

Gold Boom

The Story of Robert E. Lund

Robert Elbert Lund
1841 – 1912

Robert E. Lund was born in Ontario, Canada in 1841. He was born to Richard Lund, English Pioneer and early settler of Port Perry, Scugog Island, Ontario, Canada. Robert's father Richard was a wealthy merchant and upstanding member of his community. He cared greatly about education and politics in his town and was revered for his contributions to both.

Robert also cared about education as he studied to become an attorney and later a judge. He was also a minister who led many congregations in his lifetime. He married French Canadian, Saphrona Celia Ranous and they had five children. When he was in his early thirties, he moved his family to America in pursuit of higher education for his children. The time was the early 1870s and he and his wife settled into their new life in Greenville, Michigan where they remained for many years.

In 1886, the family relocated from Greenville, Michigan to White Oaks, New Mexico. At this point Robert Lund was forty-five years old and his children ranged in ages from nine to twenty-one. The oldest was his son Fletcher, two daughters Sarah and Alice (who went by her middle name Maude) followed and finally his two young sons Albert and Robert.

The Reverend set up shop in a small brick building with partner and original owner of the building, William Watson. They called the building the "Watson Lund" building and both men worked from there. Watson was an attorney who later married Robert's youngest daughter Alice Maude Lund.

Lund and Watson were not only practicing law and raising families in White Oaks, they were mining for gold. Watson had been in the area many years before Lund got there and was recognized as one of White Oaks earliest settlers. Lund's oldest son Fletcher was an assayer and gold miner who worked from the building with the men and mined for gold as well.

Robert E. Lund was noted to have left his wife and younger children for months at a time on his quest for gold. When the younger boys were slightly older, they went with him and would live in the mountains for months on end.

He was quite a colorful character, as you would expect any gold mining reverend and judge to be. Not only did he disappear for months at a time leaving his wife to fend for herself in the wile town of White Oaks, but he also developed a taste for the whiskey.

One morning after a cold spell passed through town Robert awoke to find that his dynamite had frozen. Not one to be easily deterred he quickly developed a plan to thaw out his dynamite so he could get on with his mining for the day.

The dear old prospector being of sound mind and body decided to place his dynamite atop a crackling fire to thaw out. He then climbed up to the roof of the mining shed where he stretched out to sun himself... he fell asleep and sure enough... the crash-boom-bam of exploding dynamite woke him from his slumber.

What a sight that must have been... the sleepy miner scurrying down off the roof for safety, barely awake, running for cover...

It was on this occasion that his sons would privately nickname him the "Dynamite Preacher."



Fletcher Lund (journeyman)
(Date unknown)



Robert Lund in buggy - front of livery
(Date unknown)