

A Little Nugget Will Do You

By Phil Sarata

OK, go ahead and admit it. You've always dreamed of striking it big and retiring early. In today's world that usually means a lottery win. However, almost a century ago the concept was associated with another event – gold.

While that sounds like more of a long shot than picking winning lottery numbers, the fact is, panning and mining for gold in South Carolina has been around since America's early history. The state's first documented gold discovery was near Greenville in 1802, less than three years after it was first discovered in the US, west of Charlotte, NC. The gold mining, prospecting and panning areas of South Carolina range generally from McCormick and Columbia north and northeast to the North Carolina state line and westward to the Georgia border. In all, over 130 gold mines and gold prospecting areas, covering 18 counties, have been officially catalogued by the state and federal Geological Survey Offices and the US Bureau of Mines.

South Carolina had some of the most productive gold mines in the country during the 19th century. They included the Brewer Mine in Chesterfield County, the Martin Mine in York and the famous Haile Mine near Kershaw in Lancaster County. Other important mines were in Oconee County and along the Middle

Tyger River and its tributaries in Spartanburg and Greenville counties.

Gold is still found in the Upstate and Midlands and several mines still operate, with the Ridgeway Mine near Ridgeway predicted to become one of the largest primary gold mines in North America. Places to pan for gold are found in the numerous streams and creeks near Camden, Clemson, Greenville, Greenwood, Lancaster, McCormick, Newberry, Pageland, Rock Hill, Spartanburg and York. If you go, be sure to look for the precious metal near Clemson and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River in the northwest tip of South Carolina. The Sumter National Forest also offers many possibilities for gold panning and metal detecting, but first check with the Forest Service Ranger's Office for more information on regulations, mineral rights and permits.

So, bring your pan and discover a real 24-karat vacation treasure in South Carolina. And, who knows? You may even find the other kind of treasure, too!

Find out more...

For a complete list of gold maps and areas to prospect, visit www.goldmaps.com