

THE GOLDEN BEAR NUGGET



Weight: 1 oz., 19.2 gr. troy

Maximum height: 2¼ inches

Maximum width: 1 5/16 inches

This outstanding and unusually formed crystallized gold nugget is the property of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

The history of the nugget is rather obscure. According to the State Division of Mines, it was discovered in 1871 in the early California town of Yankee Jim, located in Placer County. Legend has it that it was found by a 14-year-old girl, who kept it until her death at the age of 76. Upon her death, a son or brother pledged the nugget for a loan from an engineer from the Division of Mines. The nugget was foreclosed by the engineer. He wanted to recover his money and offered it to C. D. Woodhouse, who regularly visited the Division of Mines. Mr. Woodhouse purchased the nugget for \$300 in 1937. He displayed it to the CFMS, which voted in June 1938 to purchase it. Funds were raised by subscription throughout the Federation, and at the Fourth Annual CFMS Convention in San Bernardino, it was first displayed to its new owners. The Federation completed the payment in 1940. Mr. Woodhouse attempted to obtain more data on the nugget from the Division of Mines engineer but was unsuccessful.

The purchase price was \$300, but its value as a unique specimen—like anything that cannot be duplicated or replaced—can be considered in the realm of “priceless.” Physically, the Golden Bear is a magnificent specimen and is readily recognized by its characteristic shape. It is customarily on exhibit at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, but during the period of the annual convention, it is carefully removed for display to its member owners.

Small replicas of the Golden Bear Nugget are used as California Federation pins and lapel buttons. This replica with a crossed silver gavel is used as a pin for the past Club Presidents, and with crossed gold gavel for past CFMS Presidents.