

ALASKA MINING

HALL OF FAME

A Foundation Honoring Those Who Pioneered the Way

Induction Ceremony

September 19, 1998

*Fort Davis Roadhouse
Nome, Alaska*

6:00 *Cocktails*

7:30 *Program*

- *Honorable John Handeland, Mayor of Nome*
Welcome
- *Charles C. Hawley, Master of Ceremonies*
Introduction
- *Earl Beistline, President of AMHA*
Comments and Statement of Purpose
- *Walter Johnson*
Introduction of Nome Inductees the Three Lucky Swedes
- *Charles C. Hawley*
Introduction of Nome Inductee Charles D. Lane
- *Honorable John Handeland*
Introduction of Family Members and Friends of Inductees and Special Guests

~ SPECIAL THANKS ~

Alaska Miners Association, Nome Branch
Alaska Mining Hall of Fame - Board of Directors
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Sitnasuak Native Corporation
Centennial Committee, Nome Alaska

*The Discovery at Nome, the Lucky "Swedes"
and Charles Lane*

ALASKA MINING HALL OF
FAME FOUNDATION

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Charles Caldwell Hawley
and Walter Johnson
September, 1998

THE NOME DISCOVERY

The discovery of gold at Nome triggered the largest, most exciting, and unusual stampede in Alaska Gold Rush history. It was unusual in the high ratio of success for the individual Argonauts, thanks to the Golden Sands of the beaches at Nome that allowed thousands to make a stake. Within months of the discovery of coarse rich gold on Anvil Creek, the three "Lucky Swedes" were bedeviled by claim-jumpers and litigation. Some of the would-be claimants, perhaps the men from Golovin and Council, had some foundation for their assertions. Others, such as Alexander McKenzie, had none. Moreover, although Lindeberg, Lindblom, and Brynteson may have been lucky, they had intelligence and more mining background than usually attributed to them. The threesome rapidly acquired any additional mining skills needed to pursue their claims. They were fortunate, also, to turn to Gabe Price and his boss, Charles D. Lane, for help. Lane had the experience, honesty, and financial power necessary to assist the prospectors in holding and developing their claims.

John Dexter had an important role in the discovery of gold on the Seward Peninsula, including that of Nome. Dexter came north because of the Omilak silver-lead discovery in the eastern Seward Peninsula in 1880. When Omilak played out, Dexter opened a series of trading posts, centered around his headquarters at Golovin. In order to cover the extensive territory, Dexter taught the Eskimo natives the art of gold panning, so that they, on their hunting and trapping trips, might also prospect the country. Probably one of his prospectors made the first significant discovery on the Seward Peninsula. The discovery was of rich Ophir Creek in the Council District. (Two men are mentioned in different sources for this discovery--George Johansen and, an Eskimo, Tom Guarick). Undoubtedly Native Alaskan's had significant roles in other Seward Peninsula discoveries. Family tradition in the Ahwinona family of the Death Valley-Fish River-White Mountain area tells that an Ahwinona family member, Constantine Uparazuck and another Eskimo, Gabriel Adams, led the "Lucky Swedes" into the Anvil Creek area.

Several men around the trading post at Golovin also acquired gold fever to

varying degrees; one was the minister Nils Hultberg, another a doctor, A. N. Kittilsen, sometimes manager of the reindeer station at Port Clarence. On one prospecting venture in the summer of 1898, Hultberg, mining engineer Blake, John Brynteson and others discovered gold on the Snake River; Hultberg also later claimed to have found gold at Anvil Creek at this time, but did not tell Blake.

In mid-September 1898, Brynteson, with new partners Jafet Lindeberg, the Norwegian of the "Lucky Swedes", and Erik O. Lindblom, went back to the Nome region. This time there was no doubt of a gold discovery. They found gold at Anvil, Glacier, Rock, and Dry Creek and in the very rich short creek called Snow Gulch. They managed to keep their discovery secret and brought in Kittilsen, Johan Tornensis--a Saami--and Gabe Price to form the new mining district on October 15, 1898. As described legally by Judge Wickersham, "They located claims, marked their boundaries, made the necessary discovery of gold, recorded their location notices, and were in peaceable and unchallenged possession of their respective claims in compliance with United States laws before the outside world heard of their discovery".

Regardless of their knowledge, or lack of knowledge, about mining, Brynteson, Lindeberg, and Lindblom had business acumen. With his Scandinavian-American partners, Brynteson formed the Pioneer Mining Company. The best linguist and, probably, administrator Lindeberg was elected President of Pioneer. The company, with Lane's Wild Goose Mining Company, was one of two main mining companies in early Nome. The Pioneer Mining Company paid more than two million in cash dividends in the 10 year period before 1912. By the early 1920s, Pioneer had taken out more than \$20,000,000 in gold. Pioneer owned and operated an extensive ditch system, including the famous Miocene, with more than 50 miles of ditch in total. These ditches, partly the product of the engineering ability of James M. Davidson, were necessary for both the early hydraulic mining and the later dredge operations.

In 1899 and 1900, thousands of men and women flooded into Nome. Like many Argonauts, most were too late and all the creek claims were double or triple-staked. Moreover, Nome also had a perhaps inordinate number of the parasites who mined the miners. Then Fate dealt a new hand. The beaches where the gold-seekers embarked were full of gold; many of the stampedeers found abundant gold in a claim perhaps as long as a shovel handle.

Beach mining played out in a few more years, but astute miners then sunk shafts to mine rich buried fossil beaches, some about as rich as any placer ever discovered. In the 1920's, after the rich paystreaks had

been depleted by drifting, Wendell P. Hammon and the industrial placer miners took over to bring us to the present day, mining first with dredges, then open-cuts.

JOHN BRYNTESON (1871-1959)

John Brynteson, probably the best all-around miner of the group, was born into a poor farming family in Artemark, Sweden on August 13, 1871. He was educated in a nearby school. He came to the United States at the age of 16 and, as did many other Scandinavians, headed to the upper Peninsula of Michigan where he worked in copper and iron mines for about ten years and became a U.S. citizen. Although only a lad, Brynteson may have already had some mining background, as Artemark is in an historic Swedish mining district. And, contrary to some later assertions, Brynteson was a U. S. citizen when he arrived in Alaska. Citizenship was granted in Michigan in 1896.

In the spring of 1898, Brynteson arrived at Unalakleet on the eastern coast of Norton Sound, Bering Sea. His purpose was to find coal for the Swedish Covenant mission. The search for coal was unsuccessful, as was an early trip into the Fish River Flats searching for gold. Somewhat more successful was the a trip into the Nome area with the Blake-Hultberg party in the summer of 1898. Brynteson and others discovered gold on river bar deposits of the Snake River.

The venture commenced in mid-September of 1898 with Lindeberg and Lindblom was much more successful. Within a few days, Brynteson and partners knew they had a major discovery, and went back to Golovin for supplies and aid in setting up the new mining district. With the exception of Gabe Price, who the miners must have



trusted from the start, their associates were of Scandinavian descent. Probably the "Lucky Swedes" learned, at an early stage of the Nome venture, to be "Dumb Swedes", discussing their claims in a language, probably Norwegian, that most of the newcomers and potential claim jumpers could not understand. Brynteson married Emma Forsborg on May 2, 1900; the Brynteson's had three children by the writing of his, probably, first brief biography by E. S. Harrison. Harrison noted: "While the products of his mines have made

him a capitalist and placed him in a position of absolute financial independence, he still remains the unassuming man and courteous gentleman that he was before the days of his affluence."

Brynteson was the first of the partners to leave Alaska (1902). Also the only one to return to his homeland to live. He did not squander his newly acquired wealth, but used it for other business ventures and for good works. In the United States, Brynteson established a home for sailors in San Francisco and endowed charitable works in Chicago. In Sweden, he financed the construction of the Ice Palace in Stockholm for the 1912 Olympic Games, and built factories. Brynteson was honored in his day, and his life story continues to attract the attention of Swedish scholars. In 1989, Olson published a new account of his life, roughly translated as "From peasant farmer to gold king"; the work is largely based on the research of Kjell-Ake Andersson.

Brynteson lived a long life, with a very adventurous start. He died in Sweden in 1959.

JAFET LINDEBERG (1874-1962)

Lindeberg, the youngest of the Nome discoverers, was born in 1874 in far north Badderen, Norway. Like all his neighbors, Lindeberg knew something about reindeer, but he was not a typical or racial Saami, the nomadic reindeer herders of northern Europe. Lindeberg's father, Isak, was farmer and fisherman. He had come to the region from the valley of Norrbotten, an ancient iron mining region in Sweden. The Lindebergs claimed to be descended from the Walloons--Belgians who had come to northern Scandinavia about 100 years before to help mine and smelt the copper and iron ores of the region. Lindeberg's uncle, who took the young man out on weekend prospecting trips, was associated with the English owned copper mine at nearby Kåfjord. Moreover, Lindeberg had quite a bit of education. One of his



teachers, Hansen, an able linguist, made sure that Lindeberg had background in English, French, German and Russian as well as his native language.

Although not a Saami, Lindeberg did come to Alaska to work with reindeer for legendary Alaska missionary Sheldon Jackson. Lindeberg was supposed to go to the Siberian coast to pick up more reindeer; Siberian natives fought off the

would-be buyer's, and Lindeberg asked for permission to terminate his employment with Jackson. (There are several versions of Lindeberg's employment with Jackson. Lindeberg definitely came to America with the Saami, as he signed a reindeer herding contract on January 24, 1898. However, after only a few months in America, Lindeberg apparently was convinced that there was more economic potential in gold prospecting than in reindeer herding, and he acted accordingly.) Arriving at Golovin, Lindeberg was directed to the village of Council where he met his future partners, Brynteson and Lindblom, and agreed to form the prospecting venture that firmly established the future of Nome and his own fortune.

In 1899, Lindeberg began mining in earnest, and took \$10,600 from No 1 Below Discovery. Lindeberg, with his partners as the Pioneer Mining Company, took \$200,000 from very rich shallow ground in Snow Gulch, a tributary to Glacier Creek. The good luck of the newly emigrant Scandinavians, although U. S. citizens, aroused a great deal of pseudo-American xenophobia. Moreover, the xenophobia was augmented by, possibly the most dishonest federal judge in American history, Noyes, and his henchman, McKenzie, who attempted to gain control the gold fields. The story is the basis of Rex Beach's novel, "The Spoilers". (Lindeberg's nom de plume in the story is "Glennister")

But the perhaps lucky Swedes were tough and smart. Fortunately they also found some honest Americans who were willing to lend a hand. Lindeberg formed a good teammate with Charles D. Lane in the Nome litigation. Lane had the physical and financial assets; Lindeberg had direct knowledge of the claim events, as well as a good business head, necessities in conflict with men like the corrupt Alexander McKenzie.

Lindeberg built electric light and power works in Nome; and with James M. Davidson, another member of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame, and another man, formed the Moonlight Springs Water Works Co that distributed pure water from springs at the base of Anvil Mountain. The Moonlight Springs company still exists. Lindeberg married into a pioneer California family, but actively managed the Pioneer Company at Nome, until Pioneer was bought out by Wendell P. Hammon in the 1920s. Like Brynteson, Lindeberg was long-lived. He died in San Francisco, California in 1962.

ERIK O. LINDBLOM (1857-1928)

Lindblom was oldest of the partners; also apparently the one with the least physical preparation for the arduous job of prospecting and mining. Lindblom, the son

of a school teacher Olof P. Lindblom, probably also had the most difficult childhood. After the early death of his father, his mother (Brita, nee Olofson) existed practically as a beggar to maintain her family. At Stockholm, Lindblom learned to be a tailor, a portable trade that allowed him to escape the extreme poverty of his youth, and took him to St. Petersburg, Paris and Berlin. Lindblom's trek to the United States detoured through London, England, where he gained further formal education at the Y.M.C.A. Polytechnical School. Probably, he practiced his trade there, because he married Mary Ann Smith, the daughter of a tailor, in London on August 2, 1886. The young couple arrived in the United States in 1886 and began a westerly course. Like Brynteson, Lindblom became an American citizen--in Montana in 1894. Lindblom, trained in a sedentary trade, yearned for the pioneer life, and was fascinated by the American west. As the Lindbloms moved across the United States, they met and were friendly with American Indians. Their son, Olof Henry, was born while the family lived on an Indian reservation near Pocatello, Idaho. A daughter, his mother's namesake Brita, was also born on the western trek.

Seemingly, Lindblom had lesser preparation in mining than either of his partners, but he may also have had some youthful contact with the industry, as he was born in one of Sweden's oldest mining regions. Undoubtedly, he picked up pioneering skills as he crossed the United States. Lindblom gained specialized knowledge when he took courses in mining while the family lived in San Francisco Bay area after 1893. Lindblom was still in the Bay area when gold fever struck and he took the opportunity to go north, upon the rumors of a rich discovery of gold at Kotzebue in 1897. Lindblom embarked as a sailor on the north bound sailing vessel Alaska on April 27, 1898. His next adventures are legendary in character, but they were written down only

a few years later by E. S. Harrison, at a time when they could easily have been challenged. Learning that no gold had been found at Kotzebue, and nearly ice-bound at Grantley Harbor, near Teller, Lindblom jumped ship. Lindblom was with a group detailed to bring back freshwater. In the treeless country, Lindblom hid in a snow cavern excavated beneath the ice, climbed to the surface and walked for three days, bound for Golovin



across the Seward Peninsula. A chance meeting with a prospector directed him back to the harbor--a cross-country hike to Golovin would have been practically impossible. The Alaska was still there, but he found that a local Eskimo, Promarshuk, was on his way to Golovin with a cargo of fur. Lindblom rode out of the harbor under the pelts, nearly suffocating in the process. Promarshuk stopped at the mouth of the Snake River, present day Nome, and Lindblom panned colors at the mouth of Dry Creek. (Lindblom reportedly panned gold on the Snake River on July 13, 1898; another account states that he panned gold in the Sinrock River--Sinuk--west of Nome.)

Lindblom arrived at Dexter's trading post at Golovin on July 27, 1898 where he went to work prospecting for Hultberg, the gold-struck missionary. The site was the rich discovery at Ophir Creek, the discovery of the Council District. Lindblom met Brynteson, and with Hagelin prospected at Mystery Creek, also in the Council District. Shortly afterwards, Brynteson and Lindblom met Lindeberg, who had been prospecting on the Casadapaga and on the Niukluk. On September 15th, the new partners arrived at the mouth of the Snake in a boat chartered from the mission. The first major discoveries of the Nome district were made on September 22nd.

Regardless of his apparent lack of practical mining preparation, Lindblom took out \$100,000 in gold from the Discovery claim on Anvil Creek in 1899--as well as his share of the gold recovered on Snow Gulch by the partners.

Lindblom continued as an active partner and Vice-President in Pioneer Mining Company for several years, then moved to Oakland, California where he bought and operated the Claremont Hotel. But to prove it no fluke, Lindblom also entered into successful mining operations in California and Nevada, and was the owner and president of the Parral Electric, Water and Telephone Company, Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Lindblom was a bit more of a gay blade than Brynteson and Lindeberg, and thoroughly enjoyed the easier life in California. In 1903, by now a very wealthy man, he divorced Mary Ann and married Hanna Sadie Ulrika Sparman. He made at least one trip back to Sweden, but with more mixed results than Brynteson. In 1915, Lindblom was knighted by King Gustav with the order of Vasa-Orden, but he was accused, probably unfairly, of failing to support his widowed mother and effectively ostracized near his home town. He returned to California where he was a well known and honored citizen until his death in 1928. He died in his residence at the Claremont Hotel, at home, but with a fortune much depleted.

CHARLES D. LANE (1840-1911)

This Missouri native had a successful and glamorous career in the mines of Arizona and California before he sent Gabe Price north with a large party that--unsuccessfully--followed up rumors of gold in the Kotzebue Country in 1898. The Kotzebue venture was not the first Alaska venture for Lane. In 1894, Lane and Hayward, consolidated many of the key claims in Silver Bow Basin at Juneau, and went ahead to establish a mine and mill. In 1897, Lane and Hayward sold the claims to Mein and Beit, perhaps discouraged by the loss of the first mill to a massive snow slide. But Lane and Hayward affected a key consolidation of claims that later benefitted the Alaska-Juneau Mine, the largest hard-rock gold mine in Alaska's history.

Lane was born at Palmyra, Marion County, Missouri on November 15, 1840. At the age of 12, Lane's family emigrated to California, settling near Stockton. Charles was mining by the winter of the same year. Over the next few decades, Lane farmed, mined, drove ox teams, and flirted with success. He thought that every job was a worthwhile learning experience: He tried in his own words, "to draw a little bit of honey out of any kind of a flower."

Lane's first mining success was in the very fine placer gold on the bars of the Snake River Idaho. His first major success was at the hard rock Utica Mine, Angels Camp, California. It was also his first association with Hayward, a San Francisco financier. Hayward and Howard furnished the capital to buy out Lane's first partners and develop the mine, which to 1905, had produced some \$17,000,000 in gold. He was also successful at the Fortuna mine in Arizona, which paid out several millions of dollars.

In 1898, Lane financed and participated in the ill-fated Kotzebue gold play. Lane had returned to California, but his associate Gabe Price was at Golovin when the successful gold hunters--Lindeberg, Lindblom and Brynteson--returned in the fall of 1898. Price went back to Nome with the discoverers and was sufficiently impressed that he committed Lane to help develop the mines.



Lane was an ideal choice: Although nearly sixty years old, Lane was tough from years of hard physical labor. He was unafraid of a fight, physical or legal. The first battles were against men like Blake and Dexter who long had been in the Seward Peninsula--and had strings into Nome. The second and more

difficult battles were against a corrupt Alexander McKenzie, who organized the claim jumpers, and his hand picked equally corrupt Judge of the Federal Court, Alfred Noyes.

Lane's wife Anna and son Tom T. backed the only successful hardrock mine on the Seward Peninsula, the Big Hurrah. Charles Lane's Wild Goose company was only equaled by the Pioneer Company in the early days. Lane also organized the railroad from Nome through Anvil Gulch to Dexter. Lane did not confine his later activities to the Seward Peninsula. Shortly after its discovery, Lane optioned the Chichagof mine north of Sitka, Alaska. In 1907, he was preparing to develop Chichagof. A serious and long time illness, leading to death in 1911, led to the gradual demise of the Lane Alaska empire, but for his courage, foresight, and mining abilities, Lane deserves recognition as one of the true founders of Nome and important in the mining history of Southeast Alaska. An Alaskan toast could parallel one to Lane's home state, Missouri:

"We've all abused Missouri,
And sung our songs of Pike;
And laughed to poke some wicked joke
At raw-boned hungry Ike.
But we've tot to pull our houses up,
And 'fess up flat and plain;
Can't find no mate to match the State
That gave us Charley Lane"

SOURCES: THE NOME DISCOVERY

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Claims located in September 1898

- Patent # 710 - No. 1 Above on Mountain Creek, E.O. Lindblom Placer Claim, 9/19/1898
- Patent # 721 - Francisco Claim, No. 1 Above Francisco, No. 2 - 5 Above, No. 1 Sophie Gulch at Rock Creek, Bench No. 4 Above, Fractional Claim No. 4 1/2 on Rock Creek, Bench Claim No. 4 1/2 Above and No. 6 Above Right Hand Branch Placer Claims, 9/20/1898
- Patent # 722 - Discovery on Anvil Creek, No. 1 Below, Zip Coon Fraction, No. 1 & 2 Above Placer, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 1247 - No. 3 Above Placer on Anvil Creek, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 714 - No. 5 & 6 Above and No. 1 & 2 on Quartz Gulch Placer at Anvil Creek, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 1153 - No. 2 Below Discovery on Anvil Creek Placer, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 1192 - No. 4 Above Placer on Anvil Creek, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 720 - No.'s 4, 5 & 6 Above on Dry Creek and North Star Placer, 9/22/1898
- Patent # 1197 - No. 1 Above Discovery Placer at Dry Creek, 9/27/1898
- Patent # 464 - No. 2 & 3 Above Discovery and Bella Kirke Bench at Dry Creek, 9/27/1898
- Patent # 715 - No. 1 & 2 Above Discovery on Glacier Creek, No. 1 on Snow Creek, No. 2 & 3 Above Placer, 9/30/1898

MINERAL SURVEYS LOCATED IN 1898



- Text Nc1_text
- Text Nb1_text
- Text Nc2_text
- Text Nc2_stm
- Text Nc1_stm
- Text Nb1_cont
- Text Nc2_cont
- Nc2_stm
- Nc1_stm
- Nc1_road
- AIRPORT
- GRAVEL PIT
- LIGHT DUTY
- TRAIL
- Nc2_cont
- Nb1_cont
- Nc1_cont
- Nc2_road
- Nc2_lake
- Nc1_lake
- Nb1_lake
- Nb1_camp
- 1
- 3
- 4
- 10
- 11
- 12
- Nc1_camp
- 3
- 4
- 10

CREDITS

This map was created to show mineral surveys, in the Nome Area, that were located in 1898. This promotional map shows the Geographic Information System (GIS) ARCVIEW capabilities that the Sitnasuak Land Department offers.

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