

## THE GUY WHO NAMED TOMBSTONE

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

WHEN the water gets low in the streams of Douglas County, Oregon, late this summer, twenty, perhaps fifty old prospectors will converge into the region to look once again for Ed Schiefflin's lost mine. They have been at it now for almost twenty years, and the war and manpower situation has had little effect on the genuine old-style prospector, the one-mule, one-pick man, the kind that has been looking for the Schiefflin mine. Some of them haven't yet heard about the current war. They would be only mildly interested, anyway, because there is room for but one idea in the minds of the case-hardened old hill rats of the kind I'm talking about. That subject is a mine, either "lost" or merely undiscovered, that will prove to be a Golconda.

There are far too many "lost" mines in Oregon and elsewhere in the West. Most of them are likely figments of imagination in the minds of men who have lived alone too long. Lone men get that way. But the Schiefflin affair is founded on something more solid than the wishful imaginings of

hill-goofy prospectors. Ed Schiefflin was anything but a goof, and there can be little doubt but that he had struck another rich ledge when he was removed from the scene. At one time he was the best known mining character in all North America.

Until late in 1877 Ed Schiefflin's life never rose above the common stream. He was born in Pennsylvania and moved to Oregon with his parents in one of the covered-wagon trains that rutted the Oregon Trail across the plains. The gold fever caught Ed early in life. When he was twelve he ran away from home to join the rush into the Salmon River diggings in Idaho. That was in 1862. Salmon River petered out quickly, but young Ed didn't return home. He had caught a disease that few men manage to shake in a lifetime.

For the next fifteen years young Schiefflin ranged all over the West, from coastal Oregon into central Montana. He later told a friend of mine that he had panned 800 creeks and rivers during this period, and had driven his pick into more hills than he could remember by name.

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STEWART H. HOLBROOK *was born in Vermont but he has spent most of his adult life in the Far West, and is in fact an authority on the folklore of the region.*

Most of the time he managed to pan just enough gold to keep him in flour and bacon, but in 1877 the pickings got so poor that Schiefflin did the last possible thing that any hill or desert rat will do: he took a job at wages.

The job was no proletarian one. It was working as a scout in Al Sieber's troop of horsemen who were helping the United States Army to wipe out the Apaches, or at least to hold them within bounds. Under their chief, the able Geronimo, who was soon to require the entire United States Army to hog-tie him, the Apaches were making life in Arizona rather tough for the palefaces.

Schiefflin wasn't afraid of any man, red or white, but he just didn't like scouting. Didn't have his heart in it. Always mooning over rocks he picked up. His saddle bags became so filled with this stuff that Chief Scout Sieber had to order Ed to dump it in order to carry food and ammunition. Then Ed would acquire more rocks. One day while on lone patrol in the unlovely hills along the San Pedro River in southeastern Arizona, he saw some rocks that looked particularly good. He got off his horse to inspect them. Yes, sir, they looked like indications of silver.

At this moment Scout Schiefflin had all of ten dollars due him in wages. He rode directly to Fort Huachuca and told Chief Scout Sieber what he could do with Ed's job. He drew his ten dollars and with it bought a second-hand pick and a shovel, "borrowed" a little flour and some bacon,

and traded his horse for a mule. Then he dug off into the hills alone.

For his headquarters Ed picked the abandoned Brunckow mine, one of the many countless and worthless holes in the ground in that part of Arizona. Herr Brunckow of Germany had begun to dig in this spot in 1858. Not long after he was found with an arrow through his body. Other brave or foolish men had worked at the Brunckow mine, but it never paid out a dollar. Ed paid the mine no heed, using it only as a camp.

Two weeks later Scout Sieber happened along. He found Ed sitting by his camp fire. "What you doing, Ed?" he asked.

"Prospecting."

"Where?"

"Over yonder," and Ed waved an arm in the general direction of the San Pedro hills.

"What! Them hills?" exclaimed Sieber. "Geronimo is loose in them hills. You won't find nothing there but your tombstone."

"Take my chances," replied Ed, who wasn't overly talkative. Sieber shook his head and passed on, to tell that Ed Schiefflin was desert-crazy and planning to commit suicide by going into the San Pedro hills.

## II

It happened the very next day after Sieber saw Ed — I mean the Big Moment. Schiefflin rose with the sun that morning. Leading his mule he started up a wide draw into the hills.

On the way he saw smoke signals from Apache camps. . . . Dot . . . dash . . . dot . . . dash, as some brave warped a blanket to and fro over the fire. They had a Morse of their own. Ed couldn't tell what it meant, but he knew one thing—he'd have to be mighty careful, one man alone, off there in hostile country.

Before long the draw Ed was following divided into two forks. A rabbit scurried up the right fork. Most prospectors play a hunch. Ed took the right fork.

Finally, late that afternoon, Ed saw a spot he thought looked pretty good—a likely piece of ground. He struck his pick into the earth. It might have been so much thick soup, and the pick was buried almost half way to the handle. Hurriedly pulling back the thin top sod, Ed uncovered a long streak of stuff that nearly blinded him; what with the sun on it and all. It shone like pure silver.

In his pocket Ed had a twenty-five-cent piece, his total capital. He took the coin and placed it on the shiny streak, then pressed. When he withdrew the coin he saw the noble slogan so much revered by all good Americans embossed deeply in the streak of metal. By God, it *was* silver, pure, and soft as putty. Ed Schiefflin sweat mightily and it wasn't from the Arizona sun. Under his feet, he was sure, was a hill, aye, a mountain, of silver. Al Sieber had said all he would find in these hills was his tombstone.

"By Jesus!" said Ed Schiefflin, "I'll *call* it Tombstone."

Finding silver and getting cash for it are two different things. Ed hacked off a few specimens, but not out of the rock containing the pure metal. He wanted only fair samples of the ledge, and these he took with him to Signal, Arizona, pronto. He had heard that a brother, Al Schiefflin, was working at the McCracken mine there.

It was told later that even in the tough town of Signal Ed Schiefflin looked on arrival like the poorest desert rat who ever crawled in off the great open spaces. His clothes were tattered, patched with flour sacks, deer skin, and a piece of horse blanket; his hat was pieced with rabbit skin; his boots were in bad shape; his face was hidden by a curly brown beard. Al Schiefflin, when he came off-shift, did not recognize his own brother in this wild-looking man of rags. But Ed convinced him, and Al took him home. Here Ed produced his silver samples and told Al about the big strike. Al remained very calm. He had heard of plenty of big strikes that never panned out. "Ed," he said, "I jest ain't interested in rock."

Well, that left Ed with his rock, or silver, or whatever. He would have to get at least a few dollars before he could do anything about his find. Much against his grain he took a pick-and-shovel job in the McCracken mine. He showed his specimens to the foreman. "Jest a good grade of lead," that expert said. It was the same when Ed showed the ore to others. It was pretty discouraging to a man who knew he had a mountain of silver.

Engineer at the McCracken mine was Richard Gird, who had a reputation as a scientific mining man. Ed took his samples into Gird's office. "I'll take a look at them tomorrow," Mr. Gird said. And he did. He also sent a boy to fetch Ed to his office. "I have assayed your ore," he told the prospector. "One piece runs \$2000 to the ton, another \$600, and the third only \$40. You can't always estimate a claim by two or three samples. Where is your claim?"

Ed had cut his eye-teeth long since. "Over yonder," he said, waving his arms both ways at once. He knew how to answer businessmen.

For the next several days Gird did his best to have Ed tell him where the samples came from. He didn't find out, and at last Gird made a proposition: He would outfit a party of three — himself and the two Schiefflins, if Al cared to go. They would share everything they found three ways. Ed agreed. "There's plenty there for three," he said. The three men struck out of Signal early in February of 1878.

Ed led the party unerringly to the spot he had already named Tombstone Ledge. Gird gave the place a thorough examination and declared that although the pocket was rich, it was also shallow. Several disappointing weeks followed, with Ed doing the prospecting, Gird the assaying, Al the cooking. Then, one day in April, Ed came into camp with that look in his eyes. "Boys," he said, "I've hit the mother lode. She's all mine now."

"Zat so?" remarked Al with sarcasm. "You always was a lucky cuss."

Thus the Lucky Cuss mine got its name. The samples of ore Ed brought in that night assayed \$15,000 a ton. This put a wholly new light on matters, and both Al and Gird cheered up and began to sing. As for Ed Schiefflin, it was nothing more than he had expected. A few days later, just to show what a prospector could do when he got up a sweat, Ed uncovered what became the Tough Nut lode, a \$75,000,000 strike all by itself. Tombstone, Arizona, was in the making.

### III

It was no use trying to be secret about such strikes as the Lucky Cuss and the Tough Nut. Within a few weeks men were trooping into the San Pedro hills by the hundreds, then by the thousands, and fabulous Tombstone came into being promptly. Gamblers, prostitutes, and saloonmen arrived in droves. A newspaper, the *Tombstone Epitaph*, began its celebrated career. The Earps, Curly Bill, John Ringo, John Slaughter, Doc Holliday and the Clantons and the McLowerys were on the way. The hell-roaringest mining town of them all was in the works, and its career outshone Virginia City and Butte in trigger-quickness and utter depravity.

The two Schiefflins moved out of Arizona presently and they took one million dollars each with them. Gird remained to develop his share of the fortune and to make more millions.

"A million is enough for any man," said Ed Schiefflin.

The Schiefflin brothers parted good friends, and Al went off to live quietly and to die in 1885. Ed announced that as for himself, he had decided to see what all this talk about New York City amounted to. He went up to Denver where he got an outfit of store clothes, including some pretty fine patent leather boots and a silk hat, and then he took a train of steam cars to New York.

Schiefflin made quite a noise in the metropolis. Tombstone was already well known in Wall Street, and the wild doings of Tombstone's citizens were making other news in the papers. Ed, with his long curly hair and whiskers, and the shiny boots, was sketched by newspaper artists and interviewed. He told the boys that all southeastern Arizona was paved with solid silver. He remarked on the high buildings in New York and sampled champagne at the Waldorf and the Hoffman House. From New York he went to Washington. He was front-page copy here, too, and the same in Chicago. Charity hounds were hot on his trail, begging donations for this or that orphan home, many of which, it turned out later, existed only in name. Ed was a pushover for them all. The old desert rat knew what it was to be hungry. He gave indiscriminately.

But city life didn't fit Ed at all. In 1893, or four years before the world knew that Alaska contained a lot of gold, Ed bought a steamboat and went North, even part way up the

Yukon River. But although Ed said he could fairly smell gold up there, his party failed to uncover any of the rich veins that sent the world crazy in 1897-98.

Returning to San Francisco, Ed sold his steamboat, married a Mrs. Mary E. Brown, and built a mansion on the Alameda. Later he built another big home in Los Angeles. Ed was happy in neither of them. One day in January of 1897 he laid away his silk hat and store clothes and got out his old prospector's rig. Said he was going up to Oregon.

He did go to Oregon, and straight to Douglas County, where he had panned the Umpqua River when he was a lad. He built a cabin and stocked it with provisions. Then he began prospecting along streams that feed the North Umpqua. Men still living say that Ed refused to do any panning or pick work when anyone was around. He was a lone wolf. But his time was running out.

On May 12, 1897, a hunter coming along the lonely trail stopped at Ed's shack with the idea of getting a bite to eat. He found Ed lying face down on the dirt floor of the cabin. It was probably heart disease. There had been no violence. He had been dead several hours. The stove was cold and on it a pot of beans had boiled down to a charred mass.

They took Ed Schiefflin's body to Tombstone and gave him the god-damnedest biggest funeral that town ever witnessed. Bands blared, guns fired, and they buried Ed as he had

requested, with his pick and shovel and in his old red shirt. They also built the kind of monument Ed wanted — a small pile of stones such as prospectors use to mark a claim.

I have read Ed Schiefflin's will. He left his real and personal property in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, California, to his widow, and to her also went \$15,000 in bonds of the University of Arizona. ("Oughta have a place of book-learning," Ed had said.) To his widow and surviving brother, Jay L. Schiefflin, he left an insurance policy of \$15,000. The will had been carefully drawn. It continued:

I have no children, but should anyone, at their own expense, prove to the satisfaction of my executors to be a child of mine, to each I give the sum of \$50.

The will went on to outline his wish to be buried in Tombstone, and that "none of my friends shall wear erape for me." The will created as much comment in its day as the recent document of Irvin Cobb.

Today, Tombstone, Arizona, is a sleepy collection of decaying houses and a population of less than eight hundred. The silver has gone — many millions of dollars worth of it — and so has the notorious company of adventurers who followed Ed Schiefflin's trail into the hills. On top of those hills, some three miles west of town, is the pile of rocks that marks Ed's grave.

Eighteen years after Ed Schiefflin's death, a nephew of his, serving with the Canadian forces, was fatally wounded in action near Verdun, France. Before he died he talked a while with a soldier friend and gave him a piece of paper. I know this man and have seen the paper. It is a map, with many written notations, of parts of Douglas County, Oregon. The writing is beyond doubt that of old Ed Schiefflin. Two places on the map are marked "Here." The problem presented by the map is to know certain distances that are outlined. These are in a cypher of Schiefflin's own making and can be learned, apparently, only by experiment — which takes a good deal of time in a region as large and as rough as Douglas County. That is why prospectors have been at work there ever since the map was made known eighteen years ago.

There is one more item. About two weeks before he died, Ed Schiefflin wrote and mailed a letter in which he said: "I have found stuff here in Oregon that will make Tombstone look like salt. [That is, a salted mine and worthless.] This is GOLD."

Douglas County officials and businessmen display complete apathy about Ed's lost mine. But not even two dollars an hour in Portland shipyards causes a flicker of interest in the company of hill rats who will invade the Oregon creeks during August and September low water this year.



# DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

## *The Myth of the Beast*

WE are from time to time reminded, by thoughtful men who take long views of history and by meditative men given to valuing contemporary events *sub specie æternitatis*, that we are waging war not merely against certain nations, not merely against certain systems of politics and economics, but against a philosophy. The philosophy is the

root; the rattle of gunfire in a Warsaw ghetto, and the heiling and goose-stepping of little children, are only the evil flowerings. Our foe, fundamentally, is an Idea. We are at war, ultimately and in the deepest sense, against a heresy.

The Idea against which we are battling has taken many forms and been defined in many idioms; but the



*Prehistoric Man*

*Frank Utpatel*