

KELSO MINERS BACK WITH TALE OF "MOUNTAIN DEVILS"

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Too Many Other E Mystery Is App Near Soluti

By HOWARD Mac
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They Saw "Devils"



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DEVIL MINERS HAKEN

(First Page)

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HUNTERS FOR LIFE ST. HELENS

Other Explorers Is Apparently Near Solution

WARD McGOWAN are stranger things in earth, Moratin, than rained of in your pu- ation, it is the it ma- to be perfect the a party of "mountain to be desired to do Mt. St. Helens in Drennan and Herbert were two friends of the writer composed. They were led to th

ILS

MOUNTAIN DEVIL!

THE 1924 APE CANYON ATTACK & ITS AFTERMATH

Apes Declared To Be Seen-like Seen-er in

GORILLA MEN RARE INDIANS FAILED TO GET THEIR SOULS

CALLED SEEAH-TIK

By JORG TOTSGI of Sept
Editor of The Real American, an the evening they heard a peculiar
MEMBER GO... whistling and

EDITIONS LEAVE FOR LEVEL HUNT

M. MYRSELL

MOUNTAIN DEVILS TALK OF MINERS IS UNSHAKEN

(Continued from First Page.)
in, answering the people here would
the in the horse laugh if we sprung
th but on going back after the cel-
sitive here on the fourth, I saw it
again, as did all in our party with

AMERICAN TEAM MAY WITHDRAW FROM OLYMPICS

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

THIS WAS PRODUCED PURSUANT TO THE WASHINGTON SECRETARY OF STATE'S ZINE CONTEST OF 2019. IN THE "SPIRIT" OF THE ZINE MEDIUM, WHILE EVERY EFFORT WAS MADE FOR ACCURACY, IT CONTAINS TYPOS AND SPELLING ERRORS. SO DON'T FREAK OUT ABOUT IT.

FOR LIBRARIANS:

AS MY INTENTION IS TO DONATE COPIES OF THIS PUBLICATION TO LOCAL LIBRARIES, I WOULD SUGGEST CATALOGING THIS UNDER 917.97 OR 979.784 OR, GOD FORBID 001.944 FOR SASQUATCH.

MARC MYRSELL

PO BOX 2448

WESTPORT,

WASH. 98595

WPAQUARIUM@GMAIL.COM

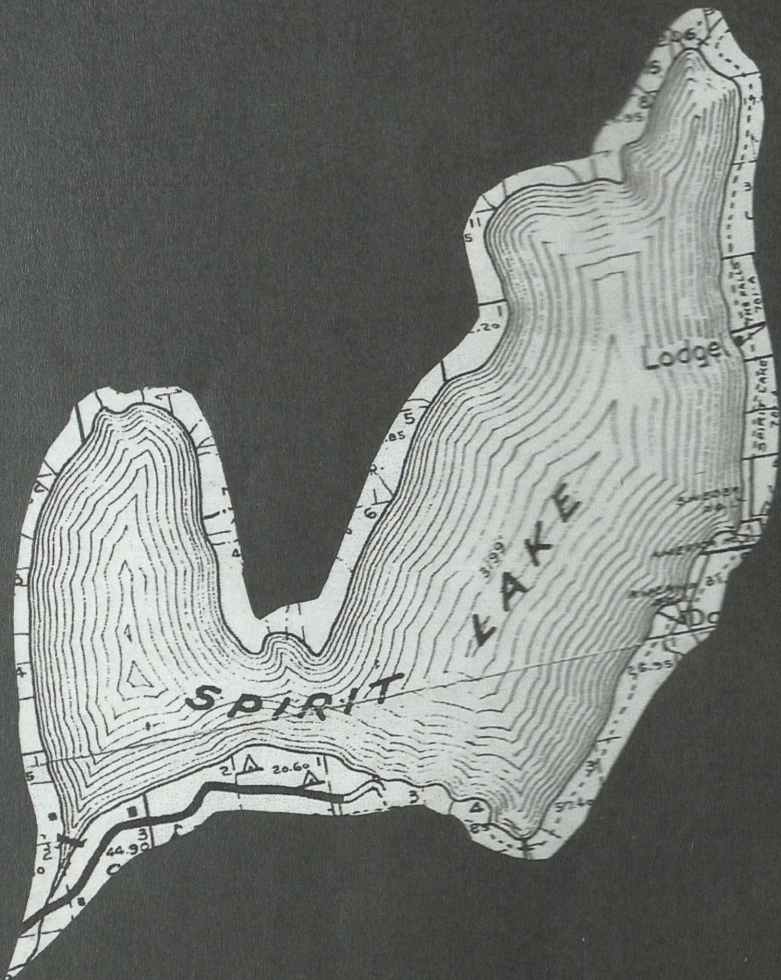
NOTES:

ON THE

morning of Friday, July 11, 1924, five men came off the eastern flank of Mount St. Helens where they had been working a small remote gold mine for the previous two years. They stated that they were abandoning their mining claim and the log cabin that had been built four weeks prior.

The reason, they claimed, for deserting their laborious project was that they had just spent the previous night fending off a six hour attack by a band of Mountain Devils.

This is their story.



"I don't want to know anything more about the creature I saw looking at me from the spring and which started toward me when I shot at it with my revolver."

Leroy Perry Smith
The Portland Telegram
July 15, 1924

CAST

OF



MARION

SMITH

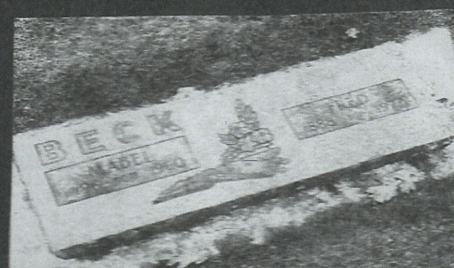
BORN IN 1866 IN KELSO, WASHINGTON TO EARLY SETTLER, L.P. SMITH OF THE LEXINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD. HE WAS RAISED IN THE ERA OF BIG TIMBER OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. HE DIED WHILE FISHING IN HIS BOAT FOR SMELT IN 1935 ON THE COWLITZ RIVER. AT THE TIME OF HIS COLLAPSE, HE WAS WITH HIS LIFELONG FRIEND, AUGUST JOHANSEN, WHO HELPED WORK THE GOLD MINE IN 1922 AND 1923.



GILBERT

LAFEVER

BORN IN 1854 IN CRAWFORD CO. PENNSYLVANIA, COUSIN TO MARION SMITH. IN THE 1890'S HE BUILT MANY HOUSES IN COWLITZ COUNTY, BEING A CARPENTER. AS AN OLDER MAN, HE WAS THE CARETAKER OF A SMALL SCHOOL IN KELSO. HE DIED IN 1937, HAVING NO CHILDREN AND HAVING NEVER MARRIED. THE SPELLING OF HIS LAST NAME APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A MATTER OF DEBATE.



FRED

BECK

BORN IN 1888 IN KELSO. HIS FATHER, JOE EMPLOYED MARION SMITH FOR A TIME AT A LOCAL LUMBER MILL. FRED MARRIED MARION'S DAUGHTER, MABEL. BECK WORKED AT THE WEYHAUSER MILL FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE PULP AND SUPPLIANT UNION. LATER IN LIFE, HE WAS A FAITH HEALER, CONDUCTING SEANCES AT HIS HOME ON HARRIS STREET IN EAST KELSO. HE DIED IN 1973 AT A VANCOUVER, WASH. HOSPITAL. HE AND HIS WIFE HAD THREE SONS; CLIFFORD, FRANCIS AND RONALD, THE LAST OF WHICH CO-WROTE BECK'S BOOK, "I FOUGHT THE APE MEN OF MT. ST. HELENS", PUBLISHED IN 1967. HIS HARRIS STREET HOME STILL STANDS TODAY.

CHARACTERS

LEROY PERRY SMITH

LEROY PERRY SMITH

LEROY PERRY SMITH

BORN IN 1905 IN KELSO. LEROY PERRY SMITH WAS THE SON OF MARION SMITH AND BROTHER-IN-LAW TO FRED BECK. HE WORKED AS A LONGSHOREMAN, A MILL WORKER, A FISHERMAN AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE LONGSHOREMANS UNION. IRONICALLY, HE ALSO DIED WHILE FISHING ON HIS BOAT IN THE COWLITZ RIVER IN 1974, ABOUT 2 MILES DOWNSTREAM FROM WHERE MARION DIED. SMITH AND HIS WIFE CATHERINE ADOPTED TWO SONS AND HAD TWO CHILDREN. THEIR TWO BIRTH CHILDREN STILL LIVE IN KELSO, WASHINGTON TODAY.



JOHN PETERSON

JOHN PETERSON

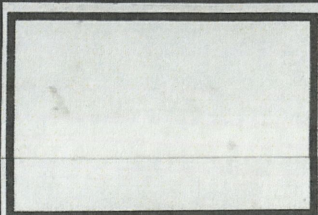
BORN IN 1850. PETERSON WAS A FAMILY FRIEND OF MARION SMITH, HAVING LIVED FOR MANY YEARS IN THE SAME LEXINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD OF KELSO. HE DIED IN THE COWLITZ COUNTY HOSPITAL IN 1937 AFTER A YEAR LONG ILLNESS. HE WAS PRECEDED IN DEATH BY HIS WIFE, ELLEN MARIE AND HIS SON PAUL. ONLY HIS DAUGHTER, MABEL REMAINED, LIVING IN PORTLAND, OREGON.



MARIE MYRSSELL

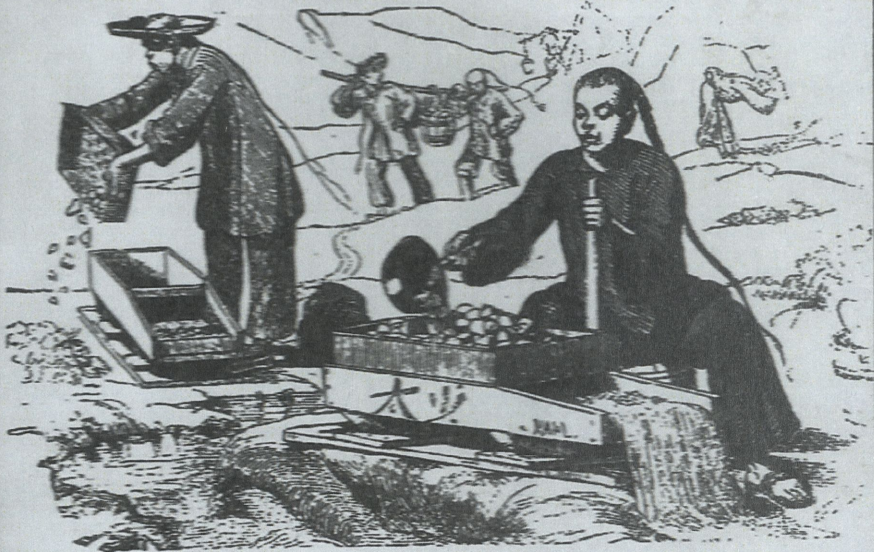
MARIE MYRSSELL

BORN IN 1966 IN NEWPORT, OREGON. I WAS RAISED AS A LAND SURVEYOR BY MY FATHER. I CURRENTLY OWN THE SAME FAMILY BUSINESS AND LIVE IN WESTPORT, WASHINGTON. SINCE BEING STRUCK AROUND THE AGE OF 9 YEARS OLD WITH ABJECT FEAR AT WATCHING THE APE CANYON RE-ENACTMENT IN "SASQUATCH, LEGEND OF BIGFOOT" ON KPTV, CHANNEL 13, PORTLAND OREGON, I NEVER FORGOT THE SCENES OF THE MINERS BEING ATTACKED. APPROXIMATELY 10 YEARS AGO, I BEGAN RE-RESEARCHING THE 1924 EVENT, CULMINATING IN REDISCOVERING THE REMAINS OF THE INFAMOUS CABIN IN 2013 AND PRODUCING THIS ZINE IN 2019.



no photograph
submitted

1918 - 1922



CHINAMEN W.

WITH A CRADLE.

THE CHINESE AND HYDRAULIC MINING IN THE FAR WEST. THE MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL (1994).

RANDALL ROHE

IN 1918

MARION

SMITH WAS 53 YEARS OLD. THE SAME YEAR I AM NOW, AS I WRITE THIS. HOWEVER, MARION SMITH HAD A VERY DIFFERENT UPBRINGING THAN I DID. I GREW UP IN THE AGE OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION GASOLINE ENGINES AND BROADCAST TELEVISION AND SCHOOL LUNCHES. MARION GREW UP WITH THE ADVENT OF STEAM AND IRON AND MASSIVE BUCKSAWS THAT DREW DOWN MONSTEROUS TIMBER, FUELING THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST ECONOMY OF THE UNITED



Harmony Falls Resort, Spirit Lake.

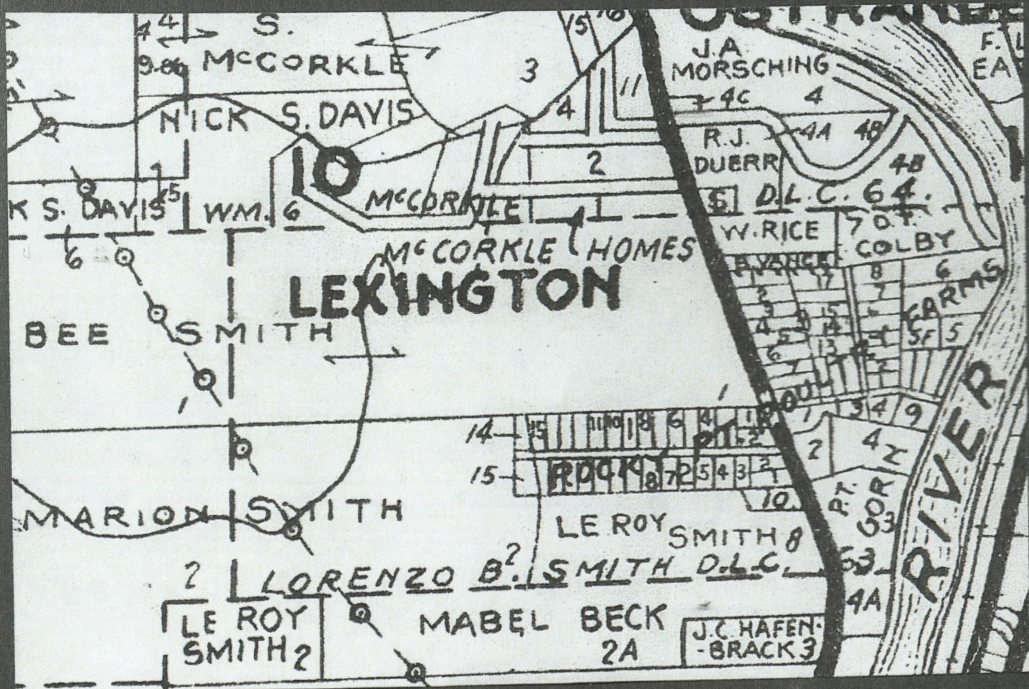
STATES. WITH THIS, IT WAS ALSO AN AGE OF REGULAR DISMEMBERMENT AND EARLY DEATH AMONG YOUNG WORKERS. REGARDLESS THE LURE OF GOOD PAY FOR HARD WORK WAS HARD TO IGNORE FOR AN ABLED-BODIED PERSON. BY THE AGE OF 53, HE HAD SPENT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME IN THE MOUNTAINS. HE HAD SEEN AND SHOT AND FISHED ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT THERE WAS TO SEE IN THE WOODS. WORKING IN 19TH CENTURY, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON, HE CAME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS GOLD COMING OFF THE MOUNTAIN. ALONG THE TRIBUTARIES, DRAINING MOUNT SAINT HELENS, THERE WERE NUMEROUS PLACER GOLD CLAIMS FILED. LEWIS RIVER, COWLITZ RIVER, COLUMBIA RIVER. CIRCA 1880'S A LARGE PLACER GOLD MINING OPERATION, REPORTEDLY OWNED AND RAN AS A CHINESE COOPERATIVE WAS LOCATED ON BURNT BRIDGE CREEK, NORTH OF WHAT IS NOW 39TH STREET IN VANCOUVER, WASH.

SMITH ENLISTED THE HELP OF HIS COUSIN, GABE LEFEVER; HIS SON-IN-LAW, FRED BECK; CLOSE FRIENDS IN THE LEXINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD, AUGUST JOHANSEN AND JOHN PETERSON; A CLOSE FRIEND OF BECK'S, MACK RHODES; AND LATER HIS SON, LEROY PERRY SMITH. THEY LEFT SMITH'S HOME IN THE LEXINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD OF KELSO AND HEADED SOUTH AND EAST TO BEGIN PROSPECTING PLACER LOCATIONS IN THE DARK, SILTY SOILS OF THE LEWIS RIVER, EAST OF WOODLAND, WASHINGTON FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, LOOKING FOR GOLD.

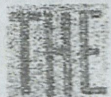
"In the morning we were glad to start for home." Six years ago when we first located the claim we saw the strange four toed tracks, with the toes short and stubby, and almost square across, and have seen them several times since. Two years ago the strange animal sought to enter our tent, and we found its tracks around the tent in the morning."

Marion Smith
The Kelsonian
July 16, 1924

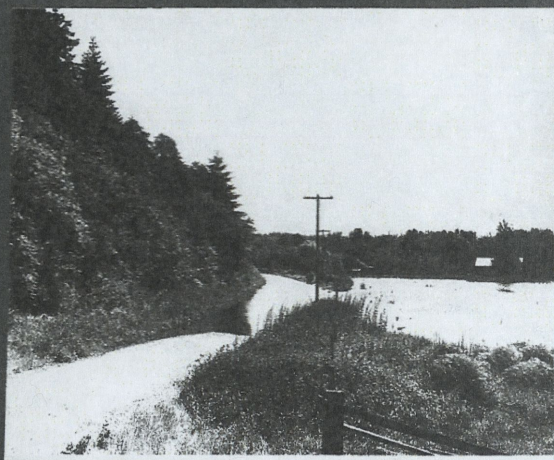
"IN THE MORNING WE WERE GLAD TO START FOR HOME. SIX YEARS AGO WHEN WE FIRST LOCATED THE CLAIM WE SAW THE STRANGE FOUR TOED TRACKS, WITH THE TOES SHORT AND STUBBY, AND ALMOST SQUARE ACROSS, AND HAVE SEEN THEM SEVERAL TIMES SINCE. TWO YEARS AGO THE STRANGE ANIMAL SOUGHT TO ENTER OUR TENT, AND WE FOUND ITS TRACKS AROUND THE TENT IN THE MORNING".



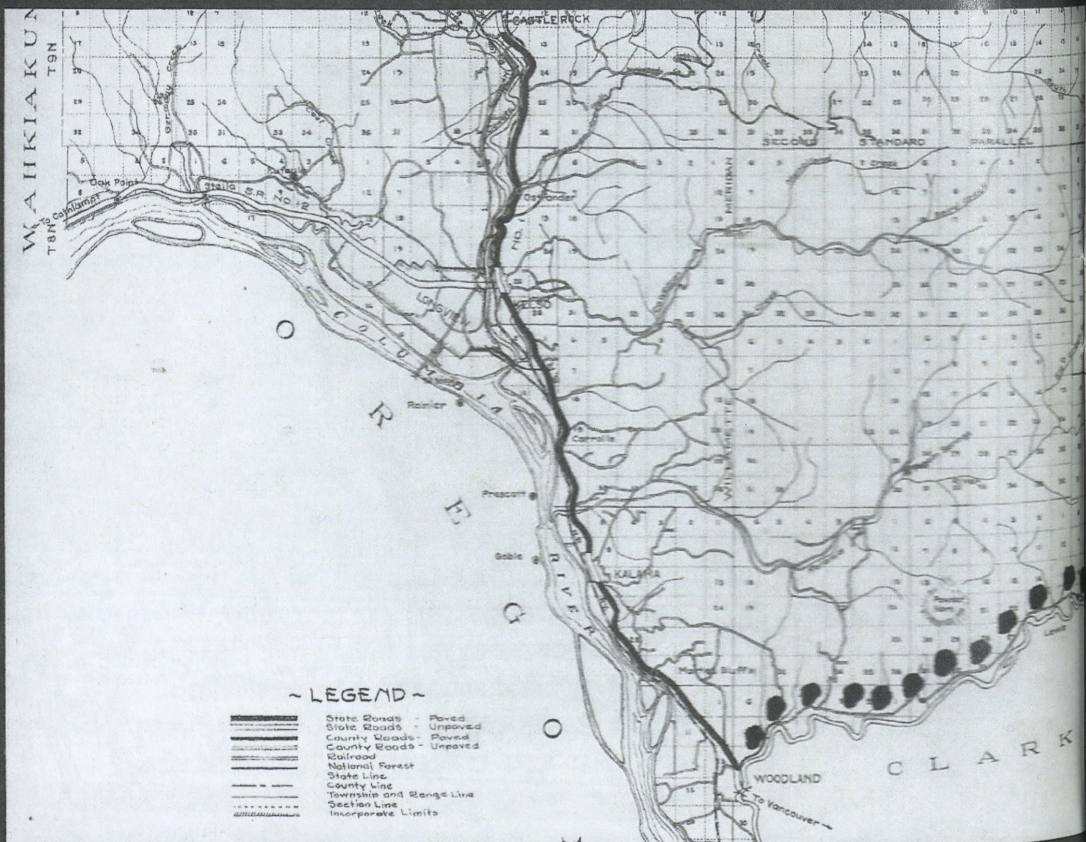
COWLITZ COUNTY ATLAS METSKERS MAPS (1956) MARION SMITH'S LAND AND FARM. "LEROY SMITH" TRACT 8 NOW CONTAINS THE LEXINGTON BRIDGE ROAD CHEVRON GAS STATION (2019).



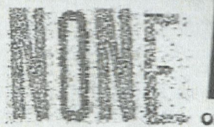
party of men travelled East from Woodland, along the North side of the Lewis River. Lewis River Road was re-aligned in the 1950's, where it is located today. At the time of the Smith's work, the road was in many places still the dangerous Stagecoach Road from 1888. A client of mine, Jay Petty who owns property along this route told me that in the early 20th century, a stagecoach would be lost once and a while, tumbling off the precipice in to the river below. The bed of the old Stagecoach Road can be still seen today in numerous locations.



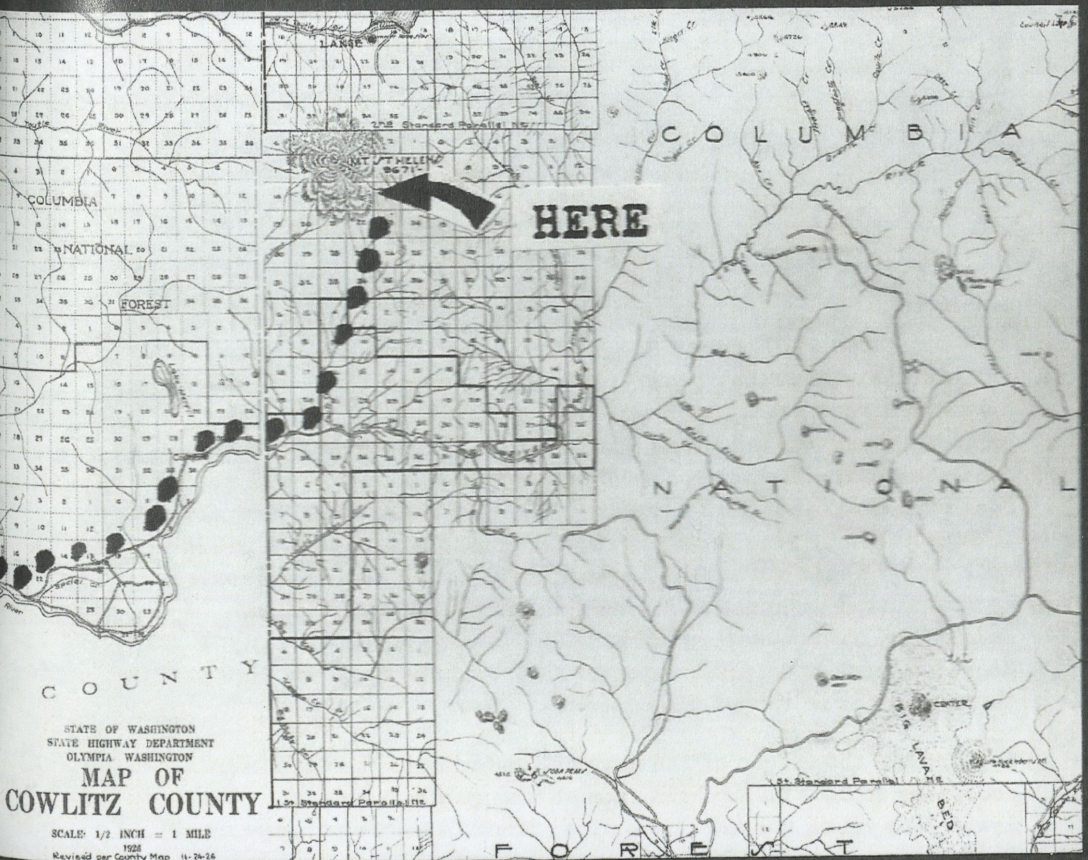
Lewis River Road and bottom land near Woodland. c. 1950
(Washington State Archives)



Maps of Cowlitz and Skamania Counties. 1936 & 1937
(Washington State Archives), showing approximate route of investigative placer mining by Smith and party (1918-1923).



of the placer locations suited the miners dreams of wealth and luxury. Travelling North, the party explored the Muddy river, up, up the mountain. The Columbia National Forest; which was later folded in to the Gifford-Pinohot National Forest did employ logging operations at the time. However, logging roads were few and ended before the miners had satisfied their desire for gold. They continued North along the ridges and through and valleys choked with underbrush. In the Fall of 1923 they at last found their mining location far up the East side of Mount Saint Helens, near the timberline in one of the most remote, dangerous locations imaginable.



1922 - JULY 9, 1924

Initial Mining
Location Notice
Venderwhite
Mine. (November
6, 1922) Records
of Skamania
County, Wash.

STATE OF WASHINGTON to FRED BECK
LOCATION NOTICE

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT FRED BECK P. O. KELSO WASH THE UN
IGNED CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, HA.. THIS 18 DAY OF SEP. 1922, LOCATED
CLAIMED AND BY THESE PRESENTS DO LOCATE AND CLAIM, BY RIGHT OF DISCOVERY AND
TION, IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE MINING ACT OF CONGRESS, APPROVED MAY 10, 1872,
ALL SUBSEQUENT ACTS, AND WITH LOCAL CUSTOMS, LAWS AND REGULATIONS, 1500 LINE
AND HORIZONTAL MEASUREMENT ON THE SURFACE LODE, VEIN, LEDGE OR DEPOSIT ALON
VEIN THEREOF, WITH ALL ITS DIPS, ANGLES AND VARIATIONS, AS ALLOWED BY LAW,
OTHER WITH 300 FEET EAST SIDE AND 300 FEET ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE MIDDLE OF
VEIN AT THE SURFACE, SO FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED FROM PRESENT DEVELOPMENT;
VEINS, LODES, LEDGES OR DEPOSITS AND SURFACE GROUND, WITHIN THE LINES OF SA
IM 600 FEET RUNNING SOUTH FROM CENTER OF DISCOVERY SHAFT, AND 900 FEET RUNNIN
FH FROM CENTER OF DISCOVERY SHAFT; SAID DISCOVERY SHAFT BEING SITUATED UPON
LODE, VEIN, LEDGE OR DEPOSIT, AND WITHIN THE LINES OF SAID CLAIM, IN SPIRIT
E MINING DISTRICT SKAMANIA CO. DESCRIBED BY VETES AND BOUNDS AS FOLLOWS, TO-
COMMENCING AT THIS DISCOVERY POST, BEING THE CENTER OF THE VEIN OR CL
UPON WHICH THIS NOTICE IS POSTED; THENCE SOUTH FEET 600, TO A POST MARKED S
TER END; THENCE WEST FEET 300, TO A POST MARKED S.W. CORNER; THENCE 1500 FEET
TH, TO A POST MARKED N.W. CORNER; THENCE 300 FEET EAST, TO A POST MARKED NOR
TER END; THENCE 300 FEET EAST, TO A POST MARKED N.E. CORNER; THENCE 1500 FE
TH TO A POST MARKED S.E. CORNER; THENCE 300 FEET WEST, TO SOUTH CENTER END.

THIS CLAIM IS FURTHER DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: THIS NOTICE BEING ABOUT 2
T NORTH FROM DISCOVERY SHAFT LEDGE RUNNING ALONG THE IRON DIKE

THIS CLAIM IS KNOWN AS THE VENDER WHITE

COVERED AUGUST, 1922

DATED SEP. 18, 1922

FRED BECK _____ (SEAL)

WITNESSES:

JOHN SMITH _____

FILED FOR RECORD NOVEMBER 6, 1922, AT 9 A.M. BY FRED BECK

Ernest P. Mitchell
COUNTY AUDITOR.

IN HIS

1967 book, "I Fought the Apemen of Mt. St. Helens", Fred Beck details the means of arriving at the location where the mining operations were made. The nature of the decision is undoubtedly paranormal; involving spirit guides, white arrows in the sky that lead them to the location as well as possible encounters with ghosts. None of these points were brought to light in the extensive reporting in 1924 and only were revealed in Beck's book. By this point, in 1967, Beck was 79 years old and had gained a following as a faith healer and conducted seances at his home on Harris Street in Kelso. Ironically, the accusation of being Spiritualists was strongly denied by Beck and Marion Smith in 1924. Perhaps Beck had time to think about it in the ensuing decades.

Regardless, the origin of the name of Venderwhite for the mine, according to Beck in 1967 was from an unexplained encounter with a mysterious young woman while on the mountain in the early years of prospecting. It should be noted that in searching the deed record, the death record, the birth record, the city directories, I found no record of the name Venderwhite.

APE CANYON

is one of the dramatic basalt box canyons on the East flank of the mountain. Pumice Butte rises sharply out of the bottom of the canyon on its North side. Prior to the incident of 1924, the canyon was known as 1000 Foot Canyon or Jump Off Canyon. By 1936, the infamy of the 1924 attack had spread and it had received its name of Ape Canyon, being noted in a Columbia National Forest Spirit Lake District Recreational Guide.

In 1932, the miners, having ready access to dynamite, blasted a shelf out of the side of the canyon, approximately 300 feet from the bottom and began tunneling in to the mountain. Logistics of this form of small mining were difficult. At this point, they had foregone approaching the site from the South and were coming in by way of Castle Rock and parking Marion Smiths truck at Spirit Lake, the closest road to the mine. From Spirit Lake, the trail led approximately seven miles South to Pumice Butte. All work tools, weapons, and camping gear were packed in by the men. If you broke a tool or needed supplies, it took about two full days to make the round trip from the mine, in to town and back again.

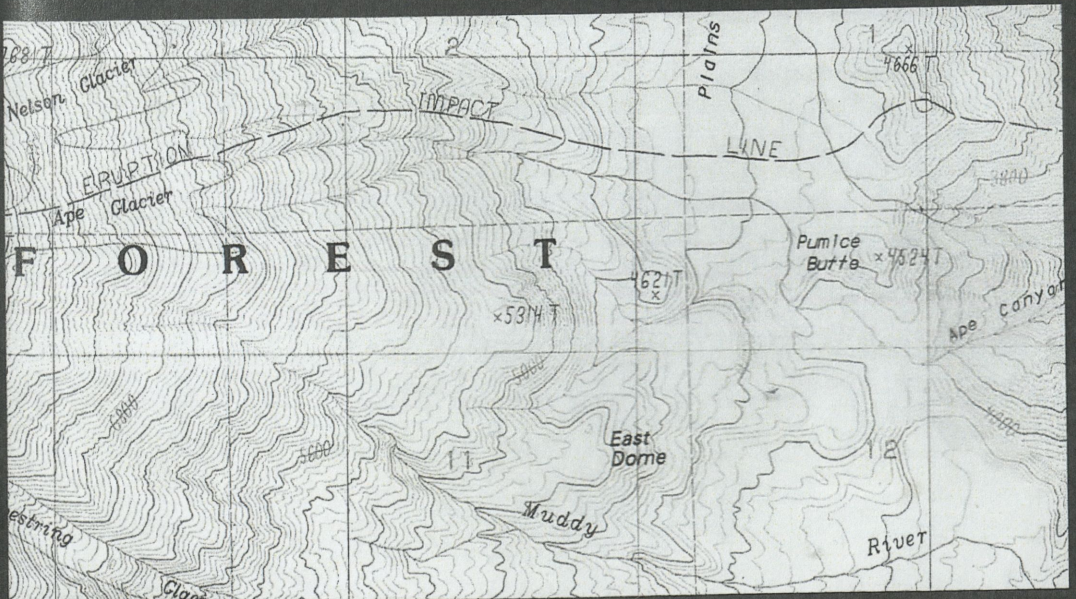


South Side Pumice Butte/North Side Ape Canyon. 2013. Author's Photo.

APE CANYON

Ape Canyon, where the famous ape legend of Mt. St. Helens originated, is found at the south end of the Plains of Abraham. The trail goes around the hoodlike canyon of Smith Creek and then into the green timber. The prospector's cabin upon whose roof fell the rocks thrown by the hairy apes, according to the legend, still stands on a ledge below the trail.

Spirit Lake Recreation Guide Columbia National Forest (1936). National Archives



United States Geological Survey Quadrangle Mount St. Helens, Washington (1983)

AT AN ELEVATION

of 4500 feet above sea level, work on the mine was seasonal. In the field portion of the Ape Canyon Project, the earliest I can get up there is late May. By Thanksgiving, you'd better be out of there. There's just too much snow. In 1922 and 1923, the miners were tent camping on the West side of Pumice Butte. Each day, they would ascend the butte and make the life-threatening 800-foot descent down its East side to the mine, using ropes and a ladder they had constructed for the last 30-foot drop.

The miners set up camp early in the year and would leave it to return to town to work their regular jobs and tend to family affairs. At the end of the season, all would be broken down and hauled back to Kelso for the winter.

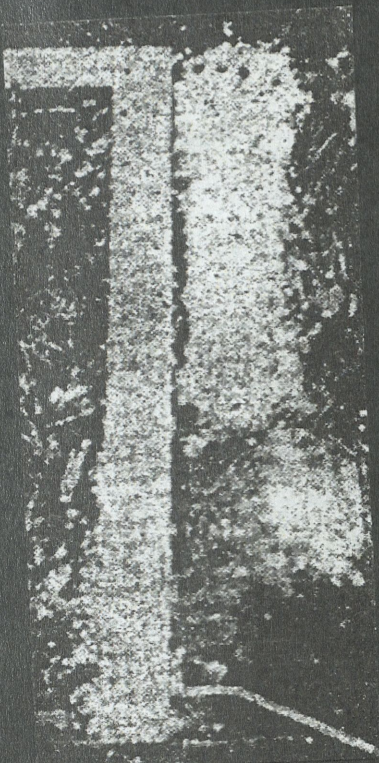
The gold assays on the mining operation were quite good, enough to encourage their return the next year. However, the miners started to take note of things happening around them that could not be easily explained. On several occasions, at night, when bedded down, the party would hear loud, high-pitched whistling noises from the nearby ridge top. Shortly after, a second similar sound would answer the first, from another ridge, opposite them. This answer and call session would continue for several minutes and go silent for the night. Most in the party, Marion Smith in particular had spent decades in the mountains and could not recognize it. During the day, low pitched thumping sounds would be heard nearby...nearly so low in decibel that one could not quite tell from what direction it was coming from.

At the mens campeite, a waterway, from glacier melt passed nearby to drain in to the deep canyon. the creek split in to two parts, leaving a sandy island in the middle. One day Leroy Smith went to the sand bar to clean pots and pans from the nights meal.

Leroy Perry Smith (left) and Fred Beck. Sowell Studio Portrait. *The Portland News*. (July 19, 1924).



Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Clarence Dunbar on the ladder constructed by the miners. *The Oregonian*. July 30, 1924.



Track found near cabin site. The photographer filled the print with talc and laid a T-square next to it for scale. *The Portland News*, July 19, 1924.

LEADY

returned to the camp site somewhat excited and agitated and demanded that the others come to the sand bar. There were two human-like footprints in the middle of the island. But only two. Beck reported them later to be about 15 inches in length, sinking 4 inches in to the sand..... But only two. There were none leading up to them, or any leading away. ..."and not one of us could conceive any earthly thing taking steps 160 feet long. No human being could have made these tracks....and there's only one way they could be made, something dropped from the sky and went back up". (*Beck, 1967*).

"Ten years ago, an old prospector, Bill Burdick, saw the animals, but no one would believe him.

Within the last four years a definite description of a devil was given by a young man who was fishing with Bert Backman of Puget Island.

The young man was fishing alone when a huge shape raised itself up from behind a log. It was like a tremendous baboon and it ripped a knotted limb from a stump and made for the youth with a low, rolling gait."

MARTIN SMITH

was not unfamiliar with previous reports of massive tracks and sightings of monstrous hair-covered monsters in the woods. "August Johansen and Chales Stover, who have worked on the claims with Smith and the others in former years report seeing tracks, and other reports of such tracks have been heard according to rumors". (*The Kelsonian*, July 16, 1924)

Ten years ago an old prospector, Bill Burdick, saw the animals, but no one would believe him.

Within the last four years a definite description of a devil was given by a young man who was fishing with Bert Backman of Puget Island.

The young man was fishing alone when a huge shape raised itself up behind a log. It was like a tremendous baboon, and it ripped a knotted limb from a stump and made for the youth with a low, rolling gait.

Stated with terror the boy dropped everything and ran for camp. Looking over his shoulder he saw the beast stop and picking up the string of that shot had been left behind, heading them in place on the rocks.



Editorial Cartoon on the Smith party report. *The Portland Telegram*, July 16, 1924.

The Portland News, July 15, 1924.



Spirit Lake. *Metskers Atlas of Skanania County*. 1956

THE STORIES

of strange large hair-covered creatures, walking upright like humans, naturally predated the arrival of Euro-Americans to the Pacific Northwest. Surrounding Mount Saint Helens, the Cowlitz, Yakima, Klickitat peoples have lived for centuries. Traditional stories involving these frightening denizens are few. However there is one, involving Spirit Lake and the origin of the basket.

Mount Saint Helens and Mount Adams to the East are rich with huckleberrys. The fruit has been collected for years as a food staple. The first nation people have a basket tradition of making containers to collect the harvest. Some baskets are small for easy collecting. Some are quite large, with slings to carry large amounts of berries back home. Klickitat and Yakima use cedar. Cowlitz and Chehalis will use alternatively bear grass, sweet grass and cedar in the weave.

There are two or three "old-time" tales among the Yakima, Klickitat and Cowlitz Nations that describe the origin of these baskets. One involves Cedar and Squirrel. One involves three sisters of the forest that first gave the baskets to humans. The one regarding Spirit Lake is not so pleasant.

In the old-time, the Yakima, Cowlitz and Klickitat people would reside at Spirit Lake for much of the year, gathering fish, huckleberries and other goods. Things were pretty good.

However, once and a while a young child, often a girl with red hair would disappear from the family.

W

the Mountain Spirits who lived above the lake would enter camp, kidnap the children and stuff them in to these large baskets with draw strings to prevent escape. These creatures were huge, covered with hair and walked like humans. They were known to be elusive and wanted to be left alone. Most of the time the children were gone forever. Once and a while they would be returned years later....but somehow different.

The humans had had enough of this after much time. They went to the Mountain Spirits and cut a deal. They agreed to leave the lake forever and not return if the creatures would give them the knowledge of the baskets. They did and the humans left.

In traditional weaving images of animals and people are incorporated in to the design. On occasion the weaver will use an ominous figure on the basket.

One of the last people known to be kidnapped by the Mountain Spirits was a woman named Wannasay. She was returned to her family as a young woman. She died in the early 20th century and is buried in Woodland, Washington in a private cemetery.



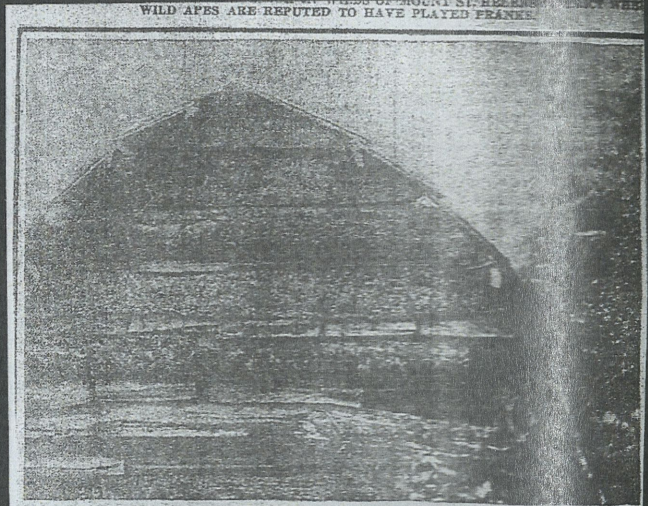
Klickitat Huckleberry Basket. Note the image of the large figure woven in to the fiber near the bottom.

THE PARTY

returned around the 6th of July and continued the mining work. Leroy was returning from the spring at the cabin one morning. The other four men were working in the tunnel. Hearing movement in the brush, Leroy turned. Less than 50 feet from him, a massive creature stood. Having his revolver with him as his father had ordered, Smith drew fired in to the creature three times. The shots seemed to have no effect. The creature turned and retreated in to the woods.

That night, in the cabin, the party of five men began to make plans to leave and abandon the operation.

WILD APES ARE REPUTED TO HAVE PLAYED PRANKS



The miners cabin.
The Oregonian.
July 19, 1924.



"The first glimpse of one of the animals came about 16 days ago when Smith and Beck saw one peeking from behind a tree at them. They fired at the animal and apparently hit it on the side of the head. It fell back. A canyon lay between them and their quarry, and by the time they had passed the canyon the animal had disappeared."

...they have been reported in the
district for six years and have fre-
quently been mistaken for points
that resembled those of a man.
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the canyon the animal had disap-
peared. Thinking they might have
been mistaken they said nothing of
the adventure when they were in
Falso for the Fourth of July cele-
bration.

Seven Feet in Air.

Thursday of last week, as Roy
Smith was on his way to the

THE MINERS

returned in the Spring of 1924 and built a cabin. The gold was coming out of the mine well enough so that they wanted a structure strong enough to hold tools and stores year-round and survive the yearly snow fall. The cabin, built from logs was about 10 feet by 30 feet on a small shelf above the mine.

On July 1st, Marion Smith and Beck were at a spring to fetch water less than 100 feet from the cabin when Beck saw one of the creatures ahead, peaking out from behind a large cedar. Seven to Eight feet tall, it was upright on two legs, covered entirely with dark hair, save for its face and hands. Beck immediately fired three shots at the monster, about 300 feet away. Smith and Beck ran to the tree. There was nothing. No blood, no body. They noted the bark was skinned by Beck's gun shots, certain that the creature had been hit. On the opposite of the draw, further away, the creature was retreating up the hill, occasionally turning to look at the men. Smith, although quite comfortable in the lonely mountains was getting nervous. He ordered that all men were not to leave camp un armed.

The men returned to Kelso a few days later to celebrate the July 4th holiday with friends and family. Although aware of the possible ridicule that they might receive over such a fantastical story, Marion and Fred could not keep quiet and told friends of what they had encountered. People in the community had difficulty squaring it. All the men in the mining party had reputations of being honest and reliable. But their tale was quite unbelievable.

"I took it to be between six and seven feet tall covered with hair of a dark brown or greyish tinge. It had a flattish kind of nose and face, resembling a hairy man, not very large upright ears and protruding mouth and lips like the baboon or monkey family. When it started toward me, I fired my revolver at it and ran like the devil was after me for the cabin"

"I don't want to know anything more about the creature I saw looking at me from the spring and which started toward me when I shot at it with my revolver," said young Smith.

"How big was it? Was it standing on two legs or four, and just what did it look like?"

"It was standing behind a tree from the spring when I went after water. I took it to be between six and seven feet tall covered with hair of a dark brown or greyish tinge. It had a flattish kind of nose and face, resembling a hairy man, not very large upright ears and protruding mouth or lips like the baboon or monkey family. When it started toward me, I fired my revolver at it and ran like the devil was after me for the cabin."

"When did you first see this thing, Mr. Beck?"

FIRE TWICE AT MONSTER.

Leroy Smith. *Portland Telegram.*
July 15, 1924.

THURSDAY, JULY 10th



Fred Beck, left and Leroy Smith inside the cabin recreating the scene. William Welch photo. *The Columbian*. March 10, 1965.

ON THE AFTERNOON

of July 10, 1924, Leroy was again outside of the cabin. This time all of the other miners were inside the cabin. The animal appeared again, coming out of the brush and started toward Smith. Again, ready with his revolver, Leroy fired 4 to 5 shots in to the creature. Hearing the shots, the rest of the miners boiled out of the cabin, armed and ready. Marion Smith later estimated that about 16 shots were fired in to the beast between all of them. Fred Beck took the final shot with his rifle. The creature was at the edge of the precipice with the canyon behind it. Fred fired. Either the creature toppled and fell or it crouched down and skidded down the canyon wall, 200 feet below.

Shortly thereafter. Night fell.

The party was certain that they were going to leave in the morning. Most likely, for good. At approximately 11 that night, something struck the short side of the cabin...very, very hard. Enough to knock out a chunk of split wood that was used as chinking between the logs of the cabin. The weather was reportedly clear. It was a full moon that night and it was bright. Fred and Marion look out of hole where the chinking was a moment ago. They could see six or seven or eight of the creatures madly dashing and running around in the moonlight.

THE CREATURES

began to climb on the roof and began trying to smash their way in. The door of the cabin began to shake. The miners, terrified ripped apart the fir boughs that made up their bunks and bolstered the door shut, trapping themselves inside. The cabin began to be pelted with rocks and boulders.

As the attack began in earnest, the miners fired back, shooting through the hole in the wall, shooting blindly through the split shakes that made up their roof when one of the animals was running across it. The metal ventilator cap for the fire was torn off and rocks began raining down inside through the new hole in the roof. Beck's head caught one of the missiles and it rendered him senseless for a short time.

Realizing that they were going to run out of ammunition, and quickly at that, they built up the fire as large as they dared. They decided to shoot as best they could only when the creatures were actually trying to get in. They screamed and yelled at the creatures.

"If you leave us alone, we'll leave you alone, and we'll all go home in the morning". (Beck, 1967).

Although not substantiated by contemporary reports at the time, Beck wrote in 1967 that a huge hairy arm was able to smash through the roof. Flailing around it found the handle of the small kid axe near the fire. It was withdrawing the axe when Beck grabbed the axe head and turned it so that it got held up on one of the roof battens. Marion ran his rifle barrel along side the axe handle and fired. The creature let go and the axe was safely stored.

The attack continued all night.

At dawn, about 4am all was quiet. The five men mustered their courage and opened the door. The creatures were gone. Massive human tracks and boulders littered the scene outside. A spare pile of roofing shakes was scattered around the building. On one side of the cabin, they found that during the night one or more of the creatures had been digging at the base of the cabin, trying to get in underneath.

They grabbed their guns and what ammunition they had left and started on what was probably the longest hike of their lives, 7 miles back to the truck at Spirit Lake.

"Joe Peterson said that he wouldn't go back for any money and in fact all the party claim to have an uncanny feeling on the subject".

Portland Telegram, July 15, 1924.

...of that vicinity and should have done more work up it but the last night's experience gave them all the "assessment" work they needed to do for this year.

Joe Peterson said he wouldn't go back for any money and in fact all the party claim to have an uncanny feeling on the subject.

NOT SPIRITUALISM

Asked as to the possibility of the

JULY 11 & 12, 1934

THAT FRIDAY

morning of July 11th, 1934, on the long walk to the truck, the miners vowed not to say a word to anybody about what had happened the night before. "We expected to be laughed at", said Marion Smith to reporters.

In my years of researching this, I've never been able to fathom how they could not. And they couldn't.

The first person they encountered was Wilma Welch, the wife of the Spirit Lake Ranger, Bill Welch for the Columbia National Forest. After a brief discussion, Marion found Bill as the rest of the party scurried in to the truck.

After speaking with Marion, Bill Welch followed him as he got in to the vehicle. He had never seen a group of grown men more frightened in his life. They "were just as wild as he (Smith) was, sitting there clutching their guns". (Welch 1965).

My friend, John Pickering is a comrade and a great historical researcher. John knew a family member of the owners of the Blue Ox Tavern in Kelso in 1934 and the family story never died of when the miners came in that Friday night, fresh from their encounter on the mountain. They needed to tell their story and they did.

From there it spread like fire. The first newspaper to print the story was the Longview Daily News; which was an evening paper. The story hit the Daily News on July 13th, about 6pm, less than 48 hours from when the attack on the cabin commenced. 1934 was an early year for the advent of the AP wire. The Daily News had it and the story spread to many states in a matter of days.

"Well, I got 'im," the man said as he slowed down in front of Forest Guard Welch.

"Got who or what?"

"The mountain devil."

"You mean a cougar?"

"No, the mountain devil."

"You mean a wolverine?"

"No, the mountain devil."

Welch, standing outside the barn eyeing the newcomer warily, recalled him as a man who had been at the station two or three weeks earlier.

FIRE PERMIT

William Welch interview. *The Columbian*.
March 9, 1965.

"Well, I got 'im" the man said as he slowed down in front of Forest Guard Welch. "Got who or what?"..."The mountain devil". "You mean a cougar?!"..."No, the mountain devil."..... "You mean a wolverine?"..... "No the mountain devil." Welch, standing outside the barn eyeing the newcomer warily, recalled him as a man who had been at the station two or three weeks earlier.

At the cabin. 1924.
 (standing left to right).
 Burt Hammerstrom,
 freelance writer; Bill
 Welch; Jim Huffman, Lewis
 River Forest Ranger.
 (seated). Frank (Slim) Lynch
 of the Seattle Post
 Intelligencer. *The
 Columbian*. March 9, 1965



The Blue Ox Tavern. 1892.
 Cowlitz County Historical
 Museum.



KELSO MINERS BACK WITH TALE OF "MOUNTAIN DEVILS"

McADOO AND DAVIS HOLD CONFERENCE

Defeated Aspirant Brando McAdoo
 talks to Enderse DAVIS.
 Urges support of Followers.

NEW YORK, July 12.—William
 Brando McAdoo took silence in poli-
 tics yesterday when he stated
 that W. Davis as a "progressive,"
 and urged his followers to support
 him in the coming election. Ad-
 vancing that there had been some
 doubt of Davis' progressivism due
 to his association with "banking
 houses and corporate interests,"
 McAdoo said that such doubts had
 been annihilated. He declared that
 "there should be no more judged
 by the lights of men's physicality by
 the lights of men's physicality by
 the lights of men's physicality by

Revising the old Indian legend
 of a marauding band of giant
 "Mountain Devils" who, according
 to tales told 60 years ago by Cow-
 like Indians, inhabited the moun-
 tain fastness and lake region of
 Mt. St. Helens and Spirit Lake,
 five Kelso men returned to that
 city this morning with a horro-
 rific tale of an escape from a band of
 four of these gorilla-like behemoths
 who attacked them in the
 darkness of night as they sought
 escape and safety in their mining
 cabin.

The attack is said to have taken
 place eight miles from Spirit Lake
 on the east side of Mt. St. Helens.
 The Kelso men—Marion Smith,
 Dave Leferre, Fred Beck, and John
 and Roy Smith—had gone to their
 mining claim to do some assess-
 ment work. Huge tracks measur-
 ing 12-14 inches across were en-
 countered one day. This led to a
 repetition of stories told by some of
 the band of having found these
 same tracks several years ago. A
 successful hunt was initiated. Four

Longview Daily News. July
 12, 1924. The first word on
 the attack.

THE AFTERMATH

ALBERT HASTINGS

the reports stated that the following week, half of any towns male population and half of the towns armory was drained as hordes of exuberant hunters flocked the area in what was to become known as the GREAT APE HUNT OF 1934.



The Oregonian. July 20, 1934.

HUNTERS GROW FORESTS
Officials Fear Casualties
Among Exerted Parties.

The Oregonian. July 19, 1934.

EXPEDITIONS LEAVE FOR "MOUNTAIN DEVIL" HUNT

Longview Daily News. July 16, 1934.

Kelso Police Start Hunt for Ape Man on Mountain

The Portland News. July 16, 1934



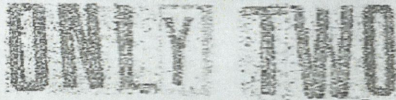
Herbert Van Valkenburgh. *Portland Police Museum.*

No More Devil Hunting

Game Warden Gilmore returned from Spirit lake yesterday evening, where he had been for a week. He reports parties of men, some armed with blunderbuses, and others with the latest firearms, coming into the county, claiming to be hunting for the "mountain devils."

After an investigation the game warden disarmed all hunters, saying that if the "mountain gorillas" had been there for so many years as claimed, they were harmless and probably beneficial, and if they were to be hunted it must be done by scientists. All firearms must now be left in care of the forest rangers.

Skamania County Pioneer. August 1, 1934.



of the miners were convinced to return to the site the following week, Fred Beck and Leroy Perry Smith. They were accompanied by a reporter from the Portland News. They were also accompanied by two Portland Police detectives, William Dennen and Hebert VanValkenburgh. Apparently, during the "tour" with the miners, the wind was heavy and brush nearby rattled. Despite their police training, the detectives were quite keyed up, as the first thing they did was to draw their revolvers at the shaking bushes and send a large amount of rounds in to the vegetation.

The police actions, and certainly combined with the amount of Ape Hunters on the mountain, the forest rangers were forced to demand that all arms had to be checked at the nearest ranger station before going on to the mountain.



William Dennen. *Portland Police Museum.*

THE THEORIES

that could provide an easy explanation to this strange report came fast and furious from the public. Keeping in mind the post-Victorian era of the United States, they included damning accusations that liquor was the cause. Additionally, the miners were thought to be Spiritualists. Neither of these explanations were substantiated and the miners denied both. As a side note, I personally have had wine and beer in my life and I've occasionally played around with a Ouija board, but at no time did I ever think that my house was being attacked by monsters in the middle of the night.

One theory that has persisted through the years is that the "Y" Boys perpetuated the attack on the cabin.

Not to be confused with Harry Reese's Boy Scout troupe, The Sait Helens Apes of the 1950's, the YMCA ran a boys camp at Spirit Lake for many years in the early 20th century. They staged a yearly hike to Pumice Butte, camped the night and went back to the Spirit Lake. In 1924, three of the young campers did, in fact encounter the miners on Wednesday, July 9th. The story they told later was that there was a confrontation, the miners got angry and ran them off. In retribution, the young men snuck out of camp Thursday night and threw rocks at the cabin.

Y. M. C. A. Boys Stage Hike.

SPIRIT LAKE, Wash., July 12.— (Special.)—An overnight trip to the eastern foothills of Mount St. Helens was made by about 70 boys of the Y. M. C. A. camp at Spirit Lake, Wash., Wednesday and Thursday. The distance was about eight miles each way to and from Pumice hill, where they camped overnight. The boys were divided into squads of nine each, with a leader. Starting at 10 o'clock Wednesday the boys reached Pumice hill at 2 P. M. The return was made in about 3½ hours the next day.

The Oregonian, July 13, 1924

The day that the story of the Mountain Devil attack was run in the Oregonian newspaper, there was another item, buried further back in the same edition. "Y.M.C.A. BYS STAGE HIKE". The short paragraph describes the hike to Pumice Butte, the campout on Wednesday night and that the campers returned to Spirit Lake the next day, Thursday. ----- The campers weren't there the night of July 10th. They were back in camp seven miles to the North.

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Boys All in Camp.
"They were all in camp that night and the day these fellows claim to have had their fight," said he. "Wait till you see the cabin. Boys could never have pulled the job."
Finally we showed off with the ranger going along to show where to take the trail down to Smith's cabin. Four miles from head of auto navigation he called it. After walking and climbing it the writer

Bill Welch. *The Oregonian*.
July 19, 1924.

"They were all in camp that night and the day these fellows claim to have had their fight," said he. "Wait till you see the cabin. Boys could never have pulled the job."

Apes Declared To Be Seeah-tik Indians

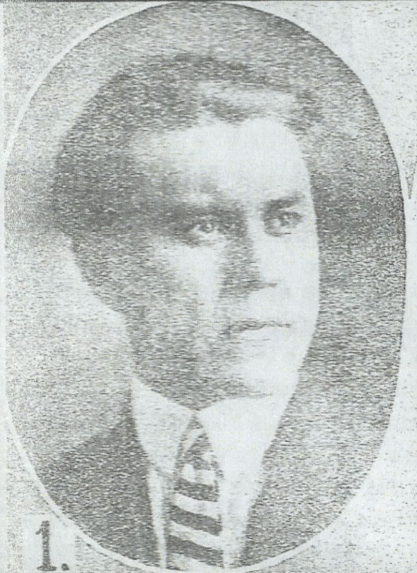
Mrs. Williams Makes Pro-

CV. WEBSTER NOW

Real American Staff

INDIAN EVOLVING

The Real American. July 17,
1934



Jorg Totsgi/aka Philip Hugh
Howell. *The North American
Indian 1936 Year Book.*

APE HUNT TO FAIL, INDIANS PREDICT

Seeah-tiks Said to Roam
at Spirit Lake.

STRANGE EVENTS RELATED

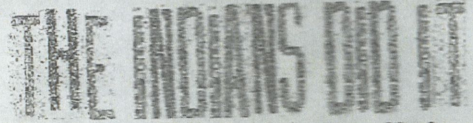
Big-Breasted Giants Take
Revenge on Tribesmen.

CEDAR IS LEFT ON DEAD

Shaggy Monsters Reputed to Be
Strong Enough to Pull Off
Heads of Humans.

BY JORG TOTSGI, Clallam Tribe,
Editor of the Real American.
HOQUIAM, Wash., July 15. (Special)
That the apes...

Jorg Totsgi *The Oregonian.*
July 17, 1934



was another theory that prevailed,
probably the most; being published in
Gifford-Pinchot Forest Service
publications well in to the 1970's.

I believe this was a case of a great man
getting sucker-punched by history.

Philip Hugh Howell, who wrote under the
name of Jorg Totsgi was a member of the
Port Gamble S'klallam nation. He ran a
newspaper, the Real American, starting
in 1923 that was solely dedicated to
Native American affairs. He was a great
promoter of Native culture, was a
competition dancer and organized many
Pow-Wows and other cultural events
through the Pacific Northwest region.

Totsgi was the first, shortly after the
attack to run a story on his take on the
events at Pumice Butte. "APES DECLARED
TO BE SEEAH-TIK INDIANS", the headline
ran. The article went over the events
and Totsgi explained that it was a small
band of Indians who attacked the cabin
that night. This is what latched on to
many of the public mind and it stuck.
Only if one read the entirety of the
article, would one understand that
Totsgi described the band of Seeah-tiks
to be an old elusive tribe that lives on
the mountain, being seven to eight feet
tall and covered entirely with reddish-
brown hair.

I believe it was Totsgi's intention to
educate the public on "all things
Indian", as he often wrote, including
older cultural stories of the area.
However, "The Indians Did It", was the
message that became prominent and
didn't go away.

EPILOGUE

THE APE CANYON

incident of 1924, like most media sensations, faded quickly from the public memory. The Great Ape Hunt, following the attack never did bag their quarry and the mountain could relax again as the hordes of hunters left. Except for the brief trip the following week that Beck and Leroy Smith led, the miners never returned to the cabin. The mine claim was never proofed and all mineral interests reverted to the public.

An item of note, however lies in a single document in the Skamania County Auditor's Office. Required of all mining claim holders, Beck filed a Proof of Labor in August, 1924, almost two years to the day when location notice for the Venderwhite Mine was first filed. The affidavit stated that all work was completed on July 10, 1924. Beck and Marion Smith both stated that the gold assays were good on the mine. The party had worked the mine for two years. They had taken the trouble to build a formidable log cabin six weeks prior. They still had about three months of good weather left to work the mine. But they gave it all up and never went back.

Something must have scared them.

FRED BECK ET AL TO VANDERWHITE

STATE OF WASHINGTON, {
 } ss.
COUNTY OF COWLITZ. }

FRED BECK, MACK RHODES AND MARION SMITH, BEING FIRST DULY SWORN, EACH FOR HIMSELF, DEPOSE AND SAY: THAT DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY, 1924 FIFTY-TWO (52) DAYS WORK WERE DONE ON THAT CERTAIN MINING CLAIM OR LEDGE KNOWN AS THE VANDERWHITE MINE, EMBRACED IN THE MINING LOCATION NOTICE, WHICH IS RECORDED IN BOOK F OF MINING LOCATIONS, AT PAGE 56, RECORDS OF SKAMANIA COUNTY, WASHINGTON, AND THAT SAID WORK WAS COMPLETED ON THE 10TH DAY OF JULY, 1924, AND THAT THE VALUE OF SAID ASSESSMENT WORK WAS AND IS AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX (\$156.00) DOLLARS.

FRED BECK

MARION SMITH

M C RHODES

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS 8TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1924.

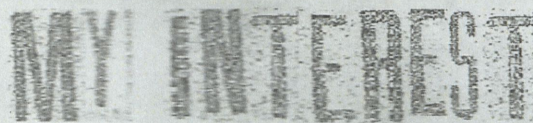
(NOTARIAL)
{ SEAL }

A. H. IMUS
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF WASHINGTON
RESIDING AT KALAMA

FILED FOR RECORD AUGUST 9, 1924, AT 2-30 P.M. BY FRED BECK

Wm. G. Mitchell
COUNTY AUDITOR
BY Leroy Smith DEPUTY

Venderwhite Mine Proof of Labor.
Records of Skamania County.
August 9, 1924



in the Ape Canyon Incident

began about 10 years ago. I suppose one could call it a mid-life crisis, being only marginally better than running off with a hot blonde and buying a red-convertable (which I managed to avoid).

After researching the event for two or three years, I began to suspect that the probable location of the cabin and mine, through a topographical coincidence may have survived the eruption. So I started looking.

There was never a map, or a solid description of the mine. However, thanks to the reporters who visited the cabin following the 1924 attack, I had a collection of clues that pointed me in the probable direction.

After about 2 to 3 years of searching in the field and defying death on the slopes of Pumice Butte and Ape Canyon, I was able to find the cabin site in 2013. But that's a whole 'nother story. Maybe I'll make a Zine about it next year.....

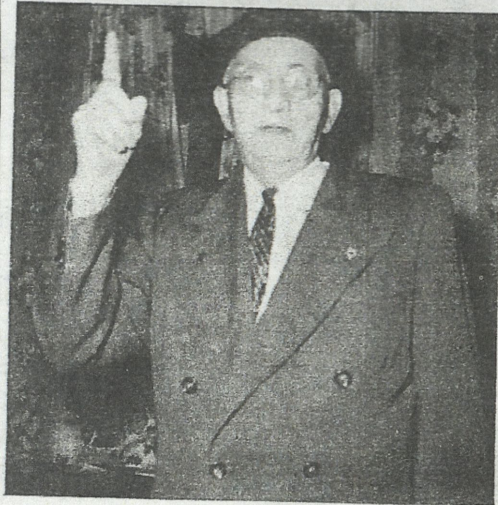


Broken saw blade found at the cabin site. 2013. Author photo.



Nails found at the cabin site. 2013. Author photo.

FIN.



FRED BECK, Author

11

What are Abominable Snowmen? Fred Beck is qualified to tell what they are. He was one of a party of five miners attacked by them in 1924, the most famous of such incidents in America. The incident has become a legend in the Northwest.

He tells the real facts after 43 years of silence.

yours in a higher dimensional understanding
Fred Beck.
R. A. Beck

Fred Beck. Frontice plate of original copy
in reference section Longview, Wash. Public
Library with original pencil inscription. I
Fought the Apemen of Mt. St. Helens. 1967.

"YOURS IN A HIGHER DIMENSIONAL UNDERSTANDING"

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