

G.S. "STU" BROWN (1916 - CURRENT)

Stu Brown entered the domain of this legend with a status that equals if not exceeds that of Jackson when he wrote his first in a long series of letters to the British Columbia provincial government on August 20, 1974. In his initial letter of that year, Stu Brown claimed to have discovered an extremely rich gold deposit worth, in his estimation, between one and twenty billion dollars within the boundaries of a provincial park.

In subsequent letters to various B.C. provincial government officials Brown identified his discovery as being the legendary "Lost Pitt Lake Mine" and that it was within the boundaries of Garibaldi Provincial Park.

Stu Brown was not some eccentric prospector inflicted with gold fever or some other illusion of grandeur when he contacted the B.C. government in 1974, he was the Supervisor of the Surveys Section - Plant Protection Division - Forestry Services - Environment Canada.

Stu Brown was born in Basswood, Manitoba in 1916. In 1937 he graduated from the Minnedosa Collegiate Institute receiving the Governor General's award for proficiency in senior matriculation.

Shortly after graduating from the Minnedosa Collegiate Institute he went to work at the Brandon Mental Hospital. In 1941 he graduated from the hospital with a certificate in psychiatric nursing.

Following his graduation in 1941 Stu enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force and served Canada with honour during World War Two. Trained as a navigator, he flew on 17 bombing missions over Germany before being shot down 40 miles from their target at Nuremberg. He had spent 21 months in a German prisoner of war camp by the time the war ended.

Shortly after returning to Canada he enrolled at the University of British Columbia and continued his academic studies. In 1947 he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. In 1948 he received his Bachelor of Science in Forestry and in 1951 he received his Masters of Science degree in Forest Entomology.

Stu's account of how he actually discovered the legendary Pitt Lake Lost Mine is quite humorous to say the least. He began by telling me that like everyone else he simply researched all of the available stories of the legend during his spare time. When he finally determined where the most likely location was, he had the appro-

priate stereoscopic photos enlarged. With a grin, he added that the enlargement was at the expense of the federal government. On these photos, enlarged enough to count trees, he identified what he was looking for. Stu relays that in addition to his position with Environment Canada which involved countless hours of aerial photo interpretation, he also had considerable prior experience looking for minute details and camouflaged sites in aerial photos during World War Two. The combination of experience gained through these two positions developed into the unique ability to identify specifics that would elude most others.

He considers his discovery to be the same as Jackson's however maintains his belief that it is not the same location as that of Slumach or "Doc" Brown. He does however add that what Slumach found should not be too far away while "Doc" Brown's location is somewhere else.

Stu is very strong in his belief that Jackson's letter is fairly straight forward but curiously adds, "His geographical sense was a bit lacking." He claims to have never actually walked to Jackson's tent shaped rock although he says he does know where it is located. He chuckles when the subject is discussed and in logical simplicity, candidly told me that he found Jackson's gold creek so there was never any need for him to take precious time to walk to a rock that he has already seen through enlarged stereoscopic aerial photos.

According to Stu, "the location itself is exactly like Jackson described it except the canyon is a little shorter than a mile and one half. Seeing it from the same ridge that Jackson once stood on was an exhilarating experience "The creek itself is blocked from exiting the canyon by a natural rock wall or short ridge that, in Stu's words, "looks just like a real man made dam," about 100 feet high. When there is sufficient thawing the water does actually exit a small hole in the rock wall for a very short period of time during late summer. Stu's description of the water exiting the hole is that, "it looks just like the falls at Waterton Lake National Park only smaller. The water just gushes out of the hole in the face of this natural rock dam."

He describes a pool at the base of the natural dam as being about twenty feet across and "ankle deep in gold." The creek itself is only a few inches deep and roughly 10 feet across, "a little smaller than Mission Creek in Kelowna." The entire creek is littered with large gold nuggets and the pool at the base of the small ridge is ankle deep in small nuggets.

Stu's description of the hole in the rock wall with water gushing reminded me of the way Corbold Creek comes boiling through the subterranean channel at the fish hatchery at Alvin. Subterranean water channels and caverns are not uncommon in or around Garibaldi or Golden Ears Parks.

In late July 1989 arrangements were made for Stu and our search party to fly in to the site under Stu's guidance and direction. On the day we were to fly out, a storm front unexpectedly moved in and the trip had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Stu later decided against flying in, saying that helicopter activity would draw too much attention to the area. Due to the lateness of the season and the personal schedules of everyone involved there were no further attempts to go into the area that year.

Stu offered to hike into the site with me so that I could both see it for myself and independently document his discovery. Arrangements were made to hike in during the last week in August. It was to take four days, two days in and two days out. According to Stu, "the longest distance actually takes less time". The most direct route is over very difficult and steep terrain which takes longer to cross than it does by going the longer distance via the more indirect and easier route.

Stu's plan was for both of us to take two empty pack-sacks into the site. We would fill one of the pack-sacks with nuggets walk it out a short distance and leave it at a predetermined location. We would then walk back in and fill the second pack sack bringing it out to where the first one had been left. The object was to leap-frog the two pack sacks out to the location of our vehicle. He believed we could each carry 80 to 100 lbs. of gold in each pack.

Stu and I drove to the north end of Harrison Lake via the Vancouver-Pemberton highway. We arrived very late in the day and parked on the main Pemberton-Harrison Lake road at the junction of the Fire Mountain logging road. We were to begin our two day hike into the location on Terrarosa Glacier from this point.

Because of our late arrival we decided to sleep in the vehicle and start out fresh in the morning. Unfortunately we woke to a heavy rain that had not been predicted in the weather forecast. The downpour was so heavy that the trip had to be cancelled.

The limited window of opportunity when the creek is accessible was lost and another expedition for that year was not planned. Due to Stu's age and his progres-

sively worsening Parkinson's disease a planned trip the following year had to be cancelled. Stu and I never did plan another trip together and to date I have not had the opportunity to return to the area again.

During our numerous discussions, Stu did tell me that he was more than financially secure with the pensions he received and did not need or want the gold for himself. He was primarily interested in the government using the resources to reduce or possibly eliminate the national deficit and reduce taxes for all Canadians.

I do know for a fact that Stu had become thoroughly offended by the responses from all levels of the provincial government. He was extremely concerned that the government or some entity from within would secretly take the gold out if they knew where it actually was. He was also gravely concerned that with time some other independent party would find and remove the gold without anyone's knowledge.

In a letter to me dated September 25, 1987, Stu wrote. "As for this summer, the situation has entered too critical a stage to have any info released... Above all, please keep mum about everything now. One word could quickly upset the whole setup. I have had recent disturbing news which I dare not even put on paper. You will understand better when I am able to talk to you."

On October 7, 1987, I received a surprise follow-up letter in which he wrote, "The expectation all summer that the government would act by going in kept things in a state of suspense and now Mr. Flitton has backed out and suggested that I apply for a permit to develop the area. As I do not feel competent to organize such an undertaking I have written to a very reputable mining company for advice...I enclose a copy of Mr. Flitton's letter which you must keep in confidence...I would ask you not to phone or come to visit as it could be the final straw...I hope to hear from you shortly".

On two occasions in 1989, Stu allowed me to tape record our conversations. On one recording he states. "If the government doesn't want to mine the vein I can understand that but they can still fly in with helicopters and take out hundreds of millions of dollars worth of free gold from the creek bottom. I can understand not wanting to develop the park, putting roads in and everything but...the gold...just pick it up...it would not have any noticeable impact on the environment...fly the stuff out...." The second recording has been transcribed and is offered for consideration in a following chapter.

Frustrated with government inaction, Stu had con-

2713 Horberry Cres.,
Ottawa, K1V 6N3,
September 25, 1975.

Honorable Leo T. Nimsick,
Minister of Mines & Petroleum Resources,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B. C.

Honorable Sir,

After I visited your office at the beginning of September I travelled with my wife and family to Vancouver to spend a few days visiting friends there. On Saturday, September 6, I made another attempt to go to the site in the park for the purpose of obtaining samples but could not complete my mission due to weather and treacherous mud slides barring the route. It was necessary to turn back and, as I had to drive to work in Ottawa for Monday, September 15, I gave up thoughts of a further attempt during 1975. Weather and terrain are unpredictable and likely to become very treacherous after the middle of September in the area. My next attempt will have to wait until the beginning of August, 1976.

Regarding the contract to protect my interests in a claim, this is of secondary consideration. However, there are two of us who are involved primarily, and three others to a lesser degree. We would be interested in obtaining reimbursement for all our expenses plus either an initial payment or share of early production which would provide for us to live comfortably for the rest of our lives. If in the form of an initial payment I would expect it to be in the form of a sale of all rights to, presumably, the provincial government, thus placing ownership in the hands of the people of the province.

I am making plans for a determined effort in 1976 but the terrain is tough and the site in a very secluded spot. You will hear further from me at a later date.

Sincerely,

G. Stuart Brown.

LEO T. NIMBICK
219 SIXTH AVENUE SOUTH
CRANBROOK
BRITISH COLUMBIA
TELEPHONE: 426-6087



R.W. Nicholson,
Box 1923,
Hope, B.C.
V0x-120

Dear Mr. Nicholson:

I am writing this letter in reply to your letter dated June 5th re the story of a lost mine. I am sorry I did not answer earlier, but I have been away from Cranbrook.

I have a recollection of someone coming to me about finding gold in the park. From what I can remember the story was that he could see all this gold and nuggets laying in the bottom of the creek ready to be picked up.

To my mind the story was a little far fetched. He wanted me to give him permission to take the gold out of the park. This would be tanta mount to giving him permission to mine in the park, which I could not do since it would be against the law.

That was all I ever heard about the gold in the park. Hoping this will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

Leo T. Nimsick.

tacted the Teck Corporation in 1987 hoping they had the resources and influence required to legally mine the site. In a letter to Stu, dated October 5, 1987, the Teck Corporation offered him, "\$10,000 and 2% of the Net Smelter Returns provided they successfully stake or otherwise acquire mineral title to the site and provided Stu give them an exclusive run at the situation for one full year."

Unfortunately, like all of his previous attempts, Stu's 1987 negotiations with the government and the Tech Corporation failed to reach an acceptable level of agreement. It was mid 1988 when Stu told me some of the details of these negotiations which he had been alluding to in the letters he had written to me in September and October of the previous year.

There are people who were either involved with Stu Brown or otherwise familiar with his disclosure who have expressed skepticism in his claim. Some dismiss his claim as either being over exaggerated or totally fictitious altogether. The primary argument from these quarters is that Jackson stated the creek disappeared while Stu identifies it as flowing through a hole in a ridge. Others point out the significant distance between what is believed to be the "Jackson" rock and the area that Stu identifies. A few have suggested that Stu was party to an expedition in which someone else made the discovery.

Stu Brown has made academic accomplishments which only the most dedicated strive for. His entire background is far beyond reproach. He was a senior government official when he began his letter writing campaign. It is very clear that both his professional achievements and personal credibility would have been completely destroyed, had the government responded positively in 1974 and he in turn was unable to identify the site.

For example, in 1975, Stu met with Leo T. Nimsick, former Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources. Mr. Nimsick apparently agreed to allow Stu to bring out representative samples, directly to him, at which point they would discuss a contract. It is doubtful that anyone would meet with any official if they were not totally confident in their opinions and beliefs.

In 1988, I telephoned Mr. Nimsick at his home in Cranbrook B.C., to ask him if he could elaborate on his 1975 negotiations with Stu Brown. Mr. Nimsick told me that he vaguely remembered his meeting with Stu Brown. When I asked him about giving Stu permission to

remove samples of gold from within the boundaries of Garibaldi Park he seemed somewhat hesitant in answering the question. He only said he vaguely remembered something about gold from the Lost Pitt Lake Mine however could not remember the details of the subject.

I asked Mr. Nimsick if he would document what he could remember and send it to me at his convenience. He assured me that he would. I did not hear from Mr. Nimsick for several months so I wrote to him, again asking for documentation.

For further independent consideration, I have included selected examples of Stu Brown's letters to the government and the responses he received to those letters in the next chapter. These selected letters are public documents and can be independently obtained by contacting the appropriate government agencies. The last time Stu Brown and I talked in person was sometime in late 1990 or early 1991. There was a sense of defeat in his voice when he told me that the gold was affecting his personal life and he was just going to forget the whole thing. He sadly admitted that he was tired of trying to convince the provincial government to take action.

Although we wrote back and forth for awhile, Stu's letters slowly became more infrequent and finally they stopped arriving. I spoke with Stu's wife briefly in late 2000 and she told me that Stu was in failing health and did not want anything more to do with Pitt Lake.

In concluding this chapter it is significant to note that G.S. "Stu" Brown is the only person to claim to have found the legendary Lost Pitt Lake Mine and live a relatively healthy life long after the fact