

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

CURSE OF THE LOST MINE BY JON FERRY – SECOND IN SERIES SCALING CLIFFS FOR LOST GOLD.

Hollywood couldn't have found us a better campsite.

Nestled beside a lake of jade and sheltered by the sheer cliffs, it was a patch of sodden ground as flat as any in this crazy Pitt Lake mountain country.

Only 60 kilometres from downtown Vancouver, there wasn't a trace of humanity around.

But the seven members of the Province-CKVU Lost Creek Mine expedition knew they were not alone.

"That's the biggest black bear dropping I've ever seen," exclaimed survival expert Dan Cook in the mud by the unnamed lake.

Chopper pilot Ron Morris had ferried us in from Grant Narrows with two sling-loads of modern outdoor gear and it wasn't long before camp was set.

We made a hearth out of the entrails of a huge piece of deadwood and brewed up some coffee and corn-beef hash.

Then we headed out on our search for the golden cache of Slumach, the insane Salish Indian hanged for murder in New Westminster in 1891.

This was to be a test climb to reconnoitre the site where Gary McIsaac, prospector, psychic and sluice-box inventor, believed the glory hole to be.

"There's been 32 people lost their lives looking for this mine," he explained.

So what of our chances of surviving to become instant millionaires?

"Well, put it this way. When I said I was going to invent a machine to hold fine gold, everyone said it couldn't be done. And I did it."

McIsaac, 40, wears black boots and a wide-brimmed gold-studded black hat.

He always carries his "dowsing bug"—a pendulum-like divining tool consisting of a canister filled with gold and mercury suspended from a chain.

McIsaac is the optimist of the Raiders of the Lost Mine, as we liked to call ourselves.

The 37-year-old Cook, a firefighter and Coquitlam search and rescue team leader is the cynic.

"I have a theory about life," Cook suggests. "Believe half of what you see and sweet all of what you hear."

Scaling cliffs for lost gold.

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Province photographer Gerry Kahrman, TV cameraman Richard Paris, and CKVU soundman Gord Anderson are all carrying a heavy load.

“Television moves with the grace of an elephant,” quips expedition leader Dale Robins.

But Cook, as usual, has the last word. “It’s hard on the cardiovascular going up and it’s hard on the feet going down,” he grunts.

Half up it starts to hail. And it’s a miracle we all make it safely to the 1,200-metre ridge.

As we rearrange our cardiovascular system, McIsaac is hovering over his dowsing bug. It’s starting to bounce around wildly.