Myth-busting the Myth:
The Grosh Brothers' Grasp
on an Unforgiving History

By John H. Trent and Hal V. Hall
Edited by Bob Crowley and Jennifer Hemmen

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By John H. Trent and Hal V. Hall



Brothers Ethan Allen and Hosea Ballou Grosh died more than 165 years ago. Their lives in many ways were lost to history. Their legacy, however, is greater than what you may have read in the past or what you might think. (Source: Charles T. Wegman)

Imagine overcoming immense personal challenge during a time long ago when those challenges were often unrelenting and unforgiving, and for a few precious moments triumphantly having the future in your grasp before tragically losing it.

It has been 165 years since the brothers Ethan Allen and Hosea Ballou Grosh were on the cusp of a discovery that promised to change their lives – and the trajectory of history – forever. That both brothers died before the extent of what they had discovered was fully known, or fully realized, or fully attributed to them, only adds to the haunting memory of their lives.

Today we call what was discovered and came to pass as the "Comstock Lode" – at the time, the richest lode of silver ever unearthed. The nation was already fevered with the California Gold Rush of the 1840s and 1850s. The "Comstock Lode" transferred the tale of instant riches that spread like wildfire throughout the country to the come-hither reflection of a new mineral in a new territory. Silver gave rise to what would become a "Battle Born" state – Nevada – created and coveted by the Civil War administration of President Abraham Lincoln.

It was the richness of the "Comstock Lode" that made much of this happen.

And yet, if not for tragedy, plain bad luck, and the vicissitudes of two lives that have been lost to time that deserve to belong to more than just memory, we could just as easily today be referring to the "Grosh Lode" rather than the "Comstock Lode." In fact, a compelling case can be made in favor of the Grosh Brothers. That what they found belonged to them. That without their hard work and knowledge, there might not have been any discovery of silver at all. That their place in history is deserved and worthy of our admiration and what's more, our recognition.

What the Grosh brothers had within their grasp was more than the future. They were tapping into a vein that resides in all of us, something that runs deep within our hearts and our minds. It is what tugs at our imaginations, and intrigues us, and drives us to action and adventure. It was the stuff of life, and of

meaning. Allen and Hosea certainly were in search of riches. The reward we seek in the story of the Grosh Brothers isn't the reversal of unrequited dreams and unrealized riches and fame, but rather a simple acknowledgment that we all desire – that our time on Earth matters.

The life and times of the Grosh Brothers clearly mattered. And in weighing the value of two lives that were cut far too short, we look to history's embrace to see where their deserved place truly lies.

After years of investigation, a group of veteran ultra-distance runners and historical researchers are now telling the story of the Grosh Brothers. The goal of their efforts is to advance the belief that attributing the discovery of one of the world's largest concentrations of silver to Henry "Old Pancake" Comstock is inaccurate. That it was, in fact, two hard-working brothers from Pennsylvania, Ethan Allen and Hosea Ballou Grosh, who found the lode in the craggy shadow of Mount Davidson near Virginia City, Nevada, but died tragically before proving their claim.



Grosh Expedition Team (L to R) Elke Reimer, Hal Hall, Tim Twietmeyer, Bob Crowley, Jennifer Hemmen (Source: Keith Sutter Photography)

The two co-founders of History Expeditions, Bob Crowley and Tim Twietmeyer, along with endurance horse riding legend and three-time Tevis Cup champion Hal V. Hall and veteran ultra-distance runners Elke Reimer and Jennifer Hemmen,

embarked on February 27, 2023, on an ambitious five-day, 100-mile trek starting from the former mining town of Silver City, Nevada to Last Chance, California. The Grosh Brothers Expedition traced the route that Allen and his friend, Richard Maurice Bucke, followed during the winter of 1857 in the wake of Hosea Grosh's death a few months earlier. Allen hoped to honor his brother by securing funding to formalize their claim. During the ill-fated high country crossing of the Sierras, Allen would also pass away, leaving proof of their discovery in a broken, hollowed out tree.

With his passing, seemingly, a chapter of history would never be fully told, for Allen carried with him the knowledge of an amazing discovery he and his brother had made months earlier.

"Our initial goal was to piece together the 100-mile journey that Ethan Allen Grosh and Richard Maurice Bucke took in the winter of 1857," Crowley said. "But during our research we uncovered facts that substantiate that the two brothers were the first to discover several of what they called 'monster veins' of silver in the region. Their claims were jumped by Henry Comstock after the brothers died tragically three months apart."

"The ensuing bonanza yielded over $3 billion in proceeds in today's currency and was used to reduce America's post-Civil War debt, fund slave emancipation and establish Nevada as the 36th state. The "Comstock Lode" should have been named the 'Grosh Lode'. However, wealthy, powerful men destined to profit from the discovery conspired to hide evidence, bribe witnesses, and bury the truth."

The Grosh Brothers Expedition headed into mountainous terrain that has seen one of the highest snowfalls in recent memory. They braved the elements with modern wilderness gear and were tracked by GPS. The team followed in the footsteps of Ethan Allen Grosh and Richard Maurice Bucke determined after research, field work and analysis of available historical information on the men's journey.

The author of the critically acclaimed book, *Donner Party Chronicles,* and one of the West's most distinguished journalists, Frank X. Mullen, believes that the team has uncovered elements of a story that hadn't been fully revealed.

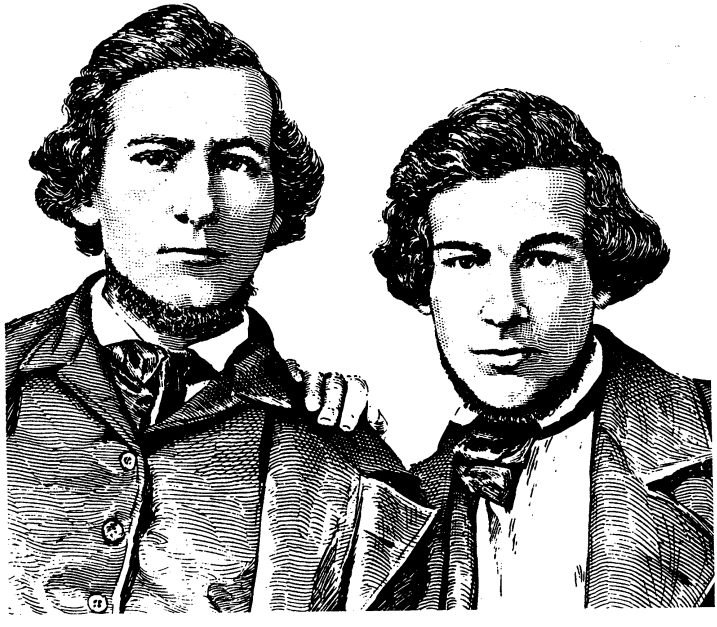
"Although amateur historians, this team has proven their ability to dig deep, persevere, question history, and relentlessly seek facts that lead to the truth," said Mullen, a member of the Nevada State Press Association Hall of Fame. "These stories of ordinary people, emerging from the shadows of obscurity and performing inspiring deeds, need to be told."

Charles T. Wegman, a direct descendant of Warren Grosh, the youngest brother of Allen and Hosea, added, "I've been impressed with the attention to detail throughout the research of the expedition team. They are the first to pursue a comprehensive search for facts surrounding the Grosh Brothers following their untimely deaths, through the ensuing decade, lawsuits, correspondence with their father, Aaron [A.B.] Grosh and the life of Richard Maurice Bucke. Their findings shine an entirely new light on the lives of and contributions made by the Grosh Brothers."

In addition to bringing attention to the story of the Grosh Brothers, Crowley said the expedition had a more personal purpose as well.

"We wanted the Grosh Brothers Expedition to honor the spirit of adventure and courage to endure," he said. "By doing this, we are honoring the memory of the Grosh Brothers and the tale of their silver discovery."

THE BROTHERS GROSH



Source: Hal Hall archives

BROTHERS ALLEN AND HOSEA GROSH were the sons of the universalist minister Aaron [A.B.] Grosh. The brothers possessed inquisitive and discerning natures and were known for being exceedingly intelligent.

Ethan, who went by his middle name Allen, born in Marietta, Pennsylvania, on November 7, 1824, overcame a sickly childhood plagued by what his father described as a "feeble constitution". "Regular school education was impossible," A.B. Grosh wrote in letters that included biographical sketches of his two sons to the Christian Ambassador in 1857-58. Despite suffering from "nervous headaches" and "severe depression" as a boy, Allen could synthesize great amounts of information quickly. His father wrote that Allen was intellectually dexterous and could "amass a large fund of general knowledge" through simple conversation and occasional reading. Allen eventually chose printing as a profession, at one point doing the "fancy" work in Philadelphia, through eventually his health forced Allen to work at the post office in Lewistown, Pennsylvania for his uncle, Moses Montgomery. Allen gained a reputation there for consistent "mental and moral improvement" and was known to influence others in a positive way, experiencing

"success in engaging others in the work." He eventually became a machinist in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Hosea Ballou, born on August 23, 1826, in Marietta, was just as notable, if not more so, than his brother for his intelligence. He was a "lively and imaginative, if somewhat unruly boy" A.B. Grosh wrote in letters to the Christian Ambassador. Hosea often seemed charged with "ungovernable passions, which punishments seemed only to increase; and a disposition to exaggerate beyond all bounds, which seemed beyond the power of repression." By the time he was ten years old, his father wrote that Hosea was called "The Philosopher" and "The Professor" by the workmen in the Magazine and Advocate office in Utica, NY, because of "his patience and hopeful reasonings in all trials and troubles, and his love of acquiring and imparting information on all subjects that engaged his attention." Hosea eventually was drawn to mathematics and any subject that was connected to the clean way that mathematics could be applied to problem-solving.

A.B. marveled that his once unruly son's ability to apply aspects of one intellectual or philosophical discipline to another had created a memorable young man. His father wrote that "he never lost his interest in religious and political subjects, especially when great principles and their practical applications were concerned. He was remarkable for his calm prudence, cheerful fortitude, and strict conscientiousness—for his great industry, whether of head or hands, and his steady persistence in whatever he undertook to perform." Like brother Allen, Hosea was a trained daguerreotypist, an early form of photography produced on a silver or copper plate covered with silver.

With the news of the discovery of gold in California, both brothers knew their destiny was to be realized in the West. In 1849, Allen, 24 years old, and younger brother by a year and 3 months, Hosea Ballou, left Pennsylvania bound eventually for California. The two young men's motivation wasn't necessarily fame and riches, although that was obviously part of the equation. There seemed to be a higher calling, one that spoke of Allen and Hosea's respect for their family. A.B. Grosh wrote to the Christian Ambassador that, "When the 'gold fever' reached here, the hope of uniting the several branches of his father's and uncle's families in some good location, and improving their pecuniary condition, induced exertions to organize a company for gold mining in California." Richard Maurice Bucke would later

recall in papers of his life that are part of a Western Libraries collection that the two brothers were indeed always cheerful, hopeful amid all discouragements, and honorable in how they treated others. They were, Bucke wrote, "in truth religious, not apt to talk about it, not wedded to any special dogma, but filled with that genuine religion of the heart which is the salt of the earth, and which keeps whoever possesses it, as it kept them, fearless, earnest, and pure." A.B. Grosh noted that Hosea was determined to join his older brother in going to California. He wrote that "a company was organized in Reading, Pa., for gold mining in California, of which his oldest brother was an active member. About two days before their departure Hosea resolved to accompany his brother—was proposed, and specially admitted, though the company was full and refused to admit more members."

The Grosh Brothers sailed from Philadelphia headed to San Francisco, California on a six-month journey that took them to Tampico in the Gulf of Mexico and overland 700 miles to Mazatlán, Mexico. On the journey was Alpheus Bull, who as a youth had traveled through the Midwest as a fervent, itinerant preacher of the Universalist religion. Bull was also headed to California in 1849 and befriended the Grosh brothers.

The Grosh Brothers carried with them their camera and dark room materials to take pictures as the trip progressed, producing daguerreotypes of the famed Mexican commander and future president of the country, Romulo Diaz de la Vega. Like many who took the route by sea to California, Hosea contracted malaria and dysentery. When the brothers arrived in San Francisco in August 1849, Hosea was still weakened with illness. He was nursed to health by his brother, who made ends meet by producing daguerreotypes. As the summer of 1850 approached, Hosea's health had returned. The brothers were ready to travel to the Gold Country of Mud Springs near Placerville, California, in El Dorado County.

The time in the California Gold Country would prove enervating and frustrating. The Groshes possessed skills that many prospectors of the time did not. They were well-read and knowledgeable, and possessed an understanding of chemistry and metallurgy that went far beyond the capabilities most of those they were joining in California's gold fields. They found success early in their sojourn into the South Fork of the American River, making approximately $2,000 – a substantial sum for the time. And yet misfortune seemed to accompany

their good fortune as they lost their profit in an ill-conceived and ill-designed effort to flume the American River to wash the rich minerals from the river's bed. It was the beginning of a frustrating pattern that would plague their efforts for the next several years. A.B. Grosh wrote of his sons' time in California that it was a recurring mix of good and bad, heartening progress followed by seemingly intractable regression, "seven years of varied fortunes and misfortunes which followed with their toils, privations, and hardships—having thrice crossed and twice re-crossed the Sierra Nevada, once with loss of horses, mules, and baggage, amid severe cold, deep snows, at starvation point." And yet, throughout it all, the proud father wrote, "his sons remained optimistic, making 'the best of everything,' ever trusting, (and by his cheerful faith, leading others to trust) in God's constantly overruling wisdom and goodness."

They were not without their down moments. Allen wrote to his father in 1855 "We have done very – very – bad this winter. Bad luck is at our fingers' end… The gold seems to vanish – it's not 'thar.'" The boom-and-bust cycle of the time was an inextricable part of the brothers' lives. Yet, even after experiencing misfortunes, there could be moments of hope, as they shared in a letter to A.B. in 1856: "By February we will probably have either our certain fortune or make a complete failure. Things look very bright & promising."

By 1856-57, what the brothers were on the cusp of finding was beyond promising. It would prove historic.

THE DISCOVERY

AS THEY WORKED ALONG THE DRAINAGES of the American River, the Grosh Brothers often crossed the Sierra, into the Carson Valley, first visiting in 1851. The Carson Valley was then part of the Utah Territory (now Nevada). The visit did not produce anything substantial, and it wasn't until 1853 that they again returned. This time they prospected parts of the Carson Valley, Gold Canyon, Lake Valley, and Washoe Valley. Gold Canyon had gained a reputation for being a productive spot for finding gold, though the gold was often mixed with rock, which intrigued the Grosh Brothers. They gathered several samples and put their metallurgical knowledge to work. Upon closer examination, the Groshes found what they thought was carbonate of silver in one of the specimens. They wrote, "It was a dark gray mass, tarnished, probably, by the sulfuric acid in the water. It resembles thin sheet lead, broken very fine – and led the miners supposed it to be (and threw it away in disgust). The ore we found at the forks of the canyon; a large quartz vein – at least, boulders from a vein close by here shows itself. Other ore of silver we think we have found in the canyon, and a rock called black rock – very abundant – we think contains silver." To flesh out their discovery more fully, and to validate their belief that they were onto a major discovery of silver, the brothers turned to raising more capital for a return visit to Gold Canyon, "trying to get a couple of hundred dollars together" Allen wrote his father.

By May 1857, with additional capital in hand, the Grosh Brothers were ready to see what they could find in the hilly, rugged, sagebrush-lined area of Gold Canyon which had seemed to hold so much potential following their initial discoveries. To help with the endeavor, they formed the Frank Silver Mining Company. An acquaintance, Frank Antonio, a Brazilian miner who had mined in the Gold Canyon area starting in 1852-53, had told the Grosh brothers about his discovery of silver ore in that region. Francis J. Hoover, an attorney who first became acquainted with the brothers in August 1851, helped them organize the Frank Silver Mining Company, which was composed of nine members, mostly Californians. The organization was needed in many ways. The area the Groshes were searching had perhaps seen the last of its productive gold discovery days. Gold production in general was lagging, and there was only a handful of miners like the Groshes who

thought the area was worth their attention.[1]

During their time in California and Nevada, the Grosh Brothers had acquired several partners and associates during the months and years that led up to their work in 1857. Among them were Captain William Galphin [W.B Galvin],[2] George Brown,[3] Mrs. Laura M. Dettenreider [Ellis],[4] William [Billy] Louget, and Francis J. Hoover, whose published recollection of insights to silver prospecting in the area of the Comstock Lode makes a reference that in the spring of 1852 that "they became involved for a partner."[5]

There were two other individuals who would play key roles as the events of the summer of 1857 and their aftermath unfolded. One was Henry Comstock [Comstock], and the other was Richard Maurice Bucke [Bucke].

Allen had contracted with Comstock to stay in their cabin near Silver City. This arrangement included one-fourth ownership in the Groshes' claims for keeping it from being jumped in Allen's absence while he went across the Sierra to prove his and his deceased brother Hosea's claim.[6]

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[1] San Francisco Call, *From Early Days: The Silver Discovery in Washoe Valley*, Vol. 75, No. 157, May 6, 1894.

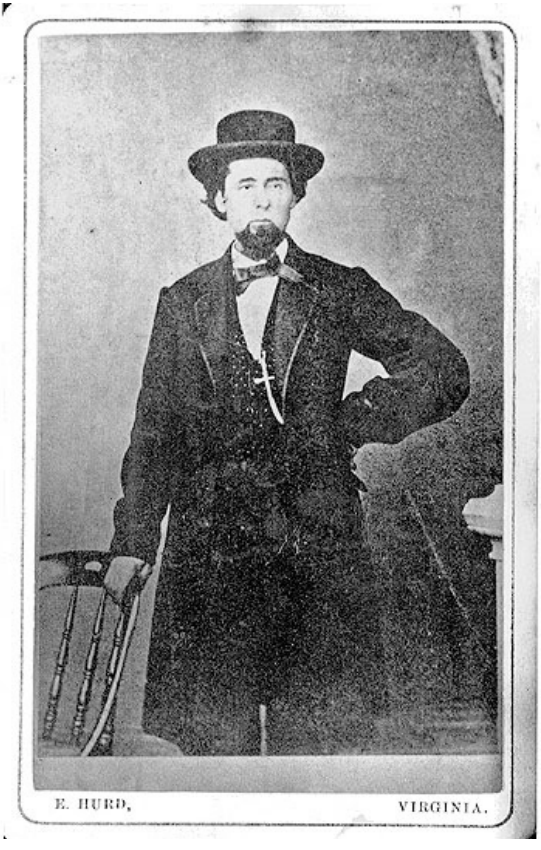
[2] Captain William (W. B.) Galphin (Galvin) is identified as a partner of the Groshes in The Gold Rush Letters of E. Allen Grosh & Hosea B. Grosh, edited by Ronald M. James and Robert E. Stewart, University of Nevada Press, 2012; *Before the Comstock 1857-1858: Memoirs of William Hickman Dolman*, New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. 22, Number 3, July 1947; and, Sam Davis, Early Mining Discoveries in Nevada, 1913.

[3] George Brown is identified as a partner of the Groshes in The Gold Rush Letters of E. Allen Grosh & Hosea B. Grosh, edited by Ronald M. James and Robert E. Stewart, University of Nevada Press, 2012; and, Sam Davis, Early Mining Discoveries in Nevada, 1913.

[4] Sam Davis, Early Mining Discoveries in Nevada, 1913, indicates that Mrs. Ellis (Dettenreider) was about to become a partner.

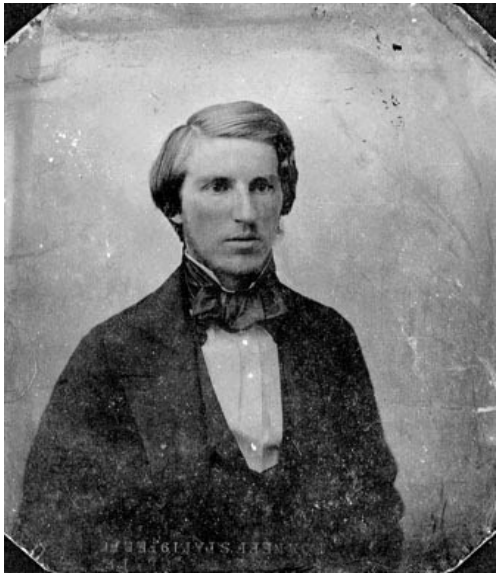
[5] San Francisco Call, *From Early Days: The Silver Discovery in Washoe Valley*, Vol. 75, No. 157, May 6, 1894.

[6] Charles H. Shinn, The Story of the Mine, 1896, Page 33.



Henry Tompkins Paige Comstock
(Source: Wikipedia, public domain)

Bucke was a young Canadian who had wandered and adventured his way through the American West, eventually befriending the Grosh brothers. Bucke was born on March 18, 1837, at Methwold, Norfolk, England. His parents emigrated to Canada when he was one years old and settled in London, Ontario. He was a typical athletic farm boy of that era and enjoyed a good ball game.



Richard Maurice Bucke (Source: Charles T. Wegman)

When Bucke left home in 1853 at the age of 16, he traveled to Columbus, Ohio and worked in several locations as a laborer. In 1856 Bucke traveled to the Sierra Nevada. In 1857, he joined forces in prospecting with Allen and Hosea Grosh at the young age of 20. He considered himself a partner of the brothers; information which he shared with Dr. J.Z. Tibbits in Last Chance, California at the bedside of a dying Grosh.[7] Later in life he would become a renowned friend and biographer of Walt Whitman, and with the publishing of his book, "Cosmic Consciousness" in 1901, was known the world over as a progressive physician who always viewed mental illness and its treatment in humane and empathetic terms. Throughout his life, Bucke was known as a dependable, trustworthy person.

By mid-summer of 1857 the Groshes were at work, having re-discovered their "Monster vein" near the fork of the canyon, Allen writes, "Day after day and week after week we were at it from daylight to dark, hanging over glowing furnaces and the thermometer in the 'nineties'. In addition, they had found,

[7] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. R.M. Bucke Fonds (diary and unpublished manuscript).

"suits of veins crossing the canyon at two other points."

Their discerning eyes and prior experience with metals would prove critical in overcoming the difficulties that came with making reliable assays. The work was not only physically taxing but required them to question what they were finding, and to examine every aspect of their discoveries very carefully. They wrote that as they attempted to make reliable assays, they found the nature of the ores to be, "not, as we had supposed, magnetic oxide or iron, but the magnetic sulfuret of iron." Although the Groshes were highly industrious and inventive young men, they found many of the materials and apparatus they used to be imprecise and somewhat imperfect for the fine scientific conclusions they were attempting to make. There was one thing they were certain of however, their assays were clearly of the blackish, purple, and violet mineralogical coloring palette of silver. This was rock that was not accented with silver but rich in it, Allen writes, "Our first assay was one-half ounce of rock; the result was $3,500 of silver to the ton. We are very sanguine of ultimate success."

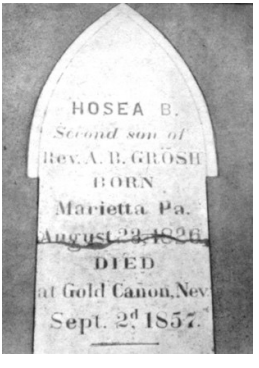
Among historians, there is no debate that the Grosh Brothers were the first discoverers of silver in the region. There is some debate, however, of where the Grosh Brothers made their discovery. Some believed the Grosh brothers were based too far down the mountain to have discovered what some call the Comstock Lode. However, they do agree that if Allen and Hosea had lived a few years longer their expertise in chemistry and mining would surely have brought them the wealth and success they longed for.

Bucke, who was with the Groshes in the summer of 1857, was interviewed, in December 1897, where a reporter for the London Advertiser stated to him, "The article in the (New York) Sun states that the Grosh brothers were the first discoverers of silver in the west." "That is a fact," replied Bucke. "They discovered silver in the west as early as 1853, if not earlier. I have read all their letters to their father on this matter, and I know absolutely about that."[8]

[8] The London Advertiser, *Discovery of The Comstock*, December 16, 1897

FATE INTERVENES

LIKE SO MANY OTHER MINERS of the time, the Grosh Brothers' life in 1857 was hard and brutal. The physical toll of the work they did in the rocky forks of the canyon was immense. There was no down time to speak of – every waking moment was spent roasting and smelting, and every other moment was spent resting to gather the strength the next day to repeat the process again. There were also outside forces conspiring against Allen and Hosea as well. In August 1857, one of their partners, George Brown, was murdered. Shortly thereafter, Hosea had an accident. He struck his pick into his foot on August 19th. Hosea did not seem to be critically injured at first, and even made light of the injury to his brother to calm Allen's worries. Eventually, though, the wound worsened. His foot swelled, fever wracked his body, and soon Hosea was treated with opium and another common frontier remedy of the time, a wrap of cow dung. Allen made the trek to Eagle Valley (today's Carson City) to consult a doctor, who reassured him that the treatments being applied to his stricken brother were what was needed. Hosea's condition never improved. He died in his sleep on September 2, 1857, just two weeks later.



Hosea Ballou Grosh gravestone, location Silver City, NV Cemetery (Source: Hal Hall archives)

In a letter to his father on September 7th, Allen writes, "I take up my pen with a heavy heart, for I have sad news to send you. God has seen fit in his perfect wisdom & goodness to call Hosea, the patient, the good, the gentle to join his mother in another &

a better world than this. I complained bitterly of the dispensation which deprived me of what I held most dear of all the world, and I thought it most hard that he should be called away, just as we had fair hopes of realizing what we had labored for so hard for so many years."

The brothers had traveled from Pennsylvania to Mexico to San Francisco to the gold fields of El Dorado County and across the Sierra to a new territory of sagebrush and silver whose brilliance was yet to fully shine. They had lived in tents, roughing out an existence where they suffered personal privation and countless economic frustrations, yet the Grosh Brothers had always retained a deep-rooted optimism that kept them always searching, always on the outlook for the realization of what their future would hold. They were sons of a minister, and their lives to this point had always reflected their righteous upbringing. Now that one of them was gone, and the other was gripped with grief, Allen compared the death of his brother to a "terrible" blow – "Oh, the utter desolation of that hour!" he wrote. And yet, he also felt an overwhelming sense of pride, a deep and abiding love for his brother and the way he had lived his life. Hosea had been Allen's ultimate friend, "so dear a companion," he wrote tenderly of his brother. There was intense loss, but also immense gratitude for living so many years with a person whose "upright life had prepared him for the next." The loss of Hosea was felt all the way across the country. A.B. Grosh wrote in an October 1857 letter to Allen that, "I have no words that will describe our feelings of grief and sorrow at the news contained in the (letter). I read only the first lines and feeling utterly unable to control my feelings or voice, uttered the words, 'Hosea is dead!' and ... retired to our room, where Mother soon followed me, and we wept long and sadly together," he wrote, referring to his second wife as the sons' mother had died years earlier. "Oh, how often have we mourned over your united failures, disappointments and misfortunes," A.B. Grosh wrote, "and hoped, almost against hope, that the tide might yet turn, and bring you both back again, to our arms."

With Hosea's passing, Allen did two things, which again reflected the type of person he was. He began the work of ensuring Hosea had a proper funeral, and he began forming plans for a trip that at first glance looked like a retreat from the area. It was yet another advance against adversity that the Grosh Brothers were very familiar with. Allen was determined to honor his brother's memory by finding a way to keep their work in Gold Canyon alive. He wrote to his father that it was, "most hard that (Hosea) be called away just as we had fair hopes of realizing what we had labored so hard for so many years." Allen's work on behalf of his brother meant that he would have to linger in the days after Hosea's death, working and having to borrow $60 from the other miners to purchase a suit for his brother so that Hosea could be properly buried in what is today known as Silver City, Nevada. He then stayed longer, into the month of November, to pay off the debt he had accrued before he set off for California to prove their claim.

Most historical accounts refer to the Grosh Brothers' original plans, before Hosea's tragedy, were to go west to San Francisco, and maybe back to Pennsylvania, to raise capital for the purpose of forming a company, procuring equipment, coming back to their mining claims in Nevada, erecting machinery, and begin working on their discovered silver ore veins. From 1853 to 1857 they had traveled back and forth over the Sierra several times as they fleshed out their discovery. One account indicated that Allen Grosh and a companion, (Richard Maurice Bucke), were headed to Grass Valley after Hosea's death to have the ore samples assayed to determine its quality from an expert. This would allow Allen to demonstrate to prospective investors that their discovery was independently tested. Melville Atwood, a chemist and metallurgist, resided in Grass Valley at the time of their passage over the Sierra."[9] Bucke wrote in the Overland Monthly in 1883, "Their plan was now to go to San Francisco, form a company, come back, erect machinery, and begin at once working the ore." However, he noted that "On the 19th of August, just as the Grosh brothers had located their "claims," and were about to leave for the coast to raise the capital required to work them, as Hosea was doing some final work before starting, his pick glanced from a rock, struck his left foot, and passed nearly through it."

[9] The Daily Sun, *Comstock Lode Name is Wrong*, March 15, 1957.

Accompanied by Bucke, Grosh set out for California in hopes to have the ore samples assayed on November 15, 1857. Both were experienced trans-Sierra travelers, although Grosh had not travelled over the route that he and Bucke sought to take over the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1857. Bucke, who despite his young years, had worked and traveled throughout the West and had gone over what he described as the "Washoe Trail" (today known as the "Western States Trail") at least four times when he traveled to and from his Marysville, California mining site.

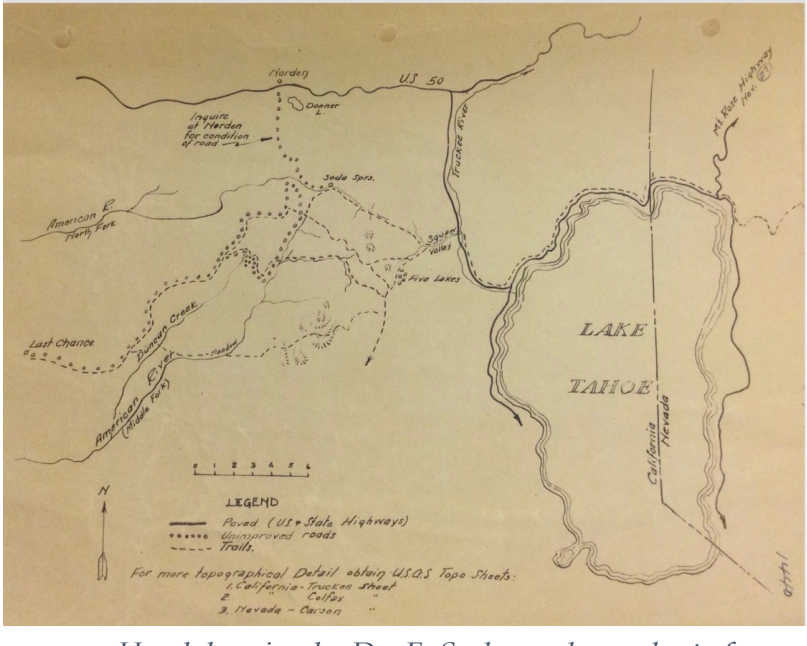
Extensive study of the Grosh and Bucke route maps by the members of the Grosh Brothers Expedition indicate that it makes sense that Grosh and Bucke would have taken the Washoe Trail if indeed their plan was to go to Grass Valley to have the ore samples verified as silver by Attwood.



Map of the Journey of Allen Grosh and Richard Maurice Bucke in November/December 1857 (Source: Western Libraries, Western University, London, Canada)

Almost from the beginning, though, their journey did not go as planned. Once the two travelers had crossed the Virginia Range and arrived at Washoe Lake, their packed animal made an escape. The donkey proved deft in its ability not to be found. Grosh and Bucke spent five days that proved to be quite

precious in searching for the mule before they made their ascent from the valley floor to what is believed to be the boulder-strewn Ophir Creek near what is today known as Slide Mountain. They then made their way around the north end of Lake Tahoe and down the Truckee River to today's Olympic Valley, California. Given the time of year – it was now late November – what happened next should not have been a surprise. They were hit by a fierce snowstorm after entering the Olympic Valley enroute along the modern-day Western States Trail. Now in the high country above Olympic Valley in a snowstorm, Grosh and Bucke struggled to maintain an idea of where they were. The snow was high enough to obscure the trail, and to make a retreat to Washoe Valley was nearly impossible without food. The donkey was sacrificed.



Hand drawing by Dr. E. Seaborn, descendant of Bucke, of approximate route taken by E. Allen Grosh and R.M. Bucke after reaching Bigler Lake (Lake Tahoe) (Source: Western Libraries, Western University, Dr. Edwin Seaborn Fonds)

After several days of attempting to cross the Sierra crest above Olympic Valley, they were able to take shelter at a cabin that Bucke knew about from his earlier travels to California in the Little American Valley, which was known as the "Greek Hotel"

or “Valley House” built by Jorge Ballen (aka “Greek George”), a Greek emigrant. “Greek George” had built the cabin in the hope of profiting from the prevalence of a wagon road, known as the Placer County Emigrant Road, that connected the mining excitement of gold country communities in California with Washoe Valley and the areas in and around Gold Canyon. The Grosh Brothers Expedition Team located the former site of the cabin in October 2022 with the help of a photo taken by Auburn, California businessman and trail advocate Wendell Robie in September 1931. Square nails and other artifacts were found at the former site.

The cabin served as protection from the elements, but the provisions Bucke thought would be in the cupboards had been pilfered, except for a small amount of donkey meat they were without any other food.



Remains of Greek Hotel with Robert Montgomery Watson and the Native Sons of the Golden West (Wendell Robie photographer; Source: Hal Hall archives)

After two days sheltered in the Greek Hotel, Grosh and Bucke set out for Robinsons Flat along what Bucke describes as the Washoe Trail following the blazes in the trees that marked the route. After reaching the ridge Grosh and Bucke got lost when the weather changed with freezing wind and snow. The story then turns on an intriguing mystery at this point, as Grosh, fighting the worsening elements and struggling to maintain a sense of direction due to the quickly deteriorating weather conditions where the trail was disappearing under the heavy

snowfall, stashed his maps, ore samples, and an assay record book of their silver discovery into a fallen pine tree. Journalists and historians have taken this debated subject up when addressing this aspect of the Grosh and Bucke journey.[10]

As it turned out there would only be one person that would later have a recollection of what happened. Bucke, a quarter- century later, would state that, "Among other things, we threw away the bundle containing [Allen's] Grosh's papers. That, of course, was left haphazard(ly) on the ground, probably miles from any path, in the wilderness, where there was no possible chance of it being ever seen again, either in winter or summer, because scarcely anyone ever went up those mountains at any time of the year except on the regular trails. It was absolutely lost."[11] However, an earlier account from Johnson Simmons, who was stopping at the Last Chance mining site at the time, indicated that just a few days after being lost in the storm, Grosh and Bucke arrived in Last Chance with severe frostbite. "The one named Grosh never spoke after he was brought in." Simmons goes on to state that Bucke (called McCloud in this account) described that Grosh had abandoned his belongings along a ridge 4 to 5 miles past the cabin in Little American Valley. Bucke stated that "At that point Grosh, who had stuck to his maps and assays through all the journey, concluded to abandon them also, and so he tied them up in a piece of canvas and deposited them in the hollow of a large pine tree."[12]

Whatever was placed, and in what large pine tree it was placed, has never been fully learned, nor ever been discovered. It remains another tantalizing detail in a story that would soon see even more tragedy. The two men's condition had worsened at

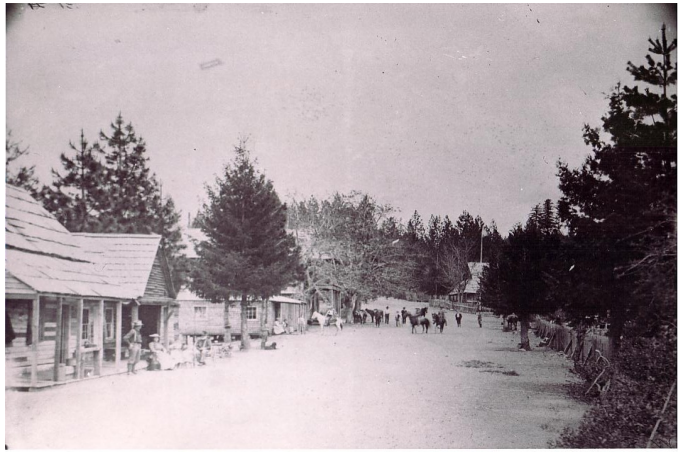
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[10] Sam Davis, The History of Nevada; The Placer Herald, *Placer's Big Tree*s, W.B. Lardner, August 21, 1920; Tahoe Topical, *The Discovery of Silver on the Comstock and the Groshes Bros.*, by Marshall W. McDonald, June 14, 1946; Nevada Magazine, *The Brothers Grosh,* J.B. Roberts, Nov/Dec 1990, Page 51; Margaret Sanborn, The River of El Dorado, Page 210; and, Norman McLeod, Distant Voices, Different Drums - Collection of True Stories, High Drama at Last Chance, 1991.

[11] The London Advertiser, *Discovery of The Comstock,* December 16, 1897.

[12] Auburn Journal, October 16, 1889, and Sam Davis, The History of Nevada, both indicates that after arriving in Last Chance in mid-December 1857, R.M. Bucke informed Johnson Simmons that Allen Grosh had placed what he had been carrying into the hollow of a large pine tree. This is supported by several other references.

this point as they followed down from the ridge to a large drainage in a snow-bound river valley. In a few days they were reduced to moving on their hands and knees along the ridge above the Middle Fork of the American River after 17 days of trekking in the mountains starving and freezing in the snow. They were finally rescued along a ditch near a miner's cabin in the vicinity of Miller's Defeat and later taken by sleds to the mining settlement of Last Chance. Bucke would write later in a letter from Last Chance of what the two had done to survive, "I said to Allen that we might as well lay there until we died, but he said that as long as he could crawl, he would not give up. On the 10th (December 10, 1857) the miners from Last Chance came up and hauled us down on sleighs to this place... (The doctor) did not get here until the 19th, and it was then too late…poor Allen died a little while after he got here."



Last Chance, CA circa mid-1800s
(Source: Hal Hall archives)

Both men's feet were frozen. Grosh's condition was much graver than Bucke's. Dr. J.Z. Tibbits of Iowa Hill, California, was summoned and amputated one of Bucke's feet and part of the other. Although he was quite ill, Grosh was able to summon the strength to write his final letter to Governor (Francis J. Hoover) and Friends on December 12, 1857. A.B. Grosh later identified Hoover as a "genial and generous" friend of the brothers, who was a Pennsylvanian that had made his way West. Before leaving for California, Hoover vowed to not return until he had been elected governor; thus, the nickname of Governor. Grosh, in his final letter from Blind Ravine, remained to the end a gracious and God-loving person, writing that he was "indebted" to those who

had rescued and were tending to him. "God bless them all, until we can make a better return to our prayers," he wrote about his rescuers. He was equally indebted to his companion, Morris Buck (both mis-spelled names for Bucke), writing that "though not yet twenty-one years of age, he has shown the high Norman blood, in encountering our difficulties and trials." He added, "Morris' feet are worse than mine as he thawed them out by the fire, while I wrapped mine up in blankets. I had not the energy to rub them in snow, for besides being without fire for four nights we were without food for three days." As Grosh rambled on further, he ends by writing, "The ends of my fingers are slightly touched with frost & My wits-end by fever, so that I feel very much ashamed at the confused note I have written you. But I must go as I cannot write another. Neither of us can walk. Our friends will try and have us packed out to Michigan Bluff, through the snow… We have had a very narrow escape of it… God's providence alone saved us."

Allen Grosh passed away on December 19, 1857.

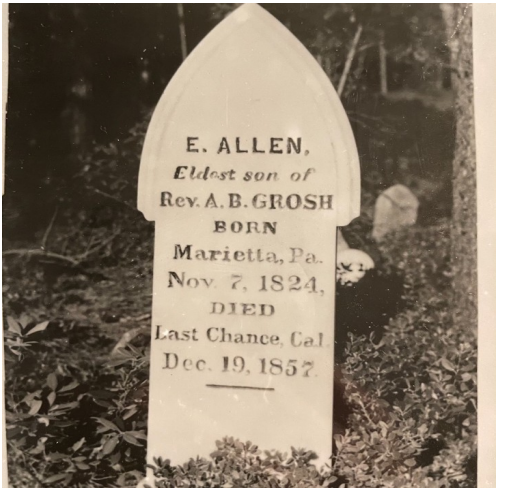
There are differing accounts whether Allen Grosh said anything before his death to anyone after arriving in Last Chance that would shed light on the fate of the papers and ore samples that would prove his discovery. The Auburn Journal newspaper account indicated that, "The one named Grosh never spoke after he was brought in."[13] Another account asserts that "Grosh died in a few days, never having recovered enough to speak."[14] Another article stated that, "He (Grosh) regained consciousness before dying but was never able to speak or to give any clue as to the location of his claims on Mount Davidson." [15]

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[13] Auburn Journal, *Grosh Brothers*, Volume 6, Number 3, October 16, 1889

[14] The Placer Herald, Volume LXVIII, Number 6, August 21, 1920.

[15] The Tahoe Topical, *The Discovery of Silver on the Comstock and the Groshes Bros.*, Marshall W. McDonald, June 14, 1946.



Ethan Allen Grosh gravesite, Last Chance, CA
(Source: Hal Hall archives)

However, there is a contradictory account that Grosh did speak, which indicated that he had been taken to Ben Leggett's hotel in Last Chance and did not die immediately. The account claims that he lived about a week and was attended by William (W.J.) Harrison, a miner residing in the area who had received an education in medicine and later became a member of the California State Legislature. Grosh, it was said, was able to converse during his sickness and likely talked to those who attended to him about his discoveries on the Comstock Lode.[16] A.B. Grosh, in one of his numerous letters to Bucke, well after the ordeal, indicated that W.J. Harrison later said that "there can be no doubt about the title to all, or nearly all, the valuable leads (lodes) that are now worked so successfully and profitably in Carson Valley. I think he has, or can get, the books, papers, and other memoranda which Grosh left on his last journey through the snow."

Bucke, after having his feet amputated, survived thanks to Dr. Tibbits, who introduced Bucke to Alpheus Bull of San Francisco with a letter that set forth his plight and asked for assistance. Ironically, Bull had come to know the Grosh Brothers when they travelled together across Mexico in 1849. Bucke was packed out to Michigan Bluff and spent time recovering before traveling to San Francisco in April 1858. Bucke was cared for

[16] Auburn Journal, October 30, 1889.

upon his arrival by Alpheus Bull, who generously purchases Bucke a ticket to return home to Canada by way of a sailing ship to the east coast.[17]

A.B. Grosh was informed by those who attended his son that Allen died at "twenty minutes past four o'clock A.M., December 19th" and that his son was buried at Last Chance "decently" on "December 20th, at a quarter past four o'clock." A lock of his son's hair was sent to him. W.J. Harrison wrote that, "Could money have purchased the life of your son, it would have been freely paid. The miners wish me to express to you and your family their warmest sympathy in your present bereavement. They *feel* sympathy, for your son died in their midst, where all around looks desolate and gloomy, among these inhospitable mountains of the frontier."



Richard Maurice Bucke, McGill University, Canada (Source: Western University Archives)

[17] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. R.M. Bucke Fonds (diary and unpublished manuscript).

RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE

AFTER SURVIVING THE TRAGIC ORDEAL, Bucke returned to Canada in 1858 indebted to Alpheus Bull, then a trustee with two major mining companies. He enrolled at McGill University to study medicine. He graduated in 1862 with the distinction of being the gold medalist of his year and winning a prize for his thesis, "The Correlation of Vital and Physical Forces." After spending time in Europe for post-graduate studies until 1864, he returned to Sarnia, Canada, to take over his late brother's medical practice. Later that same year, he was summoned to California by Alpheus Bull to provide testimony in Comstock Lode Litigation before returning to Canada in April 1865 where he married Jessie Maria Gurd and settled down to practice medicine in Sarnia for the following ten years. Bucke and his wife had eight children.[18]

Bucke was appointed Medical Superintendent at the new mental hospital in Hamilton in 1876, and after a year he was transferred to the Ontario Hospital in London where he served for 25 years. Bucke read Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" in 1867 and claimed it to be one of the most important events of his life. He travelled to New Jersey to meet Whitman in 1877 which marked the beginning of a long, close friendship between the two men. Upon Whitman's death in 1892, Bucke became one of his literary executors and was a pall bearer at his funeral. In popular culture, the Bucke-Whitman friendship found a place in the 1990 film, *Beautiful Dreamers*, which was a dramatized account of the true friendship between Whitman [Rip Torn] and Dr. Bucke [Colm Feore]. The setting is a 19th-century Canadian institution for the mentally retarded. Bucke appears as a compassionate London, Ontario, doctor who defies his superiors by treating his patients as human beings rather than animals. When Whitman champions his cause, the doctor is ostracized by those who fear the poet's reputation as a freethinking radical. It was based on a true incident – Whitman spent the summer with Dr. Bucke in 1880.

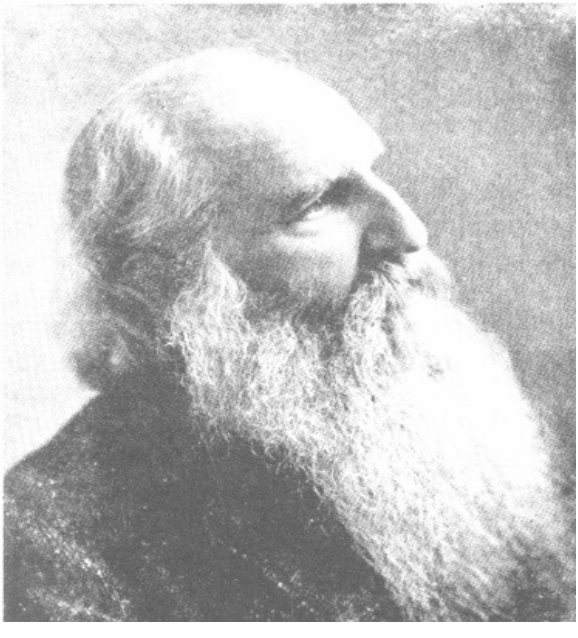
Bucke was also a memorable figure in that he was one of the first of his time to depart from orthodox therapeutics at the Asylum. By 1882 he had abolished the medicinal use of alcohol in the Asylum and by 1883 he had discontinued the use of physical restraints and initiated an open-door policy. He also pioneered

[18] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. R.M. Bucke Fonds (diary and unpublished manuscript).

many surgical "cures" for lunacy, including gynecological surgery, which he later abandoned this practice.

Bucke was an active writer, and his noted works include several psychiatric papers, "Walt Whitman, a biography of the man," "Man's Moral Nature," and "Cosmic Consciousness," the last of which has been held in high esteem for many years and reprinted many times since its publication. Bucke was one of the founders of the University of Western Ontario's Medical School and in 1882 was appointed Professor of Nervous and Mental Diseases, as well as elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Bucke delivered the opening academic lecture of the year at McGill University by request of the medical faculty in 1891. He became President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association in 1897, and the following year he was elected President of the American Medico- Psychological Association.

Bucke died on February 19, 1902, from a fall where he struck his head. The mystery of the stashed documents and diagrams proving the silver claim that Allen Grosh left in the high Sierra in 1857 during their tragic crossing followed him throughout his life.



RIGHTFUL CLAIM DENIED

A.B. GROSH WRITES on February 12, 1861, "Hoover believes W.J. Harrison, the miner who care for his son, can get the papers and memos which Allen left in the snow, asks Bucke if he could direct them to the place where they threw them away."[19] On March 10, 1861, A.B. Grosh indicated that Bucke gives information as to the depositing of Allen's papers.[20] Harrison which stated "A few days since I received a letter informing me that Bucke who was with your son in crossing the mountains claims an interest in those discoveries -- Now I am willing to be qualified that Mr. Bucke never had the shadow of a claim. Your son never saw Mr. Bucke till the morning your son Hosea was buried. I did, on the second day after bringing your son over to our little town, asked him if Mr. B. [Bucke] was a partner. Your son told me, so did Mr. B., that he, B., was not interested in any way in the discoveries."[21]"Could the bundle of papers, etc. left by your son as he crossed the mountains be found it would be a great advantage in the suit. I am satisfied that I could find the deposits of ore made by your son as he came over."[22]Mr. Hoover says of Harrison: "(Harrison) now has them (books, ores, etc.) in his possession, and will produce them at the proper time… He says Allen told him all, just before his death, but enjoined him to secresy (secrecy) in the matter, and until he is compelled by law to make the disclosure in a Court of law, he cannot do so."[23]

There were also important aspects of the Grosh-Bucke relationship to consider. For example, Richard Bucke first met the Grosh Brothers in the summer of 1857.[24] What did Bucke really know about the Grosh Brothers silver discovery, what encounters did he have that followed his ordeal of his journey with Allen, and what did he tell others?

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[19] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. Edward Seaborn Fonds, AFC 20-S5-SS4, Page 17).
[20] Letters of A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, Page 54.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid; Pages 54-55.
[24] The Bury and Norwich Post, and Suffolk Herald, July 13, 1880, Page 7; and, Peter A. Rechnitzer, R. M. Bucke-Journey to Cosmic Consciousness, 1994.

On July 8, 1861, Dr. J.Z. Tibbits, the doctor summoned by miners in December 1857 to Last Chance, writes a letter to Bucke urging him to establish his mining claims along with those of Reverend A.B. Grosh. The letter is telling as it refers to what was said by Bucke to Dr. Tibbits in December 1857 at the time of his surgery in Last Chance, which was that Bucke claimed to be a partner of Allen Grosh and heir to the Comstock Lode silver discovery riches.[25]

Johnson Simmons who was in Last Chance at the time, indicated his understanding of Grosh and Bucke's trans-Sierra journey and the fate of the documents. Simmon states that Bucke claimed that the tree in which Grosh had deposited his papers and ore samples had blown down with the wind, having broken about twenty feet from the ground. Grosh had told Bucke that it was safer to select a tree of that kind than a standing one liable in a storm to lie uprooted. The hollow in this tree was quite small, and after depositing the records he cut a mark on the tree with his knife and rolled a good-sized stone in front of the hollow. This account by Simmons differs from subsequent newspaper and book references to what Bucke claims Grosh did with his documents, maps, assay records and ore samples. Later, Bucke would claim that the documents had been scattered to the wind far from any known trail and were unlikely to ever be found again. One explanation on conflicting accounts is that Bucke may have changed his story at Alpheus Bull's request as part of the testimony regarding the litigation on the claim.[26]

When Grosh and Bucke arrived in Last Chance on sleds in December 1857 another miner, William Christian, told reporters later that he did not know, but thought it likely that Grosh talked with W.J. Harrison and others who attended to him at Ben Leggett's hotel in Last Chance about his discoveries on the Comstock. Following the death of Grosh, Harrison wrote two letters from Last Chance – one, a moving, mournful letter to Grosh's father; and, the other a letter to Francis Hoover about the death of Allen on December 20, 1857.[27]

It is apparent that W.J. Harrison was either informed by Grosh and/or Bucke about Grosh's burying of maps, samples, and the like,

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[25] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. Edward Seaborn Fonds, AFC 203-S1-SS1-F26.

[26] Auburn Journal, Volume 6, Number 3, *The Grosh Brothers - Their Part in the Discovery of the Comstock-Death of Allen Grosh at Last Chance*, October 16, 1889.

[27] Auburn Journal, Volume 6, Number 5, October 30, 1889, Page 3.

along their journey in the pine tree stump and may have later found the location, retrieved, and possessed the contents. Since there was never a court order requiring disclosure, Harrison does not appear to have ever made his assertion public. Harrison was elected as an assemblyman from Placer County in 1860. Later he moved to Healdsburg, California, and was not heard from again.

On March 5, 1864, Bucke received a telegram from Alpheus Bull who sought his assistance in a lawsuit that had been filed against the Gould and Curry (Silver) Mining Company, of which Bull was now a trustee and the president from 1864 to 1875. [28] Bull wanted Bucke's testimony that the land mined by the Grosh brothers was not the site of the Comstock Lode.[29]

The Gould & Curry Mining Company was one of the key producers on the Comstock ledge. Incorporated on June 27, 1860. The Gould & Curry began as two adjacent mining claims of Gould & Co. and Curry & Co. located between the Savage and Best & Belcher mines in the central part of the Comstock lode. Located in early 1859 as one of the first Comstock claims, it is named after Abram Curry, one of the first settlers into Carson City, and Alva Gould. Both men sold out their interest in the claim for an aggregate sum of less than $10,000. Gould & Curry was the first major mining company to build their own mills, two in 1861 and one in 1863. The stock rose to $6,300 per foot in June 1863, or about $1,600 per share, after Comstock mine production went from $6 million in 1862 to $12 million in 1863. Among the original incorporators were George Hearst, Lloyd Tevis, John Earl, Alpheus Bull, Thos. Bell, A. Head, B.F. Sherwood, and Wm. Blanding. William Chapman Ralston was initially appointed treasurer, and Charles Strong the mine superintendent. Shareholders George Hearst, William Lent and John Earl, would all go on to be instrumental in the building of the new mill at the junction of Six- and Seven-Mile canyons that was completed in 1863 and later sold and dismantled after 1870. The mine produced over $17 million in gold and silver and was the primary financial motivating machine in 1863 that changed Virginia City from a good mining region to a great one.

Alpheus Bull made his fortune at Red Bluff, California, in mining and then in the mercantile business. He was the president of the

[28] Eliot Lord, Comstock Mining and Miners, 1883.
[29] Peter A. Rechnitzer, R.M. Bucke — Journey to Cosmic Consciousness, 1994. Page 44.

Gould & Curry for most of the 1860's.[30] After moving to San Francisco in 1858, Bull made an astonishing occupational leap, becoming president of several major Nevada silver mines and vice president of the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. In 1871, his wife Sarah hung herself in the attic of their Russian Hill home. The Alta California newspaper attributed the suicide to insanity. Two years later Bull became the leader of a new Universalist Church in San Francisco, but its pastor was accused of "amorous irregularities," causing a split in the congregation. A letter from 1884 reveals that in addition to the headaches and respiratory problems he had experienced for many years, Bull suffered from severe mental depression. His death in 1890 occurred during a family outing to Fort Point. As his second wife, Jennie, and their daughters walked ahead, Alpheus lingered behind to enjoy the sea spray. He apparently became faint and pitched over the sea wall. At age 74, he left a fortune of over a million dollars.[31]

With his trip paid for by the Gould & Curry Silver Mining Company, Bucke went to California in early 1864, and was amply remunerated for his time and services. He returned to Sarnia in 1865, not only enriched in experience, but with a substantial sum of money.[32]The Grosch [sic] Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company had brought legal action against Gould & Curry and Henry Comstock, where Bucke's knowledge of the Grosh brother's discoveries was a factor in the case. The Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company was formed on July 17, 1863.[33]

While being paid handsomely by Gould & Curry mining company, Bucke spent over a year in California and Nevada being coached and awaiting to testify. He spends much time at the Gould & Curry San Francisco and their attorney's offices, and he travels with Bull to the mining sites in Nevada to meet with George Hearst where they visit the former cabin site of the Grosh brothers. Bucke shows Hearst and Bull where he remembered where the Allen and Hosea were prospecting. For an unexplained reason, Bucke also travels on horseback from north Lake Tahoe along the route taken with Allen Grosh in 1857 to Last Chance and back. Unfortunately, Bucke's diary does not indicate the reason for this journey; it only indicates

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[30] https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/gould-curry-early-1869-stock-signed-by-alpheus-bu-2340-c-2a8470193d

[31] https://rhnsf.org/about-russian-hill-neighbors.

[32] James H. Coyne, Richard Maurice Bucke - A Sketch, 1906, Page 33.

[33] Sacramento Daily Union, *The Grosch Brothers in WASHOE,* Volume 25, Number 3870, August 17, 1863, Page 5, Column 5.

that he found the rifle that Grosh discarded at Squaw Valley in the winter of 1857. There is no mention in his diaries of whether Grosh's papers and assays were found in the marked pine tree. This part of the mystery remains to this day unresolved.

There are several sources that demonstrate that the Grosh family was deliberately and diabolically denied any rightful claim or renumeration from the riches made by Comstock mining companies. Prior to the Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company litigation against Gould & Curry Mining Company, there was a claim brought by A.B. Grosh, who throughout the remainder of his life, wanted to ensure that somehow, someway, that his son's legacy would be one remembered for what they had accomplished – that they were the ones who had seen something and discovered something that others had failed to see and would not have found. A.B. Grosh sought demands of and possible settlement or litigation from Comstock Lode mining companies that purportedly were because of his son's discovery. This effort was based, in part, on Allen Grosh's August 16, 1857, letter from Gold Canyon, which gives more particulars of their discoveries… but everything in (Allen's) memoranda confirms the idea that they had really struck the Comstock Lode.[34]

Additional evidence is afforded by the story that one of their friends, Mrs. Ellis (Dettenreider), who was to furnish some capital to the Grosh brothers with which to open a mine, was told by them that their largest ledge was on what is now Mount Davidson, and she had a piece of ore containing "gold, silver, lead, and antimony," which description would very well apply to Comstock outcroppings.[35]

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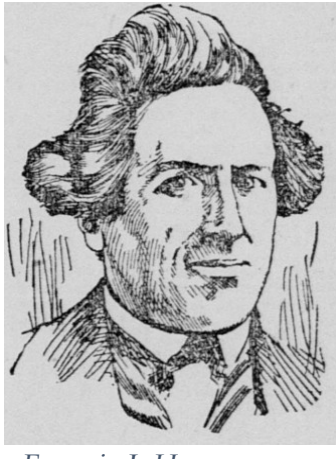
[34] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Seaborn Fonds, Bucke's Diary, AFC 20 from index F80, Page 15; and, the letters from A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, unpublished.

[35] Thompson and West, History of Nevada 1881. Berkeley, California: Howell-North, 1958. Pages 51-54.



Mrs. Laura M. Ellis - Dettenreider (Source: Yale University Library Collection)

Initially, A.B. Grosh was represented by Francis J. Hoover, a California attorney and friend of the Grosh brothers, until his sudden death on January 4, 1864.[36] The Gould & Curry and Ophir mining companies were represented by C. Temple Emmett, a San Francisco attorney.[37]



Francis J. Hoover
(Source: San Francisco Call, May 6, 1894)

[36] Letters of A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, unpublished.
[37] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. R.M. Bucke Fonds (unpublished manuscript and diary).

A.B. Grosh later hired Benjamin F. Butler, a noted Washington, D.C., attorney, to litigate the assertion over ownership. Butler conducted a thorough examination of the claim and concluded that a good argument could be made that the Grosh brothers' heirs had a right to demand compensation in view of a reasonable assertion of at least partial ownership of the Comstock Lode. Nevertheless, Butler added that "the defendants were men so thoroughly entrenched in possession and having unlimited money at their command that they would be able to buy up any jury that could be selected to try the case, and that, under the circumstances, the winning of such a case would be an impossibility."[38]



Benjamin F. Butler (Source: Autobiography of Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benj. F. Butler, 1892)

Well before the start of the Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company litigation, A.B. Grosh had deeded his ownership to Douglas and Nickerson, both of Placerville, California, who represented the newly formed mining company, and later determined that he had been swindled as he was never paid what had been promised to him.[39] A.B. Grosh ultimately determined that he was also cheated by

[38] The Gold Rush Letters of E. Allen Grosh & Hosea B. Grosh, edited by Ronald M. James and Robert E. Stewart, University of Nevada Press, 2012, Page 205; *Yet another obscure Universalist x 2*, https://www.danielharper.org/blog/?p=6985; and, Sam Davis, *The History of Nevada*, 1913, Pages 389-390.

[39] Letters of A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, unpublished.

Alpheus Bull while he was associated with the Ophir and the Gould & Curry Mining Companies.[40] Bull was also associated with another neighboring large producer of silver, the Savage Mine, during the same time.[41]

A complaint was filed by the Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company against The Gould & Curry Silver Mining Company and Henry T. P. Comstock, in the U.S. District Court of the 12th Judicial District, San Francisco, on October 17, 1863.[42] The Statement of the Grounds of the Claim of the Grosch Consolidated Mining Company was for 3,750 feet of the Comstock Ledge by Benjamin R. Nickerson. The Plaintiff was the Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Co., 420 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA., was represented by Edward Tompkins, S.W. Sanderson, and McHenry (on a contingent fee) and, the Defendant was the Gould & Curry Silver Mining Company and Henry T.P. Comstock represented by C. Temple Emmett, a San Francisco attorney. There were several newspaper articles in the Sacramento Daily Union that tracked the progress of the case. Henry Comstock asserts that he had inherited claims from the Grosh brothers that remained valid and had never been purchased by the mine operators of the time. However, Comstock arrives in San Francisco on January 3, 1865, and meets with Bucke at the Russhouse (hotel), where he lets it be known that "he is on the Grosh side of the case."[43]

Daniel S. Dickinson and Reverdy Johnson agreed to prosecute the Grosch (Grosh) Consolidated Mining Company claim against Gould & Curry Mining Co.[44] The case was dismissed on March 9, 1865.[45]

According to a letter to Dr. (Edwin) Seaborn from S.A. Moss, dated March 29, 1940, Records of any lawsuit were burned in the

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[40] Letters of A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, unpublished.
[41] Sam Davis, The History of Nevada, 1913, Page 402.
[42] Daily Alta California, Volume 15, Number 4983, October 20, 1863.
[43] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Dr. R.M. Bucke Fonds, AFC 20-S5-SS4-F1.
[44] Virginia Evening Bulletin, No. 27, Vol. 1, August 5, 1863.
[45] E. Lord, Comstock Mining & Miners, 1883, Page 133; and, San Francisco Evening Bulleting, March 9, 1865.

fire of 1906 (from the San Francisco earthquake).[46]

There remain several compelling pieces of evidence that point in support of A.B. Grosh's claims. Perhaps the most telling are references to the discoveries made by the Grosh brothers as given by a manuscript written by Francis J. Hoover who died in San Francisco on January 4, 1864. It is called "A True History of the Discovery of Silver in Washoe", (then Utah, now the State of Nevada), and is dated September 9, 1863. The story it tells is that in July 1853, Frank Antonio, "Old Frank" after whom the Grosh brothers named one of their mines, went from El Dorado County, California, with five others, to prospect in Western Utah. He had a horse stolen, and while searching for him "on a table-land running north and south and broadside to the sunrise" he found rich silver ore, which he knew, having worked in the silver mines of Brazil. Frank kept the specimen after he returned to California, and tried to interest men in the subject, but long without success."

The Hoover manuscript proceeds to say, "Frank then told the Grosh brothers, who had been mining in Gold Canon, about his discovery of silver ore in that region, and finally helped them to organize the Frank Silver Mining Company, which was composed of nine members, mostly Californians. In 1856 the Grosh brothers found what they supposed to be the main ledge and located four hundred feet for each member of the company. This, Mr. Hoover believes, was along the axis of the Comstock Lode. The first claim notice, he says, was posted on what is now the Ophir (Mine), and another was on Gould and Curry ground."

It has been 165 years since the deaths of Allen and Hosea Grosh. Over the years, from the initial sensationalistic newspaper coverage of Allen's death at Last Chance, the brothers have risen from a tragic footnote in history to something more. Some histories lump them in with the likes of James Finney (aka Old Virginia) and Henry Comstock (aka Old Pancake), as harbingers who missed an opportunity that was leveraged by men with more colorful nicknames and histories. The first miners who worked the district died for the most part in obscure poverty.

[46] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, AFC 20 from index F79, Pages 385-386.

Local folklore has always been colorful in its description of the discoverers of the Comstock Lode, depicting them as mad, lazy, drunk, and unimaginative or incredibly unlucky. From the Grosh brothers to "Old Virginny" and "Pancake" Comstock, the early characters seemingly lived a tragi-comedy of errors, with obligatory tragic endings. They filled the repertoires of local writers and continue to provide tour guides with material. It is probably a universal attribute of mining camps that their citizens revel in celebrating the eccentric nature of their origins. Perhaps people also like to think that were they placed in similar circumstance they would not make the same mistakes, and thus they characterize history's players who failed as inept or unfortunate.

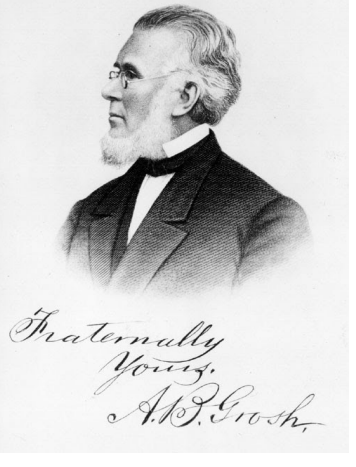
Nevertheless, it was through local tradition that these early miners gained the notoriety that their discovery might also have afforded them. The Groshes were industrious and intelligent young men who, though they faced incredibly challenging moments in their lives, had the kind of intellectual capabilities and imaginative capacities that in a different era would've been rewarded. Today we might call them innovators and celebrate their creativity and optimism. 165 years ago, these were personal tendencies and abilities that were hardly recognized, and rarely ever celebrated.

There was fraud and collusion, as well as loss of evidence and other key documentation. Bucke's diary on May 3, 1864, indicates that while he was at Gould & Curry's attorney, [C. Temple] Emmet's office, Bull shares a letter that he had received from A.B. Grosh. Bull and Emmet were meeting regarding the suit brought against Gould & Curry. Bucke states that as it relates to A.B. Grosh, "it seems that the poor dear man is at last fairly cheated out of his claim, for they have the deed of sale, and have given him for security for the $10,000 they were to have given him for 100 shares of $1,000 each of Grosch Consolidated stock." On May 5, 1864, Bull wants Bucke, "in a day or so to state what it will be worth to stay here (California) this balance of year. On May 6, 1864, they conclude it would be better not to mention any sum until after the trial as it might look bad."[47]

[47] Western Libraries, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, Seaborn AFC 20-S5-SS4-F9 - Bucke Diary; and, the letters from A.B. Grosh to R.M. Bucke from November 1856 to March 1882, unpublished.

The monumental importance of Richard Maruice Bucke, particularly in the life that he led after his amputations in Last Chance, remains one of the connective tissues in gaining a fuller and richer perspective of the life and significance of the Grosh Brothers. Bucke's life post-Last Chance is critical in understanding what the Groshes were on to, what they hoped to do with it, and what was done by others to minimize their role in the discovery of silver in Nevada. In addition to the cover-up of key facts as the prospect of credit/litigation heated up, Bucke's letters and papers offer a window into the heart of the story of the Grosh Brothers. There is a needed dimension that is added to the life of the Grosh brothers that is missing without the Bucke perspective included. They are flat footnotes without him; with Bucke, their story is enlivened, made more human, and becomes much more relatable and understandable. His is a story that shouldn't end at age 20 at Last Chance. By examining Bucke's life afterward, the life of the Grosh brothers comes back to life as well.

A.B. Grosh's story, too, is one that matters. His letters provide not just a roadmap of the journey that his sons followed but give heart and soul to a story of deep feelings, of paternal pride, and provides voice to moments that would otherwise be lost to time. Two letters from Schuyler Colfax, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and later Vice President of the United States, to A.B. Grosh, dated April 5, 1869, and January 18, 1880, respectively, are excellent examples.



Aaron B. Grosh (Source: Charles T. Wegman)

The 1880 Colfax letter states, "I never made a speech (at Hosea Grosh's memorial at the Silver City Cemetery or afterwards at a theatre on June 27, 1865) more _? from my heart than the one I made that day, for I recognized _? in the departed the real discoverer of that wonderful Ledge, the richest silver deposit in the _?; …" "By the way, it occurs to me – why do you not do something to have your brave boys the reputation they deserve in history, by writing their interesting particulars to the … Talisman, or some other of our I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows) Periodical…".[48]

There were others who felt it important that the Grosh Brothers represent more than a mere footnote in history. It was repugnant to them that the one of the greatest mineral discoveries in history was known as "The Comstock Lode." What about the Groshes? Weren't they the ones who clearly had made the discovery? Caroline Winslow's letter to Mr. and Mrs. (A.B.) Grosh, dated August 19, 1879, indicates that she sent a short account of their situation and the loss sustained in the death of their sons to *The Virginia City Enterprise*. The letter continues to describe a meeting with Dan DeQuille (William Wright) of the *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, where she indicates that, "something told me he did not himself believe what he was saying (about the Grosh brothers' Comstock ledge discovery). Caroline was then referred to Mrs. Laura Detternreider, who she met that evening where she is informed that Detternreider had confronted Henry Comstock about stealing the Grosh brothers' papers and books (from their cabin). Comstock did not deny it.[49] A.B. Grosh's letter in response to Ms. Winslow lends support of and added detail to his son's silver discoveries.[50]

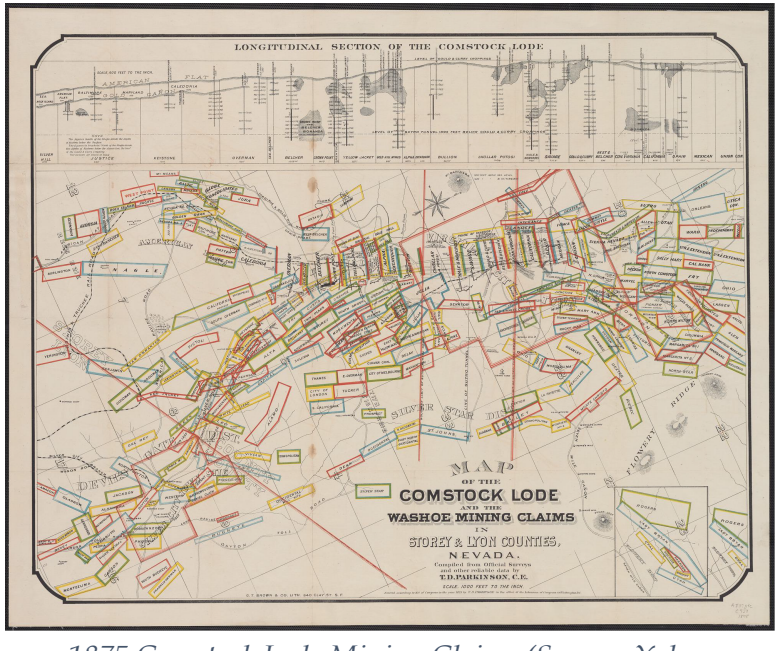
Warren R. Grosh, the younger brother of Allen and Hosea, indicated in a letter much of the same sentiment: "I place a mem. (memorandum) in connection with this paper to show that it is the Comstock lode that was discovered by my brothers. Several years ago, there was to have been started a compa (company) for contesting the Coms (Comstock)… under the name of the "Grosh M… Co." but those who were in it so… out, it is supposed, for

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[48] Charles T. Wegman and George C. Harvilla, The Letters of Ethan Allen and Hosea Ballou Grosh 1849-1857, unpublished, Nevada Historical Society, Pages 210 and 211.
[49] Ibid, Pages 188-191.
[50] Ibid, Pages 192-194.

that was the last heard of it, after the Comstock people became alarmed it was easier to buy out the party than to resort to a defense [sic] before the courts." The memorandum goes on to refer to the meeting of Dr. Winslow and Mrs. Detternreider where, Detternreider describes when the Grosh brothers told her of their discoveries and pointed to Mt. Davidson saying that the big silver ledge was at the foot of the mountain and that in locating their claims they had put her down as part of the claim.[51]

The Pacific Coast Mining Review, which contains detailed official reports of the principal gold and silver mines in Nevada (and other states) indicates that the first location on the Comstock, that made by the Grosches, was called the Pioneer (mine), and was located where Virginia City now stands, and is doubtless comprised in the ground owned by the Ophir (Mine). The first assessment ever laid on the Comstock was levied on the Pioneer and paid during the winter of 1855-6.[52]



1875 Comstock Lode Mining Claims (Source: Yale University Library Digital Collection)

[51] Ibid, Page 209.
[52] Pacific Coast Annual Mining Review, Henry S. Fitch · Volume 1, 1878, Pages 150-151.

The 1875 Map of the Comstock Lode and the Washoe mining claims in Storey & Lyon counties, Nevada: compiled from official surveys and other reliable data by T.D. Parkinson, supports the Pacific Coast Mining Review findings and conclusions.[53]

According to William Hickman Dolman (Captain), Galphin pointed out the place (where Grosh Brothers mined) to me (Dolman) but did not accompany me to... quartz croppings were nearly one and one-half miles westerly from the Devils Gate, where the Pioneer lode was located.[54]

Despite all of this, the sad ending of a tragic story was determined by who else but Grosh's companion to the end, Richard Bucke. At Alpheus Bull's written request, Bucke return to California in 1864 to testify against A.B. Grosh's demands and the suit brought forth by the Grosch Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company. Bucke had been well compensated for his schooled testimony while being instructed to be silent during his stay and beyond. In his last letter from Blind Ravine, Allen Grosh had praised his young companion for his bravery in meeting the "difficulties and trials" of their 17 days of shared snow-bound misery. It is clear in that final letter that Allen had found a kindred spirit, a younger brother, someone whose companionship made the entire experience one that was about "we" and not "I." "We are 6 or 7 miles above Last Chance and 18 or 20 above the Bluff," Allen writes, using an interesting and telling pronoun to describe the shared experience. "We have had a *very* narrow escape of it – and God's providence alone saved us." That a young man who would go on to have one of the more celebrated lives of the 19th century would change a story that should have never been changed is perhaps the greatest tragedy of them all in this tragic story.

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53 Yale University Library Digital Collections.

54 *Before the Comstock 1857-1858 - Memoirs of W.H. Dolman*, New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. 22, Number 3, July 1947, Page 234.

THE GROSH LODE

THE GROSH BROTHERS EXPEDITION followed in the footsteps of Allen Grosh and Richard Bucke from Silver City's Cemetery, the site of Hosea's resting spot, to Allen's grave at the Last Chance Cemetery. They did this to honor the memory of two brothers who died tragically in 1857. And the expedition team did this to help make the case that the Grosh brothers were not only the first to discover silver in and around Mt. Davidson but were real discovers of the famed Comstock Lode based on their research following Allen's death in Last Chance and after Bucke's survival of their trans-Sierra journey and return to Canada in 1858.

On January 28, 1859, four miners working on a site at Gold Hill uncovered some bluish rock which yielded considerable gold. Comstock heard of the strike, and immediately looked them up. He was convinced that they had found the blue stuff he had been seeking and tried to talk himself into a partnership on the basis of some shady rights that he claimed to have on the area. The miners were not convinced; but a portion of the site next to the discovery was unclaimed and Comstock filed on what remained. The four miners who had located the Gold Hill outcropping was James Fennimore, known as "Old Virginny"; John Bishop, known as "Big French John"; Aleck Henderson and Jack Yount. They uncovered one end of the Lode, but not the main vein which had previously been found by the Grosch brothers. Discovery of the main vein known as the "Comstock Lode" is generally credited to Peter O'Riley and Patrick McLaughlin on June 12, 1859. This "discovery" of the main vein was more accurately a rediscovery of the Grosch brothers' lost claim for which they did not receive recognition. In 1870, Henry Comstock was called to Nevada as a witness for the Ophir (Mining) Company and was well paid for his testimony.[55]

References to the discoveries made by the Grosh brothers are made in Francis Hoover's manuscript, which indicates that, "the Grosh brothers, who had been mining in Gold Canon, about their discovery of silver ore in that region. In 1856, the Grosh brothers found what they supposed to be the main ledge and located four hundred feet for each member of the Frank

[55] John Adams Comstock, A History and Genealogy of the Comstock Family in America, privately printed by The Commonwealth Press, Los Angeles, California, 1949.

Mining company." This, Mr. Hoover believes, was along the axis of the Comstock lode. The first claim notice, he says, "was posted on what is now the Ophir (Mine), and another was on Gould & Curry ground."[56]

Nevada's Surveyor General, in his report of 1865, claims that the Grosh Brothers made the discovery of silver in this district as early as 1857.[57]

According to author Robert Ruxton the Grosh Brothers, "had found two veins of silver – one of them a perfect monster." In June 1857, the sons' letter home to their father included a diagram. If this diagram is examined now, it will be seen that it was almost certainly a reproduction of the south end (of the) Comstock ledges, whose marvelous production has become historical. Surely, Dame Fortune was about to dower the brothers with riches! From the rock they took from this vein they had an assay made which runs over thirty-five hundred dollars to the ton! Millionaires now, of course, you say—they died miserably poor. Hosea from blood-poisoning, by a wound from his pick, in their miserable little cabin at the mouth of American Flat Ravine. Allen, starting some little time after to explain to capitalists the bonanza he had found, died from exposure in the bleak Sierras. Some say he carried his secret to the grave; others, that it was unearthed from papers left behind in the little cabin when he started on his fateful journey, and which were later unearthed by a man named Comstock."[58]

Quoted from an interview in 1897 when asked about a November 29th New York Sun article, Bucke stated, "The article in the Sun states that the Grosh brothers were the first discoverers of silver in the west," said the reporter. "That is a fact," replied the doctor (Bucke). "They discovered silver in the west as early as 1853, if not earlier. I have read all their letters to their father on this matter, and I know absolutely about that.[59]

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[56] Charles H. Shinn, The Story of the Mine, 1896, Page 29; and, San Francisco Call, *From Early Days: The Silver Discovery in Washoe Valley*, Vol. 75, No. 157, May 6 1894.
[57] Thompson & West, History of Nevada, 1881, Page 498; and, the Annual Report of the Surveyor-General of the State of Nevada, for the year 1865, Page 19.
[58] Robert Ruxton, The Tale of Silver, 1907, Pages 9-10.
[59] The London Advertiser, Discovery of The Comstock, December 16, 1897.

An interview with Bucke in 1896 concludes with, "…But the fact remains, now generally recognized, that these two patient, plodding, unfortunate Californian prospectors, the Grosh brothers, did really find the silver of Nevada, though they failed, through no fault of their own, to reap the fruitage of their victory."[60]

Among the first prospectors attracted to the vicinity by the hope of finding gold, were Allen and Hosea Grosch, better known as the Grosch Brothers, and James Finney, the "Old Virginny" of early days. The Grosch Brothers were the only ones of these pioneers who had sufficient knowledge of geology to recognize the existence of silver in any of its native forms, and they, soon after arriving in 1853, reported the discovery of a silver ledge lying east of and along the side of "Sunrise Peak," since called Mount Davidson; but it is questionable whether the first location by "foreigners," as the prospectors were called, was made by them or by "Old Virginny," but they made theirs on the Comstock, "Old Virginny" on the west or Virginia ledge. Still, placer mining held the attention of the miners almost to the exclusion of all thought of the silver lode. The first location on the Comstock, that was made by the Grosches, was called the Pioneer Mine, and was located where Virginia City now stands, and is doubtless comprised in the ground owned by the Ophir Mine. The first assessment ever laid on the Comstock was levied on the Pioneer Mine and paid during the winter of 1855-1856.[61]

When Allen started for California after the death of Hosea, he asked Comstock to caretake his cabin in exchange for a share of his eventual claim. The cabin contained the records of his and his brother's claims and the personal effects of both brothers who naturally went into possession of the locations and exercised the rights of ownership over the whole. It was in this way that he became connected with the claim which has given his name to the lode and rendered it immortal. This claim became subsequently embodied with others controlled by Penrod & Comstock, and "Old Virginny," and is now included in the Ophir Mine. It also includes the claim of John Jessup, who was killed

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[60] The San Francisco Call, *The Real Discoverers of Silver in Nevada*, C.H. Shinn, August 16, 1896.

[61] Pacific Coast Annual Mining Review, Henry S. Fitch · Volume 1, 1878, Page 150.

by Sides in Gold Hill. This claim was jumped by O'Reilly and McLaughlin while most of the people were off to Carson, where sides was taken for trial; and this is their claim to the credit of first discovering the Comstock. Had the lode been named after the true discoverer it would have been called the Grosch Lode, for the brothers unquestionably made the first location thereon. This was made before any other persons in the whole section knew anything about silver ores or their reduction. In the year 1859 locations were made, not only along the line of the Comstock, as then known, but the entire country was dotted with them.[62]

In the spring of 1857, Henry Comstock had learned that Allen Grosh was dead, and concluded to take advantage of the knowledge then acquired. Bucke, claimed afterward that Comstock ransacked the cabin for papers and data, and was thus enabled to relocate the (famed Comstock) ledge.[63]

Left in charge of the Grosh Brothers' cabin near Silver City, Nevada, through a written contract (with terms to ¼ interest in one claim) to keep the cabin and their effects from being "jumped," Comstock found what remained such as notes, charts, ore samples, and assaying tools. From this information their cabin was "jumped" by Comstock including Grosh's claim(s) that later became the Pioneer, Ophir, and Gould & Curry mines.[64]

In the Spring of 1858, Henry Comstock hearing of the death of young (Allen) Grosh, began to bestir himself to realize the value of his suddenly acquired fortune. He soon found willing listeners to his exhibits of the marvelous assays by the Grosh brothers, who at once contracted with him for his (Comstock) title and possession in return for ten thousand dollars in cash and ten thousand dollars in merchandise, provided the rock proved as rich as the Grosh brothers' assay. Judge Walsh and others tested

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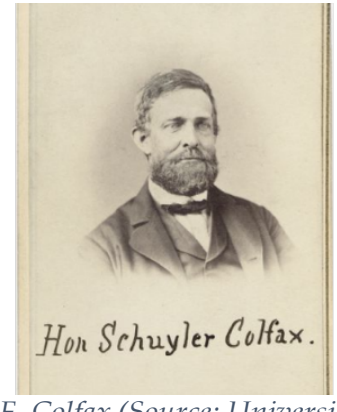
62 Pacific Coast Annual Mining Review, Henry S. Fitch · Volume 1, 1878, Page 151.
63 Sam Davis, The History of Nevada, The Elms Publishing Co., Inc., 1913, Page 386.
64 Charles H. Shinn, Story of the Mine, 1896, Pages 33-34; The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume XXV, History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming (1540-1888), 1890, Page 98, footnote 9; and, Sacramento Daily Union, *The Grosch [sic: Grosh] Brothers in WASHOE,* Volume 25, Number 3870, August 17, 1863, Page 5.

several hundred pounds of the rock, found it rich, bought out Comstock's title, gave the lodes the name of the Comstock Claims, and at once commenced operations on a gigantic scale, claiming the whole district as included in their purchase of Comstock. All parties holding under Comstock took good care to sell out as soon as possible for a few hundred thousand dollars, before the extent of their plot should be discovered to preclude the Grosh brothers and their legal representatives of the benefit of their discovery and location. Parties resident of El Dorado who had known of the above and had furnished means to the Grosh brothers during the time of the early development of the claims, concluded that they had undoubted rights, and that the father of the Grosh brothers had also equitable and just claims. They, in the Spring of 1860, organized a company (I send their certificates of stock—The title of the "Washo Gold and Silver Mining Company"), furnished means, employed a Business Agent, who went to the States and made, for a valuable consideration in cash, a contract with the father of the Grosh brothers to take possession of the entire interest of his deceased sons. Matters of form only delayed their action, which having now been obviated, the said parties have organized their company under the general incorporation laws of this State, and now claim and demand their legal and equitable rights, which they will at once proceed to enforce, under the name and style of the "Grosh Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining Company".[65]

[65] Sacramento Daily Union, *The Grosch [sic: Grosh] Brothers in WASHOE,* Volume 25, Number 3870, August 17, 1863, Page 5.



Legacy is often a difficult thing to quantify, and even harder thing to recognize. In the case of the Grosh Brothers, there is the recognition that they received not long after they died. The then-Speaker of the House of Representatives, and later, Vice President of the United States under Ulysses S. Grant, Schuyler Colfax and the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, William Bross, presided at the ceremony of erecting a commemoration tablet over the grave of Hosea Grosh in the Silver City cemetery on June 27, 1865.[66]



Schuyler F. Colfax (Source: University of Nevada Online Digital Collections)

Schuyler Colfax's speech at Hosea Grosh's memorial at the Silver City Cemetery or afterwards at a theatre on June 27,

[66] Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 29, Number 4452, June 28, 1865; George Lyman, *Saga of the Comstock Lode*, 1934, Chapter LXIV, Page 338; and, later, Schuyler Colfax Letter to A.B. Grosh, January 18, 1880.

1865, stated the following:

"Neither Allen nor Hosea had died in vain. 40,000 people had followed up Sun Mountain [Mt. Davidson] in their wake. Its slopes – its depths teemed with their discovery. Its canons and ravines were lined with mines and mills – the smoke from whose stacks blackened the heavens – the clatter of whose stamps filled the air and rocked the earth. The output in bullion had gone forth to swell the coffers of the world – to alleviate suffering on the battlefield – to play a part in national politics – to aid in freeing the slaves – to sustain the failing credit of the country – to provide the national armies with the endurance needed to win the war of rebellion. What more could the Grosches have asked of their discovery than that it had been of help to man? Last, but not least, their discovery had made it possible for President Lincoln to add a much-needed star to the galaxy floating over Sun Mountain."[67]

Additionally, there was the engineering genius of Philip Deidesheimer, a German miner of scientific attainments; the invention of a system of timbering called cribbing that started with the Ophir mine, which from its design resulted in the building of skyscrapers throughout the country.

The discovery of silver by the Grosh Brothers would be felt in the years and decades to come. Their discovery that resulted in riches helped the Utah Territory eventually become the territory of Nevada. Nevada, and its eventual statehood, would become a political centerpiece in President Abraham Lincoln's efforts to abolish human slavery. The admission of Nevada and an amendment to the Constitution was equivalent to a million more men in the field of war. During the Civil War, no State was as great a factor in saving the Union as was Nevada.

The legacy of the Grosh Brothers is one that will be hopefully re-imagined and freed of the myth that Henry Comstock made the historic discovery of the first silver in America. The retracing of Allen Grosh's 100-mile journey that in 1857 seemed bound for glory but ended in tragedy provided the first steps towards the truth. Finally, the lives of two hard-working and honest brothers can once and for all step out from the shadows of memory and find their rightful place in the hem of history.

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[67] George Lyman, *Saga of the Comstock Lode*, 1934, Chapter LXIV, Pages 338-339.

About the Authors

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Bob Crowley is co-founder of History Expeditions, whose mission is to discover American West tales and trails that have been lost to time, and honor inspiring heroes of history. As an entrepreneur, Bob co-founded and/or led technology and investment firms, appearing in the Wall Street Journal, NY Times, Wired, Fortune and on CNN, MSNBC. He's completed more than 200 endurance events, including the Western States and Hardrock 100, 200-mile mountain runs including the famed Tor des Geants in the Italian Alps. Bob and his wife, Marcy, live along the American River in Fair Oaks, California.

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The History Expedition's website at historyexp.org has more details about the Grosh Brothers Expedition and other past and future projects including the Forlorn Hope, Donner Relief Party, and Discovery Channel broadcast.