

TEXADA'S TALL TALES

Folks everywhere love stories.

Waiting for the steamships on boat nights in old Van Anda, townsfolk would while away the time by “chewing the fat” on the bench beside the heater in Deighton’s general store. It was an ideal time and place for trading stories and gossip.

The claims of fantastic gold strikes reported in Victoria newspapers were probably a topic. “The richest ore ever seen in BC.” “Lumps of gold like unto hens’ eggs,” crowed the press. Locals knew that the mine promoters’ exaggerations and embellished tales were simply an attempt to attract investment.

Most rumours and tall tales meet an early demise but some take on a life of their own. Texada historian Bruce McKelvie admitted that, as a boy, he created stories to entertain his chums as they performed his chores for him.

One elaborate tale told of Spanish gold hidden in an extinct Texada volcano. Some 30 years later McKelvie heard his tall tale repeated back to him miles away on Vancouver Island! A good story may never die!

Another tale began as a deliberate lie. The 1960’s Texada book offers this story: A teenager accused of stealing tools tried to cover his guilt by blaming a group of “Indians” with rifles whom he claimed to have seen prowling nearby. He even faked a bullet hole in his hat to add a degree of authenticity.

Although locals were unmoved by his story it made the news outside and “went viral.” Reporters arrived on Texada and plans were in the works to send special police to investigate. The boy finally confessed that his story was fabricated. This tall tale got a bit out of hand!

An enduring Texada fable repeated even today is the “Indian legend” that the First Nations never lived on Texada, fearing the island would sink into the sea. In fact, the “legend” is false. The 3000+ year old village site at Shelter Point is there to prove it.

Stories like these remind us not to believe everything we hear. Even so, our shared Texada tales (even if some are “not quite true”) are, at the very least, entertaining.

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