

HERITAGE VIEW

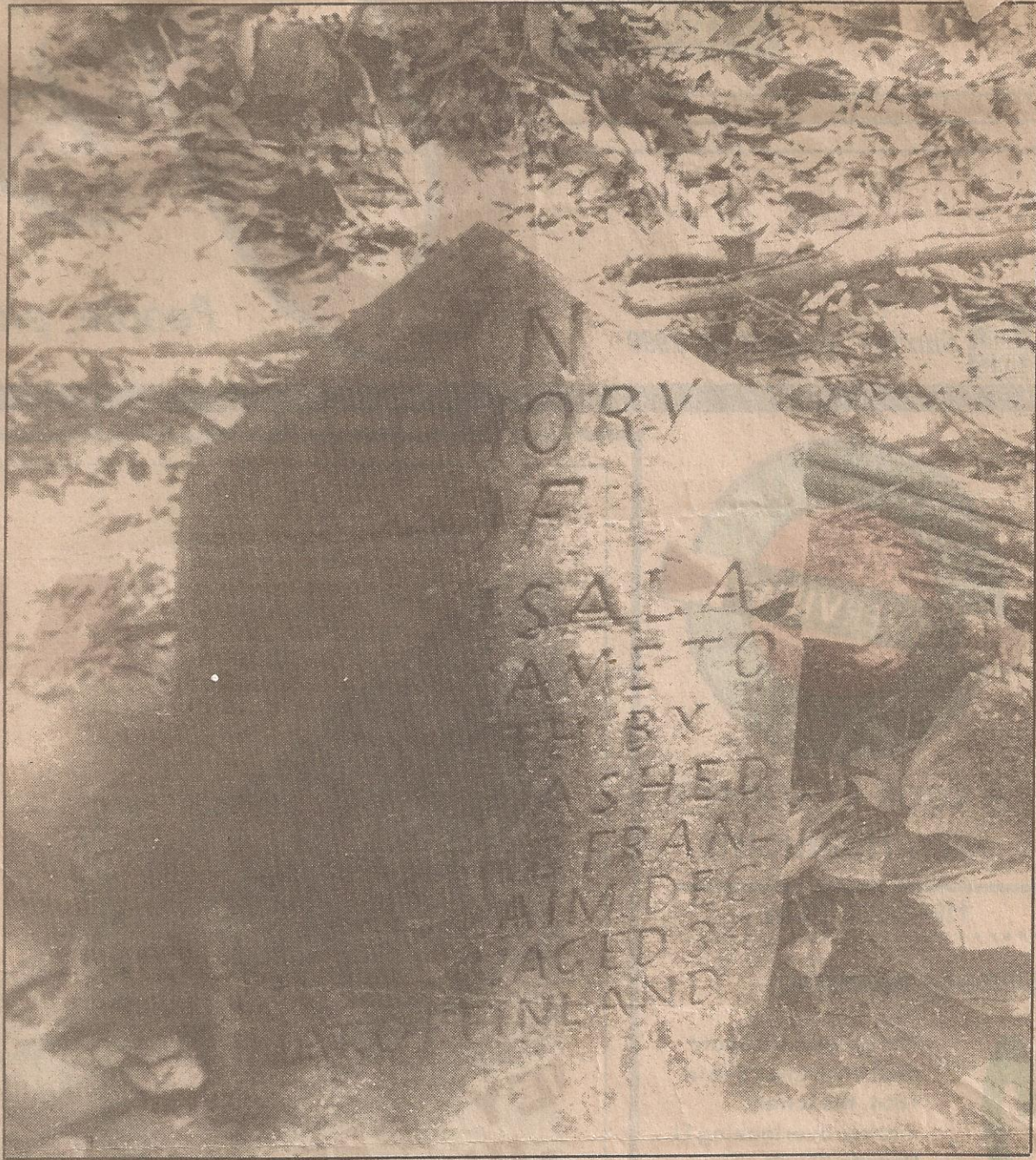


Photo special to the Journal

This gravestone is all that remains to tell the history of a miner named J. Heusala.

## Who was the mysterious J. Heusala?

The hand-carved grave marker is all by itself on a hill overlooking El Dorado Creek east of Forest-hill.

But the work on it and the way it was cut out tells a tragic story of a miner who was killed 126 years ago.

Who placed the marker there is unknown, but the work on it was of good quality and probably was done by a friend.

The marker is located amid the oaks and manzanita brush on a hill so steep it is difficult to reach. The location is about a mile and a half from the North Fork and Middle Fork and it takes a



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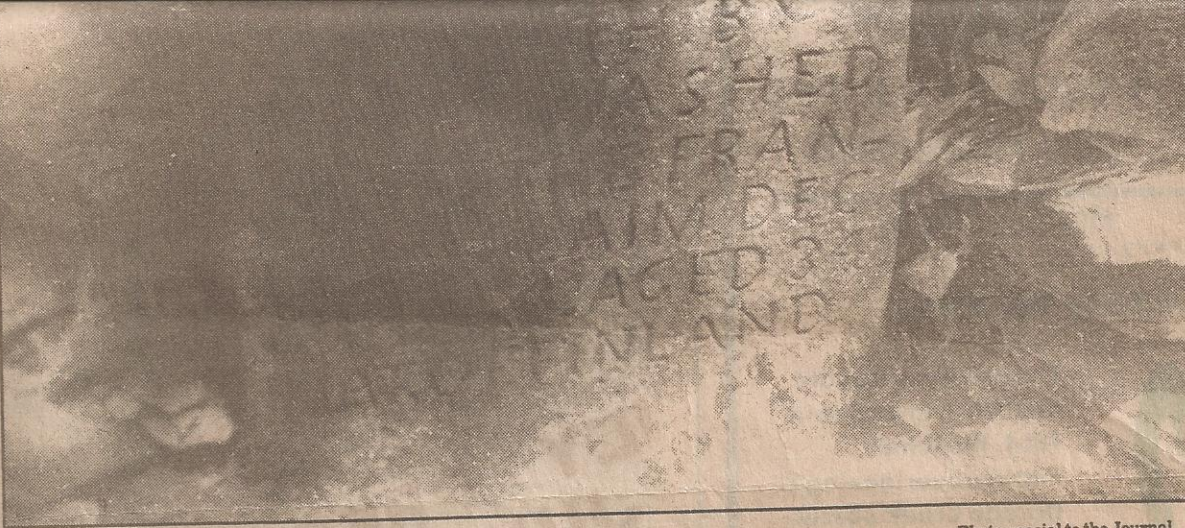


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The gravestone is in memory of J. Heusala, and it clearly states that at 34 he "came to his death by being washed from the Franklin Claim" the day before Christmas in 1864. He was a native of Finland.

The marker is made of shale or limestone and is anchored firmly in the ground. Someone has placed rocks around, outlining the site of the grave.

There are a number of pieces of mining equipment along El Dorado Creek, but there is no indication where the Franklin Claim existed.

During summer months, there are miners and campers along the creek in the area where there



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was extensive mining done from 1855 to the mid 1860s. There are still foundations of buildings remaining there.

But El Dorado Creek never gained the significance in mining as North Fork, primarily because of its inaccessibility. Nor was any mine there that compared to the Paragon Mine near Bath, owned by Abraham Breece and Judson Wheeler.

And, the secret of J. Heusala, whose only known existence or contribution to the early-day mining industry, lies in a grave on a hill along El Dorado Creek. The only thing known about him is left on the marker.