

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

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GOLD FEVER BECOMES EPIDEMIC AS HUNDREDS HUNT LOST MINE

Gold fever struck hundreds of Lower Mainland residents Sunday, and brought on a minor stampede of claim stakers to the rock outcropping on the east shore of the Pitt River.

Prospectors, both amateur and professional, swarmed over Sheridan Hill in a fresh search for a fabulously-rich mine, whose location has been a 70-year mystery.

The Columbian speculated Saturday that the hill, within a half-hour drive from New Westminster, might be the site of a pocket of gold discovered in 1889 by a Salish Indian named Slumach.

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The only information Slumach gave about his mine was that a creek flowed out of a mountain at the site.

The dry course of a creek which bored its way through the rock of Sheridan Hill was found by former Haney resident Wally Lund two years ago.

Columbian City Editor Elmer McLellan visited the site with Lund 10 days ago. He wrote Slumach's story Saturday, and was so impressed with the possibility that the mine had really been discovered that he returned to stake a claim on the property the same afternoon.

Before the staking was completed early in the evening, parties of Columbian readers, intrigued by the story and its possibilities, were climbing the hill on the heels of McLellan's small party.

Other hopeful prospectors were on the scene by 4 a.m. Sunday morning. [Caption of hardly distinguishable photograph reads: "Visit to kick-off point in search for the famous Lost Gold Mine on Sunday brought back this evidence of the interest drawn by The Columbian in a Saturday feature on the possibility that the gold mine area had been located. This Burnaby-Surrey party of prospectors included Al Arnason, Earl Sandle, Ben Wendall and Dave Norgaard. First person on the mountain arrived at 4 a.m. Sunday and he was followed by a steady stream of people during the day.]

All day long, groups of gold-seeking prospectors walked the two miles of dyke from the end of Harris road to the base of the hill, the forced their way through tangled forest growth and picked precarious footholds up the steep rocky slope to McLellan's claim half way to the summit.

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Some came with serious minds, to stake claims adjacent to the [staked?] one. Some came in a spirit of frivolity, and scoffed.

During the day, someone planted a painted sign which read: "This is Slumach's territory, keep off."

Someone also wrote on McLellan's claim stake: "This is Slumach's mine, help yourself."

Children gambolled in a tunnel opening from the side of the hill, which may have been the original exit of the underground stream of water, and appears to have been enlarged by the diligent pick of some hard-rock miner of the past.