

UNDERSTANDING

TREASURE SIGNS AND SYMBOLS



CHARLES GARRETT

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SYMBOLS



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Front cover photo:

These boulders mark the location of a treasure hidden by an Indian tribe in the Western United States. This tribe hid its tribal wealth in a cave prior to a conflict with the federal government in the 1880s. They planned to recover the treasure after the war. This is one of several treasure markers examined in later years in this area. Remember, when searching for hidden treasure signs always search diligently for “out-of-place” markers. See other such marker photos in this book.

Rear cover photo:

Explorers often discover ancient signs and symbols such as these petroglyphs on this boulder. No one should ever deface such precious historical works of art.

UNDERSTANDING
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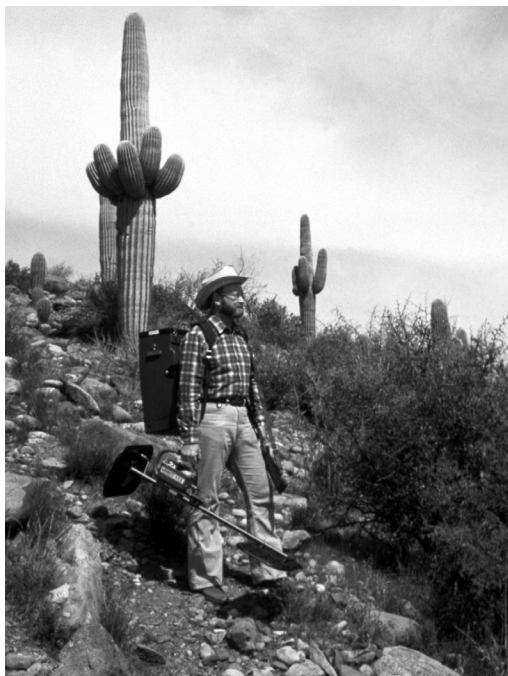
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Author Charles Garrett, seen on one of his expeditions through Arizona, regards treasure signs and symbols in the field as road-maps to old treasure.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more than 45 years, Charles Garrett has pioneered the development of the modern metal detector, demonstrated its capabilities in searches throughout the world and devoted himself to teaching others to use detectors. He has recovered treasures of all types while searching all over the world. Garrett has encountered various treasure signs and symbols in the field, some the ancient pictoglyphs of Native Americans and others such as age-old symbology of Spanish people.

The author's lifetime interest in treasure hunting prepared him to excel in that field. After earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering, Charles Garrett worked at Texas Instruments and Teledyne Geotech developing systems and equipment required by America's fledgling space effort. While devoting himself to his hobby, he designed and built his own metal detectors. This avocation became a career when he and his wife, Eleanor, founded Garrett Electronics in 1964 to manufacture and market his inventions.

Garrett quality is praised today throughout the world. From the beginning, Garrett vowed “to practice what I preach” by field-testing his equipment—to insure that each detector works for customers regardless of ground conditions and environment. He has become recognized as an unofficial spokesman for the hobby of treasure hunting and the metal detecting industry through a long list of honors, personal appearances and books.

This book on early treasure signs and symbols marks the latest installment in Charles Garrett’s pocket-sized treasure hunting field guides. He is devoted to disseminating such knowledge in a format that is both convenient and effective for helping individuals recover more treasure with their metal detectors.

INTRODUCTION

I am excited to release this fifth volume in the Garrett treasure-hunting field guide series because treasure signs and symbols have always been a great fascination of mine. I have encountered these marks during my many years in the field and can say with experience that understanding them can truly help you uncover great riches, just as it has helped me.

Many of these early guides to treasure in the West originated from Native Americans of North America and Spaniards exploring their new land. The use of such field markings actually dates back to the beginning of mankind. Cavemen painted on cave walls with charcoal sticks. Early Europeans designed special crests or family symbols. Ancient civilizations around the globe created their own symbols for communication, identification and education.

As people hid things of value, they created treasure symbols to help guide them back to their treasure trove later or to enable them

to describe the location to others. Pirates and outlaws used signs and symbols to mark their buried booty. The outlaw Jesse James carved a particular “J” into trees to pinpoint his caches. One such Jesse James symbol—on a section of tree that was removed and sent to me—is currently on display in Garrett’s treasure museum in Garland.

There are far too many symbols and combinations of them to fully cover in this book. I will, however, present basic symbols, key signs and words that you may encounter in your quest for treasure. You should learn to properly interpret these symbols after you find them in order to be successful.

Your final step in recovering an old cache is to use a high-quality metal detector that can help you pinpoint the coveted treasure. I trust that this book will become another valuable tool in your treasure-hunting arsenal.

I’ll see you in the field...

Charles Garrett

Garland, Texas

EARLY TREASURE SIGNS

Man has always concealed his treasures and other valuable possessions. People hid riches, food, weapons or even sacred burial sites. In many cases, such possessions were stored in remote caves, on mountainsides, under rock outcroppings or near some geographic landmark that could later be recognized. In order to relocate their caches or describe their location to others, individuals marked the landscape to guide them back to their stash.

In some cases, this was accomplished by stacking rocks in a particular manner. Native Americans often bent young trees and tied them off so that they would continue to point in a particular direction as they matured. Such early monuments and trail markers were meant to appear natural to the casual passer-by. But those who knew what they were looking for found trail markings as good as a modern road map.

Early tribesmen, Mayans, Incas and Aztecs used pictographs and petroglyphs to help them remember where they concealed their precious

goods. Hernan Cortes and the early Spanish explorers were wise to learn the Indian symbols and soon adapted some of them with Spanish variations. Some of the Indian tribes were reported by the Spanish to display vast amounts of gold, silver, pearls and jewelry—some of which was doubtlessly cached away and never recovered. Such riches were hidden after the Indians learned that Spaniards were willing to kill them for their precious possessions.

Numerous other cultures—including Spaniards, Mexicans, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks and Phoenicians—also left cryptic signs and symbols as guides to their concealed items. These pictorial guides were carved into trees, etched or painted onto rocks or printed on animal skins or maps. Pirates, bandits and prospectors adopted many of the same emblems.

Symbols have even been used to help people survive. In the era of the Great Depression in the United States, hobos left special symbols to mark places that provided their greatest treasure—life-sustaining food. Special marks denoted where a generous person lived or the

location of a business that might offer a hand-out. Hobos even made symbols to warn their companions of a mean dog or other menaces.

Those hiding treasure caches certainly did not want to make them easy to find, so one symbol might lead the searcher to a spot where a second symbol or map could be found. In some cases, the person hiding the goods expected not to return for years or perhaps even not at all. Yet, they wanted to leave some path that could lead others to what they had stashed.

The person hiding the treasure even needed to give himself a reminder of where to dig for his hidden loot. Some of the symbols that were left behind could therefore indicate a number of things: the treasure itself, directions, distances, time, personal identification, landmarks or even warnings related to the treasure trove's location.

Florida Indians were known to carve symbols into conch shells or onto hammered-out Spanish pieces of eight. Pirates often incorporated astrological, zodiac, Masonry and even witchcraft symbols into their "treasure maps." Trees were often carved with multiple symbols

and sometimes other trees or rock formations in the same area provided additional clues. The navigational marks on one old tree might very well lead to another marked tree and so on.

Many symbols used in different cultures have similar shapes and meanings. In some cases, not all symbols can be understood—particularly those where a person created a personal emblem for recognition purposes. Only an individual who knew a great deal about that other person might be able to spot and interpret such a personalized symbol.

This field guide simply does not have the space to cover all known treasure signs and symbols. I will, however, present some of the more common signs that today's treasure hunter might have the good fortune of encountering. The key to finding an old treasure cache is good research and learning how to find and interpret the clues that were left behind.

SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Before we discuss the various symbols themselves, I'll relate a few of my own encounters with treasure-hunting signs and symbols. Some have led to great treasures, while others have caused me to conduct research to decipher just what the map symbols were saying.



Javiere Castellanos, one of the author's companions on a treasure expedition into Mexico, points to a circle on a mountain slope. Such circles served as clues, or markers, that helped lead Garrett's team to silver caches.

In the early 1970s, a group of men joined me for a treasure-hunting expedition into Mexico's Sierra Madre. We journeyed to the primitive village of Batopilas, a centuries-old gold and silver producing area. On several Batopilas area mountains are caves perched high upon the slopes. Caves such as these were often used by travelers and outlaws alike to hide themselves or things they didn't want others to find.



The Garrett search team followed painted white symbols in the mountains to recover these nuggets of silver ore.

We were searching for a famed silver ore cache that was reportedly hidden in this mountain range. Clues were evident along the slopes of this region. Circular painted symbols had been applied to the rocks as location markers leading to the treasure. We followed these painted symbols and, with the aid of our metal detectors, were able to discover sacks of silver ore nuggets that had been hidden in this area decades before.

Indians often marked trees to pinpoint their trails or to indicate directions to a treasure trove or some sacred location. The young trees which they bent, twisted or tied into a particular direction often grew into malformed adult trees. In areas where trees were not available or practical for carving, Indians marked their trails or caches in other ways.

Roy Lagal—my treasure hunting buddy—and I have encountered several piles of stones that had been used by Indians as markers. We have found large rocks stacked in peculiar ways or moved into positions that could not have occurred naturally. Roy and I quickly learned to



Indians often tied off young trees to point out a trail or the path to a treasure. Even in its old age, this deformed oak still clearly points toward some old trail.

fire up our metal detectors when something just seemed out of place.

During one expedition into old Indian country, Roy and I were eagerly searching an area that offered us great hope based on our research. We scoured the rugged terrain for half an hour before we found a lucky marker.

“Do you see it?” Roy yelled excitedly.

It took me a couple of minutes staring in the direction Roy was pointing—but then I saw it.



These heavy boulders, located in a fairly remote area, were obviously propped against each other to serve as a guide. The treasure hunters who noticed this unnatural marker found an Indian cave cache site nearby.

A large, flat piece of shale (similar to that shown in the photo on the preceding page) suddenly became an obvious treasure marker to me. This particular rock—roughly six inches thick, three feet wide and about eight feet tall—was wedged down between two adjacent boulders. The rock was left sticking up about two feet higher than the boulders it was wedged between. It was clearly something unusual and out of its natural place.

This particular area was off the beaten path for most people. We knew it was an old Indian sign that likely indicated a hidden cache. The marker led us to a small cavern tucked away in the rocky bluffs below. The main area of the cave was void of stashed goods or treasure. We realized that other people had been in this particular cave in recent years. (They left clues of their presence which were not hard to decipher.) Momentarily disappointed, Roy and I completed a thorough sweep of this cave with our metal detectors. Our reward was finding a tomahawk and cache of weapons up on a small ledge that the Indians had stashed during the 19th century.



Treasure hunter George Mroczkowski studies pre-Columbian pictographs in the Laguna Mountains of Southern California.

Another odd rock formation led me to a great silver cache on a treasure expedition in the 1980s in Canada. By chance, I spotted the top of a large rock that seemed oddly unnatural protruding from the ground. I scanned around this rock and picked up two strong metallic signals, one on either side of the rock. After digging enough soil around this rock, I removed it and realized that it had been wedged down



Mroczkowski felt that this “bursting sun” pictoglyph was an indication of a nearby buried treasure.

into a hole to conceal what was under it. Sure enough, on either side of the base of this five-gallon-can-sized rock, my detector picked up nice silver readings. I soon recovered two caches of high-graded silver ore that a miner had hidden here many decades before.

The moral to both of these examples is to be aware of your surroundings at all times and to look for things that seem out of place. Even today, people use signs and symbols to mark treasure caches. I recovered a decades-old coin



The author holds pieces of high-graded silver ore from two caches he discovered in Canada by observing a treasure sign in the field.

cache by spotting a spike that had been driven long ago into an oak tree. It had been driven under the bottom side of a limb and was not easy to see. I ran my detector below where the spike was directing me and—bingo!

My advice is to keep a sharp eye out for the unnatural in your surroundings.

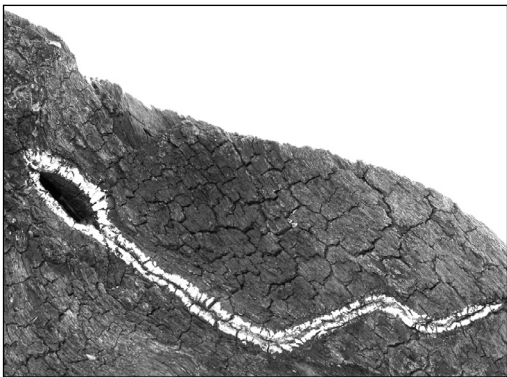
You should also have a good understanding of the symbols outlined in this book. I've long treasured such knowledge. An old hunting friend of mine named Bill Mahan put out a great pamphlet in 1963 called *Early Spanish Treasure Signs & Symbols*. I literally wore the cover off that little booklet in my many years of consulting Bill's guide.

I hope this guide will serve you as well. Today's treasure hunter can also find a wealth of information about Spanish and Indian treasure symbols on the Internet.

INTERPRETING YOUR DISCOVERY

The symbols in this book are important to understand in order to help find your treasure. When you discover that first symbol, then the real fun begins: the quest to solve an ages-old challenge!

Some symbols simply will not be understood. Some will be the unique mark of the



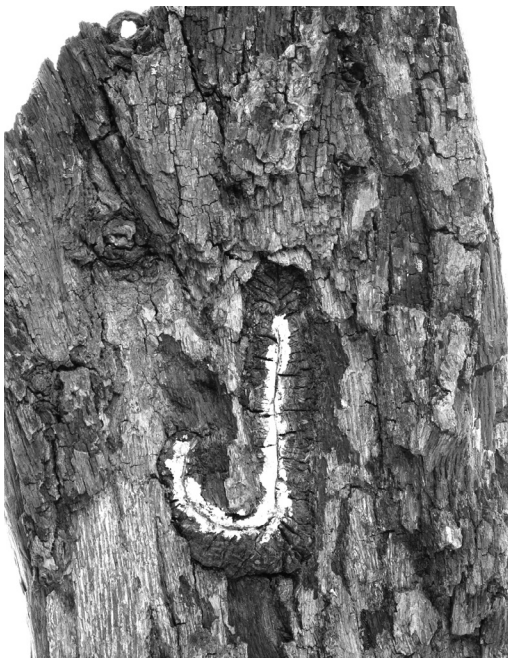
This serpent symbol, outlined in white to highlight its details, was presented to the author and is on display in Garrett's treasure-hunting museum in Garland, Texas.

maker, a primitive personal logo if you will. That person's "crest" might just be the proof that this position is indeed the correct location.

Take care to document the symbols you find. Take a photo, if possible. Photos, however, often will not show the finite details of a symbol carved into a tree. It is therefore a great idea to sketch out the symbol you see. If the symbol is carved into a rough stone surface you might even be able to carefully transfer it to a sheet of paper by tracing the outline or lightly rubbing a pencil against the paper.

You can also use white poster paint or chalk to highlight or outline the symbols before you photograph them. Do not use permanent paint! Your highlights should be easily rinsed off with water or by nature's next rain. Symbols should be treasured for the rare guideposts they are; don't destroy them by carving or defacing them in any way.

This is especially true if you encounter ancient Indian pictographs on stones. Report or record your discovery but never destroy such a rare piece of history. Remember the treasure



This old tree section contains a specific “J” symbol that was reportedly used by the outlaw Jesse James to mark an area where he had hidden a cache. This symbol, again highlighted in white to show the detail, is also on display in Garrett’s museum.

hunter's code of ethics which we should all follow as responsible searchers. Simply put, I've always preached that you should leave a place in better condition than you found it.

Check out the area around the location of any treasure symbol. Draw a map of the area, marking any symbols you find along with precise distances and directions between them and nearby landmarks. Take note of these significant landmarks—rivers, creeks, old trees, rock formations, etc. Try to research this area to find who might have left these signs.

Use your metal detector to search the area where the treasure clues seem to be steering you. If you can't find anything, study your map and its symbols again.

COMMON TREASURE SYMBOLS

Many signs and symbols can have multiple meanings—an important fact to consider as you attempt to interpret an old drawing or map. Some early Indian pictographs—which can be found in all parts of the United States—simply cannot be interpreted. Many, however, are quite clear and point toward the location of an item or where an event once happened.

Spaniards later used some of the same early Indian signs and symbols with only slight variations. While space limits the volume of such symbols that can be discussed, I will begin by covering some of the more commonly encountered treasure glyphs.

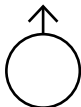
Sun Symbols

A circular sun may often be found with various accompanying signal clues. For example, a setting sun would indicate that you should look toward the west.

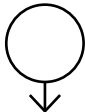
Sun Symbols



EARLY EXAMPLE
OF SUN, WINDLASS,
MINE, TREASURE
BELOW, VAULT



ASCENDING
SUN



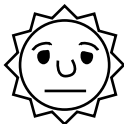
DESCENDING
SUN



GOLD, TREASURE
NEARBY



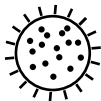
SUN SIGN =
BRIGHT PROSPECTS,
OPENING



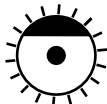
SUN GOD



THE RISING SUN,
LOOK EAST,
COUNT NO.
OF RAYS = DAYS



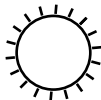
LARGE QUANTITY
OF MINERALS,
GOLD SIGN



ECLIPSE, GOLD,
IN THE SHADOW
OF THE SUN



THE SETTING SUN,
LOOK WEST



SUN, MINERALS
CLOSE BY



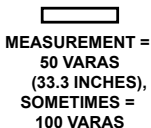
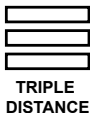
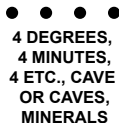
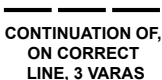
SUN, TIME, LIGHT,
OPENING, AIR

Distance and Measurement Symbols

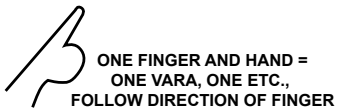
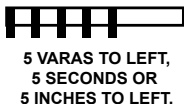
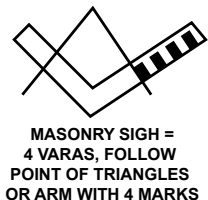
The Spanish word “vara” was an early measurement of distance used by land surveyors. A *vara* measured 33 inches or about the normal stride of a Spanish soldier. Another common Spanish land measurement was the *league*. The land measurement of a league varied from 2.12 to 2.18 miles.

Estado was a term used to indicate the minimum depth that items of importance were to be buried, set at 5 feet 7 inches. Pirates and sailors also used the term *braza* to indicate a depth of 5’7” for treasure. On their maps, the pirate replaced the term *braza* with *paces* or *varas*. A tall man’s pace could be significantly different from that of a short man; but the pirate knew to use the *braza* distance of 5’7” for each *vara* or pace distance indicated on a map.

Distance and Measurement Symbols

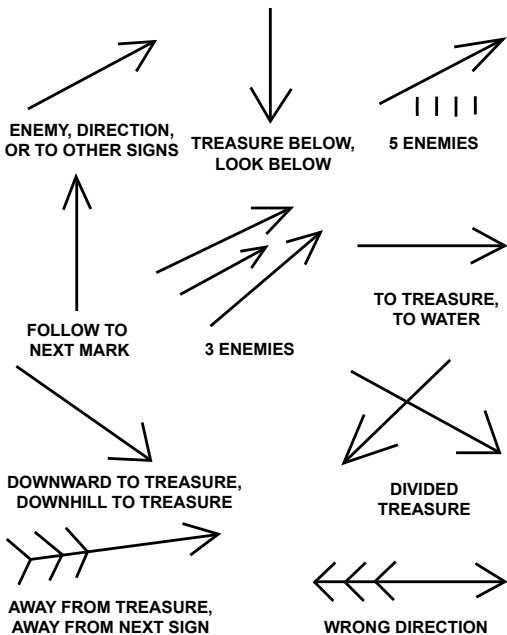


Distance and Measurement Symbols



Arrows and Directional Symbols

The arrow was a very common symbol that indicates the direction or distance necessary to travel toward something.



Arrows and Directional Symbols



TREASURE IN THE WOODS



HERE, THIS IS
THE PLACE,
FRIENDSHIP



DEFEAT, DEATH



STRAIGHT ACROSS
A LANDMARK,
OR RIVER,
OR ROAD



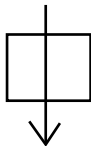
TOWARD THE SUN,
TOWARDS THE MOON



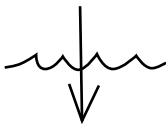
TREASURE TO ONE SIDE



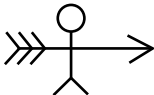
PROCEED,
THEN TURN RIGHT



BOX BELOW



BENEATH THE WATERS



WARRIORS,
DEATH

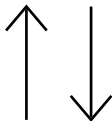


CIRCLE AROUND,
LOOK AROUND YOU

Arrows and Directional Symbols



GO AROUND,
REVERSE,
TO THE LEFT



HERE,
OVER AND UNDER



DIRECTION,
LOOK UP, ALERTNESS



DIRECTION
CHANGE



“WARD OFF EVIL SPIRITS”
“PROTECTS”,
TOWARD THE CENTER



POINTS TO,
FROM, LIGHTING



DIRECTION
CHANGE



DIRECTION
CHANGE



WATER NEARBY,
TO WATER, TO CREEK,
RIVER, STREAM, OCEAN

Compass Degree Symbols

Some old maps will contain symbols of compass degrees to help steer you toward your treasure.



SEMI-SEXTILE = 20°



45°



SEXTILE = 60°



90°



120°



150°



180°



180°



INFINITY



PERPENDICULAR



ONE AND A HALF
QUADRATES = 135°



0°

CONJUNCTION
SAME LONGITUDE,
RIGHT ASCENSION



SQUARE, 90°
APART IN LONGITUDE
OR RIGHT ASCENSION

Treasure Direction Symbols

You may also encounter a wide variety of symbols which offer information on how to proceed to the next sign or to the cache.



TREASURE BELOW



TREASURE ABOVE



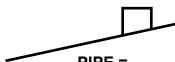
KNIFE POINTS TO
TREASURE OR TO NEXT SIGN



CAVE OR SHAFT,
FILLED, STEPS



POINTING TO NEXT SIGN



PIPE =
STEM POINTS TO
TREASURE OR NEXT
SIGN, FOLLOW STEM,
TO ONE SIDE

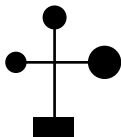


TREASURE IN
MOUNTAIN OR CAVE,
TUNNEL, LOOK UP,
OVER DEPOSIT



MARKS SPOT, ON
LINE, FOLLOW LONGEST
ARM, SWORD

Treasure Direction Symbols



CHURCH TREASURE,
FOLLOW LARGE KNOB,
CHURCH OBJECTS HERE



AROUND HILL, STONE,
ETC., THEN TO RIGHT



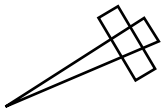
ROCKS ENCLOSE
TREASURE
IN TRIANGLE



MARK SPOT,
FOLLOW POINT
OF LONGEST ARM



AROUND BEND,
AWAY FROM TRIANGLE



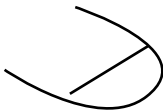
VARIATION,
FOLLOW POINT
TO TREASURE



TRIANGLE OF
TREES OR ROCKS,
TREASURE TO ONE SIDE

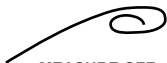


GO UP SLOPE



GO DOWN SLOPE

Treasure Direction Symbols



MEASURE OFF
CURVE



SHOE POINTING,
IN ROUTE



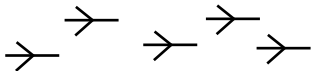
GOING IN RIGHT
DIRECTION



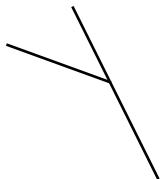
DEER TRACKS OR OTHER ANIMAL
TRACKS = PLENTY GAME,
FOLLOW TRACKS



TRAIL FORKS
TAKE RIGHT HAND

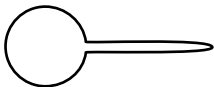


TURKEY TRACKS,
CROW TRACKS,
FOLLOW DIRECTION



TRAIL FORKS
TAKE LEFT HAND

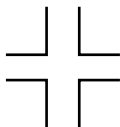
Treasure Direction Symbols



PAN, HANDLE
POINTS IN
TREASURE
DIRECTION



HORSE SHOE
WITH DOT =
CHECK FOR
SOMETHING BELOW



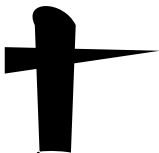
PATHS CROSS,
THIS PLACE, HERE



HORSE SHOE
POINTING IN
DIRECTION TO
CONTINUE



HORSE POINTING
DOWN = TREASURE
OR NEXT SIGN BELOW

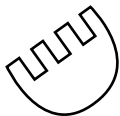


VARIATION IN TRAIL =
FOLLOW POINT

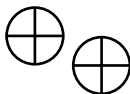


ANCHOR,
FOLLOW,
ARROW

Treasure Location Symbols



FOLLOW POINTS,
THE FOUR GREAT
PRIMARY FORCES,
GO OPPOSITE



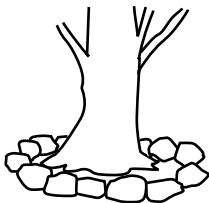
TREASURE CLOSE
BY, LOOK FOR
LAST SIGN



TREASURE BELOW
IN HOLE,
CAVE OR TUNNEL



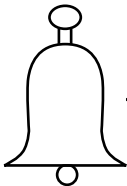
SAME, LOOK
ABOVE AND BELOW,
2 LOCATIONS



CIRCLE OF ROCKS AROUND
TREE = TREASURE HERE



GOLD



BELL = NEAR
TREASURE,
FAVORITE PIRATE
SYMBOL



CIRCLE OF ROCKS
ON INDIAN MOUND
OR HILL = TREASURE
HERE



TREASURE BELOW

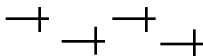


CLEAR DEPOSIT IN
TRIANGLE OF TREES
OR ROCKS

Treasure Location Symbols



LOOK BELOW OR
FOLLOW LEGS



FOLLOW DIRECTION



ONE LEG POINTS
TO DEPOSIT, IF ON
ROCK, LOOK BELOW



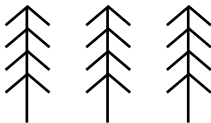
CENTRAL POINT



CANDLE = FOLLOW
FLAME



CENTRAL POINT



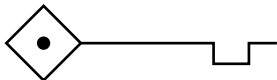
TREES - IN THE WOODS,
BETWEEN 3 TREES



CONVERGING
INTO CAVE,
ETC., FOLLOW
CENTER LEG



ON LINE
OF TREASURE



KEY TO MEANING OR
TO TREASURE

Treasure Location Symbols



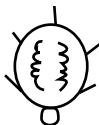
TREASURE HERE
OR POINTING
TO TREASURE
(ANY OF 3 DIRECTIONS)



TREASURE
BELOW



TREASURE
BELOW



TURTLE OR ANIMAL
SYMBOL = TREASURE
BELOW



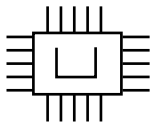
OR



TREASURE IN TUNNEL
OR ENTRANCES



FENCE



HOLDS IN
OR CONTAININGS



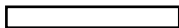
WELL OR
SHAFT FILLED,
POSSIBLE CONTAININGS
TREASURE



CHECK SOMETHING
BELOW



TRIANGLE OF TREES,
ROCK, LANDMARKS,
TREASURE IN CENTER



FLAT STONE OR STONES
COVERING LOCATION

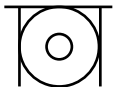


TREASURE IN
CAVE OR CAVES

Treasure Location Symbols



NEW MOON
POINTING DOWN,
DIG HERE,
SILVER, CAVE
NEARBY, OVER CAVE



LOOK IN TUNNEL
OR MINE SHAFT



SYMBOLS
OF GOLD



SYMBOLS OF GOLD



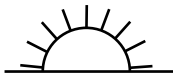
SYMBOLS OF GOLD



BOX OR CHEST,
BURIED HERE,
OR SQUARE FOOT



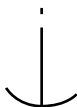
ON LINE,
LAND MARK, OR
TO BREAK,
TO DIVIDE, OR 10



RISING SUN =
TREASURE BELOW



PRECIOUS STONES
NEARBY, OR 4, OR
VARIANT OF CROSS



SHAFT TO
TUNNEL AT
FOOT OF HILL



MINE OR TUNNEL
CLOSED, ROCK ROOM,
LIVING QUARTERS

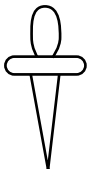


STEPS TO TREASURE OR
IN CAVE, 3 CHEST OR 3 ETC.

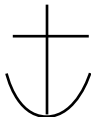
Treasure Location Symbols



LADDER = CLIMB
TO TREASURE



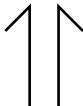
DAGGER =
TREASURE
BELOW



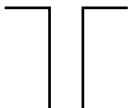
ANCHOR = TREASURE
BELOW, FAVORITE
PIRATE SYMBOL, STOP HERE



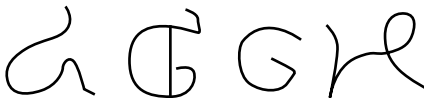
TREASURE
BELOW



TREASURE
ABOVE



TREASURE IN TUNNEL
OR SPRING,
LOOK IN HOLE



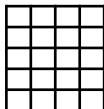
GOLD OR ORE NEARBY



HORSESHOES =
TREASURE BELOW

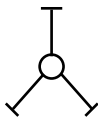


POT =
TREASURE HERE

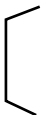


OPENING, MINE OR
CAVE CONCEALED

Treasure Location Symbols



WINDLASS = MINE
OR TREASURE BELOW



TO LEFT

TUNNELS -
TREASURE INSIDE



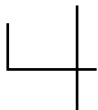
STRAIGHT
AHEAD



BRACKETS =
TREASURE NEARBY



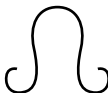
RIGHT LOWER
HALF



LEFT UPPER
HALF



CHANGE
DIRECTIONS



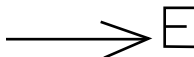
GO UP



FOLLOW 90°
OR FOLLOW POINT



ON COURSE, FOLLOW
IN EITHER DIRECTION



FOLLOW TO EAST
(CAN BE A "W", "S" OR "N")

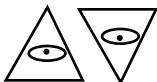


NORTH OR
FOLLOW OPPOSITE
COURSE TO SOUTH

Treasure Location Symbols



**POINTING LIMB =
FOLLOW LIMB,
OFTEN USED BY
SPANIARDS, PIRATES**



**EYE WATCHING
TREASURE HERE OR
IN TRIANGLE OF TREES,
ROCKS, ETC.**



GOLD NEABY



**TREASURE IN
OPENING**



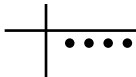
**HOLE IN TREE =
SIGHT THRU
HOLE TO LOCATION**



**CHEST OR BOX,
180° TO TREASURE**



**TRIANGLE OF
TREES, ROCKS, ETC.
TREASURE ON OPEN SIDE**



**FOLLOW
LONGEST POINT
FOR 4 VARAS, ETC**

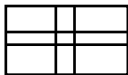


**TREASURE
HERE**



**SPADE = DIG HERE
POINTS TO**

Treasure Location Symbols



OPENING, CAVE
CONCEALMENT



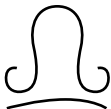
TREASURE IN MOUND



SOMETHING
REMOVED
FROM HERE



TREASURE IN
TUNNEL OR CAVE,
TWO ENTRANCES



TREASURE
ABOVE



FOLLOW POINT,
JESUIT SYMBOL
FOR GOLD
OR TREASURE
HERE OR NEARBY

Miscellaneous Symbols



LADDER, VARIATIONS OF LEADING TO



DOUBLE DISTANCE UP,
TREE, LOOK UP,
LOOK DOWN



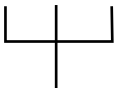
TO THE RIGHT
"GOING TO
SOMEWHERE"



TO THE LEFT
"COMING FROM"



UP TO THE
RIGHT, DIVIDED



FURTHER UP,
TREE



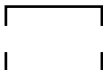
HERE, THE
BEGINNING,
MULTIPLIED



LESS
THAN



GREATER
THAN



HERE,
CONTAINS
WITHIN



AROUND 180°
TO TREASURE
OR NEXT SIGN.



UP, DOWN, HERE
GOD POWER



HERE, EARTH, TO LEFT
OR RIGHT, VARAS
(USUALLY 50 OR 100),
MINUS, NEGATIVE

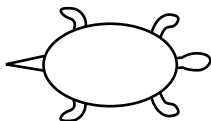


THREE TIMES
THE DISTANCE,
FARTHER,
A MEASUREMENT,
CAVES

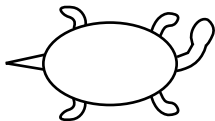
Turtle Signs and Symbols

The turtle is an important treasure symbol used to point to a trail or to give direction to a hiding place. If you see a turtle with markings on his shell, each mark represents 1 vara in distance. The number of marks is often followed by a vara arrow pointing in a particular direction. Three marks followed by a down-pointing arrow would indicate to proceed 3 varas south.

A turtle with its head removed indicates that the treasure has been removed. If the head seems to have been recently removed from the original carving or sketch, it is possible that another hunter is hoping to frustrate you from searching any further. My advice is...don't give up!

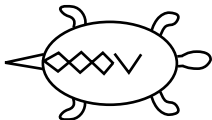


**FOLLOW TURTLE,
TREASURE, TO
NEXT SIGN**

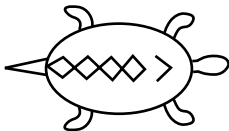


**FOLLOW TURTLE,
TREASURE, TO
NEXT SIGN BY
FOLLOWING HEAD**

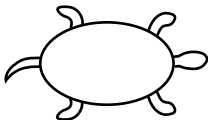
Turtle Signs and Symbols



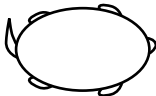
**3 DIAMONDS AND VARA
SYMBOL INDICATES TO GO
3 VARAS IN THIS DIRECTION**



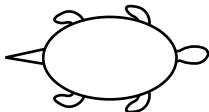
**SHELL MARKED TO MEAN
"GO 4 VARAS IN DIRECTION
OF TURTLE'S HEAD"**



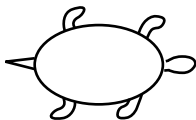
**FOLLOW TURTLE BUT
GO IN DIRECTION
OF HIS TAIL**



**STOP, DANGER,
OBJECTS HIDDEN**



**SLOW, NOTE
FEET CLOSE TO
BODY**



**FEET ARE OBVERSE =
ON RIGHT SIDE**

Snake Signs and Symbols

The turtle was also commonly used as a warning or to indicate the direction to travel. Some were drawn or carved as mere curved lines with a triangular or oval head.



**COILED SNAKE =
TREASURE BENEATH,
OR HEAD OR TAIL POINTS
TO LOCATION,
DISTANCE 3 VARAS**



HEAD OR TAIL TO NEXT SIGN



**RATTLESNAKE =
PROCEED WITH CAUTION**



**HEAD UP =
GO IN DIRECTION OF
HEAD TO NEXT SIGN**



**HEAD POINTS
DOWN =
GO IN DIRECTION
OF HEAD,
10X DISTANCE,
TO GROUND,
TO TREASURE,
OR TO SIGN**



HEAD POINTS TO TREASURE

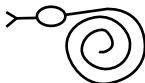
Snake Signs and Symbols



**BLACK SNAKE =
SAFE TO FOLLOW**



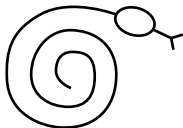
**HEAD =
DIRECTION OR
ENEMY**



**FOLLOW AROUND
TO LEFT**



STAY ONLY TO RIGHT



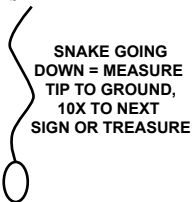
**FOLLOW AROUND
TO RIGHT, ALSO
TREASURE BENEATH**



**HEAD POINTS
TO TREASURE**



**TO THE LEFT,
DANGER**



**SNAKE GOING
DOWN = MEASURE
TIP TO GROUND,
10X TO NEXT
SIGN OR TREASURE**

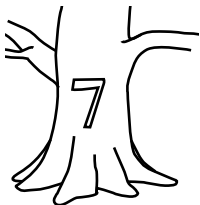


**DOWN,
BENEATH**



**HEAD = DIRECTION OR
ENEMY**

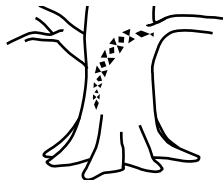
Sample Tree Markings



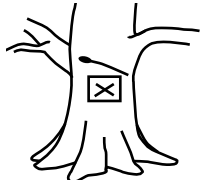
**GOLD,
THE ATTAINMENT,
TREASURE**



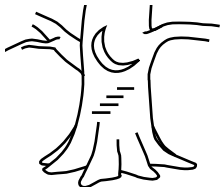
**HORN,
HARMONY**



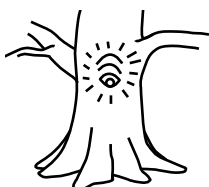
**RATTLESNAKE,
HEAD POINTS TO LOCATION**



**TREASURE
TO THE LEFT**

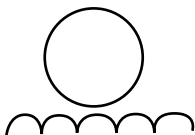


**MOON WITH DIRECTIONAL
MARKS TO THE RIGHT**

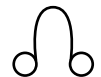


**EYE WATCHING
LOCATION**

Moon Symbols



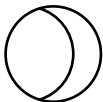
MOON IN CLOUDS,
FARTHER, LOOK
HIGHER



ASCENDING
MOON



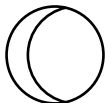
NEW MOON,
GO TO RIGHT,
TIDES, TIDAL WATERS



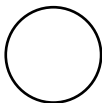
GO TO LEFT



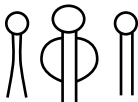
DESCENDING MOON



GO TO RIGHT



MOON, ALSO SUN,
FIRE, FACE OF WATER



MOON IN WOODS,
LOOK IN FOREST



WANING MOON,
LOOK BELOW



MOON OVER MOUNTAINS,
TRAVEL TO MOUNTAINS, WEST

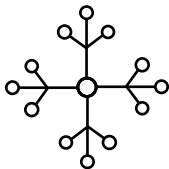


SPANISH
SYMBOL =
MOON, MONTH,
TIME



ECLIPSE, DANGER,
LOOK HERE

Time Markings and Symbols



**SUN SYMBOLS =
HAPPINESS, DAYS JOURNEY, NUMBER OF DAYS**



**HOURGLASS,
1 DAY**



MOON = 3 MONTHS



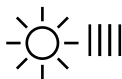
SUN = 3 DAYS



**SHORT TIME,
SHORT DISTANCE**



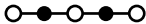
**DAY, A DAY
JOURNEY**



SUN = 4 DAYS



**NUMBER OF DAYS
JOURNEY, LOGIC
AND REASONING**

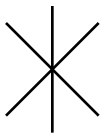


**NUMBER OF DAYS
AND NIGHTS**



**SUNDIAL = 1 DAY,
FARTHER TO GO**

Danger Symbols



VARIATIONS OF STARS WHICH INDICATE DEATH



LEO THE LION
OR DANGER



DO NOT RECOVER
IN DAYTIME



WAR



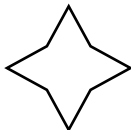
WARRIORS
OR DEATH



POISONOUS



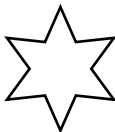
VERY
POISONOUS



FOUR POINT STAR
INDICATES GRAVE
DANGER



SPANISH LIGHTING
BOLT OR ABSOLUTE
DEATH; CAN ALSO
INDICATE THAT A
DEATH TRAP IS NEAR
THE TREASURE



SIX POINT STAR
INDICATES MORE
GRAVE DANGER

Danger Symbols



**BATTLE AXE, DEATH
OR DANGER**



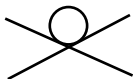
DEAD PERSON



DEFEAT OR DEATH



**IMMINENT DANGER
HOSTILE INDIANS OR
LONG STRETCH
WITHOUT WATER**



**DEATH OR
CAMPFIRE**



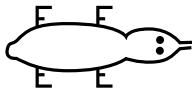
**WATER OR
DEATH**



**DANGER, POISON OR
RATTLESNAKE JAW**



**DANGER,
LOOK HERE**

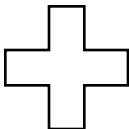


**GILA MONSTER,
DESERT, POISON**

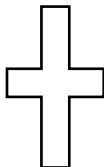
Crosses and Religious Symbols



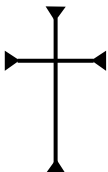
EARLY CROSS
OR
AMONG THE
FIRST SIGNS



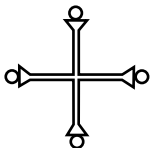
EARLY CROSS



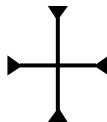
LATIN CROSS



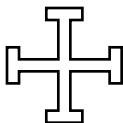
LATIN CROSS
VARIATION



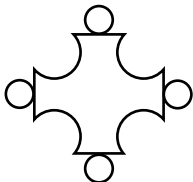
MEXICAN CROSS



GREEK CROSS



PERUVIAN CROSS

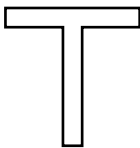


MEXICAN CROSS,
VARIATION

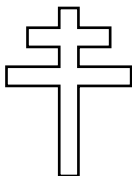


ST. ANDREWS CROSS,
THE ROMAN CROSS
OR "BARRIER"

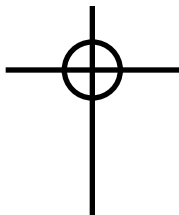
Crosses and Religious Symbols



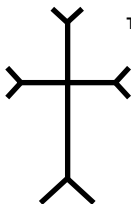
ST. ANTONY'S
CROSS, VARIATION



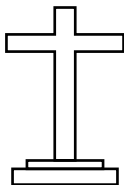
CROSS OF LORRAINE,
THE PATRIARCHAL CROSS



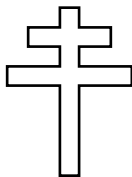
CHURCH CROSS



CROSS ON SPANISH
SILVER BARS



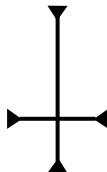
CHURCH CROSS =
RELIGIOUS ARTICLES



CROSS OF LORRAINE,
THE PATRIARCHAL CROSS



JESUIT SYMBOLS
OF GOLD,
THE ATTAINMENT



ST. PETERS
CROSS

SPANISH TREASURE TERMS

Treasure hunters who have studied old maps or written notes regarding a treasure often encounter the Spanish language. As Spain expanded into the New World, many words from its language made their way into other cultures and will be found during your research of land grants, waybills or field surveys.

The way a Spanish word is interpreted today might be quite different from its meaning hundreds of years ago. Along the same lines, a unit of measure might be slightly different in different cultures or in different countries.

One such troubling treasure word is *vara*, a word commonly used by Spaniards, Mexicans, Indians and even early Texas settlers to measure distance. The length of one vara, however, has varied over time from 30 inches up to 35.9 inches and was once inconsistent even between the different provinces within Spain. In general a vara was approximately 32 or 33 inches in length, or about the normal stride of an average

Spanish soldier. Fortunately, Spain accepted the metric system in the late 1860s but treasure terminology prior to that time frame will often involve varas. Treasure symbols for vara can indicate how many paces or sets of these 33-inch lengths must be stepped off to reach a particular point.

In North America, the vara had slightly different measurement lengths. In Mexico, the vara's equivalent in inches was 32.99. This was later rounded to 33 inches in California while Texas used a 33.33-inch vara for early land measurements.

Many other words of Spanish origin will likely be encountered in your research of old documents. Although I recommend adding a Spanish to English dictionary to your treasure-hunting arsenal, it is worth considering a few other significant treasure words that are of Spanish origin. For example, the terms *braza* and *estado* were also used to measure distances.

Pirates and sailors used the term *braza* as a measuring distance of 5 feet 7 inches. Each "pace" or vara distance given on a map was

thus walked off in lengths of 5 feet 7 inches. The term *estado*, used by Spanish Jesuits or Catholic priests, was also measured as 5 feet 7 inches. One *estado* was the minimum depth measurement that items of importance were to be buried.

The term *league* is another important word in determining distances to treasures. The statute (land) league was a distance that varied between 2.12 and 2.18 miles while a nautical league varied between 3.18 and 3.27 miles. There are far too many words to cover in this book but the treasure hunter should be aware of at least some common terms of measurement that can be quite troublesome.

The following brief list includes translations of common Spanish words that could be encountered on treasure-related documents:

<i>alhaja</i>	jewel
<i>cajón</i>	large box, chest
<i>cavar</i>	dig, excavate
<i>cobre</i>	copper
<i>codo</i>	half of a vara (16")

<i>entierro</i>	hidden treasure
<i>escondida</i>	hidden
<i>este</i>	east
<i>harqueta</i>	fork in trail or stream
<i>iglesia</i>	church
<i>joya</i>	jewels
<i>llano</i>	plain
<i>loma</i>	small hill
<i>marca</i>	mark, sign
<i>moneda</i>	money or coin
<i>norte</i>	north
<i>oeste</i>	west
<i>oro</i>	gold
<i>pasada</i>	passage
<i>patacón</i>	silver coin
<i>plata</i>	silver
<i>quilate</i>	carat (24 carat gold)
<i>sur, sud</i>	south
<i>tesoro</i>	treasure
<i>tiro</i>	mine shaft
<i>vena</i>	vein of ore

SPECIAL ADVICE

- **Make sure you have a trustworthy hunting partner.** There's nothing more heart-breaking than to track down a treasure, solve the clues of the symbols and then get double-crossed. Trust me...I've been taken before. I worked closely with someone I trusted to successfully locate a cache site in Louisiana. We planned to excavate the area the next morning but I returned to find nothing but fresh dirt and a hole where something large had been removed!

- **Consult a specialist** if you find words from another language you are not familiar with. In the Spanish language, for example, word combinations might be interpreted differently in various regions.

- **Be wary of trickery** when following directions from a group of treasure symbols. Some signs, seemingly clear, might actually be pointing you in exactly the *opposite* direction.

Other treasures could be buried *in the middle*—halfway between your first symbol and the point you believed to be the ending spot. Use your metal detector to sweep the whole area from one end to the other.

- **Research source materials.** Old family stories, tribal legends, court and church records, diaries, wills and archival documents sometimes prove to be just as productive as a genuine treasure map. Legends from the old days usually contain a certain degree of historical fact, even when intertwined with the hyperbole.

- **Depend on items that have not changed with time.** When following signs, remember that the treasure you are seeking was probably hidden long ago. Trees and shrubs have grown while rock formations, although weathered, have remained essentially the same.

- **Never destroy or alter signs or symbols** that you may encounter. Follow them and appreciate them but leave these ancient artifacts

alone so that others may learn from and enjoy them in their original state.

- **Pay close attention to symbols of danger when they are presented.** Some were meant to scare off treasure seekers while others could be an indication of a trap that was set. Death traps have been found where a heavy boulder is propped in a precarious position—ready to fall on the unwary fortune hunter who digs in the wrong spot!

- **Use logic and a little imagination** when reading a sign. Some treasures have been found by simply following the ancient directions. Other treasures await only those who can “think outside the box”—misdirection was a common tactic of those who left symbols. A little luck and perseverance are often just as productive as knowledge. Mine entrances, mines shafts and cave entrances have also been booby-trapped to protect treasures. The *lightning bolt symbol* indicated that a large gold or silver treasure was nearby but that deathtraps were present.

- I'll leave you with the best treasures signs advice I know to offer. **Look for something or things unusual or out of place.** Anything you can spot that could *not* have happened naturally is important. Such abnormalities, although often subtle, might be just the treasure clues that could lead you to great discoveries!

I wish you good health, good hunting and the good fortune to find your own treasure signs and symbols.

I'll see you in the field!

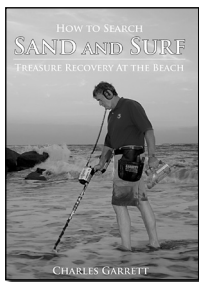
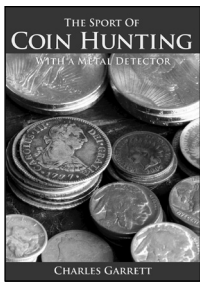
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To see a current list of titles available from RAM Books, please consult a Garrett Metal Detectors hobby catalog or visit:

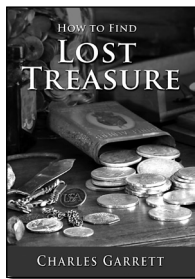
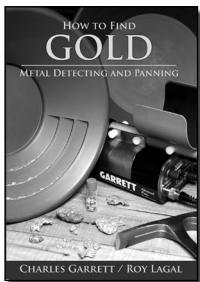
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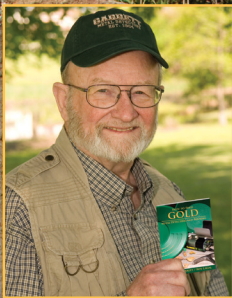
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