



Native Sons of British Columbia Post

William F. Cull
Another of the more recent searchers for the Lost Creek Mine. In 1975, he spent several days exploring the divide separating the Pitt and Stave watersheds. Near the top of the divide, he discovered a tent-shaped rock beside which had been abandoned a pick and shovel. Both tools were very weathered, indicating that they had been there for some time.

In his book *The Fraser Valley Story* Don wrote in 1988:

“..William F. Cull, a mailman from New Westminster, contacted me about the lost mine. He stated that he had become intrigued with the legend in the late 1950s from reading newspaper clippings and, as a result, had made several trips by helicopter into the remote wilderness. On one trip, Cull spent 10-12 days exploring and discovered a very weathered pick and shovel hidden in the crevice at the base of a tent-shaped rock, near the top of the divide between Pitt and Stave watersheds. Clearly visible on this rock was the letter ‘J’. Cull concluded that the letter had been carved with the pick left by the original owner of the tools. Unfortunately, he had gone too early in the year and there was still ice on the creeks and several feet of snow on the higher elevations. Cull told me that he planned to charter a helicopter to go in again once the snow melted; he invited me along for the trip. In June 1975, my father and I were deposited beside the tent-shaped rock. Unfortunately the snow was still too deep and we found nothing.”



From Daryl Friesen 7 August 2011

I had the pleasure of meeting William Cull at the Witch of Endor pub back in 1991 when I first really started tracking people down who had searched for the mine. He was very hesitant to share the location of the tent-shaped rock but I managed to get the general area. He was also the inspiration for something I wrote called “the prospectors philosophy.” It’s below as well as the line he said in our conversation that inspired this. Anyway, since he has passed away, I thought maybe someone would find this interesting. You see, we prospectors are a dying breed. The world doesn’t function around us anymore like it used to back in the gold rush days. The people who care for you can’t understand. What in the world would make you want to risk your life to look for gold? They don’t understand the dream, but in the old days everybody understood.

You didn't have to worry about your wife leaving you or your friends scorning you because you wanted to find the gold. Everyone was doing it. Everyone dreamed of the day when they would be the one to strike it rich. For all it represented freedom, but what does it mean to people today? I'll tell you, a big house and a nice car. People don't see that prospecting is so much more than just finding the golden score. It's not seen as a building block for freedom. It's been twisted and messed up to the point of being stuck on a scratch-and-win ticket. That is what is left of the prospector's dream in today's world. All the people around you don't understand, they can't see the freedom and the hope it brings you when you chase the dream. They just think you're dreaming, but we know the truth, don't we? .

"The truth is: you're living and they are the ones that are dreaming. Their search for the big car and the nice house. Ha! Illusions I tell you, brought onto their brainless minds by a media machine. How I wish I could chase after it still, but the fight's over for me, lad. I've got a bad ticker, you see."

THE LINE ABOVE WAS SAID BY BILL CULL.
WORD FOR WORD.

From Don Waite's memoirs on his Web site

By coincidence, my Father was once again visiting with me from Ontario. Familiar with the story, he accompanied me to the airport, and when Cull's partner refused to get into the chopper, my Dad took his place. The flight into the Pitt and Stave Regions became a highlight in his life. Unfortunately, Cull opted to fly in too early in the year, and the snow was too deep around the base of the rock and I was unable to locate and photograph the 'J' letter in the rock.

Upon my return to my studio, I learned that one of my clients had fallen into Alouette River and managed to submerge her expensive 35 mm Leica camera. She had left me a message to visit her upon my return in the hope that I could salvage her equipment. During the visit I casually mentioned that I had earlier in the day flown right over the home in a helicopter on my way to search for the lost gold mine of Pitt Lake. Her husband overheard the conversation and moments later returned and plunked down a huge raw gold nugget on the table. He told me that the three inch long nugget had been found in the Klondike and that it been in the family for several years. I asked him to loan it to me. He agreed but explained that if the nugget disappeared I'd owe him \$20,000. The following morning I went to work and as always joined several of my cronies for the usual 10:00 A.M. coffee break. I was getting quite a ribbing from everyone until I swore all to secrecy and then placed the nugget on the table. Non-believers became believers within seconds as I went on to describe the creek that was laden with walnut-sized nuggets of pure gold. I told them that Cull had given me the nugget as a memento to his discovery and that I was planning to purchase a new vehicle with my gift. My jeweller friend offered to purchase it and any other nuggets I could acquire on a cash no questions asked basis. I told him I'd make enquiries and then went back to work. Hiker John Hume was somewhat skeptical and insisted on taking his penknife to the nugget to convince himself that the rock was indeed gold and not some other 'similar' metal. I left everyone convinced that the Mother Lode had been found. Secrets about the 'Lost Mine of Pitt Lake' - at least in Maple Ridge in 1975 - were never kept and for several days I was asked my almost everyone with whom I came into contact if I could show them the nugget.