go abroad instead of relying on foreign missions traveling to China,” Niziolek said. “This is also a time when competition between maritime societies of Southeast Asia heightened. The great empire of Srivijaya, which once controlled much of the maritime trade in the region, had fallen, leaving a vacuum for other polities to fill.”

The inclusion of those “Made in China”-esque inscriptions was key, she said. “Our new dataset also included research based on an inscription found on two ceramic box bases,” Niziolek and Feinman said. “This inscription provides a place name, Jianning Fu, which was only assigned that name by the Song government from 1162 until 1278 CE, when it was changed to Jianning Lu by the Yuan dynasty.”

Piecing together the truth about a shipwreck can be difficult for many reasons. The salinity of the ocean, as well as sea creatures, can degrade the condition and integrity of artifacts. But looting is also a big issue. In order for a research institution to safeguard a wreck site, it must to be able to document it quickly after discovery and partner with local communities. But they’re often limited by funding and other challenges that take time to overcome, allowing looters to reach the wreck first.

These factors encouraged Niziolek and her colleagues to test multiple artifacts. Two resin samples, one ivory sample and the inscriptions on the ceramic boxes and jars from the wreck were included in the analysis.

The resin and ivory samples were badly damaged, and when tested, they returned dates ranging from 889 to 1261. Amazingly, once the cork-like growth was removed from the resin, it was still glassy and sweet-smelling.

Taken alone at face value, the earliest dates from the organic ivory and resin materials would have thrown off accurate dating for the wreck as a whole. Organic material is easily affected by the ocean, and this wide date range suggests it affected the dating, too.

“What surprised us the most were the early dates obtained through the radiocarbon dating of the resin and the elephant tusk samples,” Niziolek and Feinman said. “These were sometimes much older than the earliest date the ship could have sailed based on the Jianning Fu inscription (1162 CE). This study explicitly illustrates how important it is to look at multiple lines of evidence when trying to answer archaeological questions.”

This is why the team focused on a combination of ceramic analysis based on styles and forms, accelerator mass spectrometry and inscriptions found on some of the ceramic vessels.

These inscriptions are not the earliest discovered. Markings on ceramics can be dated back to the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 206 BC to 220 AD. Most marks on ceramics at the time were family names, numbers, or inscriptions that identified the function of the vessel or were marks of felicitation, Niziolek said.

Accurate dating isn’t just important for the wreck itself. Being able to link similar materials from a shipwreck to a place can knit historical gaps together.

“Other archaeologists could use this material to date kiln sites where ceramics were produced, ports where merchants lived, and domestic and religious sites where similar pieces were used,” Niziolek and Feinman
said. “Furthermore, the number of Chinese ceramics recovered at the Java Sea Shipwreck site in 1996 (more than 12,000) is evidence of the scale and intensity of mass production in China at the time. One estimate puts the original number of ceramic vessels on board at 100,000 (or 30 tons). This is a huge number of trade items and this is just from a single trading ship. This is also evidence of the high demand for Chinese ceramics abroad for use in houses, temples, palaces, and government buildings and as trade goods within local systems.”

This study also shows the importance of re-evaluating artifacts with new technology—not something that often happens.

From CNN.com, submitted by Tim Harding, Taos, NM.

ESTATE OF ‘UNTOUCHABLES’ NESS IN LEGAL FIGHT OVER OLD STOCK

A legal fight is brewing in Florida between the estate of “Untouchables” Prohibition agent Eliot Ness and an Ohio company over some long-undiscovered stock that apparently belonged to Ness and may be worth more than $1 million.

Ness, the famed Prohibition agent who led the “Untouchables” in their crusade against Chicago gangster Al Capone and his mob accomplices, later was the top executive at bank services company Diebold Inc.

A 50-share Diebold stock certificate, along with Ness’ old federal badges and credentials, languished for years in a box in the South Florida apartment of Winnie Higgins Knorr, Ness’ longtime personal secretary. When Knorr died several years ago in Fort Lauderdale, her belongings—including the Diebold stock—passed on to an acquaintance, Debra Hole.

Attorney John F. Bradley said it could now be worth more than $1.1 million because of stock splits and dividends over the years that could swell the number of shares to some 29,500. Bradley represents the Ness estate, with at least three surviving heirs, in a federal lawsuit seeking to force Diebold to pay up.

“I’m kind of picturing him as America’s first superhero. Sadly, he died with not that much,” Bradley said of Ness. “It’s just a simple debt as far as I’m concerned.”

North Canton, Ohio-based Diebold declined to comment, but in court filings the company has tried to get the lawsuit dismissed.

Diebold, which started out making bank safes and vaults 150 years ago, now provides multiple financial services including ATM machines and drive-through teller equipment. Also named in the lawsuit is Wells Fargo bank, which handles Diebold’s stock transfers.

In court documents, Diebold and Wells Fargo insist there is no record available of any stock ownership by Ness.

“The certificate is no longer valid,” their filing states.

Ness was Diebold’s chief executive officer from 1944 to 1951, after his crime-fighting successes in Chicago and later stints as Cleveland’s safety director. His 1929-31 service as a Prohibition agent in Chicago was the subject of a popular book and later a television show with Robert Stack as Ness, followed by the 1987 film with Kevin Costner in the agent’s role and Robert DeNiro as Capone.

The name “Untouchables” comes from his unit’s reputation for refusing to take bribes from Capone, according to media accounts of the time. Although Ness’ efforts eventually led to some 5,000 bootlegging charges against Capone, the infamous gangster was actually convicted of tax evasion. The liquor violations were eventually dropped.

Ness, who also unsuccessfully ran for mayor of Cleveland, died of a heart attack in Pennsylvania in 1957 at age 54. He left little in his estate to his third wife, Elisabeth, according to Bradley. No mention was ever made of the Diebold stock certificate and the company never reached out, he said.

“The estate had no knowledge of its ownership of the
was fantastic." Bradley said. "I thought it her connection to Ness or mention the stock certificate. The law school did she reveal not until Knorr retired from friend. Involved in founding the School. Hole, who was Southeastern University Law at the brand-new Nova stock until recently," Bradley said. The stock certificate took a winding road to Florida. Knorr, the former Ness secretary, came south in 1974 to work as admissions director at the brand-new Nova Southeastern University Law School. Hole, who was involved in founding the school, became her close friend.

But according to Bradley, not until Knorr retired from the law school did she reveal her connection to Ness or mention the stock certificate.

"My reaction was, wow," Bradley said. "I thought it was fantastic."

The Ness estate, closed for decades in Pennsylvania, has now been reopened to pursue the stock claim, which led to the lawsuit in Miami.

Ness had an adopted son who died years ago. The remaining heirs are cousins of Ness’ third wife and live in California, where she died in 1977. Three of those cousins are pursuing payment for the stock.

Ness made little money as a government employee, and neither Ness nor his family ever profited from the book that created his popular Capone-fighting legend, according to a Ness history compiled by the Cleveland Police Museum. The book, written by sportswriter Oscar Fraley, was based on a 21-page memoir that Ness typed himself.

But Ness signed away the rights in 1955 to Fraley, thinking the book wouldn’t be much of a success, according to the museum’s account.

“I knew it would be a success and if he didn’t like it he could sign off on it, and he did,” Fraley told the museum in a 1998 interview.

So for the Ness heirs, the long-hidden Diebold stock certificate is the only thing of value remaining from him, other than the badges and memorabilia. If the claim is not settled, U.S. District Judge Jose Martinez has ordered mediation for later this year. If that’s unsuccessful, the case is set for trial in Miami federal court.

“This isn’t easy or quick,” Bradley said. “This thing has been closed for a long time.”

From The Daytona Beach News-Journal, submitted by Masik Kabasik, Palm Coast, FL.

SHIPWRECK FOUND IN BLACK SEA IS ‘WORLD’S OLDEST INTACT’

A Greek merchant ship dating back more than 2,400 years has been found lying on its side off the Bulgarian coast.

The 75ft. wreck, found in the Black Sea by an Anglo-Bulgarian team, is being hailed as officially the world’s oldest known intact shipwreck.

The researchers were stunned to find the merchant vessel closely resembled in design a ship that decorated ancient Greek wine vases.

The rudder, rowing benches and even the contents of its hold remain intact. “It’s like another world,” Helen Farr from the expedition told the BBC.

“It’s when the ROV [remote operated vehicle] drops down through the water column and you see this ship appear in the light at the bottom so perfectly preserved it feels like you step back in time.”

The reason the trading vessel, dating back to around 400 BC, has remained in such good condition for so long is that the water is anoxic, or free of oxygen. Lying more than 2,000m below the surface, it is also beyond the
reach of modern divers.

“It’s preserved, it’s safe,” she added. “It’s not deteriorating and it’s unlikely to attract hunters.”

The vessel was one of many tracking between the Mediterranean and Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast. It was discovered more than 80km off the Bulgarian city of Burgas.

The team used two underwater robotic explorers to map out a 3-D image of the ship and they took a sample to carbon-date its age.

The vessel is similar in style to that depicted by the so-called Siren Painter on the Siren Vase in the British Museum. Dating back to around 480 BC, the vase shows Odysseus strapped to the mast as his ship sails past three mythical sea nymphs whose tune was thought to drive sailors to their deaths.

As yet the ship’s cargo remains unknown and the team say they need more funding if they are to return to the site. “Normally we find amphorae (wine vases) and can guess where it’s come from, but with this it’s still in the hold,” said Dr. Farr.

“As archaeologists we’re interested in what it can tell us about technology, trade and movements in the area.”

Over the course of three years the academic expedition found 67 wrecks including Roman trading ships and a 17th century Cossack trading fleet.

From BBCNews.com, submitted by Lisa Lommasson, Pebble Beach, CA.

VALUABLE GOLD COIN FOUND IN JEFFERSON CITY SALVATION ARMY RED KETTLE

Someone in Jefferson City dropped a rare gold coin in one of the Salvation Army’s Red Kettles.

Lt. Christopher White, Corps Officer with the Salvation Army, says this is the first time it has ever happened in Jefferson City, at least since the mid-1970s.

“They told me that there was something really special in one of the buckets and I couldn’t quite believe it when I saw it,” he said.

Charles Clark was the volunteer who received the donation at Sam’s Club. He has been ringing bells with the Salvation Army for five years.

“I was kind of shocked because I’ve never had anybody do this, I have never had anybody drop that kind of coin in my kettle,” he said.

The coin is an uncirculated 1998 American Eagle One ounce Gold Proof coin. It is currently valued at around $1,300.

“What I’m telling my bell ringers and my volunteers is that it’s a real sign of approval,” White said. “It’s a great sign of support for the Salvation Army and for the work that we do here, and also our Christmas campaign this year.”

White said they plan to sell the coin at the end of the bell ringing season, which goes until January.

“Salvation Army’s red kettles money goes not just to our Christmas services like our toy shop, our Angel Tree program but to our services that we fund throughout the year,” he said. “We have a 31-bed shelter here in town, a food pantry, utility, rental assistance program and any others as well.”

Due to the continued cold weather, kettles are currently a little below this point last year. The current fundraising total stands at $96,144 or 33% of the goal compared to $99,213 last year.

White said they have not learned who is the donor of the coin.

“Whoever they are, thank you so much,” he said. “We are grateful for all the donations that have come in this year.”

As for Clark, he said he’s hopeful for another gold coin donation.

“It might happen again, who knows,” he said. “I still plan to ring bells for Salvation Army, next year and years to come.”

From KOMU.com, submitted by Lisa Lommasson, Pebble Beach, CA

If you’ve read an interesting, treasure-related story in your local paper or online that you’d like to share with our readers, please email it to: editor@wetreasures.com —Thanks!
I located this Printing plate with permission I acquired in Orange City, Florida. It was the 3rd target of the hunt and was at a depth of 17". I was using a CTX 3030 with the 6" coil, and running one of my custom programs. When I pulled it from the hole I realized that I was staring at a plate with a photo of the Harlan House Hotel that was once in the town of Lake Helen which is located in Volusia county. I remember hearing of the hotel when I was young, so I was familiar with its location. Research has discovered that the city of Lake Helen was founded by a gentleman whose name was Henry Deland and named after his daughter Helen. Mr. Deland is named for another city that is home to Stetson University. The hotel was built in 1883 and named for Mr. Deland’s only son Harlan. The hotel is no longer standing after a fire in 1922 destroyed it. Shown on the plate you can see a gentleman standing on the front steps, and a horse drawn carriage on the left. I met with several historical societies to try to figure out who the person is. It was first believed that it could possibly be President Grant being that he was in Sanford, Florida in the 1880’s to dedicate the Southern Florida Railroad at that time. After several discussions it is now believed to possibly be Mr. Deland. The plate is made of lead and has a sheet of copper added. It is 3" x 4". This printing plate will be donated to one of several that are interested in acquiring it for their collection.
Me and a buddy went out to a site we had recently done a little bit of research on. This area was a farm field for many, many years. Today it has a ball field on a portion of it. When I arrived I noticed that there was a large mound of dirt on the low side of an embankment. I figured that was the old farm field dirt pushed away to level for a ball field. I was swinging my new Equinox 800. On the very first signal I got a 33-36. Thinking it was trash I dug what turned out to be the best coin of my life—an 1807 Bust Half Dollar. I put it right in a small case with cotton and detected my way down to the creek. I gently rinsed it off and Wow!

The rest is history.

The gilt buttons which adorned Washington’s inaugural suit were engraved with the Arms of the United States by William Rollison. I have read the buttons were given away to family members after Washington’s death in 1799. Were they similar to the buttons that we found that day? I would like to think so but it doesn’t really matter. The 1789 Heraldic Eagle with Estoile variety is one of the varieties that were sold to the crowds that attended the inauguration and also to the well wishers, politicians, militia members, and former Revolutionary War veterans who lined the roads on Washington’s Northern Tour of New England from October 15 through November 13, 1789.

I was fortunate to find not only my very first George Washington Inaugural Button but two and a half additional GW’s in early June of 2018. My digging buddy, Danny
LaMontagne, and my friend, Dave Wise also each found a GW Eagle and Star at the same site. It was an unbelievable day filled with laughs, good times and great friends.

In my research, I would say that it is very likely that the buttons found at the site may have been purchased in early November 1789 during Washington’s Northern Tour. It was only a few months after the inauguration when Washington embarked on the tour as he wanted a first hand look at the condition of the country. Was the proud owner of the buttons a former Revolutionary War soldier who witnessed Washington’s triumphant tour? This question may never be answered but there is no doubting the patriotism of the man who purchased at least six Heraldic Eagle with Estoile buttons.

U.S. BELT BUCKLE
Clem Bechard

I was at a group hunt with friends in Maine. We had just hunted a known old house site without any targets so we continued on to another site. Using my AT Pro with a 5x8" coil, I was on part of the site with lots of iron. I got a nickel hit between iron and almost did not dig it. When I did it was about 5" down and under a rock. Letters down I thought it was just a piece of junk metal. I turned it over and wiped the mud off the face and was in shock to see US showing through. So rare to find these up here in Maine. It is for sure my best find ever.

1768 GOLD GUINEA
Andy Blessing

This past spring I received permission to metal detect a field near a small stream in the Central Pennsylvania area. I was to attend a family function that day so after it warmed up a bit I decided to try this field to see if it would produce or cross it off my list. After an
hour and a half of can slaw, shotgun shells and three 30.06 bullet shells and nothing else to show for it, things were looking bleak. Working toward a small clump of corn stalks. I received another signal like the three bullet shells. After one shovel full it was still in the hole. I spread the dirt from the second try and there it was, just as you see it, looking right at me. Your mind plays tricks on you, at first you do not believe it. I took a breath and looked around, trying to take it in. I knew for sure when I took my gloves off and picked it up. The weight gives it away. It is a 1768 British Gold Guinea coin, 22K of gold weighing 8.2 grams. It is my first gold. Spanish silver, large cent coppers and buttons were to follow, but the gold coin was the first good hit that day. I scanned the hole again and got another signal, but it was a flat button. It was struck by the plow as you can see the nicks and is also bent as it must have been pinned between the rocks and became slightly bent. The bottom is also clipped or shaved as someone stole from the coin, a common practice of the day. I guess you can say it has character now. I called my wife to let her know I was going to be late, but I had a really good excuse. Thanks also go to Bill Dancy for his Virginia Relic book as it inspired me to take chances on fields like this, Keith Zorger for teaching me how to hunt Colonial fields as that is one of my favorite places to hunt, and for my mom and dad for being smart enough to get this kid a metal detector 44 years ago. This is my second submission for Best Finds as my Washington Inaugural button was in the 2002 issue.

I was hunting an old house site in Kentucky with woods around it. I got a hit in the 50’s on my AT-PRO and was thinking a pulltab.

Pulling a small plug of dirt out of a hole I saw my first gold coin! Slowly wiping the dirt off I could see that it was an 1880 $10 Gold Eagle! Wow, this is a find of a lifetime for me! See related article on page 45.
I went detecting with my dad on a cold mid-April morning. We hunted at a very old park, but didn’t find much. We decided to head to an old school we have hunted many times. On the way, my dad saw a parking strip where an old house used to sit, so we stopped. Not finding much there either, I went over to my dad to try to encourage him to move on. He wanted to finish the area he was working on and told me to go hunt the parking strip that was around the corner from where we were hunting.

The first target I dug was a Memorial penny. My next target was certainly one to remember. Getting a nice high tone at 7" is always what I like to hear. I pulled out the target from my plug, and in my hand was a small silver box. Being the first good find of the day, I walked over to my dad to show him what I had just found. On my way there, I heard the distinct sound of something rattling. Clearly something was inside the silver box. My dad examined it, identifying that it was stamped 925 and had some British hallmarks.

The fun was only beginning. When I opened the box, there laid a 1935-D Washington silver quarter. I was very excited to see that. But, my excitement for it was short lived as there were more coins still to be pulled out. Next out of the box came a 1920-S Buffalo nickel, a 1922-D Wheat penny, which is a semi-key date and a 1901 Indian Head penny. Astonishingly, there were still more coins. Underneath the Indian Head penny was an 1857 Flying Eagle cent, an 1857 Seated Liberty half dime and a small silver 1896 Guatemala ¼ reale. These last three coins were first finds for me.

This was such a memorable find for me in 2018 at the ripe old age of 22. I wonder what the story is behind the box, the coins in it and why it was there.
TWO GREAT GARRETT OFFERS!

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This is my S-173 has die cracks and a cud error, also has a significant die rotation. I found it in New York at an old house site that the owner told me had been hunted several times. This is very rare and the only example I can find is one non-dug in XF condition for $4,500. I’m very happy to have it!

Found at an old house site in New York. I’d detected this house a few times before and didn’t find much. This time I brought my new Minelab Equinox and decided to work the iron, and I found this Jersey copper, a large cent and a few other coins. Don Hartman and expert on Jersey coppers who is also doing a study and documenting all dug Jersey coppers has told me mine is a rare and very desirable Maria 63-R. It is an R5 rarity and is the only one he has seen of this variety out of all 868 he’s documented.

I have relic hunted Castine, Maine, and the site of the Penobscot Expedition for many years and I have had a number of articles published about relics and buttons found there in W&ET since 1995, including Best Finds accepted over the years.

This year I decided to venture out from Fort George in Castine, Maine and travel up one of the two rivers that flow into the Penobscot River. About 1-1/2 miles up the Bagaduce River is an old ferry crossing that has been there since 1781, two years after the British occupied Fort George. My quest this time was not for Revolutionary War relics but for coins lost by the ferry passengers. I did indeed find some early Spanish and American silver coins.

However, the surprise came when I found, in the sea-
weed on the shoreline, the first of two 74th Regt. of Foot vest buttons. Not expecting Revolutionary War relics or buttons, the true shock came when on the low tide I recovered an encrusted large number “4”. It was thick heavy brass measuring 1-1/4” by 1-1/2” and missing the attachment on leather prongs. Also found on the beach was a dropped musketball and a large Hessian button with shank.

A week later I was able to hunt the beach again and found one of the two brass prongs that was lost along with this number 4 (when, I’m assuming, the soldier exited the ferry when landing). There would have been the number 7 and 4 for the 74th Regt. of Foot on his cartridge box. Since the Hessians were at Fort George from October 1782 to July 1783, the loss of these buttons and cartridge box number falls between these dates. I expect they were on a foraging mission when these buttons, musketball and rare number 4 were lost.

I immediately contacted a known relic expert and sent him a picture plus information where this item was found. He agreed the number 4 made of brass and its size, that this relic was no doubt used on a cartridge box to hold down the leather. He also stated it is the only one known to exist from this regiment.

I consider this my Best Find of 2018 and hope to submit an article about my recent relic recoveries in the coming months.

I was planning a detecting trip with my friend BN. Being in a touristy area in the summer we knew the traffic would be extremely heavy. After some phone discussions we decided to take our chances. After navigating the filled parking lot and beach we spread out and started detecting. An hour in we compared finds. We had few dollars in clad change and a small ring found by BN (that turned out to be a junker). As our window was closing I had a tight target and 2 scoops later there was a small ring in the scoop. As I put it in the “good” pocket I noted it felt heavy. When we arrived back at the car I said I have one I need to look at closer. When I saw PLAT inside I knew it was a good one. Turned out my best ring so far was 1.25ct diamond set in Platinum. Needless to say I am glad we braved the traffic!
David Finnern has an article in the February 2019 issue of *Western & Eastern Treasures* titled “Third Piling To The East.” In it he explains why he was detecting at a local beach at 4 a.m., and why he went back and asked his grandson if he would like to join him. Here are a few excerpts from the article to explain why these items are considered to be David & Jake’s Best Finds of 2018:

“My grandson, Jake Carney, asked if I was heading to treasure hunt the beach any time soon. “You bet,” I replied. “There’s a series of minus tides right now. That’s the good news. The bad news is, they’re in the middle of the night.”

“... Jake and I headed across the sand; I went left, and he went right as we neared the water.

“... Jake soon uncovered a tungsten ring, and then a beautiful gold ring adorned with diamonds and emeralds. It wasn’t large but it was definitely a prize, especially since it was the first gold treasure Jake had found.

“... I was at the same beach during another minus tide a month later, and experienced the same phenomenon, with a really weird twist. I received a nice reading as I neared the same area where Jake had discovered his diamond & emerald ring. I sifted the target and flashed my light across the contents of my scoop. Incredibly, an identical ring lay at the bottom! What are the odds?”

**Editor’s Note:** If you are a subscriber to *W&ET*, go online and check out the entire story in the 2.19 issue at [www.wetreasures.com](http://www.wetreasures.com) If you don’t have a digital subscription, go to our website and sign up today. You’ll have access to over 110+ back issues (including the 2.19 issue of *W&ET*)!
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After hunting a local park nearly 4 hours and recovering only $1.38 in clad coins and trash, no jewelry or trinkets of any kind, I decided I would take one of my “healthy walks”.

My healthy walks are a series of 3 walks in a day that aggregate more than 10,000 steps. The walks generally follow the same path past two coin counting machines. So, this day at the turnaround point at the credit union, I noticed in the waste can adjacent to the coin counter, there appeared to be the face side of a V nickel and some other coins and debris on top of receipts from the adjacent ATM. I quickly picked the waste can up (small office type) and walked into the men’s restroom. I scooped up the coins and debris and put the material into a baggie left from a previous coin counter, quickly returned the waste can and took the material home.

On sorting out and laying out various items, I got $9.92 in coins (many damaged and scarred), 16 foreign coins, various numbers of bobby pins, paper clips, plastic beads, sewing needles, nuts, screws, buttons, wads of paper and foil, and a lot of lint balls. And one small gold colored coin.

On inspection, it was an 1895 Mo 875 Mexican 1 Peso. I took it to our friends at AAA Precious Metals and had the metal content confirmed at .875 gold and rated at XF, book value of $110.

The weather had turned unusually mild for the middle of February in Portland and I was anxious to get out and find something. There are over 100 parks in Portland and I started looking over prospects that we hadn’t visited in the last year. By happenstance I noticed school maintenance workers moving furniture in and out of a school but the lack of children.

So I parked and walked into the school grounds where their truck was parked and asked why there were no children (on a school day.) They informed me that the school had been “mothballed” and students hadn’t been there for a few years.

This looked like a good prospect for hunting. The neighborhood still used the ball diamonds and play areas for recreation and running their dogs. So I contacted my hunting buddies, John MacClanathan and Rick Page and arranged that we hunt the school the next day.

We all three intended a 4 hour hunt. The 4 hour hunt was a total bust. Between us
we only recovered just over $3 in clad coins, one die cast car, one token, one crushed ring (later determined .925 silver) and a ton of trash. Oh, and one very thin foreign coin dated 1798.

That coin was out of place and I originally thought that it was a replica or a product promotion. I dug it at about 4 inches with an e-Trac reading of 12-44. When we gathered to show our finds for the day, I placed the coin on the ground and asked that both John and Rick to read the signal with their new detectors. They both said that it rang similar to a wad of foil and probably would not have dug it.

When I got home, I started researching on the chance it might be real. My grams scale showed it at 2.35 grams and it measured 23mm diameter. I searched the internet with the lettering and date and found a coin with identical features labeled “Beast” coin: A 1798 Bern 4 Kreuzer. The weight and diameter were correct. The website indicated that the composition was Billon, an alloy of silver and copper used in the late 18th century in Europe.

The next step was to have the metal content analyzed. So, the next week I visited AAA Precious Metals and it checked out 25% silver and 75% copper. I concluded that it must have been a student’s bragging rights item or brought for “show and tell” and lost on the playground.

It’s still the Best Find I think I’ll find this year.

Through some research of Northern Ohio, it was discovered that on or around 1846 a house and schoolhouse once occupied the corner of what is now a corn field. On Oct 27, 2018, after verifying that the field was harvested and receiving permission from the land owner, I was able to metal detect it. After approximately 30 minutes, I received a strong 86 high tone on the AT Pro being used in Pro Zero mode. The Spanish 2 Reale was extracted with my Lesche hand digger after only being 2” down. This is my oldest coin I have ever dug. A true find of a lifetime for me.
I have been detecting for three years. My husband Jason Hallas got me into the hobby. On Aug. 9, 2018 we were hunting in the woods. I got a signal with my AT Pro that sounded scratchy but heard an interesting chirp only three inches down. I was not expecting what I found—2 Seated Half dimes, 3 trimes and a silver draw-string purse charm fashioned in a chatelaine/fob also on the reverse side inscribed with children’s names (making them Love Tokens). With research we found that their lineage traces back to the earliest settlers of Rhode Island. This has been my most exciting find yet, and I’m looking forward to my next find.

A GOLDEN HALLOWEEN TREAT
Beth Jacobs

I was metal detecting with my husband Gregg at a local central Pennsylvania ball park in early October 2018...
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when a gentleman named Craig came up to me while walking his dog and inquired if we could look for his gold wedding ring that he had lost about 13 years ago. He said he knew the approximate area where we could search. In the meantime, he had replaced the lost wedding ring with another ring and to his dismay had lost that one, supposedly inside his house, 3 or 4 years ago. Rain and prior commitments prevented us from hunting until a nice day fell on Halloween. We went to his house, eager to begin our hunt with Gregg’s White’s MXT and my MXT All-Pro. Craig wasn’t home but we detected for over an hour where he thought the ring might be and found nothing interesting. Giving up on the house, I headed for the garage perimeter and immediately got a hit on my MXT All-Pro. Imagine my surprise when the hole revealed Craig’s engraved 14K gold wedding ring! Craig’s wife said to go ahead and hunt some more while we waited to show Craig his ring. Before I even stepped off the driveway I got a hit two inches away in the grass. To my complete surprise, another 14K gold wedding ring came out of the hole! It was the replacement ring that Craig thought he had lost in the house! It was truly a Golden Halloween treat with big smiles all around and new friends made that day. It was certainly a day to remember and will go into our record book as number one for our metal detecting discoveries!

After 6 consecutive days of below freezing temperatures in January, I got a call from my friend Addam Coe. He said that the undergrowth in a recently logged Confederate camp had really been burned down and the site could be hunted. Several of us met and spread out over the camp, each looking for a keeper. We still had to contend with limbs and stubble, but people soon started calling out with finds, bullets, flat buttons, and occasionally a coin. I was working very slowly in an area that gave me a nice SC vest button when the area was first logged and there was the definite solid bang in my headphones. Digging down 4-5 inches in the dark sandy soil, I finally located the disk and my heart started racing as the curve of a 2 piece button emerged out of the dirt in my hand. A twig gently removed enough dirt to reveal the Palmetto tree and the button went in a container to protect it until I could get home and clean it carefully.

Once home, gentle cleaning revealed a low convex lined, bordered, SC coat button. The backmark read “Ives & Scott Waterbury”. Research revealed that they were only in business from 1834-36. The “books” also say that the button should be unlined and have no border. The descriptions noted that the “S’s” and “R’s” were engraved backwards which explains why I had trouble reading the backmark. Now my heart was racing. I knew I had found a rare button. Conversation with Mr. Bob Edmondson and postings online confirmed my research and make this one of my treasured finds.

I almost hate to say that this is the second best button that I have sent you this year. The first was the unlisted SC Coat from Ives/Scott. It was the first week of October and I had the chance to go down to Charleston, S.C. to a site that is part industrial, part natural.
It was the last day of our January, 2018 Honolulu vacation. I’d been hitting the beaches each morning but found only clad and a few pieces of costume jewelry. Not surprising, considering how heavily the Waikiki beaches are hunted. This morning, I headed to a beach where I’d found a few crusty nickels, the theory being that if other hunters were passing those by, they might also be overlooking gold. After about thirty minutes, I got a nice signal on dry sand near the surf line. It disappeared if discrimination was set much higher than Foil, which made me hopeful. Only one scoop was needed to recover a ring that appeared to have three diamonds: one large and two tiny. The band was a mix of gold and platinum. It looked real, but I tried not to get excited until I had an opportunity to get it professionally appraised. When I did, I was shocked to learn that not only was it real, its replacement value for insurance purposes was approximately $10,000! That’s by far the most valuable thing I’ve found in almost forty years of metal detecting, and makes all the pennies and trash seem (almost) worthwhile. Even my fiancee no longer thinks my hobby is quite so crazy!

Returning two months later to the site where I had found my 2017 Best Find entry (a 9” Dalhgren Naval Artillery Shell) I continued scouring the ravines of this James River fort site. Other than a shell fragment or two my search for another shell was looking unproductive. Walking along
the bottom of a deep creek cut I was swinging my T2 on a long arc across the water, and then up the sides of the dirt wall, when I got a high tone about 2' above the creekbed. Since there had been no other targets heard in the past hour (I told you it was unproductive!) my expectations were that it was a piece of trash floated in during past storms. But upon chopping out a plug from the ravine side wall I was happy to see the green patina of a “fat” button. “Eagle Button” was my first thought but brushing it off I was shocked to see the figure of Virtus standing over Tyranny - a Virginia State button, my first ever! Its awe-some condition promoted it to Find of a Lifetime status, too. I had seen other VA buttons come out of this site, but most were damaged by 150 years of corrosion and soil acidity. Not this one; by being “preserved” up in the side wall of this gully the thin brass had remained “high and dry” and looks close to what she did when some scared Southern soldier was hugging the dirt of this natural “fox hole trench” while awaiting the murderous shelling overhead to finally stop raining shrapnel on him.

The Scovill / Waterbury CT backmark is quite clear and indicates that the button was manufactured pre-war by the original owner’s enemy (the Yankees) circa 1850. Thus the soldier that lost it was either a long time member of the pre-war VA militia or was wearing hand-me-downs (common for the CSA) in 1862/63 when this battle took place. And since research of this fort site indicates that Confederate Cavalry was the main focus of the fighting in the area my button was found, I’d like to think it was lost by a member of that group of horseman as my great great grandfather was a member of the 6th VA Cavalry (though his service post-dated this particular battle).

Due to its remarkable condition local relic experts have told me that the button could be worth $1,000, but its value to me far exceeds that.

TWO LARGE SILVERS!
Mark Kus

I was out hunting with my pastor Randy in a large ocean side park that has a large old estate dating back to the turn of the century. We had decided to work our way along the western edge of the park along the marsh. The tides actually comes up onto the lawn on extreme high tides which had a bearing on one of my finds resulting in some rust along the edge of it.

As we walked along, Randy had a hit on his e-Trac and was busy digging. As I kept walking he said, “hey Mark, come here I got something.” I turned to walk back over to see his find and he was smiling!

I said you got something good? He said I think so, and I was stunned to see a gold diamond ring!
Stuck in the plug with roots growing through the ring I snapped a cell phone photo then pulled it free—WOW! What a beautiful ring, 14K too. Randy removed the string from his sweatshirt and tied the ring to it and placed it in his pocket for safe keeping.

Well I thought to myself this day can not possibly get any better. Boy was I wrong. I literally turned and took about 10 steps and had a solid 97 on my Deus. I knew that was silver!

As I removed the plug I saw a dollar sized coin in the hole. “Hey Randy, I just found a Morgan dollar, a bucket lister for sure.” He came over and could not believe it. Now I was happy to be on the board with a coin like that. So I said to myself to carefully check the hole. Nothing else, so I scanned the surrounding area and about a foot away another 97 hit. No way, another Morgan I thought, so I cut another good sized plug. I flipped it over, and yep another silver, but this time a Walking 1946 half. Man what an afternoon we had with mostly clad the rest of the day. But we were seriously happy to have made these amazing finds together.

I’ve only been seriously detecting for about a year and a half and had a nice list of silvers and my first $5 1911 Half Eagle, which is my favorite find so far. Randy was told by one appraisal the diamond was not real but the ring is 14K so he’s going to get another appraisal.

In an area I had just found a clad dime about 4” down, I continued to sweep over the area and then heard the faintest high squeak. I cut a plug about 3” down, ran the coil over the hole, but nothing. I did get a nice high tone over the plug, however. I pulled out my pinpointer and as soon as it touched the plug it rang. I scraped away a little of the dirt and saw the outline of the smallest coins I’d ever found. I thought it’s a Trime no doubt!

Wrong. I saw the eagle on the back. A bust half dime! I washed it off in my mouth LOL...

It looked like it might be in EF condition, a beautiful small coin, dated 1835. It’s now the oldest American silver I’ve found. I’ve been hunting two years and have been looking for a bust coin. Well I’ve found my first, and it’s a dandy!

I found this gorgeous hammered gold coin in England in March, 2018. The coin is a gold quarter Noble struck between 1422-1430 during the reign of Henry VI of England, an historic period in the middle of the 100 years...
Max wrote in his 1.19 W&ET article, “Found At The Foundry— Colonial Relics And Rare Coins!”, “I’ve found it to be true that the best relic hunts are often in the most unexpected places.” That’s how his successful and unexpected detecting began one day in 2018. A friend of a friend introduced him to the town historian, and when schedules were coordinated they met at the historian’s home. He and his wife live in an 1810s farmhouse and while walking the property stories were shared and then the landowner mentioned there was oral history that a 1750s house once stood next to where his barn is today. With that Max was given permission to detect the property to help with the dating of the surroundings. Since he always takes his detector wherever he goes, the circumstances led to one of the most productive and successful hunts Max has had so far.

Due to where the site sits, the ground conditions were ideal for preserving copper relics and coins. So be sure to read his 1.19 article for all the details about the relics and coins found that day. All of the recoveries were exceptional, but the one that is being featured as Max’s Best Find is the 1785 Vermont copper. It is a Ryder 3, listed as rare with potentially as few as 50-60 surviving examples. As Max put it, “Unearthing an early American copper in such exquisite condition, and a true rarity, too, is a once-in-a-lifetime find!”

Well done, Max, and this all goes to prove
I went to detect an old house in my town that was slated for demolition last October. After getting permission from the property owner, I began searching close to the structure but was asked not to go inside, so of course I agreed. Two hours later I was getting cold and tired. I’d found three Wheat cents and some assorted metal junk. I decided to leave after one more target and just then got a 36-40 reading on my Minelab 305. I made a large plug and turned over the soil. I really thought it was a large medal, but on closer examination I could see leaves peeking out from the caked dirt. I turned it over and saw it was a Large cent, 1798! I’d always wanted to find a Large cent. This find made my whole year.

I was detecting during vacation this past June along the “treasure coast” in South Central Florida. I had been finding modern coins, mostly dimes. In the past I had worked the beaches exclusively. However, this day I decided to work my way out near the A1A access road in an area that was undeveloped. It wasn’t long before I received a signal that sounded and read out like another dime. So naturally I thought I had just found another clad dime.

However, after wiping off a little dirt with my thumb, I saw the cross! I stood up and my knees got weak. I could hardly believe my eyes! I immediately took a picture with my cell phone and sent it to my wife back home. After 35+ years of searching these beaches I finally had found my own piece of Spanish treasure! The old saying is certainly true—“patience, perseverance and persistence pays off!”
Schilling.

Looking back at this find in the context of the other finds including my 1730 one real cob it all makes sense. This town was a major trading seaport with Britain and the Caribbean islands. That morning of May 27 he had gone directly from work after an overnight double shift. I was shocked when he called me and said he saw “a tree on this dug coin and what is it?” Immediately I had him text me a picture and I busted out with, “don’t rub it!” He brought it over and I saw the dark gritty pine forest soil clinging to it. I knew a hot water soak in Dawn detergent would do the trick. I repeated this a few times, changing the solution each time.

Later I submitted the coin to NGC and it came back with the labeling “altered surfaces”. The NGC labeled weight designation matched what I got on my scale of 49.5 grains. A complete large planchet variety weighs in at 68 to 72 grains, so this one saw some thievery of its silver. Clipping was a common practice and the reason we have edge devices like lettered edges and reeding. I’ve been involved in numismatics for 50 years and never doubted its authenticity, and NGC backed that up. These crude coins overseen by Samuel Hull well over 350 years were struck on a rocker press and have an intriguing story. I plan on submitting the coin to ANACS for encapsulation so he can easily show it off. We are both members of the Yankee Territory Coinshooters and this is the most remarkable find I’ve seen for 2018.

my grown stepson Casey Guilmette into metal detecting. Since that time he has taken to it much as I did 32 years ago. He’s addicted! While he’s on duty as a corrections officer he shares detecting exploits with his coworkers in the effort to gain some new permissions. His successful efforts have provided us with many bucket list finds but none so stunning as last May. The entire backstory and other finds from one particular permission are a worthy submission for a full story. This submission is about a find that has eluded me in my 32+ years of metal detecting. This particular site, a small parcel and wooded has had human activity since the mid 1600s and has escaped development. Our first trip out there yielded for me a 1732 pistareen, 5 KG 2nd coppers in one hole among other memorable keepers. Casey scored an 1852 trime and some newer silver. There is so much more to what we’ve dug but this is about Casey’s career find of a heavily clipped 1652 Pine Tree Schilling.

34 APRIL 2019
I found 3 of these buttons in a camp occupied by LA & TX troops close to Vicksburg on the Louisiana side of the river. CSA Coat Button, Louisiana Coat Button with local B/M and a Louisiana cuff button with a local B/M.

Followed these Soldiers to the Mississippi side of the river and dug an extremely Rare CS Staff Officer Button near Vicksburg, MS. Very little was known about this Staff officer button back in the 90’s when the Button book came out. Only one known at the time and it was dug in the South in a CS camp. Since then 14 more have been dug and all found in Confederate Camps occupied by Louisiana & Texas Troops. The experts say either made locally for Confederacy or France made this Staff Officer button for the Confederacy. Very Rare.

I was detecting a few days ago at a farm field in Southern New Jersey with my buddy Tim. I was using my White’s Spectra V3I and it gave me a great signal. I dug the hole but had difficulty finding the target. I used my pinpointer and located a small gold colored button. I saw the image of an eagle with the words “United States Of America” on top and knew that it was something special. When I got home and after some light cleaning, I looked in my Alberts Book of Military Buttons from 1976. I found a very similar Button listed on UU132A. The only
difference that I could see was that my button arrows were pointing down and mine had more branches. It measures 14 mm.

The reverse has Scoville Extra in raised letters around the outer rim.

I called Ralph to help identify it from one of his old button books. We eventually found it in Alberts Historical Button Book, Bicentennial Edition. It was under Political Campaign Buttons #PC78 on page 420. I couldn’t believe it. This was my first ever political button and to be from 1828 Andrew Jacksons Campaign blew my mind. The relative value in 1976 was $125.00. The obverse of the button is plain. Can’t wait to go back out to do some more hunting.

1828 ANDREW JACKSON CAMPAIGN BUTTON
Timothy Reno

1828 ANDREW JACKSON CAMPAIGN BUTTON
Timothy Reno

ROYAL EDINBURGH VOLUNTEERS BELT PLATE
T.J. Rickli

I was metal detecting in the Orange County of New York with a couple of friends. We had been detecting all morning not finding much when I came across an
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old rock wall. I decided to make my way down it swinging my detector as I walked. I got a high tone 83-85, so I started to dig. I saw a rectangular buckle in the hole. I picked it up and turned it over and saw REV across the front. I wasn’t sure exactly what it was, so I sent a few pictures from the field to one of my friends. One friend called me back in two minutes and told me that it was a waist belt plate of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers, 80th Regiment of Foot who fought at Yorktown. I couldn’t believe what I had just found walking a rock wall in New York.

I just got back from a few weeks overseas on a mission, and was just itching to get back at my new site in SC. Recoveries so far have been killer with an assortment of early silver, 18th century toy cannon, and a 1740s 2 escudo counterfeit. I definitely get the feeling the Colonial owners had wealth, and I knew there had to be something special left in that dirt. Soon, I was able to sneak away for a few hours of dirt therapy. Locating a few flat buttons and assorted lead had me a bit discouraged until the XP let out a broken chip among the iron. I flipped the plug, removed a few iron nails, and re-swung the hole...solid 75...definitely a flat button. Reaching in with the pinpointer, I pulled a heavily encrusted button.

I dry brushed it like I always do in the field and noticed a ring of stars and shield. Knowing immediately what I had found, I just sat in the dirt in disbelief... my first rattlesnake button! Condition was rough given the saltwater nearby, but cleaning over 1,000 flat buttons had prepared me for this one. Mineral oil soak, followed by careful mechanical toothpicking/brushing, along with a paste of baking soda/lemon juice slowly revealed the detail underneath. Finally, I used a protec-
evening and figured I’d give
the site another sweep, just to
make sure I didn’t miss any
targets. After about an hour of
grid work and 0 signals, I fig-
ured I got it all. With another
hour to kill, I said to myself... if I was shooting at someone
from this position with a mus-
ket, where would I be. After
all, I did find a lottery button
and a USA there, which
reflects at least 3 different
soldiers. There was really
only one position that would
make sense, a small section
where the coast jutted out. So
I walked about 200 yards and
starting swinging, musket-
ball...musketball... and then
the CTX made the 12-20 tone
I had been waiting for.
Flipped the plug and holy
smokes, it’s marked. Initially
only saw the 3 and thought I
might have another SC, but
quickly recognized the crown
and 3rd American as the
“other” 3rd... The New York
Volunteers (loyalist) 3rd
American Regiment. These
guys were raised in NY in
1776 as part of General
Howe’s army, and eventually
ended up in Florida in
October 1778 with Sir Henry
Clinton. They worked their
way through Savanna, and
eventually took Charleston in
April 1780. It’s nothing short
of crazy that I’ve stumbled on
an undocumented skirmish
site, that ultimately resulted
in the surrender of the SC 3rd
Regiment of Rangers to the
Loyalist 3rd American
Regiment. What are the
chances of digging 2, 3rd
Regiment buttons, both made
up of American colonists...

I am still riding the
high from last week’s SC
Revolutionary War button, a
perfect 3rd Regiment of
Rangers. Got back out this
research continues as I attempt
to pin down the family that
owned this property during the
18th century. Regardless of
who the land belonged to, it’s
clear that this southern family
was loaded. So far the coinage
has included a 2 pence rosa
americana, 2 COBs, and 3 pre-
1750s Spanish. I could only
dream of the prospects of
recovering a Colonial gold
coin, but managed to recover
the next best thing. Here’s the
in situation shot, fresh out of
the plug - Deus XP 11.7Khz
45VDI at 8 inches... not pic-
tured is my jaw on the floor.
The stone is blue turquoise, all
the designs are cast in 22K
gold. I’ve reached out to a few
experts to try and narrow the
date range, but most have stated early 1700s. I’ve dug a few
18th century copper rings, 1
silver, but this target is without
a doubt a find of my lifetime,
and a very personal piece. Just
incredible to think this stuff is
still out there to be found after
300 years in the dirt. Similar
Georgian examples sell from
$1,300-2,000.

3RD AMERICAN
REG BUTTON
(NY VOLUNTEERS)
Jonathan Schmidt
This Colonial gold posy ring was found on a relic hunting trip in Eastern USA— a partial but still high on the bucket list. Over the last 2 years I’ve dug the occasional unmarked pewter, correct construction with integral cast loop shank, but nothing left to ID the unit. I knew there had to be a marked SC in there somewhere, but hundreds of hunts yielded little but musketballs.

Flying a night sortie tonight, so figured I may as well hit the coast. CTX gives off the familiar sound of pewter 12-15... dig the plug and look at the familiar shank of an American made pewter button.

I flipped it over and nearly had a heart attack. After catching my breath and texting pictures to everyone I know, I realized I finally had my #1 bucket lister, a South Carolina 3rd Regiment of Rangers button. These guys were mounted light infantry, organized in 1775, and known for their liberty or death caps. These guys terrified the British in the SC back country until the fall of Charleston in 1780.
is a very historical site with a vast amount of early U.S. and Colonial history. My brother and I had hopes of locating some Civil War ordinance on this trip or perhaps something from our country’s early history. Our trip was for three full days of metal detecting and during the third day of the trip, about a half hour into hunting, I came across a very good reading on my Equinox 800. As soon as I cut and pulled the plug of sod from the hole, I saw what I immediately recognized as a gold ring glistening in the morning sunshine. Upon retrieving and examination, I soon found out it was not just a typical gold ring, but a Colonial gold posy ring. Further research placed its age from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century. Colonial posy rings are an extremely rare find in the United States and I learned more so from talking to others and an offer of $4,250.00 for the ring from a high end jewelry store.

Although monetary worth is always nice to know on discoveries, this is something I will never sell simply because of the amazing history and also knowing I had an ancestor living approximately four miles from the location where I made this remarkable discovery. It is simply an amazing feeling to pull something from the ground that was lost so many centuries ago, long before the United States was even a country, and to realize all the history that took place during the time it lay there in the ground.

I found this beautiful 1796 Draped Bust Dime, while detecting a corn field that my buddy Mark had gotten us permission to hunt. Being only about 10 miles from Gettysburg, we were hoping to find some Civil War relics that day. I could hardly believe it when I pulled this coin out of the ground and saw 1796 on it, I knew right away that I had a once in a lifetime kinda find. We didn’t find any Civil War relics that day, but you definitely won’t hear me complaining.

I’ve heard people say gold is where you find it, well, so are Confederate relics. After a few partial days of digging a local park and having found some modern change I decided to go to a farm I have detected before, that does have some older material on it, as I prefer the old relics to newer items. I had been on the property previously, but hadn’t dug it much. I walked 5 feet from the car, and balanced the machine. I walked six steps and got a decent signal. It sounded like a dime sized signal and read a 65 on my XP Deus. Out popped a splash of gold. No, it was not a gold coin. But even dirt encrusted, I could see it was a Civil War type domed button. I did a little more digging before I had to leave but got 1 more flat button and 2 modern dimes, and was so curious about the button I just had to get out of there and get home and get it cleaned.

What the cleaning revealed turns out to be an ultra rare button, used by Confederates in the Civil War. It is a St. Timothy’s Hall button. St. Timothy’s Hall was a military school in Catonsville, Maryland started in the 1830s. The school burned in 1872, and it never reopened as a military school.

John Wilkes Booth
attended for a time from 1852-1853. Booth assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in April of 1865. Another alumni, Samuel Arnold, was convicted of conspiracy in the murder and went to prison for his part in the conspiracy.

Maryland was a very divided state during the Civil War, and many of the students in this particular school had a strong southern bend. While the headmaster was a strict abolitionist, many in the school body had other loyalties, and it was reported in 1861 when each southern state seceded from the union, the student body cheered and fired the cannon in salute to that state leaving the Union.

The school gave the Confederate Army General Fitzhugh Lee, another alumni and Brigadier General Steven Elliott, Jr., among many, many other soldiers.

Professional button collectors consider this a true southern school button. The button itself is intact. Alphaeus Albert’s “Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons”, Bicentennial Edition lists it as SU378 on pages 342 and 343. It lists its backmark as “Scovills & Co. Superfine”.

This button’s backmark is “Waterbury Button Co.**” which was used exclusively 1861-1865. This backmark is pictured in McGuinn and Bazelon’s “American Military Button Makers and Dealers; & Dates” figure 21, in the appendix.

The site was along the route some of Jeb Stuart’s cavalry used during the Gettysburg Campaign. It is conceivable one of the alumni lost it on the raid from Hanover, through York down into Maryland. What a ride for the little buttons!

Digging a Confederate button is no easy task these days, but digging a Confederate school button is mind blowing.

A few days later I went back to the same site, parked the car in the same spot and proceeded to detect with my XP Deus. Two feet away from where I found the button, I got another decent signal and recovered a second, almost identical button. I tell fellow detectorists, if you miss a target by an inch, it might as well be a mile.

I have hunted the site quite a bit since then and found a few more non-descript period buttons, and a few dropped minie balls, but no more from the school.

Three months later, I was invited to detect a farm about 100 miles from this site with another person and we found a great place, all on private property, with 17th through 19th century relics on it. It seems there were three houses on the property and the houses were gone by 1900, as determined by the lack of modern items on the site. I was surprised to find a standard 3 ringer Union Minie ball.

After a few hours of detecting, and finally homing in on where the houses stood, I found an Eagle “I” button and nearby another St. Timothy’s Hall button. This button was the cuff variety and about 10' away found my fourth St. Timothy’s Hall button, another damaged cuff. The last button was flattened, but there is enough remaining to make a positive identification. As a native Marylander, it has been my privilege to rescue these small bits of history for future generations. References: Catonsville Churches Schools before 1950 by H. Ralph Heidel.
I must have visited over 50 sites this year and have never found a spill of this magnitude. The site was old because nature had reclaimed the stones on the foundation. I was working the lip of the barn cellar when I got a decent signal. I dug down and recovered a 1785 Nova Constellatio Crosby 3-B variety Copper Pointed Rays Large US and then I also recovered a 1788 Vermont copper, Ryder-29 variety out of the same hole. My first Colonial copper coin spill!

Late in 2017, I found myself with a few hours to swing my trusty metal detector and I decided to try a turn of the century trading post/store, which was also a popular motor vehicle stop into the early 1920s. Over the past year, I’ve dug a couple of Seated Liberty silver coins at this abandoned site, as well as Mercury dimes and Wheaties, so I wasn’t expecting any surprises on this nice sunny day. The old adage of a site is never worked out came into play as I first dug a 1902-V nickel, with full liberty and only a few feet away, out popped this nice looking 1903-S Barber dime. The leafy dry soil had preserved it well! San Francisco minted coins are routinely found here on the West coast and at first my memory wasn’t sure of the value of this dime, so it went into my safe container, until I could check it out. Just finding 1902 and 03 dated coins is a “Win-Win” on any day but when “RARE” low mintage specimens surface, it’s a real miracle. My current Yeoman’s Redbook gave me a thrill when I discovered that this 1903-S Barber dime had a mintage of only
when I uncovered it, we both couldn’t believe our eyes. I was shaking and excited so bad that I had to quit for the day and go home. Now mind you, this coin comes out of the ground as clean as the day it went in and it truly was a sight to behold.

I have been metal detecting as a hobby for some twenty years and have had the privilege of finding some rare and unique finds. I have been honored to have the 1997 “Company K. First Dragoons Plate”, 2003 Arizona Territory Token and the 2012 Central Pacific Railroad Tags all be published in the past “Best Finds” issues of Western & Eastern Magazine. To those who are reading this, don’t give up swinging the coil as you never know what treasure awaits you!

Three months ago I was given permission to metal detect an excavation site in Yuma, AZ. After the workers were done, I would search the newly dug soil and holes which during this time span, has yielded quite a few coins, rings, buttons etc. Included in these finds are an 1823 Capped Bust dime, 1877 5 SEN coin, and a 1859-S Seated Liberty dime. None of what I had found can compare to the day I unearthed the 1867-S $10 gold piece. The owner of the property was there with me when I heard that magical solid sound of something good screaming from my headphones, and

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Richard Taylor

I found this 1712 Carlos the third 2 Reale in amazing condition in a cornfield on Memorial Day 2018.

Robert Williams

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1712 2 REALE

1867-S $10 GOLD COIN

1823 CAPPED BUST DIME
1877 5 SEN COIN
1859-S SEATED LIBERTY DIME
1867-S $10 GOLD PIECE

613,300, making it a very “RARE” and desirable coin, especially for the Barber collector. The condition of this beauty, after being in the ground over 100 years, is Fine+, with a book value of around $400. The drier climate out west is known for preserving our finds in better condition than the average East Coast find and this coin clearly confirms the theory.

1867-S $10 GOLD COIN

1823 CAPPED BUST DIME
1877 5 SEN COIN
1859-S SEATED LIBERTY DIME
1867-S $10 GOLD PIECE

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USA: 800.446.0244
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Time and time again I have listened to my friends’ stories about the nice coins and Civil War relics that they have found over the many years they have been hunting. After a while I began to think that I would never find anything as good as they had. They got me into metal detecting about four years ago, and all I had found so far was a few Wheat cents. We started going to club hunts all over the eastern part of the country, and I got to meet other people with the same interest. Going to these seeded hunts is fun and even pays more than the entrance fees now and then. Finding silver dimes, quarters, and sometimes even half dollars at these events, and listening to the stories of all the other hunters, got me hooked.

Most days I search for a couple hours without finding anything but pennies and clad coins at city parks. I have never found a single silver coin in any of these parks, and I was about to give up on ever finding one. However, I also invested in a Garrett AT PRO several years ago, and that opened up a whole new world! I started hunting at beaches, in and out of the water, and now have a small collection of rings. With nine gold rings, that AT PRO has paid for itself several times over already!

Most of my detecting is done in Indiana, but I also have some land in Kentucky that has several old house sites. I have hunted them many times, finding Wheats, a few Jefferson nickels, and lots of iron. One cold winter day I decided to search a large wooded area and was finding very little, mostly old cans, until I headed on up in the woods and started working around a small hill. About five minutes into the hunt I got a hit and, thinking it was another can, I used my shovel to cut a plug. Looking into the hole, I saw several large coins look-
The ten Seated Liberty half dollars in the cache ranged in date from 1854 to 1877.

When I checked the hole, my Garrett Pro pinpointer started ringing, and I excitedly kept on pulling silver dollar after silver dollar out of that hole! Some of the coins were smaller, but with all the mud on them I couldn’t tell what they were until later, after cleaning them. I could not
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believe it! I’d scored my first cache, and I was shaking like a leaf!

With a big pocketful of coins and no more hits, I decided to get them secured somewhere better than my coat pocket. Ten minutes later I went back to work the area again, to see if there might be even more coins. Starting at the hole where I had found the cache of coins, I got only dead air, but about a foot or so off to one side of the hole I got a hard hit. Thinking it was probably a pulltab, I decided to dig anyway, in hopes of a relic. Again using the shovel, I turned over a small plug of dirt and couldn’t believe my eyes! There was a gold coin gleaming up at me! Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would find a gold coin! Carefully wiping the dirt off, I saw that it was a gorgeous $10 gold Eagle! Then, looking closely, I also saw that I had hit it with the shovel. After beating myself up for hitting the coin, I cautiously wiped some clinging dirt off and saw the date... 1880. Except for the scratch I’d put on it, the coin looked as if it was just minted yesterday! I again checked that spot very slowly, and now it seemed that all the coins had been found. Checking on around the hill with no further success, I decided to get back to the house, rinse off the coins, and see just what I had found.

Silver dollars dominated the cache—52 Morgans in all. There were also ten Seated Liberty half dollars. One coin looked different from the other silver dollars, and I discovered that it was an 1877 Mexican silver dollar! Last was the $10 gold Eagle. A total of 64 coins had come out of that one spot, and all were in Very Good or better condition, apart from some discoloration that I think may have been caused by a bag that the coins were in.

The dates on the coins ranged from 1854 to 1882, so I think that they must have been there in the ground since 1882-83. Who put them there and why they were never recovered by the owner is something to wonder about. Were there more caches, and they just missed this pile, or did they die before they could recover them? The coins were just under the surface and not buried very deep at all, so were they just lost rather than hidden in the woods? Whatever their untold tale may be, they are now recovered, and that old Kentucky cache has become my find of a lifetime!

TERRY CAUSEY is retired from the U.S. Army and now looking forward to his wife Brenda’s retirement, also from the Army, so that they can travel the country metal detecting.
By William W. Purkey

Hello, treasure hunters!

During the coming months, if you have the opportunity to offer advice to “tenderfoot” newcomers to our hobby, the following suggestions might be helpful.

New members of your club are sure to ask, “Where’s a good place to hunt?” I have an answer. Advise the newcomer to talk about our hobby with everyone he or she meets. This includes the dentist, physician, pastor, neighbors, churchgoers, social club members, family, and friends. Even talk about your hobby with casual contacts. In fact, never miss a chance to talk about it!

Everyone loves the adventure of treasure hunting. This is not true of all hobbies. If your hobby is collecting Cabbage Patch dolls, salt & pepper shakers, matchbook covers, little bars of hotel soap, or Beanie Babies, there will be a limited amount of interest. When you talk about treasure hunting, your listeners’ eyes are sure to light up! You will have a captive audience. They will want to learn more.

“How does it work?”

“How far down does it reach?”

“What have you found?”

“Is it like a Geiger counter?”

By talking about your hobby to everyone you come in contact with, you are likely to have two positive responses, one immediate and the other “delayed action.”

The immediate response is that the listener will tell you about something he or she lost. Often the loss will have occurred on their property or in a nearby park. Volunteer to search for the lost item. Not only is this a great opportunity to make the owner of the lost item happy, but it also opens the door to find other lost and forgotten items sprinkled around the property.

The second response is “delayed action.” People will remember you and your hobby, and sooner or later either they or someone they know will lose something of value: car keys, cell phone, watches, rings, etc. When this happens they will think of you and your hobby. You will be called on for help.

When you go to the site of the lost item, don’t be fooled by the appearance of the buildings. A modest little bungalow may not look very promising, but three or four families with lots of children may have lived there over the years. On the other hand, a stately mansion with white columns may have seen little activity on its beautifully manicured lawn for nearly a century.

During my half-century of metal detecting I have bragged a lot about my hobby, and as a result I have been asked numerous times to find everything from lost car keys to billfolds. I was once contacted by a woman who had lost her wedding ring. Actually she had thrown the ring at her husband during a heated argument. (Bad idea!) After she phoned me and asked if I could find it, I gridded the yard and searched carefully but had no luck. However, I did find a gold wedding band that her husband had lost a decade earlier. Perhaps my find may strengthen their marriage. As the vintage movie sleuth Charlie Chan used to say, “Strange events permit themselves the luxury of occurring.”

Featured Finds

Puget Sound Treasure Hunters Club
Tacoma, Washington
Digging Washington
Tim Conner, 1908 Indian Head cent; Bob Barack, 1995 commemorative Winston Churchill coin (I actually met Winston Churchill, believe it or not.); Tom Evenson, Tiffany diamond ring; Mark Kuselth, Blue Diamond Coal Company token.

Empire State Metal Detector Association
Albany, New York
ESMDA Newsletter
Mike Casey, crotal bell (sleigh bell); Tim Myers, sander lid for use with quill pens; Angelo Primo, old buck...
Cascade Treasure Club members (l-r) John Miller, Charles Plumlee, Amber Carte, Jim Lewis, Alan Henneberry, and Joe Sacco get set for a great club hunt in a stunningly scenic setting.

le; Mike Holt, Model T valve cover tube; Tim Hogan, very old lock.

Massachusetts Treasure Hunting Association Newton Highlands, Massachusetts MTHA Newsletter

Rick Smith, 1852 3¢ piece; Dave Nylan, 1943 Walking Liberty half dollar; Bill Stowers, 14K gold class ring (I hope Bill can find the owner.); Ken Camilleis, 1860 presidential campaign token (Best in Show); Kent Blethen, crotal bell.

Metal Detecting Club of Central New York Rome, New York EARTH Newsletter

Robert Thomas, 50 Year Commemorative Boy Scout kerchief slide; Dave Lofgren, 1918 Mercury dime; Mike Eychner, numerous clad painted green from last year’s hunt (I wonder if he can still cash them in for prizes?); Thomas Ferjet, 1934 Washington quarter; Margaret Ferjet, Ferrari Matchbox car; Larry Ehlinger, 1862 Indian Head cent.

Indian Territory Treasure

Hunters Club Tulsa, Oklahoma Treasure News

Cody Reese, 1851 Seated Liberty dime; Wally Dick, 1893 Barber quarter; Russell Miller, 10K ring with diamond; Mike Henson, WWI coat button; Jim Nobles, 1903 Indian Head cent.

Midwest Historical Research Society Chicago, Illinois Trash to Treasure

Andrew Pollak, large 18K Masonic ring; Bill Berning, 1826 large cent; Gene Zscherenitz, Hubley cap pistol (In good condition these guns are highly collectable.); Tom Halek, Top Ten Illinois Swim pin; Dan Bundy, 1854 Braided Hair large cent.

San Diego Treasure Hunting Club San Diego, California Digs & Scoops

John Howe, gold ring; Tim Walker, 1909 Wheat cent; Tom Dunning, 5¢ token; Bryan Kinnear, 1922 silver dollar. (I’ve been hunting for over 50 years and only found one silver dollar.)

Cascade Treasure Club Auburn, Washington Foiled Again

Gary Clark, 1871-S Seated Liberty half dollar; Ken Cochran, .925 (sterling) silver Borox Mfg. Co. bracelet; Chad Plumlee, Masonic penny token, Kent, Washington, c. 1880s, and U.S. Navy whistle; Joe Sacco, 1912 Barber dime. (Joe is the club’s newsletter editor.)
Michigan Treasure Hunters
Livonia, Michigan

The Prober
Ernie Herring, 18K necklace & cross with diamonds; Sharon Standish, 1833 Upper Canada halfpenny; Rick Navarre, ship builder’s badge; Charlene Sabisch, Roman silver siliqua, c.245-270 A.D. (Charlene is the editor of The Prober.)

Nuggets
Cover those beach sand holes! When you’re beach hunting in front of huge high-rise buildings, you can be sure that there are people in those apartments with binoculars, watching everything you do. Covering the holes you make in the sand only takes a second, and it shows that detectorists are responsible for making beaches a better place for everyone. While you’re at it, please be sure to pick up trash and dispose of it properly, too.

Odd & Ends
In a previous column I described “Sunshine Soldiers.” These are members who only show up for club hunts or other special events. Sunshine Soldiers do not attend regular meetings or contribute to the work that makes a club a success. Some clubs are beginning to crack down on those members who shrink from service. For example, the Midwest Historical Research Society has passed a bill requiring members to attend a certain number of club meetings prior to taking part in a hunt. I hope it works out.

Congratulations to Roger Horrom, who was recently presented a life membership in the Midwest Coinshooters & Historical Club, St. Louis, Missouri. Roger served many years as club president, and I greatly enjoyed corresponding with him when he also served as editor of their newsletter.

A longtime member of the Massachusetts Treasure Hunting Assoc., Watertown, Massachusetts, he recently moved to Nevada. Scott Ferguson presented the club with a 10 oz. silver bar as a farewell gift. The club is fortunate to have such loyal and generous members.

When I received the latest Foiled Again newsletter of the Cascade Treasure Club, Auburn, Washington, I was bowled over by the beautiful cover photograph of six members, with a magnificent background view of the Cascade Mountains. The photo, taken during a club hunt, accompanies this column, many thanks to Joe Sacco for giving me permission to share it. Joe is editor of Foiled Again and a talented photographer.

In Memoriam
It is with sadness that the Midwest Coinshooters & Historical Club, St. Louis, Missouri, announces the death of longtime member Elizabeth Rath. Elizabeth, who joined the club as an original member in January 1980, also had a keen interest in antique bottles and was a member of a bottle collecting club. She led a full life and passed away at the age of 91.

* * *

Until next time, don’t forget to send me your newsletters, and be sure to fill in those holes. Happy hunting!
The Enchanted Ghosts Of New Mexico

By Gary B. Speck

New Mexico - USA—The Land of Enchantment!

Like the other Western states we’ve been exploring for the past couple of months, New Mexico is loaded with an eclectic mix of enchanting ghost towns. New Mexico was first settled by Europeans in July 1598, when Juan de Onate established the colonial capital of San Juan de los Caballeros at the Yuque Yunque pueblo home of the Tewa, who relocated to nearby Ohkay. It was located in a valley near the confluence of the Chama River with the Rio Grande.

The Spanish clashed with the mostly sedentary native Puebloans, as well as the nomadic Apache, Comanche, Navajo, and Ute tribes, and in 1610 the capital for Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexico was relocated to a new, more secure location now known as Santa Fe. The Spanish abandoned the Yuque Yunque pueblo, returning it to the Tewa. Despite 200-some years of bickering, fighting, and outright war, the Spanish continued planting settlements across present-day New Mexico, especially along the Rio Grande Valley southward toward today’s Albuquerque.

In 1848, the Mexican-American War ended, and New Mexico became an American territory. Sixty-four years later, New Mexico - The Land of Enchantment became the 47th state. Now, another 107 years later, we will explore some of the enchanted ghosts of New Mexico!

CHLORIDE
(Sierra Co.)

Rich silver chloride ore birthed Chloride. Less than a year after the initial discovery
in 1879, the bottom of Chloride Creek Canyon was covered with tents and mining claims. By 1883 Chloride was a full-on boom town with over 100 buildings housing assay offices, a bakery, blacksmiths, boarding houses, butcher shops, a doctor, general stores, a hotel, laundry, livery stable, lumberyard, millinery store, newspaper (The Black Range), photography studio, post office (1881-1956), restaurants, nine salons, and a school. Stage lines connected it to the outside world, and Saturday night dances kept the 500-3,000 people hopping.

When the silver market crashed in 1893, Chloride faded. However, it was never abandoned, with a few alert residents keeping an eye on things. Its future was secured in 1977, when Don and Dona Edmund rolled into town, looking for a unique little place to settle in. Chloride was it. They bought a house and, as the old-timers died off, purchased more and more of the town. Since then, they have restored a number of buildings.

Chloride’s colorful collection of over two dozen buildings ranges from ruins to restored. Chloride sits at the mouth of narrow Chloride Creek Canyon, hemmed in on three sides by the ridges of the Black Range, and is a true delight in a land of enchanting ghost towns. This mesmerizing bit of rustic Americana and its 11 residents can be found on Forest Road 226, 2.5 miles south of Winston, about 35 miles northwest of Truth or Consequences.

**CUERVO**
( Guadalupe Co.)
Straddling Interstate 40 at Exit 291, 18 miles east of Santa Rosa and 41 miles west of Tucumcari, Cuervo is a quirky, near-dead roadtown filled with several dozen empty buildings occupied by a tiny, watchful population.

It was established along the railroad in 1902, and by the 1930s had become a major stopping point on old US Highway 66, at which time it sported several hundred people. Today, Route 66 is gone, as is most of Cuervo. North of Interstate 40 is Cuervo’s former business dis-
Solid but unused, this old Catholic Church building stands in the southern part of Cuervo.

trict, a moldering, mostly abandoned line of buildings lining old Route 66. In 2015, only a garage/tow company was active there.

Across the freeway, the mostly abandoned residential district clusters around the solid, red-stone Catholic Church and boarded-up schoolhouse. When we last visited, I wandered the road shoulder, sensing eyes upon me.

No dogs barked. Now wind blew.

It was absolutely dead-still.

GLENRIO
(Quay Co., NM/Oldham & Deaf Smith Co., TX)

Lying south of I-40, smack-dab on the New Mexico/Texas state line, this dead townlet stretches a few blocks east into Texas and west into New Mexico. It dates back to 1903, when the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad established a siding right on the state line. First known as Rock Island, it was renamed Glenrio in 1908. It grew into a busy railroad shipping center filled with wood-frame and adobe buildings such as the large, adobe-walled Glenrio Hotel, a barbershop, Methodist Church, hardware store, newspaper (Glenrio Tribune), railroad depot, restaurants, schoolhouse, and town hall.

In 1925, Route 66 came through, bringing gas stations and motor courts (motels). For a half-century, Glenrio was a shining star on the great

Blanche Wilson married A. Lee Nowlin, and lived in this iconic Lake Valley home. They operated a Continental Oil Company (Conoco) service station/store there in the 1930s, and she remained a resident until her death in 1982.

This c.1925 Broyles Mobil Gas Station still stands in Glenrio; however, its roof now sags even more than in this photo taken in 2012.
The only motel in Glenrio sat on the Texas side of the border, which runs along the left side of the property. That star was extinguished in September 1973, when I-40 opened. Despite a couple of gas stations relocating to the nearby offramp, Glenrio’s bustle was replaced by shuttered windows and “Closed” sign-decorated front doors—a history book name at a seldom-used offramp.

LAKE VALLEY
(Sierra Co.)

Sitting along SH 27, 42 miles northeast of Deming, is a quiet, dusty, silver mining ghost administered by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Lake Valley consists of a dozen or so standing buildings, and others that aren’t so standing.

Rich silver ore discovered in August 1878 fueled a boom that was given a prodigious boost when miners hit a massive ore pocket of almost pure silver. Named the Bridal Chamber, it assayed well over $15,000/ton, its crystalline silver glittering in the light of miner’s candles.

Lake Valley went crazy! Buildings and over 1,000 folks sprawled across the landscape. It didn’t last, however, once the national silver panic of 1893 took its toll, crippling Lake Valley. Two years later fire ripped through the heart of Lake Valley, but it was a tough little town and hung in there. In 1934, the railroad shut down, but still it hung in there. In the decade following World War II, manganese kept Lake Valley breathing. In 1954 the

Welcome to Lake Valley. This large stone building once housed a store/saloon and gas station.

This sagging cabin in Lake Valley was covered with rolled composition roofing to help keep out the ever-present New Mexico wind.
At the west end of Mogollon stands the former J.P. Holland General Store (left) built in 1885. It now houses the Silver Creek Inn. The three buildings on the right include a museum.

post office closed, and in 1956 the mines and the school closed as well. Even so, a few residents remained until the BLM took over ownership and began preservation in 1994.

MOGOLLON
(Catron Co.)

Located along Silver Creek at the bottom of a narrow canyon in the Mogollon Mountains, 52 air miles northwest of Silver City, Mogollon (pronounced moe-gee-YON) is the crusty remnant of a tough, isolated town that once had 2,000 people and 14 saloons.

Silver and gold were discovered here in the 1870s, but nothing happened until 1889, when the first cabin was built. Come 1890, a true boom town lined itself along the narrow canyon bottom where shipping the $20 million treasure across narrow, dangerous, mountain trails cost a fortune. In 1897, a road—a narrow, winding road—was carved out of the mountain connecting Mogollon to the outside world.

Mogollon thrived on adversity, each setback strengthening it. It burned. It rebuilt.

It washed away. It rebuilt.

Time after time after time.

By the mid-1910s Mogollon laid claim to 1,500 or more people, and its long main street was lined with a bakery, doctors, hotels, an ice maker, photographer, post office, restaurants, saloons, a school, a number of stores, and a theater. Mogollon also had electrical power, as well as telephone and water service.

In the 1920s, the mines scaled back production, but remained open. The national prohibition against alcohol was just an outside rumor that didn’t even dent the miners’ Saturday night cavortings.

During the 1930s the population slowly dropped, along with mine production. The once-unstoppable juggernaut came to a whimpering end, not by fire or flood, but a piece of paper issued on October 8, 1942, in far-off Washington, D.C.: War Production Board Limitation Order L-208.

Today, two dozen or so

Wilkerson’s once busy store and gas station in Newkirk is about to succumb to age and gravity.

Located on private property, this old school in San Pedro once echoed to the sounds of children. Today, it echoes only to the sound of wind.
Originally called the Midway Theater, this restored building, dating from the turn of the last century, is said to be the oldest intact theater in the state.

buildings and a handful of people manage to keep up appearances in Mogollon.

NEWKIRK
(Guadalupe Co.)
Newkirk is another faded Route 66 has-been, strung along the old highway north of I-40, 8.2 miles west of the county line, and 32 miles west of Tucumcari. One active combination gas station/market/post office, and a badly cracked church building greet travelers. Other long-dead structures include gas stations, a store, a motel, and other, unidentifiable structures. As in Cuervo, the town’s few occupants keep a sharp eye on visitors.

Newkirk started as a Chicago, Rock Island & Gulf Railroad station in 1901, with a post office opening in 1910. Like Cuervo and Glenrio, Newkirk boomed when Route 66 came through. In the 1930s Newkirk boasted 240 people and had four gas stations, two restaurants, and a trading post.

By 1950, the census counted 190 folks, and in 2010, only seven.

SAN PEDRO
(Socorro Co.)
Located 1.5 miles east of San Antonio and a half-mile south of US Highway 380,
San Pedro is an adobe wall-draped townsite with a few residents scattered about the remains of the town.

Where 223 folks lived in 1860, melted adobe walls and the detritus of a long-dead town hidden in the desert scrub lie side-by-side with a half-dozen inhabited buildings. The overwhelming quiet here allows one to truly feel the past.

STEINS
(Hidalgo Co.)

Long one of my favorite ghost towns, Steins sits just off I-10, 3.5 miles east of the state line, 19 miles southwest of Lordsburg. It is privately owned, and tours are offered periodically.

Steins is an outgrowth of Steins Station, a tiny Southern Pacific Railroad station established in the 1880s and named for Enoch Steins, a U.S. Cavalry officer who was killed nearby in 1873, during a clash with Apaches. The seed was planted in 1857, when the Birch Stage Line established a station called Doubtful Canyon to the northwest. In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Stage Company took it over, but it shut down in 1861 when the Butterfield line closed.

During the 1870s, when gold and silver mines were developed in the Peloncillo Mountains to the north, four small mining camps popped up, one of which took on the stage station name of Doubtful Canyon. Off to the south, the Southern Pacific Railroad pushed tracks through a large, flat area. Just east of the present state line they built a railroad station with a water tower, coaling station, and work camp, naming it Steins Pass. A wagon road connected the station to the mining camps. In 1888 a post office was established at the Doubtful Canyon camp.

Shortly before 1905, the railroad relocated Steins Pass Station a couple miles east, renaming it just plain-old Steins. The Doubtful Canyon post office relocated to the new town, as did several of the mining companies. Soon Steins had 100 folks, a general store, a restaurant, and a saloon. It grew slowly, and in 1919 claimed 200 people, a boarding house, a dance hall, a general store, a hotel, and a railroad section house and station, as well as three saloons.
An abandoned motel in Tierra Amarilla. It was probably later used as apartments.

World War II ushered in decline, and in 1944 the post office closed. Few folks remained after the war ended, and in 1955, when coal-powered trains disappeared, the railroad station closed, shoving Steins into the recesses of history.

Today, Steins is an intriguing collection of ruins and restored buildings—a living history museum lovingly cared for by its owners.

TIERRA AMARILLA
(Rio Arriba Co.)
This badly faded county seat near the junction of US 84/64, 23-some miles south of the state line, hosts the county courthouse, the county administrative center, a police/sheriff department building, a post office, and a quaint cafe that serves delicious deli sandwiches. The rest of this town of just under 400 souls is pretty much dead.

This old gas station once fueled visitors to Tierra Amarilla.

Tierra Amarilla began as Las Nutrias in 1862, near the 1860s Army post of Camp Plummer. When the fort closed in 1869, Las Nutrias and its Tierra Amarilla post office soldiered on until 1877, when it became the Rio Arriba County seat. In 1880, the town officially took on the post office name of Tierra Amarilla.

In 1916, the original courthouse was torn down and replaced. A century later it still stands in the heart of this almost anonymous little town with its near-silent streets filled with crumbling memories of its past.

Over the years, Ghost Town USA has journeyed to New Mexico numerous times. I hope you’ve enjoyed this brief foray into the enchanted ghosts of New Mexico - USA — The Land of Enchantment!

GARY SPECK says, “April 1984 to April 2019 marks the 35th anniversary of when Ghost Town USA began here in W&ET. I have only one thing to say: Thank You for supporting this column and this magazine!”
A Five Alarm Find

By Amy Maruso

For most of us, the events of 9/11/01 left an indelible scar on our minds, hearts and souls, and for some, it left physical marks as well. Ask just about anyone where they were and what they were doing when the news broke that our country was under attack and it will dredge up clear and harrowing memories. It was a day that changed the face of humanity forever. But sometimes the path to healing in the aftermath of tragedy is tempered with stories of the good in humanity. This is one of those stories.

It was a balmy June day in Ship Bottom on Long Beach Island, New Jersey. My good friend and hunting partner of 25 years had just come off the beach she had been detecting for the past few hours, but as often happens with Betty Sullivan, she hadn’t quite gotten her fill of detecting for the day and so she headed to a heavily used gravel parking lot near her beach house. She sometimes stops there to pick up loose change and just about anything that’s worked its way into the stones.

Betty often finds lots of change in gravel parking lots as people fumble for keys while carrying all manner of accoutrement to and from their cars for a day at the beach. She noticed that this lot was packed a bit tighter than the last time she detected it and assumed a new layer of gravel had been laid down on top of the old. Never one to give up, she picked at the signals a little harder than the last time she detected it and assumed a new layer of gravel had been laid down on top of the old. Never one to give up, she picked at the signals a little harder, choosing to only dig solid signals rather than the iffy ones.

The next signal didn’t sound great, but intuition sometimes trumps logic and leaves us no choice but to dig! After levering several tightly packed stones, the edge of something gold revealed itself. In complete astonishment, Betty carefully teased a gold pendant shaped like a Maltese cross attached to a gold chain
from among the stones. The pendant was a miniature version of a Fire Department badge with a number and “F.D.N.Y.” in raised letters.

As long as I’ve known Betty, nothing about this hobby has thrilled her more than to return a lost item to its rightful owner, and she has done it many, many times. She never asks for or expects a reward, but it’s important to her to get a letter or picture of the return for her scrapbook. So began her quest to find the owner of the medal.

The next day, Betty picked up copies of the local newspapers and checked the lost and found section, as well as going online to the local Facebook group. Eventually, when no lost ads appeared describing the piece of jewelry, she decided to take it to the local Police station to see if they could assist in the search. The police took possession of the necklace and gave Betty a receipt. Betty requested they call her when the owner came to claim it so she could hand it to them in person and hopefully get a picture. There the necklace sat while she waited for a call with any news.

After not hearing anything about the necklace for some time, Betty visited the police station and was dismayed to hear the necklace had already been claimed. She had really wanted to meet the person who lost it and hear the circumstances under which it was lost. Now she’d never know!
beach house and introduced themselves as Liz and Joe Healy. It turns out Joe was a New York City Fire Fighter in the station right across the street from the twin towers during 9/11. Joe prefers not to talk much about that time and has since retired after 21 years with the Department.

The necklace was a gift from his sister upon graduating from firefighting school and had been lost for 2 years. The couple explained that the Maltese cross was lost when Joe laid it on his beach chair before going in the water and completely forgot about it until after they returned home. Joe never

After several weeks, her phone rang one night and the woman on the other end introduced herself as Liz, the wife of the man who lost the necklace. She apologized to Betty for taking so long to get in touch but there were some circumstances that put their lives in overdrive until they could take a breather and call. She asked Betty if they could arrange a time for her and her husband to meet so they could thank her in person. Betty was thrilled and a date was set.

There were smiles all around the day of the meeting. The couple met Betty at her beach house and introduced themselves as Liz and Joe Healy. It turns out Joe was a New York City Fire Fighter in the station right across the street from the twin towers during 9/11. Joe prefers not to talk much about that time and has since retired after 21 years with the Department.

The necklace was a gift from his sister upon graduating from firefighting school and had been lost for 2 years. The couple explained that the Maltese cross was lost when Joe laid it on his beach chair before going in the water and completely forgot about it until after they returned home. It must have fallen out of the chair when they were packing the car to go home. Joe never

Joe and Liz always admired someone’s flowers when they took the short walk to the beach from their car, but they never knew the flowers were planted in front of Betty’s beach house!
Betty and Joe take a moment to enjoy the natural beauty of the New Jersey beach.

dreamed he would see it again.

Coincidentally, Liz and Joe often visited Long Beach Island, and after parking their car they would walk down the same small street to get to the beach. Each time they went they noticed the beautiful flowers planted in front of someone’s house. Yep, it was Betty’s house! In gratitude for returning the necklace, Liz gave Betty a bouquet of flowers and Joe presented her with two FDNY t-shirts. I don’t think there is anything that could have pleased her more.

We don’t know the memories Joe carries with him from that fateful day. We can only be grateful for the many men and women like him who acted so selflessly and quickly for their fellow man and country. Joe now carries another memory – a happy memory of a kind stranger who cared enough to reunite him with a treasured keepsake.

Joe’s lost and found Maltese cross FDNY gold necklace – a gift from his sister upon graduating firefighters school.