

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

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SHERIDAN HILL ONCE MENZIES ISLAND ... AND THEREBY
HANGS A TALE

BY SYD ORPWOOD

A yellowing old topographic chart of the Pitt River area of the province has shed new and interesting light on the history of Sheridan Hill, focal point of a Columbian story last week on Lost Creek Gold Mine. City Editor Elmer McLellan staked a claim in the area and assay test are now being made.

The chart made from surveys undertaken in 1875, shows the large rocky outcropping at that time was known as Menzies Island.

The area around it was marked as a swamp.

The area is now dyked to prevent water encroachment from the nearby Pitt River, and is prime farm land.

At the time of the original survey and later once to compile the chart, the area around the rock would have been flooded during spring freshets on the river, and periods of very high tides.

The chart is part of the early records in the office of the New Westminster gold commissioner Fraser McDonald, and was examined for clues to the activities of a Salish Indian named Slumach, during the years 1889 and 1890.

Slumach periodically came into New Westminster at the time to spend gold nuggets, which he claimed finding near Pitt Lake, several miles north of Menzies Island.

Observers of the time maintain there were no deposits of nuggets in that location and suspected Slumach of murdering Fraser River prospectors for their pokes.

They surmised he may have cached the stolen pokes in some secret place and made periodic visits to replenish his own empty pockets.

Menzies Island would have provided a perfect hide-out for this purpose.

During part of the year it would be approachable only by a shallow draft craft such as an Indian canoe.

The rest of the time it could be visited only by someone familiar with devious and unmarked paths through miles of swampy ground and pools of stagnant water.

Once on the island, a smooth natural hole leading down through the rock to a small cavern in its heart would provide an almost undetectable safety vault.

Investigators who have followed this line of reasoning have

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periodically made a superficial examination of the hole in the rock, but so far no one has found evidence that any of Slumach's gold is there.

I HOPE YOU STRIKE IT RICH

To the Editor:

I thought I would drop you a line after reading your article in our Daily Colonist and seeing you on the TV news.

I do hope that you will be lucky in finding that fabulous treasure.

I think you may still need a mineral detector to find where it is hidden. One prospector friend of mine told me that Slumach's riches came from holding up the miners from Barkerville and that the squaws were murdered so that they wouldn't squeal on him.

Did you see the TV show a couple of years ago? They took a Vancouver RCMP and others into Pitt Meadows to hunt for the Lost Creek Gold Mine. They actually found an underground creek which came from Indian Head Mountain. They did find a few nuggets, but not the mine.

I love prospecting and always like to see a prospector strike it rich. In most cases, the prospector stays poor while the mining companies get richer.

Wishing you all the success and if you do make it, would you please start up a Prospectors's Club which will help and protect all prospectors from undercutting deals. I would like to be the first member to sign.

A Prospector

Vancouver Island

YOU'VE BEEN TAKEN – MR. PROSPECTOR

To the Editor:

I am afraid you've been taken for a gullible eager-beaver by a very amateurish prospector.

First of all, I'm not making fun of your story of the Lost Gold Mine. In fact, I enjoyed reading it very much and can see where it would be very intriguing to hear first hand a story like Mr. Lund's.

But on that first trip you surely couldn't have missed noticing an old claims post 50 feet below the tunnel showing it had previously been staked and no doubt recorded in New Westminster which would quickly discount the Lost Gold

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Mine story.

I admit I was one of the curious prospectors who trekked the two miles to the tunnel, but not with gold fever, Sunday. I'm afraid you won't find enough gold in that entire hill of granite to fill a tooth, the only mineral in evidence being a very thin streak of molybdenum (soft lead appearance) showing a trace of copper stain and iron pyrites.

The molly is no doubt what spurred the old hard rock miner to put in a tunnel.

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