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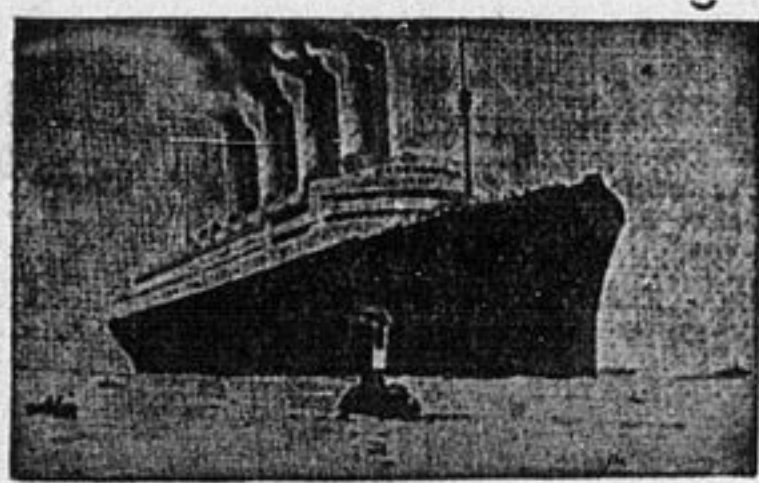
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**From Wild Man of Whirlpool to Pioneer of the Porcupine**

**Geo. Bannerman and Tom Geddes Started the Porcupine Gold Rush, Says Harry A. Preston. The Opening Days of This Great Gold Area as Outlined by Mr. Preston in Letter to The Porcupine Advance.**

Literally hundreds of people have expressed a desire in the past few years to see the story of the Porcupine Gold Camp set forth in accurate detail. The Advance has been anxious to publish such a true and authentic account of the earlier days of this Gold Area. At various times there have been stories of the early days, interesting and no doubt authentic so far as they went, but they have been fragmentary and incomplete.

Some weeks ago Mr. Harry A. Preston wrote to the Advance volunteering to give in fullest detail an accurate account of the discovery of the Porcupine as a gold area. Mr. Preston supported his statements in the matter with offers of cold cash to any person who could successfully dispute his presentation of the facts. No one has yet come forward to refute anything claimed by Mr. Preston. An outline of his story has been given widest publicity, but none have shown any desire to contradict him in this matter. Mr. Preston appears to have his facts and figures at his finger tips and to feel himself in the unassailable position of being the man who knows the truth and tells it in straight fashion. Accordingly the Advance has secured the complete story of the Porcupine as given by Mr. Preston.

Here is Mr. Preston's story:— Sometime between 1 a.m. and 12 noon, on April 14th, 1876, there was born at Niagara Falls, Ontario, a boy later named Harry Alridge Preston. The family home was on the River Road, just 200 yds. south of the old Great Western Railway Suspension Bridge and in view of the great Falls of Niagara. Here, he lived in the old home for 29 years. When around seven years of age he learned to be a fast walker, and every Sunday his father would take him and his brothers out into the country five or six miles for a walk. Then the following Saturday, when there was no school, Preston and his cousin would hike off to these same places, and it was not long before the lads knew the country for miles around. Young Preston was into anything for pleasure or money-making. He had a regular museum in his back-yard. There were frogs, mud-turtles, fish, crabs, and other birds. As he grew older he prospected the Niagara Gorge from end to end, selling souvenirs and guiding tourists below the Gorge. He saved two lives; he found a man's skeleton one Saturday afternoon, and has recovered over fifteen bodies of human beings from the Niagara River. Some of these were drowning accidents; others were suicides. Among them were infants, boys, girls, men and women. Some are still in Landy's

Lane Cemetery, yet unidentified. During the Pan-American Exhibition a woman poisoned herself at a Niagara Hotel. During June and for months after no one could find her name or where she belonged. Preston used to go to the undertakers, where she was being kept, to see her, and during the following March he was reading a newspaper and saw an advertisement about a missing woman. Preston showed the advertisement to the undertaker, and between the two of them, the woman's identity was eventually fully disclosed.

Mr. Preston began to get the deer-hunting fever around 1896, and started going to Burks Falls each season. Then came the Big Moose fever. When the T. & N.O. started from North Bay Preston came to Temagami for his moose. And he got him. There was only one shack where moose could be had. It was kept by Dan O'Connor in those days. Temagami looked so good to Preston that he came regularly each season. One year he was there and found that Cobalt was creeping into existence. Preston said to himself, "If my mother was not living, I would be here to settle and to stay." In 1905 his mother died, and just one month afterwards Harry Preston made straight for Cobalt and New Ontario. Since then he has only seen his home town for ten days in twenty years.

Preston secured a job in Cobalt with Clark & Lowery in their billiard parlours, and there he happened to run into Mr. Fairburn, an old Niagara district boy he knew down home. Fairburn said, "I'll have a job prospecting in the Spring, and I want you to be with me as I know you were a lucky fellow around Niagara." So, in March, 1907, Preston and Fairburn and Anson Cartwright and two others got on Contractors McDonald's Muskeg Train for McDougall Chutes.

At that time the end of steel was two miles south of the Chutes, and so a team fetched their baggage to the Chutes and from there they proceeded to Abitibi Lake. The teamster who took them was Mr. Jack Powers, now of Timmins, Ont. Well, they spent that summer at Lightning River, Ghost River, into Marro and all the townships east of McDougall Chutes, walking straight to the Height of Land.

In the early Fall, the party got into their canoes and paddled down the Abitibi to the Black, and across to Night Hawk Lake, and south to Latchford. Preston got his pay at Cobalt, purchased a rifle, and back he goes to Elk Lake, where there were a few tents and one or two log houses. He stopped at Mullin's Hotel and there he got in touch with two gentlemen named Miller and Middleton who had camps in James Township. They invited him to go to the camps and have his moose hunt, which he did. Soon they had all the meat they wanted. When his hunt was over, Preston said to his hosts, "Good-bye. I'm going back to McDougall Chutes and Abitibi Lake, where there is gold, and I'm going to stay up there and find a mine."

Arriving back at the Chutes he spent the Winter and following Summer working in the hotel then run by T. F. King, now of Timmins. Preston used to tell King he was going to discover a gold mine some day. When Fall came Preston was allowed his holidays to go to Temagami for a moose hunt. He had his hunt, and when he was eating his breakfast in the Ronacco Hotel, Dan O'Connor came to Preston to tell him that his town had burned down that night, but this did not change Preston's mind about the gold. So, when he had shot a big Bull Moose, with a 67-inch spread he sent it to the taxidermist, and then hustled back to McDougall Chutes, where he remained with a friend for a short time, then leaving for Cochrane to work in an hotel there. It is here where the history of Porcupine begins. Well, here she goes!

The proprietor of the hotel at Cochrane was a relative of Mr. J. S. Wilson, and Mr. Wilson made visits regularly. He was living at Driftwood, now called Monteith. Mr. Wilson managed to interest W. S. Edwards and T. N. Jamieson, of Chicago, into grubstaking him and a party to prospect for gold and anything else in the mineral line. Wilson was kind enough to hire H. A. Preston as one of his party. So, along in March, 1909, Preston helped Wilson to fetch a good supply of grub and outfits by dog teams from Driftwood to Frederickhouse Lake. There we put it in (Continued on next page.)



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