Chapter 1: The Treasure Hunter Within Me

The Buried Secret of Mora, New Mexico

Of all the treasure hunts I experienced as a young boy, there's one adventure that has stayed with me throughout my life.

It happened on an old ranch in Mora, New Mexico.

My father and uncles had taken me along on another treasure-hunting adventure. We were looking for the kinds of things that had always fascinated us—old coins, buried valuables, bottles, gold, and pieces of history that might have been forgotten over time.

On this particular hunt, we found ourselves near an old root cellar.

As they began searching the area with their metal detectors, something unusual happened.

The detectors started going crazy.

There was something beneath the ground, and whatever it was, the detectors kept picking it up.

They decided to start digging.

At first, they began uncovering old bottles and other objects that had been buried for years. As they continued, more things appeared, including old saddles, shoes, and coins.

But the metal detectors kept sounding.

There was still something down there.

So they kept digging.

The hole grew deeper, and the discoveries continued. Each object they brought to the surface was another piece of the past, another clue to what might have happened on that ranch many years before.

I remember the excitement of watching them work and wondering what they might find next.

They could have stopped after finding the bottles, saddles, and coins. Those discoveries alone would have made the day memorable.

But the detectors were telling them there was more.

And they weren't ready to give up.

Eventually, they unearthed something none of us had expected.

An old still.

Buried beneath the ground was equipment from another time, hidden away and forgotten.

But the adventure didn't end there.

As they continued examining what they had uncovered, they discovered old horse collars.

And those weren't just ordinary horse collars.

They were filled with treasure.

Imagine that for a moment.

What had started as a search around an old root cellar had turned into the discovery of something that had apparently been hidden for decades.

It was estimated that the treasure had been buried there for more than sixty years.

I was young, but I never forgot that day.

I remember the metal detectors sounding, the digging, the old objects coming out of the ground, and the excitement surrounding that unexpected discovery.

That experience taught me something about treasure hunting that has stayed with me ever since.

You never really know what's waiting to be found.

Sometimes you search and find very little. Sometimes you discover things you weren't expecting.

And sometimes, when you think you've already found everything, there's something even more remarkable waiting a little deeper.

Years later, when I began thinking seriously about creating 505 Treasure Hunts, those childhood memories were still with me.

I wanted other people to experience that same anticipation.

That same mystery.

That same excitement of discovering something hidden.

The treasures I would eventually hide for 505 Treasure Hunts were different from the ones my father and uncles searched for.

But the feeling behind the adventure was exactly the same.

Keep searching. Follow the clues. Never underestimate what might be waiting to be discovered.

And above all, enjoy the adventure.

Because sometimes the memories you uncover are worth more than the treasure itself.