

# Glenn Rawson Stories



## Robert Henderson and “Siwashes”

It is costly on many levels to carry grudges and fail to forgive.

August 1896. Robert Henderson, a prospector and native of Nova Scotia, was returning to his modest claim on Hunker Creek, just below a mountain called King Solomon’s Dome. He happened to run into George Carmack, a white man, and several First Nation companions traveling with him. As was custom in the north and the code of prospectors, Henderson told George of his find. George asked if there was room on the creek for him to stake a claim, to which, Henderson replied that there was for him but not for any Siwashes, which is an offensive term for the First Nations people of Canada. The insult was overheard by Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, two members of the Tagish nation. It seems that some months earlier, Henderson’s supply cache had been pilfered, and since he was, by his estimation, the only white man for miles, it had to have been native peoples.

And to finish the insult, when Skookum Jim and Charlie asked to buy some tobacco of Henderson, they were rudely rebuffed.

Henderson then told George that he should go prospect on Rabbit Creek, which was just a few miles away and one canyon over. George said he would and promised to inform Henderson if he found anything.

The two groups parted, Henderson to his claim and George and his party up Rabbit Creek. They made camp about 1/2 mile below its headwaters.

# Glenn Rawson Stories

There are conflicting accounts, but it appears that sometime near sunset on August 16, 1896, Jim was cleaning a pan from supper and saw something glinting in the water. He picked it up and discovered it was a gold nugget the size of his thumb. Excitedly, Jim and his companions searched and panned out more gold. They staked a claim and George went to the nearby town of Fortymile and filed the claim. Now of course Carmack, of course, told others of the strike, but they just thought he was telling a tall tale, however, when he produced that poke full of gold, the town was emptied out almost overnight and the great Klondike gold rush was on.

George Carmack returned to his claim and made more than a million dollars, as did Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie. It is estimated that more than 250 million dollars in gold was taken from the area, and that with gold at \$14/ounce.

And by the way, no one ever told Robert Henderson of the strike above the Klondike until all the claims were taken. George Carmack later said, "His obstinacy cost him a fortune." Robert Henderson never struck it big, nor will any of us who cannot forgive and forget.

Glenn Rawson  
July 2019 Ketchikan, Alaska.

#### SOURCES:

<https://www.mysteriesofcanada.com/yukon/klondike-gold-rush-part-2-discovery-on-rabbit-creek/amp/>

<https://www.rubyrange.com/travel-facts/gold-rush-history/>

<https://www.fishingyukon.com/yukon-visitor-information/klondike-gold-rush/>