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INDIAN GHOST STANDS GUARD OVER LOST CREEK GOLD MINE | DISCOVERER TOLD SECRET BEFORE HE DIED ON GALLOWS BUT HEX OF OLD MAN HAS SPELLED DOOM FOR 22 SEARCHERS FOR "HIDEOUS CREEK LINED WITH GOLD"

BY STEWART MCNEILL

A chain of tragedy surrounding the mystery of the Lost Creek gold mine, 45 miles northeast of Vancouver, might never have happened if old Slumach's son had kept his father's last request.

Old Slumach, an Indian who discovered the mine in the 1880s, died on the gallows at New Westminster in January 1891, for murder. Before he died he told his son, Young Slumach, where the mine was located.

"But," he said, "only go there when times are bad."

Scarcely had the executioner cut the old man down from the scaffold, when his whiskey-loving son headed for the mountains of Pitt Lake. According to legend, Young Slumach lugged thousands of dollars worth of precious metal out and exchanged it for fire water.

25 have vanished

He teamed up with a half-breed, but the friendship didn't last long. The hex of his father spelled doom for the rich young Indian.

He vanished, as have 21 others who sought out the mine since that time.

An unidentified American followed the half-breed back to the mine site and watched the gold being picked up from what the Indians describe as "the hideous creek that is lined with gold."

The American then recruited a fellow countryman named John Jackson and again the half-breed was followed. The two white men could not contain their excitement and they pulled a revolver and shot the half-breed.

The murderers each toted out a reputed \$20,000 from the mine. But only Jackson reached New Westminster. The country swallowed up the other prospector.

Two maps

Jackson is said to have made two maps one of which was given to a nurse who was with him in his last days. The other was given to a man known as Shotwell of Seattle, Wash.

The Indians claim that neither Shotwell nor the nurse ventured into the area but sold their maps for \$500 apiece.

Indian ghost stands guard over lost creek gold mine

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This prompted other searchers to seek the Indian bonanza but no white man ever saw the mine again.

Simon Pierre, one of the last of the old medicine men, who died a few years ago, told Chief August Jack Khatsahlano that he had other Indians guide a white prospector into the mountain and came face to face with Old Slumach's ghost.

"We sat around the fire one night and the ghost of Old Slumach appeared," Pierre was quoted as saying. "It told us not to take the white man further. We left the prospector alone and returned...white man went no further. So he lived."