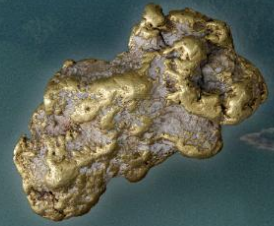


SLUMACH'S CURSE

AND THE LOST GOLD MINE OF PITT LAKE



FOREWORD

ADAM J.B. PALMER

Movie Star and Mountaineer



♦ Foreword ♦



Friedrich 'Fred' Braches (1930-2024)
Founder of the website slumach.ca
<https://slumach.ca>

It was in the Summer of 2009, after returning from an expedition with Evan Howard looking for the Lost Creek Mine that I met Don. He was with Fred Braches and both of them proceeded to question Evan and I regarding our recent trip to the Terrarosa Glacier. Right away, I sensed Don's strategy was more akin to that of a police detective than a fellow gold hunter in breaking the ice with us for our first introduction. Nonetheless, his passion and curiosity along with his genuine interest in our expedition was only fueling my intensity to tell him everything I knew. I was also curious to know everything he knew as well. I figured this was my way into his mind for the way he interrogated me. I opened up and gradually steered the conversation towards his own research and he soon opened up and divulged what he knew. However, I realized there was more to this Donald Waite guy than just someone who was looking for a lost gold mine. I soon found out his life was just as twisted and mysterious as was 'The Legend of the Lost Creek Mine, a rabbit hole that sucks people in and at a time in Don's life when he was trying to find his way out.

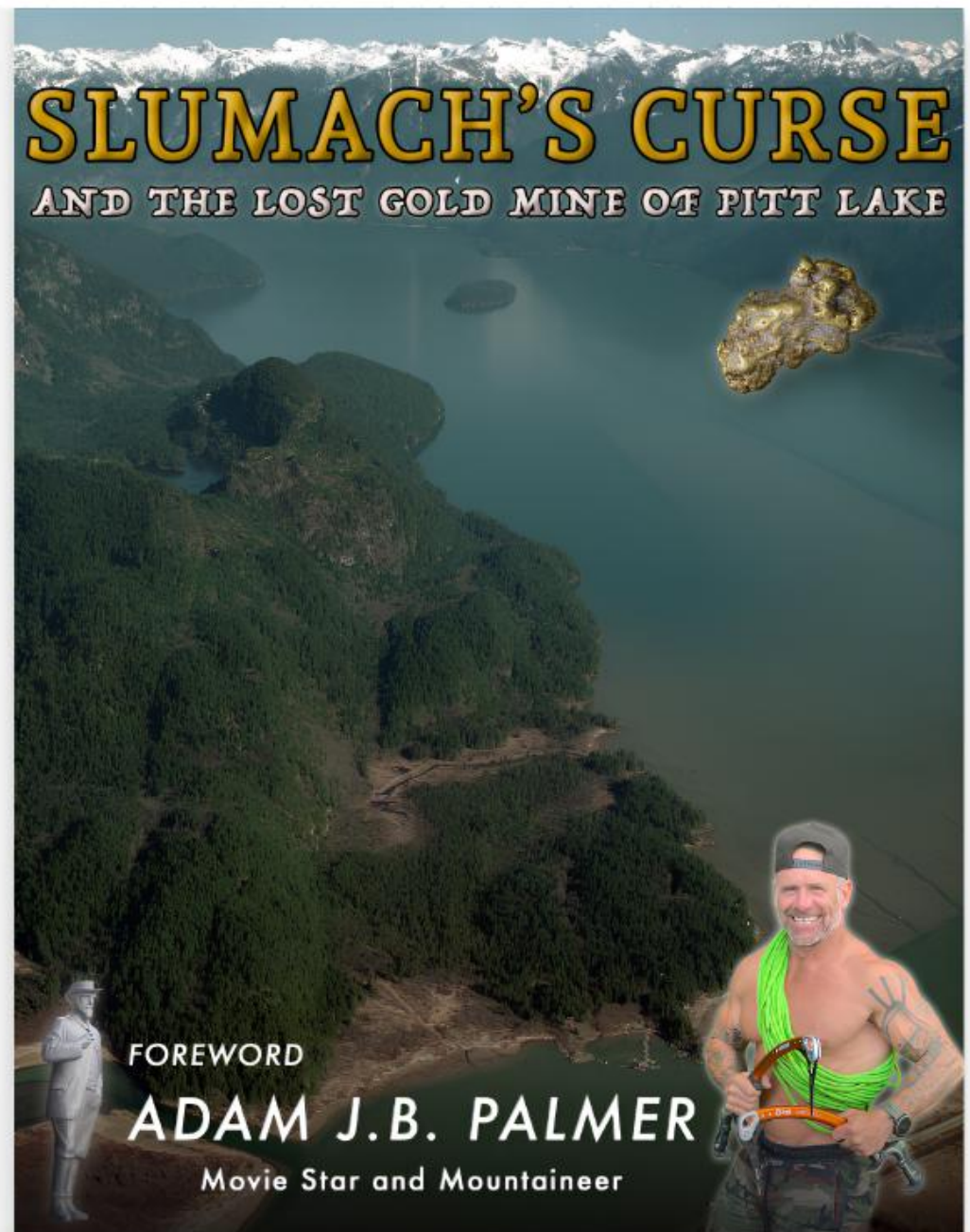
As days, months, and years passed by, the communication between Don and I has never stopped in regards to researching the mystery behind the Lost Creek Mine. But the further down this rabbit hole I go, the more I realize there is a strange parallel between Don's life and the Lost Gold Mine. Both trap you into what can be best described as a 'psychological thriller' or a difficult thousand piece jigsaw puzzle and the last piece of the puzzle is missing. Don provides a window to look into his life and witness the mental and psychological ups and downs of an author, explorer, police officer, father, and husband. Don's personal triumphs and tragedies takes you on a twisting highway of mental breakdowns that seems to spiral out of control, but like the Legend of the Lost Gold Mine, there is always something new that hits you, and pulls you further in and sparks the curiosity to those of us that have agreed to open the door to Don Waite when you hear him knocking.

Adam J.B. 'Boomer' Palmer
Mountaineer



Adam Palmer and Tim Hardy,
Director of *Dead Man's Curse*
<https://www.timhardy.ca/>

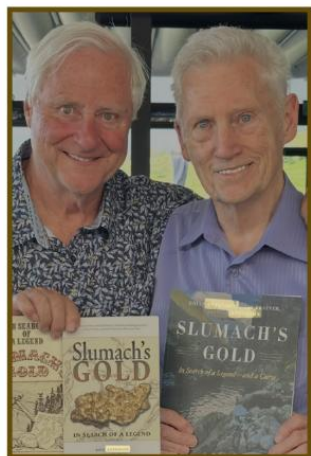
SLUMACH'S CURSE



It was a spring day in 1972. I worked with a graphic arts firm, *Camart Studio of New Westminster*. One of our clients was Maple Ridge Printers and I was dropping off work we'd done for them. Talking with the owner Mo Staudt, I mentioned my older brother Brian, our friend Mary Trainer and myself were nearing completion of our book about Slumach's gold, readying it for printing in the coming month.

"Well, you should meet my friend Don Waite. He's also writing a book about ol' Slumach. I'm going to print it this summer. It's really good. No one knows more about that legend than Don."

"Don who?" I asked.



Rick Antonson, author of
Slumach's Gold.

<https://www.rickantonson.com/>

him saying. "I thought people would just pay. They don't. I've had a successful four months. But, I've been so busy I didn't start looking at the accounts receivable until this week. I need the money."

After meeting him, and newly aware about how good his book would be, our publishing timelines might have been sped up a little out of competitive spirit to ensure our book hit the shelves first. Our title was out in June 1972. Don's book came out in August.

Like Don, we had very little idea what we were doing. We, too, were self-publishing our work. As with him, we had uncertain plans for getting the book into stores and to readers we were all convinced wanted our two books. What he knew was that his book would get very good newspaper coverage in Maple Ridge where he was popular. And that was the main market for the Slumach legend.

Whenever I was in Maple Ridge (which I made a point of every few weeks, as an excuse to talk with Don), we met up. Don was the original "Slumacher". His research was diligent. His sources were impressive. He had stories we didn't even know existed. As an RCMP constable, he'd befriended the Katzie people, Slumach's nation, and they respected him. From them he heard facts and rumours about their family, including Slumach. I couldn't wait to read his book.

Coincidences continued. Both our books would be distributed by Western Heritage Supply, enabled by Bill and Max, who placed heaps of our *In Search of a Legend: Slumach's Gold* and Don's *Kwant'stan* in racks and

"Go two blocks from here to Don Waite Photo Studio. Tell him I say hi."

Shortly afterwards, I stood inside the door of the photography shop eyeing portraits and looking at cameras for sale while a man behind the counter dealt with two female customers. Mostly I was trying to get the measure of the man. When the ladies left, I stepped to the counter.

"Hi. You'll be Don. Mo sent me. Says you're writing a book about Slumach. Us too. My name's Rick. How do you do..."

"Want a coffee?" he said.

Thus began a friendship I treasure, one that's as active as ever 54 years later. And that brings me to writing this introduction of Don and his work.

Don was then new with the photography shop, deeply committed to making the retail and portrait ends of the business do well. Over that first day's coffee, he mused about aerial photography as a niche he wanted to pursue. And admitted to being new to the world of commerce. "I just started to go after people to pay me," I remember him saying. "I thought people would just pay. They don't. I've had a successful four months. But, I've been so busy I didn't start looking at the accounts receivable until this week. I need the money."

bookstores around the province, both books selling out in months instead of years.

Despite the competition – or perhaps because of it – a close friendship ensued.

Over the next few years, Camart Studio did the graphic and print preparation for two more of Don's books, including *The Fraser Canyon Story*. Always, we debated design and content and ideas and shared lessons learned from our publishing enterprises. Don was articulate about how he saw a book being shaped. He admitted the need for an editor to sort out his words. And he always showed amazing photographs at all manner of angles, often from the air. Mary, Brian and I had taken our interests forward by establishing Nunaga Publishing which would eventually publish 25 books by other authors through to 1979 when we sold it to Douglas & McIntyre. We paralleled Don's publishing endeavours for his own works.

It was clear Don wanted control of his books, their appearance and distribution. His eye for that was reflective of his talent for the art of photography: a one-off ability from a one-off individual. Every couple of years he'd have a new book, each improved over the last one in terms of writing and images and design and sales.

Once while visiting over coffee and donuts at Don and Tina's home on a weekend morning, a grizzly man appeared through the doorway. Don introduced him as Fred Braches. "Fred knows a fact or two about Slumach. He's skeptical about pretty much everything you or I have written about the legend. A bit cynical, but I luv the guy." All this said in front of Fred, who nodded.

Fred would go on to become the most thorough researcher about all-things-Slumach, aided and abetted by Don. Fred established *slumach.ca* and decades later before he passed away he asked Brian, Mary and me to be custodians of the site on his behalf, an honour we maintain to this day. Don's work is throughout *slumach.ca*, tracked and documented, making sure nothing has been missed – not the asides or the wanderings or the hypothesis or the escapades.

In a real way, Fred's work with *slumach.ca* and his books chronicled Don's quest for truths (and huge dollops of myth) surrounding Slumach's gold.

As my own writing veered toward foreign travel adventures and publishers like Dundurn/Toronto and Skyhorse/New York demanded the best of images for their use, Don offered his help. Over long days, he took mediocre photographs of mine and did a sort of photo-voodoo magic of enhancing out of focus bits, making colour turn to vivid black and white, and inconvenient content disappear. He befriended my books as he'd befriended me. Never asking anything in return except understanding of his writerly ambitions, and the ongoing bits of debate.

By then, he was into reminiscing, often jibbing me for a cover of his that didn't work out on a book Camart produced, and for which we blamed one another for the poor cover decision. Quick to laugh, he couldn't let it go. Which is how he's been about everything – diligent, tenacious, focused and brave, and with a genuine gracious yet biting sense of humour, often aimed at himself. Gotta luv that.

When Brian, Mary and I wrote our capstone edition, *Slumach's Gold: In Search of a Legend ~ and a Curse*, we spoke often with Don for his tales, updating what was written earlier. As generous now as he was in 1972, he shares what he knows. And he provided photographs as a gift to enhance our work. And then he identified spots on maps to help our storytelling. He still knows things none of the rest of us do.

As I've read his *The Boy from Renfrew: Ramblings of a Bird Photographer*, and as I go through his writing-that-will-never-end *Sir James Bond II: Crazy Genius*, I applaud his candour about "the rapid descent from normal to bipolar". He is as forthright as he was the day I met him, never shy about integrity, open as a book.

Rick Antonson, Author

OIL PAINTING BY FRANZ XAVIER WINTERHALTER, ROYAL COLLECTION: QUEEN VICTORIA WOA 3154



Queen Victoria (1819-1901)

Queen Victoria's reign began in 1837 and ended with her death in 1901.

British Columbia's capital, Victoria, was named in her honour.

She was also responsible for the naming of New Westminster, known as the Royal City.

SLUMACH'S CURSE

◆The Royal City's RCMP Courthouse Detachment◆

A short backtrack is in order before going forward with the saga of Slumach's Lost Gold Mine on Pitt Lake and my career in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. My first posting upon leaving recruit training in Ottawa was to the City of Burnaby, British Columbia's largest detachment. From there, the force sent me to New Westminster Subdivision Headquarters to shuffle paperwork for several months before another transfer to the New Westminster Courthouse. This detachment was located on the second floor and consisted of non-commissioned officer Corporal H. Frank Bacon's (1913-2003) small room, a reception area, a coffee room and a lockup with two 8x8 foot cells. Frank shared the detachment with me and a rookie cop straight out of training. For the first few months duties were marching down to the post office in boots and breeches to pick up the morning's mail or driving around the Fraser Valley with a newbie serving summons and subpoenas.

The large County Courtroom (Federal) was just down the hall where criminal trials sometimes took weeks because an accused, given the opportunity of being tried by a Judge Alone or by a Judge and Jury, always took the latter as it was more fun to be the center of attention in a courtroom than whiling away the time in the 160-acre Oakalla Prison Farm in Burnaby. Besides, they didn't want their fate to be at the hands of a single judge having a bad day in the office.

It was on a quiet day when Frank called me into his office for assistance in tidying up an old vault. He unlocked a door off his office and led me up a circular staircase to a room containing manuscripts of criminal trials dating back almost 100 years. As we sorted through the musty files, my superior casually mentioned an old Katzie Indian named Slumach had been hung from a rafter above the vault's stairwell for murdering another First Nations individual who had supposedly followed him to a gold mine on Pitt Lake. That brief conversation was the first time I had ever heard of Slumach or the Lost Mine of Pitt Lake. Frank was wrong. Slumach was hung in the Provincial Gaol (now Simcoe Park at the northwest corner of 8th Street and Royal Avenue). From the time of his capture until his trip to the gallows, Slumach pined away in the British Columbia Penitentiary. For years, it was believed Slumach had been buried in a pauper cemetery. He wasn't. The 70+ year old First Nations gentleman was interred at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Sapperton, only a stone's throw from where he'd been imprisoned in 'The Big House'.

A day or two later, I visited the New Westminster Public Library and Chief Librarian Alan Woodland pulled the 'Slumach' file with about 50 pages of newspaper clippings about the elder Katzie murderer. He photocopied the pages for me.

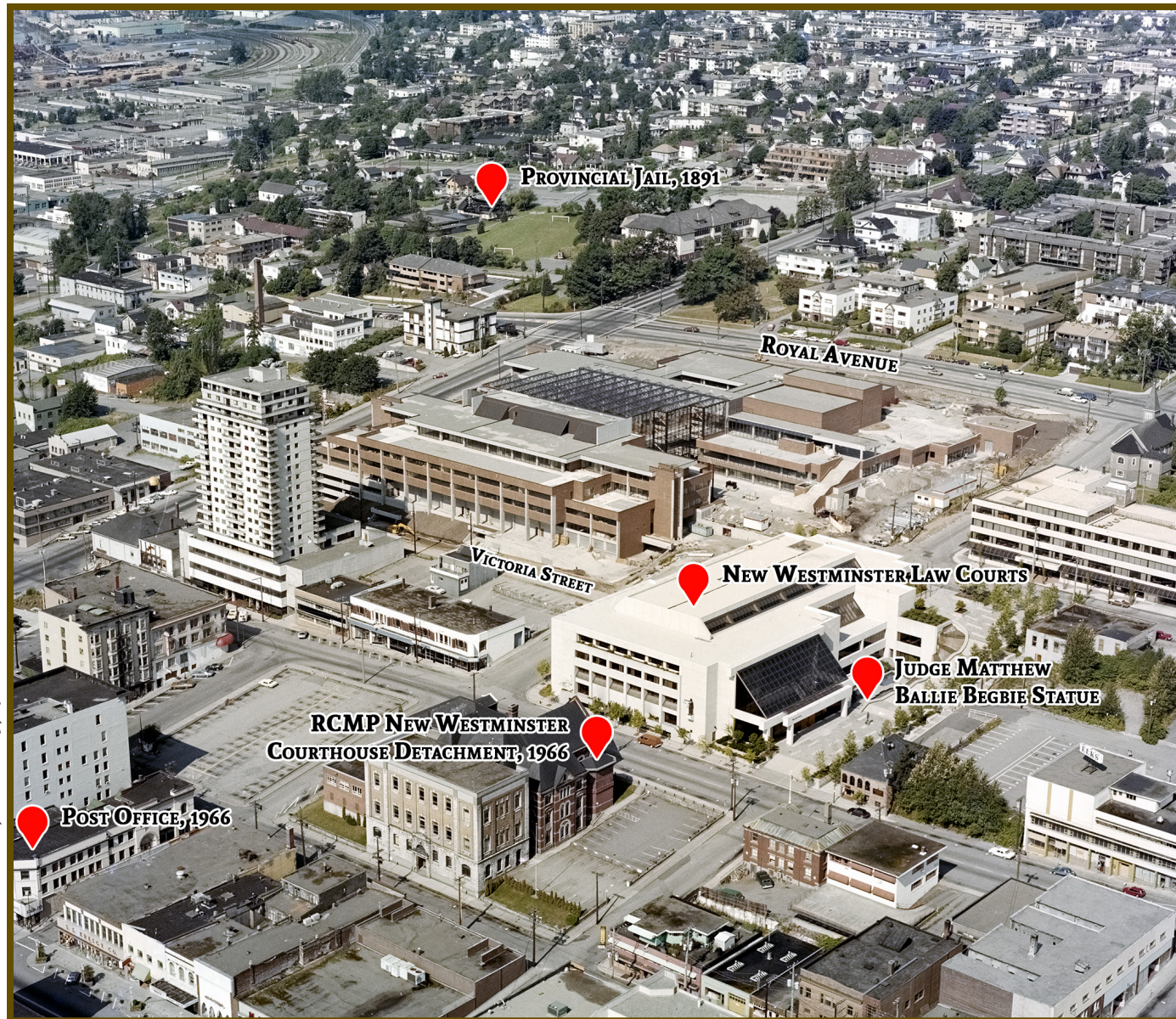
Although unaware of it at the time, my hours of sitting in British Columbia's Supreme Courtroom as an escort for lawbreakers placed me within 20 feet of where Slumach's trial took place. In 1891, the imposing brick and stone court house was opened by Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, the province's first Chief Justice. He came to be known as 'the Hanging Judge'. Begbie was sworn in only a few months before Slumach's trial for murder. His statue stood at the entrance into the new New Westminster courthouse for several years before being removed in July 2019. The decision to get rid of the mannequin was made by the New Westminster City Council due to its association with the wrongful hanging of Tsilhqot'in chiefs and its status as a symbol of the colonial era.

My responsibilities changed a few months later with the Fall Assizes and for me it was a rude awakening as my duties shifted to escorting dangerous criminals from Oakalla Prison Farm awaiting their days in court. The OPF held criminals serving two years less a day and as well suspects charged with heinous crimes such as armed bank robbery, safe cracking, sexual assault, rape, attempted murder and murder. With another member, it was our job to transfer the charged men the five miles back and forth between OPF in Burnaby to court. On occasion, repeat convicted felons for bank robbery and safe cracking were given long sentences or even for life under the Habitual Criminals Act. Called the 'Bitch', 'the three strikes and you're out' was a

Matthew Begbie B.
(1819-1894)
'The Hanging Judge'



SLUMACH'S CURSE



RCMP New Westminster Courthouse Detachment, 1966

good deterrent for hardened criminals to take to the straight and narrow. Although the last hanging took place in the BC Pen in 1959, the death penalty was not abolished until 1976. Transporting the same prisons day after day, it was easy to become complacent and it was easy to let one's guard down and foolishly crack jokes with some of Canada's most dangerous criminals. Convicted murderers spent the rest of their lives in 'the Big House' living in fear of a noose being placed around their necks.

The Fall Assizes took weeks and on Monday through Friday over several months, my assistant and I drove to OPF to pick up and take prisoners for court and afterwards return them to Oakalla. The Justice Department had the best lawyers with the deepest pockets while most accused didn't have a pot to pee. The JP lawyers were very dapper with their black robes and the ability to intimate the defence lawyers and their witnesses. On occasion, an accused appeared in court all alone at the mercy of the system.

Once, two accused charged with the attempted murder of an OPF guard were sentenced to 14 years in the 'Pen'. My partner and I almost made a fatal mistake on making a search prior to handcuffing them for transportation to their new home. We searched them but not their envelopes containing their paperwork for their trial. Luckily, my sixth sense kicked in and we shackled the two men in leg irons and put their hand-



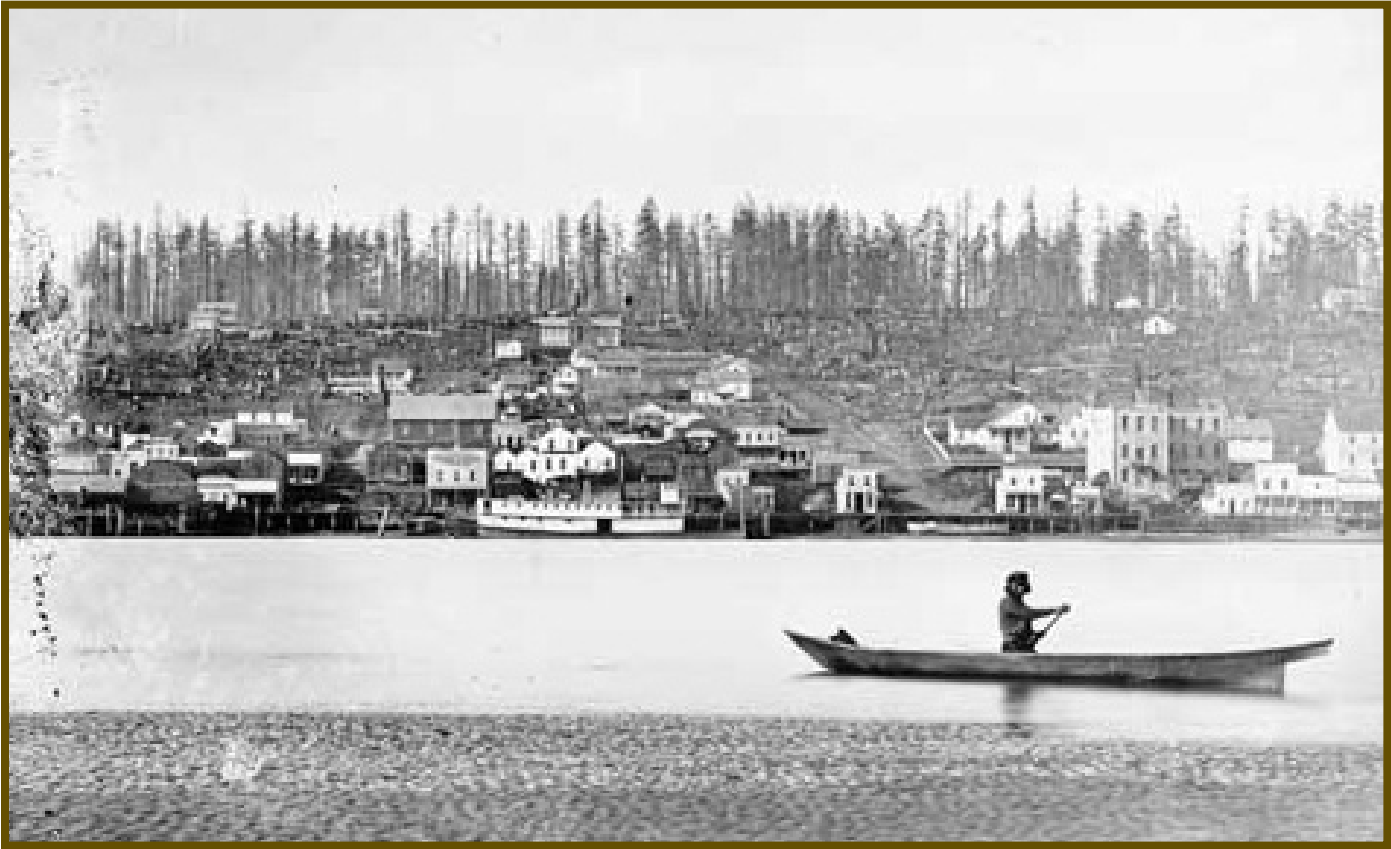
The British Columbia Penitentiary was Slumach's place of incarceration before his trial.
Nearby, the St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cemetery was his final resting place.

cuffs through a belt. The cuffs, the belt and a carabiner were within a few inches of both their belly buttons. We dropped them off at the 'Pen'. Upon our return to the detachment, Frank called us into his office. He told us the warden wanted us to return to the prison. We did. He told us on passing through the metal detector, guards had recovered two shivs; table knives that had been sharpened on cement into crude shanks. Our carelessness could have easily resulted in our deaths.



Slumach Historian Brian A. Antonson visits "Peter" Slumach's final resting site at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cemetery.

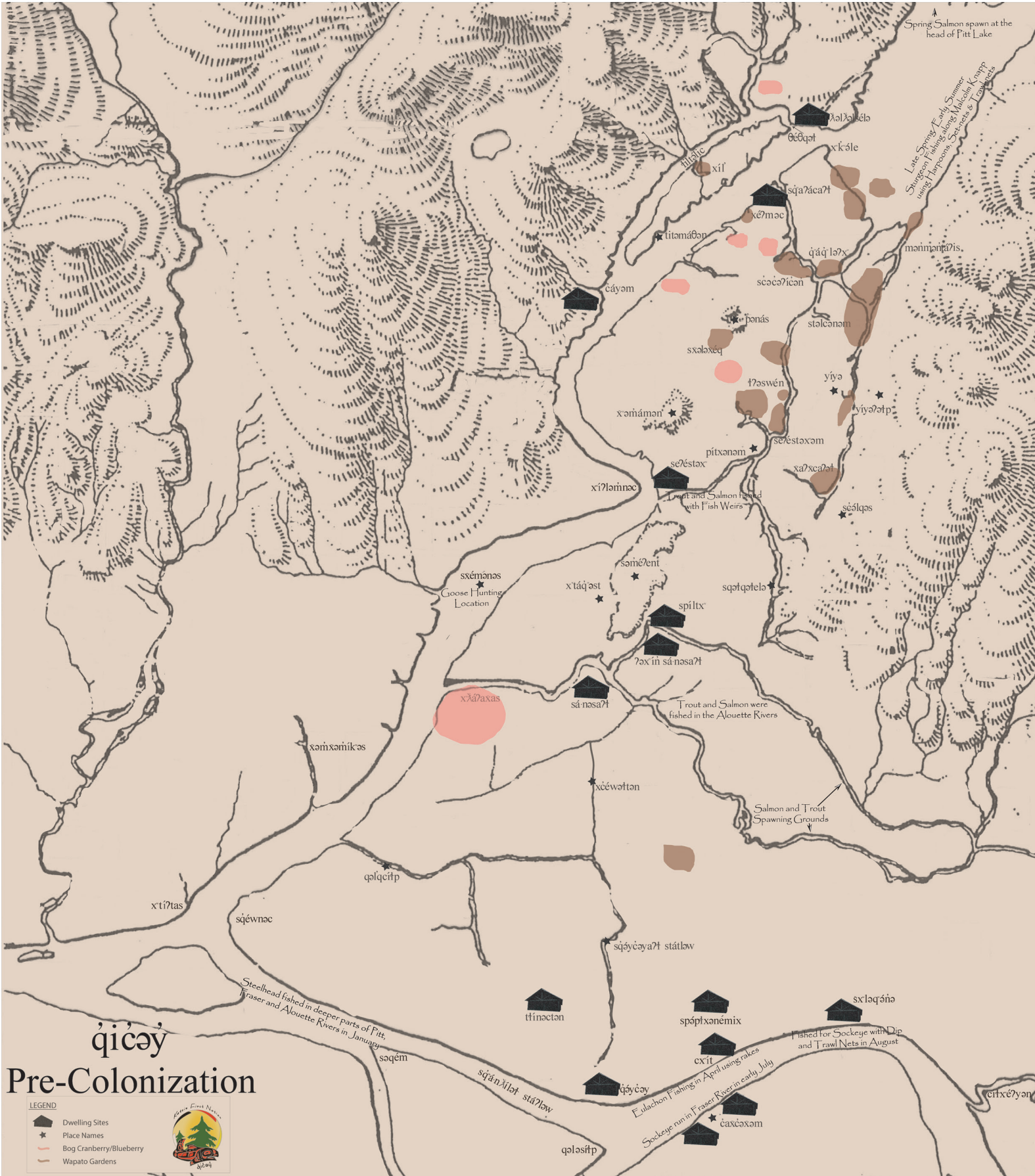
♦The Legend of Slumach♦



An early view of New Westminster, dated from 1862-1866, taken from across the Fraser River in Surrey.

The fact people like a good mystery is undoubtedly why the Lost Mine of Pitt Lake tale has persisted for more than a century. Since the 1890s prospectors have been making vain attempts to locate this lost Eldorado which allegedly nestles in the treacherous Pitt Range some 35 miles north-east of Vancouver. The arrival each spring of both seasoned and amateur gold hunters into the libraries and newspaper offices of New Westminster and Vancouver is a sure sign the search is still far from over. The many legends together with newspaper men’s fanciful accounts of the story make it impossible for these adventurous groups to separate entirely the fact from the fiction. The legend of the mine and its finder, an Indian named Slumach, began in the Royal City of New Westminster in 1889 when the Indian supposedly burst into a saloon and ordered a round of drinks for everyone present. He was carrying a haversack packed with nuggets the size of walnuts which he scattered in all directions as he painted the town red for the next few days. His coming and going into the city, with each visit longer and wilder, persisted for a year-and-a-half during which time the Indian made 16 visits. The police suspected Slumach was murdering and then robbing prospectors for the gold.

A Constable Grainger was assigned to the case. Disguised as a prospector who had struck it rich, he became a pal of the Salish big spender. The constable soon learned he was not the only one interested in Slumach. Molly Tynan, an attractive half- Irish half -Chinese lass, announced her intention of claiming the Indian as her own personal property. Molly had arrived in New Westminster while Slumach was away. She was determined to seize upon the once in a lifetime opportunity to get rich. She had handled the toughest of men from the Barbary Coast to Alaska and figured Slumach would be no problem. Besides, she packed a pistol in the pocket of her skirt and planned to use it on Slumach once he had taken her to the mine. Things backfired for Molly and her body was recovered from the Fraser River by fishermen. A knife was found pro-



Katzie land, pre-colonization, before the coming of the British.



The location of the Katzie reserve in relation to Louis Bonson's pre-emption, the Fraser and Lower Pitt Rivers, and Slumach's Cabin.

truding from her back. Constable Grainger was able to prove the knife belonged to Slumach and he was thus able to have Slumach hanged for murder. As he stood on the gallows, he whispered a curse on those who would seek the mine, meaning no one would ever find his gold and live and they would die in their search. His hangman heard it, as did several witnesses standing in the courtyard at the British Columbia Penitentiary. Slumach refused to reveal the location of his mine. On the evidence, Slumach was tried for and convicted of Molly's murder. Even under sentence of death, So much for the legend.

Here's what really happened:

The New Westminster Daily Columbian & Victoria Colonist Reports

9 September, 1890 -Shot Dead

Louis Bee, a half-breed, is deliberately shot and killed by an insane Indian named Slumach at Lillooet Slough. A terrible unpremeditated murder was committed yesterday afternoon at a point on Lillooet Slough (afterwards Alouette), not far from Pitt River, and some two and a half miles above Pitt River Bridge. An Indian named Slumach, aged about sixty years, was hunting in this neighbourhood, and coming out of the bush, with his double-barrelled shotgun in hand, found several other Indians trout fishing on the banks of the Slough.

A half-breed named Louis Bee sauntered up to Slumach and asked him in a casual way what he was shooting around here. Without a moment's warning, or any preliminary sign of anger, Slumach instantly leveled his gun at Bee and fired. Just before the discharge of the piece, Bee held up his hands and begged Slumach not to shoot. The distance between the two men was so short the whole charge entered the victim's body, just under the armpit, behind the shoulder-blade. Death was instantaneous and Bee fell without a moan weltering in his own blood while his murderer coolly proceeded to reload his piece.

One of the Indians who witnessed the awful deed immediately fled, not only to give the alarm, but from motives of personal safety. He describes the countenance of the murderer after the act was committed as resembling that of an incarnate demon. Slumach is insane, and what he had done seemed to have kindled all the wild disorderly fancies of madness in the maniac's brain and lit up his eyes with a ferocious gleam that boded no good to anyone whom he should encounter when his gun was reloaded. Slumach slowly retreated to the impenetrable and pathless jungle surrounding that part of Lillooet Slough and plunging into its gloomy recesses was lost to sight and is still at large.

10 September, 1890 - The Murder of Louie Bee



Lewis Francis Bonson & family.

Through the courtesy of Lewis F. Bonson, who placed his fine steam launch at the coroner's disposal, Captain Pittendrigh and his attendants were enabled to perform the journey yesterday from the city to the scene of the Indian murder at Pitt River in an expeditious and comfortable manner. Long before the fatal spot was reached, the Indians could be heard chanting a loud strange death song, or coroonach, for the untimely death of their comrade Louis Bee. The party from the city, on arriving at the place where the murder occurred, found a number of congregated Indians suffering from fear to a considerable extent. The inquiry developed the fact that none of them dared to pursue the murderer through the bush, and their terror of him had been very much increased by the appearance of Slumach the day following the murder, and his appropriation of the murdered man's remains. He placed the body in a canoe and set out in the direction of the lake. It was suspected Slumach's intention was to drop the body overboard in deep water, and Captain Pittendrigh, acting on the supposition, set the Indians to work dragging the river for the

corpse. The latest news stated the body was recovered, and was in the custody of friends in the neighbourhood of the spot where the tragic occurrence happened. The Indian witnesses who came to the city with the first information of the crime, were taken to the city lock-up this morning for safekeeping, by order of Mr. William Moresby. Captain George Pittendrigh and the jury returned from the Pitt River last night. This morning a new jury was summoned to proceed to view the remains of Bee.

11 September, 1890 - Coroner's Inquest

A coroner's inquest was held yesterday in the committee rooms at the City Hall upon the body of Louis Bee, the half-breed who was murdered last Monday afternoon at Pitt River by an Indian named Slumach, and whose remains were brought to the city yesterday. Dr. Walker performed the post-mortem examination, and found the bone of the upper left arm to have been shattered by the passage of the ball, which had entered the side of the deceased, fractured the fifth rib and penetrated the right side of the heart, and torn the lungs. The bullet was found embedded in the right lung. Death, in the doctor's opinion, was instantaneous. Charlie Seymour, an Indian, was the principal witness examined by the jury. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the Indian Slumach. The body of the murdered man was coffined, and taken home by the Indians for internment in their own cemetery near the entrance to Pitt Lake. Mr. William Moresby and two special officers left immediately this morning by steamer for the scene of the murder. They were to be met by the Chief of the Indians with a selected posse of men, and the search for Slumach will be prosecuted unceasingly until he is captured.

12 September, 1890 - Still at Large

Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee is still at large, and there is no immediate prospect of his capture, unless he is driven by starvation into the haunts of men. Mr. Moresby went up to Pitt Lake yesterday and continued the search for him, but with no success. Just before Mr. Moresby arrived, the Indians saw Slumach in his cabin, but he quickly plunged into the bush again, and was not visible during the remainder of the day. On examining

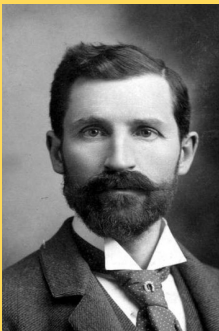
Moresby - A Man Worse than Begbie

William Moresby was born in London, England in 1847, and wouldn't arrive on Canadian shores until emigrating with his family in 1861. His father practiced law on arrival, and William articed to do the same.

Moresby

In his youth, he became involved in policing, and set off for the Cariboo Goldfields. There, he lived among settlers and miners of all races. As with most pioneers, he picked up the Chinook language in his relations with the Indigenous people of the interior.

Back on the coast, Moresby was appointed Governor of the provincial jail in New Westminster in 1878. He remained here for the next 17 years. It's noted by biographer RE Gosnell that, as inspector of police on the mainland, Moresby captured over 100 crimi-



Gosnell

the cabin Mr. Moresby found a can of powder and a large quantity of provisions which he destroyed, and then to prevent Slumach returning there for shelter, the shack was burned to the ground.

His canoe was also destroyed.

Slumach will now have to keep to the woods until cold weather and starvation drives him out of hiding. Mr. Moresby left for Pitt Lake again this morning and may not return to the city for several days. He is determined to bring him to justice, and will, if he can, obtain the assistance required.

The Indians are all afraid of the murderer, and decline to assist in beating the bush for him, as he is well armed and has lots of ammunition. Slumach is a desperate character and is credited by the Indians with another murder, committed years ago and under similar circumstances. Although a few of the murder's friends say he is insane, dozens of the Indians who know him, say otherwise and declared, he is only a bloodthirsty old villain.

16 September, 1890 - Slumach the Murderer still at large

Indians who knew him well, say he has committed four or five murders during the last 25 years.

His last murder, previous to the killing of Louis Bee, was committed about six years ago when he is said to have killed an Indian without any apparent cause. He fled to the mountains in seclusion for a whole year, and then suddenly returned one day and took possession of his cabin and lived quietly until the perpetration of his last crime.

The Indians look upon Slumach as a very wonderful person, being able to endure the greatest hardships without any apparent inconvenience. As a hunter he is without equal, and he is adept at making fires in the primitive manner, using two sticks and rubbing the same together until the friction ignites the wood. He is said to be without fear of man or beast and to be possessed of a nature vicious in the extreme.

19 September, 1890 - Slumach's Action

Mr. William Moresby went up to Pitt Lake on the steamer Constance on Wednesday, returning to the city last night. Constable Anderson reported having seen Slumach the preceding day standing on a rocky bluff afar with only a red shirt and a handkerchief tied around his head.

He was armed with his deadly rifle, and was too far away to permit an exchange of bullets. On the nearer approach of his pursuers he quietly retreated into the impregnable fastness among the stupendous precipices that frown upon the lake at that neighbourhood. He has not since been seen.

SLUMACH'S CURSE

The Indians say that Slumach has always acted strangely, and at irregular intervals would withdraw himself alone into the forests that border for weeks, reappearing at the end of those periods of aberration looking haggard, and more like a savage beast than a human being. In spite of his lunacy however, the maniac never displayed any signs of hostility, nor gave indication his freedom was dangerous to human life.

He is described as a very powerful man and is rather dreaded by his own Indian friends.

It is of the utmost importance that fishing and hunting parties going into this region, should keep a most vigilant lookout, as the murderer is still roaming the woods armed with a shotgun, and as far as can be learned, with plenty of ammunition.

The Indian who informed Mr. McTiernan, Indian Agent, of the occurrence says that from Slumach's looks, he had not the slightest doubt that he would murder the first man he met.

Parties contemplating a visit to the spot indicated above should therefore be on their guard, as carelessness in this matter may result in a more lamentable tragedy than that just described.

Louis Bee was a splendid specimen of a half-breed, he was tall, well-formed, and very muscular, besides having a rather handsome face. It is related that once, when in the city, and under the influence of liquor, six stalwarts could not hold him down, and it was only by their dogged perseverance that they at length got him to the police office.

Bee suffered several times in police court, owing to his fondness for alcoholic stimulants, but otherwise was a quiet respectable man.

Several parties of men are now scouring the woods in the neighbourhood of the scene of the murder, in the endeavour to run the desperate perpetrator of the crime to earth.

The Indians in that part of the district are intensely excited over the horrible affair, and are doing everything in their power to capture Slumach.

19 October, 1890 - Starved Out

The Indian Slumach, who attained to ghastly celebrity some weeks ago by wantonly murdering a young half-breed named Louis Bee, has been suffering terrible privations in the mountain fastness around the shores of Pitt Lake, whither he retired after the murder and set the power of law in defiance. A month ago, Mr. P. McTier-nan, Indian Agent here, had a conference with the members of the tribe at Pitt Lake, and succeeded in convincing them of their duty to deliver Slumach over to the law. From that day, no assistance was given to the outlaw, and probably on that account he was forced to give himself up to the police. Yesterday he sent his nephew for the Indian Agent, who went up to Pitt Lake accompanied by two policemen, and to them the desperate fugitive quietly surrendered.

He had eaten nothing for several days, and was in a terrible state of émaciation and thoroughly exhausted. His ammunition was all gone and his clothing in rags and he presented a very wild and weather worn aspect.

Slumach was at once brought to the city and placed under the care of the physicians of the Provincial jail.

At the latest account today, Slumach was in a very precarious condition, his vitality being spent. The doctors do not care to express an opinion of his chances of recovery, but it is understood that they are very small. Should he recover he will be given a preliminary trial, and then remanded for trial at the assizes in November.

3 November, 1890 - District Court (before Captain Pittendrigh, J. P.)

The Murderer, Slumach, was up in the district court before Captain George Pittendrigh, Justice of the Peace, for a preliminary hearing. Several witnesses were examined, and a mass of evidence taken down, and the magistrate sent Slumach up for trial at the approaching assizes.

The prisoner has greatly improved in health since his surrender and will be strong enough to undergo the

SLUMACH'S CURSE

tedium of the assize trial this month. Slumach is rather an intelligent looking man of about 60 years of age. His face expressed a great deal of determination, even ferocity. He sat in court listening to the evidence this morning with the utmost apathy.

A number of Indians occupied seats and took a great deal of interest in the proceedings.

11 November, 1890 - The Case of Slumach

Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee, now confined in the Provincial jail awaiting trial at the Assizes which opens tomorrow, is in a very bad state of health, and may not be in fit condition to appear for trial at this term. He is very weak and does not seem to gather strength so rapidly as might be expected, considering the attention and comforts he receives from the medical superintendent and gaol officials.

Mr. McTiernan, Indian Agent, is of the opinion that Slumach will not live long in confinement, and it is a well-known fact that an Indian sentenced to a long term of imprisonment soon pines away and dies. It now looks like Slumach will not be able to stand trial at the coming assizes, and should turn out to be the case it is pretty certain that he will escape the gallows by death from natural causes before the spring term.

14 November, 1890 - The Fall Assizes

The Crown resumed sittings at 10:30 o'clock.

The crown prosecutor asked for the arraignment of Slumach for murder. Mr. T.C. Anderson, the defending counsel asked that this case be adjourned until next assizes, on the ground that there were two important witnesses for the defence, Moody, an Indian, and Florence Reid, who could not possibly be obtained in time for this assize, but could be produced at the next sitting of the court. The affidavits of Slumach and his daughter Mary, were produced and read...

Mr. Moresby said he could produce the witnesses required by the defence by 11 o'clock tomorrow, and his Lordship therefore adjourned the court until that time.

15 November, 1890 - Fall Assizes (Mr. Justice Drake presiding)

The Slumach murder case occupied the attention of the court today. The evidence had to be nearly all interpreted.

There were several Indian witnesses examined at length, and they gave minute particulars of the tragedy.

It came out in the evidence that Bee, the victim of the murder, was in the habit of blustering at, and threatening almost everyone with whom he came in contact. Against Slumach he indulged something of a grudge, and for a long time there was bad blood between them. The Indians who were with Bee at the time of the murder were fishing, and on Slumach emerging from the adjacent woods, a slight altercation ensued between him and Bee, with the result that Slumach shot him dead.

The jury retired at 3:45, and after 15 minutes, returned with a verdict of guilty.

His Lordship sentenced Slumach to be hanged 16 January next.

16 January, 1891 - Paid the Penalty

Slumach, the murderer of Louis Bee, pays the penalty for his crime. Old Slumach was hanged in the yard of the provincial gaol this morning at 8 o'clock, for the murder on 8 September last, of Louis Bee, a half-breed.

The particulars of the hanging are briefly as follows...Pierre (the Indian catechist-medicine man) slept in the same cell with Slumach, and prayed with him day and night and it is satisfactory to know that the labour of the good priest and his assistant was not in vain...

The condemned man retired to rest at an early hour last night and slept well... Slumach awakened early and immediately went into devotional exercises with his spiritual attendants, after which breakfast was brought

in and he ate a good meal with apparent relish.

A few minutes before 7 o'clock, Father Morgan (the Roman Catholic priest) baptized Slumach, who professed his belief in Christianity and the hope of salvation. Prayers were continued until the arrival of the hangman to pinion him, and to this operation he submitted without a murmur. All being in readiness a few minutes before 8 o'clock, the procession was formed and proceeded to the scaffold. Mr. Sheriff Armstrong led the way followed by Mr. William, governor of the jail and the deputy sheriff, next came Slumach, supported by gallery's Burr and Connor, and followed by the hangman, masked and hooded.

Father Morgan, (Peter) Pierre, Dr. J.M. McLean, Dr. Walker and a number of constables brought up the rear of the procession.

Slumach walked firmly up the step leading to the platform, and faced the crowd below. The hangman quickly adjusted the noose, and Father Morgan commenced a prayer. Then the black cap was put on, and at 8 o'clock exactly, the bolt was drawn, the trap fell, and Slumach paid the penalty for his crime.

The hanging was very ably managed and beyond a few little twitching of the hands and feet, the body remained perfectly still after the drop. In three minutes and fifty-eight seconds life was pronounced extinct, but it was more than 20 minutes before the body was cut down and placed in the coffin.

Coroner George Pittendrigh and a jury viewed the body and brought in the usual verdict. Slumach's neck was broken in the fall, and death must have been painless. The drop was eight feet, five inches.

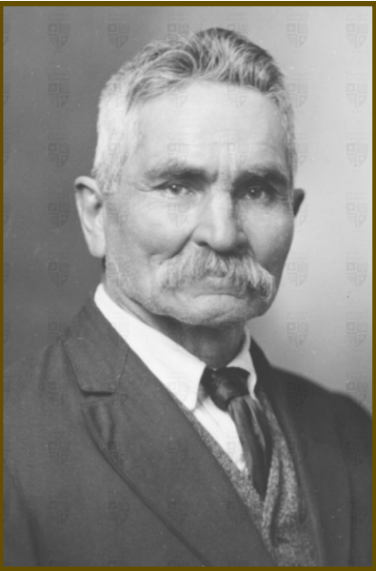
Over 50 persons witnessed the hanging, and a large crowd gathered outside the jail, and remained there until the black flag was hoisted. Among the crowd on the street were several Indian women, relatives of Slumach, who waited around the jail more than an hour after the execution.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

The above reporting gets convoluted with the confusion between an initial coroner's inquest to determine the why, where, and when a death occurred and the subsequent short trial taking place at the New Westminster assizes over the 12, 13, 14 and 15 November, 1890.

Regina (Queen Victoria I) versus Slumach, an Indian on an Indictment for Murder

Henry V. Edmonds, Foreman



Jason Ovid Allard
(1848-1931)
Interpreter

Witnesses:

Charlie Seymour

R. Eden Walker, M.D.

Swanisit

N.B. Gauvreau, C.E.

William Moresby

Robert Anderson

Lucy

L.P. Eckstein, Crown Prosecutor

Mr. A.T. Atkinson, Defence lawyer

THE INFORMATION and complaint of William Moresby of New Westminster taken tenth of September, in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety, before the undersigned one of Her Majesty's Justice of the Peace in and for the District or County of Westminster, who saith that Slumach an Indian on the 8th day of September in the year A.D. 1890, at Pitt River, in the County of Westminster, did feloniously, wilfully, and with malice aforethought kill and Murder one Louie Bee. SWORN before me, the and your first above mentioned, at New Westminster.

George Pittendrigh, Justice of the Peace

Mr. Justice Montague Tyrwhitt-Drake presided over a Grand Jury of 15 men at the Fall Assizes in the Supreme Court in New Westminster beginning on the 12 November. After being sworn, the grand jury retired at noon. After lunch, Mr. Atkinson asked permission for Slumach to be examined by a doctor. The jury consisted of pioneers from the Fraser Valley - Joseph Coupland, John Johnson, W.H. Burns, Thomas Bales, George Munday, Robert Blackstock, E.J. Newton, S.W. Lehman, Foreman, H.H. McKenzie, John D. Paris, H.E. Johnson, Lawrence Thornber, George Good and John Blair.

On 13 November, Henry V. Edmonds, Jury Foreman, and the Grand Jury heard sufficient evidence from witnesses to believe Slumach, the accused, had probably committed the crime of murder and should go to trial.

On 14 November, Slumach sat in the prisoner's box and heard evidence from witnesses in both Chinook and English translated by Jason Ovid Allard. Mr. Eckstein, the prosecutor for the crown, had an assistant Mr. Gaynor. Mr. Atkinson was the defendant for the accused Slumach who asked for an adjournment until the next assizes.

Request for Adjournment by Slumach

I, the above named Slumach make oath and say that one Moody, an Indian, and Florence Reid are necessary and material witnesses in my behalf in the trial on the above charge and I cannot safely proceed to trial without their attendance as witnesses to dispose of the following facts: That Louie Bee the deceased was habitually quarrelling with me. That he frequently harassed me with improper language and more than once threatened me with violence and I was in constant fear of him. That I have been unable

The Ol' Boys' Club

Henry Valentine Edmonds
(1837-1897)

Henry was appointed Deputy Sheriff in New Westminster in 1867 until 1876 and in 1883 was named a Justice of the Peace. A land speculator, Henry accumulated real estate in Port Moody, Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond. He invested in every scheme imaginable and with several New Westminster cronies gambled the Canadian Pacific Railway's western terminus would be Port Moody. Instead, it was Vancouver. With many ups and downs in his life, he died almost penniless.

George Pittendrigh
(1831-1914)

George had quite the interesting life before coming to BC and in 1854, as a soldier in the Sixty-third Foot Infantry, had fought in the Crimean War in the British forces against Russia in the sieges of Balaklava and Sevastopol. Balaklava was famous for the famous 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. As a sidenote, some of the Russian 6 and 12 pounder artillery guns were melted down and made into the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious decoration posthumously awarded to members of the British Armed Forces. George arrived in BC in 1874 and soon afterwards became the Assistant Indian Agent for New Westminster. In 1894-95, at the age of 40, he was made a coroner and a judge.

Montague William Tyrwhitt-Drake
(1830-1908)

Montague came to BC in 1863 and represented Victoria in the Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1868-1870. He was Mayor of Victoria in 1876-7. He served as Justice of the Supreme Court of BC from 1889-1904. He sentenced old Slumach to death before going to lunch with some of the jury!

to procure their attendance at the present sittings of this Court. That I can procure their attendance at the next sittings of the Court as their usual place of abode is within the District of New Westminster.

Sworn before me at the City of New Westminster, British Columbia this 14th day of November, A.D. 1890, having first been read over and interpreted to the said Slumach who appeared to understand the same.

Slumach signed with an X

Taken upon oath and acknowledged this 3rd day of November, A.D. 1890, before me, George Pittendrigh, Justice of the Peace.

The defense lawyers for Slumach screwed up and his final sentence should have said, "I shot Louie Bee because he came at me with an axe and he was shot in self-defence." It would have been his Slumach's word against Charlie Seymour, the only witness to the shooting. He'd have been acquitted.

Evidence of Mary, Cowichan

I Mary, an Indian woman of Cowichan in the Province of British Columbia, make oath and say: That I am the daughter of the above named Slumach. That I arrived in this city on the 5th instant, and have since been endeavouring to procure the attendance at this court of the one Moody, an Indian, and one Florence Reid, to give evidence on this trial of the said Slumach on the above charge. That I have not been able to procure the attendance of the said Moody or of the said Florence Reid. That the said Moody and the said Florence Reid can be produced as witnesses if the trial be postponed till the next sitting of this Court.

She signed as Annie with an X

Evidence of Charlie Seymour, an Indian, upon his oath saith as follows:

I remember the 8th day of September last past I went up in a canoe with Louie Bee from the place where we were living on Pitt River to look at our sturgeon lines. Louie was the only one with me in the canoe. We went up about two miles when we got to the lines we found there was no bait on the hooks, then we looked around for some dead salmon to bait them. We went up a little further and saw a canoe come near, we hailed it and found it contained the chief of the Katzie tribe and his wife was along with him. We had a conversation for a few minutes. He then left us going down stream. We went upstream immediately after parting. I heard the report of a gun on the opposite shore that is the left hand side going upstream. Louie Bee proposed to go across where the shot was fired as he thought it might white men there,

When we got to the shore, I saw the prisoner Slumach coming out of the long grass and I told Louie Bee he was coming. Then I caught a glimpse of a canoe hauled up partly on the shore. When Slumach got near, Louie Bee asked what he was firing at. He gave no answer but kept walking until he reached the edge of the river, he was preparing his gun, bringing it into position to shoot without further word he presented his gun at Louie Bee, the deceased, and fired. Slumach then ran toward his canoe and took out his own ammunition and reloaded. After the shot was fired, I saw blood coming out of Louie Bee's arm at the back of his shoulder. He grasped hold of the side of the canoe and after a few seconds fell overboard and sank in about two and a half feet of water. The canoe was afloat and about 15 or 16 feet from the shore. The water here is shallow for some distance out. I jumped on shore immediately after Louie Bee was shot and I was afraid of getting shot as well as Louie Bee who had given no provocation whatsoever and the prisoner was putting powder in his gun again. The gun was a percussion single barrelled one., I asked the prisoner as I jumped on shore why he had shot the deceased. He said he wanted to drive us away because he didn't want anyone to go up there. I waited in the grass hidden for a short time to see what Slumach would do as he was holding his gun during the time I was hiding which was about twenty minutes. I thought I might be shot so I down the shore and then walked over the railway bridge and up to the house when I got near I hallowed out to the women that Slumach had killed Louie Bee. The women came out and went with me to my house. I then started to come down here and arrived at the city at dark and reported the circumstances to the Indian Agent. I met no one on the way down. I told my own wife and Louie's wife what had happened and there was an old man in the canoe in another compartment but he did not hear. I remained in the city all night

and returned with the Coroner. When we arrived, we could not find the body as the tide was high. I commenced searching for the body and shortly afterwards found it and a young man who was with me fired off his gun to attract attention. The body was in deeper water owing to the rise in the tide. I recognized Louie Bee's axe in Slumach's house when Mr. Moresby searched for it. We had a bottle in the canoe for killing sturgeon. These things were in the canoe when I jumped out. Louie Bee only said to Slumach, "What are you shooting at?" Louie had no club in his hand. I was in the stern and Louie Bee was in the bow. Louie being in the bow of the canoe was closer to Slumach. He was sideways to him. I cannot say if the Coquitlam Chief had any whiskeys or not in his canoe as we were some distance from each other. I had no whiskey on that day. I was with Louie Bee all day and he had not had any whiskey either. There was none to be got. The prisoner Slumach now before the Court is the man who shot Louie Bee, on recovering his body I brought it down to Westminster as directed by the Coroner. I did not hear Louie Bee call you any names. I was in the canoe that brought the body of Louie Bee down to New Westminster. It was the same body that was taken to Mr. Moresby from the canoe and placed in an out house on Front Street and on which the postmortem by the doctor was made. This took place on the 10th day of September 1890.

Evidence of R. Eden Walker, M.D. of New Westminster



Dr. R. Eden Walker (1864-1923)
Worshipal Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of
British Columbia and Yukon

I practice in British Columbia. I remember making a post mortem examination on the body of Louie Bee on the 10th day of September last. The body was in an out house on Front Street lying in a shirt, waistcoat and pants and covered with blankets. The clothes were wet as if the body had recently been in the water. On examining the body, I found a wound on the outer side of the left shoulder and on following the wound down found it passed through the upper part of the arm bone into the chest through the left lung through the upper part of the heart and through the right lung into the right cavity of the heart where I found part of the bullet which had caused the wound. Death was caused by the wound in the heart. There was no trace of the deceased having any alcoholic beverage within several hours before death. The body was that of a well nourished male.

Evidence of A. O'Connor

I am a guard at the jail of New Westminster and make oath and say: That on Thursday the 13th day of November, I saw the Indian Moody on the street in New Westminster and at the time that I saw the said Indian Moody he was in the company of Constable Anderson.

Address by the Prosecutor to Slumach, the Accused

"Having heard the evidence, do you wish to say anything in answer to the charge? You are not obliged to say anything unless you desire to do so; but anything you say will be taken down in writing, and may be given in evidence against you upon your trial. You have nothing to hope from any promise of favour, and nothing to fear from any threat, which may have been holden out to you to influence you to induce you to make any admission or confession of your guilt, but whatever you shall now say may be given in evidence against you upon your trial, notwithstanding and promise or threat."

Statement of Slumach, the Accused

"I have nothing to say."

At 11 a.m. Mr. Edmonds made a presentation to the jury. At 3:20 Judge Pittendrigh summed up and at 3:30 the Jury retired and 15 minutes later the 15 jurors returned at 3:45 with a verdict of guilty. Slumach was to

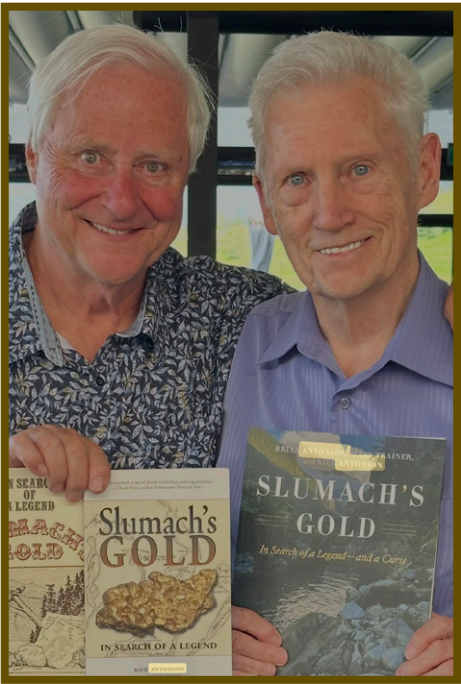
be removed to the gaol from whence he came and there to be hanged by the neck until he be dead on the 16th of January, 1891.

◆ Foreword ◆

It was a spring day in 1972. I worked with a graphic arts firm, *Camart Studio of New Westminster*. One of our clients was Maple Ridge Printers and I was dropping off work we'd done for them. Talking with the owner Mo Staudt, I mentioned my older brother Brian, our friend Mary Trainer and myself were nearing completion of our book about Slumach's gold, readying it for printing in the coming month.

"Well, you should meet my friend Don Waite. He's also writing a book about ol' Slumach. I'm going to print it this summer. It's really good. No one knows more about that legend than Don."

"Don who?" I asked.



Rick Antonson, author of
Slumach's Gold.

"Go two blocks from here to Don Waite Photo Studio. Tell him I say hi."

Shortly afterwards, I stood inside the door of the photography shop eyeing portraits and looking at cameras for sale while a man behind the counter dealt with two female customers. Mostly I was trying to get the measure of the man. When the ladies left, I stepped to the counter.

"Hi. You'll be Don. Mo sent me. Says you're writing a book about Slumach. Us too. My name's Rick. How do you do..."

"Want a coffee?" he said.

Thus began a friendship I treasure, one that's as active as ever 54 years later. And that brings me to writing this introduction of Don and his work.

Don was then new with the photography shop, deeply committed to making the retail and portrait ends of the business do well. Over that first day's coffee, he mused about aerial photography as a niche he wanted to pursue. And admitted to being new to the world of commerce. "I just started to go after people to pay me," I remember

him saying. "I thought people would just pay. They don't. I've had a successful four months. But, I've been so busy I didn't start looking at the accounts receivable until this week. I need the money."

After meeting him, and newly aware about how good his book would be, our publishing timelines might have been sped up a little out of competitive spirit to ensure our book hit the shelves first. Our title was out in June 1972. Don's book came out in August.

Like Don, we had very little idea what we were doing. We, too, were self-publishing our work. As with him, we had uncertain plans for getting the book into stores and to readers we were all convinced wanted our two books. What he knew was that his book would get very good newspaper coverage in Maple Ridge where he was popular. And that was the main market for the Slumach legend.

Whenever I was in Maple Ridge (which I made a point of every few weeks, as an excuse to talk with Don), we met up. Don was the original "Slumacher". His research was diligent. His sources were impressive. He had stories we didn't even know existed. As an RCMP constable, he'd befriended the Katzie people, Slumach's nation, and they respected him. From them he heard facts and rumours about their family, including Slumach. I couldn't wait to read his book.

Coincidences continued. Both our books would be distributed by Western Heritage Supply, enabled by Bill and Max, who placed heaps of our *In Search of a Legend: Slumach's Gold* and Don's *Kwant'stan* in racks and

bookstores around the province, both books selling out in months instead of years.

Despite the competition – or perhaps because of it – a close friendship ensued.

Over the next few years, Camart Studio did the graphic and print preparation for two more of Don's books, including *The Fraser Canyon Story*. Always, we debated design and content and ideas and shared lessons learned from our publishing enterprises. Don was articulate about how he saw a book being shaped. He admitted the need for an editor to sort out his words. And he always showed amazing photographs at all manner of angles, often from the air. Mary, Brian and I had taken our interests forward by establishing Nunaga Publishing which would eventually publish 25 books by other authors through to 1979 when we sold it to Douglas & McIntyre. We paralleled Don's publishing endeavours for his own works.

It was clear Don wanted control of his books, their appearance and distribution. His eye for that was reflective of his talent for the art of photography: a one-off ability from a one-off individual. Every couple of years he'd have a new book, each improved over the last one in terms of writing and images and design and sales.

Once while visiting over coffee and donuts at Don and Tina's home on a weekend morning, a grizzly man appeared through the doorway. Don introduced him as Fred Braches. "Fred knows a fact or two about Slumach. He's skeptical about pretty much everything you or I have written about the legend. A bit cynical, but I luv the guy." All this said in front of Fred, who nodded.

Fred would go on to become the most thorough researcher about all-things-Slumach, aided and abetted by Don. Fred established slumach.ca and decades later before he passed away he asked Brian, Mary and me to be custodians of the site on his behalf, an honour we maintain to this day. Don's work is throughout slumach.ca, tracked and documented, making sure nothing has been missed – not the asides or the wanderings or the hypothesis or the escapades.

In a real way, Fred's work with slumach.ca and his books chronicled Don's quest for truths (and huge dollops of myth) surrounding Slumach's gold.

As my own writing veered toward foreign travel adventures and publishers like Dundurn/Toronto and Skyhorse/New York demanded the best of images for their use, Don offered his help. Over long days, he took mediocre photographs of mine and did a sort of photo-voodoo magic of enhancing out of focus bits, making colour turn to vivid black and white, and inconvenient content disappear. He befriended my books as he'd befriend me. Never asking anything in return except understanding of his writerly ambitions, and the ongoing bits of debate.

By then, he was into reminiscing, often jibbing me for a cover of his that didn't work out on a book Camart produced, and for which we blamed one another for the poor cover decision. Quick to laugh, he couldn't let it go. Which is how he's been about everything – diligent, tenacious, focused and brave, and with a genuine gracious yet biting sense of humour, often aimed at himself. Gotta luv that.

When Brian, Mary and I wrote our capstone edition, *Slumach's Gold: In Search of a Legend ~ and a Curse*, we spoke often with Don for his tales, updating what was written earlier. As generous now as he was in 1972, he shares what he knows. And he provided photographs as a gift to enhance our work. And then he identified spots on maps to help our storytelling. He still knows things none of the rest of us do.

As I've read his *The Boy from Renfrew: Ramblings of a Bird Photographer*, and as I go through his writing-that-will-never-end *Sir James Bond II: Crazy Genius*, I applaud his candour about "the rapid descent from normal to bipolar". He is as forthright as he was the day I met him, never shy about integrity, open as a book.

Rick Antonson, Author

Ridge Meadows Detachment

My next introduction to Slumach occurred with my transfer from the Royal City to Haney Detachment, located some 40 miles east of Vancouver and on the north side of the Fraser River. I reported for work on July 1st, Canada Day; the dominion's 100th birthday. Pitt Lake was in Haney's jurisdiction. By coincidence Roland Harding (1919-2017), the non-commissioned officer in charge of the detachment, had just written a story 'Old Slumach' for the force's 'RCMP Quarterly'. It's strange. I married Tina Sarglepp in 1989 and a few years later decided to make our own funeral arrangements. Our wish was to be cremated and placed on her Grandfather Adolf Kruusma's grave. Low and behold, we found Roland's grave just 20 feet south!



Katzie Chief Joachim Pierre
(1925 - 1971)

On one of my very first patrols, I visited Katzie Chief Joachim Pierre (1925 - 1971) and his wife Agnes (1935-2006). After some preliminary greetings about alcohol on the reserve, the conversation came around to Joe's great-uncle Slumach being railroaded to the gallows. After some tea, Joe invited me to make a sojourn in his fishing boat on my next day off down the Fraser River, up Pitt River to Pitt Lake to see the red ochre pictographs on the west side of the lake opposite Goose Island. Joe said, "If you are a good person, the pictographs will reveal themselves. If not, they'll hide." I saw them and took pictures.

Just before reaching the south end of the lake, I saw a submerged log in the water. Me, "Hey Joe, do you see the snag straight ahead? Joe," Ya, I see it." Joe hit the log straight on and was thrown from the back to the front of his boat hitting the bow hard with a face plant. We beached at a rocky outcropping at Widgeon Slough at the south end of Pitt Lake for lunch. Pushing on, we saw and I photographed the pictographs. A few days after the boat ride, I visited the Pierre family. Joe's eyes looked like two pieces of coal. He told the young braves, "Don't tangle with Copper Waite. Look

what he did to me."

My mentor Tony Beecroft (1938-2009) and I became lifelong friends to the point where we made a pact whoever died first the other would do the their friend's eulogy. I did some tapings of Tony. "I always wondered about Don Waite, because he would volunteer to run the boat. I always knew he had an exploring mind, so I figured his enforcement abilities would overcome his desire to fool around, and he'd balance off the boat's objectives of enforcing the law and his acquiring some pleasurable time. I came in on a Monday morning and was downstairs and Harding was having a conniption and asked if I had seen the boat? It was backed in undercover where it belonged, but this time it was turned around the other way. Usually it was stored bow out but this time it was parked bow in, hiding the left front. He was doing a chicken dance. He was so upset. He was actually frothing and was saying, 'Do you know what happened?' And I said, 'No, I don't know what happened.' I didn't have the boat out. I said the boat had to have been out but it was in someone else's care. He was screaming so I went out and looked and there were these four-foot gouge marks underneath. It looked as if it had been stroked several times with a huge claw. I could tell what happened. It had bounced up and down on the rocks, and it was right through to the gel coat. There wasn't much of a gel coat on this cheap boat anyway. It looked more like tissue paper. He told me to move it and said, 'I don't want the officer Peter Wright to come and see it or we'll be in big trouble. We are going to have to make a story. Find out what happened to the boat. Phone Waite, he'll know.' Waite was very chipper. He was always busy, and he was usually strung out from lack of sleep from trying to compress 28-hours into a 24-hour day. He had a pretty short story. He had been up at Alouette Lake, and he was tired and didn't have time to talk about the damn boat. He hung up. My boss was listening to me. He was hovering in the background by the radio room, and he saw me standing there holding the phone, and the talking suddenly stopped. He asked what happened, and I said, 'He hung up.' He said, 'Get him down here.' I was about to phone, and he rushed off to the office by the file room. He was just a-boiling.

I don't know what happened, but a short time later I see Waite looking angry as hell, wearing red serge. I was wondering if he was going to court. Up until this moment I still didn't know what had happened to the boat. I felt rather out of control like it was some deep dark liberty secret. What happened to the frigging boat? It was years later I found out what really happened to the boat, when Don, out of the force for many years, and I shared many laughs together. I guess he and some companions had gone on a semi-police sojourn into the wild entrails of northern Alouette Lake and were jumping off rocks. I heard many stories about Al Burnet water-skiing. He used to take it to do patrols but he was more for taking a female companion as a patrol partner. We had the RCMP crest put on the boat, but Al would cover it up. The boat was always a pain in the butt and the cause for problems. I was glad when it disappeared."

Marg Leisen, the detachment's secretary, became aware of my interest in Slumach and told me her Grandpa Harry Corder had managed the fish hatchery at the top end of Pitt Lake and that her mother had been raised at Alvin. Harry, a widower, owned a tiny Second World War home four blocks from the detachment. Rookie Al Burnett room and boarded with 'Old Harry'. One evening, Al and I chatted with him about Alvin and he told us he'd been one of the rescue party that went looking for 'Doc' Brown in 1926.

I needed an excuse to explore the Upper Pitt Lake country and a few weeks later the detachment received a complaint of pit-lamping at Alvin, located on the Upper Pitt River seven miles above the top end of the lake. Rookie Dick Brock and I took the police boat to the end of the lake where we were met by Bill Keillor. He and his wife Muriel ran the government fish hatchery. Bill asked, "And what would two of Canada's finest be doing up here at Alvin?" I explained the detachment had received a complaint of pit-lamping. Bill asked, "What's pit-lamping?" Me, "It's when a hunter uses the headlights of their vehicle to shoot deer after dark."



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF 'HARRY' HENRY GORDON CORDER (1890-1983)

The Robert Allen 'Volcanic' 'Sunset' 'Doc' Brown rescue party, 1928.
Left to right: Herman Gardner of the BC Provincial Police; Alvin Patterson, after whom the locality of Alvin, BC was named; Caleb Gardner, and Harry Corder.

Bill, "Hell, that's how I get my meat." I told him to shoot his venison at twilight instead of in the dark. Complaint concluded. After some lunch, Bill took Dick and I on a truck ride up Seven Mile Creek and afterwards across a bridge at the Second Canyon hot springs.

Bill introduced Dick and I to confirmed bachelor Mickey McLaughlin. He lived in a tiny shack a mile or two north of Alvin. Mickey was a prospector. He knew Marcus Cox, another prospector. According to Bill, Marcus had once been married to a German princess. The pair split up and the princess spent the rest of her life in Vancouver reading tarot cards for a living while he managed to make enough cash working an old mine to pay for his grub. Bill was right about the German princess story. In 1916, Marcus married Martha Frederika d'Autier Von Micklenburg. She had a Swedish father and Prussian (German) mother. She likely was a princess.

When Dick and I went up the lake in the detachment's 14-foot aluminum boat, the water's surface was smooth as glass. Returning homeward in the late afternoon, strong winds from the north began blowing down the cigar-shaped lake resulting in a five foot chop. About midway down, I realized the gas tank was almost



SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

John, an expert rock climber, rigged a rope to get all of us safely down to the springs and then back up to the bridge. Roping down, we found the springs so hot it was necessary to walk some distance downriver before entering the water. We christened the spot the ‘Broiled Frog Hot Springs’ upon discovering a cooked amphibian in the water. The water coming out of the rocks was boiling hot and everyone had to go downstream to bathe in warm water.

I was anxious to show my new bride Carol the breathtakingly beautiful Upper Pitt Valley and a short time after returning from our honeymoon, I made a patrol with her and a senior member stationed in Vancouver. He wanted to do some fishing. It was a beautiful blue sky day in September. We hadn’t gone more than a few miles before spotting a gaggle of Trumpeter Swans flying to the northwest a short distance ahead of the boat. I increased speed to almost full throttle and hit a sandbar on the left-hand side of the channel. The propeller was badly bent and the boat became stuck in the mud. I should have turned around but we continued to the wharf at the top of the lake. Bill was supposed to pick us up but was late so Carol and I began walking the seven miles to Alvin. Black Bear scat was everywhere as the salmon were in full spawn. Bald Eagles were taking full advantage of the spawn feast. They looked like overloaded B52 Bombers. They’d run along the shoreline squawking but rarely took to the air. After walking halfway to Alvin, Bill picked us up. He gave us a tour up Seven Mile (Corbould) Creek and on returning clocked an Olympic Wolf at 40 miles an hour.

Upon learning Carol and I were going to Ottawa, Agnes knit a Cowichan sweater her and Joe gifted to me a few days before our departure to Canada’s capital city.

The Nation’s Capital, 1970-71

In the summer of 1970, my request to transfer to the Identification (Forensics) Branch in Ottawa came through. On 27 July, I was going through my ‘Slumach’ photocopies and came across a Coquitlam Herald, 14 August, 1951, clipping about Duncan Eli McPhaden (1882-1980). The article was 20 years old and talked about him being rescued after taking a bad fall prospecting on Pitt Lake. On a whim, I wrote him well knowing if he was still alive he’d be in his eighties.

That weekend, the Head Supervisor in the Fingerprint Bureau, invited Carol and I to a party at her Ottawa residence. We knew no one. One guest engaged me in conversation and it seemed like serendipity when he asked, “Where have you transferred in from?” My reply, “Haney in British Columbia.” He then asked, “Is that anywhere near Pitt Lake?” My reply, “Yes, Pitt Lake is in Haney’s jurisdiction.” He then told me he had an Uncle Duncan McPhaden who spent years looking for a lost gold mine on the lake. He was shocked beyond belief, as was I, when I produced his Uncle Dunc’s letter from my vest pocket.

empty. Looking back over my shoulder, I saw Dick’s pea-green face as he was puking his guts out over the side of the boat. I yelled at Dick, “If you don’t switch tanks, we’re going to swamp.”

The trip took twice as long coming down as going up and on eventually docking at Grant Narrows, we both had to urinate like a couple of horses on a fast-moving train. It was impossible to pee in our pants due to the constant bucking up and down of the tiny craft. A week or two later, I mailed Bill a copy of Diamond Jenness’s book, ‘Faith of a Coast Salish Indian’ compiled by the anthropologist’s many interviews with Peter Pierre.

It was about this time Hell’s Angels bikers began visiting Golden Ears Provincial Park a couple of hundred strong causing trouble. They were a real pain in the ass and members on day’s off were called in to work to escort the trouble makers in and out of the park. Park Superintendent Andy Hetherington and I became good friends and we talked about the Second Canyon hot springs. Andy insisted on taking his 25-foot boat up the lake and visit the area with the idea of turning the Upper Pitt Lake’s huge expanse into a park. My hiking companion John Hume and rookie Ron Hurt came along for the ride. Bill picked us up at the wharf and after enjoying a good lunch prepared by Muriel, he drove us to the springs. We crossed over a high level bridge just upriver from the springs.

Bill remarked, “Be careful, there are sulphur holes up here”. Me, “What’s that?” Bill, “They’re holes about five feet in diameter that go down God knows how many feet deep. You can smell the sulphur. Be sure to watch your step in the undergrowth.”

August 15th, 1970 - 11:35 a.m.
Mr. Donald Waite,
Suite 403
27 Henderson Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Sir,

Your letter of July 27th was received about a week ago in spite of the postal strikes every few days!! I was not aware Slumach had a nephew and a daughter. Are they both still alive, and where do they live?

I quite understand the ‘run around’ you refer to. It’s rather a difficult situation for the officials. However, the information you require, for example ‘Transcript of the Slumach trial’ should be available and I understand it is from the archives in Victoria. I hope to visit Victoria within two weeks and will look into the matter as I would like a copy myself.

The Pitt Lake area, as you know, is heavily covered with moss. The old fish hatchery was abandoned by the government in their ‘economy’ stint and was taken over by the ‘BC Forestry Logging’. A new hatchery was subsequently erected several miles farther up the river. The government found it had made a serious mistake.

The wife of the hatchery overseer, this was years ago, told me she had gone to live there as a bride and spent three of the happiest years of her life there even though when the children appeared she had to be always on the alert for fear of the black bears. Mountain goats were always a delight and revelation to watch at their climbing antics.

During the 1907 land boom several locals took up homesteads between the head of the lake and the hatchery, mostly near the lake. Checking on an abandoned ‘stead’ or two, I observed bear tracks on the nearly obscured homestead road. I got down on my hands and knees on a sharp upgrade road so as to get as close as I could to bear to shake hands - no fooling!! I crawled along on my stomach (belly, that is) and near the top of grade I lifted my body and head and about 10’ away there was bruin squatting on his haunches swinging his head from side to side trying to get my scent. He had evidently heard me approaching before I noticed his tracks. You of course know a black bear’s eye sight is very poor - his scent very keen. I’d been sleeping under the trees for some days and with a couple of very loud “woofs”, he headed for the tall timber. Grizzlies used to come down to the head of the lake in the old days; before logging operations. One of my school friends - subsequently a homesteader at the head of Pitt Lake who is now a resident at a “rest home” at 85 years. He told me a thriller or two of grizzly bear stories. Personally, I had a grizzly bear claw my ankle.

You probably know as much or more about Slumach and his gold than I do about his mine. A friend of mine met me in New Westminster and said, “Mac, have you got \$20,000?” I said, “Charlie, I have only \$2.50 to my name.” He said, “Too bad, I can make you \$1,000,000.” Thousands were subsequently spent on this project until being recently abandoned!!

Incidentally, as you disclosed your aquanticeship with the Slumach people, query them as to the stories of Slumach taking a woman with him on his gold getting trips. Sounds like a “lot a bull” although I quite understand it could be true. Do his people really know? I know why he did it if he did? It’s not what these PUNKS we have around now would think.

Must close before I am warmed up.

Maybe you will write again.

It’s a difficult matter to write about - so controversial.

Sincerely,
D.E. McPhaden
436 - 1st Street
New Westminster, BC

Aunt Mandy’s Recollections



The Aunt Mandy Interview, 1972.

I arrived back in Haney as a civilian in late July, 1971 and it was one of the more stressful times in my life. Fortunately, I had arranged with Andy to hire me as a park ranger. Carol and I had baby girl Michelle on the 14 August. With finding a place to rent and getting my ducks in a row to open a camera store, my life, although happy with a daughter, was a busy time.

I’d no sooner opened my shop before Staff Sergeant Norm Manning, the new non-commissioned officer at the RCMP Haney Detachment, called saying Dunc McPhaden was at the front counter enquir-

ing about me. The 89-year old man had taken the bus out from New Westminster. We had too short a visit. When he’d visited the British Columbia Royal Museum and Archives in Victoria, Dunc had photocopied the entire transcript of the Slumach trial. He allowed me to make photocopies of his photocopies. Unfortunately, I ran out of dimes to photocopy everything and Dunc ran out of time.

Mickey McLaughlin was living in a rest home about six blocks from my residence upon my return to Haney. On 10 September, I visited him and made some sketchy scribbled notes about his time in the Upper Pitt Valley. He told me he’d rode up to Alvin with Volcanic Brown. It was to be ‘Doc’ Brown’s final trip. Alvin Patterson saw Brown alone going up onto one of the glaciers as he was coming down. Patterson was with Dave Ketson. Mickey told me Marcus Cox claimed to have found gold on the Upper Stave River. A Lillooet Indian, Marcus lived at the head of the lake from 1904 until his death in 1950.

In September, Agnes called me with the horrific news Joe, his mother Minnie (Mrs. Xavier), and Agnes and Joe’s son Andrew had been killed when the vehicle in which they were riding went over a steep embankment on the Mission side of the Stave Lake Bridge. They were returning home after visiting with Aunt Mandy and Uncle Clinton. The funeral took place a few days later at St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic Church in Maple Ridge. With Joe’s death, Agnes became chief.

Store hours in Haney in 1971 were from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and for the first several months in business, Agnes used to accompany me into Vancouver every Monday. She’d spend time with the Department of Indian Affairs while I visited suppliers for camera inventory. On occasion, Agnes babysat Michelle. It was during this time Agnes took me out to Mission to meet Joe’s Aunt Amanda (1902-1987) and Uncle Clinton Charnley (1884-1971) who were living in a home with son Bob on Charnley Avenue just west of Cedar Drive and north of 7th Avenue.

Although Aunt Mandy was blind, it didn’t stop her from being a totally social and gracious hostess. She volunteered to tell me what she knew about the Slumach’s Lost Mine of Pitt Lake. Her explanation of the discovery of gold by her great-uncle Slumach and his subsequent hanging was very likely the closest anyone got to hearing the most accurate account. Here’s Aunt Mandy’s account almost verbatim:

“Here is what my Father told me about Slumach, the killing of Louis Bee, and the gold Slumach found in the Pitt Country. My father, Peter Pierre, a catechist from the Roman Catholic Order of Mary Immaculate in Mission and medicine man at the Katzie Indian Reserve, was Slumach’s nephew. Father said Charlie Slumach at the time of the shooting of Louie Bee was closer to 80 than to 60 and he was a crippled and harmless old widower who lived at the bottom end of Pitt Lake in a shack on the abandoned Silver Creek Indian Reserve. He was part Katzie and part Nanaimo Indian. He had a brother named Smum-qua and a married daughter Mary living at Cowichan on Vancouver Island. My father spent the last week of Slumach’s life with him in prison teaching him religion and preparing him for the hereafter. Slumach told him what had happened at

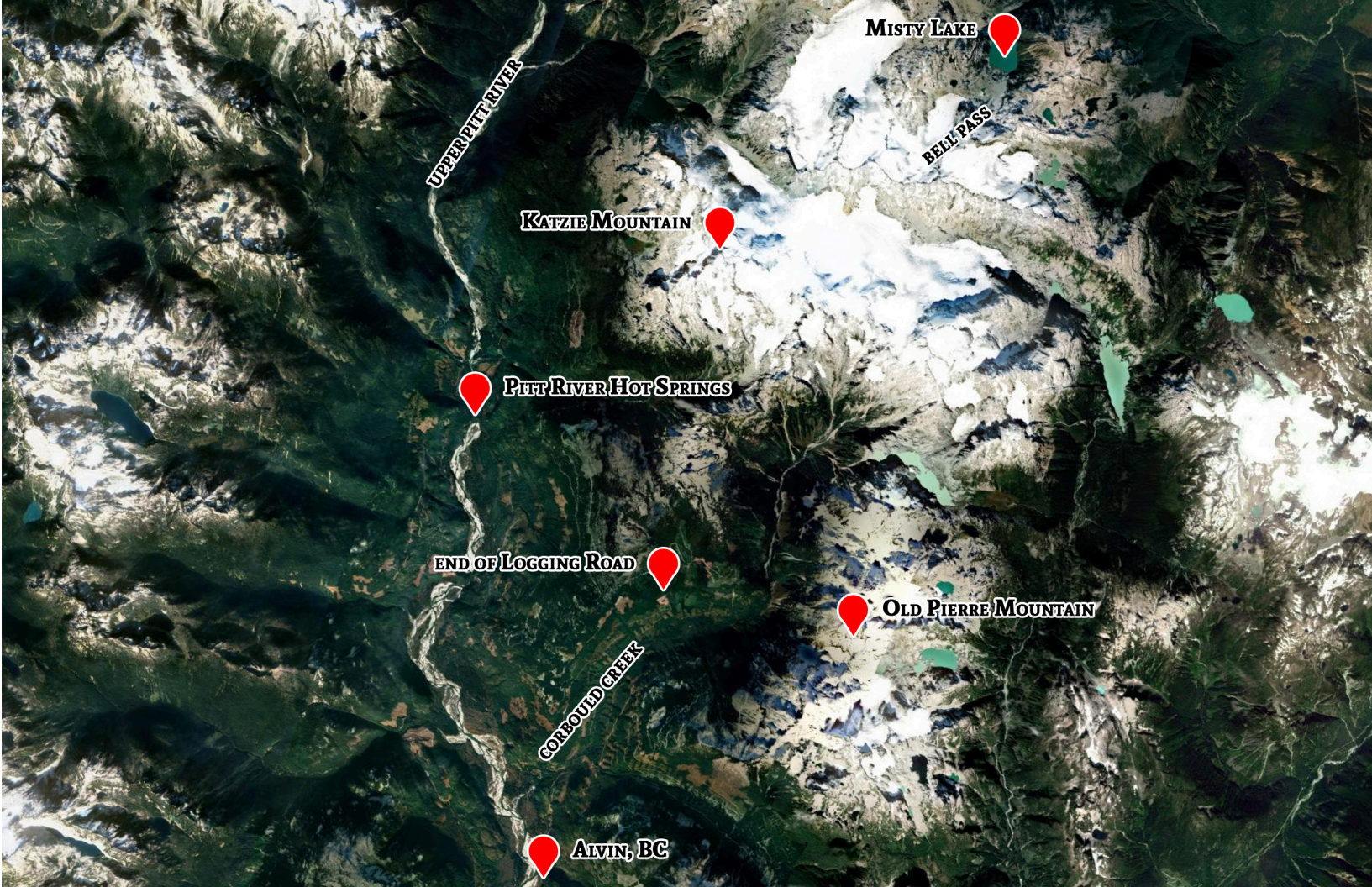


The Peter Pierre Family, 1906.
Back Row: Margaret (*Margie*, later Mrs. Andrew James) and Xavier Pierre (who later married Minnie Mussel).
Front Row: Peter Pierre, Matilda Pierre (later Mrs. William Kelly), Catherine (Mrs. Peter Pierre née Charles) and Amanda (later Mrs. Clinton Charnley).

Peter Pierre was a gold prospector, medicine man, herbalist, fisherman, and Roman Catholic catechist who provided well for his family -- food and luxuries that included silk and satin clothes, and patent leather shoes and gloves. “Old Pierre” assisted anthropologist Dr. Diamond Jenness write the title *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*. Where did he get his wealth? was it gold? Older son Simon (not included in above portrait), although only 25 years of age, accompanied Chiefs Capilano of North Vancouver, Charlie Tsipeymult of Cowichan on Vancouver Island, and Basil David of Bonaparte near Cache Creek to London, England, in 1907 to act as interpreter for their meeting with King Edward VII to discuss the unfairness of land appropriations from the Indigenous people. Joseph August Pierre (another son, not in above portrait), was born in 1880 or 1881 and died somewhere between 1904 and 1910. His only son, Richard, born in 1902, married Margaret Rose Moody, the granddaughter of Sewell Prescott Moody, the founder of Moodyville, which later became North Vancouver.

paddled upstream to his cabin. The following day a boat came out to Slumach’s home. The posse merely fired shots into the house resulting in Slumach escaping out the back door and hiding under a fallen tree. The group aboard the boat disgusted Peter by the irresponsible manner in which they carried out their duties. To ensure Slumach would not return to his home for shelter, they burned it to the ground. It was to Peter that Slumach eventually surrendered. Peter persuaded his uncle to give himself up to the Indian Agent. My father went into

Alouette Slough. He said he had been heading up the Lower Pitt River in his canoe to his cabin when he spotted a deer. He shot at the animal from his canoe and then pulled into the beach to see if he had hit the animal. Seeing blood, he ventured into the bush to look for the wounded animal. After a lengthy and futile search, he was returning to his canoe when he saw two Indians in a canoe out on the water. One was Louis Boulrier, a half-French half-Kanaka, called Bee for short, and the other was Charlie Seymour, an Indian from Harrison Mills. Slumach told Peter that Bee held a grudge against him and stepping ashore came at him wielding an axe and shouting “I’m going to chop your damn head off.” Slumach raised his shotgun out of sheer fright and fired point blank at Bee, killing him instantly. Seymour, the only witness, disappeared into the bush. Slumach placed Bee’s body in the victim’s own canoe and set it out in midstream to drift down to the fishing party. Slumach did not accompany the body because he feared Bee’s friends might mob him. He then got into his own canoe and



the bush after his uncle despite warnings from the posse. Peter told them he was going to see his uncle and not some wild animal. He found Slumach half-starved hidden under a fallen tree. According to my father, there was only the hangman, Father Morgan, and himself who actually witnessed the hanging of his uncle although a great many more were present outside the gallows. When the hangman was placing the hood over Slumach’s head the old Indian asked him in Chinook not to waste any time. At that moment my father closed his eyes and began to pray with Father Morgan. He opened his eyes and all he could see was the dangling rope. Despite attempts by his daughter to get possession of the body to give him a proper burial, Slumach was buried in an unknown grave in the prison cemetery in Sapperton. It was during my father’s stay in prison Slumach told him about finding gold in the Pitt Country. Slumach told my father it was only one occasion did he ever take gold out of the Pitt. He said he had met Port Douglas Indians from the head of Harrison Lake coming off Glacier Lake and down Patterson Creek into the Upper Pitt Valley. They told him they had taken horses part way but had driven them back towards Port Douglas and had crossed Glacier Lake on foot. They gave him a handful of bullets moulded from gold they had found in Third Canyon. Slumach spent the night in the canyon and slept on a bench-shaped rock on the west side of the river. The rock was covered with a rust-coloured moss. When he awoke around 5 a.m. he could scarcely see the sun coming up over three mountain peaks for the east wall of the canyon. During this time he was still shrouded in darkness. As it became lighter, Slumach could see in his own surroundings. Peeling the moss off his rock bed, he saw a yellow metal. He dug out some nuggets with a penknife and half-filled his shot bag with them. He sold the bag, about the same size as a ten-pound sugar bag, to a storekeeper in New Westminster for \$27. The storekeeper went back to England a short time after the purchase. That, claimed Slumach, was the only gold he ever took out of the Pitt country. Sitting on the cell bench, Slumach drew a map for Peter of the location where he had found the nuggets. Peter memorized the drawing and then destroyed it. Years later he re-drew the map and I [Amanda] traced out three copies but unfortunately they were all destroyed in a house fire in the 1930s. “

The story of Amanda and Clinton’s lives are extraordinary, so I will tell it here before returning to Slumach. There are two versions of Amanda Charnley’s story, but I have left both in because they show some details vary to a certain extent.

Clinton’s parents and siblings came to Vancouver when he was five years old to check out the area and when Clint was 17, the family sold their businesses and property in England and moved to Vancouver and bought properties. Soon his parents had a home in the west end of Vancouver along with a summer home on Barnston Island (directly across tge Fraser River from the Katzie First Nations’ Reserve). Clinton became friends with Peter Pierre and family and took them out for drives in his expensive cars (Pierce Arrow being one). When Clint first saw Amanda, she was swimming at the age of eight. Amanda from a very early age told everyone, “When I grow up I’m going to marry Clint Charnley.”

Years later, they dated with chaperones. Clinton much later moved to San Jose, California, for the climate and excellent cattle ranching. They were writing to each other by this time. Amanda wanted to get married, so Clint came back to ask permission from her father (which was customary in those days). Her father consented on the strict condition Clinton not take her away from the Fraser Valley. Amanda was a new breed of young women who wore short dresses, had bobbed hair, smoked and went to dances where the Charleston was the rage. Clint and Amanda married at the ages of 41 and 23 respectively. They lived in Marpole, Vancouver, for a time and then had a home in Sapperton, New Westminster, before settling on their 130-acre island ranch near Dewdney, east of Mission, where they ran beef cattle, sheep and hogs—and began raising a family. Unfortunately all the photographs of Mandy during this chapter of her life were lost when her trunk possessing her most treasured valuables was lost in the Great Fraser River Flood of 1948.

In January 1931, while collecting water for the sheep, Amanda slipped on ice in the Dewdney Slough, was knocked unconscious and days later developed blurred vision and a crucifying headache. Clint took her to St. Mary’s Hospital in New Westminster for the removal of a blood clot but the surgeon mistakenly severed the optic nerve, which resulted in instant and irreversible blindness. The couple had two small boys, Bob and Cecil. Cecil had leukaemia and died in his Mom’s arms the day after she arrived home from the hospital after becoming blind. She was initially unaware her baby was going to die.

Amanda took her son Bob and went to live with her parents, Catherine and Peter Pierre, for five years, suffering from profound depression and being suicidal. The parents were strict but loving and very supportive and later encouraged her to cook, do laundry and other household chores instead of just grieving. She learned how to knit and crochet while totally blind.

Years later, remarkably rehabilitated, confident, capable and industrious, she moved back to the island ranch where she took advantage of the resources found there and taught herself how to skin muskrats, even though she hated touching the smelly creatures, and dry them on frames she carved out of the wood found on the island. She bought traps and had her son Bob set them around Norrish Creek. These pelts were sold to a furrier company in Vancouver. She had her children climb Cascara trees. They peeled the bark. Amanda dried and sacked up the bark which was sold to a company in Vancouver for making cascara into medicine.

Clinton and Amanda went on to have three more children, a second son Bill (later a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force) and daughters Judy and Catherine. Clinton paid the expenses for a Swiss eye surgeon to visit British Columbia in hopes he could restore his wife’s eyesight. The hospital and medical costs practically turned Clinton into a slave. He had to live in Vancouver in a rooming house to work at the Pacific Meat Company packinghouse as a butcher and skinner for a salary as well as coming home on the weekends to the island ranch to tend the cattle, plough acreages and plant fields of clover and alfalfa. In the late summer, he had to cut, stack and store hay. He eventually did manage to pay off all the bills.

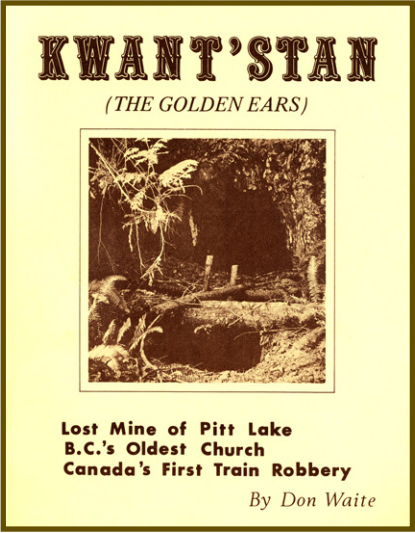
During the 1948 flood Clinton, with sons Bobby and Bill, Clint managed to load the beef cattle onto a scow and get them to high ground in Mission. He obtained permission from the priests at the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (the First Nations residential school in Mission) to pasture the cattle on a huge piece of

land well above the floodwater. Clinton had to sell the cattle at auction for a small fraction of their value that was a horrendous loss both financially and emotionally. Later he went to work for Clappison Meat Packers in Haney (Maple Ridge) well into his old age, even after the family had left the island, and did not retire until his early eighties, and only because Amanda telephoned his boss and told him in no uncertain terms to fire him. Clinton died in 1971 and Amanda lived until 1987.

I used to visit Aunt Mandy when she came to Haney to play bingo. She was quite capable of playing several braille cards simultaneously. When my daughter Michelle was three and four years of age, we used to visit Aunt Mandy and she used to touch Michelle’s face and ringlets to study her facial features.

As mentioned in the chapter about my time in Ottawa taking the Forensics Course, I wrote a letter to 87-year-old Duncan Eli McPhaden about his time as a registrar in the courthouse in New Westminster and his time pursuing his long quest for Slumach’s gold mine. A short time after I opened my camera store the force’s detachment commander called me with news Duncan McPhaden had just showed up at the counter with a huge file folder of Slumach material. He had come out to Maple Ridge on the bus just to see me. During his short stay, he permitted me to photocopy much of his material.

In the fall of 1972, I published a 72-page 5x7 inch book titled ‘Kwanstan (The Golden Ears) meaning Four Sisters Mountain in the Halkomelem or Chinook (Indian) language. For me, it was a really big deal and my introduction to self-publishing. My friend Maurice Staudt, owner of Maple Ridge Printing, ran the first 100 copies. A businessman first and a friend second, he charged me 2 cents each for 200 staples! The books cost 52 cents each to produce and sold to McClure’s 5 to \$1.00 store adjacent to my camera shop for \$1. They sold them for \$2. It went into a second printing of 300 copies before saturating the market! It was fun but certainly not a money maker.



Cover to the 1972 book featuring the shaft going into Viking Mine.

By coincidence, Rick Antonson happened to visit Mo at his print shop and panicked on learning about my book. He, his brother Brian, and Mary Trainer had just written their own 5x7 inch title, ‘In Search of a Legend Slumach’s Gold - the search for the Slumach lost creek gold mine’. I had the scoop. I had Aunt Mandy’s account. They didn’t. Rick paid a visit to my camera store and despite the book conflict, we became lifelong friends.

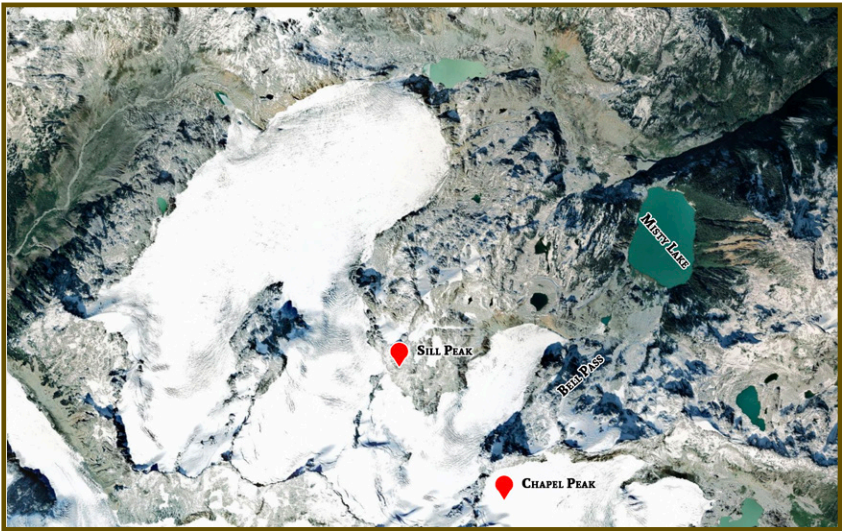
Doc Brown’s Last Camp



In the fall of 1972, Peter McIlvaney and Dick Hamilton visited my store with an interesting story. They had taken a ferry to the top end of Pitt Lake and been driven to the end of a logging road which went up the north side of Corbould Creek. Their ambition was to cross over the glaciers to Whistler. At Misty Lake, they found ‘Doc’ Brown’s last camp but didn’t put two and two together at the time. It was on a soft, grassy patch of ground away from any rocks. They found a two-foot tall cairn. They took it apart and found a copper pestle and mortar. They thought it was a bell. Dick recalled, “Initially, I believed it was a bell like the ones the pioneers used when they took wagon trains across the plains. It would be hung on a tree and when blown would make a noise to guide the pioneers”. Anyway, we put it back the way we found it and continued with our hike.” They checked their maps and concluded they didn’t have enough grub to make it to Whistler and so retraced their way back to Alvin. They failed to realize a pile of rocks on the north side of the camp was meant to be a wind break from the strong winds.

They got in touch with movie producer Mike Collier, President of Yale-town Productions, Vancouver, in 1978 and Mike, cameraman Bob Rodvik, Peter and Dick returned to Misty Lake and recreated their discovery for a video “The Curse of the Gold Mine”.

On 26 April 1978, Milke attended at my home to interview Aunt Mandy. I had earlier negotiated with him to pay her \$150 for the privilege of doing the interview. The first taping session took place at my residence. Mike asked several questions and then I followed up with some questions.



Mike: Slumach was half Katzie and half Nanaimo?

Amanda: Yes, and he had one daughter named Annie?

Mike: Did any of your family remember Slumach’s daughter?

Amanda: No.

Mike: How about Chief Coquitlam Williams, did your family know him?

Amanda: Yes, Tommy Williams you mean? His father was Coquitlam Williams.

Mike: Did your father know Coquitlam Williams?

Amanda: Oh yes, Coquitlam Williams said he knew of Slumach’s mine. Oh, if you were talking about Tommy Williams (the son), he wouldn’t know anything about it. Tommy was known to tell stories. They told me they read in the papers or read to me in the paper one time he took somebody up to where the gold mine was. He took them up in a plane. They went up in a plane and he didn’t even know where he was. And he came back. They staked a claim when they went up that time and they called it Rymoo Coquitlam. There was Ray Monroe, Bill Ryan and Tommy Williams, and Tommy took them up there and led them to this spot and said this is where Slumach buried his gold. He didn’t even know.



Expedition to Bell Pass, 1972
Tom, Dick, Harry, Peter and Joe

Mike: There’s a story written in the Province in 1951 by Bruce Larsen and it says Indian legend insists the ghost of an Indian who died on the gallows in New Westminster guards the Lost Creek Mine’s fabulous Eldorado that lured 21 white men to mysterious deaths. It begins, “The legend was told today by 79-year-old Chief Jack Katsilano, the only Indian living that knows the whole story...” Does that sound familiar?

Amanda: He’s from North Vancouver and he’s half-Cowichan. He died long ago.

Mike: Is he from Dan George’s tribe?

Amanda: Yes, but my father was the only proof man. He was there. He stayed with the old man in his prison cell for a whole week teaching him his catechism. You know, my father was a devout catholic. He was teaching him all the rites of the church and all the hereafter stuff. Simon Pierre was my oldest brother. My father was born in 1859. Peter Pierre taught catechism to Slumach.

Mike: Katzie? Slumach spoke Katzie?

Amanda: Yes, Nanaimo is a different dialect. Indians spoke Katzie from Yale to the mouth of the Fraser. The Squamish Indians spoke what sounded like Chinese to me.

Mike: Can you tell me what you remember from your Dad about his being in jail with Slumach?

Amanda: I wasn’t born then. I was born in 1902 and this happened in the nineties. Eighteen ninety. All I know is what he told us about it. It all started with the lies they said about him. He was this and that, you know, cruel old man and all that, but my parents both said he was a kind old man. He was a cripple. He had a cane when he walked. He wobbled. He broke his hip when he was younger and as he got older he had to have a cane. It said in the stories they told about him he was sixty-five but my father said he must have been over 80 because he was such an elderly man.

Mike: Did Slumach shoot Louis Bee?

Amanda: He didn’t intend to do it. This guy (Bee) was drunk when he came after him. And my father said this old man Slumach had a very weak voice and this Louis Bee was shouting. He was drunk and when Slumach told him, “I shot a deer” this guy shouted back “What were you shooting?” Slumach answered, “Come and help. I’ll tell you when I get out of the bush. You just wait there.” Well this guy (Bee) jumped out of the canoe. He had his big axe. “If you don’t answer me,” and swearing at him, “If you don’t answer me, you old so-and-so and black-face, I’ll chop your head off. I’m coming after you.” Bee was eight or nine feet away from Slumach running up toward the old man. This guy Bee really means what he says, so Slumach took his gun from under his arm like this and the cane from the other side. He put up his gun like this and fired a shot about three feet to his right and Louis tried to jump backwards when he saw the old man put up his gun. He jumped backwards right where the shot went and was shot right in the right side and chest. And the man that was

with him jumped out of the canoe right away and ran into the bush. He didn’t see what happened, so the old man stood there. He pulled the canoe in. Louis’s canoe. Bee was still breathing. He wasn’t quite dead. Slumach stood there thinking what he should do. Should he take Bee back to his people? He thought about what would happen if he told his story and concluded they’d just shoot him down. He put Bee back in the canoe and set him adrift down the river. Slumach then went up the river in his own canoe to his home.

Mike: At the trial Chief Swaneset testified?

Mandy: Old Slumach didn’t see Old Swaneset coming down the river because he was in the bush looking for the deer he shot. He shot the deer from his canoe going upstream and when he shot the deer he got off his canoe and went in the bush looking for it for about 45 minutes or more and those guys came around.

Mike: They say Slumach stayed in the bush for two months.

Mandy: So the books say. It couldn’t have been that long because when my father walked to his house he had a lot of food. He must have been cooking his lunch or breakfast because he had bacon, potatoes and a frying pan. The kettle was boiling when my father walked in.

Mike: They found him in his house?

Mandy: Yes. The old man ran for the bush when he saw the boat coming. He thought they were coming to shoot at him again like the day before.

Mike: They shot at him the day before?

Amanda: When they first went they fired shots at his house from about 200 or 300-yards away. He ran away from the house and after two hours came back to his house. The next day my father went back with the posse. When my father told them to put the little boat out from the tugboat so he could row ashore they were going to give him a gun. “What do you want me to take a gun for? I’m not going after an animal. I’m going to see my uncle.” He didn’t take a gun or anything. He walked into his little house. He had a little two-room house. He wasn’t in there but the back door was open. He had snuck out. My father shouted and shouted and when the old man heard my father’s voice, “We’re not going to hurt you. You can come out. Nobody is going to hurt you.” Slumach returned. He didn’t have his gun with him. All his guns were in the house. My father knew he was safe. Slumach came out willingly.

Mike: That’s when he was arrested?

Amanda: That’s what my father told me.

Mike: Do you believe Slumach had a gold mine somewhere?

Amanda: Well, I believe so because he told my father so.

Mike: He told your father he had a gold mine?

Amanda: That he discovered it. He went up there when he wanted and brought a half bag of it. Years ago they used to have ten-pound cotton sugar bags. That’s how big. That’s how much he brought down. You know how much he got for it? He got \$27.

Mike: How did you know that?

Amanda: He didn’t want anybody to know. He told the man he sold the money to not to tell anybody because he knew if anybody found out they would be after him to show him where he got the stuff.

Mike: When your father was teaching catechism to Slumach did he draw a map?

Amanda: The day before he was hung my father told me that when the catechism was finished the priest anointed him and baptized him. Slumach pulled out a bench and drew the map on the bench in the cell.

Mike: Did you ever see the map?

Amanda: My father memorized it. My father travelled in his young childhood days and knew all the mountainsides and all the summits of the mountains up there like the palm of his hand.

Mike: Did your father ever find any of the gold?

Amanda: He did try to go many years after the old man was hung but he met with an accident. He went to the Second Canyon and was going to jump across a creek but when he jumped on the boulder in the middle of the creek, he slipped and broke his hip and they had to carry him back. His wife went with them and was there when they carried him back to the canoe and brought him home to New Westminster and the hospital. And that was the last time he went. [According to Judy Charnley, Aunt Mandy’s daughter, Peter Pierre slipped on ice on a glacier while prospecting for gold and was bedridden from then until his death.]

Mike: What year was that?

Amanda: It was somewhere in the nineties—the late nineties.

Mike: Do you know somebody named Jones?

Amanda: I know a Bill Jones. He was a broker. I mustn’t mention his name because he has a boy living in Pitt Meadows.

Mike: What was his relation to the story?

Amanda: He tried to go up there. He tried to get my father to go up there and my father went with him twice and they brought out some samples. They didn’t go up to the canyon where they were supposed to go. They just washed in Patterson Creek. They brought home samples but there was no platinum or gold—just a little bit of silver and copper. After that Jones got somebody else. My father and my brother sidetracked him.

Mike: You mean he got somebody else?

Amanda: He got a fisherman and prospector who thought they knew where it was. They didn’t find it.

Mike: Did Jones take his son?

Amanda: No. He was just a boy, four years old. It was a long time ago. The son would be 60 or 70 now. Well, he must be in his fifties at least. He wouldn’t remember anything.

Mike: Did your father make any copies of the map Slumach drew for him?

Amanda: Yes.

Mike: What happened to them?

Amanda: They got burnt. He made the first map. I traced it from his map and my brother put it in a box and put it away in his house. Many years later the house got burned and they lost everything on Barnston Island. That’s Joe Pierre’s father’s [Xavier Pierre] house.

Now the questioning was turned over to me:

Don: Did anyone else in your family go looking for this gold?

Amanda: No, the young generation isn’t interested. I haven’t got a brother living—only one sister, Mrs. Jamieson who is 81. They weren’t interested. It’s too much work climbing up the mountains and besides some of them never came back. They got lost up there and some got hurt.

Don: Did you hear of John Jackson?

Amanda: Jackson from California? My parents brought him out of Pitt Lake. I think it was before I was born. My parents were cruising around the lake in a canoe one afternoon and they heard a whistle. My father

looked around and they saw this object out on the lakeshore on the east side of Penitentiary Island. They saw this animal or human being waving at them. He looked like an animal from far away. When they heard him speak they found out he was a person. They went ashore and he asked my father to take him out to New Westminster. He said he'd pay my father. "Just give me your address. I'll pay you when I get home. I haven't got any money." They brought him down to the quarry. (Gilley's Quarry across the Lower Pitt River from the Swaneset Bay Resort & Country Club).

Don: What did he look like?

Amanda: He was dressed in skins. I guess deer hides. His feet were wrapped up. All his clothes were torn up. He lived on wild animals.

Don: Did he have any gold with him?

Amanda: He had a packsack made out of hide and when he was getting off the canoe he told my father he had landed it. The right stuff all right and that he had found the thing (the gold mine?). It was the last time we heard of him.

Don: Did you know Volcanic Brown? What do you remember about him?

Amanda: Oh yes. He used to go up there every summer.

Don: How old was he?

Amanda: He was in his seventies. He must have been almost 80 when he went missing. He went up there to the head of the lake for seven to 10 years. He went up every year.

Don: Did he ever talk to you about the gold?

Amanda: He came to my father every time. He came down from the Okanagan every summer. He came to my father to try and get information but my father wouldn't say anything.

Don: Were they friends?

Amanda: Oh, yes.

Don: Were you a little girl then?

Amanda: No, I think I was married already when he was lost.

Don: Have you heard about his gold teeth?

Amanda: No.

The questioning continues with Mike Collier:

Mike: I wonder what happened to the jar of gold found in Volcanic's tent?

Amanda: I suppose the people that found it took it. My father thought that he went far away up on the glaciers and fell between the crevices and that he'd be up there frozen or something.

Mike: They say he cut off a toe on an earlier expedition?

Amanda: He came back again but next time he didn't come back. Two years later he came up the lake again. He's still up there but dead.

Mike: Do you remember the time he cut off his toes?

Amanda: No, he didn't come to my parents' house. He said last time he came it got pretty cold up there. The best time to go up there is in the fall. That's what Old Slumach said.

Mike: Someone found an old cabin on Burke Mountain about 3,000 feet up. Could it have been Slumach's?

Amanda: No, he didn't make a cabin up there. He just slept in a hollow tree. He didn't build a cabin, he just slept out.

Mike: But when your father went to find him he was in a cabin?

Amanda: Oh yes, where his camp is just before you get to Pitt Lake. They call it Silver Creek. His cabin was about 200 yards east of Silver Creek. There is a rock that sticks out in the river. It's about 200 yards out in the river about 75 yards wide. That's where the old man's house was.

Mike: That's where it was when the posse burnt it down?

Amanda: Yes. After they got the old man in the boat they got out and burnt it down.

Mike: That wasn't very nice since he hadn't been convicted yet.

Amanda: My father said it was self-defence.

Mike: There were two or three people that testified at the trial and Slumach's daughter Annie was looking for some people to testify. Rose somebody and an extension of the trail was asked for but not given.

Amanda: The only witness to the shooting was a man from Harrison Mills who was with Louis Bee. His name was Charlie Seymour.

Mike: Slumach's daughter said at the trial, "I, Annie, an Indian woman of Cowichan in the Province of British Columbia, make oath and say I am a daughter of the above-named Slumach, that I arrived in this city on the 5th instant and have since been endeavouring to procure the attendance at this court of one Moody, an Indian, and one Florence Reid to give evidence on the trial of the said Slumach of the above charge, that I have not been able to procure the attendance at this court of the said Moody or said Florence Reid."

Amanda: Moody? What was his first name? I never heard of them.

Mike: Slumach said at the trial, "I, the above-named Slumach, make oath and say that one Moody, an Indian, and Florence Reid are necessary and material witnesses in my behalf in the trial on the above charge and I cannot safely proceed to trial without their attendance as witnesses to the following facts."

Amanda: My father said there were so many people related to Old Slumach that just blackened the old man like the devil himself and that he was a crook. My parents said he was a kind old man and very soft spoken. Whenever he came down from up there where he lived—my parents lived in South Westminster near the bank on the east side of the first bridge—he brought venison or trout.

Mike: Slumach said at his trial that "Louis Bee, the deceased, was habitually quarrelling with me and he frequently harassed me with improper language and also threatened me more than once with violence and I was in constant fear of him."

Amanda: He was afraid this drunk guy was going to harm him so that's why he put his gun up to scare him off but Louis Bee jumped in front of the shot. He told my father he didn't really mean to shoot him but just wanted to scare him.

Mike: What about the women Slumach took with him?

Amanda: Oh, I read that story in braille. I was so glad to tell the truth. So many books like McLean's Magazine and the Courier the neighbours would read to me. Nothing until Don's book told the true story. Gold as big as walnuts and that he'd treat everybody in the bars were all lies. He came down with it only once and nobody knew. Nobody knew anything about it until my father got hurt. And then the story went around. Italians, prospectors from Italy, came to see him about it. Oh, shucks.

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

Mike: Was Slumach known as a good hunter?

Amanda: He got to know about this mining. He used to take prospectors all around the lake and rivers and creeks from New Westminster and government surveyors and that’s how he became familiar with minerals. That’s how he got to know about this mining while up the lake. One time in the summertime way up at the head of the lake he saw two men firing shots up in the air to signal to him so he paddled his way to them. They were Indians from Port Douglas. They had come so far on horseback and at Glacier Lake had sent the horses back and then walked the rest of the way over the mountain shooting deer for food. It took them three days to come over to that shore. When they got to this wall they saw this thing and this guy got his pen knife and started digging. They were all the bullets for his rifle. It was so soft—a vein-like shiny thing they came upon and they started moulding it into bullets. When Slumach brought the Indians to New Westminster one of them gave him a handful of bullets and told him that it was for his trouble for bringing them out. The men had relatives that worked at the cannery in New Westminster. They had thought they would just come over the mountain and reach New Westminster. They told the old man where they found the stuff.

Mike: Do you remember anyone else who got lost looking for the mine?

Amanda: I know a man from Mission, Northcott. He fell over a cliff. I don’t know if he died. He was badly injured anyway.

Mike: Quite a few injured?

Amanda: That’s why my father didn’t go back.

Mike: Indian people injured?

Amanda: August Jack, the only one that went up there, took some people, prospectors up there but they never found it.

Mike: Coquitlam Williams, Tommy Williams’ father?

Amanda: I don’t think old Tommy Williams’ father knew anything. Tommy Williams died a few years ago.

Mike: Do you know Dave Bailey?

Amanda: He was from Coquitlam. He was half Scotch and half Indian. He married an Indian woman and they had two girls. My oldest brother who was older than Simon, married Dave Bailey’s oldest daughter. My brother died when he was 26 years old and he left two children, and the girl died when she was 18, that left only a son Richard who took his grandfather’s name of Bailey and not Pierre. He lives on the Katzie Reserve.

Mike: Would he know anything about the mine?

Amanda: He never listened to my father. He was never around. Dave Bailey didn’t know much. My father asked him to come when he broke his hip. They were related by marriage.

Mike: Have you heard of Shotwell?

Amanda: No.

Mike: Have you heard of Hugh Murray?

Amanda: No.

Mike: Who was Louis Bee?

Amanda: His mother was Katzie and his father was Hawaiian—a deserter from the boats.

Mike: Did he drink a lot?

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

Amanda: He boozed a lot.

Mike: Did your father witness the hanging?

Amanda: There was Moresby, the judge, Father Morgan, the doctor and my father. That was all that witnessed the hanging and his daughter was downstairs. And all the books say they hung him on a tree and a multitude of people watching it but it wasn’t so.

Mike: What was the real story?

Amanda: They led him up the steps, poor old guy. When they led him up the steps he went up willingly. When he got up there they put the hood on, tied him up with a rope, the noose was hanging from above and the hangman was shaking like a leaf. My father was praying. Slumach told him to hurry and not to waste time.

Mike: Slumach and the curse on gold?

Amanda: No. He never mentioned anything to anyone except my father. You know where Sturgeon Slough is? This point is on the west side of Sturgeon Slough across the Pitt River, the corner before you turn north to the quarry. That’s where it happened, just a little west of the corner. That’s where the group of Indians was camping at the mouth of the Alouette River. That’s where they would camp and fish.

Mike: Who was the Indian with Louis Bee?

Amanda: Charlie Seymour. He jumped off the canoe and ran for the bush on the north side of the river—the same side where Louis Bee was shot. He claims he shouted for some people that were out in the river fishing to come and pick him up on the north side of the river.

Mike: Chinook language?

Amanda: Made up language—French, Latin and Indian and all that mixed. I remember old Father Cherouse. He was pretty good at that. My father worked with the French missionaries at Mission. He understood French but couldn’t speak it. He could understand Latin but couldn’t speak it. In the church, he used to interpret for the priests.

Mike: Diamond Jenness?

Amanda: Oh, yes. He came to my father and wrote “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian.” He came down from Yale University. I was born in South Westminster but my parents moved to Katzie, a mile below Hammond.

Mike: Indian conflicts?

Amanda: Rivalry. The west coast of Vancouver Island Indians used to attack the Indians towards springtime. They’d attack the land Indians for food and take away young kids for slaves. This all ended when the Hudson’s Bay Company came to [Fort] Langley and mowed them down with machine guns. That was the last time they ever came to attack.

Amanda: Slumach canoed on Pitt Lake and picked up these three (Port Douglas Indians) men and he took them down to New Westminster. These men disembarked from the canoe and one of them handed Slumach a handful of bullets. Slumach looked at it and told them it was gold. “Yes, I know,” was the reply. “There’s lots of it.” He then went on to tell Slumach where he could find it. “You go up there and get all you want, up on the Pitt.” And that’s how the world got to know about Slumach’s gold. My father Peter Pierre spent a week with Slumach before he was to be executed, teaching him his catechisms to know the rights of the Catholic Church and the day before he was to be executed. My father told him he was ready for the next world, and he drew the bench toward my father and him and he wanted a pen and my father asked the guard for a pen and he gave it to him and he drew the map on the bench for my father where the gold was located

and gave the pen back and told my father whenever you need money just go up there and get it. It's as plain as daylight. My father memorized it. He knew all about the lake and Pitt Mountains. In his younger days he used to roam around and he memorized this map and they destroyed it. That's that. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pierre, were canoeing on Pitt Lake and pretty well close to the Golden Ears and they heard somebody shouting and my father looked around and saw this object on the beach and my mother was afraid to go near because it looked like an animal. And my father heard him speak. Father said, "No, he's a human being. What's wrong?" Mr. Jackson was all dressed in skin, his feet were wrapped up in skin. He had a packsack made out of deerskin and he asked them to take him to the quarry in Pitt River, and he brought him there, and when they

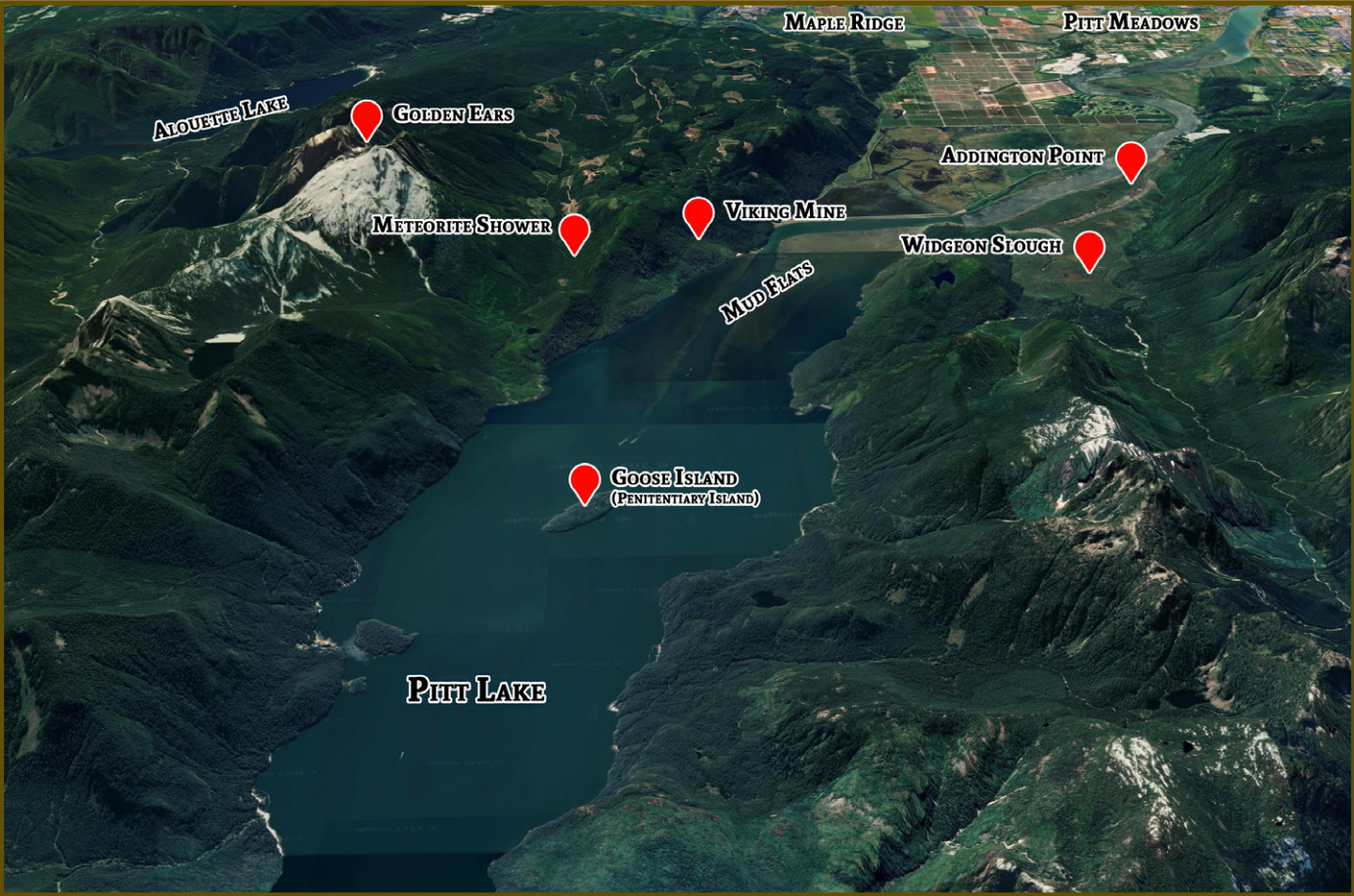
were coming down in the canoe, he told my father, "I landed the stuff." He meant gold. He said, "There's lots of it there. I'm going to come back and open it up. I got some in this packsack—samples to take home," and he told my father where he came from—California. He gave my father his name and address saying he had no money now but that he'd send some money to my parents for their trouble in bringing him out. That's the story. That's all I know about Jackson. Here's how it was told to me about my father Peter Pierre about Slumach. He was coming from New Westminster for food supply, going up the Pitt River in a canoe, when they got to a certain place just as they turned north on Pitt River. He saw a deer so he shot the deer and he thought he killed it but apparently when he got off the canoe he pulled his canoe up and traced the blood up in the bush. These two men in a canoe on the river were shouting, "What did you kill? What did you kill?" The old man answered that he shot a deer and couldn't find it. He had a very weak voice



Mike Collier and Dick Hamilton interview me at the south end of Pitt Lake, 1978.

and Louis Bee couldn't hear him and he got in a huff and yelled, "What's the matter with you, you old so and so," called him names and old Slumach told him, "You wait until I get down there and I'll tell you all about it" and apparently he didn't hear again and Louis Bee paddled ashore where Slumach's canoe was and jumped out of the canoe with a big axe swinging it around said, "Don't answer me. I'm coming up there to chop your head off." Well, Old Slumach knew then he was drunk by the way he staggered around. He had to do something to defend himself. He had his gun under his arm on his left and he used to go around with a cane on his right. He just put his gun up. He was going to shoot three or four feet away from this mad man coming at him, and when he pulled the trigger and shot, Louis Bee jumped backwards right into the shot, shot on the right side, and when Charlie Seymour jumped out of the canoe and ran for the bush Old Slumach stood there wondering what he was going to do. He sat down and wept a bit, sorry for what happened. He put his gun in his canoe and put Louis Bee in his own canoe and pushed him out into the river. He thought if he took him to where the Indians were camping in the mouth of the Alouette they would shoot him on sight. They wouldn't believe him. He went on his way back to his old shack way up on Pitt River just at the south of Pitt Lake. He told my father Peter Pierre that he wept all the way home and that's the story. Slumach went up the lake to look for the gold. It took him weeks to get up to this place where he found it. He got up there all right. He didn't know if he was in the right place. The men that gave him a handful of gold told him it was on the backside just right—can dig it with a pen knife. He went up, up, up these canyons, certain canyons, he was tired so he lay on his canvas blanket, slept, woke up in the morning. The sun was coming up in the east. He got up and there was a funny fog up to his waist and he sat there waiting for the fog to subside and he thought, "I wonder if this could be the place," because he had never seen fog like this before, and when the sun came up he looked at the moss. It was a beautiful deep yellow color like gold and he got his knife and dug some out. He got his canvas pellet bag and he put it in the bag three quarters full. That's what he brought down. He covered that thing up again

with the moss. He got the markings from the mountainside to mark the place where this thing was so he'll just go right up next time and he did. He came down to New Westminster the next morning and the store wasn't open. Slumach didn't tell anybody about the gold he found up there but my father Peter Pierre the day before he was executed. Slumach was my father's uncle by marriage. He was married to my father's distant aunt. My father Peter Pierre witnessed Slumach's execution right there with Father Morgan and [Mr. William] Moresby. There were only four that witnessed it, and when the hangman was too slow Slumach told him not to waste time and hurry. My father shut his eyes when the hangman pulled the lever, and when he opened his eyes he saw the rope dangling."



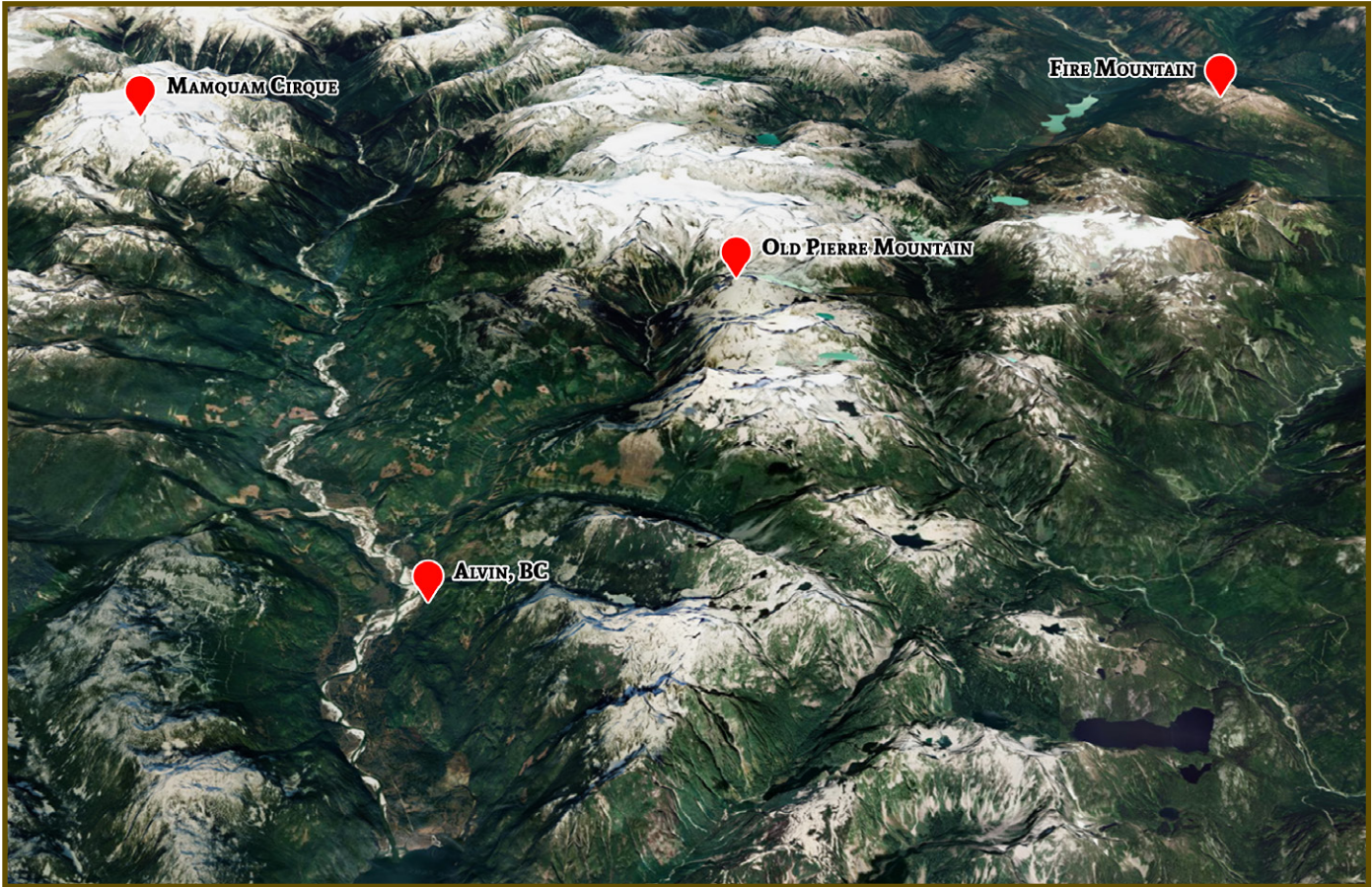
Looking south down Pitt Lake, towards Golden Ears and the more populated lowlands around the lower Pitt River.



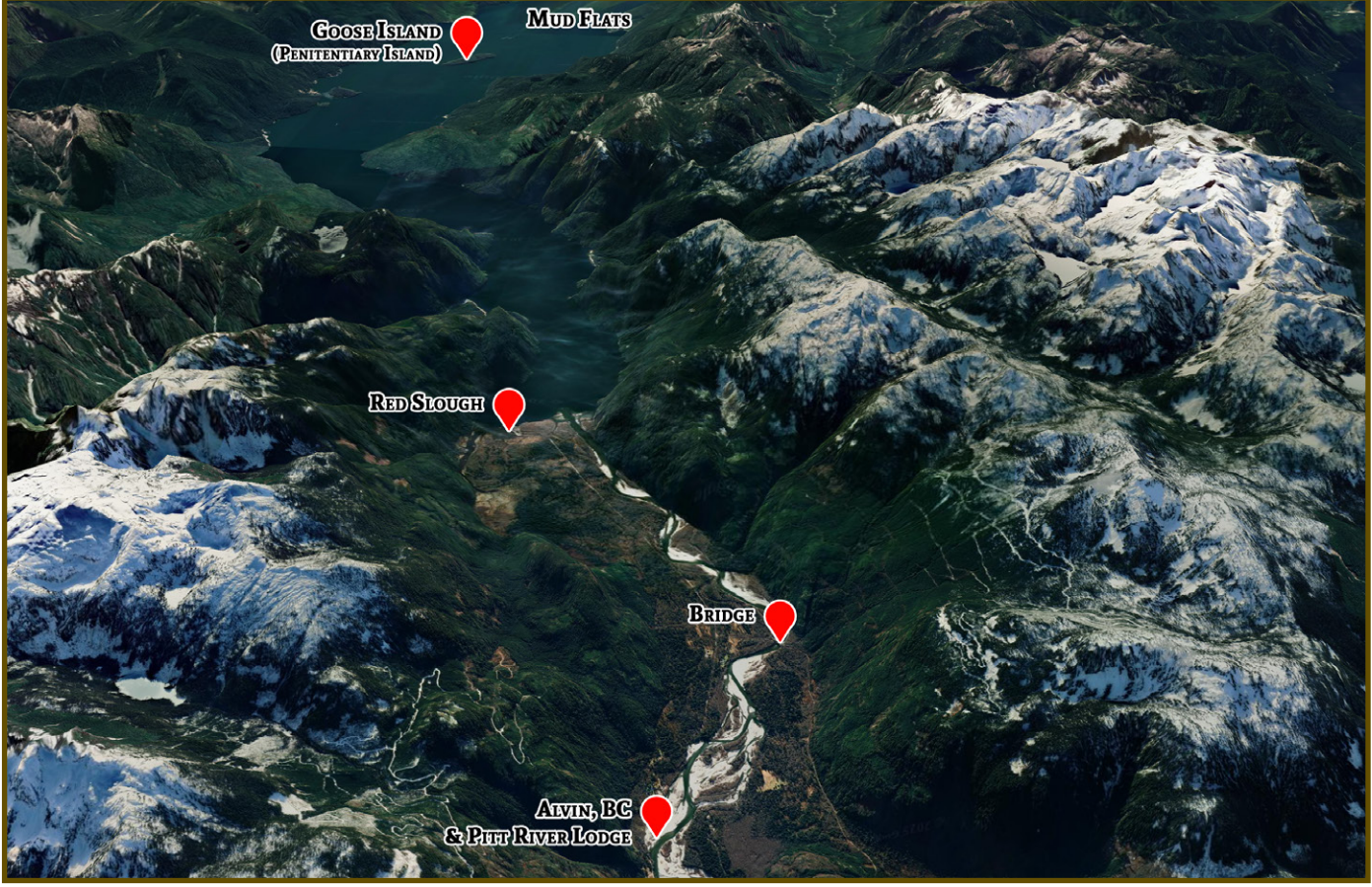
A view of the entirety of Pitt Lake, as seen from its south end.



Southeast-facing view of the Coast Mountains with important landmarks.



Looking north from the head of Pitt Lake and up the Upper Pitt River Valley.



Looking down the Upper Pitt River Valley, towards the south end of the lake and Pitt Meadows.

G. Stuart ‘Stu’ Brown

September, 25 1974
Mr. Donald Waite,
22317 Lougheed Highway,
Maple Ridge, BC

As a former resident and active forest survey officer in British Columbia, I came to know many areas of your province very well. During forest survey work, I became interested in minerals and for several years carried a prospector’s license. My work in Ottawa has continued to involve me in survey work in all provinces, but it was not until this summer that I was able to take time to investigate properly certain locations in which I had previously been interested to be brief, I have come up with some extremely startling results, which have shaken me thoroughly.

There is one problem in that the particular spot of extreme interest is within the confines of one of your provincial parks and prospecting, removal of samples, and mine development is therefore against the law. I do not wish in any way to flout the laws of the province, so I am writing to you. My request is that I be able to bring out loose surface samples to you, and then have the situation discussed with your cabinet. For emphasis, I would estimate that there is 20 billion (dollars) involved, much of it loose on the surface, and appearances indicate much more, even to hundreds of billions.

And this could make the Klondike and Caribou appear like peanuts.....

Sincerely,
G. Stuart Brown
2713 Norberry Crescent,
Ottawa, Ontario.

September 5, 1980
Mr. James Fyles,
Deputy Minister,
Department of Mines and Petroleum Resources,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, BC

Dear Mr. Fyles,

You will probably recall my visit in August, 1978, to your office regarding Slumach’s lost gold mine and some subsequent correspondence regarding finding the glory hole. At that time, I mentioned that it appeared quite certain that at least one other person knew the location as I had seen him in the area. First, in your letter of February 16th, 1979, you stated that you and your staff were skeptical of my discovery. For proof I can only refer to your documented police records of late 1930 which describe the search for the last known prospector who found the lode. Searchers did find him but they found his last camp and in it his tent they found nuggets of raw, free gold with crushed and broken quartz in it showing that he had found a lode richer than any rarely found.

Since I was at your office in 1978, I have been in the area twice. I was there in August, 1979, and have just recently returned this year. I know now that there are four other men besides myself who have been into the area because I saw them within half a mile of the site. I am sure they were from the United States for they were driving a car that had Oregon licence plates. If I can bring out 120 lbs. of almost solid gold in one five-day pack trip with two packs I’m sure each of the four could bring out 60 lbs. with one. At 15 ounces to the pound and \$600 per ounce that equals over half a million dollars. I can only repeat what I said in my letter of January 27, 1970, that I do not expect any advance for expenses I have endured, nor any grubstake to bring samples out. However, I must insist on written assurance that I will not be prosecuted under any regulations your province may have, I must have a written contract giving me and certain others a stipulated percentage of all gold brought out. I would also require that the environment be protected and that I get credit for the discovery for newspaper purposes. For your further information, I took time since 1978 to re-estimate the amount of gold present and i am sure my original was only one third of what is there. Much of the early excitement of the find, I have learned to live with since I first found the canyon in 1975 but the appeal of the area is strong and I really enjoy hiking there. I am enclosing a picture taken in the general area so you may see the type of terrain. This picture was taken in early September so you can see the glacier-type situation and the rough travel involved in hiking in. Your sincerely,
G. Stuart Brown

Sincerely,
G. Stuart Brown
2713 Norberry Crescent,
Ottawa, Ontario.

On September 5, 1980, Brown ended his line of communication with the government and, embittered, decided not to reveal the location of the mine.

In 1986, anticipating a revised edition of my book, I wrote to Brown who was living in retirement in Kelowna, B.C. Upon receipt of my letter, Brown drove to Maple Ridge for a face-to-face discussion about the possibility of his taking me into the location of Slumach’s Gold Canyon. At the end of August, Brown, Victor Loffler of Mission, and I left Pitt Meadows in a van en route to Pemberton and Mount Currie.

October 26, 1981
Mr. Donald Waite,
22317 Lougheed Highway,
Maple Ridge, BC

Dear Mr. Waite,

This is by nature an enquiry to determine if you still reside at the above address. If so, I would like to hear from you in the very near future.

The topic I wish to take up with you is the discovery of the lost gold mine discovered by Slumach and later visited by Jackson and Volcanic Brown. I am not about to reveal any details but I discovered the gold canyon in 1974 and have been fighting a very frustrating battle with the B.C. Provincial government in order to have some controlled action taken before some unscrupulous person learns of the secret and pilfers the lot. I have visited the offices of the government in Victoria on four occasions and have got nowhere. In addition, there have been numerous letters between myself and various officials there.

However, I will go into the situation in more detail if I hear from you. I wrote hoping to contact you because I know of your involvement in outdoor events and also that you are familiar with the details of the events in the story of the gold canyon.

Sincerely,
G. Stuart Brown
2713 Norberry Crescent,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Al Burnett & ‘Jock’ Hume, 1968
Skylarking at the Narrows on Alouette Lake



Some trivia about the Golden Ears Peaks, Penitentiary Island, and the surrounding areas.

Two brief notes in Library and Archives Canada’s holdings of the British Columbia Penitentiary illustrate the dangers of running prison work gangs in remote locations. At various points throughout its 102 years at the New Westminster site, the penitentiary operated a prison farm as well as carpentry, metal work and masonry shops. But in the early 20th century it attempted to establish an off-site logging and quarrying operation approximately 20 km from headquarters.

In 1903, the penitentiary acquired the deed to Goose Island through an Order in Council. Also known as Wright Island, Pen Island, and even Convict Island, this 140 acre property sits in the centre of Pitt Lake towards the eastern edge of B.C.’s Lower Mainland.

The penitentiary’s plan was to set up a work camp on the island to extract its lumber and mineral resources, and in June 1906 two guards and seven convicts travelled to the island from the New Westminster site. The group, which was later joined by seven additional convicts, cleared roads, built log houses and a wharf, cut 200 cords of wood, and quarried 96.5 yards of granite. Additional crews were sent in the spring and summer of 1907 and 1908.

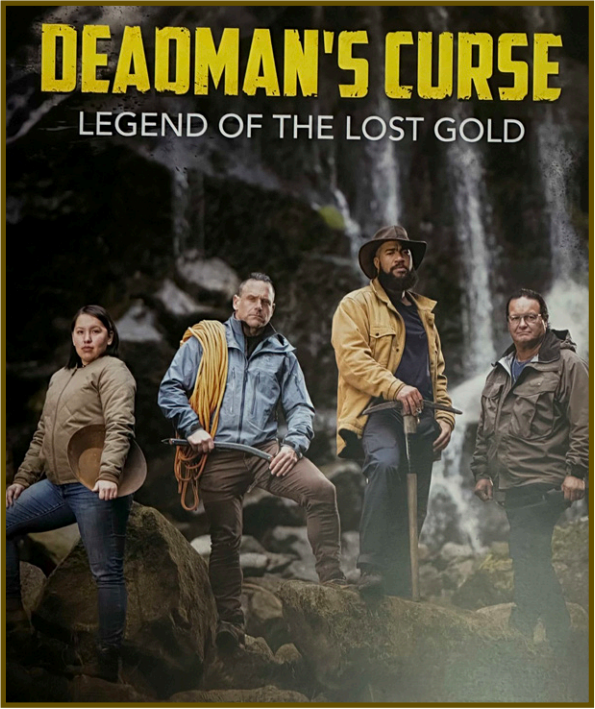
As Goose Island was such a remote location at the time, prison guards were supplied with twelve carrier pigeons each week for communication purposes. One pigeon was sent from the island to the New Westminster site each day to provide a routine status report. For urgent matters, guards were to send two pigeons in quick succession, and for emergencies such as escapes, three or four pigeons were to be sent at short intervals.

On May 27, 1908 such an emergency was encountered at the camp. At 3:55 pm, guards sent the first of at least two carrier pigeons, which arrived at the penitentiary at 9:00 am the following morning to report a “murderous assault” by two inmates. A follow-up message indicating that the prisoners had been handcuffed and that no injuries were incurred was sent at 8:10 am on May 28th and arrived at 4:30 that afternoon.

In addition to this attack, escapes and attempted escapes were also reported to have occurred from this camp. Predictably, the challenges of controlling a convict work gang in such a remote location led to the disuse of the island site. By 1919, the log cabins were in disrepair, and penitentiary staff erected “no trespassing” signs on the property to prevent vandalism. Despite some sporadic interest in the island’s stone, lumber, and recreational potential in the intervening years, little activity took place on the site before it was sold in 1953.



Adam Palmer interviewing
Amanda's daughter, Jude, 2025.



'Deadman's Curse' (2022) was another attempt at
cracking the Slumach case.



Lost Mine of Pitt Lake Society, 2020
Top: Don Waite, Evan Howard, Greg Henderson, and Adam Palmer
Bottom: Darryl Friesen, Mike Boileau and Fred Braches



Lost Mine of Pitt Lake Society, 2020
Top: Don Waite, Evan Howard, Greg Henderson, and Adam Palmer
Bottom: Darryl Friesen, Mike Boileau and Fred Braches





The television series ‘Curse of the Frozen Gold’ (2015) focused on the legend of Slumach. We did not find the gold.

From left to right: Daryl Friesen, Danny Gerak, Don Waite, Fred Braches, Adam ‘Boomer’ Palmer, Evan Howard.



The television series ‘Curse of the Frozen Gold’ (2015) focused on the legend of Slumach. We did not find the gold.

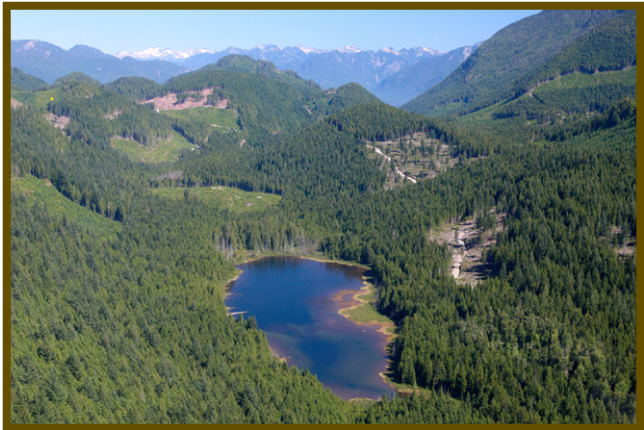
From left to right: Daryl Friesen, Danny Gerak, Don Waite, Fred Braches, Adam ‘Boomer’ Palmer, Evan Howard.



Colin Pelton
President Contour Helicopters
contourhelicopters.com



Steve Pelton
Chairman Professional Photographers of Canada
bellavistaphoto.com



#3



#4



Mud Flats & Goose Island
View North



Top end of Pitt Lake & Upper Pitt River
View North



Upper Pitt River / Pitt Lake / Red Slough
View North



Upper Pitt River disguring into Pitt Lake & Red Slough
View Northeast



Upper Pitt River Valley & Alvin
View North



#10



#11



#12



#13



#14



#19



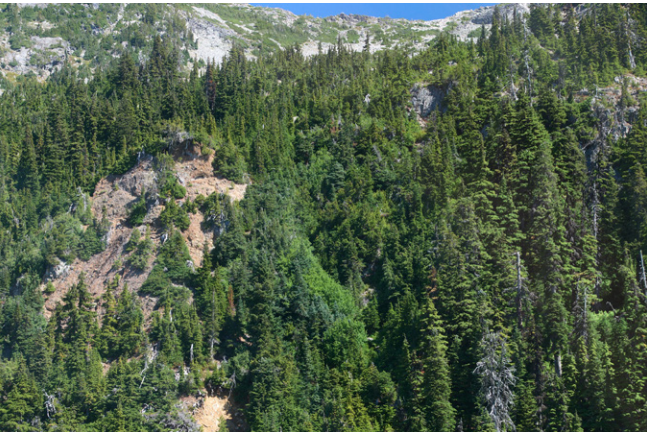
#20



#15



Don Waite, Peter McIlvaney & Adam Palmer
Somewhere in Pitt Country



#21



#22



#17



#18



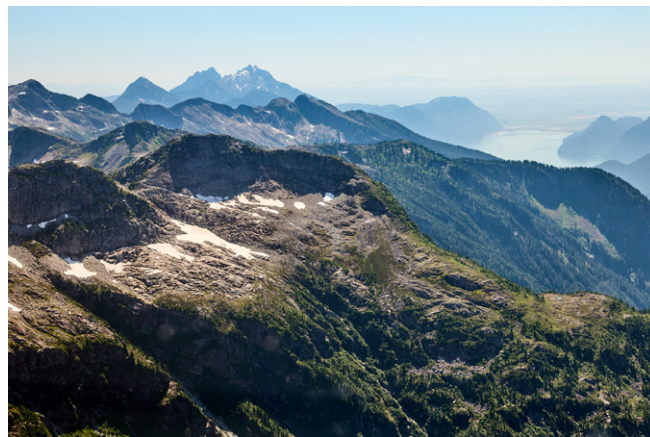
\$23



#24



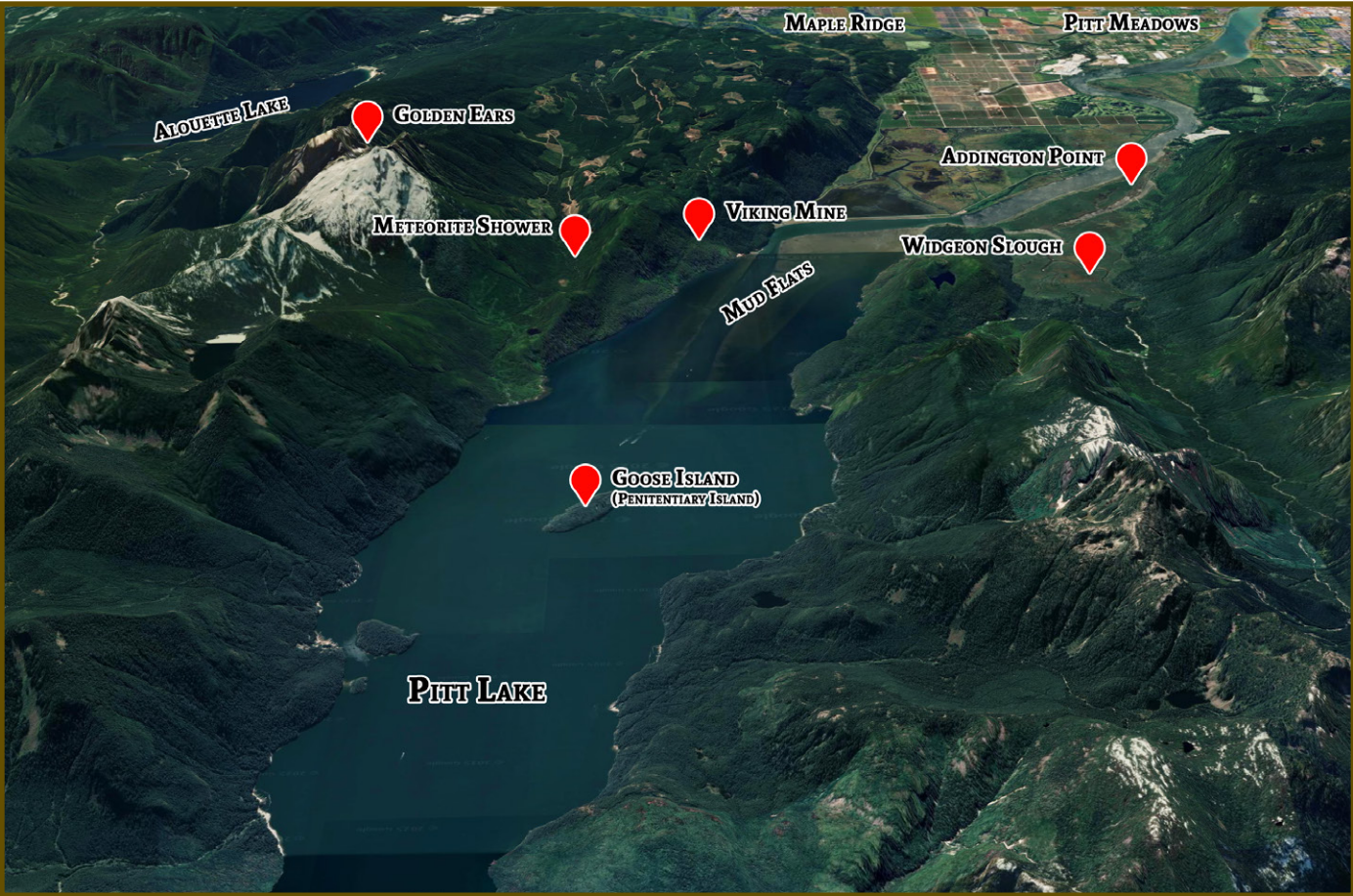
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#26



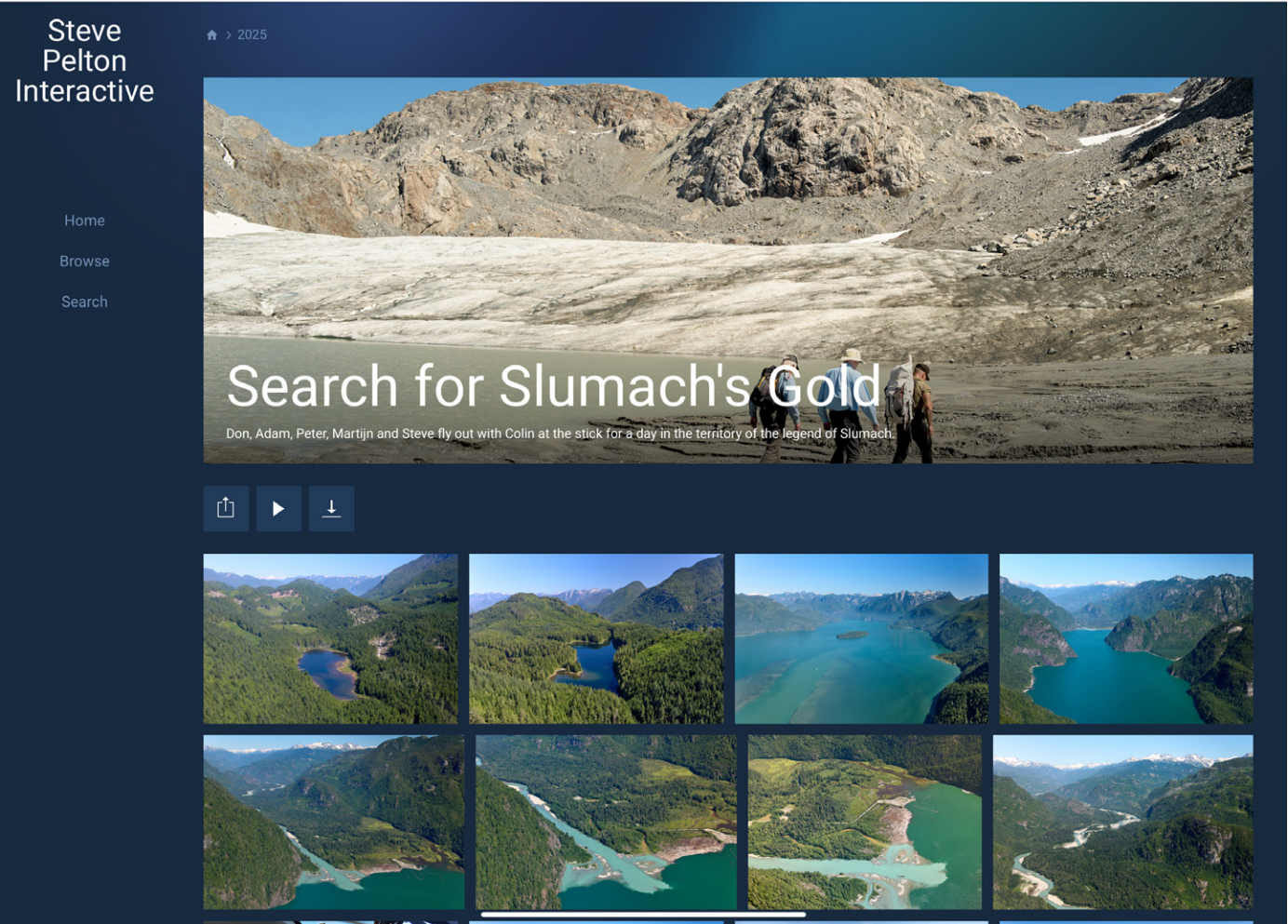
Dick Hamilton and Don Waite, 2025



Looking south down Pitt Lake, towards Golden Ears and the more populated lowlands around the lower Pitt River.



SLUMACH'S CURSE



View Southeast at the peaks of the Golden Ears.
On the far right: Mount Baker.

SLUMACH'S CURSE



MARCUS COX (1873 – 1945)

In 1967 when Donald Waite visited Alvin at the head of Pitt Lake for the first time, he met Bill (William Edward) Keillor and his wife Muriel at the Alvin fish hatchery. In their conversation Keillor mentioned Marcus Cox, “an Indian prospector who had once been married to a German princess. The pair eventually split up. She spent the remainder of her life in Vancouver reading tarot cards for a living while he managed to make enough working an old mine to pay for his grub.” Keillor made these rather denigrating remarks more than twenty years after the death of Marcus Cox and it is doubtful they ever met him personally. Cox would have been forgotten were it not for Don’s notes on his first visit to Alvin. In his lifetime there was nothing distinguishing Marcus Cox from other prospectors exploring the area and after the Second World War, when the press revived and swept up the myth of the legendary gold of Pitt Lake, Marcus Cox was no longer alive to tell his part of the story.

It is not known when Marcus Cox came to Pitt Lake, but in 1911 the Canada Census shows him living there. He was then a 38-years-old bachelor. After the opening of the post office in 1915, the BC city directories started including Alvin showing Marcus Cox as a resident, a farmer and miner, until the year after his death in 1945, at the age of 72 years. He probably spent most of the winters outside Alvin.

Marcus Cox was born in Silverdale on the Mission side of the Stave River. His father, after whom he was called Marcus, was of Irish descent and born in Quebec. Marcus Cox Sr. is listed in the 1881 Census but the names of his First Nation wife and their children are not shown.

Their two sons, Gabriel (born February 1870) and Marcus (born April 1873) seem not even to have known the name of their mother.

In 1889 Marcus Cox Sr. married Nancy Steward from Ontario. Ten years later he passed away in Silverdale, age 67 years. The first record of the existence of Gabriel and Marcus is the 1911 Canada census showing Gabriel settled in the Sumas region and Marcus at Pitt Lake.

In July 1916, in Bellingham, Washington, Marcus Cox, from Alvin BC, 43 years of age,married Martha Frederika d’Autier née von Mecklenburg, from Buffalo, New York, 43years of age. Her father was Swedish by birth and her mother Prussian (German). The name von Mecklenburg hints at Swedish nobility. The couple stayed in Bellingham at least until 1921, Marcus probably spending the summers in Alvin. In April 1917 their daughter Wilhelma Greta Cox was born. There are no records of a separation. She stayed in Whatcom County for the rest of her life. She and her daughter are both buried there.

Fred Braches, September 2020

My good friend Fred wrote this on a blog for his website slumach.ca

The Wigwam Inn is a historic and stunning hotel situated at the northern end of Indian Arm, boasting a fascinating past. It was built in 1909, with financial support from Alvo von Alvensleben, a German-born entrepreneur who became a real estate king in Vancouver within five years. He financed various ventures, and the Wigwam was one of them, which was rumored to have been aided by Kaiser Wilhelm.

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The Wigwam Inn opened in 1910 as a world-class resort, financed by Count Gustav Constantin Alvo Van Alvensleben, and changed ownership several times. It was once raided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) as a gambling casino, and notable guests included John D. Rockefeller, John Jacob Astor, and Al Capone, who allegedly used it as a hideout. The Royal Vancouver Yacht Club now privately owns the Wigwam Inn, and kayakers and paddleboarders can only view it from afar.

The building has a full industrial kitchen, showers, and many comfortable hotel-style suites. The balconies offer a breathtaking view of the surroundings.

Around ten years ago, the Wigwam Inn came to the attention of a local writer when they researched Alvo von Alvensleben, an early Vancouver businessman and the son of a German count who came to Vancouver in 1904. Alvensleben is one of the most intriguing characters in British Columbia’s history, but there has never been a biography of him. Consequently, the writer dedicated a chapter to him in their book, “At Home with History: The Secrets of Greater Vancouver’s Heritage Homes.”

The idea of a resort in Indian Arm came from Benny Dickens, an advertising manager for the Daily Province, who purchased several hundred acres of land in the early 1900s. However, Dickens ran out of money and looked to Alvensleben for help. The Dominion Building was built with Alvensleben’s financing, and his private residence is now part of the Crofton House girls’ school in Kerrisdale. He owned a hunting lodge on Somerset in North Vancouver, along with homes in Pitt Meadows, Surrey, and Washington State, known as “Alien Acres” and “Spy House.”

Alvensleben turned the Wigwam Inn into a German Luftkurot (fresh-air resort) and sold lots for \$200 to \$300, offering a private boat service to Vancouver that “guaranteed to get business people to the office by 9:00 a.m.” However, when the First World War began, Alvensleben left for Seattle, and the government seized the Inn in 1914, causing it to struggle financially.

Over the years, the Inn changed hands several times and was mostly forgotten by the public until the early 1960s, when William “Fats” Robertson, 34, and his partner Rocky Myers, 30, took over. In July 1962, the RCMP raided the Inn and found an illegal gambling operation, plates for printing counterfeit money, stolen art, and 300 cases of beer. Robertson and his partner were found guilty of attempting to bribe an RCMP officer and received a six-year sentence in prison.

British Columbia travel
The Wigwam Inn passed through several owners until the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club purchased it in 1985. Since then, it has been strictly members-only, with no more room for the public. The Deep Cove Heritage Society offered a boat ride up Indian Arm as a summer fundraiser, and the speaker booked a ticket a few years ago to see the Inn. The Inn’s history is fascinating, and the story of Alvo von Alvensleben remains a mystery, making it an exciting topic for research and exploration.

