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 AMHFA
  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
Alaska Mining Hall of Fame - Honor Committee
  Charles C. Hawley
  Walter Johnson
  Gussie Kauer
Sitnasuak Native Corporation
Centennial Committee, Nome Alaska
The Discovery at Nome, the Lucky "Swedes" and Charles Lane

ALASKA MINING HALL OF FAME FOUNDATION

Compiled and edited by Charles Caldwell Haxley and Walter Johnson

September, 1938

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 McBain, had none. Moreover, although Lindbergh, 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 Omilik silver-lead discovery in the eastern Seward Peninsula in 1880. When Omilik 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 Eskimos 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-Flath River-White Mountain area tells that an Ahwinona family member, Constantine Uparasuck 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 the 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 Jafer Lindberg, 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 Tornenius--a Saaami--and Gabe Price to form the new mining district on October 16, 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, Lindberg, and Lindblom had business acumen. With his Scandinavian-American partners, Brynteson formed the Pioneer Mining Company. The best linguist and, probably, administrator Lindberg 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 an 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 stampeders 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. Harmon
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
copper and iron mining in the United
all-around miner of the group, was born
States at the age of 16 and, as did many
into a poor farming family in Artexark,
other Scandinavians, headed to the upper
Sweden on August 13, 1871. He was educated
Peninsula of Michigan where he worked in
in a nearby school. He came to the United
copper and iron mines for about ten years
mines and became a U.S. citizen. Although only a
and became a U.S. citizen. Although only a
lad, Brynteson may have already had some
lad, Brynteson may have already had some
mining background, as Artexark is in an
mining background, as Artexark is in an
historic Swedish mining district. And,
historic Swedish mining district. And,
contrary to some later assertions,
contrary to some later assertions,
Brynteson was a U.S. citizen when he
Brynteson was a U.S. citizen when he
arrived in Alaska. Citizenship was granted
arrived in Alaska. Citizenship was granted
in Michigan in 1896.
in Michigan in 1896.

In the spring of 1899, Brynteson
arrived at Unalakleet on the eastern coast
arrived at Unalakleet on the eastern coast
of Norton Sound, Bering Sea. His purpose
of Norton Sound, Bering Sea. His purpose
was to find coal for the Swedish Covenant
was to find coal for the Swedish Covenant
mission. The search for coal was
mission. The search for coal was
unsuccessful, as was an early trip into
unsuccessful, as was an early trip into
the Fish River Flats searching for gold.
the Fish River Flats searching for gold.

Somewhat more successful was the trip
Somewhat more successful was the trip
into the Nome area with the Blake-Hultberg
into the Nome area with the Blake-Hultberg
party in the summer of 1898. Brynteson and
party in the summer of 1898. Brynteson and
others discovered gold on river bar deposits
others discovered gold on river bar deposits
of the Snake River.
of the Snake River.
The venture commenced in
The venture commenced in
mid-September of 1898 with Lindberg and
mid-September of 1898 with Lindberg and
Lindholm was much more successful. Within a
Lindholm was much more successful. Within a
few days, Brynteson and partners knew they
few days, Brynteson and partners knew they
had a major discovery, and went back to
had a major discovery, and went back to
Gold Run for supplies and aid in setting up
Gold Run for supplies and aid in setting up
the new mining district. With the exception
the new mining district. With the exception
of Gabe Price, who the miners must have
of Gabe Price, who the miners must have
trusted from the start, their
trusted from the start, their
associates were of
associates were of
Scandinavian descent. Probably the "Lucky
Scandinavian descent. Probably the "Lucky
Swedes" learned, at an early stage of the
Swedes" learned, at an early stage of the
Nome venture, to be
Nome venture, to be
"Dumb Swedes" discussing their
"Dumb Swedes" discussing their
claims in a language, probably Norwegian,
claims in a language, probably Norwegian,
that most of the newcomers and
that most of the newcomers and
potential claim
potential claim
jumpers could not
jumpers could not
understand.
understand.

Brynteson married
Brynteson married
Emma Forsborg on May 2, 1900; the
Emma Forsborg on May 2, 1900; the
Brynteson's had three children by
Brynteson's had three children by
the writing of his, probably, first brief
the writing of his, probably, first brief
biography by E.S. Harrison. Harrison noted
biography by E.S. Harrison. Harrison noted
"While the products of his mines have made
"While the products of his mines have made
him a capitalist and placed him in a position
him a capitalist and placed him in a position
of absolute financial independence, he still
of absolute financial independence, he still
remains the unassuming man and courteous
courteous gentleman that he was before the days of his
remains the unassuming man and courteous
affluence."
affluence."

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

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

**JAFET LINDEBERG (1874-1962)**

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

Although not a
Although not a
Saami, Lindeberg did
come to Alaska to
come to Alaska to
work with reindeer
work with reindeer
for legendary Alaska
for legendary Alaska
missionary Sheldon
missionary Sheldon
Jackson. Lindeberg
Jackson. Lindeberg
was supposed to go to
was supposed to go to
the Siberian coast to
the Siberian coast to
pick up more
pick up more
reindeer; Siberian natives fought off the
reindeer; Siberian natives fought off the
would-be buyer's, and Lindberg asked for permission to terminate his employment with Jackson. (There are several versions of Lindberg's employment with Jackson. Lindberg 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, Lindberg apparently was convinced that there was more economic potential in gold prospecting than in reindeer herding, and he acted accordingly.) Arriving at Golovin, Lindberg was directed to the village of Council where he met his future partners, Brayton and Lindblom, and agreed to form the prospecting venture that firmly established the future of Nome and his own fortune.

In 1899, Lindberg began mining in earnest, and took $18,600 from No 1 Below Discovery. Lindberg, 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 the most dishonest federal in American history, Noyes, and his henchman, McKenzie, who attempted to gain control of the gold fields. The story is the basis of Rex Beach's novel, "The Spoilers". (Lindberg's nom de plume in the story is "Glenister")

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

Lindberg 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. Lindberg 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 Brayton, Lindberg 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, née Olofsdon) existed practically as a beggar to maintain her family. At Stockholm, Lindblom learned to be a tailor, a portable barrow 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 Brayton, 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 saw 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 born while the family lived on the trek.

Seemingly, Lindblom had lesser preparation in mining than either of his partners, but he may also have had more 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 fresh water. 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—Sink—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 Niuknik. On September 12th, 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 estranged her 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 Beitz, 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 equalized 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 Joe.
But we've got 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


Including a letter to P. L. Wise from Asaf Lindstrom, footnote p. 15-18; also a statement from Dr. A. M. Littleton, 1899. Footnotes p. 31.


Lindstrom, Robert O. to Ousia (Beaard) Kaiser, City of Nome, letter, 2 pages, 2 June 1997 (Robert Lindstrom is Ret Lindstrom's grandson by the marriage to Mary Ann Smith.)

Olmsted, Sw. 1889. Torparenem Son Blev Goldring; Osmakorvsten; Lars Lindvist, Dalekansansens, 1889.


Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, Ill.


Claims located in September 1898

Patent 710 - No. 1 Above on Mountain Creek, E.O. Lindstrom 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 ⅓ on Rock Creek, Bench Claim No. 4 ⅓ 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