

SHOTWELL & HARRINGTON (NOVEMBER 1911)

In November 1911, two worn and sickly looking men walked into the office of E.H. Heaps and Company near Ruskin, B.C. They identified themselves as Shotwell and Harrington.

According to the stories relayed by E.H. Heaps employees who were present at the time, both Shotwell and Harrington were tired, hungry and suffering from severe cases of influenza.

The ailing pair told the employees that they had been prospecting in the Stave area when they ran out of food and the weather turned on them. The mountainous terrain, poor weather condition and lack of food had forced them to follow the Stave River to civilization. Neither of them thought they would make it out alive.

They said that they had no money but offered to pay for their food, lodging and a ticket to Vancouver on the next C.P.R. train with some of the gold they had found. One of the men, it is unclear which one, pulled a large buck skin pouch from his inner jacket pocket. The pouch was almost full of large sized gold nuggets.

In exchange for a handful of nuggets the office manager arranged for food and lodging at the local hotel, obtained cloths and shoes from the local store and provided Shotwell and Harrington with enough cash to purchase train tickets to Vancouver.

As much as they were quizzed, neither Shotwell and Harrington would say any more about their prospecting trip other than they had gone into the Stave area via Pitt Lake and were on their way back to San Francisco

via Seattle. When the pair arrived in Seattle, Shotwell was admitted to the hospital where he died of influenza a short time later. What happened to Harrington is unknown. Given that Shotwell died of influenza it is assumed that Harrington may also have met a similar fate. Like so many others passing through the legend, Harrington seems to have simply disappeared into the mist never to be heard of again.

It has been suggested that either Shotwell or Harrington were the initial recipients of Jackson's letter and alleged map. Speculation further concludes that they had found Jackson's cache of gold at the base of the tent shaped rock but failed in their attempt to locate the actual source.

The very old depression at the base of what I referred to as the "Jackson rock" in the last chapter was obviously dug by someone a very long time ago. It is definitely not out of the question to suggest that this may have been where Shotwell and Harrington obtained their gold. However, the identification of a single pouch of gold does not necessarily confirm a direct link to Jackson. Jackson stated he buried part of the gold because of the weight. This indicates that he buried a substantial quantity of his load. Theoretically, by comparing the gold value of the time period with the monetary value of what Jackson did pack out would put one-half of his initial pack weight at close to 50lbs. It would have taken several pouches the size of the one described in this story to move the quantity of gold believed to have been buried by Jackson.



Photograph of the CPR station at Ruskin in 1910. This is where Shotwell and Herrington were last seen boarding the westbound train for Vancouver.