

FIRE MOUNTAIN

Fire Mountain has been identified as being of significant interest to Game Warden Stevenson during the 1931 search for R.A. Brown. The history of Fire Mountain is not only interesting in the context of R.A. (Volcanic) Brown, it is also significant to Jackson and may ultimately prove to be relevant to Slumach as well.

In 1896, gold was discovered near the top of Fire Mountain. The elevation of the mineral deposit was such that the B.C. Minister of Mines Report for the year 1900 identified it as being under several feet of snow for six months of the year.

In 1897, the Fire Mountain Gold Mining Company started construction of Tipella City, 18 miles southeast of the mine site, on the western shore of Harrison Lake.

That same year company official John R. Brown described his recent trip to the mine site to a newspaper reporter. "I travelled 40 miles to get to the mountain taking Indians, the only aid that could be secured on account of the deep snow. I found that there were two true fissure veins running parallel to one another and crossed in several places by stringers. Wherever these stringers crossed, the ore was immensely rich. At the end of 100 feet the ledge widened from four to five feet in width and a streak of copper ore had come into the pay streak. There is nothing to stop us from developing one of the richest claims ever located in British Columbia". The Fire Mountain Gold Mining Company's Money Spinner claim exposed the largest deposit. It was an 8 foot wide vein. Two hundred pounds of the ore from the vein sent to San Francisco for testing yielded \$73.13 in gold per ton. According to the B.C. Minister of Mines report there were 1,500 tons of ore on the dump and thousands of tones in sight by the end of 1897.

The Fire Mountain Company was not the only company rapidly developing their properties. Six adjoining claims were also being developed by the Skookum Chuck Mining Company.

In 1898, over a steep and treacherous pack trail the Fire Mountain Company hauled in equipment and built a quartz mill at the mine site. The ore proved to be too hard to crush without a crusher so a 50 ton sectional Huntingdon mill was hauled up to the site the following year.

The discovery of gold on Fire Mountain in the late 1890s definitely ignited considerable interest in the mining potential of the upper Harrison Lake country and drew the attention of countless prospectors.

It is entirely probable that Jackson was one of the countless prospectors drawn to the upper Harrison Lake country in search of their fortunes.

It is interesting to compare the similarities in the style of writing found in Jackson's letter and Harrison's John R. Brown's words quoted by the newspapers in 1897. The identical use of the phrase "on account" and the employment of natives by both Jackson and John R. Brown are two of several similarities that should not be overlooked. In addition to the similarities on the writing style, the similarities in elevation should also be considered. Jackson states his source would not be found for many years unless someone knew it was there, strongly suggests that it is covered by snow for the better part of the year if exposed at all other years. The Minister of Mines similarly identified the Fire Mountain properties as being covered with several feet of snow six months of the year.

The general area around Fire Mountain has been the site of numerous mining ventures since gold was first discovered there in the late 1800s. Even today the search continues and mineral claims extend in all directions right to the borders of Garibaldi Provincial Park. The Geological Survey Map identifies a large area around Fire Mountain as being the Fire Lake Group. The Fire Lake Group contains greenstone, slate, chlorite, greywacke, granulite, andesite, conglomerate, quartzite, minor limestone and schist.

As a final general point of interest there is a cabin of unknown origin located on the small island on Fire Lake. The cabin was identified in 1987 as belonging to the B.C. Forest Service, government reserve No.0308419.



Photograph of Fire Lake looking southwest towards the head of Harrison Lake taken in 1914 by the BC Forrest Service



Photograph of a sternwheeler docked at an unidentified town site on Harrison Lake in 1865.