

From the Mineral Inventory Files

Meandering Thoughts

A couple of years ago local prospector Roland Anthony discovered impressive amounts of placer gold along a section of the Meander River near Greenhill, Hants County (Fig. 1). This discovery caused me, once again, to reflect on an area of the central and western Rawdon Hills where several factors suggest the presence of undiscovered gold deposits. Those involved with mineral exploration commonly use the old adage “where there’s smoke there’s fire” and I have felt for some years now that this Rawdon Hills area has a distinctly sooty smell.

The recent discovery by Mr. Anthony spurred me to compile an inventory of mineral indicators present in this region and pass them along in this article. Several workers have made interesting notations over the years, the first dating as far back as the gold rush immediately following the first discovery of gold in Nova Scotia in 1860. At that time people were fanning out all over the province with dreams of “striking it rich.” In 1863, John Campbell wrote a report to Provincial Secretary Joseph Howe that was published in the *Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia*. The report, among other things, drew attention to a section of the Herbert River that traverses Halifax Formation rocks about 16 km west of the Renfrew Gold District (Fig. 1). Campbell noted how the river “rolls gold in its sands along the greater part of its course” and that he found gold in “every panful of the stuff” that he tested. He also noted the abundance of quartz float in the glacial till in several areas and actually cited a farm in which a 60 m long stone wall (present day location unfortunately not known) was built almost entirely of quartz.

The Meander River, where Roland Anthony’s recent placer discovery was made, parallels the Herbert River and both traverse the same sequence of Halifax Formation slates, so it can now be said that both rivers “roll gold in their

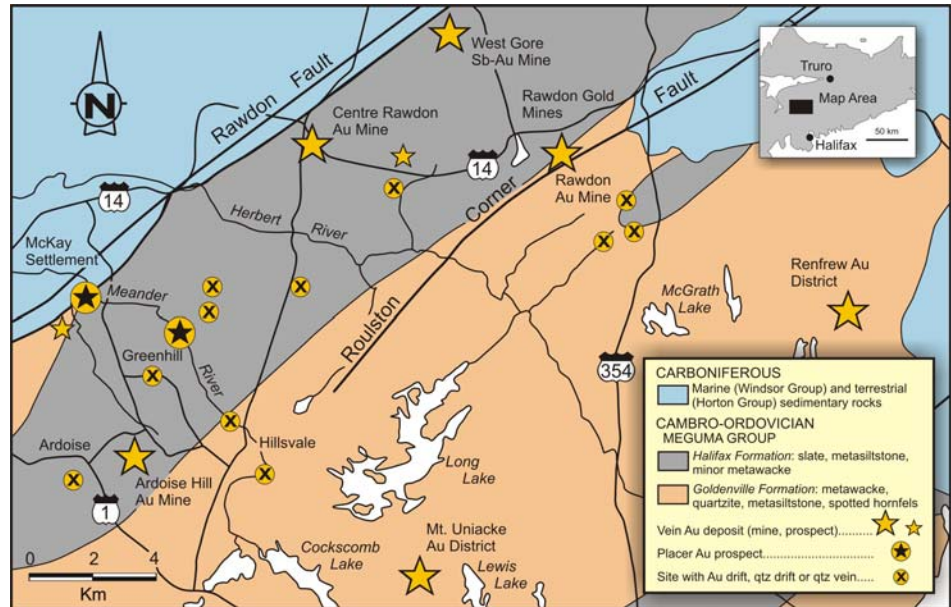


Figure 1. Geology of the central and western Rawdon Hills area showing the location of gold mines and prospects, as well as sites where there are quartz veins in bedrock and abundant quartz and gold-rich float present in overburden.

sands.” Add to this that at McKay Settlement, about 4 km downstream along the Meander River from Greenhill, a section of the Little Meander River just upstream of its confluence with the Meander produced a small amount of placer gold from 1897-1899.

What is the source of this gold? This region has its share of old gold mines, such as the typical saddle-reef quartz vein deposits mined at Mt. Uniacke, Renfrew and Rawdon (Fig. 1). As well, the region is the home of some former gold mines and prospects where the mined quartz veins are atypical of most Nova Scotia gold deposits, which are typically associated with northeast-trending structures. At the Centre Rawdon Mine the mine’s entire gold production came from two northwest-trending, discordant, quartz veins. Similarly, at the West Gore antimony-gold mine, the ore was also produced from northwest-trending, discordant quartz veins. At Ardoise Hill, just west of Greenhill, small-scale

gold mining took place in the late 1800s from both interbedded and discordant quartz veins, but several were very rich in pyrite. These deposits could be looked on as potential sources of the placer gold still present in the Meander and Herbert rivers. Given the lay of the land, however, it’s difficult to believe that the placer gold occurring along these rivers comes from those deposits. Instead, I would draw attention to several other mineral indications noted on E. R. Faribault’s 1908 Elmsdale and 1909 Windsor map sheets over the Rawdon Hills. These maps show numerous notations of “gold drift”, “quartz drift” and “quartz veins” over the entire region (Fig. 1), suggesting that the gold in the major rivers is from another source, or possibly multiple sources. In my opinion, all these indications, looked at collectively, weave a tale worth reading and it is high time someone signed this book out and paid strict attention to its pages. Any takers?

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