

Photo of the Month

Kruse's Gold Mine



About 1900 W.H. Kruse, a Minneapolis businessman whose parents lived in Rogers, began to have visions. His strongest vision was that there was gold on his father's farm southwest of downtown Rogers.

In his vision Kruse "saw" that the gold would be found under the roots of a wild apple tree. Writing to relatives in Rogers about this, he received a reply that there were no wild apple trees on the property. Returning to Rogers to see for himself, Kruse found an old wild apple tree hidden by some brush and dug what he considered to be some ore from between its roots. Professional assayers said there was only a trace amount of gold in the ore, something fairly common. Of course Kruse knew this could not be true, so his vision told him of a new method for assaying ore. The assayers refused to try this new test so Kruse conducted experiments himself. Not surprisingly, he determined that the ore contained up to \$5,000 per ton!

Work was begun at the mine in September of 1905. With a local band playing "Silver Threads Among the Gold" and "In The Shade of the Old Apple Tree" Kruse led a parade from downtown Rogers to the new diggings. A log tower was constructed to help haul the ore out of the planned 125 foot deep shaft (the actual shaft only got a few feet deep), but this blew over in a storm a few months later.

Sporadic digging continued at the mine until 1912, depending on the power of Kruse's visions. No pay dirt was ever removed from the mine and the last load of ore shipped to St. Louis on the [Frisco](#) was dumped into the Mississippi River when Kruse could not pay the freight charges.

In order to tell people of the other wondrous things his visions told him, Kruse published 6,000 copies of a pamphlet called "Sunshine and Truth." At one point he needed to buy a used printing press from Rogers

newspaperman [Erwin Funk](#), but wanted to wait for his vision to tell him how much to pay. The vision said \$150. Not wanting to go against Kruse's vision, Funk let him have it for that price, although he only wanted \$100 for it!

Kruse died on December 12, 1925 at the age of 65. He never was able to realize his dream of mining gold in Rogers and the mine had long since been reduced to weed covered ruins and rubble.

Reference: *The Benton County Democrat*, December 15, 1976

(photo reference: Rogers Historical Museum, N007173)