

John Ferguson – The Nugget From Nashville 1868: Of Perseverance And A Prince

The graphitic nature of both sedimentary host rocks and some fault intersections at Nashville (now Gympie) provoked initial precipitation of precursor gold masses within quartz veins. Over geological time, a network of soft gold veinlets was compressed into a dense gold nugget.

In February 1868, George Silas Curtis and Valentine Curtis Brigg, uncle and nephew working as partners, unearthed a 905ozs gold nugget from an alluvial claim in Sailors Gully. This event occurred before the establishment of a local newspaper. Names associated with the nugget include; “Curtis”, “Perseverance” and “Gympie Creek “ and others. Within two months, the nugget was monetized to £3,132/9/9 by being smelted into gold bullion at the Sydney Mint. The branch network of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney provided transit to the Mint during which fragments of information were left behind. At today’s values, the nugget would be worth at least \$2,500,000. A touch of royalty into this odyssey was provided when the nugget was displayed to a wounded Prince Alfred, on-tour in Sydney. Unfortunately, an image has been not been found to illustrate the character of this rare natural specimen. With such a short, transient life, the identity of this nugget has been obscure relative to many others, despite still being the largest ever found in Queensland.