

Gold Fever Raged In Continental Mountain

Only a couple of hours climb from the Big Kachina lies the old Gold Hill Mine, as rich in yellow ore a century ago as it was in lusty adventure. Here, the toughest brawling miners of the West pitted their brains and brawn in the frantic race to carve their fortunes out of the placid mountain.

Before the Civil War, the fabulous Gold Hill Mine produced the richest ~~plac~~ gold deposits ever to be discovered in the Southwest. Its reputation was so widespread that, even now, no informed miner thinks of uncovering a ledge in this area without tracing its origin to this productive mother lode.

It was the "Gold Hill excitement" that attracted the first settlers and they came from all over the hemisphere after the magic words were spread around.

Although it is almost impossible to find more than a brief mention of the once famous mine in the libraries of Phoenix, it has been noted that the climate of this part of the country was so healthy at that time that nobody left except by bullet or arrow. In fact, the whole Hassayampa Valley from Prescott to Wickenburg, so rich in gold deposits, was one long bloody struggle between furtive prospectors, Mexican bandits and vengeful, marauding Indians.

To the east, and higher than the Hassayampa mining camps, lies the Gold Hill Mine. It is exactly two and a half miles north north west of the entrance to Tonto Hills, 5200 feet high at the head of Mexican Hal Wash.

At the time when the Gold Hill saw its most turbulent action, the ore was carted by mule or ox team down the wash and into what is now Cave Creek. From there it went by wagon train up Black Canyon through Cordes Junction to Prescott. Trains hauled it to San Francisco, to be carried overseas and into the English smelters.

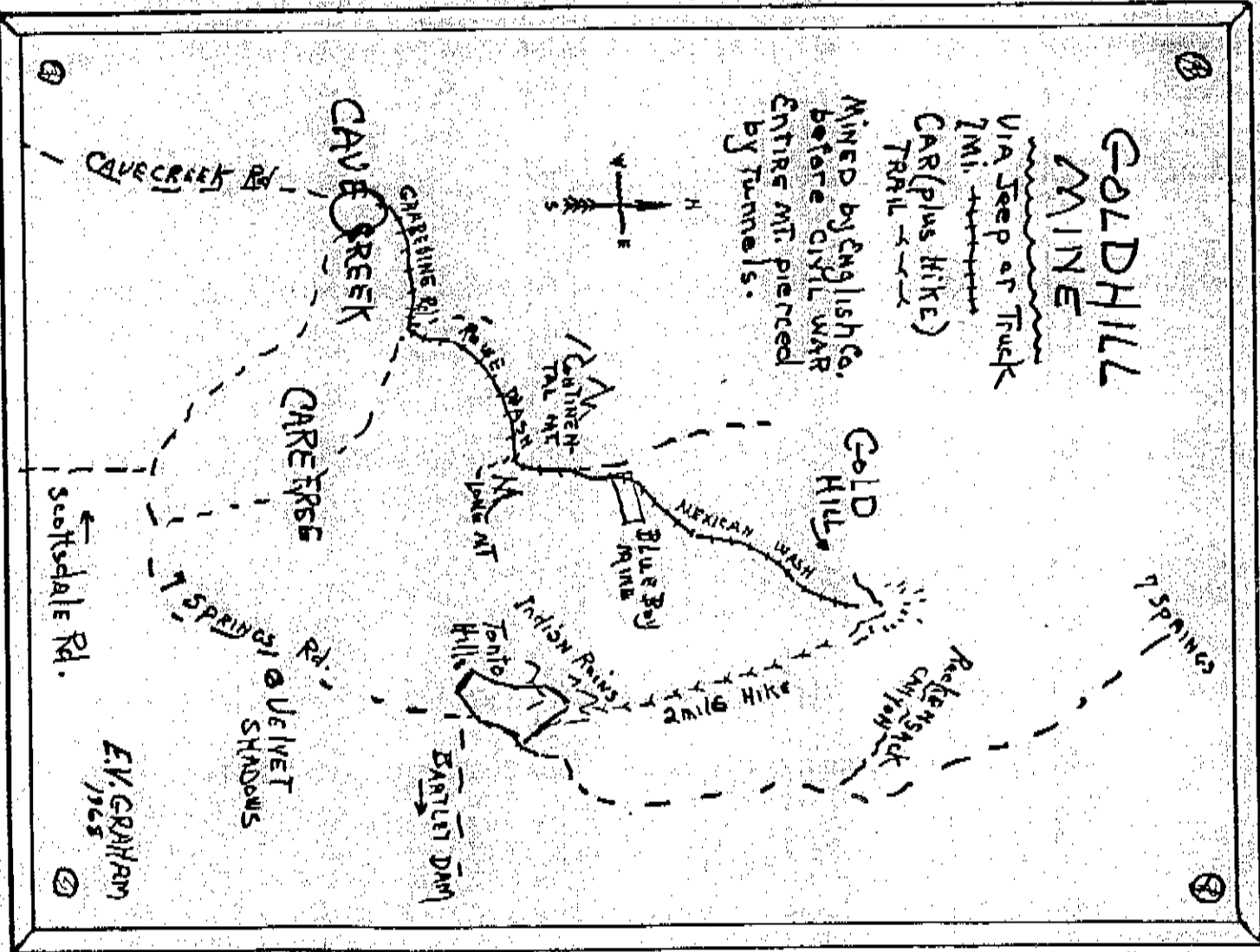
Although the site is not easy to reach, it is still possible to go to the Gold Hill Mine by jeep. Emmett Graham, developer of Tonto Hills, and a frequent visitor to the site, became intrigued with its history and has found out the few known facts about the operation.

"The whole mine was excavated until it was almost completely hollow," he explains. "Apparently it was eventually abandoned because the easy access ore petered out. The miners eventually hit water in the sulides and couldn't handle it. But from the mile-high top of the ground to the water level, the mine is honeycombed with shafts and tunnels."

According to Graham there are ruins of foundations for a blacksmith shop, a bunkhouse and a boarding house near the entrance to the big tunnel, as well as remains of hand hewn spikes and rails for the little wagon carts.

Other ruins of a similar nature are to be found a few miles away on another patented claim of twenty acres called the Blue Boy Mine, recently bought by Lloyd Nuttalls, who also owns the seven Gold Hill claims.

The main shaft here goes straight down around one hundred feet and is filled at the bottom. No one seems to know how deep the



Map drawn by E. V. Graham, shows how to reach Gold Hill Mine and Blue Boy Mines.