

Newspapers and Magazines 1900s

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WHITE-HAIRED PROSPECTOR ESCAPES LOST MINE CURSE

An injured prospector managed to escape from the Pitt Lake mountain country last week, breaking the legendary curse of the "Lost Creek Mine" which has claimed the lives of 21 men who ventured into the rugged terrain to locate the lost gold mine.

White-haired Duncan McPhaden, 68, of New Westminster is reported in "fairly good" condition after being rushed to Pitt Lake Ferry wharf, at Pitt River Bridge, and transferred to Royal Columbian Hospital by New Westminster Exclusive Ambulance.

He is suffering from back and chest injuries. McPhaden said he was injured Tuesday of that week when he tumbled off a 20-foot ledge near his cabin which crumbled under him. He struck his back on a huge rock as he fell.

For two days he remained in the isolated cabin in a semi-conscious state. Early Friday he decided to make his bid for aid.

Forest restrictions prohibit entry into the territory at this time and his closest neighbours were at Williams Lodge, a summer camp at the head of Pitt Lake, six miles away.

Painfully McPhaden dragged himself from the cabin and crawled on hands and knees over more than 200 yards of rock-strewn terrain to a rowboat moored at the lake shore.

Finally he reached his gas boat moored in deep water.

At Williams Lodge he was quickly placed in a speedboat by proprietor Carl Williams and rushed to the Pitt Lake wharf, where Captain Benneck reports he seemed in "pretty serious shape."

The elderly man, who has spend ten-odd years in the Pitt Lake area in search of the "Lost Creek Mine," escaped the curse of the mine, which has haunted prospectors for more than half a century.

The last victim was Fred Gaspard, 60, of Langley, who set out on July 20, 1950 for the upper Pitt River. He was never seen again.

The Lost Creek Mine, fact or legend, originated in 1890 when a half-breed name Slummok made trips into New Westminster from the area and always brought gold nuggets with him. Despite drinking bouts and loose revelry his guarded tongue uttered no more than "Lost Creek."

No one ever was able to follow Slummok to the mine and when he died on the gallows for murdering an Indian woman he had taken to the site, his secret went with him.

White-Haired Prospector Escapes Lost Mine Curse

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Only one white man, an American, ever stumbled back with gold since Slummok was hanged in 1891. He related a fearsome tale of hardship and a creek that lost itself in a mountain tunnel. Then he sold his pack-load of gold for \$10,000 and died.