

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

Province 26 May 1952

NINE CLAIMS NOW STAKED: "SLUMACH'S GOLD" STILL ALLURING

BY BILL RYAN, PROVINCE STAFF WRITER

Nine mining claims have now been staked on the rocky slope of a Pitt Lake mountain on the site where a 106-year-old Indian chief claims Slumach's fabulous Lost Creek Mine lies buried beneath the snow.

A Province photographer and reporter staked the original claim last month when led to the area by the son of Chief Coquitlam Williams, Tommy Williams.

During a four-day trip back to the scene last week The Province team staked five more claims for themselves, two others for other parties for whom they acted as agent, and found that another Vancouver man had managed to find his way to the spot and stake a claim.

The latter is Howard Rode, Vancouver carpenter and member of the Alpine Club. A veteran of many of the stiffest climbs in B.C., he recognized the location of the area from stories and pictures which appeared in The Province.

Easy for Him

A few days after The Province team returned to the city, Rode and a companion traveled by canoe 12 miles up Pitt Lake from Port Coquitlam and climbed to the scene. Rode found our stakes and staked his own claim nearby.

What had been a tough, hazardous expedition for two white-collar newspapermen was and "easy" climbing junket for him.

Coincidentally, he returned to the scene last week at the same time as photographer Ray Munro and this reporter and high on the mountainside, in deep snow, after following each other's footprints about for several hours, we met a bare 100 feet from where we had placed the final post of our original claim.

Sure There's Mine

Much of the snow which totally cloaked the mountainside when we first visited the scene last month is now melted, but it is still too deep to allow samples to be taken from the creek bed.

The Pitt Lake ferryman, who took us in this time, Capt. Bill Benneck, is convinced there is a Lost Creek mine...somewhere in the peaks around Pitt Lake.

"A relative of mine actually saw the nuggets years ago," he said.

**Nine Claims Now Staked:
"Slumach's Gold" Still
Alluring**

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

Capt. Benneck has already ferried a number of searchers for the mine into the area, but all are concentrating on the region at the head of the lake, the area where 21 men have vanished.

Gold in Area

Officials of the mining recording office in New Westminster report they have received “a great number of inquiries” since we first staked our claim in the mountains on the west shore of the lake.

Mining officials have told us that there is no question there is gold in the Pitt Lake area, but all that has been located to date has been in small quantities. Some say that the rock formation in the district virtually rules out the possibility of finding rich lode gold there.

Those who have analysed the Slumach story carefully, including historian Bruce “Pinkie” McKelvie, Province staff man in Victoria, hold this theory about the bizarre story of murder and gold:

Slumach actually did come out of the Pitt Lake mountains with gold, they say, but it was not found in that region. They contend that the murdering Indian traveled further north, possibly over the old Chilcotin trail and waylaid a prospector returning from the rich Cariboo diggings. Then he returned to New Westminster with the gold to say he found it in his Pitt Lake mine.

Regardless, virtually the entire side of the mountain where ancient Chief Coquitlam Williams and his son believe Slumach’s mine to be is now staked.

The concealing snows should be gone by late July or August, and a close study of the rockbound creek we have staked must wait until then.

Until that time, frankly, it is a gamble at long odds and anybody’s guess.