

Cream Minerals looks for lost gold in British Columbia

By Peter Caulfield

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Vancouver mining man Frank Lang thinks he might have solved the 70-year-old mystery of the lost Mortar and Pestle Mine in southeastern British Columbia.

The tale begins one evening in the mid-1930s, when CPR lineman Walter Clough checked into the Grand Hotel in Poplar Creek, BC, a small gold-rush town founded in 1903. Next morning, Clough fell into conversation with two of the hotel's permanent residents, A.G. Johnston and his sister Helen. Unlike the others who had flocked to Poplar Creek in the '03 gold rush and then left, the Johnstons had stayed, convinced the town would return to its former glory.

While Clough was talking to Helen, her brother silently picked up two metal buckets and walked out the door. An hour and a half later he returned with the buckets full of a reddish ore. In all his years, Clough had never seen anything like it. Each piece of ore was shot through with massive veins of free gold.

Johnston explained to the astonished Clough that whenever he needed some extra cash, he made a trip to his mine, broke out some ore, milled it and took the coarse gold to the Bank of Montreal in nearby Kaslo. He said he had drawn from the mine for several years and there was enough ore in sight to keep him in gold for a long time to come. The old man then proceeded to hand-mill the ore with a mortar and pestle. Clough was present on several other occasions when Johnston slipped off and returned soon after with his high-grade ore.

After the Johnstons died, local prospectors who were aware of the Mortar and Pestle Mine began looking for it; but every time they went out they came back empty-handed. 'Somewhere close to Poplar Creek, in that famous gold belt, lies Johnston's old mine, they said,' Frank Lang says. 'I'm convinced of it. And we're going to find it.'

The gold rush of '03

Gold fever struck southeastern British Columbia in July 1903, when hundreds of prospectors, fired by reports of large gold finds, converged on the area. The Canadian Pacific Railway even ran special excursions to the property.

According to a newspaper report of the day, '[Frank Marquis and George Gilbert] brought with them pieces of quartz that are more than half gold. These specimens will run in value... up to figures almost incredible, \$100,000 to the ton being mentioned as a low estimate for some of the samples shown. In a tin [can] brought down there [from the hill] was in the neighborhood of \$100 worth of gold. Mr. Marquis, who is a reliable and experienced prospector, states that they have over \$100,000 worth of ore in sight, putting it at one half of what he is confident would be realized with but a little more work.'

Excerpt from "The Daily News" featuring Poplar Creek Ore, published Saturday, August 8th, 1903.

The Goldsmith Property, on which the lost Mortar and Pestle Mine is located, was worked on and off until 1930. Westmin Resources optioned portions of the property between 1980 and 1983, conducting mapping, trenching and drilling programs. No significant exploration work has been done on the property from that time until Lang's Cream Minerals optioned it in early 2003.

'I haven't seen so many high-grade gold values'

Consulting geologist Linda Dandy, P. Geo., who has worked extensively on the property in the past three years, says, 'There's probably gold still there. It's never been mined and there's no extensive sub-surface work. I haven't seen so many high-grade gold values over such a broad area in my 25 years as a consulting geologist.'



Property geologist Linda Dandy P. Geo., with prospector Ron Saalfeld and dog standing at the mouth of "Lucky Jack #2" adit.

In 2003, Dandy discovered high-grade gold mineralization in several locations over a 1.2 km long area. In grab sampling conducted in June 2003, 140.16 g/t gold was found at the Bullock #2 working. At Bullock #4, 9901.79 g/t. At Lucky Jack #4, 3888.1 g/t.

A 0.8 metre chip sample at Bullock #1 returned 63.78 g/t gold and 36.2 g/t silver. A 0.5 metre chip sample at Bullock #2 returned 14.55 g/t gold.

'We want to find the ore body'

Lang says he wants to find the ore body which he's convinced is there and develop the property.

'Indications are there's a considerable amount of gold remaining and that it's worth going after,' Lang says. A lot of work still needs to be done to uncover the gold.

'We need to complete the geochem, undertake a magnetometer survey, prepare access roads, drill pads and bring in drills and crews,' Lang says. 'And that's going to take new investment in Cream Minerals.'

Once the ore body is discovered, easy access to the main highway means that getting the gold out won't be a problem.

'We'll build our own mill and pour our own gold bricks,' Lang says. 'Because it appears the property contains high-grade ore, we might not even need a mill.'

The recent geochemical survey of the property indicates there may be a considerable amount of gold near the surface, suggesting a low-cost operation.

'It might even be an open pit mine at the start,' Lang says.

The above article is compiled from the Historic files of Cream Minerals Ltd. by freelance writer Peter Caulfield. Information prior to 2003 does not meet the requirements of National Instrument 43-101 as the property presently has no reserves or resource and there is no guaranty any will be developed. Work since 2003 has been under the supervision of Ms. Linda Dandy, P. Geo. of P & L Geological Services Ltd., who is the "Qualified Person" for NI 43-101.