



Queen Victoria (1819-1901)

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

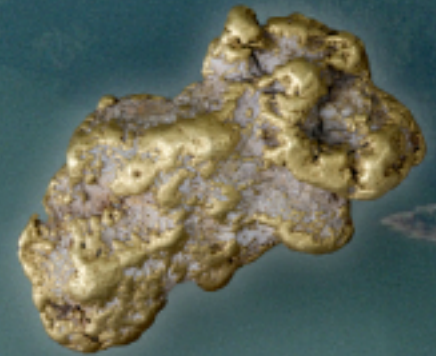
British Columbia's capital, Victoria, was named in her honour.

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

SLUMACH'S CURSE

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)
Creator of the website: 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



Queen Victoria (1819-1901)

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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'.

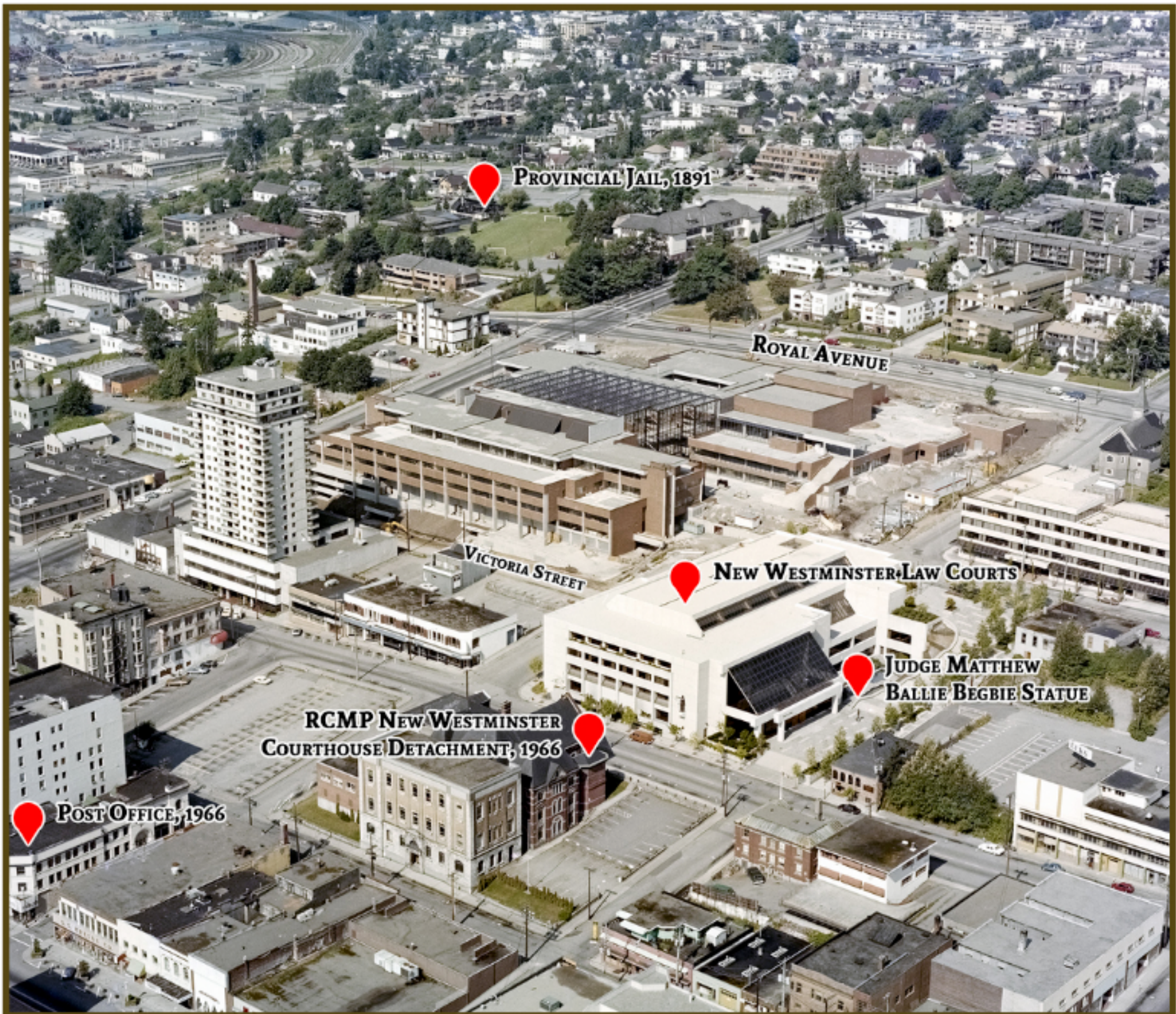
A day or two later, I visited the New Westminster Public Library and Chief Librarian Alan Woodland pulled the 'Slumach' file with about 50 pages of newspaper clippings about the elder Katzie murderer. He photocopied the pages for me.



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

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



RCMP New Westminster Courthouse Detachment, 1966

and you're out' was a 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-

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

WAITE AIR PHOTOS, MARCH 11, 1982



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.

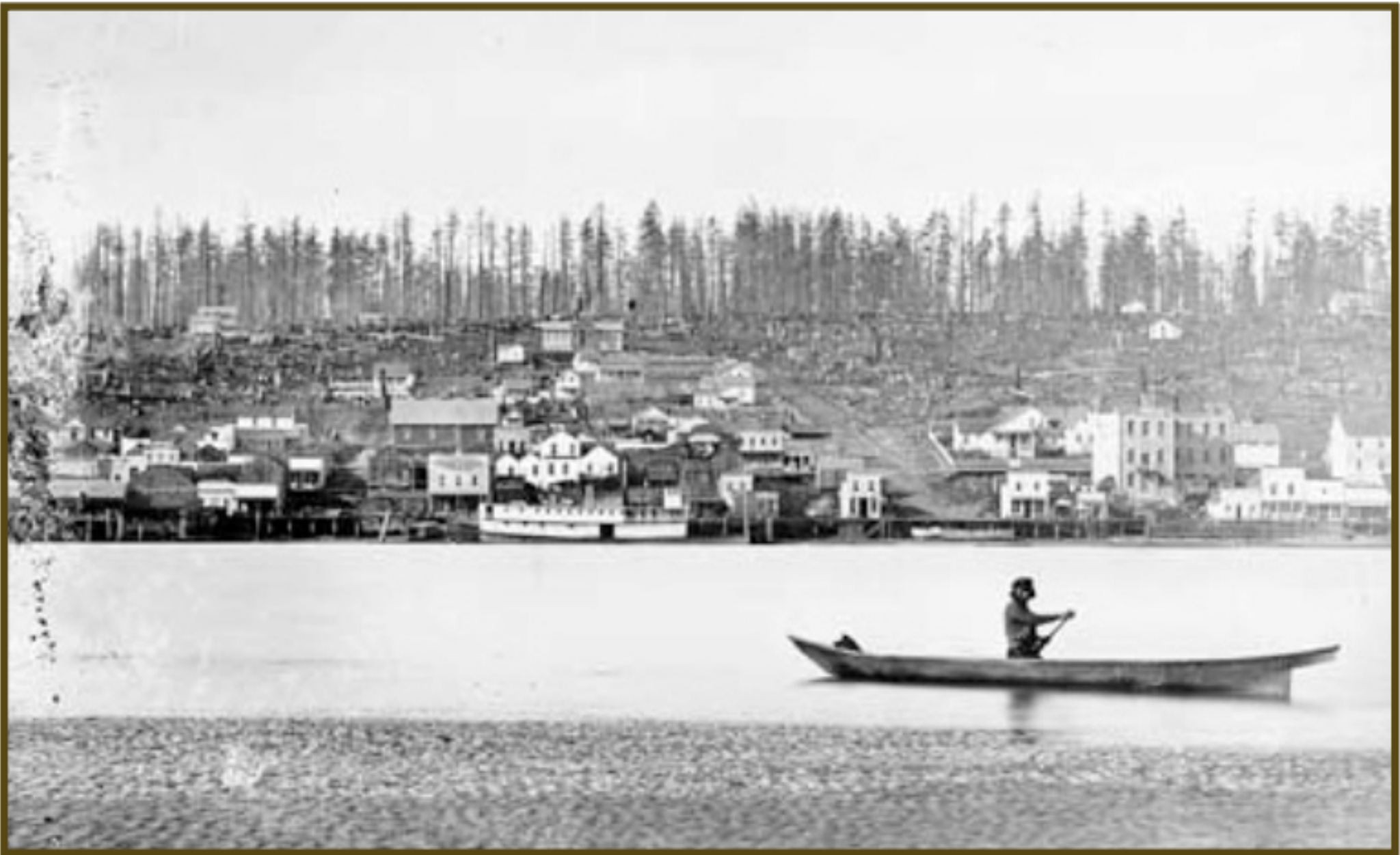
cuffs through a belt. The cuffs, the belt and a carabiner were within a few inches of both their belly buttons. We dropped them off at the 'Pen'. Upon our return to the detachment, Frank called us into his office. He told us the warden wanted us to return to the prison. We did. He told us on passing 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* ♦

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCIS GEORGE CLAUDET (1837-1906)
PROVIDED BY NEW WESTMINSTER ARCHIVES

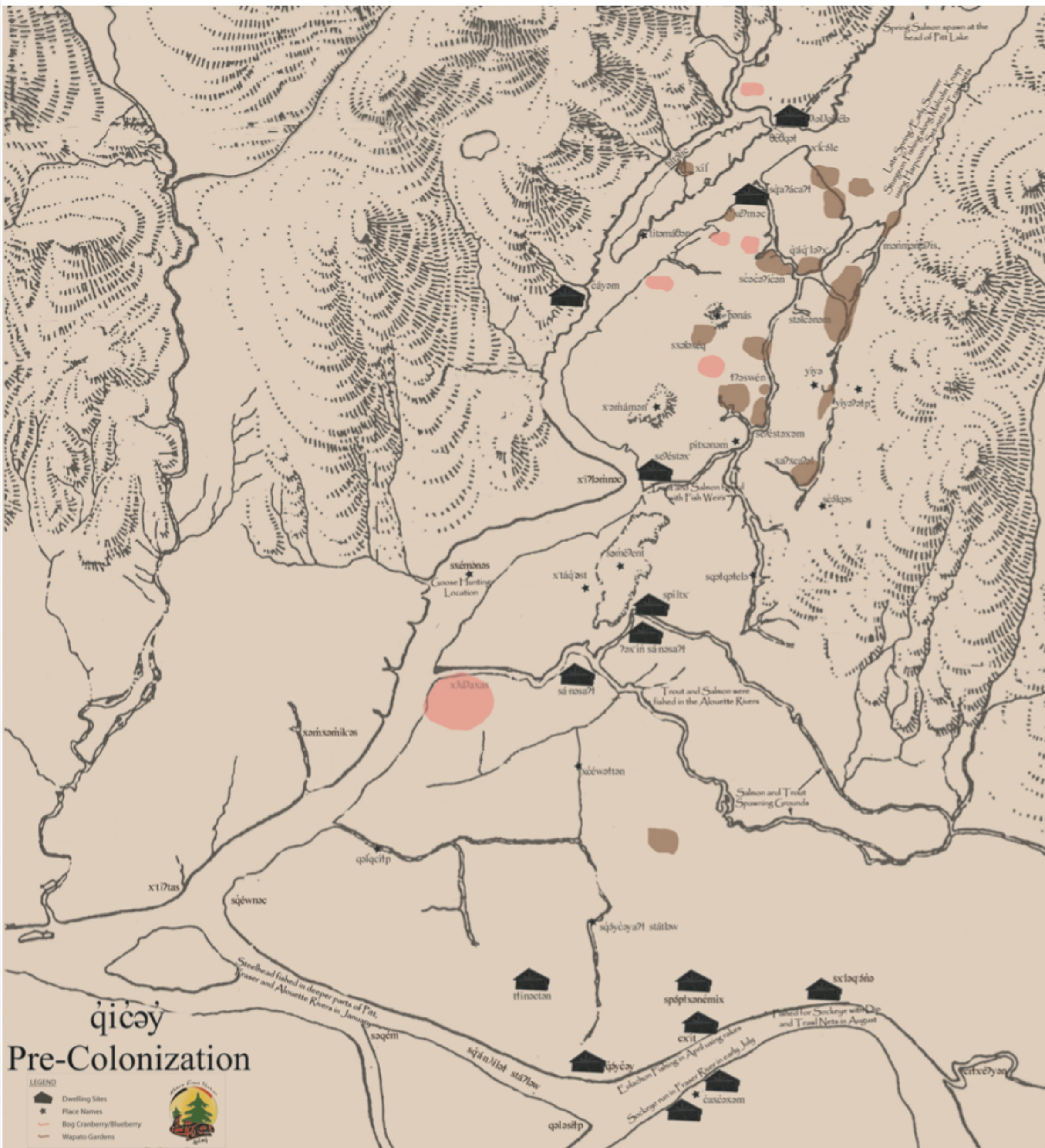


An early view of New Westminster, dated from 1862-1866, taken from across the Fraser River in Surrey.

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-

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS



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.

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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 articulated 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

SIR JAMES BOND II: CRAZY GENIUS

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. McTiernan, 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 emaciation 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

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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

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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.

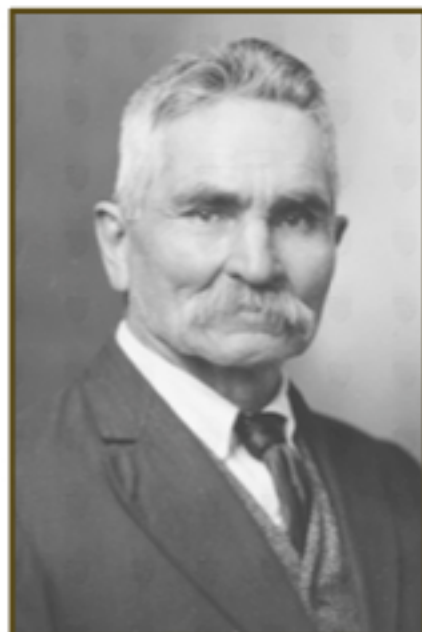
Over 50 persons witnessed the hanging, and a large crowd gathered outside the jail, and remained there until the black flag was hoisted. Among the crowd on the street were several Indian women, relatives of Slumach, who waited around the jail more than an hour after the execution.

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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

SLUMACH'S CURSE

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 Pittendright, 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 Pittendright
(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!

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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

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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

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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 (xxxx-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.

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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.



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*.

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."

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

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Waite Air Photos, March 11, 1982.



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."

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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 for 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.

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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 acquaintanceship 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 Boulter, 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. "