

Columbian 1890-1891

Thanks to the diligence of Ann Lunghamer, Head of Reference Services of the New Westminster Library, microfilm copies of the second half of 1890 of the *Daily Columbian* are now available at major libraries in British Columbia.

For almost half a century the bound originals of the *Daily Columbian* covering the period from June to December 1890 were considered too frail to be handled by the public or to be filmed. Researchers and authors interested in the murder of Bee and the pursuit, capture, trial and conviction of Slumach had no choice but to rely on transcripts made by William W. Burton as published in *The Native Voice* of July 1959.

An alternative source, the *Weekly Columbian*, only became available on microfilm a few years ago (also thanks to Ann Lunghamer) but it was not certain if everything published in the daily edition about the Slumach affair would have been repeated in the weekly edition of the *Columbian*.

The following transcripts from the now available *Daily Columbian* include any text omitted in the Burton transcripts as published in *The Native Voice*.

Daily Columbian 9 September 1890

Shot Dead

LOUIS BEE, A HALF-BREED, IS DELIBERATELY SHOT AND KILLED BY AN INSANE INDIAN NAMED SHUMACH [sic], AT LILLOOET SLOUGH.

A terrible, unpremeditated murder was committed yesterday afternoon at a point on Lillooet Slough, not far from the Pitt River, and some two and a half miles above the Pitt River bridge. An Indian named Shumach, aged about 60 years, was hunting in the neighbourhood and coming out of the bush with his double-barrelled shot gun in his hand found several other Indians on the banks of the Slough. A half-breed, named Louis Bee, sauntered up to Shumach and asked him in a casual manner what he was shooting around there. Without a moments warning or any preliminary sign of anger, Shumach instantly levelled his gun at Bee and fired. Just before the discharge of the piece Bee held up his hands and begged Shumach not to shoot. The distance between the two men was so short that the whole charge entered the victim's body, just under the right arm pit, behind the shoulder blade. Death was instantaneous and, and Bee fell without a groan, and lay weltering in his blood while his murderer coolly proceeded to reload his piece.

One of the Indians who witnessed the awful deed immediately fled not only to give the alarm, but from motives of personal safety. He describes the countenance of the murderer after the act was committed as resembling that of an incarnate demon. Shumach was insane and what he had done seemed to have kindled all the wild disorderly fancies on madness in the maniac's brain and lit up his eyes with a ferocious gleam that boded no good to anyone whom he should encounter when his gun was reloaded. Shumach slowly retreated to the impenetrable and pathless jungle surrounding that part of the Lillooet Slough and plunging into its gloomy recesses was lost to sight and is yet at large.

The Indians say that Shumach has always acted strangely and at regular intervals would withdraw himself alone into the forest that border the mountains around the lake and remain there for weeks; reappearing at the end of those periods of aberration, looking haggard and more like a savage beast than a human being. In spite of his lunacy, however, the maniac never displayed any signs of hostility, nor gave indications that his freedom was dangerous to human life. He is described as a very powerful man and is rather dreaded by his own Indian friends. It is of the utmost importance that fish-

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ing and hunting parties going into this region should keep a most vigilant look-out, as the murderer is still roaming the woods, armed with a shot gun, and, as far as can be learned, with plenty of ammunition. The Indian who informed Mr. P. McTiernan, Indian Agent, of the occurrence, says that from Shumach's look he had not the slightest doubt that he would murder the first man he met. Parties contemplating a visit to the spot indicated above should therefore be on their guard as carelessness in this matter may result in a still more lamentable tragedy than just described.

Louis Bee was a splendid specimen of the half-breed. He was tall, well formed and very muscular, besides having a rather handsome face. It is related of him that once when in the city and under the influence of liquor six stalwart Siwashes could not hold him down and it was only by their dogged perseverance that they at length got him to the police office. Bee figured several times in police court owing to his fondness of alcoholic stimulants, but otherwise he was a quiet, respectable man. Several parties of men are now scouring the woods in the neighbourhood of the scene of the murder in an endeavour to run the desperate perpetrator of the crime to earth. Capt. Pittendrigh proceeded to Pitt River bridge today at noon to take charge of the murdered man's remains, impanel a jury and hold the inquest. The Indians in that part of the district are intensely excited over the horrible affair and are doing everything in their power to capture Shumach.

Daily Columbian 10 September 1890

The Murder of Louis Bee

Through the courtesy of Mr. L.F. Bonson, who placed his fine steam launch at the coroner's disposal, Capt. Pittendrigh and his attendants were enabled to perform the journey yesterday from the city to the scene on the Indian murder at Pitt River, in an expeditious and comfortable manner. Long before the fatal spot was reached, the Indians could be heard chanting a loud strange death-song, or coronach, for the untimely demise of their comrade, Louis Bee. The party from the city on arrival at the place where the murder occurred found a number of Indians congregated together, and apparently suffering from fear to a considerable extent. Enquiry developed the fact that none of them dared to pursue the murderer through the bush, and their terror of him had been very much increased by the appearance of Shumach the day following the murder, and his appropriation of the murdered man's

remains. He placed the body in a canoe and set out in the direction of the lake with it. It was suspected that Shumach's intention was to drop the body overboard in deep water, and Capt. Pittendrigh, acting on this supposition, set the Indians to work dragging the river for the corps. The latest news received states that the body was recovered, and was in custody of friends in the neighbourhood of the spot where the tragic occurrence happened. The Indian eye-witness, who came to the city with the first information of the crime, was taken to the city lock-up this morning for safe-keeping by order of Mr. W. Moresby. Capt. Pittendrigh and a jury returned from the Pitt River last night. This morning a new jury was summoned to proceed to view the remains of Bee.

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Coroner's Inquest

A coroner's inquest was held yesterday in the committee rooms of the City Hall upon the body of Louis Bee, the half-breed who was murdered last Monday afternoon at Pitt River by an Indian named Slumach, and whose remains were brought to the city yesterday. Dr. Walker performed the post-mortem examination and found the bone of the upper left arm to have been shattered by the passage of a ball, which had entered the side of the deceased, fracturing the fifth rib, penetrating the right side of the heart, and torn the lungs. The bullet was found embedded in the right lung. Death, in the doctor's opinion, must have been instantaneous. Charlie Seymour, an Indian, was the principal witness examined by the jury. He briefly related all that is now known of the murder. The deed had been entirely unpremeditated, as shown by the sudden manner in which the murderer committed the act. Seymour witnessed the shooting and shortly afterwards left the place to lay information with the authorities here.

The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the Indian Slumach.

The body of the murdered man was coffined and taken home by the Indians for internment at their own cemetery near the entrance to Pitt Lake. Mr. Moresby and two special officers left this morning by steamer for the scene of the murder.

They were to be met by the Chief of Indians with a selected posse of men, and the search for Slumach will be prosecuted unceasingly until he is captured

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Daily Columbian 12 September 1890

Still at Large

Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee is still at large and there is no immediate prospect of his capture unless he is driven by starvation into the haunts of men. Mr. Moresby went up to Pitt Lake yesterday and continued the search for him, but with no success. Just before Mr. Moresby arrived the Indians saw Slumach at his cabin, but he quickly plunged into the bush again and was not visible during the remainder of the day. On examining the cabin, Mr. Moresby found a can of powder and a large quantity of provisions which he destroyed, and then, to prevent Slumach returning there for shelter, the shack was burned to the ground. His canoe was also destroyed. Slumach will now have to keep to the woods until cold weather and starvation drives him in.

Mr. Moresby left for Pitt Lake again this morning and may not return to the city for several days. He is determined to bring him to justice, and will, if he can, obtain the assistance required.

The Indians are all afraid of the murderer, and decline to assist in beating the bush for him, as he is armed and has lots of ammunition. Slumach is a desperate character and is credited by the Indians for another murder, committed years ago and under similar circumstances. Although a few of the murderer's friends say he is insane, dozens of Indians say otherwise and declare he is only a bloodthirsty old villain.

(Daily Columbian 13 September 1890)

Slumach the Murderer

CONSTABLE ANDERSON HAS A BRUSH WITH SLUMACH, WHO ATTEMPTS TO SHOOT HIM. INDIANS IN LEAGUE WITH THE MURDERER AND GIVE HIM ASSISTANCE.

Mr. W. Moresby returned at 11 o'clock last night from Pitt Lake, where he had been in pursuit of the murderer. Slumach. He reports a serious state of affairs at Pitt Lake which will require very strict attention. Relations of Slumach have been in close communication with him ever since the murder, and have kept him thoroughly posted on the movements of Mr. Moresby and his special constables. Special Constable Anderson, who is in charge of the Indian specials, reported to Mr. Moresby that during the whole of Thursday night Slumach kept up a signal conversation by means of flashes of light from grass fires. This means of communicating news

seems to be as well understood by our Indians as by those on the great prairies east of the Rockies. Shortly after day break Slumach met his friends close to the shore of the lake, and there had a conversation with them. Spies were placed at different points to warn the party against surprise and this was noticed by Constable Anderson, who determined to ascertain what it meant. Taking an Indian with him, Anderson proceeded along the beach and while thus doing saw an Indian make a signal, which was answered by a peculiar cry. On turning a rocky point the Indian constable suddenly shouted to Anderson. "Look out!" and dropped to the ground; and when Anderson looked forward he saw Slumach in the act of aiming at him. There was no time to the rifle to his shoulder, so, quick as thought, the constable brought the muzzle in the direction of the murderer and pulled the trigger. The bullet went wild, but it disconcerted Slumach and spoiled his aim, and before he could aim a second time the Indian constable fired; the murderer dropped on to his hands and knees and rapidly crawled into the bushes, the two constables following as rapidly as they could. A minute later Slumach was seen running across an open space, and two more bullets were sent after him, which, however, did not harm.

Mr. Moresby continued the search immediately after his arrival, and though he covered much ground did not get a sight of him. On returning to the end of the lake Mr. Moresby found a number of Indians gathered there, all relatives and friends of Slumach, and they acted in a very threatening manner. Being convinced that they were assisting the murderer to evade the officers and defy the law, and not being the kind of man to put up with interference of this kind he ordered the whole lot to pack up their goods, board the steamer and go down to the Coquitlam reserve. There was a general objection to this and one of the Indians, a brother of Slumach, showed fight, but after Mr. Moresby had favoured him with a heavy fall, he agreed to go. The Indians were put on board of the steamer Constance, and taken to the Coquitlam reserve and notified that if they left there they would be arrested and their cabins and chattels destroyed.

To-morrow morning Mr. Moresby goes to Pitt Lake again, and will make another effort to get the murderer. He is of the opinion Slumach will not allow himself to be taken alive.

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Still at Large

Mr. Moresby returned from Pitt Lake at 12 o'clock last night after another unsuccessful hunt for Slumach, the murderer. On Sunday morning shortly after daylight Slumach was seen by the Indian constables, but he disappeared instantly and has not been seen since. Being well armed and a good hunter he will have no trouble in keeping himself in food, and the Indians think he will be able to live in the mountains all winter without suffering great hardships. Mr. Moresby, however, is still confident of effecting his capture, and those who know that officer well are satisfied that Slumach will have a very unpleasant time until he is finally run to ground.

The news of his murder has awakened in the memories of the Indians crimes which Slumach has committed in years gone by. Indians who know him well, say he has committed four or five murders during the last 25 years. His last murder, previous to the killing of Louis Bee, was committed about six years ago when he is said to have killed an Indian without any apparent cause. He fled to the mountains and remained in seclusion for a whole year, and then suddenly returned one day and took possession of his cabin and lived quietly until the perpetration of his last crime. Slumach is looked upon by the Indians as a very wonderful person being able to endure the greatest hardships without apparent inconvenience. As a hunter his is without an equal, and he is as adept at making fires in the primitive manner, using two sticks and rubbing the same together until the friction ignites the wood. He is said to be without fear of man or beast and to be possessed of a nature vicious in the extreme. It is quite evident that if only half what is told of Slumach is true, he is a fit candidate for the gallows, and should not be allowed to remain unchanged. It will be a great relief to the people of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge when that old villain is secure within the prison walls.

Daily Columbian 19 September 1890

Mr. Moresby went up to Pitt Lake on the steamer *Constance* on Wednesday returning to the city last night. Constable Anderson reported having seen Slumach the preceding day, standing on a rocky bluff afar off with nothing on but a red shirt and a handkerchief tied around his head.

He was armed with his deadly rifle, and was too far away to permit an exchange of bullets. On the nearer approach of his pursuers he quietly retreated into the impregnable fastnesses

among the stupendous precipices that frown over the lake at that neighbourhood. He has not since been seen.

Daily Columbian 20 October 1890

Still at Large

The hunt for Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee, is still being continued by Indian constables sent out by Mr. McTierman, Indian Agent. Nothing has been seen of the murderer of late and he is either keeping close to the mountains or has managed to make his escape out of the country. When the Indians give up the search, as they may be expected to do soon. Mr. Moresby will again take up the pursuit, and endeavour to run the blood-thirsty old villain down. The small reward of \$50 has been offered by the Government for the capture of Slumach, which trifling sum would not amount to wages for the time necessary to effect his capture, even were his whereabouts known, and it is certainly no inducement to any man to undertake such a dangerous expedition. There are several men in the city who would go after Slumach and bring him in if the Government offered anything like a suitable reward, and if there is any earnest desire to capture the murderer this reward will be offered without delay.

Daily Columbian 25 October 1890

Starved Out

SLUMACH, THE NOTORIOUS MURDERER OF LOUIS BEE, QUIETLY SURRENDERED AND IS NOW IN JAIL.

The Indian Slumach, who attained to ghastly celebrity some weeks ago by wantonly slaughtering a young half-breed named Louis Bee, has been suffering terrible privations in the mountain fastnesses around the shores of Pitt Lake, wither he retired after the murder, and set the power of the law at defiance. A month ago Mr. P. McTierman, Indian Agent here, had a conference with the members of the tribe at Pitt Lake and succeeded in convincing them that their duty was to deliver Slumach over to the Law. From that day no assistance was given to the outlaw, and probably on that account was he forced to give himself up yesterday to the police. Yesterday he sent his nephew for the Indian Agent, who went up to Pitt Lake, accompanied by two Indian policemen and to them the desperate fugitive surrendered. He had eaten nothing for several days and was in a terrible state of emaciation and thoroughly exhausted. His ammunition was all gone and his clothing in rags, and he presented a very wild and weather-

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worn aspect. Slumach was at once brought to the city and placed under the care of the physicians of the Provincial jail. At latest accounts today Slumach was in a very precarious condition, his vitality being almost spent. The doctors do not care to express an opinion as to his chances of recovery but it is understood that they are very small. Should he recover he will be given a preliminary trial and then remanded for trial at the assizes in November.

There can be no doubt that the sensible arguments of the Indian agent prevailing on the Indians and inducing them to render no assistance to Slumach, was the real cause of his surrender. Surreptitiously supplied with food and clothing by the Indians, the murderer could have remained in the woods for an indefinite period.

Daily Columbian 3 November 1890

District Court

(BEFORE CAPT. PITTENDRIGH, J. P.)

The murderer, Slumach, was up in the District Court this morning before Capt. Pittendrigh, J. P. for a preliminary hearing. Several witnesses were examined and a mass of evidence taken down and the magistrate sent Slumach up for trial at the approaching assizes. The prisoner has greatly improved in health since his surrender and will be strong enough to undergo the tedium of the assize trial this month. Slumach is rather an intelligent looking man of about sixty years of age. His face expresses a great deal of determination, even ferocity. He sat in court listening to the evidence this morning with the utmost apathy. A number of Siwashes occupied seats and took a good deal of interest in the proceedings.

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The Case of Slumach

Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee, now confined in the Provincial goal, awaiting trial at the Assizes, which open tomorrow, is in a very bad state of health, and may not be in a fit condition to appear for trial at this term. He is very weak, and does not seem to gather strength so rapidly as might be expected, considering the attention and comforts he receives from medical superintendent and the goal officials. Mr. McTiernan, Indian agent, is of the opinion Slumach will not live long in confinement, and it is a well known fact that an Indian sentenced to a long term of imprisonment soon pines

away and dies. It now looks as if Slumach will not be able to stand trial at the coming Assizes, and should this turn out to be the case it is pretty certain that he will escape the gallows from natural causes before the spring term.

Note: The autumn assize opened on 12 November 1890 but the trial of Slumach started in the afternoon of 14 November 1890.

Daily Columbian 14 November 1890

Fall Assizes

(MR. JUSTICE DRAKE PRESIDING)

Court resumed its sittings this morning at 10:30 o'clock.

The Crown prosecutor asked the arraignment of Slumach, for murder.

Mr. T.C. Atkinson, defending council, asked that this case be adjourned until next assizes on the ground that there were two important witnesses for the defence, Moody, an Indian, an Florence Reed, who could not possibly be obtained in time for this assizes, but could be produced at the next sitting of the court.

The affidavits of Slumach and his daughter Slumach were produced and read. His Lordship admitted the affidavits.

Mr. Atkinson then produced medical affidavits testifying that Slumach was not physically fit to attend the court on so grave a charge as that on which he was arraigned. His Lordship said that those affidavits were not admissible as they did not make the ground. They should, in any case, have been submitted to the Crown counsel for perusal, which had not been done.

Mr. Eckstein said that no case for the postponement had been made out, as one of the witnesses sworn to in the affidavits resided in town and another was a well known resident of Langley.

His Lordship said, there was no foundation that had been shown by defending council for the postponement of this case, and asked him to amend the affidavits.

The charge was then read and Mr. Atkinson pleaded not guilty. The amended affidavit was then read and stated that the absence of two important witnesses, Moody, an Indian, and Florence Reid, very material to the defence in this case could not be procured.

Mr. Eckstein then read contra affidavits, which said that both

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these witnesses had been in town a few days before the present date.

His Lordship said he could not allow slight matters to interfere where a man was on trial for his life, and if the case were adjourned at all it must be until the next assizes.

Mr. Moresby said he could produce both the witnesses required by the defence by 11 o'clock to-morrow, and His Lordship thereupon adjourned the court until that time.

Daily Columbian 15 November 1890

Captured the Witnesses

The two witnesses required by the defence in the Slumach murder case, and on account on whose absence from the city an adjournment of the trial was asked until the next assize, reached the city last night. Mr Moresby guaranteed to find the missing couple and present them before the court this morning, and he kept his word. He procured the str. Buzz and went down the river to certain Siwash haunts where he felt certain they would be found, and he got them and brought them to the city. Mr. Moresby is to be congratulated on the success of his mission, for had he failed this important case would have been laid over for six months or more with the possibility of the murderer escaping justice.

Daily Columbian 15 November 1890

Fall Assizes

(MR. JUSTICE DRAKE PRESIDING)

The Slumach murder case occupied the attention of the court to-day. The evidence had to be nearly all interpreted. There were several Indian witnesses examined at length and they gave minute particulars of the tragedy. It came out in the evidence that Bee, the victim of the murder, was in the habit of blustering at and threatening almost everyone with whom he came in contact. Against Slumach he indulged something like a grudge and for a long time there was bad blood between them. The Indians who were with Bee at the time of the murder were fishing, and on Slumach emerging from the adjacent woods a slight altercation ensued between him and Bee, with the result that Slumach shot him dead.

The jury retired at 3:45, after being out 15 minutes, returned with a verdict of guilty. His Lordship sentenced Slumach to be hanged on January 16th, next.

Daily Columbian 16 January 1891

Paid the Penalty

SLUMACH, THE MURDERER OF LOUIS BEE, PAYS THE PENALTY OF HIS CRIME

Old Slumach was hanged in the yard of the Provincial goal this morning at 8 o'clock, for the murder, on September 8th last, of Louis Bee, a half-breed. The particulars of the murder are briefly as follows: On the afternoon of September 18th [sic] a number of Indians, among the Louis Bee, were fishing for trout in Lillooet Slough, near Pitt River, and while they were thus engaged Slumach came out of the bush and approached the group. Bee went towards Slumach after a minute or two and asked him in a casual manner what he was shooting around there. Without a moment of warning or any preliminary sign of anger, Slumach instantly levelled his gun at Bee and fired. Just before the discharge of the piece Bee held up his hands and begged Slumach not to shoot. The distance between the two man was so short that the whole charge entered the victim's body, just under the right arm pit, behind the shoulder-blade. Death was instantaneous, and Bee fell without a groan, and lay sweltering in his blood, while the murderer coolly proceeded to reload his piece. One of the Indians who witnessed the awful deed, immediately fled, not only to give the alarm, but for motives of personal safety. He described the countenance of the murderer after the act was committed as resembling that of an incarnate demon. Shortly afterwards Slumach left but returned later and carried the body to his canoe, then paddled out into the river and sank it.

The hunt after the murderer was a long one, and nearly two months elapsed before he was apprehended. He was tried at the Assizes before Mr. Judge Drake, and sentenced to hang this morning. It came out in the trial that Louis Bee had been in the habit of taunting Slumach with being a sorcerer, pagan, and a devil, which, in the Chinook language, is about the worst epithets that can be applied to a person. This no doubt was the cause for the murder.

From the time sentence was passed on Slumach, until this morning when he died, Rev. Father Morgan, O.M.I., and Pierre, the Indian catechist, have been in constant attendance on the doomed man, praying for his conversion and exhorting him to a belief in the Christian religion. Pierre slept in the same cell with Slumach, and prayed with him day and night, and it is satisfactory to know, that the labours of the good priest and his assistant were not in vain.

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As late as yesterday efforts were made to have the sentence commuted to imprisonment for life, but the Department of Justice refused to interfere, probably owing to the numerous Indian murders which have occurred in the Province during the last few years, and which have not been punished by the extreme penalty. To Mr. McTiernan, Indian Agent, Slumach made a statement a few days ago, in which he said the murder of Louis Bee was the only crime of the kind he ever committed, although he was credited with more. He expressed himself as penitent and willing to suffer death for the deed. It was the names Louis Bee called him which maddened him and brought about the awful deed.

The Execution

The condemned man retired to rest at an early hour last night, and slept well. Father Morgan and Pierre, the catechist, remained in the cell praying throughout the night. Slumach wakened early and immediately entered into devotional exercises with his spiritual attendants, after which, breakfast was brought in and he ate a good meal with apparent relish. A few minutes before 7 o'clock Father Morgan baptized Slumach, who professed his belief in Christianity, and the hope of salvation. Prayers were continued until the arrival of the hangman to pinion him, and to this he submitted without a murmur. All being in readiness a few minutes before 8 o'clock, the procession was formed and proceeded to the scaffold. Mr. Sherriff Armstrong led the way, followed by Mr. Wm. Moresby, governor of the jail and the deputy sheriff; next came Slumach, supported by gaolers Burt and Conners, and followed by the hangman, masked and hooded, Father Morgan, Pierre, Dr. I.M. MacClean, Dr. Walker, and a number of constables brought up the rear of the procession.

Slumach walked firmly up the steps leading to the platform, and faced the crowd below. The hangman quickly adjusted the noose, and father Morgan commenced a prayer. Then the black cap was put on, and at 8 o'clock exactly the bolt was drawn, the trap fell, and Slumach had paid the penalty of his crime.

The hanging was very ably managed, and, beyond a few little twitching of the hands and feet, the body remained perfectly still after the drop. In three minutes and fifty-eight seconds life was pronounced extinct, but it was more than twenty minutes before the body was cut down and placed in the coffin. Coroner Pittendrigh and a jury viewed the body and brought in the usual verdict. Slumach's neck was broken in the fall, and death must have been painless. The drop was eight feet, five inches.

Over fifty persons witnessed the hanging, and a large crowd gathered outside the jail and remained there until the black flag was hoisted. Among the crowd on the street were several Indian women, relatives of Sumach who waited around the goal for more than an hour after the execution.