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LOST PITT LAKE MINE—FORTUNE STILL ELUSIVE

BY BRIAN MAKKEN [?]

Many young adventurers have visited the New Westminster Public Library in search of newspaper clippings about the lost gold mine at Pitt Lake.

They plan to make their fortunes by discovering the nuggets which are supposed to be there, ready to be gathered. The legend of the mine is not new. It began many hundreds of years ago.

A young Indian in search of food paddled his canoe into Pitt Lake and beached it on an island.

When the water was low he discovered a large entrance to a cave and, being curious paddled in.

AFTER a while his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and there on a ledge just above the water he saw a huge and very old-looking water serpent hardly able to move.

The Indian became very frightened and began to leave when the old serpent spoke and told him to have no fear.

The old serpent told the Indian that he had been expecting him. Because now that he was old and dying, the young Indian was to replace him as the guardian of the cave.

The young Indian wondered what there was to guard. But the serpent read his mind and told him that deeper within the cave were many shiny pebbles which if some day were discovered by men with white skins will bring an end to the happy lives of the Indians.

AS THE WATER began to rise in the cave the old serpent placed his head upon the Indian's shoulder, who immediately became a young serpent. And when he looked up to the ledge where the old serpent had been he saw an old Indian standing there.

The old Indian said that he too, when young, had paddled into the cave and was transformed into a water serpent. The old Indian spoke further and said that only the Indians had the right to the shiny pebbles. And that if ever a man with a white skin was to discover the cave he must not leave it alive.

When the water reached the roof of the cave the old Indian slipped beneath the water and disappeared.

ON JANUARY 16th, 1891, an Indian called Slumach was hanged at New Westminster for the murder of the half-breed Louis Bee.

**Lost Pitt Lake Mine—
Fortune still elusive**

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According to contemporary reports in The Columbian neither Slumach nor Bee was an angel. Slumach is reported to have killed an Indian six years earlier and Bee had a reputation of being a troublemaker. But the Columbian makes no mention of the gold nuggets which Slumach is supposed have brought into town during the previous year.

It was either 1904 or 1912 that the legend of Lost Creek Mine began.

HUGH MURRAY, who admitted to have been an Indian fighter, scout, stage coach driver and prospector was supposedly asked by Seattle financiers to guide them in search of the lost mine.

One of the financiers is supposed to have produced an old map showing the location of the mine.

The map was believed to have been drawn by one John Jackson who, according to Murray, had discovered the mine months after Slumach was hanged.

Jackson is supposed to have taken a fortune in gold nuggets back home to San Francisco.

The Seattle financiers were guided into the Pitt Lake area but found no gold.

The legend which began with Hugh Murray has been published in many newspapers and magazines. Each author telling a different story.

SOME AUTHORS claim that Slumach had charmed young women into accompanying him and then killed them in order to [protect] his secret.

Others have illustrated their stories with fake photographs purchased from [obliging] photographers in New Westminster.

And yet the legend persists.

Slumach is supposed to have gone into the rugged and dangerous country four times, each time bring back a knapsack full of gold nuggets large as walnuts.

Newspapers [would] hardly let a millionaire escape their pages. Yet, no [report of it] was ever written.

It is also difficult to believe that a sixty-year-old Indian could make four trips in one year in and out of that country.

THE FISH diet of the Coast Indians was satisfying their easy-going life as fishermen. But unlike the Plateau Indians of the northern interior the Coast Indians did not have the stamina

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required for trips into that rough, mountainous country around Pitt Lake.

Yet, the legend claims Slumach did it.

As for the young women, even if the sixty-year old Slumach did have sex appeal, he needn't have killed them. The rough country would have done it for him.

But the legend grows. And inexperienced adventurers go into the Pitt Lake country in search of fortune in gold and remain there forever.