

HIM FELT ADMIRATION

Hero of the Kispiox

\$500 worth of furs off him, plus a couple of sureties of \$50 each. He also added the quaint note in his report that an Indian at Bear Lake said one of their women had found a white man's head in perfect condition or "quite fresh," as the woman said. It was found near Teclap River.

Wilkie sadly concluded his report with "I received no definite information re Gun-an-noot or Ha-ma-dan on my trip. One Indian reported he'd seen two snowshoe tracks up near the source of the Finlay River. Peter Hi-ma-dan's father and a boy made the trip from Kis-kigas to Bear Lake a year ago but there is nothing definite to show where they are now."

He concluded that it would be better to take up the chase in summer when horses could be employed. "Either that," he summarized, "or give up the chase until some reliable information is received."

Wilkie's concluding paragraph is a model of brevity. "I left Hazelton Feb. 14, walking down the ice of the Skeena to Copper River, thence by trail to Kitimat, thence by Ss. Amur to Victoria, arriving there March 12." He'd covered between 1,500 and 1,600 miles, most of it on foot.

With Gun-an-noot still at large, season followed season, months rolled into years. Now and again came word to Kispiox that Simon had been seen somewhere. Came once a report that Peter Hi-ma-dan had left him, and later another report that Peter was drowned in some swift running, foaming rapid. Outbreak of war in 1914 took minds elsewhere. Young men joined the army, old-timers died or moved to the lower mainland and in the unceasing departmental shuffling policemen relieved policemen at Hazelton, new men giving way to still newer men, men who'd never heard of Simon Gun-an-noot. He was a wraith in the background, a wisp of smoke, a memory.

Now and again in barrooms or around camp fires Robin Hood-type stories were told about him, of how he'd once been bold enough to slip back into Kispiox in the dark of the moon. It was even said, he'd walked the back alleys of Hazelton, in swift and stealthy visits. It was claimed a local trader annually packed grub out to some distant point, and came back with a load of Gun-an-noot's furs. There were rumors that Gun-an-noot had discovered a fabulous mine, and the further the tale went, the bigger the mine got.

Right here in Victoria there are men who knew Gun-an-noot. One is 73 years old, hale and hearty, Frank B. Chettleburgh. He and his good wife live at 932 Arundel Avenue, just off Admiral's Road. Frank, one-time land agent for architect Frank Rattenbury (designer of the legislative build-



T. W. S. PARSONS

ings), came to Hazelton from the Prairies in 1909 and spent 18 years in the north country.

It was in March, 1912, he told me recently, that he ran across Gun-an-noot. He was out with a Kispiox Indian locating some claims along Pebble River in the Ground Hog country, 150 miles north of Hazelton.

"I saw some smoke in a valley one afternoon," he recounted, "and I asked my Indian who it was."

"Another Indian" was the cryptic reply.

Chettleburgh wanted to meet the distant camper but the Kispiox brave was against it. "He doesn't like white men," was his sombre advice.

Frank headed down the trail and made the lone camper's acquaintance. He was an Indian all right, well set up, about 30, and despite the warning seemed frank and open. He didn't give his name but asked Chettleburgh who owned the cache down by the river. Chettleburgh said he did. "I like one jam," said the red man.

"Go ahead. Take what you want when you're down there," was Chettleburgh's reply.

A week later Chettleburgh found a chip of wood at his cache bearing the pencilled legend, "I take one jam."

One afternoon while he made up his notes, a shadow darkened his tent flap. It was the Indian, with a hind-quarter of caribou. "To pay for the jam."

When he departed, the Kispiox man said, "His name's Gun-an-noot."

It was seven years before they met again.

During the First World War Mrs. Peter Hi-ma-dan died at Kispiox. Before she breathed her last she made a confession. With her relatives clustered round her she said she'd killed Max LeClair. In low, halting tones she told how, in the early morning hours she was on her way to Two Mile to get Peter home from the party. She met LeClair on the trail, and he was drunk. He threw his arms around her, she pushed him,

A TRUE WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

by Cecil Clark

then ran to her pony and dragged a rifle out of its scabbard. LeClair mounted and was making off when she fired, hitting him in the back.

When she saw what she'd done she started to cry. Just then Gun-an-noot, who'd heard the shot, came galloping up. He told her to go home and think no more about it. He'd take the blame for LeClair's death. Helping her homeward he made her promise never to reveal what happened on the trail that night.

When they got home, Nah-Gun, Gun-an-noot's father, told them that McIntosh had been shot, and that Gun-an-noot was sure to be blamed. He'd better get back in the mountains and stay there. It was due to Nah-Gun that Gun-an-noot had fled, said the dying woman.

The story had weaknesses. How did Nah-Gun know that McIntosh was dead? And who could shoot so accurately in the dark?

Later, from the reserves, came another story, that Peter Hi-ma-dan, who was drunk, had shot LeClair, just as Peter's wife appeared on the scene. Thinking to protect her hus-



FRED S. HUSSEY

band she'd taken the blame in a deathbed confession. Again the flaw, for no drunk man would shoot with that degree of accuracy. These conflicting stories reached out into the wilds, and the grape vine brought back the word that Gun-an-noot was ready to give himself up. He swore he didn't kill McIntosh. But Simon's old father was still alive, and sent him word not to surrender.

"You can't prove your innocence," adjured the old man. "You've got to stay in hiding."

It was evident by stray talk that Gun-an-noot was tiring of his self-imposed exile and craved the society of his people, the talk of his friends. True, he'd made friends with one or two men on the Yukon Telegraph line (that's how he got scraps of news of his relatives) but he missed the songs, the chatter, the fires of the rancherie.

Finally, old Nah-gun took ill in a distant bush camp. Gun-an-noot paid him a visit just in time to see the old man breathe his last. Before he died he made one request. He wanted to be buried on the shores of glacier fed Bowser Lake, lying under the east side of the mighty Cascades.

Unbelievable as it may seem, Gun-an-noot performed his father's last wish, packing the body on his back 40 miles to Bowser Lake.

The ensuing months were busy with rumors of Gun-an-noot's impending surrender, and the police in Hazelton knew it was now only a matter of time. Gun-an-noot, like a suspicious animal, couldn't quite face the unknown, the labyrinth of the white man's legal code.

In March, 1919, it was rangy bushman and packer, George Beirnes, who broke the impasse. George had packed supplies for the Yukon Telegraph in the early days, and between times took the mail on the frozen Skeena, by dog team, between Hazelton and Prince Rupert. He knew Gun-an-noot, and he sent word by devious means that he'd find a lawyer to whom Gun-an-noot could tell his story.

George, of course, wasn't entirely disinterested. He'd heard of that fabulous mine, too. Anyway, he got hold of the late Stewart Henderson, of Victoria, and the pair falked it over.

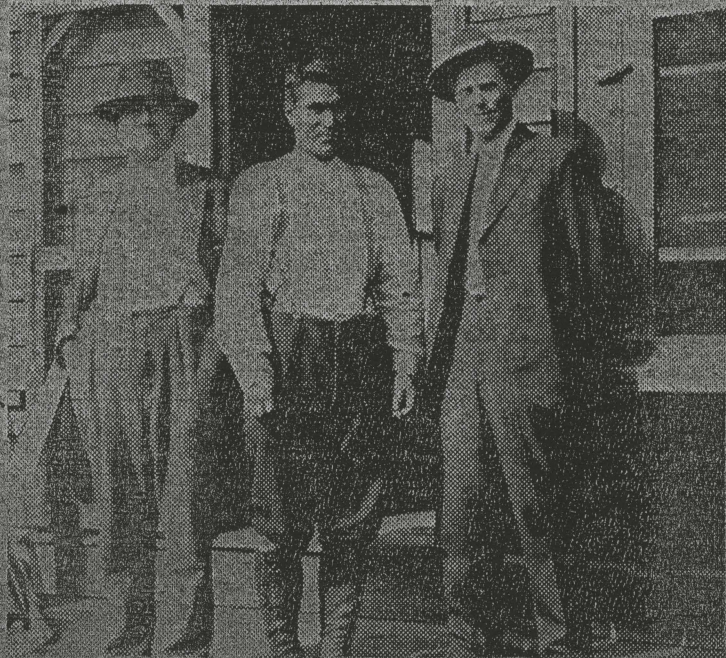
Stewart, one-time brilliant Queen's University student, protege of the great Laurier, and ex-member of the B.C. Legislature, was a character. At home in the wilds, he enlivened the proceedings of many a rural courtroom with his drawing Mark Twain style axioms, punctuated by liberal pinches of snuff. He and Beirnes knew there was small chance of conviction with most of the key witnesses long since dead or disappeared.

For weeks the dickering went on, at long distance, the caginess of the Indian offsetting Beirnes' almost taunting messages. Finally, one day, by appointment, Gun-an-noot appeared on the edge of town and the three met. Or rather four, Frank Chettleburgh went along, too.

The four men trudged along the dusty road to within sight of the Hazelton jail. Beirnes and Henderson stopped and studied Gun-an-noot. The Indian looked at first one, then the other, as if to gauge their honesty of purpose. Then straightening his shoulders he walked in to the police station.

Sergt. John Kelly of the B.C. Police looked up from something he was doing at the counter to see an Indian—an Indian who said quietly, "I'm Simon Gun-an-noot, come to give myself up."

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In the last chapters of his story, these were the leading characters, from left to right, Stewart Henderson, one of the most formidable criminal lawyers ever to practice in Victoria; Gun-an-Noot, and George Beirnes, the man who helped the chase-weary Indian to surrender—to freedom.

EVEN THOSE WHO HUNTED GUN-AN-NOOT, Fugitive

NORTH of the Canadian National Railway that crosses B.C. east-west from Jasper to Prince Rupert, is the other half of the province. Land of a thousand valleys and peaks, criss-crossed with some of B.C.'s biggest lakes and mightiest rivers, it's an area bigger than New Zealand, or Italy or the State of Washington. It's the land of superlatives, with its big bear and moose, big trout and—big mosquitos. Did I say big lakes? Babine Lake is as big, in area, as two Salt Spring Islands—with room to sail round them. In other words, it's a good country in which to get lost.

Fifty-one years ago an Indian called Simon Gun-an-noot made part of this wilderness his stronghold, and the story of his flight from justice became one of the northland's controversial legends.

Simon was a Kispiox Indian, a full blood, and his home was at Hag-wil-gate, close to the crossroads trading, rail and river centre of Hazelton. Simon was big for an Indian, around six feet, and years of back packing and canoeing had stripped off any fat and steeled his muscles. Tireless and bushwise, he was famed as a successful

hunter and trapper, and among pioneer whites bore a name for truthfulness and fair dealing. Early in his youth he'd been converted to Christianity and proudly wore his church medalion on feast days. At home he was devoted to his young wife.

It was in June, 1906, that Gun-an-noot came out of the wilderness to sell a catch of prime fur to the Hudson's Bay company at Hazelton. Settling a few debts, he returned to his wife at Kispiox and that evening joined in a celebration at the roadhouse at Two Mile.

Gun-an-noot wasn't a drink-

ing man, but others apparently were and around midnight the party was getting a little out of hand. This was the time that Alex McIntosh and Max LeClair, a couple of half breeds, both the worse for liquor, were incautious enough to make some sly remarks about Mrs. Gun-an-noot.

Simon's eyes narrowed, his mind jerked to a sharp focus, and his sinewy brown hand shot out and grabbed McIntosh by the sweater. There was an exchange of punches, McIntosh ended up on the floor and Simon strode out into the night.

TWO MEN SLAIN BY IDENTICAL WOUNDS

When day dawned a party of Babine Indians walking the trail to Hag-wil-gate found their path barred by a man—a man who was lying sprawled on his back in the road, dead.

The natives hurried in to Hazelton, told Johnny Boyd, who in turn informed Const. Jim Kirby of the B.C. Police.

By 8.30 Kirby and the local coroner, Edward H. Hicks, Beach, were on their way to the scene. The body was that of Alex McIntosh. There was blood on his shirt around the chest, his face was bruised and discolored and the little finger of his right hand was injured. Death had been instantaneous, caused by a rifle bullet that entered his back two inches from the spine, just below the 12th rib, and had exited through a ragged hole three-quarters of an inch below the left collar bone. McIntosh's horse was nearby,

and from its tracks it was deduced that he was galloping along the trail when someone stepped out of the bush behind him and shot him in the back from a kneeling or prone position.

Just as the constable and coroner were arranging for a wagon to take the dead man in to Hazelton, an excited character called Gus Sampan came running up to tell them that there was another dead man lying on the trail about a mile and a half out of Hazelton.

The other body proved to be that of Max LeClair, who was also lying flat on his back in the road. By the strangest coincidence death had come to him by a bullet—a bullet which had hit him just two inches from the spine and torn its way up through his body to find daylight again just below the collar bone on the left side!

LeClair too, had been riding, and it was assumed that his killer must also have been kneeling or lying prone on the trail behind him.

One other thing was certain. He was no means shot. But how had he achieved both deaths? By killing one man, then riding on to post himself at another vantage point? Or was it the work of only one man?

In his investigation Kirby dug up witnesses from the overnight party at Two Mile. Some were evasive, some reluctant, and some were so befuddled with liquor that they didn't recollect anything. But apparently there had been some sort of altercation between Gun-an-noot and Alex McIntosh. Some said they heard Gun-an-noot threaten to kill him. There was also evidence that Peter Hi-ma-dan, Gun-an-noot's brother-in-law, had taken part in the brawl and threatened Max LeClair.

ON THE RUN FOR 13 YEARS

Kirby next visited Gun-an-noot's cabin, but found him gone. His wife said she didn't know where he was. From the look of the yard it had been sudden flight. The horses were gone, and poking around the cabin's interior Kirby noted that all his ammunition had been taken. Later in the day Kirby intercepted old Nah-Gun, Gun-an-noot's father, just as he was heading for the hills. He said he didn't know anything. And Peter Hi-ma-dan had disappeared.

Came next the inquest and a jury's verdict that the two men came to their deaths at the hands of Simon Gun-an-noot and Peter Hi-ma-dan. Warrants were issued charging the two

Indians with the double murder.

Swearing to the information was easy, executing the warrants was a little more difficult for no policeman put a hand on Gun-an-noot for the next 13 years.

To Gun-an-noot, who could slide through thickets with the ease and speed of a deer, the Engimika, the Omineca, and all the country from Bell-Irving River to Klua-tan-tan was like a backyard. For 500 square miles every pass, ridge, creek and slough was home.

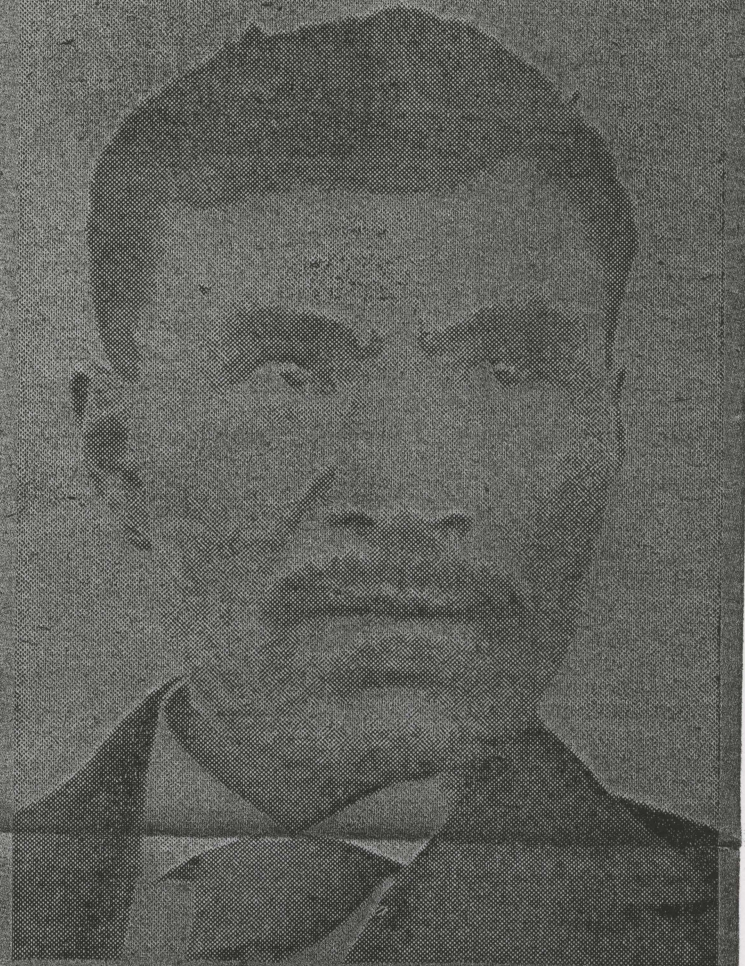
The first police search party headed by Jim Kirby and Const. Maitland-Dougall followed the trail for miles, then lost it. They picked it up again, and again it vanished.

All that summer of 1906 re-lays of expert bushmen followed up the pursuit, checking on every chance story concern-

ing the will o' the wisp character known as Simon Gun-an-noot.

Summer faded into fall, to give way in turn to winter. With the northland ice and snow-bound, travel can be quicker. But there was no quick solution to the whereabouts of Gun-an-noot and Hi-ma-dan. By this time old sourdoughs here and there were voicing grudging admiration for the dark skinned outlaw, and from "Gun-an-noot" wags were transposing his name to "Done a 'chute!"

The baffled police, too, were beginning to respect this wilderness wizard who could be here, there and finally nowhere at all. It was becoming evident, too, that these periodic patrols to check on reports about the elusive Indian were proving a bit of a drain on the local police manpower.



For years police and trackers chased him fruitlessly through the wilds of B.C. and he grew to legend proportions. He was Simon Gun-an-Noot of the Kispiox.

Which is the reason why, in 1907, head of the Force in Victoria, Fred S. Hussey, assigned a specially picked squad to stay on Gun-an-noot's trail wherever it led. In the party were Sergt. F. R. Murray, Constables Otway Wilkie and John Huggard, and as guides and packers were men called Huntley, Tyner, Murgatroyd and Jealous. Two of the latter were former members of the North West Mounted Police, and two had been northern guides and packers. Another well-known northerner, Bert Glassey, was added for good measure.

The plan called for the formation of two parties, one to go up the Stikine river and then come south over the Skeena watershed, checking the cabins of the Yukon Telegraph line. The other party, under Wilkie, would go in from Hazelton. Wilkie left Vancouver, August 10, 1907, in the "Camosun," and returned six months later. Hiring horses at Hazelton, he set out for Takla Lake, 96 miles away, where he made a base camp. Pushing on to Bear Lake he reached there Oct. 8. The searchers scoured part of the shore line by raft, then went down the Bear and Sustut rivers exploring them for eight days, to return in a blizzard.

"Cont. Jack Graham," Wilkie reported, "arrived on the night

of the 23rd, nearly exhausted, his snowshoes gone to pieces, having taken 12 days to make the trip from 4th cabin on the Telegraph Line."

In January they're up on a mountain pass (Kitkeah Pass) "nearly out of provisions here but two prospectors, Bates and Olsen, had some goat meat."

They searched the Otseka and the Kettle rivers and finally returned to Bear Lake having seen not a trace of Simon Gun-an-noot. Fresh blazes on trees in the Otseka country had sounded interesting, sounded as if some stranger had been there. Run to earth they proved to have been made by an Indian from Fort Graham.

On January 31 the bone weary searchers started bucking the snow laden trail back to Hazelton, "via the mountains back of Kiskigas and then down 'the Nil-ki-kwa River to Babine." They arrived at Hazelton February 10 where Wilkie meticulously paid off the guides and "returned my camping equipment to Const. Kirby, leaving two rifles to be shipped to Victoria."

The trip only bore one small result. Wilkie had arrested Skookum House Tom, alias Sam Brown, an Indian, for "theft of furs and refusing to obey a summons two years ago." Just to ensure Sam's appearance in court, Wilkie took

Gun-an-noot Fugitive Hero of the Kispiox

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The prisoner was booked in routine fashion, put in a cell, given a couple of blankets, and he promptly went to sleep.

The rest of the story is quickly told. A preliminary hearing was held before L. W. Patmore, and Gun-an-noot was committed for trial. By some strange, legal quirk the case was heard in Vancouver, and it fell to Insp. (later commissioner) T. W. S. Parsons, then of Prince George, now retired in Victoria, to take Gun-an-noot 'outside' to be weighed in the legal balance.

As they were preparing to leave the lock-up, Gun-an-noot extended his wrists to Parsons. The inspector searched the Indian's face enquiringly. "I guess you want to handcuff me," was Gun-an-noot's observation.

"I don't think there's any

need for that," said Parsons with a smile.

For a second Gun-an-noot's eyes clouded, clouded with a mixture of emotion and relief.

At Vancouver the hearing was brief. Court officials, who knew nothing of the northland or the by-gone frontier emotions that had brought this Indian among them, dispassionately toyed with papers and pens and called the few witnesses. The thirteen-year-old tale of the Omineca outlaw's crime, blurred with the passage of time, was quickly told and a jury as quickly rendered a verdict. "Not guilty."

Gun-an-noot was free, but emotionally he was spent. He succumbed to a breakdown and had to have hospital treatment before he returned to his beloved north. There he hired out on a few occasions as a big game guide, but he was never quite the same man.

Finally, stricken with illness, this time incurable, he just managed to make his last trip. To the shores of Bowser Lake . . . to see his father's grave. There he collapsed, and died. There he was buried.

Talking the other day to one of our well-known B.C. land surveyors (it was Thorne Forrest of Cordova Bay, as a matter of fact) he told me of visiting Bowser Lake about 30 years ago.

"Saw a grave up there, of an Indian," he remarked. "Some fellow the police were chasing for years."

"Was it marked?" I asked. "Yes," said Thorne. "It had a cross set up, with his name."

That isn't the only memorial to Gun-an-noot. On current B.C. maps you'll see Gun-an-noot Mountain and Gun-an-noot Lake.

His fabulous mine? Just talk.

lotte Sound to be thrown ashore on Princess Royal island on the British Columbia coast. Luckily all hands got ashore safely, salvaged some provisions and commenced to build a raft.

It was then a fishing boat took them aboard, got Tai Ping afloat and towed her into Ocean Falls where it sank in some 40 feet of water.

Tai Ping still lies where she sank.

How many more junks, possibly before the Pacific coast of North America was populated, may have been blown by contrary winds and pushed by persistent tides in this direction, it is impossible to guess. But there is every reason to suppose it true that Chinese and Japanese saw Alaska and B.C. long before Fraser or Mackenzie, Juan de Fuca or Vancouver.

Indeed it may well have been they who discovered America.

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