

LOST CREEK MINE

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
LEGENDARY GOLD DEPOSIT OF
PITT LAKE

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In Memory of "Arlie" Nicholson 1938 - 2001

**Dedicated to the memory of those who have lost their lives
pursuing this legend and to those who still accept the challenge.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of time, mankind has assembled an extensive collection of myths and legends that continue to puzzle the curious and inquisitive. Each and every one of these mythical and legendary records will continue to be re-counted, re-examined and relentlessly probed until they are solved or resolved.

While there are definite commonalities between myths and legends, there are also distinguishing differences. Legends are based on some aspect of factual events that have escaped their initial boundaries and grown increasingly distorted with time. Mythology on the other hand, is based on primeval beliefs and traditional ideologies that have attempted to rationalize and interpret the unexplained by incorporating, demigods, supernatural creatures and super heroes.

Almost every corner of British Columbia has experienced some of this provinces rich and colorful mining history. With that history come the inevitable legends. Legends of murder, mayhem, hidden fortunes and mysterious lost gold mines. For the most part, legends of hidden fortunes and lost gold mines have had a tendency to incorporate murder, deception, betrayal, and some aspect of the supernatural into their story.

One of the most famous of British Columbia's elusive fortunes that contains a captivating blend of mythological intrigue is the fabled Lost Pitt Lake Mine. This legendary mother lode is also known by other names such as, The Lost Creek Mine, Slumach's Lost Gold Mine and Jackson's Lost Creek Mine.

According to legend, hidden somewhere in the southwestern region of British Columbia, beyond the head of Pitt Lake, lies a creek so rich in placer gold that it literally defies imagination. Nestled somewhere in those steep and treacherous mountains with their deceptive unforgiving glaciers is the elusive mother lode of mother lodes.

Since its conception in the late 1880s, countless prospectors and fortune hunters have searched in vain for this elusive creek of gold. In their quest for fame and fortune at least 25 of these unfortunate souls have died or simply vanished into the wilderness never to be seen or heard from again.

Of the thousands of nameless prospectors who have searched for this legendary fortune, only five, in addition to the legends founder, have been historically iden-

tified or otherwise accredited as successfully locating a source of gold. It is the stories surrounding Slumach, Jackson, Shotwell and Harrington, R.A. Brown alias "Doc" or "Volcanic" Brown and G.S. ("Stu") Brown that forms the basis of this book.

The ghost of the legends founder, Slumach, is said to zealously guard the site slaying anyone who tries to retrieve the gold. Some will swear that they have seen this ghostly apparition and claim to have been spared its wrathful vengeance only because they immediately retreated back to civilization. Many believe that some of the deaths and disappearances that have occurred over the years are the direct handiwork of this ghostly assassin.

Modern science may have validated the existence of the paranormal and supernatural entities however a hostile environment and nature itself can be just as lethal and unforgiving as any ghost seeking revenge.

The mountains and glaciers beyond the head of Pitt Lake are treacherous and will not pamper the inexperienced, unprepared or unlucky. The rugged mountain terrain is steep, littered with gullies, canyons, ravines and treacherous unstable talus slopes. Above the tree line the barren rock becomes smoother, slipperier and even more dangerous. Numerous glaciers and snow packs in the area provide an illusion of safety with their thin and peaceful looking cover over deadly ice crevices.

World class sized grizzly bear are on record as having been taken out of the search area. Exceptionally large wolves, head and shoulders above the stumps of freshly fallen trees, have been seen by loggers working beyond the head of Pitt Lake. A helicopter pilot has reported examining the remains of an uneaten yet disembowelled and dismembered mountain goat on an ice pack. Several credible researchers have also reported sighting the fabled Sasquatch. I personally have seen a wolverine that was at least the size of a large German Shepherd dog. The weather, particularly in and around the immediate vicinity of the glaciers and ice packs, is unpredictable and can change suddenly and drastically within a few minutes. Anyone caught unprepared on a steep barren rock slopes or in the lower ravines and gullies during heavy rain storms can easily become trapped and face life threatening situations.

The existence of a vengeful ghost is best left to individual opinion and belief. The existence of Sasquatch however is a more openly debatable subject. Native history, numerous reported sightings and current avail-

able evidence does lead on to ponder the validity of the fabled creature. Regardless of individual belief, I am confident that the recorded deaths and disappearances linked to this legend can be directly attributed to any one of the multitude of natural peril commonly encountered in the area.

For several months in 1987, I worked for British Columbia Forest Products as a driller/blaster at their logging operations at the head of Pitt Lake.

Unfortunately my employment was short lived due to the sudden onset of a serious health problem. I was hospitalized for what was initially believed to be a heart condition. The original diagnosis was nitro-glycerine poisoning, a type of heart condition attributed to long term exposure to explosives.

Within months of being virtually disabled with this condition, almost as suddenly as it appeared, my condition cleared and I fully regained my health. I continued working with explosives until 1992 and never had a relapse of any type. Whatever caused my health problem not only remains a medical mystery to this day, it is also my own personal Pitt Lake mystery.

During my brief stay at the BCFP logging camp at Alvin, a short distance past the head of Pitt Lake, I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to familiarize myself with all areas located within the logging boundaries. I was also privy to some of the lesser known stories that circulated amongst the loggers.

In addition to viewing the more accessible sites located within the logging boundaries, I have also traveled to many of the more remote locations and examined several interesting sites. To date, I have been involved with 7 helicopter and 4 hiking expeditions to various locations within the boundaries of Garibaldi and Golden Ears Provincial Parks.

Experiencing the extremities of the terrain, the harshness of the environment and encounters with less than passive carnivorous animals has definitely given me a much clearer understanding of the legend and the vulnerability of humankind.

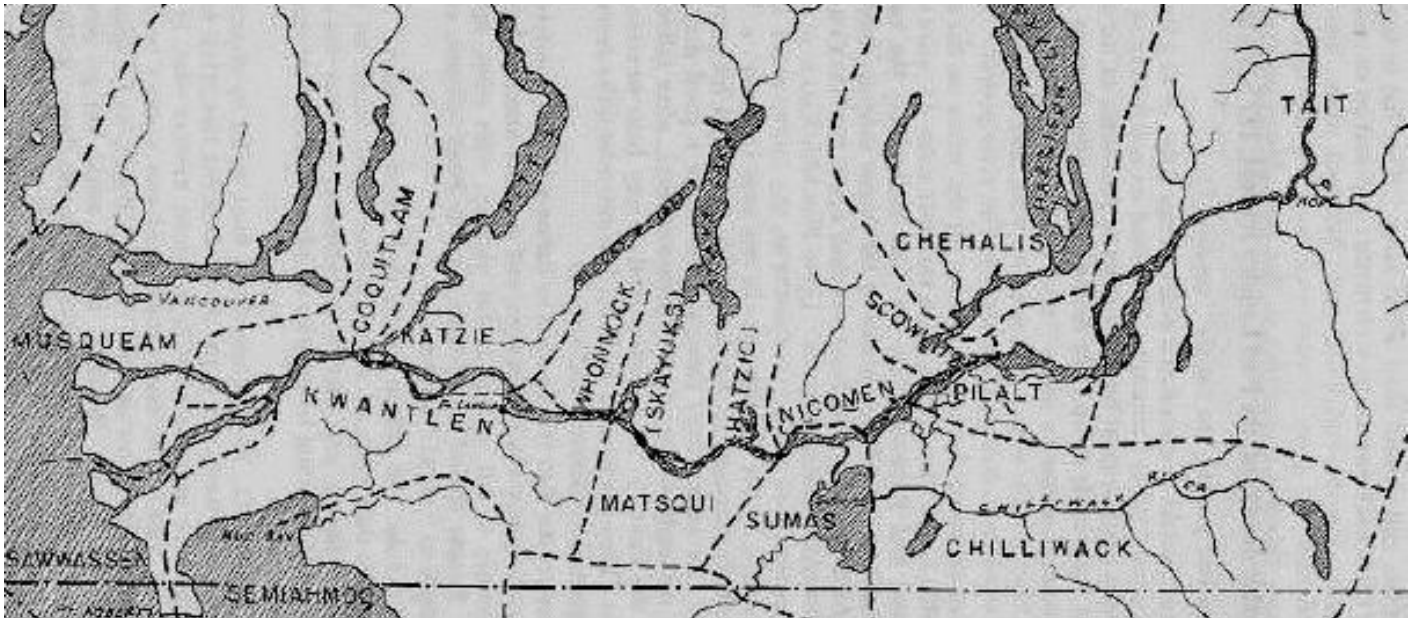


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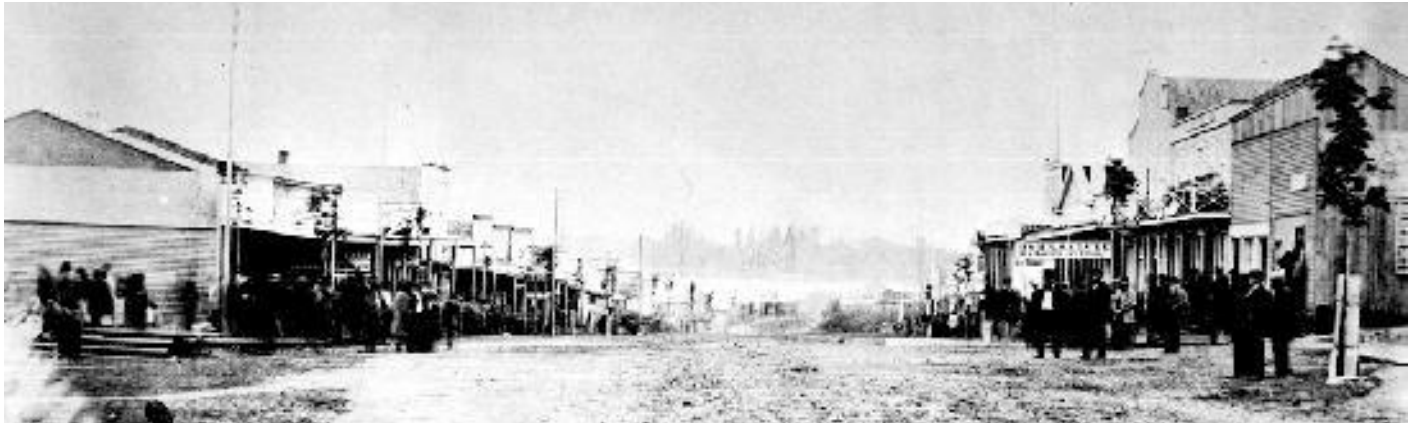
Several people have asked me why I have never returned to the area where I believe the legendary gold is located. The answer to that question is personal and I will not identify any specific reason. I will only say that I did experience an event that I have no intention of repeating in my lifetime. After reading this book, a perceptive reader may be able to speculate with some degree of accuracy the reasoning behind my resolve.

Without gold nuggets in hand, it is both impossible and irresponsible to absolutely confirm the existence of the Lost Pitt Lake Mine. However, by all accounts I firmly believe there is a remarkably rich mother lode worth billions of dollars at today's prices patiently waiting to be re-discovered. I am confident that the information presented in this book will offer even the most skeptical, food for thought.

R.W. Nicholson



Map outlining the traditional boundaries of the Sto:lo and adjacent Native tribes of the Fraser Valley. Source: *The Upper Stalo Indians*, Wilson Duff



Photograph of Columbia Street in New Westminster taken sometime in the 1880s. BC Archives A01665



Photograph of Port Douglas (Fort Douglas) on Little Harrison Lake taken in 1865. BC Archives A-03519