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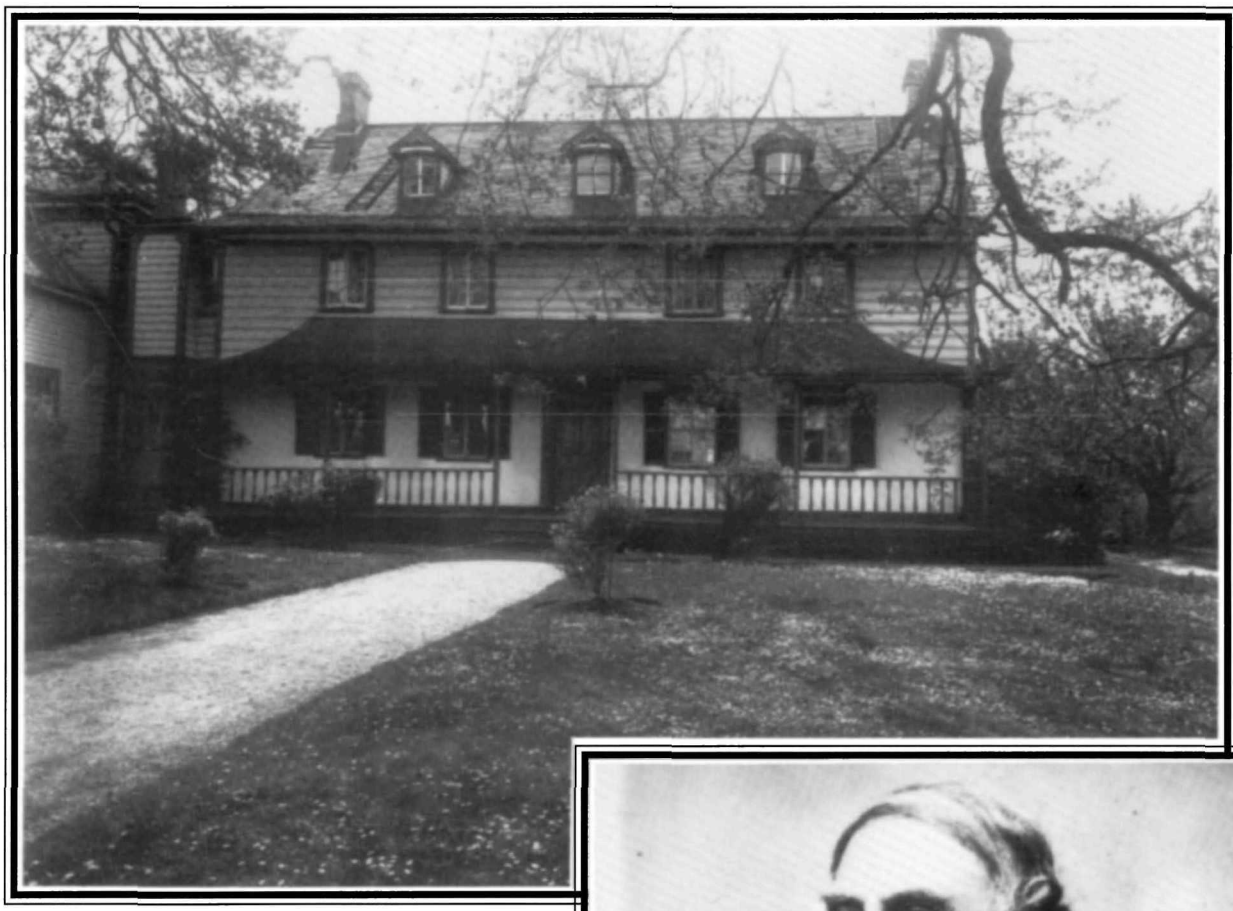

JAMES DOUGLAS

MEMBER SOCIETIES

Member Societies and their Secretaries are responsible for seeing that the correct address for their society is up to date. Please send any change to both the Treasurer and the Editor at the addresses inside the back cover. The Annual Return as at October 31 should include telephone numbers for contact.

MEMBERS' DUES for the current year were paid by the following Societies:

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Arrow Lakes Historical Society	Box 584, Nakusp, B.C. V0G 1R0
Atlin Historical Society	Box 111, Atlin, B.C. V0W 1A0
Boundary Historical Society	Box 580, Grand Forks, B.C. V0H 1H0
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Kootenay Museum & Historical Society	402 Anderson Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 3Y3
Lantzville Historical Society	c/o Box 274, Lantzville, B.C. V0R 2H0
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Salt Spring Island Historical Society	129 McPhillips Avenue, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2T6
Sidney & North Saanich Historical Society	10840 Innwood Rd. North Saanich, B.C. V8L 5H9
Silvery Slocan Historical Society	Box 301, New Denver, B.C. V0G 1S0
Surrey Historical Society	Box 34003 5790 - 175th Street Surrey, B.C. V3S 8C4
Trail Historical Society	P.O. Box 405, Trail, B.C. V1R 4L7
Vancouver Historical Society	P.O. Box 3071, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X6
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AFFILIATED GROUPS

Kootenay Lake Historical Society	Box 537, Kaslo, B.C. V0G 1M0
Lasqueti Island Historical Society	c/o P. Forbes, Lasqueti Island, B.C. V0R 2J0
Nanaimo and District Museum Society	100 Cameron Road, Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 2X1

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British Columbia Historical News

Journal of the B.C. Historical Federation

Volume 31, No. 2 **Spring 1998**

EDITORIAL

This issue leads into the Annual Conference of the B.C. Historical Federation. All history buffs are welcome to attend. Note that the deadline for registering is April 10. (The deadline for registering for the Genealogy Workshop is April 3, 1998. See page 5 for details.)

Surrey Historical Society offers entertainment by Irish dancers, a ride on a Fraser River paddlewheel steamer and/or a bus tour, plus speakers on the history of the Fraser River (Jacqueline Gresko), the Interurban (Victor Sharman) and the Telegraph Trail (Jim Foulkes), the Annual General Meeting and the Awards Banquet. Please phone Wayne Desrocher @ (604) 599-4206 or Kathleen Moore @ (604) 538-6731 for registration details and forms. It sounds like an exciting conference!

~

Articles in this issue give us a volunteer's view of behind the scenes in the Surrey Archives, and later, a nineteen year old tells us how she did research by dovetailing written and oral information with statistics available on the Internet. For those of us who are computer illiterate it sounds easier than reading microfilm in an archives . . . but?

We have another contributor from outside Canada. An American gently slaps our predecessors on the wrist for their negative responses to a group of immigrants who were very valuable workers.

And, thanks to Pixie McGeachie there is a transcription of a letter from Victoria, VI written by Robert Burnaby.

Naomi Miller

COVER CREDIT

The lovely home shown on the front cover stood in downtown Victoria where the Royal B.C. Museum is now. It was the residence of James Douglas and his family, built circa 1851, when they were no longer obligated to live within the stockade of Fort Victoria. Douglas died here in 1877. The house was vacated and the furnishings auctioned off in 1902. The heirs found no buyers for the house so it was demolished in 1906.

Photo - BC Archives #G-04924

Inset. The recently retired Governor, Sir James Douglas. This portrait was taken shortly after he was created Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in August 1863.

Photo - BC Archives #A-01229

CONTENTS

FEATURES

The James Douglas We've Hardly Known 2
by Peggy Cartwright Walker

How Vancouver Island was Settled and Saved 3
by Peggy Cartwright Walker

The McLean Gang 6
by John Keranen

Discovering New Horizons On Old Landscapes 11
by Lorne Martin Pearson

British Columbia's Error Regarding the Chinese Immigrant 14
by Craig D. Wilkey

Robert T. Lowery: Editor, Publisher & Printer 18
by Bronson A. Little

Bill Billeter: 1914 Sailor & Fisherman 24
by Dirk Septer

Researching the Lives of Pioneers on the Internet 27
by Jennifer Wasley

Robert Homfray C.E. L.S. 29
by H. Barry Cotton

Dear Harriet . . . From Robert 34
Letters transcribed by Meg Kennedy Shaw and Pixie McGeachie

NEWS and NOTES 36

BOOKSHELF

Copying People 37
Review by Laurenda Daniells

Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Verney 37
Review by Phyllis Reeve

Wo Lee Stories 37
Review by Adam Waldie

Those Lake People: Stories of Chowichan Lake 38
Review by Richard Lane

Hubbard the Forgotten Boeing Aviator 38
Review by Richard Lane

Raincoast Chronicles 17 39
Review by Richard Lane

Vancouver at the Dawn 39
Review by Phyllis Reeve

Union Steamships Remembered 39
Review by James Delgado

Provincial and National Park Campgrounds in BC 39
Review by Sheryl Salloum

The Story of Butchart Gardens 40

The Vantreights: A Daffodil Dynasty
Review by Morag Maclachlan

Manuscripts and correspondence to the editor are to be sent to P.O. Box 105, Wasa, B.C. V0B 2K0.
Correspondence regarding subscriptions is to be directed to the Subscription Secretary (see inside back cover).

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The James Douglas We've Hardly Known

by Peggy Cartwright Walker

It is not my purpose, nor do I have qualifications for writing a biography of James Douglas. However, despite all that has been written about "the father of British Columbia" – books, unpublished manuscripts, articles in journals and newspapers – almost nothing in any of these was said about his life prior to his entering the service of the North West Company three months before his sixteenth birthday, May, 1819.

Another blank in the written history of British Columbia is the story of the black settlers who came in 1858, not for gold, but for land to farm, where they could live without fear, raise families,

Amelia Lady Douglas, born January 1, 1812, died January 9, 1890, daughter of William Connolly, Chief Factor at Fort St. James
Photo courtesy of B.C. Archives #H-04909

build homes and churches along with settlers of other races, and with equality under the law. It was when I began doing research about the black settlers that I first became aware of James Douglas as a real person. Until then he was for me, going to school in Vancouver, a being called the father of British Columbia, and

James Douglas
Photo courtesy of B.C. Archives #A-01228

that was it. Of his background before he acquired that label I was totally ignorant. I've since discovered that my ignorance was shared by almost all British Columbians.

My research on the emigration of black settlers to Vancouver's Island during the Fraser Gold Rush in 1858, led me to the realization that James Douglas was a coloured man. But historians writing about him either follow the accepted version that James Douglas was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland,[1] that his mother was probably a mulatto servant on his father's plantation,[2] or that the name and background of his mother remain hidden, perhaps forever.[3] Many writers speak of the mystery surrounding his birth. Yet in a Maclean's article titled "The Mulatto King of B.C.", April 15, 1952, we read that "Modern research indicates that he was born in the West Indies in 1803, son of a Scottish father and a Jamaican mother. His contemporaries took his mixed blood for granted".[4] Another historian states that Douglas was often referred to as mulatto because his mother was mulatto or Creole.[5] There was also the highly respected minister who, presented with facts he found too difficult to absorb, wrote of James Douglas's birth, "his father, in humble circumstances, emigrated to British Guiana from Scotland shortly before his son was born". This may have been an effort to explain how James Douglas came to be born in British Guiana instead of Scotland. The reverend gentleman supplied no further details.

It began to become clear to me that the mystery surrounding the birth and family background of James Douglas was really how people could have failed to know the basic facts. The Hudson's Bay Company did, company records referring to Douglas as a Scotch West Indian.[6]

David Cameron certainly knew, for he had been managing the Douglas family's plantations in Demerara, and was married to Douglas's sister, Cecilia. Surely the Camerons had been in contact with James Douglas during the years before he was transferred to Fort Victoria, in June 1849.[7] The only reference to his mother's death is in an old notebook, in Douglas's handwriting, "1839. July. My mother died."[8]

Further confirmation that the facts of his parentage were well known and accepted are found in comments by contemporaries, e.g., a letter written by someone familiar with personal details about Hudson's Bay Company officials which refers to him as a mulatto.[9]

Then we come to the exhaustive research done by Dr. Charlotte Girard during a year's sabbatical in Guiana, formerly British Guiana, and published in **B.C. Studies**, no. 44, Winter 1979-80." The Royal Gazette of British Guiana," a colony of close to 80,000 population, included in the issue of July 13, 1839, a

list of deaths, presumably of persons of some social standing, Miss Martha Ann Telfer, noted with the date of death given as July 11, in Cumingsburg, a district of Georgetown.[10] The will of Martha Ann Telfer, filed July 16, 1839, directs that after the payment of debts and bequests, the residue of her estate, left from the sale of household furnishings - advertised in the Royal Gazette - be held in trust for her granddaughter, Cecilia Cowan, daughter of Mrs. David Cameron, born Douglas.[11] The will also reveals that Martha Ann Telfer's maiden name had been Richie.[12] This confirms the statement made by Sir James' daughter, Agnes (Mrs. Arthur Bushby) that her grandmother's maiden name was Richie.[13] With names like Richie and Telfer on his mother's side, one might be tempted to assume that James Douglas had Scottish forebears on both sides.

* * * * *

1. Professor Walter Sage, **Sir James Douglas**, University of Toronto Press, 1930.
2. Alison F. Gardner, **James Douglas**. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd. Don Mills, Ont. 1976.
3. Derek Pethick, **James Douglas: Servant of Two Empires**. Mitchell Press, Vancouver, 1969.
4. Mary E. Colman, "The Mulatto King of B.C." MacLean's, April 15, 1952.
5. W. K. Lamb, "Some Notes on the Douglas Family" **British Columbia Historical Quarterly** Vol. 17, 1953.
6. Pethick, **James Douglas, Servant of Two Empires**, page 27.
7. Ibid, page 113.
8. Ibid, page 10.
9. Ibid, page 10.
10. Dr. Charlotte M. Girard, "James Douglas' Mother and Grandmother" **B.C. Studies** no. 44, Winter 1979-80.
11. Ibid, page 27.
12. Ibid, page 27.
13. Ibid, page 25.

How Vancouver Island was Settled and Saved

by Peggy Cartwright Walker

The Crown Colony of Vancouver Island was in danger, a fact which was apparent to James Douglas, Chief Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Victoria, and also Governor of the colony, under direction of the Colonial Office in London.

At the Headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company in London also, there was concern. American settlers had contributed greatly to the success of the United States in the Oregon boundary dispute. The new Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, was similarly worried by the prospects of further American expansion, and declared: *Looking at the encroaching spirit of the U.S., I think it is of importance to strengthen the British hold upon the territory now assigned to us by treaty, by encouraging the settlement on it of British subjects.*[1]

Archibald Barclay, secretary of the HBC, did not agree with Earl Grey. Writing privately to the governor of the Company, Sir George Simpson, he stated: *I quite agree with you as to your estimate of Vancouver Island. It is in my view* ***worthless*** *as seat for the colony.*[2]

In 1849 James Douglas, who had assumed that the Hudson's Bay Company genuinely desired to promote immigration, recommended an initial shipment of twenty families, totalling about 100 persons. Simpson, however, wrote: *The great danger to be apprehended in a too rapid settlement of the island is that a year of unfavourable crops might occasion scarcity & that would inevitably lead to the immediate abandonment of the colony by the settlers, who would seek more genial climes in Oregon or California.*[3]

Then came the Fraser Gold Rush. Bancroft states that "from 30,000 to 40,000 miners left the United States for the gold fields of the Fraser and Thompson rivers".[4]

From the HBC Headquarters in London Sir George Simpson, disregarding King Canute's salutory lesson with the tide, immediately issued orders that only British subjects would be allowed access to the gold fields, and the Hudson's Bay Company should keep out "strangers from California and elsewhere." It is evident that Sir George lacked experience with gold rushes.

James Douglas, on the other hand, knew what to expect. As merchants swarmed into Victoria, eager to make their fortunes supplying the miners with goods on their way to the gold, and relieving the lucky ones of their assets when they returned by selling them real estate at ever-rising prices, he managed to keep order, control the sale of liquor, and remain calm.

He also wrote letters, giving a concise and comprehensive picture of the situation, to the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere at the Colonial Office.[5]

His correspondence made its way, as might be expected, to the office of the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Bulwar-Lytton.

Then on August 2, 1858 the British government passed an act establishing direct rule over the mainland, thereafter to be known as British Columbia. James Douglas resigned as chief factor and disposed of all his interests with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget Sound

Agricultural companies, to become governor of both the mainland colony and Vancouver Island.

He would be responsible for the two newly-created colonies, which until then had been controlled and governed by the Hudson's Bay Company, with scant attention being paid to colonization. Now, with thousands of gold-seekers arriving by shiploads every week, the need for settlers was urgent. The miners who were rushing to the gold fields had no intention of remaining to become British subjects, to provide the stability essential if the sweep of "manifest destiny" from the United States was to be halted. As early as the summer of 1858, the Colonial Secretary was making it clear to Douglas that he was expected "by the growth of a fixed population" to establish "Representative Institutions" in British Columbia. *"It should be remembered,"* Lord Lytton wrote, that *"your real strength lies in the conviction of the emigrants that their interests are identical with those of the Government, which should be carried on in harmony with and by means of the people of the country."*[6]

Edward Bulwar-Lytton, statesman, diplomat and novelist, known to us today as the author of **The Last Days of Pompeii**, would surely have appreciated the historical significance of the meetings that were held at the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in San Francisco just three months before his dispatch to James Douglas regarding the type of emigrants desired for the colonizing of British Columbia.

Douglas knew he needed settlers. But where was he to find the sort he needed? He had heard from his friend, Jeremiah Nagle, harbourmaster of Victoria, who made frequent trips to San Francisco, that the congregation of Zion Church on Pacific Street, had been meeting under the leadership of their pastor, John Jamieson Moore, to consider emigration. He knew that these people were not caught up in gold rush fever, that they were looking for something else, for land to farm and to own, for a place where they could build homes and churches and schools, and live without fear, with equality under the law.

Were these not the very qualities that Lord Lytton recommended should be sought in emigrants? Jeremiah Nagle thought so. He attended a meeting in the small black church on Pacific Street, informed the congregation of what Vancouver Island offered for settlers, and replied to the questions that were asked in a way which seemed to be the answer to the problem.

It was a serious problem for the black congregation of Zion Church. Nine years earlier California was admitted to the United States with a constitution outlawing slavery. Black people, like so many others, had gone to California during the Gold Rush of '49, and had continued to go there in the following decade. There were restrictions, there was prejudice. But they were free. And now they feared, with good reason, that if the South seceded from the union, California would follow, becoming a slave state.

To pack up their worldly goods, to sell businesses, to break friendships and leave behind their connections in neighbourhoods where they had lived and followed trades, then to set sail for an unknown land, far to the north - it was a large step to take. But they made the decision unhesitatingly, supported by hope, and faith in God and the promise of James Douglas.

They were not naive. Three of their members had gone ahead, to wait upon the governor and ask the important questions face to face with him. And he had answered all their concerns in the affirmative, making only one condition, that there should not be a "Negro colony."

The Report of the Pioneer Committee was accepted, and the resolutions which had been read at their previous meeting were adopted. The first clause read:

WHEREAS we are fully convinced that the continued aim of the spirit and policy of our mother country is to oppress, degrade, and outrage us, we have therefore determined to seek asylum in the land of strangers from the oppression, prejudice and relentless persecution that have pursued us for more than two centuries in this our mother country.

Therefore, a delegation having been sent to Vancouver's Island, a place which has unfolded to us in our darkest hour the prospect of a bright future; to this place of British possession, the delegation having ascertained and reported the condition, character, and social and political privileges and its living resources.

and after a dozen more clauses, covering all aspects of the proposed move, the members who wished to join were requested to place their signatures on the document, and plans to emigrate were immediately implemented.[7]

It has been estimated (though no official figures are available) that between 600 and 800 black emigrants came to British Columbia during the period of 1858 to 1863 or 1864. Some went to the Fraser gold fields to try their luck, but for the most part they were happy to settle and make new lives for themselves on Vancouver Island. Over 50 applied for British citizenship soon after arriving. Some pre-empted land and became farmers in the Saanich Valley, others farming on Salt Spring Island. Many went into business in Victoria, and in time spread out to other communities on Vancouver Island, as well as on the mainland. When the black settlers are mentioned now, the usual response is surprise, and then the assumption that black people in British Columbia's history were escaped slaves who came via the Underground Railroad - though that famous and inventive system of transportation never operated west of the Kansas-Missouri border.

But where are the descendants of those black settlers now? Some are still in British Columbia, but the majority of the original settlers returned to the United States after the Civil War, believing the promises of Reconstruction, expecting to be allowed to live as citizens in the country of their birth, unable to imagine what lay ahead in the long struggle towards real freedom.

We should not forget, however, the part they played in helping James Douglas save British Columbia from becoming part of the expanding United States.

His need for emigrants continued to demand his attention. In 1861 he endeavoured to negotiate a direct steamship service from San Francisco to the colony of British Columbia, to ensure "the expected flow of immigration being directed towards its Capital, instead of being diverted through the Columbia River."[8] The gold rush was over, the hordes of miners had left, but if the end result was to stimulate immigration to the northwest, Douglas wanted the emigrants to be routed to British territory, if possible.

He lived to see his province become part of the Federation of Canada, the western boundary of the great land mass extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. He is not placed alongside John A. Macdonald and Wilfred Laurier in our history books, but had it not been for him, Dominion Day might mean only what it did in 1867: the federation of four colonies clustered on the eastern seaboard. And the State of Washington might extend northward to Alaska.

It was James Douglas, of mixed Scottish and West Indian blood, who made the difference, and the black settlers contributed to that achievement.

* * * * *

Mrs. Walker enjoys browsing through the B.C. Archives and the Royal B.C. Museum - both of these are within walking distance of her home.

FOOTNOTES

1. John S. Galbraith, "The Hudson's Bay Company, An Imperial Factor".
2. Barclay to Simpson, Oct. 13, 1848, HBC Archives.
3. Simpson to Douglas, Private, Feb. 20, 1850, HBC Archives.
4. Hubert Howe Bancroft, **History of British Columbia**, pp. 348-349.
5. Douglas to Labouchere, May 8, 1858, Colonial Correspondence, BC Archives.
6. Lytton to Douglas, July 31, 1858 - cited by Derek Pethick, "James Douglas".
7. From the **Daily Evening Bulletin** San Francisco, May 12, 1858, report on "Meetings on Emigration" at the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.
8. The Colonial Secretary to Attorney General, 27 December, 1861, B.C. Provincial Archives.

MARGARET ORMSBY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

B.C. History Winners Announced!

The Society for the Promotion of British Columbia History is pleased to announce the winners of the First Annual Margaret Ormsby Prizes. The prizes honour British Columbia's premier historian who passed away late last year.

The prizes for the best essays in British Columbia History have been awarded to:

- Jessica Pauls of the University-College of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack-Abbotsford for her paper, "Emily Carr: Her Ethnographic Importance to British Columbia."
- Carol Grant Powell of Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo for her essay, "The Horne Family Portrait: A Micro-Study in the Use of Photographs as Primary Sources."
- George Richard of Okanagan University-College in Kelowna for his work, "Price Ellison: A Gilded Man in British Columbia's Gilded Age."

The prizes are awarded for the best essays in British Columbia history, including: the related disciplines of historical geography, historical sociology, art history, the history of education and ethno-history, to students at the provincial university colleges. The prizes are meant to encourage what Dr. Ormsby did well: researching and writing about British Columbia history in a way that informs and engages a broad audience.

The Margaret Ormsby Prizes are offered by the Margaret Ormsby Scholarship Committee of the Society for the Promotion of British Columbia History to honour Dr. Margaret Anchoretta Ormsby. She is most widely known for her book, **British Columbia: A History,** the first modern attempt to explain the development of British Columbia to British Columbians. A pioneering woman scholar who headed the history department at the University of British Columbia for over a decade, Dr. Ormsby promoted the history of the province more effectively than any other individual.

For more information please contact Dr. John Lutz, History Department, University of Victoria, PO 3045 Victoria, B.C., V8W 3P4, (250) 721-7392, FAX (250) 721-8772, EMAIL: jlutz@uvic.ca.

Free Genealogy Workshop

Thursday, April 30, 1998

The topic of the 1998 workshop is Genealogy. This is very appropriate, since there are several major research collections within the North Surrey area where the B.C. H.F. conference is being held. The Cloverdale Public Library, the British Columbia Genealogical Society and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints all have extensive collections of genealogical material within the region.

The workshop will be held at two sites: the Cloverdale Public Library and the Surrey Inn. A bus will be used to transport the registrants between the two places.

We shall have representatives from the libraries speak about the resources available for Genealogical Research. John Adams from Victoria will also speak about the importance of Cemeteries in Genealogy.

At the Surrey Inn, Ron Taylor from Mission will demonstrate Genealogy on the Internet. This is a subject of interest even if you do not own a computer. You can always get your friends to log on for you!

Registrants should be prepared to spend the day immersed in the subject. No one should miss the sessions at either location.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED BY April 3rd, 1998

Workshop Registration for Both Sessions / Locations

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Phone or Fax _____

MAIL TO:

Melva J. Dwyer - 2976 McBride Ave., Surrey, B.C. V4A 3G6 or Phone / Fax: 604-535-3041

The McLean Gang

by John Keranen

The story of the McLean brothers and Alex Hare shocked the European community in the newly created province of British Columbia. The brutality in the way in which the young McLean gang killed Provincial Policeman John Ussher and Jim Kelly led many to fear the worst. The newspapers reflected the alarm felt in the community that a possible Native uprising, led by the murderous McLeans and Hare, was taking place. The crimes took place in 1879, and the language used by the press and the Anglo-European elite to describe the events reveals much about the dominant attitudes of the day. The discourse used by these institutions illustrates the way in which they viewed the role of law and the nature of the settlers and the aboriginal and mixed-blood peoples. Also, the language used by the popular press and the leading elites shows that there was a perceived fear that a repeat of American violence might occur in British Columbia.

The three outlaw McLeans were born to Donald McLean and his Kamloops Native wife Sophia. They were the three youngest in a large family that had been in Canada for many years. Donald McLean was a chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Company and he often acted as an enforcer of the Company's law. The elder McLean was known as a man of violence, having shot a fugitive's uncle in place of the fugitive. During this incident, Donald McLean's bullets also claimed the lives of a woman and her infant son.[1] Donald died when the boys were very young. He was shot by a Chilcotin man during the 1864 expedition to avenge the men killed in the Waddington Massacre.

Of the three outlaw McLeans, Allen was the oldest in 1879 at 24 years of age, and he was the unofficial leader of the gang. Next was Charlie, who was 17 years old and the youngest was Archie, who was 15 years of age.[2] The fourth member of the McLean gang was another mixed-blood Alex Hare, who was the same age as Charlie. The boys had had a long history of petty crimes before 1879, taking part in horse and cattle stealing and the theft of other properties. They also had a record of violence that seemed to be getting worse; Charlie had been charged with biting off the nose of a Native man, and the gang had recently robbed a Chinese man and severely beaten him. The gang apparently held the area of Kamloops in a state of terror for some time; "there neither life or property was safe, so far as they were at large."[3]

In early December 1879, the McLeans had broken out of jail again, and were at large once more. This time, the young men had a reward of $500 posted for their capture. A local rancher named Bill Palmer, while looking for a prized horse, stumbled across the McLeans and Hare. Palmer noticed that the McLeans had his horse, and after an uneasy exchange with the boys he rode back to Kamloops to tell the local British Columbia Provincial Policeman John Ussher that he had seen the McLean gang and to report their latest theft. A small posse was formed; it was comprised of Ussher, Palmer, a Canadian Pacific Railway man Bill Roxborough, a rancher named John McLeod, and a respected tracker named Amni Shumway.[4] Ussher quickly made the other men special constables, and they set off to find the gang.

Once the posse was in the area where Palmer last saw the McLean gang, one of the brothers gave a signal and they fired at the policeman and constables.[5] The posse returned the fire somewhat unsuccessfully due to the failure of some of their guns. Ussher dismounted and approached the McLean gang to try and reason with them. Alex Hare saw Ussher and attacked him with a knife, stabbing him repeatedly. As Ussher grappled with Hare, Archie ran up and shot Ussher in the head at point blank range.[6] McLeod was also shot in the head, but the bullet hit one cheek and exited out the other. These were not his only wounds, as McLeod was also shot in the leg. Realizing that they were outmatched, the posse beat a hasty retreat. The McLeans also left the scene, but only after they had stripped Ussher's body of his possessions.

The McLeans and Hare apparently had a list of people that they wanted to get even with. They also had repeatedly claimed that they wanted to rid the country of the whites.[7] Part of their plan was to arm the local Native bands and to do this they began to scour the countryside for weapons. After stealing a few pieces from local ranchers the McLean gang came upon a sheep herder named Jim Kelly, whom they did not like. After an exchange of words the boys shot Kelly dead and stripped him of his possessions as well.[8] The second part of their plan was to secure the aid of the Douglas Lake Indian band. The chief of this band, Chillihitzia, was Allen's father-in-law, and Allen felt this connection might secure the old chief's help in fighting the whites. Chillihitzia refused to help, claiming that an uprising would mean the end of his people.[9]

Meanwhile in Kamloops, other posses were being organized. Telegraph despatches were sent to Victoria asking for assistance. People in Kamloops knew that the McLeans might attempt to stir up trouble among the Aboriginal peoples, and they were even more afraid when settlers began to tell them that the McLeans and Hare were collecting weapons. A dispatch was sent to the United States with a description of the boys, in case they tried to cross the line.[10] The news of Ussher's murder reached Victoria on December 9, and the Superintendent of British Columbia Police Charles Todd made preparations to send men and arms to the settlers in Kamloops.[11]

The McLean gang, after their meeting with Chillihitzia, occupied an empty cabin near the Spahomin village, on the Douglas Lake Reserve. Apparently they went there to plan their next move. Unknown to the fugitives, a Native man had informed a posse leader named George Caughill of the McLean's whereabouts.[12] On December 10, 1879, the settlers surrounded the cabin and a three-day siege began. After a tense stand-off, during which a settler and two Natives were wounded, the boys surrendered. It appears that their lack of water was beginning to take its toll. Also, it became obvious that escape was impossible and that the posse was going to carry out its threat to burn down the cabin.[13] The McLeans and Hare surrendered on December 13 to a posse of some 75 settlers and Nicola Lake and Kamloops Indians. The fugitives were put in irons and led off to Kamloops. After two trials, the gang was hanged in New Westminster, on January 31, 1881.

The newspaper accounts of the McLean incident are full of references to the way in which the early British settlers viewed the importance of law and order. By looking at the discourse used by the press to describe the McLean gang and their relationship to the British system of law, one can get a sense of the way in which law reinforced ideas of Anglo-European superiority. The author Tina Loo argues that the type of colourful prose found in these early papers cannot be separated from the stories they described. The prose was intentional and formed part of the language used by the local European population to describe their world view, and to persuade their audience.[14] Crime, according to Loo, was the central metaphor of disorder in the Nineteenth Century, and "responses to it not only tell us about identity but adumbrate the larger contours of social order."[15] The Anglo-Europeans were concerned with building a type of social order through the civil and criminal law. They also used law to define themselves as being separate from the United States, whose lynch law the elites in British Columbia found distasteful.

The British system of law was especially important during the last decades of the Nineteenth Century, in which British Columbia was experiencing a period of transition. The fur trading colony was becoming a "reluctant component of a modern federation, and in the process a way of life was passing into history, particularly for the Native Indians and the half-breeds of the remote regions."[16] With the large influx of mostly American miners and with the increase in European immigration, British Columbia's white population grew by some 15% from 1870-1881 to become 40% of the province's total population.[17] In 1870, the Native population made up roughly 70.8% of British Columbia's total population, and by 1880, the Aboriginal peoples made up only 51.9% of the total population.[18] With the increase in the white population, settlement expanded into the interior, and conflicts over land ownership grew in number. The increase in settlement often displaced the Native peoples and left them without the land to pursue their old ways of hunting and fishing or from raising crops like the whites.[19] The law took on new importance as a way to maintain sovereignty over the new immigrants as well as the disgruntled Native population.

The law in British Columbia was also undergoing a transition. During the fur trading period, the Hudson's Bay Company was the only semblance of European law in the area, and administration of this legal system was crude at best.[20] After the crown colony of British Columbia was formed in 1858, the mainland colony's first judge, Matthew Baillie Begbie, proclaimed in force the English Law Ordinance. The Ordinance provided that the civil and criminal laws of England, up to the date of November 19, 1858, applied to the new colony.[21]

The lack of enforcement of British law was the reason the McLeans and Hare were allowed to get away with what they did, according to the press of the day. The newspapers never blamed British law for failing to deal properly with the McLeans, but rather the government, under Premier Anthony Walkem, for letting the crisis get out of hand. The frequent requests of John Ussher for money to fix the dilapidated jail house in Kamloops, which could not detain the juvenile McLeans, were not acted upon. Also, Ussher's plea that more constables be sent to the Interior fell on deaf government ears. The press felt the government, in "pursuing a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy," was responsible for creating contempt for the law that the press felt was present among the Aboriginal and mixed-blood peoples.[22] The **Victoria Daily Colonist** suggested that Ussher was a victim of the local government's parsimony and neglect.[23]

The press' attack on the Walkem government reveals the differences in British and United States frontier law. In the British model, the central government was the upholder of the law, while in the United States frontier, local governments or groups of individuals carried out the maintenance of order and the punishment of criminals. In British Columbia, British sovereignty was enforced by the law, while in the Western United States the ideology of vigilante justice promoted popular sovereignty.[24] Americans saw "people as being above the law [which was] viewed as ineffective against frontier crime."[25] The British Columbia press placed the blame for the McLeans' criminal rampage solely on the Provincial Government, and not on the inability of the local settlers to organize an effective posse. British law was fundamentally different from its Western American counterpart in other ways. The United States frontier held to the legal doctrine of "no duty to retreat".[26] Unlike English law, which stated that "in a personal dispute that threatened to become violent, one must flee from the scene . . .[and] should it be impossible to get away one must retreat as far as possible."[27] The top Ohio Court, in 1876, struck down the English law and proclaimed that a "true man was not obligated to fly from an assailant."[28]

Also, instead of the British system of

reasonably fair trials, vigilante justice reigned in the Western United States. During the California Gold Rush of the 1840's, cities such as San Francisco often had vigilante groups consisting of as many as six to eight thousand members.[29] In Montana, volatile vigilante groups such as "Stuart's Stranglers" were treated like heroes. The cattle-baron Granville Stuart, who led the Stranglers, was later named "Mr. Montana", the state's most revered pioneer.[30] The vigilantes and lynch mobs executed horse and cattle-thieves, and they often enforced the dictates of the big cattle barons and the rich merchants by eliminating opposition. A British traveller who had taken part in a Texas cattle drive in the 1880's commented that the cowboy was possessed of a "violent vengefulness against insult. . .[dealt with] frequently not [by] a word and a blow but [by] a word and a bullet."[31] Clearly, with such violence south of the border and the large influx of Americans into British Columbia, the enforcement of British law became that much more necessary. Men like Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie were proud that there was a distinction between the two legal systems; "as early as 1860 Begbie had felt able to boast that Sir William Blackstone was more regarded in his jurisdiction than Judge Lynch."[32] This was a clear reference to the differences in the two systems.

In the minds of the people in the provincial capital and in New Westminster a lynch mob execution of the McLeans and Hare would have been a travesty of British justice. They were far enough removed from the violence in Kamloops to condemn the few local cries for a lynch mob. In Kamloops things were different, and according to Amni Shumway and Bill Palmer, the mood among some of the whites was hostile, with some of them saying "they would shoot them [the McLeans and Hare] as quick as a coyote and others saying that they would hang them to the first tree handy."[33] Apparently, a small group of vigilantes led by A.E. Howse of Nicola was making its way to Kamloops to try and hang the outlaws.[34] In order to prevent such action, the McLeans and Hare were kept under heavy guard in the Kamloops jail during their brief stay. Also, to ensure their safety and their ability to get an impartial jury, the McLeans and Hare were sent to New Westminster to stand trial. However, no such lynch mob ever materialized. Justice Henry Pering Pellew Crease, in his address to the grand jury of the first McLean trial, proclaimed the moral victory the citizens of British Columbia had won over the evils of a United States-style lynch justice; "let it go out to the world, that British Columbia is a law abiding country . . .[and that] the people of the Interior truly followed the genius and spirit of the law, [because] they did not take the law into their own hands."[35] Crease saw the trial as being a particularly painful one, given the ages of the condemned men and their gruesome crimes and also their sad fates. Even though it was painful, Crease reminded the jury and all present that the trial was necessary, because it was the morally superior and only alternative to lynch law and the United States policy of "shoot at sight."[36]

The language the press used to describe the McLean gang paralleled the developments in the case. As the relationship between the McLeans and the law changed, so did the tone of the newspaper articles. Just after the deaths of Ussher and Kelly, the McLeans and Hare were described as outlaws, bandits and desperadoes. This kind of language suggests that they still were feared, and indeed they were, as the mainland papers still believed that the McLeans were in league with a hostile Indian confederacy. However, the press changed their urgent tone once the boys were taken prisoner. As soon as their power to potentially destroy the white settlement in the Kamloops area was gone, the McLeans and Hare were described by the press as assassins.[37] One newspaper described them as being "poor deprived wretches . . .all the ferocity and blind rage taken out of them."[38]

Once the McLeans and Hare were finally in the grip of the law, the press described them in a more sympathetic and patriarchal way. The gang, as wards of the state, were considered to be "unfortunate."[39] The once feared bandits were described to be repentant men, changed by the just nature of British law. The press gave a full account of their conversion, including the time they spent with Reverend Father Horris and two other priests.[40] The press described how the outlaws asked for the forgiveness of those they had wronged, before they were executed. Yet even in captivity the McLeans and Hare were feared. It is interesting to note that some witnesses in the two trials asked for permission to carry guns in case friends of the gang or even the gang themselves sought revenge.[41] It was only after British law had ultimately triumphed by hanging the young men that the white community could breathe a collective sigh of relief.

Compared to the Anglo-European community, the half-breed McLeans and Hare were foreign. As Tina Loo argues, the white community used the "otherness" of the Native and mixed-blood peoples and their seemingly primitive ways to define themselves as superior.[42] The discourse of the key players in the McLean incident reflects this attitude clearly. In his address to the grand jury in the first trial, Justice Crease summed up popular race-thinking and the belief in the characteristics assigned to each race:

What is their future? Sons of the hardy pioneer . . . they fell into many of the habits of the natives among whom they lived and many a trapper and trader has owed his life to the fidelity and sagacity and courage of his Indian wife. The offspring of these marriages, a tall strong, handsome race, combined in one the hardihood and quick perceptions of the man of the woods, with the intelligence and some of the training and endurance of the white man, which raised them into a grade above their mothers' but not up to the fathers' grade . . . They learned next to nothing of agriculture. They never went to school or had the semblance of an education . . . So long as the white father lived, the children were held in some sort of subjection but the moment he was gone they gravitated towards their mothers' friends and fell back into nature's ways . .

The cases before us give a terrible illustration of my observations.[43]

According to the press, the McLeans fit the profile of the half-breed suggested by Crease. Their father Donald was praised as being a man who showed much bravery and gallantry in the Chilcotin expedition and among the Indians during his days in the Hudson's Bay Company.[44] But with their father's death, the boys were left to their mother's care, which in itself was considered an abomination to the patriarchal order of the dominant Anglo-European elites, especially considering the boy's mother was Native. As a result of their family the McLeans were not brought up in a way the Anglo-European community saw proper; they did not have a full education and the time they did spend in school was mischievous.[45] As a result, the McLeans adopted the roving lifestyle of the Native and refused to take up any settled employment.[46] Crease and the Anglo-European community saw the McLeans and Hare as being products of their upbringing and of faults inherent to their race.

If the McLeans were the epitome of all that could go wrong in mixed-blood youth, then John Ussher was offered as a contrast by the press as a symbol of white values. Ussher was a man of many talents, due in part to the many government duties he had to perform as the only civil servant in the Kamloops area. The press claimed Ussher was one of the most able and popular "gentlemen" in the public service.[47] Unlike the McLeans and Hare, Ussher was well rooted in the public life of the community. Ussher was also recently married, a fact which the press mentioned almost immediately in their description of him, illustrating the importance placed on marital status by the Anglo-European community. By contrast, the only mention made of Allen McLean's marriage to Chillihitzia's daughter was when it was feared that this connection might lead to an uprising of the Douglas Lake Indians.[48] Ussher's upbringing is ideal when compared to the fatherless childhood of the McLeans, and the papers do not fail to pick up on this, as the **Daily Colonist** reports that Ussher was the son of the Reverend Mr. Ussher of the Reformed Episcopal Church in Montreal. Ussher was at the height of his youthful vigor and energy, which added to the tragedy as he was "cut down in the flower of his manhood."[49] The McLeans and Hare, by contrast, were referred to by a settler as being "four brats," which illustrates the idea of the young innocent savage, untamed and unruly.[50]

Perhaps one of the most pressing concerns evident in the discourse of the press was the fear of an American style Indian war. In the western United States frontier, conflict between whites and Native peoples was a central and peculiar feature of the settlement process.[51] As Anglo-American civilization expanded, the Native populations were displaced often through violent struggle. The author Richard Slotkin terms this type of conflict as the "savage war," in which the supposed differences in the cultural and racial characteristics of the "primitive" Native peoples and the "civilized" whites made coexistence impossible on any basis other than that of subjugation.[52] Therefore, the "savage war" was a fight for survival, and "because of the 'savage' and blood thirsty propensity of the Natives, such struggles inevitably became wars of extermination in which one side or the other attempted to destroy its enemy root and branch."[53]

Given the recent conflict between the American Government and the Sioux peoples, including the stunning defeat of the United States Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 and the 1877 war against the Nez Perces, the white community most likely felt uneasy about the safety of the settlers in the interior. Apparently some Nez Perces refugees had been in the Kamloops area trying to get support from the local Aboriginals.[54] Trouble was beginning to brew among the prairie Metis at this time. Locally, there were fears that the poor condition of many of the Native peoples might drive them to revolt. Concerns were raised when a letter from William, the chief of the Williams Lake Nation, was published in November, 1879. William wrote that his people were starving due to white settlers taking all of their land and fencing it off. The whites, William wrote, had scared off the game animals with the noise of their threshing machines.[55] Also, the Natives could not pre-empt land to adopt white ways and grow crops. William warned the Anglo-European population that his people would not starve in peace, for it would be better for them to die fighting than to die from hunger.[56]

The fears of an American style "savage war" were heightened once the murder of Ussher was made public. The press wrote that the 200 or so white "industrious settlers with their wives and little ones," along with their houses and property, were threatened with destruction.[57] The settlers were portrayed as being so good-natured that they did not even think before-hand of buying weapons in case of possible hostilities.[58] Under headlines such as "The Grave Emergency," newspapers urged the government to act quickly for "hesitation would embolden the Indians."[59] It was feared that a potential force of some 1500 warriors, disgruntled by white encroachment on to their land, might join the McLeans and Hare and lay waste to the white settlements. Even in Toronto, the press reported that the situation in British Columbia was dire, as the "Indians are fearfully excited and an Indian revolt is feared."[60]

The level of concern over a potential United States style "savage war" was obviously great, judging by the military reaction the Kamloops murders generated. Superintendent Todd led a group of men from Victoria with twenty-two rifles of "the new improved pattern" and hundreds of rounds of ammunition to arm the settlers in case of an attack.[61] The **Daily Colonist** suggested that Todd's expedition take with them one or two of the Hale's war rocket batteries that were stored at the Dockyard.[62] These units were reportedly well suited for bush warfare, and they were proven to be field worthy in the Abyssinian and Zululand wars.[63] It was also suggested that the

force from Victoria be in proper military dress, as "the Indians hold uniforms in great awe."[64] Volunteers were converging on the Kamloops area, ready to fight for the settler community. It seems that the Anglo-European society was still unsure of their Aboriginal and mixed-blood neighbours. The mistrust and the racial attitudes towards the Aboriginal community, along with the examples of the American Indian wars, influenced the press to assume the worst once news of the Ussher murder reached them.

By examining the language used by the popular British Columbia press and by members of the Anglo-European community, one can piece together some of the attitudes of the dominant white society in the last decades of the Nineteenth Century. The story of the McLean gang reveals the way that the Anglo-European elites viewed themselves and the mixed-blood and Aboriginal peoples. John Ussher became a symbol of the settler society, while the McLean brothers and Alex Hare became the representatives of all that was bad in the Natives. The reporting of the Kamloops murders also reveals the importance that the Anglo-Europeans placed on British law and their contempt for the American lynch law. Finally, the fears of a full-scale Indian war illustrate the mistrust the settlers still felt towards the Aboriginal community.

* * * * *

John Keranen of Langley was a student in History 404 when he researched this dramatic story and its sociological aftermath. In May 1997 he graduated from the University of British Columbia with a B.A. (History Major).

FOOTNOTES

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4. Rothenburger, 95.
5. **Guardian**, "Special Assize" March 17, 1880.
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11. Rothenburger, 127.
12. **Guardian** "Special Assize" March 17, 1880.
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30. Brown, 402.
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32. Foster, 310.
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35. **Guardian**, "Special Assize" March 20, 1880.
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37. **Daily Colonist**, Dec. 16.
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39. **Guardian**, 2 Feb. 1881.
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THOMAS DONALD SALE
1914 - 1998

Don Sale passed away on January 8, 1998 after a long struggle with cancer. He was active with many groups and volunteer organizations in Nanaimo and across the province. We remember him best as the Corresponding Secretary of the B.C. Historical Federation from 1983 to 1997. He was also a judge for our Writing Competition, 1983-94.

This gentleman, however, racked up over 6,000 hours of volunteer service with the St. John Ambulance Brigade; served at St. Paul's Anglican Church in so many roles that latterly they appointed him "Warden Emeritus"; he was President then Secretary of the local Royal Canadian Legion; he was active in the Masonic Lodge and concordant bodies, the Old Age Pensioners Organization, Retired Teachers Association, Loyal Nanaimo Bathtub Society, St. Lazarus Society, Nanaimo Historical Society and Nanaimo District Museum. "His hands were always at the public service and he was ever ready to enter upon work that was good for his fellow man." This quote, written for Don's grandfather in 1889, inspired Don and others in his family. Don's last request was, "No flowers. Donations may be given to the BCHF Scholarship Fund, Nanaimo Museum or a charity of your choice."

The address of the BCHF Treasurer is inside the back cover. Donors will be sent a tax deductible receipt.

Discovering New Horizons On Old Landscapes

A novice looks at the complexities of Archival retrieval.

by Lorne Martin Pearson

My first real academic passion in retired life was with AVA. AVA has permitted me to step onto a time machine and explore new horizons on old landscapes. AVA is not the sultry, seductive damsel working in the office down the hallway, rather, it is the passion of being an Amateur Volunteer Archivist, (AVA), with the Surrey Museum and Archives Heritage Services.

The initial spark of this passionate flame was ignited in 1957/58, when my father who was the first historian for the Municipality of Surrey and author of Surrey's first written history, — "Land of the Peace Arch" — handed me the following poem to proof.

LET US HONOUR THE PIONEER FATHERS

Let us travel down through the ages
And visit people of yore.
Let us listen to stories and legend
Of those that have gone before.
Let us walk over trails and pathways
They blazed through the forest and vale.
Let us fathom the fields and meadows
They cleared between mountains and dale.

Let us pause for just a brief moment
In the turmoil and rush of our day.
And walk over campsites and middens
Of a race from an age — far away.
Let us learn of pioneer Fathers
Who came to this beautiful land,
And left us a garden of Eden
On the golden, Pacific strand.
- John Pearson

The words of this definitive idyll were almost immediately emblazoned upon my mind. However, as a young man seeking a new found career with the thirty-three year old Surrey Fire Department, I did not have time to think of Pioneer Fathers — nor in fact, the past, even though I knew that my great, great grandparents were among the first settlers in Nanaimo, arriving in 1854.

A subsequent culminating factor to this future passion with AVA came a year or two later when father handed me a birthday gift, in the form of a Charter Life Membership card for the Surrey Museum and Historical Society, (L29).

Unbeknown to me at the time, this was an intellectual implant that would blossom into fruition in the 1990's when I became a volunteer archival worker with the Surrey Heritage Services, a division of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

I was not aware of this when I sauntered into the terra incognita world of Archives on that eventful day of 1994.

I had some insight toward the Municipality of Surrey for reasons that have already been noted and I had been told more than once, "you know a lot about the Surrey Fire Department, why don't you work on recording its history?"

Virtually everything historically known about the Surrey Fire Department at that point in time was hearsay, passed from mouth to ear over the years. In fact the only published historic information regarding the fire department was that which Fern Trelevan wrote in her book **The Surrey Story**. Therein she wrote: - "Surrey's first Fire Department was started in 1924 by the Surrey Board of Trade. It consisted of a group of volunteer men, with a second-hand 80-gallon tank mounted on a trailer made from an old car."

The challenge having been presented and accepted, I nervously entered the Surrey Archives that afternoon to take up the gauntlet and was received by Archivist Jacqueline O'Donnell, who interviewed, questioned with maieutic enthusiasm and then encouraged me to become a volunteer within her Archives program. Considerable information was presented to me, to take home and digest prior to making a decision to commit to such an endeavour.

One week later I returned to the Archives for basic indoctrination and more reading material.

Jacqueline, who is truly an intellectual academic, has become my inspiration and above all my mentor. She has nurtured my transition and virtual existence into the archival world and educated me as to what is required in being a volunteer archival worker, and has taught me a great deal about life — past — present and future.

Indoctrination into the Archivist world is not simplistic, for as with all professions there are specific terminology and procedures to which one must adhere, some examples are:

- A collection
- Provenance[2]
- An inventory[3]
- Biographical Sketch/Agency History/ Administrative History[4]
- Manuscript Groups, (fonds)[5]
- Ephemera[6]

It seems that the vocabulary for the Archivist's profession is ad infinitum. Even after several years working at the Archives there is new exposé each time a visit is made to the Archives.

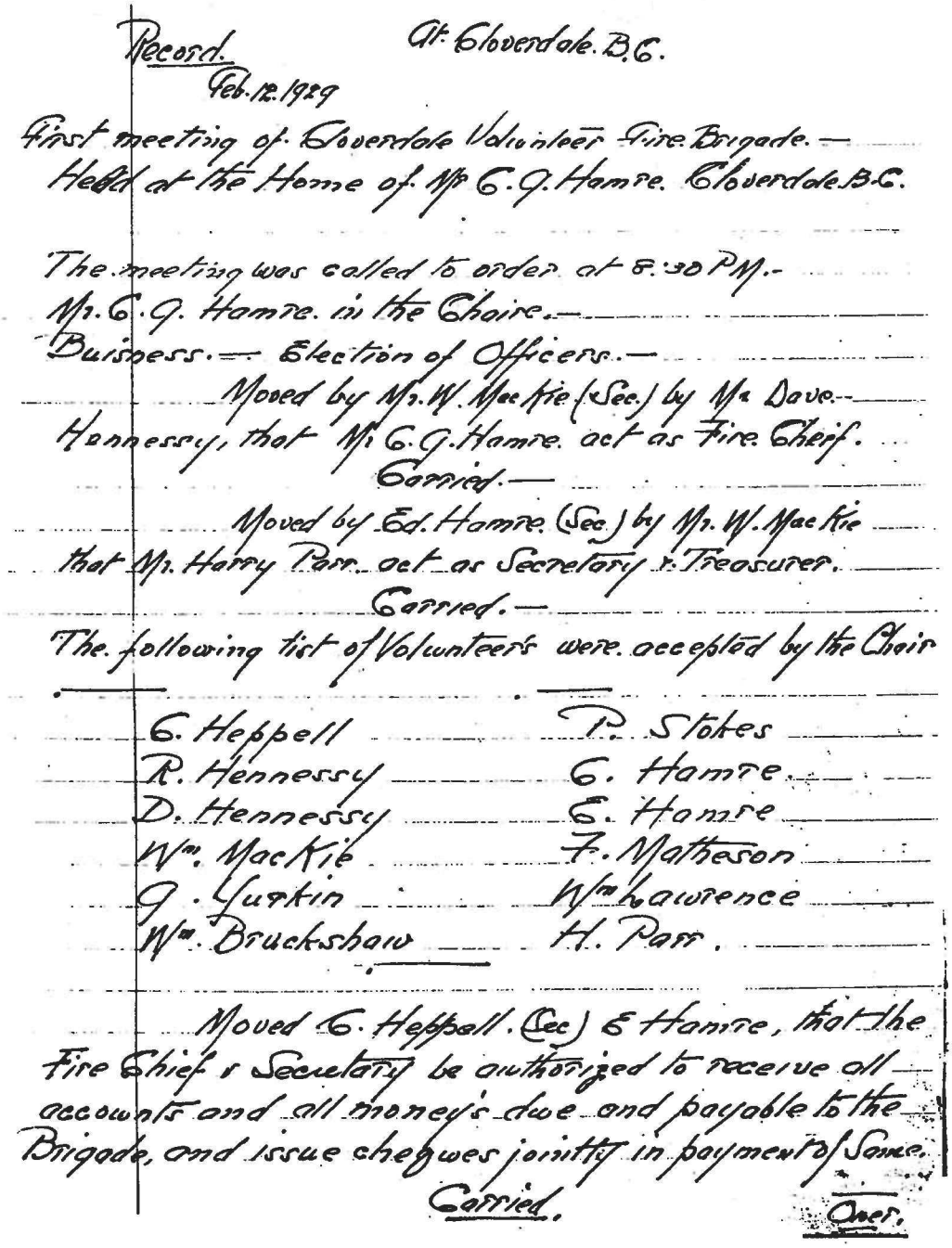
Archival methods, procedures, general work ethics and in fact The Archivist are rarely recognized by others, indeed the Museum Curator, the Historical Boards and even the Archaeologist know that something is happening in amongst all those files and records, but none are sure exactly what it is that is happening.

However, they and many others do know that when historical research is required, one just drops into the Archives and receives guidance and support from the Archivist to complete his or her chore.

Generally though, people look at the Archives as the point between the administration office files and the paper shredder, a place where one can 'dump' the records one no longer requires for the day to day operation of society. However, most fail to realize or remember that words lead to ideas, ideas develop into beliefs and then become world views — and without archival preservation and retrieval this would not be a reality. In proper perspective Archives form a huge, but almost invisible impact upon problems which confront society . . . Archival repositories conserve these ideas or words in original form, within an orderly manner of files and photographs.

Today's modern Archivist brings forth these historic records via Museum Displays, Public Exhibitions, Newspaper and the Electronic Media, on a routine basis, to inform the public of the impact our past has upon the technologies of today and tomorrow.

It has been postulated by Archivists that many collections arrive in a state of chaos. Such was certainly the predicament when exploration of Surrey Fire Department history began. The first snippets of the collection were a veritable hodgepodge of newspaper clippings; disorganized office records; many photographs — without a great amount of identification; a few scrap books; some World War II vintage items of fire fighting procedures, namely apparatus instruction books and even codes. There were maps; receipts; cheque stubs; tax notices; money by-laws and various other paraphernalia referencing the development of the fire department in Surrey. Virtually nothing at the beginning of our endeavour pre-dated World War II.



Record. At Cloverdale. B.C.
Feb. 12. 1929

First meeting of Cloverdale Volunteer Fire Brigade. —
Held at the Home of Mr G. J. Hamre. Cloverdale B.C.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 PM.-
Mr. G. J. Hamre. in the Chaire. —
Business. — Election of Officers. —
Moved by Mr. W. MacKie (Sec.) by Mr Dave. —
Hennessy, that Mr G. J. Hamre act as Fire Chief.
Carried. —
Moved by Ed. Hamre (Sec.) by Mr. W. MacKie
that Mr. Harry Parr act as Secretary & Treasurer.
Carried. —
The following list of Volunteers were accepted by the Chair

G. Heppell	P. Stokes
R. Hennessy	G. Hamre
D. Hennessy	E. Hamre
Wm. MacKie	F. Matheson
J. Yurkin	Wm Lawrence
Wm. Bruckshaw	H. Parr.

Moved G. Heppell. (Sec) E Hamre, that the Fire Chief & Secretary be authorized to receive all accounts and all money's due and payable to the Brigade, and issue cheques jointly in payment of Same.
Carried.
Over.

During the process of appraising, organizing and cataloguing this material, it became obvious that there was a great amount of organizational detail not accounted for documenting the history, growth and development of the twelve fire halls of Surrey. Therefore, as a result of my recent administrative association with the fire department, I was able to contact the fire stations both as a group and individually to solicit the donation of their early records.

To say the least, this effort was almost futile. It is my observation that for some unknown reason people in general do not wish to turn over their files and records to Archives, which are an unknown or mysterious and misunderstood authority. This is not to suggest that the acquisition process was a useless endeavour, in fact the Surrey Archives has been the recipient of considerable material from three or four fire departments in Surrey.

By far the greatest collection acquired was from the Cloverdale fire brigade, considered to be the first operational bri-

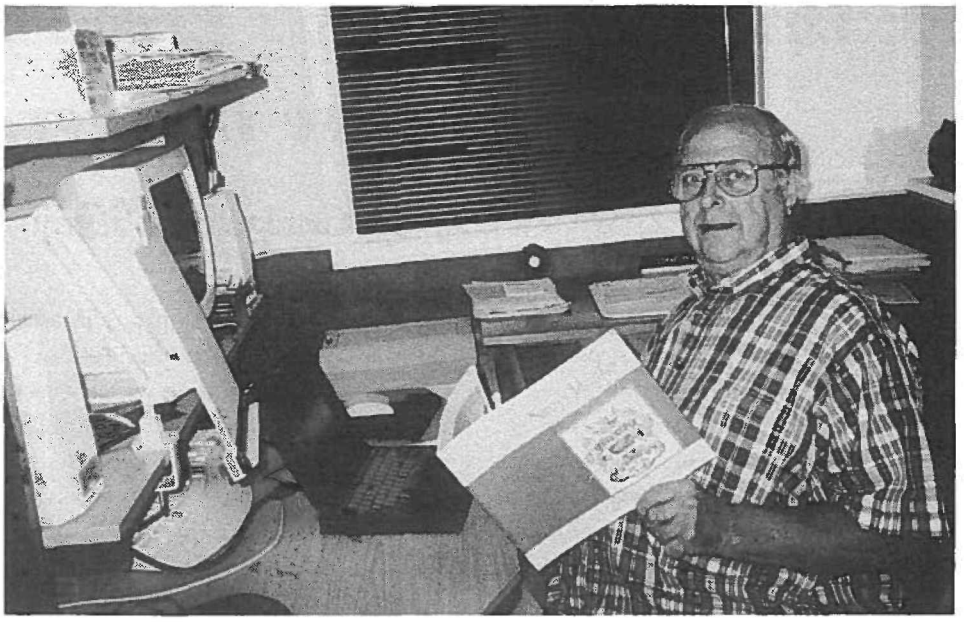
gade in Surrey. This collection was a veritable bonanza toward tracing the history of the Surrey Fire Department. The records, photographs and ephemera that the Archives received from Cloverdale dated back to the handwritten recorded meeting minutes of the first brigade meeting, held on February 12th, 1929. There were also pictures and more pictures, in various sizes and condition — the list of items included in the collection defies the space available for mentioning at this time. Suffice it to say they were housed in a large steel container which required the strength of two men to transport.

The Cloverdale brigade records, particularly the minutes book, presented a quandary for it valiantly disputed previous historical documents indicating that the fire department began in 1924. Inventories were created, photographs identified and reproduced because the original donor was not willing to transfer the pictures without retaining copies for their education programs and events. This was a benefit to the fire brigade, for they received photo copies and laser prints of their contribution — which in many cases were far superior to their originals. Another "spin-off" benefit was that all the duplicates were organized, copies of their photographs were put into acid-free envelopes and many were identified and dated before being returned to them.

The initial success with the Cloverdale brigade was beneficial toward acquiring further collections, as word spread throughout the fire department detailing the integrity of the Surrey City Archives. At times since beginning this project we have even had a few "walk-in" donors with significant fire department contributions.

Our Surrey Fire Department collection is today at a point where a researcher/writer can work through the archival files and compile a written history of Surrey Fire Department.

The importance of a written history became ever more evident when on June 7th 1997, during research into another Surrey Archival program, the following



Lorne Pearson August 1997 in his office "Den" at home.

was discovered within the pages of **The Daily Columbian** Newspaper of May 3, 1898.

Fighting Fire at Surrey Centre

Great excitement was caused at Surrey Centre, Sunday afternoon, by an alarm of fire, caused by sparks supposed to have blown from the Chinese shack on Coast Meridian road. The flames spread with great fierceness, helped along with the brisk wind which was blowing. Mr. A. Richardson's property stood in great danger for quite a time. Fences, logs and a great amount of rubbish lying around blazed merrily for a long time. Neighbours and all persons in the vicinity, along with the boys, worked like Trojans, and gained a noble victory, after a most terrible fight. Churchland's farm and outbuildings luckily escaped. Fences were torn down to stay the rush of the fire fiend. Water was thrown on the flames by the Surrey Centre fire brigade, (long may they live!) from two powerful spray pumps. Loss, not known; no insurance. — Com.

Research is now on going to uncover earlier verification of the Surrey Fire Department's establishment. If nothing is forthcoming, then 1998 becomes the critical year for centennial celebrations. Whichever way the question is answered we are delighted, for even though we may have debunked earlier historical writings, we have discovered new horizons on old landscapes.

The future with Surrey City Archives does not seem to have any shortage of projects to work on. The chore will be for the Archivist to teach this old dog new tricks.

* * * * *

Lorne Martin Pearson has told you about his volunteer work in this article. What he never mentioned is that he now lives in Chilliwack and drives several times a week to work in the Surrey Archives.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Pearson was commissioned by the Municipality of Surrey to write a history of the Municipality, as a Centennial project, (1958).
2. The office of origin.
3. First document produced in the archives after being received from a Provenance. They are preliminary, summary and regular.
4. This is not a detailed day to day record of life and activity, rather, it is a 'sketch' designed to give the researcher a fairly concise overview of the history of the person or the agency. It only covers the period encompassed by the Collection.
5. World governments have maintained archives for more than two thousand years. However, modern archive methods only date back to around 1840, when the French established the principle of respect des fonds, which requires that groups of documents created by one office be dealt with as a unit not mixed with records from other offices.
6. Items printed for a one time impact: - Letterheads, Flyers, Tickets, Bumper Stickers, etc.

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British Columbia's Error Regarding the Chinese Immigrant

by Craig D. Wilkey

Nationalism in Canada not only meant the unification of the various provinces of land into one conglomerate government, it also meant the unification through a transcontinental railroad called the Canadian Pacific Railway. One of the seven points of the National Policy derived by Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, as mentioned in lectures, included this railway. Macdonald wanted the task completed in ten years. To meet the time limit and complete the process of building this railway, many laborers were required, and one major source of labor, used on the West coast, were the Chinese. The inhabitants of British Columbia vehemently opposed the use of Chinese laborers by demanding that white labor be used instead. It can be argued that the British Columbia inhabitants erred in their opposition to the Chinese immigrants as laborers for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway because these immigrants contributed significantly to the development of the Canadian nation through the revenues and taxes paid as consumers and merchants purchasing the necessary items for consumption by the Chinese and by their involvement in large sums of money saved for the shareholders due to lower labor costs.

In 1871, with the Prime Minister's nationalism policy, the Canadian Pacific Railway was conceived. It was Macdonald's intention to have a railway built from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Alexander Mackenzie, a Liberal leader, considered this railway venture an "act of insane recklessness."[1] The United States had recently completed their transcontinental line and they had been a nation for almost 100 years. This looked like an almost impossible task with Canada being a young nation attempting to build a railroad almost 1,000 miles longer than America's.

Due to delays in finding available backing and extensive surveys for probable routes, the beginning of construction occurred on June 1st 1875, four years after proposal, near the mouth of the Kaministiquia River close to Lake Superior. The railroad came together in sections across the continent over the next few years. However, the railways could not be completed within the ten year period promised by John Macdonald. The toughest section to complete was considered the final stretch from Kamloops to Port Moody following the Fraser River, and it was this section where Chinese immigrants became involved.

Prior to 1878, a member of Parliament (MP), from Victoria, called for a "restriction on Chinese immigration and urged the government not to permit employment of the Chinese on the railway construction."[2] Arthur Bunster, another MP, attempted to add a "clause in the CPR contract forbidding the employment of anyone whose hair was more than five and a half inches long."[3] This particular length of hair referred to Chinese as they usually wore it long as a mark of submission to the Manchus. Had either of these recommendations been passed, the work that needed to get done on the final section would probably have been delayed, not to mention that it would have cost the railway more money than expected due to higher wages.

Even though the British Columbia inhabitants were against the use of Chinese laborers, many people in authority positions favoured them, as historian Anthony Chan observes: "Sir Matthew Begbie, the British Columbia chief justice, declared that the four personal qualities of the Chinese were 'industry, economy, sobriety, and law-abidingness.'"[4] J.A. Chapleau, a cabinet minister of the Conservative Canadian government, wrote in 1885 "that the Chinese worker had no superior as a railway navvy"[5] The most famous endorsement of the Chinese worker came from Prime Minister John A. Macdonald when he told parliament in 1882, "although the Chinese are 'alien' and would never assimilate into the 'Aryan' way of life," he stressed, "that it is simply a question of alternatives: either you must have this labor or you can't have the railway."[6] Given the political clout of these speakers, the people had no other choice than to accept the Chinese as laborers into the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The government awarded the contracts for the final section to Andrew Onderdonk in 1880. He was not the lowest bidder; however, since he had proven his ability to complete his contracts on time, he won the bid. The employment problems started as Onderdonk tried to recruit the labor he needed to meet his task. In the British Columbia area, there were only about 50,387 people, of these, 26,849 were native, 19,069 were white, and 4,195 were Chinese.[7] The British Columbia inhabitants actually hoped that more white people from other parts of Canada or from America would respond to advertisements for work which would add more people to the communities. The merchants looked forward to the railway workers spending their money in their stores for consumables and supplies, aiding the local economies. Onderdonk knew that he would need in excess of 10,000 able-bodied men to complete the task. The number actually doubled over the five years it took to complete the project.

From his previous experience in America west, Onderdonk knew that Chinese laborers would be able to do the task in the time needed and at a much cheaper rate than white labor, but he had promised the Anti-Chinese Association that he would hire whites first. Advertising rates of $1.50 a day or $125 a month for overseers brought only thirty-nine satisfactory workers. In addition, Onderdonk also ran advertisements assuring whites that their work was wanted. One advertisement read as follows:

There appears to be an impression that we propose to work Chinamen on our Railroad Contracts, to the exclusion of white labor. This impression is working us an injury, as many who might otherwise apply for work are discouraged from doing so. As it is imperative to work a very large force of men the coming season, we shall employ both classes of labor, and shall furnish employment for 3,000 white men, at our current rates for that class of labor, on application, provided they are hardy and industrious.[8]

This proved that Chinese labor was necessary, especially considering they would work for $1 a day. Presently there were only 4,100 Chinese living in British Columbia. Chinese population figures for the five-year period prior to 1880 accounted for only 2,326 Chinese people, and after 1880 that number increased to 15,701.[9] A majority of these were brought in in 1882 and 1883 for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Robert Ward, a commission merchant for the Six Companies of San Francisco, located in Victoria, supplied 5,000 to 6,000 Chinese from Hong Kong in response to Onderdonk's first order. Ten ships delivered the Chinese workers in 35 days. Residents worried about the social and moral evils that would come with more Chinese immigrating such as prostitution, gambling, and opium. Their worries were confirmed when the Six Companies' men offered these items along with food, lodging, and clothing to the recent arrivals prior to sending them to the work camps. This continued even under the auspices of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association which replaced the Six Companies in 1884.[10]

From the very beginning of contractual work Onderdonk worked the Chinese. A report in the **Inland Sentinel** listed the railroad payroll as having 330 white men and 101 Chinese in May of 1880.[11] These numbers were to increase as time went along. A later report by July 1880 listed 1,300 men on the Railroad company payroll, a little over half of these were Chinese.[12] The ratio comparison shifted from one-fourth of the workforce, as being Chinese, to over one-half of the workforce, in a period of just one and a half months. By 1884, 6,500 of 10,000 workers were of Chinese descent, bringing the ratio to sixty-five percent.[13]

At first, Onderdonk used the Chinese for the simple tasks; however, he found that they were also better suited for the hard tasks. Four-fifths of the workers performing grading work were Chinese. Grading meant to cut out hills to fill ravines and gullies. The reclaiming of the swamp lands also fell to the Chinese as they were more conditioned for this type of work. The Chinese appeared to be immune to malaria, which often occurred from working in the swamps. In addition, the Chinese were used for tunnelling and work involving dynamite. Nevertheless, their pay did not change no matter how hard or demanding the work. The performance of this style of gruelling work, along with other demanding tasks, demonstrated the usefulness of the Chinese in the building of the railway.

As time went along, the construction company found that the Chinese had as much endurance as the white man, if not more. This was proven when they were put up against some Cornish miners and the Chinese were able to cut more rock in a week in the most gruelling conditions. It became evident that the Chinese were needed to build the railway as not enough white men could be secured, and the Chinese had proved their capacity for hard work.

One of the toughest assignments awarded to 150 Chinese laborers dealt with the Hell's Gate region of the Fraser Canyon. Onderdonk wanted a steamboat to make a run through Hell's Gate, thus lowering the freight costs to provide materials. After having a steamboat built specifically for the task, the hard part lay ahead in making the run. At one point the water moved rapidly at ten knots over a ledge and allowed a passage only eighty feet wide. To master this task, ringbolts were placed into the walls of the canyon at steady intervals. The Chinese laborers then passed ropes between the ringbolts and helped the **Skuzzy** maintain the middle of the river preventing her from crashing against the edge. The significance of this event is noted in the harrowing eventuality of death the laborers faced while handling the ropes. One false move or lost grip ensured a fall and possible death.

The Chinese in and around British Columbia were also involved in more than just the railway construction. Many worked in mines, canneries, milling, farming, and some were merchants. Each occupation provided taxes which contributed to the province's development and growth. The businessmen contributed approximately $150,000 in duties and $2,300 in revenues from the $1,320,000 in annual business received.[14] A more detailed report on revenues for a two-year period, from July 1882 to June 1884, brought in $87,460 and $99,779 respectively,[15] not to mention the annual $400,000 in trade merchants did with other local merchants.[16] Other expenditures from Chinese people included freightage and drayage at $26,000, road tolls at $13,000, rent paid to white owners equaled $33,180, and interest, gas and insurance totalled $12,370.[17] All in all, the Chinese spent a large portion of their wages in British Columbia, contrary to the popular belief that they sent it home to China. Out of the average annual Chinese wage of $300, he probably had approximately $43 left over after expenditures.[18] This was not enough money to bring a wife and children to Canada, nor was it enough money to allow him to return to China.

Another venue that can be considered

Provincial Trade with China			
Year		**Value**	**Duty Received**
1874	.....	$ 6,064	$ 174.47
1875	.....	1,277	194.60
1876	.....	5,481	1,994.85
1877	.....	20,711	8,392.48
1878	.....	81,345	22,940.23
1879	.....	121,976	30,410.78
1880	.....	44,936	14,186.25
1881	.....	127,852	39,204.48
1882	.....	240,170	78,433.65
1883	.....	326,239	104,738.66
1884	.....	393,728	111,300.15
Table # 1	Total	$1,369,779	$411,970.60

regarding the Chinese is the number of arrests due to the increase of Chinese after 1880. According to reports in 1879 and 1880, Chinese were arrested seventy-five and sixty-nine times respectively. In 1881 the numbers dropped to twenty-four, followed by fifty-three, forty-three, and thirty-two for the years 1882, 1883 and 1884 respectively.[19] These numbers compare favorably with those of the whites. In 1879 and 1880 the number equaled 291 and 295; however, in 1881 they increased to 354, then 375, 394 and 305 for the remaining years.[20] This strongly suggests that Chinese were in less trouble than whites. However, reports do not mention if the whites were arrested because of the Chinese.

Throughout the building of the railway, many deaths occurred, the majority of which were Chinese. The high mortality rate was caused by the severity of the jobs assigned and the poor safety precautions established by the company. Some of these deaths occurred because of premeditated negligence, or simple incompetence of the laborers, herders, or the company, and insufficient warning of imminent explosions, falling boulders, rock slides, or cave-ins. Death to the Chinese laborer caused a stoppage by all other workers, especially if the death occurred within sight of other workers. Once the body was removed from the sight of the workers, they returned to work. In Canada's China towns, a saying arose: "For every foot of railroad through the Fraser Canyon, a Chinese worker died."[21] This was an exaggeration of course; however, Onderdonk's records as well as Lee Tung-hai's records (Lee Tung-hai was an author of **Jianada huoaqiao shi**) showed an estimated number of 600 Chinese dead during railroad construction.[22] This estimate equated to four Chinese dead for every mile of railroad built.

The citizens of British Columbia still did not want these Chinese people around. Yet on the other hand, British Columbians benefited greatly by maintaining trade relations with the Chinese, as is evident in table number one. [23]

The amount of duty received because of trade with China in delivering items needed by the Chinese was beneficial to the province.

In terms of trade, the Chinese purchased a large quantity of goods. A number of these goods such as tea, rice, chinaware, silk goods, and many more were imported from China, Japan and the United States. In addition, a duty was paid on the items because they were imported. On the other hand, they also required local items which added to the betterment of the province. Purchased items included cloth goods, woollens, linens, boots, stockings, horses, carriages, and many others.

Taking into consideration the amount of money spent by the average Chinese in British Columbia, between supplies, consumables, taxes, and such, one must wonder why the inhabitants of British Columbia still believed the Chinese sent all their money home. Had the situation been reversed, by using white laborers, the amount of income for the district would have been considerably less; especially because the province would not have been able to charge a head tax. In addition, the price of 100 pounds of rice was substantially higher than 100 pounds of flour, not to mention the duty charged on rice which did not apply to flour.

Another interesting point regarding taxes charged the Chinese was a small school tax of five dollars per year, as reported in the **Inland Sentinel** in 1881.[24] Failure to pay the tax brought tax-collectors to the work site to obtain the tax. The tax-collector came with several large men to ensure that payment occurred. Considering the number of Chinese working the line, at five dollars a head, this added tremendously to the coffers. The more significant part of this tax is that ninety-eight percent of the Chinese workers were single and had no children attending the schools. Therefore, the Chinese were now contributing to the education of the residents of the province with no regard to their own welfare or their children, if they had any. In addition, if they had children in the province they would not attend the same schools as the others.

In addition, a portion of the anti-Chinese sentiment dealt with the subject of racism. This sentiment also bore symptoms of hatred, jealousy, and misconceptions of Chinese living conditions. A

majority of the middle class citizens were the ones looking for expulsion, while the upper class had an indifference to the situation, partially because they hired Chinese for domestic work. This paper, however, deals only with the economic considerations regarding the expulsion of the Chinese; as the issue of racism is an entirely different venue.

Another interesting point regarding the subject of limited immigration regarding the Chinese people came from the actions of the people of the United States. In 1882, the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act.[25] This act suspended immigration, limited the civil rights of resident Chinese, and forbade their naturalization. Furthermore, cities on the Pacific Coast such as Tacoma, Portland, and Seattle even went to the point of expelling the Chinese living in their cities in 1885 and 1886.[26] This period was sometimes referred to as the Yellow Peril era. For the situation to reach the height of Congress required the problem to have existed many years prior to this. Now British Columbia attempted to do almost the same thing that the United States had already done. This is another example of Canada following in the footsteps of its southern neighbor.

The Canadian Pacific Railway would not have been completed as rapidly as it was, had the Chinese not been hired, nor would the company have saved $3-5 million. Onderdonk knew that the Chinese were hard working diligent people capable of getting the job done, because of previous experience using them. On the other hand, it is hard to understand the British Columbians' resistance to the Chinese being in the province especially when taking into consideration the amount of revenues and taxes received from them. By continuing the attempt to eradicate the province of Chinese inhabitants, province citizens were figuratively cutting their own throats. Fears about crime did not appear to substantiate removal of the Chinese; the statistics reveal that the Chinese were involved in less crime than the other inhabitants. The British Columbian inhabitants should have changed their views relating to the Chinese as inhabitants of their province and should have accepted them with open arms as taxpaying constituents of the province after looking back at the contributions the Chinese made to the development of British Columbia. One might say the Canadian Pacific Railway, West of the Rockies, could have had its name changed to the Chinese Pacific Railway because of the cooperation and involvement of those who built it.

* * * * *

Craig Wilkey is a retired U.S. Navy Submariner who served on various Poseidon Ballistic Missile Nuclear Submarines. This father of four children has just completed his B.A. in History at the University of Washington in Seattle. This essay was written for a course in Canadian History taught by Dr. Richard Mackie of Victoria.

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15. **Sessional Papers**, No. 54 a, Appendix N, p. 397 and 398.
16. **Sessional Papers**, No. 54 a, **The Honorable Commissioner Gray's Report Respecting Chinese Immigration**, p. ix.
17. **Sessional Papers**, No. 54 a, **The Honorable Commissioner Gray's Report Respecting Chinese Immigration**, p. ix.
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Much Canadian history can only be read aright with one eye on the history of the United States.

R.G. Trotter,
Canadian Historical Review, 1924

Robert T. Lowery: Editor, Publisher & Printer

by Bronson A. Little

In 1891, first hand news of major Slocan silver and lead strikes was limited to two West Kootenay papers, the **Hot Spring News** in Ainsworth, B.C., and **The Miner** in Nelson, B.C. These settlements were not in the Slocan District proper, but they were as close as possible to those first exciting news events and the ones which followed in 1892. **The Miner**, in particular, continued to carry a great deal of Slocan mining news while the weekly Slocan papers were getting established.

The first newspaper to be published in the Slocan was the **Kaslo-Slocan Examiner**. Its editor was Mark W. Musgrove from Oregon. Some copies of the first issue were printed on four folds of fancy silk cloth, probably to ensure a permanent record, but also to advertise the new paper. It was published on October 22, 1892. A copy, brown with age, may be seen in the B.C. Archives in Victoria.

The second Slocan newspaper was the **Kaslo Claim** which was started on May 12, 1893 by the versatile Robert Thornton Lowery. He was distinguished by his short stature (about five feet), his piercing Irish eyes behind steel-rimmed spectacles, his mild manner, and his caustic wit. He was a smart dresser, wore a goatee, and smoked expensive cigars. He enjoyed a healthy shot of whiskey and he played a good hand of poker. These characteristics earned him the honorary title of "Colonel" although he was not a veteran of any war.

Mr. Lowery began life in Halton County, Ontario (near Milton) in 1859. His early days were spent in Petrolia, Ontario. His career in printing and publishing began in a job printing office in Toronto. He later returned to Petrolia, and with his elder brother Bill, started

Robert T. Lowery in his later years.
Photo courtesy of BCARS HP42283

the **Petrolia Topic** about 1886. A few years later, he sold his interest in this paper and moved to Sault St. Marie, Ontario where he opened a stationery store.

Lowery grew weary of the routine store business and headed west to Vancouver, B.C. in the early part of 1891. He first arrived in Nelson, B.C. on May 26th of that year. It would seem that he was somewhat undecided about settling down in Nelson. However, in 1892, he opened a stationery store there and in Kaslo, where he also felt there was a need for another local paper in this busy frontier distributing centre.

In the first issue of the **Kaslo Claim**, Lowery expressed himself with witty phrases and a dry sense of humor which would be the trademark of all ten of his West Kootenay publications, eight of which were newspapers. "The printing factory," he wrote, "is on Printing House Square, close to the meeting of the waters of Kaslo Creek. If the mules do not kick the office down before Fall we will wear diamonds and gaze at the World's Fair before Christmas. This oration does not cost anything but the **Claim** is still $3 a year . . ."

Unfortunately a slumping silver market in the summer of 1893 put Spokane banks in financial difficulties and caused the Slocan to lose, for a short time, its commercial backing. The **Kaslo Claim** felt the effects of the depression. On August 25, 1893, Lowery was forced to shut down the paper with an unusual "tombstone" edition. On the front page the epitaph was printed on a gravestone. In this issue, Lowery poked fun at his advertisers by changing the position of some of their ads. These were printed upside down for clients who had not paid their bills; sideways for clients who had partly paid; and right way up for clients who had paid in full. Some Kaslo residents were not amused by Lowery's eccentricity but he at least had the pleasure of showing up these deadbeats!

Lowery was no quitter. He was a sharp and shrewd newspaperman, and when he saw a good opportunity to publish firsthand he moved, even though he had to borrow money to make a fresh start. On October 5, 1893, the initial issue of the **Nakusp Ledge** came off his press which he had moved from Kaslo. Some copies were printed on white silk, probably to ensure a more permanent record and to advertise the new paper. An example can be seen in the Special Collections Library at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Nakusp was at this time becoming a busy railroad and sternwheeler centre. The B.C. Government contractor was rushing to get the Nakusp and Slocan Railway line completed through to

Sandon townsite before the Kaslo & Slocan Railway could get in its line. Consequently there was plenty of exciting news to report. The railways and roads were, of course, the main topic, as were Nakusp events.

Lowery commented on railway progress (or lack of it), and interspersed his comments with observations on other aspects of frontier settlement. He took a great interest in people, being quick to point out their faults and foibles. He could also give praise where it was deserved. He wrote with honesty, boldness and humor about any issue which he felt needed to be exposed for better or worse. He believed strongly in the rights of workers and many of his editorials blasted the mine owners for the poor working conditions in some of the mines.

Once the "Colonel" got started on a subject he would not leave it until he was satisfied that he had made clear his position, which was usually a strong one when it came to railroading, retail business of all types, and labour problems and politics. His use of flowery words and long sentences helped him to get across his points, often with a dry humorous twist. In some instances he used words and phrases which may be somewhat difficult to understand today.

In the October 26, 1893 issue of the **Nakusp Ledge**, Lowery wrote a stinging editorial on the voices of Kaslo's Theatre Comique, a branch of Spokane's Comique Variety Show. "The Comique," he said, "is not one of those resorts to which gentlemen take their wives and it is not a place which is calculated to improve either public or private morality. Within its precincts we must never expect to find either culture or talent. Education is not well represented therein, but on the other hand, it presents a lewd appearance, a something which is suggestive which does not attract our better qualities, but which appeals strongly and directly to the lower and most beastly part of our nature. A double row of boxes, called private, a boisterous pit, a number of meretriciously attired females, an orchestra, and a row of lamps throwing a glare of light upon tawdry ornamentation - and there is Kaslo's Theatre Comique."

The Comique was certainly one of Lowery's favourite targets for criticism. In the years to come, he would have more to say about it, especially when it became established in Sandon, B.C.

Near the end of 1894, Lowery decided to move the **Nakusp Ledge** to New Denver, B.C., where it became simply **The Ledge**. The first issue was printed on December 27th. New Denver was much closer to the major mining activities, both up in the mountains and near Slocan Lake. The town was filled with speculators and businessmen of all types. Three Forks and Sandon were also feeling the pleasant effects of a rapidly expanding population and booming economy. Other centres, such as Slocan City and Silverton, provided a wealth of news as they were, like New Denver, convenient stopover points for all types of travellers.

On the other side of the Slocan divide, Kaslo was experiencing rapid growth and prosperity. Lowery felt it again needed a paper so he started up the **Kaslo Claim** (relocated) on August 10, 1895. He appointed John J. Langstaff as its publisher. John was also an Ontario native from Bruce County. He worked closely with Lowery to put out this paper and frequently used some of the "Colonel's" cynical comments on human nature. The March 21, 1896 issue contained some especially good ones, for example:

> The human race are natural kickers. We know business men in this town who kick because the people send away for goods in order to save a few cents. The same individuals, if they wanted a job of printing done once a century would, if they could, save half a dollar and send to China for it, in preference to having it done in this district. This is not the way to build up a town, and it is a poor rule that does not work both ways.

The special subscription offer on April 11, 1896 stated that "For $25 we will send the paper for life to any individual who is old or who gains his living in a dangerous occupation."

Soon after this printing, the **Kaslo Claim** (Relocated) ceased publication. The last issue came out on April 25, 1896. Langstaff was anxious to try his hand at prospecting that year, and Lowery was apparently unable to find another publisher. The New Denver paper took up a lot of his time as he published it with little assistance except when he was out of town. The main source of revenue came from advertisements and subscriptions which he often found hard to sell. He was constantly after people to pay up.

Once in 1903 he became so discouraged that he wrote a short poem for the November 26th issue of **The Ledge**. It was entitled "Printer's Poetry" and read like this:

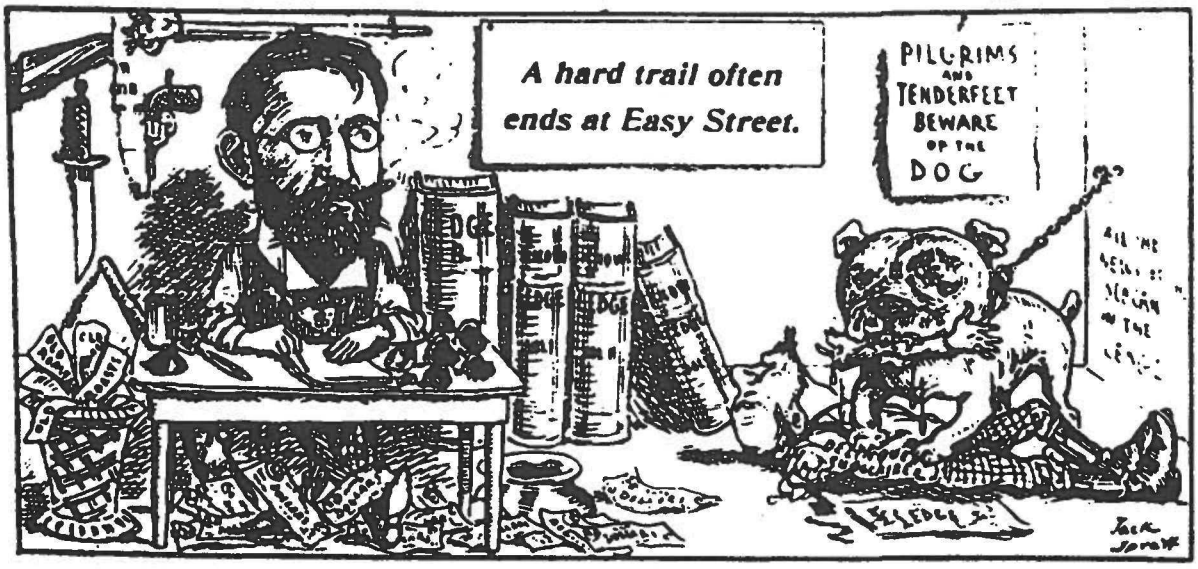
> Lives of poor men oft remind us
> Honest toil won't stand a chance.
> The more we work, there grow behind us
> Bigger patches on our pants.
> On our pants once new and glossy
> Now are stripes of different hue.
> All because subscribers linger
> And won't pay us what is due.
> Let us then, be up and doing.
> Send the pay however small,
> Or when snows of winter strike us,
> We shall have no pants at all.

Lowery did not often write poetry for publication but when he did it was usually funny and it was often directed at himself.

In the summer of 1896, Lowery returned to Petrolia to visit friends and relatives. He found few changes other than the death of a friend. He sent back for publication in the July 23rd issue of **The Ledge** the following comment under the heading, "Among the Tenderfeet. Or the Ups and Downs of a Travelling Editor's Life":

> Many of the old boys look about the same as they did in the days of yore. Hank Brake has the same sunburnt face he used to have, but I missed my old partner Hec. During our absence he had climbed the golden stairs into that country where no man carries a pack and everything breaks even. Hec was a dead square man, and his moral formation carried a wide paystreak of everything that was good and true in man.

Lowery was not a particularly religious man in terms of being a regular church



THE LEDGE (New Denver): July 12, 1900. Cartoon from an editorial page. 'Colonel' Lowery sits at his desk, while Keno, his bulldog, devours a delinquent subscriber.

goer. However, he did have convictions. He basically believed that the way a person lived in this life would largely determine what would happen in the next life. He believed his criticisms were valid and that he was doing the right thing in expressing them in his newspapers. The final judgement, however, would not be made by him.

He derived some satisfaction by occasionally poking fun at the Ministry which is well illustrated in this quote from **The Ledge** for August 6, 1903 under the heading, "The Editor's Upper Stope":

> A New York preacher says that we all go to the devil when we get $50,000. This is some comfort, although we wish some breeze of fortune would send us a ticket so that we could take a look at the devil, and see whether he is real, or just a dream of blue brains or yellow livers.

By the Fall of 1896, Sandon was fast becoming a major commercial centre for many of the mountain mines around it. Retail business was booming: stores, hotels, and saloons filled its gulch from end to end. All this activity created the need for town planning and the expenditure of considerable sums to make the town safe and attractive for settlement. Both the Canadian Pacific and the Great Northern railroads were now in to Sandon, so outside communication was considerably improved. Professional gamblers, prostitutes, and con artists of all types showed up on a regular basis. Money and whiskey flowed freely in Sandon. However, unlike many United States mining camps, there were few shootouts.

This was the type of opportunity Lowery favoured for the starting up of a new paper. On September 26, 1896, the first issue of **The Paystreak** appeared in Sandon. The "Printing Palace," as Lowery liked to call his business, was a wood shack sandwiched between other businesses on the main street. The "Colonel" first put John J. Langstaff in charge of its publication while he stayed in New Denver to work on **The Ledge**. Lowery, however, always made sure **The Paystreak** contained some of his material. These items were published under "Ledge Croppings." Later, beginning in 1900, they appeared under the heading, "From Lowery's Upper Stope."

In March 1897, Langstaff for some reason, left **The Paystreak**. Lowery appointed a new manager, E.C. Bissell. The content and style of the paper did not change. The years 1897, 1898 and the early part of 1899 were boom times for Sandon. News was abundant and the reporting of it was generally good. It is particularly during this period that Sandon's connections with other Slocan communities were emphasized. There were good sporting teams in most of them and entertainment of all types was a shared experience. If an event was being held in Sandon, people from Kaslo and New Denver got on the trains and attended in significant numbers. Even bad weather did not usually stop this exchange in or out of Sandon. Many of these activities were faithfully recorded in **The Paystreak**, and the accounts are invaluable to researchers of social life in early mining towns. With a shifting population of around 5000 at this time, Sandon had much to offer in this way. There was never a dull moment.

In 1898, Lowery decided to start up a paper in Rossland, B.C. Only one issue of Lowery's **Golden Claim** was ever published and that was on December 18th. He apparently decided that New Denver and Sandon were better locations, at least for him.

Lowery frequently argued with the editors or owners of other local papers when he felt they were taking advantage of him, or were unfairly criticizing his opinions. He particularly disliked Charles Cliffe of the **Sandon Mining Review** because Cliffe would wait to publish his paper until **The Paystreak** came out. Then he would use some of Lowery's news without permission. There were no copyright laws back then. Cliffe had come to Sandon from Brandon, Manitoba, and Lowery often felt he should return there, for good. Cliffe also ran a book and stationery store in Sandon in conjunction with the **Mining Review**. No doubt, Cliffe took away from Lowery some Sandon advertising business, and his store was quite success-

ful, which probably irritated Lowery even more. On the other hand, the "Colonel" never had any serious competition in the ten years he published in New Denver.

Around April 15, 1899, Billy MacAdams assumed full ownership of **The Paystreak**, and acted as its publisher and editor. Although Lowery's connection with this paper diminished, he still made contributions to it from time to time, and MacAdams used some of Lowery's New Denver news from "Ledge Croppings." This is an example from the July 8, 1899 issue:

> The lowest form of life yet found is the man who will take a paper for years without paying for it, and then have the postmaster send it back, marked, 'Not Called For.' Hell is so full of this class that respectable applicants from Nelson, Vancouver and other points have been refused admittance until the premises can be enlarged.

MacAdams, like Lowery, was an outspoken critic of big business, railway magnates, labour leaders, and politicians in general. However, he was not as successful as Lowery in voicing his opinions in flowery language which made Lowery's comments seem less harsh and less likely to antagonize the person being criticized. In the summer of 1902, MacAdams went too far and, in an editorial, insulted the B.C. Supreme Court judges. He was given a jail sentence, and Lowery had to publish **The Paystreak** for the rest of that year.

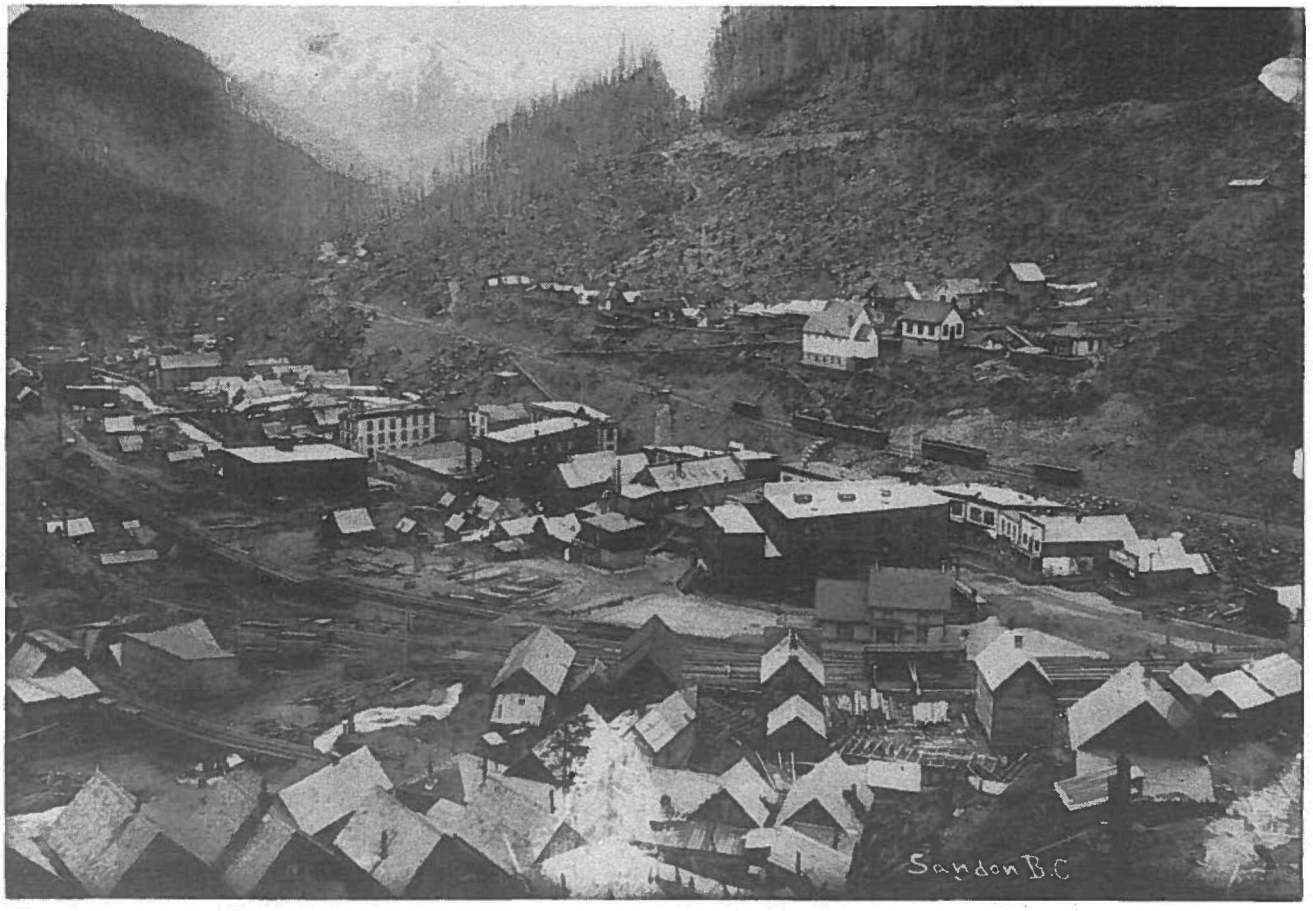
Prior to this trouble, Lowery had started the **Slocan Drill** in Slocan City, which was first published there on April 6, 1900. He had turned over the job of publishing the paper to C.E. Smitheringale. It was a success until the spring of 1905 when it became defunct because of unpaid bills.

In addition, Lowery was experimenting with the publication of Lowery's **Claim**, a monthly journal, which had come out at irregular intervals since 1901 in New Denver, Nelson and Vancouver. Although the **Claim** continued sporadically until 1906, it was never a success. It was a controversial publication in which Lowery proposed to expose all sorts of frauds with "truth and humor."

Lowery was a busy man throughout 1903 and 1904. He kept up the publication of **The Ledge** in New Denver, and attempted to start a weekly, The **Ozonogram**, in Vancouver. This was published only in May and June of 1903.

Near the end of 1903, Lowery started a paper at Poplar in the Lardeau country north of Kaslo. This was **The Nugget** which was published for nearly a year. Prospectors had earlier made some good silver strikes in this area, and when gold was discovered as well in June 1903, there was a mad rush to stake claims. Lowery felt that Poplar was destined to become as important as Sandon, but by the end of 1904 the boom was over and so was **The Nugget**.

Lowery's next project was **Float**, a collection of a few of his own articles and short stories by other authors, in book form. It was published only once in New Denver and Nelson for the years 1903/



Sandon, B.C. Hub city for the Slocan Mountain Mines. CA 1897.

Photo courtesy of the Kootenay Museum Association, Nelson, B.C. #1509.

1904. He had intended **Float** to be a "romantic history of Kootenay," but it turned out to be mostly just a collection of borrowed fiction and not very good fiction at that. There were only a few good stories about "Kootenay." and a skimpy section about his start in the Slocan. Lowery touted **Float** as a "literary venture," but his best publications were the ones which contained his own material or that of his editors.

Before **Float** was printed, Lowery made another trip east to Petrolia which he wrote about for his new publication. This is a small section from the trip account:

> I found many people here willing to board me in return for my company. I have given them a kind invitation to move out west so as to be always near me. Such folks are dear to me, and I suppose in time I would be dear to them. So far my washing has not cost me anything and I am inclined to remain here for life, but my love for America's Lucerne will probably shatter my dream of ease. I have been asked to attend church several times, but up to this minute I have not yielded to the temptation. It is a great pleasure to be home with a mother. I have only one mother, and she thinks I am an angel without wings.

The "Colonel" was always glad to return to New Denver or "America's Lucerne" as he liked to call it. Only R.T. Lowery could describe in such descriptive prose the Slocan's changes in season, the moonlight on Slocan Lake, or the fury of a storm. The following account is a good example from **Float** in which he makes comparisons to the great flood in Galveston, Texas, the one in Biblical times, and Niagara Falls:

> The elements were all on a toot the other day. As the day grew old the storm became more violent. It seemed to favor my printing place with steady attention. The sign blew down like a feather from a flying goose. The wind howled like a Three Forks demon, and the rain was copious enough to indicate an attack of diabetes in the heavens. I thought of Galveston. Then I battened down the hatches, tied myself to the big press, and allowed resignation to spread itself over my benign-or-ten-countenance. After that I rested easier. The lurid flashes of Nature's electric light plant revealed ever and anon the solemnity of the occasion. The rain descended in long sheets of active moisture, and I knew that somewhere rainmakers were working overtime. The office sprang a leak abaft the smokestack and I thought of Noah, but it did me no good, as nothing in the building would pair, not even my hosiery. The storm increased in virulence, and the roar on my tinslated hurricane deck was like Niagara. The bulldog howled as though praying in Gaelic, while the mice, which have been stealing my paper all summer, came out of their holes and with tears in their eyes begged my forgiveness. Taking it all in all, it was the wettest storm this camp has had for many moons, and it has made soft water a drug on the market.

(The highest deck on a sternwheeler was often referred to as a hurricane deck. He called his bulldog, Keno.)

About the best true story that Lowery wrote about Sandon life was printed in **Float**. It described a gambler, Morris Butterman, and his last deal, under the heading, "How Morris Cashed In":

> In '97 there were flush times in the Slocan. The overflow of the Rossland boom swished through the silver camps and coated them with gold. The wash struck Sandon the hardest, and for months that town had its Cairo-like street literally paved with dollars and playing cards. Sandon is built in a gulch between high mountains, o'er which the sun occasionally rubbers the burg. In those days it was a hot locality. All night long the pianos shrieked 'Below the dead line', while about it the booze factories had no keys. The clinking of glasses kept time to the rattle of chips and cries of 'That's good', 'I'm fat!', 'Put in with you!', etc. Gamblers were thicker than 'Coons at a cake walk', and a flash of sunlight made the lower end of the camp look like a switchyard with all the danger signals on fire. The camp never closed up. It was one long carnival of cards, wine and women. When one shift went flewey another took its place, and Canada's Monte Carlo never blinked an eye.
>
> About this time, Morris Butterman hailed the camp. Morris had no yellow in him, and packed more than sixty years on his broad back. He had been a gambler for nearly half a century. He had faced the tiger in Montana, shot craps in New Orleans, dealt stud on the old Mississippi and peeped from behind fours in many a draw game. So when he hit the camp he was not afraid of anything in sight. He dealt faro in the Bucket of Blood saloon and kept his shirt bosom ever white. For a long time his meal ticket had figures on it, and then the splits came. The crash in silver, and then the strike, soon made Sandon look like a dirty deuce in a new deck, and the old gambler went up the hill to cook for a while, but he did not suit and wandered back again, broke, but sad, silent and proud.
>
> Several of the boys noticed that he did not eat regularly and proffered him aid, but he shook his head and stood pat. One day, about five in the afternoon, he passed through the Bucket of Blood to the stairway on the rear to his room. As he mounted the steps he turned and took a long look at the bar and Handsome Jack. Late the next afternoon Jack went upstairs to the old man's room and found him dead. He had put on his best clothes, got under the blankets, taken a swallow of poison and cashed in. And thus Morris quit the game — a philosopher. Old, broke and nothing behind the deal, he preferred to pass up, rather than burden his friends.

On April 2, 1903, Lowery amalgamated **The Ledge** with a new edition of **The Paystreak** which was published under the Typographical Union label, Nelson No. 340. However, he kept the name **The Ledge** and continued to publish it in New Denver until August 11, 1904 when he moved his press to Nelson. The **Ledge** name moved too but it lasted only until October 20, 1904. Perhaps there was too much competition in Nelson for Lowery, or he had a falling-out with another editor or publisher. He had been known to criticize the Nelson populace somewhat harshly in his Slocan papers.

In any case, Lowery decided that Fernie, B.C. needed a good newspaper. He kept the name **The Ledge** and the first issue was published there on Octo-

ber 26, 1904. The paper was full of news about coal mining and the people who made up this "camp" as Lowery liked to call the towns in which he had a publication. For some reason, he only published **The Ledge** in Fernie until August 2, 1905 at which time he seems to have taken a short rest from the newspaper business.

Lowery's next paper was **The Ledge** in Greenwood, B.C. His first issue was published there on May 10, 1906. It had a long run right up to August 1, 1920. During this time Lowery acquired the **Similkameen Star** in Princeton, B.C. He was involved with it from July, 1914 to May, 1918, but eventually sold it to another publisher.

As usual, Lowery took a great interest in recording Greenwood's daily events in the centre of the copper mining and smelting region of the Boundary district. Phoenix, up in the hills above Greenwood, was a bustling city itself so there was plenty of news to more than fill the weekly edition of **The Ledge**. What did not get published there was printed in the **Phoenix Pioneer**, a rival paper.

On June 14, 1906, soon after his arrival in Greenwood, Lowery wrote as follows under the heading, "Phoenix Notes":

> On the road from Greenwood, snakes, birds, and gophers are plentiful, and can be seen without drinking anything out of a bottle.

About the only differences between Sandon and Phoenix were the dryer climate and the type of ore in the mines. The miners were basically the same, and the news about them and the general populace in Greenwood and Phoenix had many similarities to Slocan news. Greenwood, however, could boast of a smelter!

By the latter part of 1920, Lowery's health was beginning to deteriorate. He developed dropsy or edema, a debilitating disease which leads to retention of water in body tissues. The doctors of today are usually able to successfully treat this disease but in Lowery's time it was not well understood. He was hospitalized for several months in Grand Forks, B.C. from 1920 until 1921. On August 1, 1920 Lowery had to retire from the newspaper business and **The Ledge** was leased to another publisher who changed its name.

On May 20, 1921 Robert Thornton Lowery "climbed the golden stairs" after sixty-two years of a very interesting life. He had indicated, during his last days, to his executor, W.R. Dewdney, that he wished to be buried at Nelson by the Oldtimers. This was the Nelson branch of the Kootenay Pioneers' Association. The funeral was held on May 25th and was well attended by the Oldtimers, many of whom had been close friends of the "Colonel" in Nelson's earlier days. Lowery had never married but he left behind two sisters and three brothers, all in Ontario.

At the funeral an interesting rite took place which was later described in an unidentified newspaper for July 2, 1921, under the heading, "Dropped Boughs into Open Grave. Indian Rite Performed at Funeral of Late Robt. T. Lowery":

> A beautiful rite, employed by the Kootenay Pioneers' Association for the first time, was exemplified at this funeral when twenty-five old associates of the early days each dropped into the open grave his tribute of British Columbia fir, with the parting injunction, 'Rest in Peace.' This rite was founded on the custom of an Indian tribe in the East Kootenay-Columbia Valley many years ago, of never passing a certain spot in the narrow trail at the head of Columbia Lake, where once the men of the tribe died to a man in making a stand against an invasion, without depositing a fir bough, the pile of boughs being always green by this perpetual renewal.

This seems like a fitting tribute to a man who had spent some thirty years publishing and printing newspapers throughout the Kootenays. Lowery was buried in the Anglican section of the Nelson cemetery. The grave is not marked with a headstone. Surely, the "Colonel" deserves one, for without his ambition and drive, the Slocan and other parts of the Kootenays would not have the excellent record provided by his early newspaper accounts.

* * * * *

The author spent many years in the Kootenays but now lives in Victoria where he can visit the B.C. Archives and read newspapers from the early years.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

B.C. Outdoors, Vol. 24, December, 1968. Article by Wayne McCtory: "The Colonel of the Kootenays."

The Columbian (New Westminster): Articles by John Pearson: November 2, 1970, "The Way It Was — Pioneer Editor Saw Life in the Raw."; March 1, 1971, "The Way it Was — Soot, Booze Filled Pen."

The Courier (Cranbrook): March 19, 1969. Article by Dave Kay and D.A. MacDonald: "Come With Me to Yesterday — Colonel Lowery, Newspaperman Extraordinary."

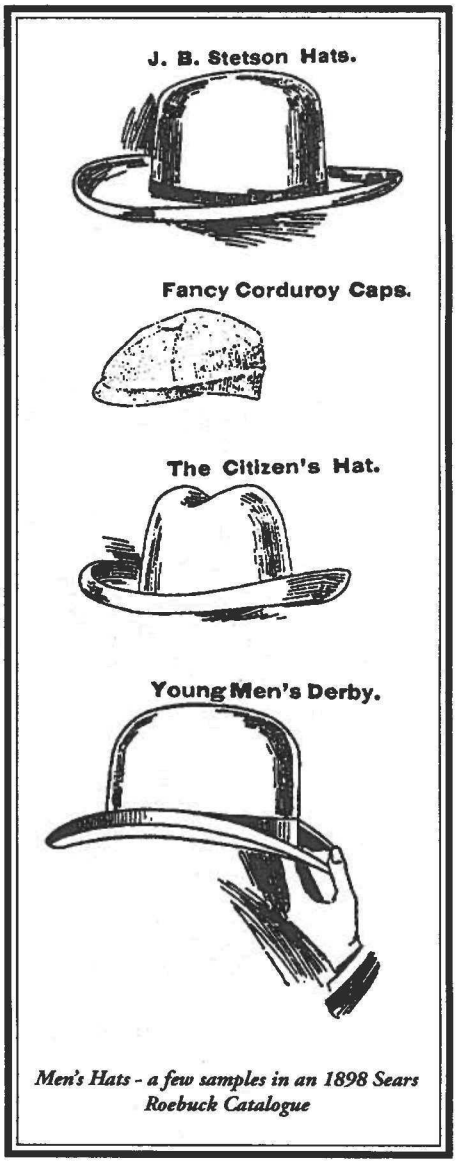
Daily Townsman (Cranbrook): June 6, 1977. Article by John Pearson: "A Part of Yesterday — The Mark Twain of the Kootenays."

Frontier Times, Austin, Texas: September, 1970. Article by Wayne McCrory: "All the News That's Fit to Laugh At!" (Editor Lowery).

The Kootenaian (Kaslo): March 14, 1968. Article by Wayne McCrory: "Colonel Lowery — the Famous Founder of Many Area Weekly Newspapers."

Kootenay Lake Historical Society: Pamphlet, "Historical Kaslo, British Columbia", 1966.

Public Works, Nelson. Telephone conversation in July, 1991 with Bob Adams in regard to Lowery's gravesite. Personal visit to gravesite in September, 1992.



Men's Hats - a few samples in an 1898 Sears Roebuck Catalogue

Bill Billeter: 1914 Sailor & Fisherman

by Dirk Septer

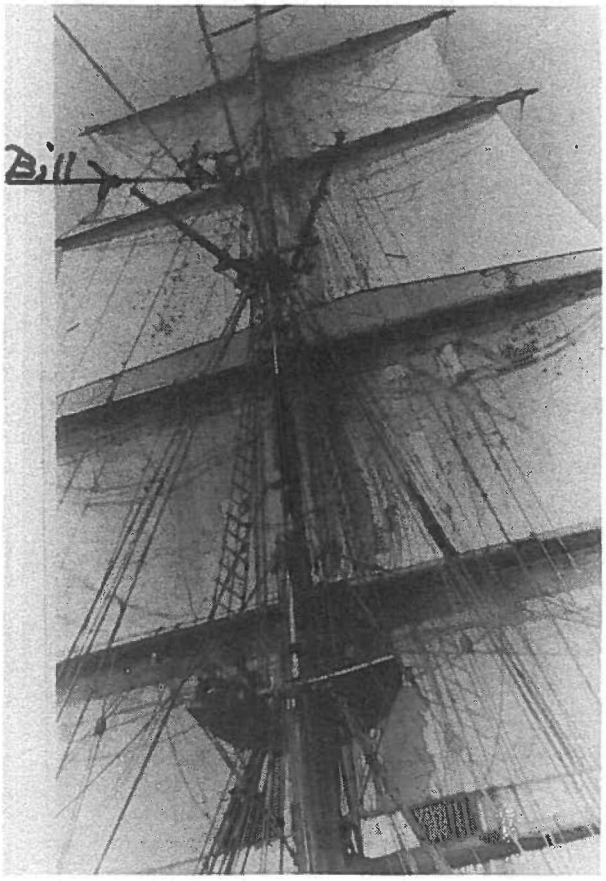
William "Bill" Billeter, now deceased, was a long time resident of the Bulkley Valley. His pictures and few notes were left to the Museum in Smithers. The author was shown these when preparing "Pages from the Past", a column for the Smithers newspaper ***The Interior News****. Mr. Septer decided to share the photographic story with the readers of the* ***B.C. Historical News****.*

When these pictures are returned from the printer Septer plans to send them to the Alaska State Archives in Juneau as a record of the sockeye season in 1914 in Bristol Bay.

On board the W.B. Flint - 1914, Bill and some of his crew mates.

The Journey to Alaska

In April 1914, the **W.B. Flint**, a really old fully rigged wooden sailing ship, left Seattle, Wash. for the Bering Sea. Since the ship was entirely dependent on sail, it was towed out of Puget Sound to the open Pacific. The journey to Bristol Bay took 31 days. Since the men were on the payroll from the time of leaving port, they were all assigned to various tasks while aboard ship. Billeter was given the job of being one of the sailors. Unfortunately, the weather was rough when the men got turned loose and many got promptly very seasick. Another thing made the first couple of days anything but pleasant. Most of the sailors, to be fishermen later, were Scandinavian or Finns, and nearly all liked their liquor. At the time, rotgut whiskey was so cheap that many of the men brought a five gallon keg of this on board with them. For the next couple of days, only the odd sailor was really sober. When drinking, a water dipper was used, and if you happened to be a bit different and would not drink with them, they felt highly insulted. Some would get really nasty, and Billeter, being seasick as well, was in real trouble. He recalled one morning, he felt so sick that he could not get up. The sleeping quarters were down in the hold and the bunks were three high and so close together that you had to walk sideways to get in between. Billeter occupied a top bunk. Pretty soon the mate came down and said: "And what is the matter with you?" Billeter replied that he felt very sick. The mate then said "Hell we are all sick" and yanked Billeter out of the bunk and let him fall . . .



On board the W.B. Flint - 1914. It was one of those beautiful days and I went up into the rigging for fun.

Things improved steadily as the whiskey ran out and Billeter learned about his job. As a rule they did not go up in the rigging to work the sails unless it was really blowing and the mate thought that a little more would tear the sail. It didn't bother Billeter much to be up. But when half a dozen men would get up on one small rope, it made him a bit uneasy because everything about the ship looked so old. He knew that if a rope broke that would be just too bad . . . No nylon rope in those days!

The men never learned the age of the old "tub". Perhaps one indication of the age was that, with the exception of the captain's cabin, there was no plumbing, not even a sink to wash dishes. The gal-

ley (kitchen) was in one part of the ship. Then the food was carried to a small cubby hole in another part. This place would seat only a quarter of the crew, so they took turns. The dishes were washed in a bucket of cold salt water.

As the ship leaked since leaving Seattle, frequent pumping was routine. The amount of leakage depended on the condition of the sea. And of course, there were only hand pumps. Despite the crude conditions, Billeter enjoyed the latter part of the trip north.

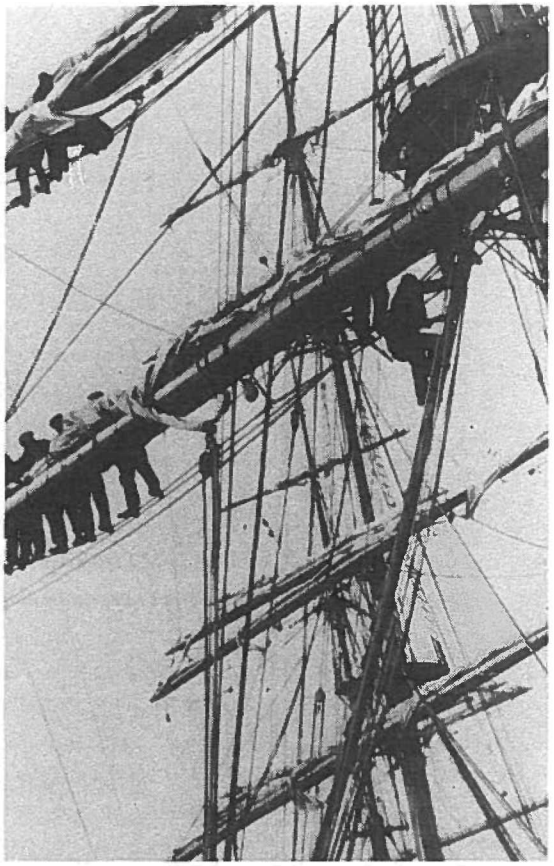
Kogguing, Bristol Bay, Alaska

After a 31 day journey, the **Flint** arrived at Bristol Bay. Due to a very gradual slope of the sea-bed from shore and a 30 foot tide, it was necessary to anchor the vessel some miles off shore. The cannery itself was built inland on a deep slough. When the tide was out, the slough was dry. Most of the area around the cannery was covered with deep spongy moss. Walking across it in summer would bring out clouds of gnats. These pesty little critters would fly into one's eyes, nose and ears, and could drive a person crazy when no netting was worn. Near the cannery a number of Natives were living. Their standard of living was quite appalling. In cold weather they would go underground in shallow dugouts not much better than kennels. For a good part of the year their diet consisted of dried fish and the odd seal. There was no sign of game in the area. One of the worst features of the time seemed to be their isolation and lack of communication.

Billeter spent the early part of the season working on the cannery's little tug boat. It was used to move freight from the **Flint** to the cannery. This little boat had been built for river work, and she certainly was not suited for work in this area. She only drew three feet of water and when it was rough she bobbed around like a cork. On two occasions Billeter was tossed out of his bunk. A barge was anchored at a convenient spot to receive fish from the fishermen.

When the fish started to run, he was given the job of firing the steam boiler that powered the cannery. Normal work hours were sixty hours a week. However, when the run started, each day's catch had to be processed that same day. Some days it would be midnight or later before everything was cleaned up. There was not such a thing as overtime. The men received a regular pay of $50 a month, paid in one lump sum when they arrived back at Seattle. The bookkeeper also kept some sort of commissary, supplying work clothes, tobacco and whatnot.

A crew of Chinese labourers, who lived in separate quarters, cleaned the fish. The heads and tails of these fish soon formed a big heap. It did not take long before that pile perfumed the whole area. The food in the cannery was good and when the men worked long days they had extra snacks. By the time Bill left, he had put on 35 pounds. It took him six months to get rid of it.

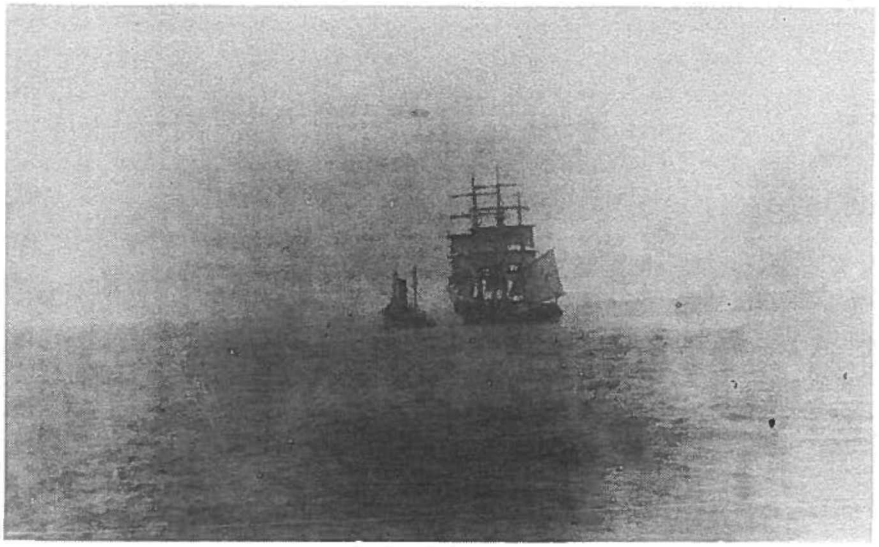


On board the W.B. Flint - 1914. You just did not dare worry about that old rope breaking.

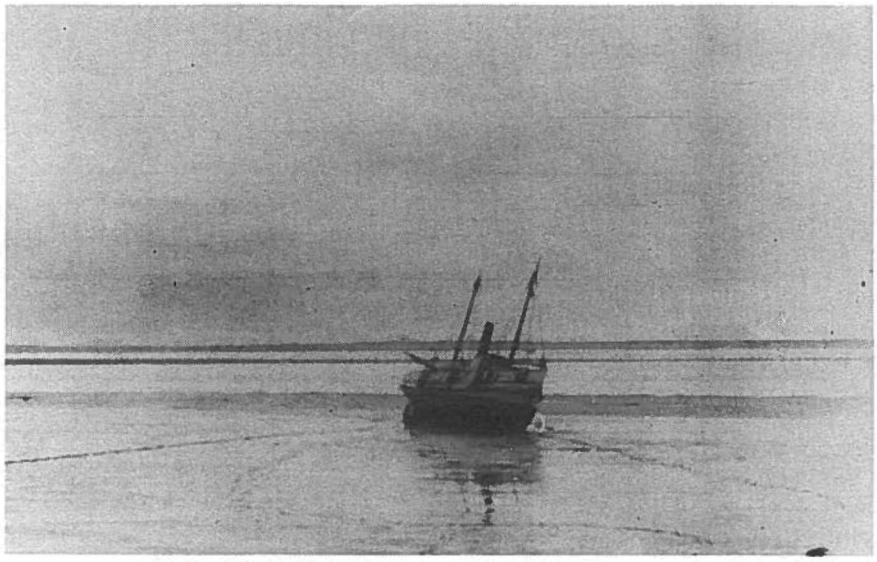
The fishermen needed a lot of courage, skill and stamina, going out in these little boats. They worked two men to each boat, going out for days at a time and often working around the clock. When needed, the only shelter they had was a piece of canvas to throw over the bow. The boats had a tiny sail to take them where they wanted to go. There was always the danger of being blown far out to sea. These men sure earned their money! The sad part of it was that for quite a few of these fishermen the season's work would give them only one big binge when they got back to Seattle and payday.

Return Journey

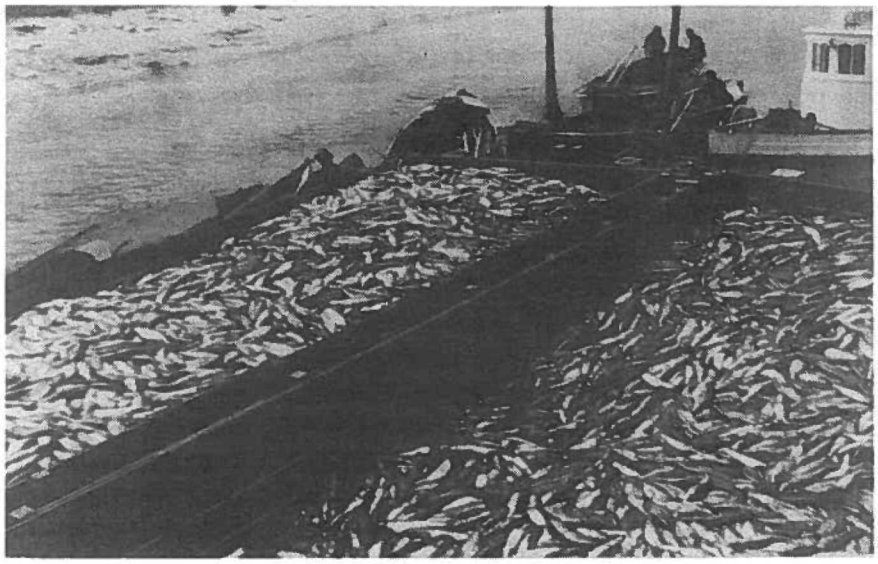
At the end of the season, the **W.B.**



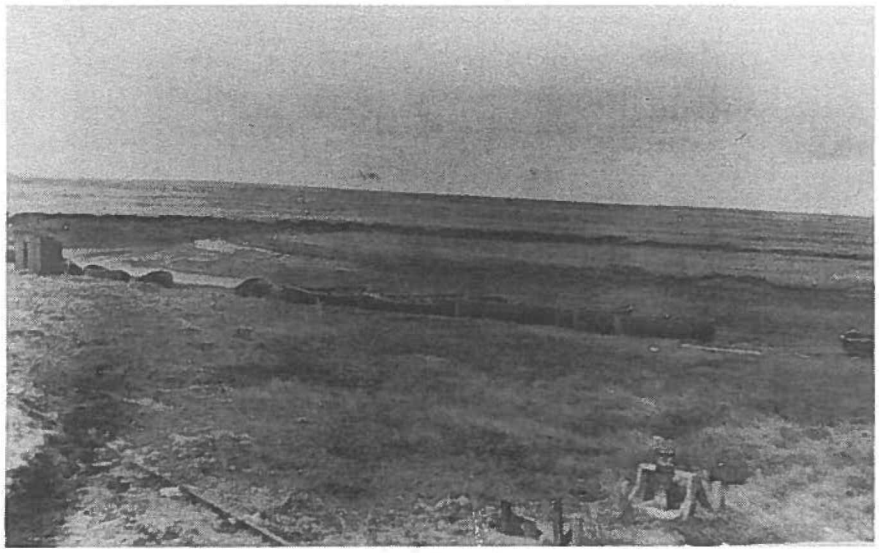
On board the W.B. Flint in Bristol Bay - 1914.



W.B. Flint, Bristol Bay - 1914. Here we are sitting in the mud because the tide beat us out.



W.B. Flint. Bristol Bay in the Bering - 1914. This was the catch on one of the better days.



Area near the cannery at Bristol Bay - 1914. Small boats lined up on the shore. It it were not for the fish this would be a godforsaken land.

Flint, loaded to capacity, took the men back home to Seattle. Soon after leaving, still in the Bering Sea, they got a real beating when a terrible fall storm arose. The **Flint** began leaking badly, and though the crew pumped frantically round the clock, they could not keep up. By the next day, the sleeping quarters were flooded and the men were forced to find whatever shelter they could find on deck. Consequently the men did not get much sleep. The ship carried a number of canvas covered lifeboats scattered around the deck. Some of the men were tempted to crawl into them, but they were a bit leery to do so, because they thought there might be a chance that these boats might be swept overboard. A real strong gust of wind swept overboard a fair sized tank that contained their supply of fresh drinking water. The tank had been bolted to the deck with two heavy iron bars that just snapped like ribbons. That certainly settled the thought of crawling into those lifeboats!

As the water rose inside the ship, she settled lower and lower. The ship was steadily sinking lower and by the fifth day, part of the deck was under water and the men had to take care not to be swept overboard. Suddenly the storm died, as quickly as it had started. This was not a bit too soon, for if it had lasted a bit longer the ship might have just slid under. It had been just a bit too close for comfort!

There followed a stretch of beautiful weather. However, it took the men some time to get the ship pumped out and their sleeping quarters dried out a bit. The return journey back to Seattle took 33 days. Though they had been so close to disaster, Billeter considered that all in all it had been an interesting trip.

* * * * *

Dirk Septer is a Forester based in Telkwa, near Smithers.

Researching the Lives of Pioneers on the Internet

by Jennifer Wasley

The Internet makes a great deal of information available with the click of a mouse. Vital statistics are available via the Internet; it is no longer necessary to trek to Victoria to find these numbers.[1] Interment information is also available over the Internet, giving genealogists and historians easy access to burial records.[2] This technology does not just exist. It works.

Is online technology, like the Internet, a useful research tool for discovering the lives of pioneers? There are many reasons why this question may seldom be asked. On of the major reasons is that the possibility of information about pioneers, long dead, being available online seems outlandish. The research conducted for this paper shows that the Internet is a viable research tool when investigating the lives of pioneer women.

The Internet can be used as a tool to supplement stories of pioneer lives. Local histories, like **Memories Never Lost: Stories of the Pioneer Women of the Cowichan Valley and a Brief History of the Valley**, offer the stories of pioneers lives as recalled by their families. This paper examines one account from **Memories Never Lost**, that of Annie Bonsall, to determine how useful a research tool the Internet is now and how useful it might become in the future.

For instance, Marjorie McKay wrote her mother's story, as she knew it, for **Memories Never Lost**.[3] Information from this account is a starting point that can be elaborated upon through online research. Mrs. McKay noted that her mother, Annie Botterill, married Henry Bonsall on Vancouver Island. She did not give a date or location for the ceremony. The Internet, through the "B.C. Archives Vital Events Index" revealed that Annie Botterill married Henry Bonsall March 8, 1875, in Victoria.[4] **Memories Never Lost** states that Annie was born in 1859; this is substantiated by her age given on her death registration.[5] Annie would have been sixteen years old at the time of her marriage. Mrs. McKay also notes that her mother died in 1933 but does not give the actual date, place, or site of interment. Annie Bonsall died January 24, 1933, in North Cowichan and is buried in the All Saints Church Cemetery, Westholme.[6] This type of information was always available but it was hard to access and in some cases not indexed in such a way as to be accessible.

Mrs. McKay mentioned that Annie's parents were Matthew and Mary Botterill and that they came from Ontario via the Panama route. When she related this information she gave the impression that Annie was an only child.[7] Matthew Botterill died April 16, 1921, in Saanich and his wife Mary died June 5, 1900, in Maple Bay. They are both interred in the Maple Bay Pioneer Methodist Cemetery.[8] The records for this cemetery indicate family relationships. The Botterills had other children because the cemetery records indicate a Mary Frances Botterill as being buried there and list her as "third daughter of Matthew and Mary Botterill."[9] One piece of information is useful; when the pieces are put together they become really valuable.

Information from the Internet and **Memories Never Lost** combines to offer a fuller picture of Annie Bonsall's life and that of her family. But sources like the cemetery records raise questions as well as answering them. For instance, Annie's parents are buried in a Methodist cemetery and Annie and her family are buried in an Anglican one.[10] Were the families of different religions, was there only one church in the community, or did they attend different churches than the ones in which they were interred? Mrs. McKay reported that her mother made sure that the children attended Sunday School but does not say where.[11] These questions cannot be readily answered by technological sources proving that there is still a need for actual hands-on-research.

The Internet may become a powerful tool for historical research but is currently still in its infancy. Many manuscript censuses are becoming available online. The ones needed for this paper are not yet available. Birth registrations for British Columbia are slated to come online soon. Mrs. McKay tells the reader that her mother had fifteen children, eight girls and seven boys, and says that "(b)y the time the youngest was born, the eldest had moved away from home."[12] She does not give the names of her brothers and sisters. A partial list of names can be made from the death and marriage registrations but it cannot be completed until the birth registrations or the 1891 census come online.

Another use for the Internet, in research about pioneers, is determining what information found on the Internet says about women's place in society. The public lives, more commonly led by pioneer men, are more readily available on the Internet. For instance, Mrs. McKay's account mentions that her father pre-empted land at Westholme in 1881.[13] The B.C. Archives has put an index of correspondence to the Chief Commissioner of Land and Water, 1871 to 1883, on the Internet. This record made two mentions of the Bonsall name concerning land grants.[14] Mrs. McKay also mentions that her grandfather worked for the Hudson's Bay Company for a short time after arriving in Victoria. The Hudson's

Bay Company Archive indexes are available online but they are not yet searchable. The "Servants Records" contain the post, address of the servant, salary, contract duration and other employment information.[15] If they were searchable the "Servants Records" would have yielded a great deal of information, such as the Botterill financial situation, and through that, information about Annie's family life before she was married.[16] Because women were often relegated to the private sphere their stories must be told in local histories like **Memories Never Lost** and supplemented with information from sources like the Internet. Women's place in society is a factor because the records would only show the researcher some of Annie's life indirectly. The records of church organizations and ladies aid societies could reveal more about pioneer women's lives. They may never become available on the Internet because the organizations or their records no longer exist or there is not a perceived interest. The Ontario census for 1871 is available online. Although it offers no information about Annie Bonsall it does reveal something about women's place in society. It only lists the information for "heads of households and strays"[17] This excludes women in most situations. The nature of the information about pioneer women on the Internet reflects the ideas of women's place in society in their time.

The types of information on the Internet used in this paper will never stand alone as a source in women's history. They can provide dates, locations, facts and figures but can never tell the story of pioneer women's lives like their families can. A death or birth certificate could never tell us, as Annie's daughter does, that she went to church one day and saw.

. . . Mrs. Lloyd, also a very small woman, at the organ. When she came home she reported that she had seen the smallest woman she had ever observed. Later, we heard that Mrs. Lloyd was making the same report of her![18]

This kind of account may be included in the B.C. Archives but it is not listed in the index nor is it as readily available as **Memories Never Lost** is at a local library. Accessibility is a factor when researching the lives of pioneers. The Archives seems only to be able to offer supplementary information like when and where a pioneer married or died. This information however, is not worthless. It is just more valuable when combined with an account like Marjorie McKay's.

The information from the Internet has been intertwined with the account in **Memories Never Lost** to give a fuller picture of Annie Bonsall's life. The Internet is a viable research tool for investigating the lives of pioneers. References to time and place that were lacking in Mrs. McKay's account were filled in by information found on the Internet. Everything that the government recorded about Annie Bonsall is becoming available online. Thus far, most of the information relates to her death, but as Birth Registrations become available more will be known about her child-bearing years. This synthesis of information could be further augmented with hands-on research to discover documents that recorded community events of the time. Although it still sounds strange, information about the lives of pioneers is available on the Internet and is a useable resource for researching their lives.

This example of the power, both realized and potential, of the Internet as a historical research tool should serve to inspire the reader rather than discourage him. The Internet is very accessible and extremely user friendly. A look at your local Yellow Pages, under "Internet" will give you a place to start. Call around to some Internet service providers to see what kind of services and packages they offer. On average, service should cost $20.00 - $25.00 a month for 100 hours of time. If you are affiliated with a college or university it will be available there and will probably be free. Find a provider who gives good customer service and offers 24 hour support. Some providers will even come to your house for no extra charge to get you started. The Internet offers a whole new range of possibilities for history, as both a research tool and a forum for discussion.

* * * * *

The author wrote this paper while a student at Malaspina College in Nanaimo. She is now enrolled at the University of British Columbia.

FOOTNOTES

1. Webmaster, BC Archives. "Vital Events Indexes." last revision: April 9, 1997. <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/index/htm> (April 6, 1997) Provides a searchable index of marriages (75 years or older) and deaths (20 years or older). Birth registrations are scheduled to come online soon (100 years or older).
2. Ron Demaray. "British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid." August 9, 1996. <http://www.islandnet.com/bccfa/homepage.html> (April 7, 1997) Ptovides a searchable index with over 100,000 burial listings from 141 cemeteries in British Columbia.
3. The Pioneer Researchers, **Memories Never Lost: Stories of the Pioneer Women of the Cowichan Valley and a Brief History of the Valley, 1850-1920.** (Alrona, Maniroba: D.W. Friesen and Sons, 1986) 35-37.
4. "Vital Events Indexes."
5. Pioneer Researchers 35 and "Vital Events Indexes".
6. "Vital Events Indexes" and "British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid."
7. Pioneer Researchers 35.
8. "Vital Events Indexes."
9. "British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid."
10. "British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid."
11. Pioneer Researchers 37.
12. Pioneer Researchers 37.
13. Pioneer Researchers 36.
14. Webmaster, B.C. Archives. "B.C. Department of Lands and Works: Chief Commissioner of Land and Water Inward Correspondence, 1871-1883." last revision: April 9, 1997 <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/index/htm> (April 9, 1997)
15. Government of Manitoba, Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. "Hudson's Bay Company Archives." February 24, 1997. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html> (April 11, 1997)
16. "Hudson's Bay Company Archives"
17. Jeff Moon "Ontario Census, 1871" December 5, 1995. <http://stauffer.queensu/ca/docsunit/searchc71.html> (April 8, 1997).
18. Pioneer Researchers 37.

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Robert Homfray C.E. L.S.

by H. Barry Cotton

Early Efforts to Probe the Homathko Valley

In 1863 Capt. Pender R.N. named Homfray Channel after this enterprising engineer and surveyor. Homfray Creek (now deserted) was also named for him. Both lay on the usual route from Victoria to the head of Bute Inlet, where Homfray had been one of the first white men to venture into the turbulent domain of the Homathko River.

Robert Homfray was born in Hales Owen, Worcestershire, England in 1824. He became a pupil of the eminent civil engineer and naval architect I.K. Brunel, who amongst other things designed the **Great Eastern**, the steamship which laid the Atlantic Cable, and for many years was the largest ship afloat.

The quest for an adventurous life led Robert and his brother to California in the 1850's. Robert spent time in the heart of the mining area actuated by the California Gold Rush. Here, by his own admission, he was engaged in underground surveys, tunnelling, canals, and other work connected with the mines, and was latterly employed as County Surveyor for Nevada County.

He arrived in Victoria in 1858, and went to work in the Colonial Survey Office under J.D. Pemberton on September 28th. He was involved in several noteworthy projects.

Hope, Yale and New Fort Langley

One of Homfray's field-books, still on record at the Surveyor-General's office in Victoria, gives details of the first surveys of these townsites, made before the Royal Engineers arrived in British Columbia.

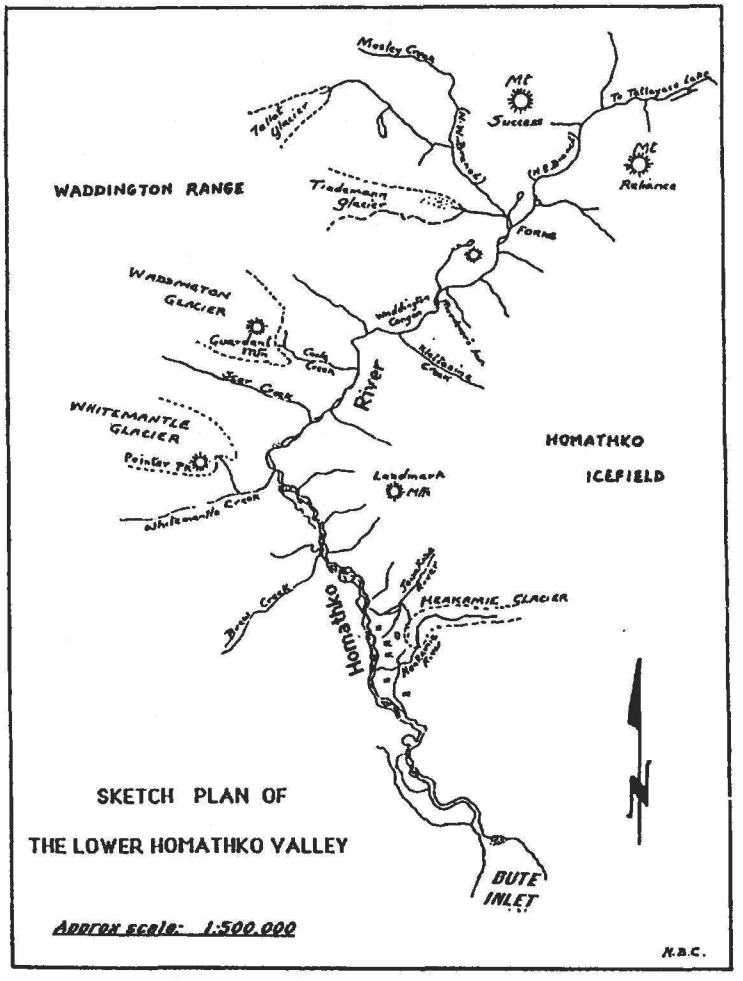
Throughout 1858, Governor Douglas had been taking steps to ensure at least an impression of stability in the wild country that constituted the Mainland Colony, and surveying townsites was one of them. Hope had already been laid out in September 1858 (by Commissioner O.J. Travaillot), so Homfray spent only two days there. On Oct. 13th he proceeded on to Yale, at that time a turbulent town with more than its fair share of unsavory characters (one of whom seems to have been hired by Homfray @ $3 per day, and fired the same evening!)

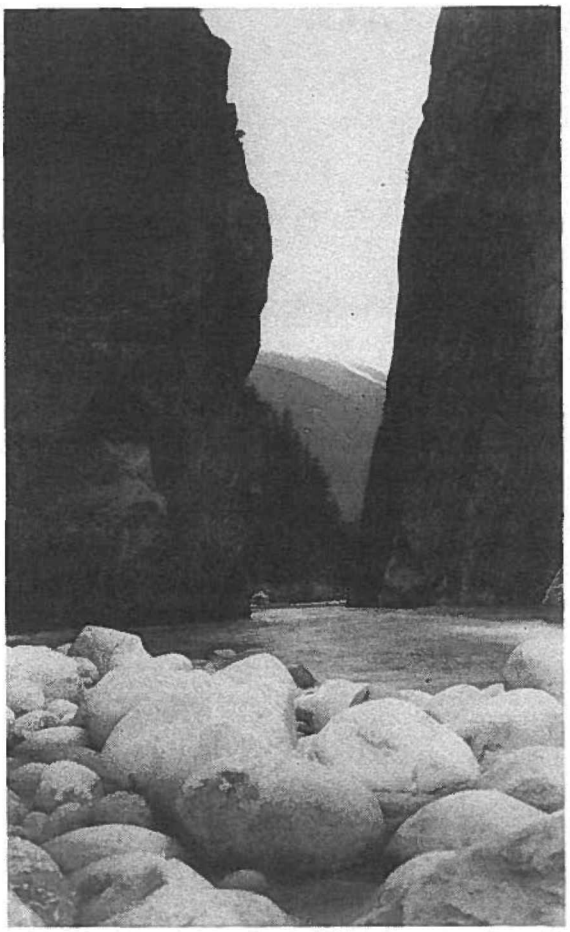
By Oct 27th, he had finished at Yale and moved back to New Fort Langley, where he spent 22 days laying out the townsite. He was one of those present at the historic inauguration ceremony for the Mainland Colony — giving the date as Fri., 19th October.

This new townsite was on the location of the old (original) Fort Langley (the fort itself having been moved upstream in 1839). Thus we have New Fort Langley occupying the site of Old Fort Langley — a situation guaranteed to confuse! Fortunately, the town was soon renamed Derby. It was not proclaimed as the capital of B.C., although such a possibility must have occurred to the hundreds of people who bought lots there. It was a townsite spawned by speculation, although Douglas in a shrewd move was able to expropriate the development, and turn the operation over to Pemberton's office, thus producing revenue for the new Colony. As a town its days were numbered, but it set the pattern for a great deal of later development in the Province — the land-grab, followed by the speculative selling of lots.

Homfray was employed in Pemberton's survey office until April 1859. During this time he drew plans for Lots 1595-1627, Victoria City, auctioned on April 16, 1859. He also drew a large map to accompany the first comprehensive survey of the interior goldfields by Lt. R.C. Mayne of **H.M.S. Plumper**. The map showed creeks, trails, approximate geographic positions, and names of the Fraser River bars being mined in those early days; historically, a most unique and invaluable map.

Homfray was at first unsuccessful in obtaining employment under Col. R.C. Moody, as his instruments were in San Francisco (being repaired). He advertised his engineering services in the **Victoria Gazette** in 1859, the **Colonist** in 1860,





Inside Waddington Canyon Photo courtesy of BC Archives #A-04111

and again in 1861, when he took on a quite different kind of enterprise — to assess Alfred Waddington's proposed route to the interior via the Homathko River.

The Bute Inlet Route

The first to explore the rugged Homathko officially had been Maj. W. Downie and his partner Alex MacDonald in June 1861. Downie was one of the most competent wilderness travellers of the day and he called it "without doubt the hardest looking part of B.C. that I have yet been into". He left a well-written journal — fairly easy to follow on a modern map. After travelling upriver by canoe for about 27 miles (to Scar Creek), he went on foot for another six, as far as what later became notorious as the Waddington Canyon. After which he stated categorically that this was no place for a road. Subsequent history was, of course, to prove him right. But he also reported that "it will be an easy matter to go up (the river) in the fall, when the cold weather sets in".[1] Homfray who followed him in a few months time did not find it an easy matter at all.

Downie's report was greeted with great suspicion by the Victoria citizenry of 1861. Quesnelmouth and Fort Alexandria were now gateways to the goldfields, and the "Bute Inlet Route", if feasible, promised to be not only a shorter way, but a more favorable one for the Victoria merchants, who daily saw the business of supplying miners being usurped by New Westminster.

The champion and steadfast promoter of this route was, of course, Alfred Waddington, a man who had himself been in the business of supplying miners' needs before he came to British Columbia. Little was known of the route which he undertook to sponsor, except that the Chilcotin Indians came down through the valley in the fall to spear salmon. But Waddington at sixty years of age was an implacable promoter, whose enthusiasm would in no way be distracted by the enormous difficulties which would eventually present themselves.

He soon arranged a party to investigate the beginning of the route. On September 19th, 1861 he left Victoria in the steamer **Henrietta**, visited the head of Bute Inlet, made friends with certain native people in Desolation Sound (which was to be a boon for Homfray two months later), navigated by steamer for 8 miles up the river, and then by canoe some distance beyond.[2] He left one Thomas Pryce on Sept. 27th with four men to explore further, and returned to Victoria.[3]

Homfray's Expedition

On the 24th of October, Pryce's party returned to Victoria, and Waddington lost no time in arranging a second party to probe the Bute Inlet Route, this time "under a competent engineer, to survey the whole line, and fix upon the most eligible route (under approval) for the proposed trail". This quotation is from Waddington's letter of Nov. 8th, 1861, to Governor Douglas (which I shall have occasion to refer to again later). This time Homfray was in charge of the party, which consisted of himself, three of the Hudson's Bay Company's best voyageurs Cote, Balthazzar and Bourchier, Henry McNeill and two native Indians. Unlike Downie who went by schooner to Bute Inlet, and Waddington who went by steamship, Homfray's party had to be content with just one canoe. Company officers warned him that he probably would not come back alive; and as events turned out, he was lucky to have done so.

The party set out on 31st of October 1861. They took nine days to reach the entrance to Bute Inlet, where they were promptly kidnapped by hostile Indians. They were rescued in the nick of time by a friendly chief of the Cla-oosh peoples, whose village was in Desolation Sound. . . . The latter, after unsuccessfully trying to dissuade Homfray from going further, eventually agreed to guide them through the Homathko River valley. So they set out for the head of Bute Inlet, the start of their venture.[4]

The Homathko River drains two of the major snowfields of the Coast Range in B.C., for part of the way encased in perpendicular canyons. In Waddington's day, glaciers extended almost to the river itself. Don Munday in his book **The Unknown Mountain** well described the Homathko, when in 1926 he led a group of mountaineers to explore the glacier and peaks of the (then still unknown) Waddington Range: —

"Most of the valley floor undergoes a cycle of devastation and reclamation. Log jams collect from trees of all sizes which have been undermined by the river, and swept down. Above a jam, silting up may follow rapidly . . . a deep bed of silt will kill root systems of even the biggest trees in mature forest . . . whitened cedar rampikes stood like grisly spearmen with lances uplifted in salute to death . . ."

Robert Homfray told of one log jam, twenty feet high and half-a-mile long,

stretching right across the river. The party buried some provisions to ensure a supply on return, and proceeded up the rapids, manhandling the canoe over slippery log-jams, often up to their waists in water. Wet snow continued to fall, and above the noise of the rapids the roar of avalanches could be heard. In one place Homfray described the blue ice of a glacier extending almost to the river bank. Their guide turned back. For a while their two Indians were able to keep them supplied with game. Then the weather turned bitterly cold and the ice froze on their clothes, their beards and hair. River boulders coated with ice gave the appearance of glass balls. After almost losing their canoe when the tow rope broke, they decided to cache it, and proceeded on foot. Eventually, at the end of their tether with cold and hunger, they met up with a tall, powerful, almost naked Indian, with body painted jet-black, and vermillion-colored rings around his eyes. *"The bow and arrow . . . was pointed straight at us. He danced up and down in a slooping (sic) position with his knees bent, and uttered frightful sounds . . . Cote told us to lay our heads on our shoulders to show him we wanted to sleep; then to open and shut our mouths so that he might see that we were hungry . . . "*

When the Indian eventually made up his mind that they were friendly, Homfray's relief can well be imagined; although it was still tempered with concern that the whole party might end up with their throats cut! Down in the Indian's underground shelter, an old Indian woman offered them food, which, despite their hunger, Homfray and his cohorts found completely revolting, and the smell "indescribably overpowering". But Cote insisted that they must eat it, or the Indians would feel insulted. Here, Homfray's account becomes quite humorous, as he tells of their subterfuge in doing so, while all the time passing the food to the Indian dogs lying behind them.

So the natives proved to be friendly and let them rest awhile, before clearly indicating the way they should go - back the way they came.

ROBERT HOMFRAY,
Civil Engineer, Land & Mining Surveyor.
(Late County Surveyor of Nevada County, California, and in the :Land Office, Victoria).
Office - Government Street, opposite Post Office.

UNDERGROUND SURVEYS AND SECTIONS OF MINES. Laying out railroads, Canals or ditches, Tunnels, Roads, Bridges, Flumes, Dams, Reservoirs etc etc.

Mr Homfray has studied Engineering several years under the late celebrated English Engineer J.K.Brunel Esq, (from whom he has testimonials), having previously acquired a thorough knowledge of Surveying during a long residence with one of the most practical Surveyors in England, and has since been engaged in Yuba, Placer, Nevada, Tuolumne, Sierra and Mariposa Counties, California, as Engineer and Surveyor of extensive mining works, including nearly 350 miles of canal or miner's ditch, and some 60 miles of tunnelling, costing an immense amount of time and capital.

Homfray's advertisement in the Colonist, March 20, 1860.

However, their return journey was nothing short of horrendous. Their canoe was wrecked in a log jam, and most of their supplies lost. They salvaged some gear, including fortunately matches and two axes. It took them four days, wading and relying on a makeshift raft, to reach the head of Bute Inlet and their buried provisions; which they had perforce to eat with their fingers, while they shared one empty baking-powder tin for drinking. After riding half-way down Bute Inlet in a hollowed-out log, they were eventually rescued by their friendly Cla-oosh chief who brought them to his village; and in the end escorted them back to Victoria, where their ragged and exhausted condition elicited no little surprise. They had been away two months.[5]

Details of this hair-raising story, however, were not immediately available, as Homfray's laudable sense of professional ethics was such that, in order to avoid prejudicing Waddington's plans, he made no public comment until thirty-three years later. Obviously, after such time the tale would lose various details, and certainly gain a few!

Waddington himself was, of course, undeterred by this setback. **The Colonist**, after noting Homfray's return and briefly describing his misfortunes, then went on to make some astounding revelations eg: - *Price (sic) River is found to be navigable for light-draft steamboats for 40 miles . . . then an easy portage to avoid a canyon 350 yards in length* . . . and so on.[6] Obviously this was what the Victorians wanted to hear.

Conjecture and Persistence

Homfray's abortive experience probably did not add much to Waddington's store of information. This, however, was immaterial. Waddington's letter of Nov. 8, 1861 to Governor Douglas (already referred to) shows that he had already decided on the feasibility of the undertaking.

The letter was written shortly after Homfray had left and before he returned. Waddington describes the Homathko as a *"fine level valley, from two to four miles wide, and navigable for forty miles from the mouth for steamers of four or five feet draft . . . without a single rock or other serious impediment". He notes: "A deep canyon forms an obstruction across the valley, which was avoided by following a side trail for about six miles, over a hill 700 ft. high." But states: "This trail was of easy ascent . . . "*. The topography beyond here is probably described from hearsay. The Forks are mentioned and also the Big Lake (Tatlayoko). The mountain nominated as Mt. Success by Waddington is described, but in the wrong location. He even quotes a (quite unreal) latitude and longitude.[7] The let-

ter must have been read by dozens of historians - one of whom was constrained to write "oh!" as a marginal note to Waddington's topographical inexactitudes.

Considering that Pryce's expedition (substantiated by Homfray's) had merely navigated twenty-five miles of river, traversed eight miles of trail before coming up against a vast, precipitous Canyon, Waddington's description of the route so far explored is fanciful in the extreme.

But Waddington gives equally visionary details of the terrain beyond the Canyon. This information may well have come from Indian reports, although Indian reports do not quote Latitudes and Longitudes and the fact that one was given - however inaccurate - implies the presence on the ground of an observer. One can only speculate as to how Waddington came by his knowledge (garbled though it might be) of the unknown country beyond the Canyon. Pryce would have contributed a certain amount of it, and he had plenty of time to talk to the Indians in their village just south of the Canyon.

Pryce was a man who had no previous experience of wilderness travel. He took with him bed-sheets, a "cask of bottled ale" and an Indian servant, and was duly aroused in the morning by Cote at 9 am each day. He was turned loose by Waddington on Sept. 27th 1861, (with Cote and McNeill as chaperones), probably about 25 miles up the river, with only 8 more to travel before getting to the Canyon. His last camp was just inside the Canyon, and in the nineteen days he spent before turning back (he had started out with six weeks provisions!) he could have reconnoitred to a point where he could see the Forks, the mountain Waddington named Mt. Success, and made some sketches. He would not agree to Cote's suggestion of proceeding further with one man. His report is unfortunately not extant, but he is said to have told Waddington that he had found a trail that *a tilbury might be drawn over with a little macadamization*, and purported to have *seen the bunch grass.*[8] H.O. Tiedemann, who in 1862 took only seven days from the head of the Inlet to reach a point above the same campsite, where he beheld nothing but peak after peak of snow-clad mountains *so far as the eye could reach*, concluded that Pryce must have been dreaming.[9]

Homfray's Grave in Ross Bay Cemetery.

It is hard not to conclude that Waddington himself must have been dreaming to hire such an inexperienced man to explore a route where Downie had already turned back. Possibly, due to the latter's report, it would have been hard to find a competent man to explore further. Obviously Pryce's report had much to do with Waddington's assessment of the unknown part of the trail, as his letter of Nov. 8, 1861 was written before even Homfray returned.

Waddington's subsequent letter, where he proposes to draft a regular plan of this (still untried) trail, and give an estimate of total cost [10] - and where he submits a preliminary plan, and discusses proposed tolls and admininstration,[11] all continue to describe this mostly unknown route in glowing terms. On March 28th, 1862 he received his charter, and had a work party on the ground within days. [12] All this although a practical assessment of the route had yet to be done. Otto Tiedemann would, of course accomplish this in June 1862 - but that is another story.

The real achievers in all these shenanigans were, of course, the voyageurs. Without them no expedition could proceed at all. All day they paddled, poled or tracked the canoes, and on land shouldered packs of over 100 lbs to climb the hills. They shivered in the gloom of the rain-forest, fought cold, insects and dysentery, and slept under a canoe with one blanket, aching muscles and backs. Well led, they would probably go anywhere. Cote and McNeil were on both these early trips into the Homathko, and both played a leading part in Waddington's later road building activities. It is nice to be able to report that Robert Homfray was well thought of by these men.[13]

Homfray's Later Years

After the excitement of 1861, Homfray was no doubt quite willing to go back to his life as a surveyor/engineer in private practice. In 1862 he surveyed part of John Work's property, and was in Hope drawing plans for a silver mine, and nearby pre-emption. His also applied for the post of City Engineer for Victoria City but was unsuccessful.

That summer of 1862, Waddington's perseverance paid off, when H.O. Tiedemann, the next engineer to penetrate the turbulent Homathko valley, reached Fort Alexandria, although by his own admission, "reduced almost to a skeleton and hardly able to walk."[14] Of

those who read Waddington's highly euphemistic article in the **Colonist**,[15] Robert Homfray at least would be able to read between the lines.

He would continue to work both in Victoria and in remote parts of B.C., wherever his services were required. In 1863 he was at the mouth of the Nass River, in 1864 doing work at Thetis Lake, in 1865 surveying the site for Christchurch Cathedral in Victoria. In the same year he did work for the Leech River Ditch Co. (for which he was not paid until 1869!). In 1866 a letter to the **Colonist** places him at the Big Bend, (the current "diggings") where he was compiling a map indicating routes and trails to the mines.

Robert Homfray, according to letters and newspaper reports, was something of an extrovert, and very active in community affairs. He was secretary of the Victoria Philharmonic Society in 1860-1, and played cornet at their concerts. He was a member of the St. John's Church choir for forty years. He was also a member of the 1st Volunteer Rifle Crops, organized in Victoria in 1864. He was also a keen amateur astronomer, as witness various letters to the **Colonist** in 1864, the year of total eclipse of the sun; and later in 1869.

Indeed, the **Colonist** frequently had occasion to mention his name. On one occasion (three months before setting out on his Bute Inlet expedition) he was acclaimed for having scared off two burglars from his home in Trounce Alley, with a big revolver. His letter of explanation appeared next day, denying that he had had any intention of using the weapon.

1871 found him on location surveys for the Canadian Pacific Railroad at Lytton, B.C., and the following year he was on the payroll of the Surveyor-General in connection with the Victoria City waterworks.

An article in the Colonist, Oct. 2, 1873, describes Homfray's shell collection, consisting of five cases of shells and marine animals *"just as the energetic naturist found them"*. In 1902, before he passed away, he donated this collection to the Provincial Museum. His address in 1893 was 3, Quebec St. adjacent to the grounds of the Parliament Buildings. He was unmarried.

In 1894, Homfray decided to publish the story of his epic winter journey of 1861, noting in hindsight that although his friends had pointed out the dangers of navigating the Gulf of Georgia in winter in a frail canoe, up an unknown river and through wild mountainous country, surrounded by savage tribes, he had looked forward to the adventure and the challenge of new and strange sights.[16] Such self-reliance was, of course, a philosophy common to a good many of our pioneers, and fortunately so.

It is not hard to determine just how far up the Homathko River his party penetrated. At no time does he tell of leaving the river itself, and tells of "a great canyon" just ahead before turning back, which would indicate that he got no further than the Indian village known to be near the start of the Waddington Canyon.[17] On March 3, 1863, giving evidence in court, Homfray stated that he went up to within sight of the canyon in a canoe,[18] and his story tells of proceeding on foot after that till he reached the Indian village. The Indians he met with, living in underground shelters, were undoubtedly Chilcotins.

Homfray also stated at the time that he had been hired by Waddington for $200 per month, and if successful was to be given the engineering of the road.[19]

It is said that some years before his death, Robert Homfray had his tombstone erected in the Ross Bay cemetery, with his particulars on it except for the date of his decease, which was added after Sept. 16, 1902 the day he died. It is a massive, polished, dark red, granite globe supported by a square-sided pedestal, and impressive.

* * * * *

The author is a retired B.C. Land Surveyor now living on Salt Spring Island.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes are given here for events concerning the proposed Bute Inlet trail, viz: -

1. Downie to Douglas, Aug. 17, 1861.
2. Waddington to Douglas, Nov. 8, 1861.
3. **Colonist**, Oct. 1, 1861.
4. **A Winter's Journey in 1861** - R. Homfray, 1894.
5. Ibid.
6. **Colonist** - Dec. 21, 1861.
7. Waddington to Douglas, Nov. 8, 1861.
8. Pryce vs Waddington. Supreme Court, Feb. 27 - March 4, 1863. **Colonist** report.
9. P.A.B.C. E/B/T44.
10. Waddington to Douglas Feb. 1, 1862.
11. Waddington to Col. Sec. Feb. 8, 1862.
12. Waddington. Neville Shanks, Port Hardy 1975.
13. Pryce vs Waddington - Supreme Court, Feb. 27 - March 4, 1863. **Colonist** Report.
14. P.A.B.C. E/B/T44.
15. **Colonist**, Aug. 1, 1862.
16. **Colonist**, March 9, 1975.
17. **A Winter'r Journey in 1861**. R. Homfray, 1894. P.A.B.C. E/B/T44. Sketch att'd.
18. Pryce vs Waddington. Supreme Court, Feb. 27 - March 4, 1863. **Colonist** Report.
19. Ibid.

References to Robert Homfray's life itself are available at PABC.

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(N.B. the author considers it unlikely that the Robert Homfray here portrayed was ever a member of the Royal Engineers Corps in British Columbia).

Alfred Waddington, dreamer, entrepreneur, and lobbyist. This sketch of a young Waddington was chosen for the series "Builders of British Columbia - Centennial '71"

Dear Harriet . . . from Robert

Recently, four letters written (1859-63) from Victoria by Robert Burnaby, were discovered in the estate of a descendant of the Burnaby family. These letters, written to his sister, Harriet in Dublin, Ireland, have never been previously published. They are of historical significance in that they describe Burnaby's views of prominent people and early times in the Colony of Vancouver Island. Copies of the letters were sent by Burnaby's great-great-great niece, Meg Kennedy Shaw to Pixie McGeachie who continues to research Burnaby's life and times. The original letters remain in England in the Burnaby family archive.

Robert Burnaby arrived in Victoria on Christmas Day, 1858 along with Colonel Richard Moody, Commander of the Royal Engineers. Governor James Douglas appointed Burnaby private secretary to Moody whose prime task was to open up the lower mainland of the Colony of British Columbia for Settlement.

After a short stint with Moody, Burnaby moved to Victoria where he fulfilled his purpose of coming to the Colonies, by establishing a commission merchant business. He became a respected businessman, an entrepreneur, a champion of social issues and a Member of the Legislature in Victoria. A number of geographic sites in B.C. bear his name including Burnaby Lake after which the City of Burnaby is named.

(The other three letters will be published in future issues of the **B.C. Historical News.**)

Victoria V.I. December 3rd, 1859

My dearest Harriet -

It is your turn, I am sure, to have a letter, as it is on my mind to thank you for two or three giving me full accounts of all your Dublin gaieties. Something has happened to the Mail, & we are kept out of our regular budget, as well as unable to send on mail we had ready; but the steamer, just in, brings me two letters from Sally dated Sept. 22 and Oct. 6th. She mentions not hearing from me: but there must be some irregularity in the Post, since with the exception of the short time I was out in Burrard Inlet, and thereabouts, I have never failed writing every Mail.

I never was better: and since leaving England, have not known an hour's real illness: and there can be no doubt about the healthiness of this climate.

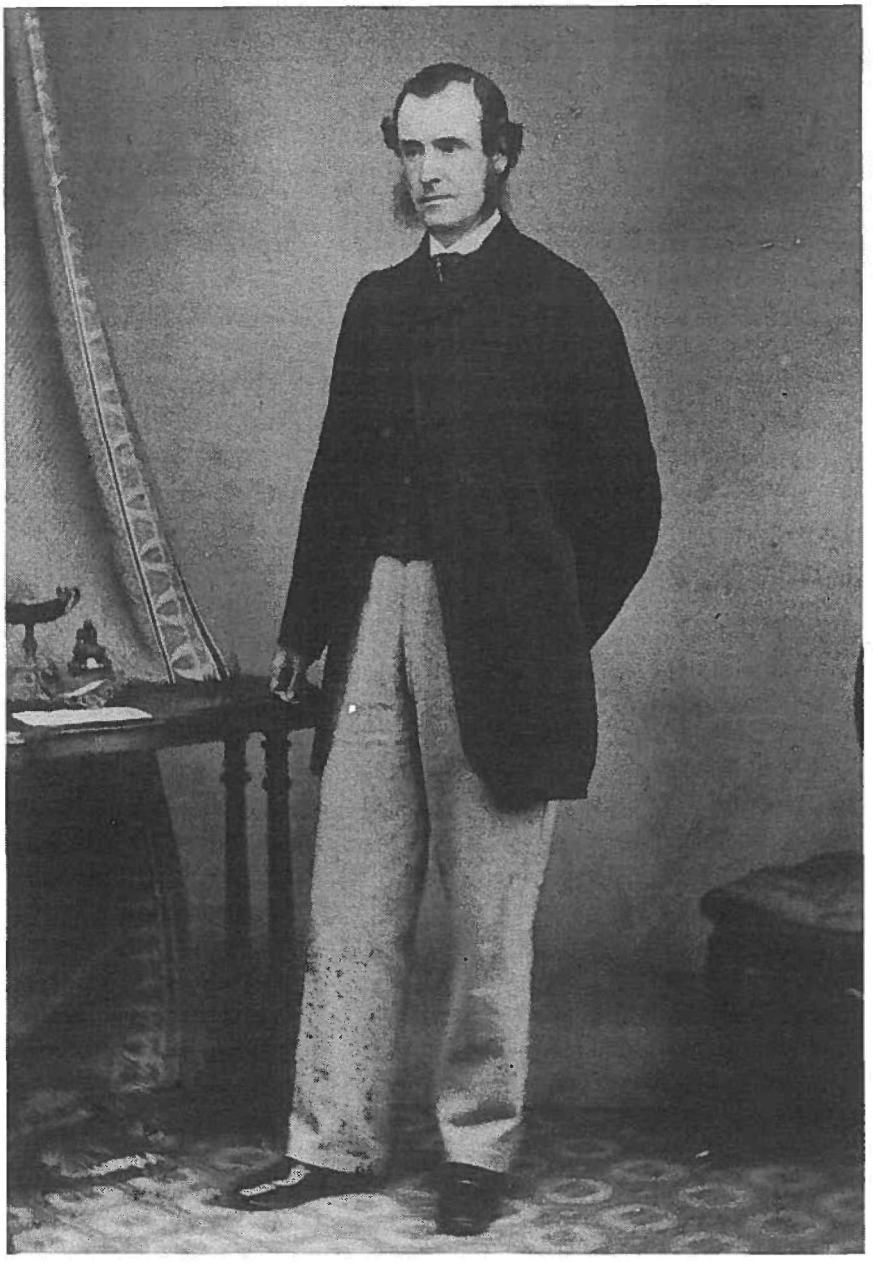
I am now actually in business harness: have got a couple of good rooms in "the City" - and at this instant am sitting, by the side of a good wood fire on the open hearth, amidst my household Gods, or rather **Goods**, to wit Bales of Blankets.

Amongst my visitors are many gentlemen of the Hebrew faith & of German extraction: who are reputed to be the keenest traders, and most slippery customers in the world: but as they bring dollars in their pockets we soon contrive to come to an understanding -. So far my efforts have been as successful as was to be expected, and a good number of red white and Blue Bales have been born (sic) away for Native adornment - The Indians are very particular about the style of their Blanket & its quality: quite as much so, indeed, as Ladies are about the fashion of their attire - We shall soon have the great Blanket feast coming off: at which magnanimous proprietors tear up all their Blankets into shreds before the tribe, to show how rich they are, and how utterly they despise the possession of wealth after all -.

We are all amused here to see what a sensation Genl Harney's move on San Juan caused at home: such leaders [editorials] in the papers and indignation all round: Here it is not regarded as more than a nine day wonder, although had it not been for admiral Baynes the hot headedness of Gov. Douglas might have risked a collision. He is a curious man: full of craft and tack - a diplomatist of the first order, which art he has acquired by constant intercourse with Indians - in treating with whom you must always conceal your **real** object and work round to it in an indifferent way: otherwise, the moment they see you **want** something they double their demands -.

He has taken Colonel Moody, and crumpled him up small: never was there a man so well armed for the fight - sent out on purpose to out manoeuvre the old Hudson's Bay factor - he **talked** a great deal of all his intended moves: while the old Boy, who had measured his man, let him go on and on: muddling his work, and doubling his expenditure; and then when the time came for it quietly sat upon him, which the gallant Colonel allowed -. At one time from his talk I thought him an exception to the rule that all men of the Canting school are weak & wishy washy - but he has proved true to the Colours of the faithful and of course was writing slip slop to Missionary meetings when he ought to have been hard at work on the country -. He will probably return home in the Spring - after waiting Mrs. Moody's convenience in regard to an increase in the population -.

The news from the Gold fields is very encouraging - at this time of year the Miners come down to winter here or in San Francisco - they all bring plenty of money and mean to return in the Spring -; and everybody looks for a rush of Miners this way when the weather breaks -. As a proof of their earnings fancy an Irishman going up there six weeks ago "dead broke" as they say: & coming down again after paying all his expenses with between £80 & 90 in his pocket -. Some men have made as much as £10 in a day -. But the country has been neglected and mismanaged - B.Columbia on the mainland has been snubbed for the sake of forwarding Victoria V.I. and all Govt.



This portrait of Robert Burnaby was chosen to illustrate a series on "Builders of British Columbia" during the B.C. Centennial '71.

officials sent from home for the former, and paid out of its Revenues are **absentees** kicking their heels here -. There is a Mr. Drake come out, who lived at Shepperton - he knew the Potters there and Mrs. P. he tells me was some Italian Baroness -. You allude to the **Marge** in a **ship** letter, which being insufficiently stamped was sent here round the Horn: and with many others arrived welcome enough but very **stale** -. Please send me all particulars about it - My faith in the Potter was never very extensive: & it was considerably shaken by the attitude he took to Tom, with regard to the index of his horrible Magnum opus -: about which I spent a world of useful time and much pains -. I was so glad to hear of Collingwood being on the Armstrong Gun Committee - He will never be forgotten or overlooked where more than ordinary talent and knowledge are required - Give him my very kindest love, and good wishes -. I see Dick is promoted: which is pleasant news - it will I suppose interfere with his Survey appointment - We have plenty of gaiety: the **ships** are **Ganges, Plumper, Tribune, Satellite** & till lately **Pylades** - all officers nice fellows - many of them friends of Elwyn -. We had a Ball here the other night which rather astonished the old resident **Big-wigs** -; got up by a Committee of **Gentlemen** in the place: your brother being one: it was done in "tip top" style - and **every one** was there, to the dire wrath of several **nobodies** who had hitherto allowed themselves into affairs of the kind -. The room was decorated with bunting from the fleet - and looked lovely -.

All festivities are just now at a halt: owing to the death of Mrs. Cameron the judge's wife and the Governor's sister - the Colonial Secretary's Mother in law and the Speaker's Aunt-in-law. /Happy family!/ there was a grand funeral the day before yesterday: at which everybody was present: and where I, with many more, caught a cold in the head -. I hope, by this time, that Tom has got settled - But I don't like to think of it - Kindest love to all at home, L'pool. Kelso and Leicester - not forgetting sweet Dublin City -

Your loving Bro
R. Burnaby

Letters transcribed by Meg Kennedy Shaw and Pixie McGeachie.

* * * * *

There are several characters from early Canadian history at hand, and in search of an author. There is a world now scattered in the archives and the dust, waiting for whoever wants to try putting it together again.

William Kilbourn,
The Firebrand. 1956, XV.

NEWS & NOTES

Janet Bingham Wins Heritage Award

Vancouver author and heritage activist, Janet Bingham, received the Gabrielle Leger Award from Heritage Canada. This Vancouver Historical Society member was involved in the saving of Gastown, Roedde House, Christ Church Cathedral and many other buildings. She has published books on Samuel Maclure (B.C. architect), Barclay Square and more. She is now lobbying to save the Lions Gate Bridge and some heritage buildings in East Vancouver. Congratulations!

Vancouver to Host Heritage Canada

The joint conference of Heritage Canada and the Heritage Society of B.C. will be held October 1st to 3rd, 1998 at the downtown Vancouver campus of Simon Fraser University. For further information contact Rick Goodacre, Executive Director of the HSBC in Victoria at (250) 384-4840 (phone and fax).

Alberta Treaty #8 Centennial Conference

The Edmonton & District Historical Society with the Lesser Slave Lake Regional Indian Council and the Alberta Vocational College in Grouard will host a major conference June 17-21, **1999**. This conference and re-enactment of the 1899 treaty signing will coincide with the Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Historical Society. Anyone interested in attending should contact: Edmonton & District Historical Society, P.O. Box 1013, Edmonton, AB, T6J 2M1 or phone (403) 489-4423.

Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Map

The Alexander Mackenzie Trail Association has produced a map, **The Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route: Canada Sea to Sea**. It is a beautiful map, augmented with pictures and brief notes about many of the historic sites along the route. This is selling in many bookstores or may be ordered by mail at the cost of $7 from: The Alexander Mackenzie Trail Association, P.O. Box 425 Station A, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 7P1. The members visualize this map as their contribution to the Canadian Unity movement .

Royal Museum Shop Lauded

The gift shop in the new foyer of the Royal BC Museum has been chosen the Canadian Retailer of the Year for 1997. This award is not based on sales volume but on overall excellence in all facets of retailing, quality and assortment of merchandise, displays, and staff efficiency. P.S. This is a shop which regularly carries a few copies of our **B.C. Historical News**.

Salt Spring Island Historical Society Innovations

Regular meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 2 pm. Some flexibility is being exercised to accommodate certain speakers and to attract those interested in the working public by scheduling a few evening meetings.

Plaques have been installed on six heritage buildings in the village of Ganges. The tourist bureau has a handout for visitors describing the history of these six sites with a map marking the short walking tour to view these buildings. Plans are afoot to mark and map other sites outside the village. The tourist bureau staff and local real estate firms have enthusiastically endorsed this program.

Heritage Trust Reactivated

Minister Jan Pullinger has appointed Dr. Jean Barman of Vancouver the Chair of B.C. Heritage Trust, with former MLA Anne Edwards of Moyie-Cranbrook as Vice-Chair. Mary Elizabeth Bayer of Victoria and Ardith Cooper of Sooke were reappointed. New additions to the nine person directorate are Colin Browne of Vancouver, Alice Maitland of Hazelton, Michael Osborne of Duncan, Richard Wright of Williams Lake, and Kent Wong of Kamloops.

Hills Bar Anniversary

The major gold strike at Hills Bar in the Fraser River on March 23, 1858 triggered a gold rush and ultimately the creation of the Colony/Province of British Columbia. Heritage Historical Tours of Yale are planning a tour up to Hills Bar on this, the 140th Anniversary of the Strike. Anyone interested in participating should contact Blake Mackenzie, Box 87, Yale, B.C. V0K 2S0. Phone (604) 863-2324, Fax (604) 863-2495 or Email: prospect@uniserve.com.

Living Landscapes

The first project undertaken jointly by the Royal British Columbia Museum and an interior region has achieved its initial goal. Internet users can now access a lot of information on the Thompson-Okanagan on World Wide Web at http://royal.okanagan.bc.ca.

Grant Hughes is currently working with the directors of the new Columbia Basin Trust to create a website for the East and West Kootenay. A broad cross section of local citizens have been consulted; they represent everything from Libraries to Wildlife Societies, Naturalists, Historians, Archivists, Archaeologists, Arts Councils, Schools, Colleges and Tribal Councils.

Victoria Historical Finds Grim Memories

Members walked from Menzies and Belleville around Laurel Point and Ogden Point. They were told of the James Bay Athletic Association sites and activities, then a soap factory and a paint company, depression years on this waterfront, Indian burial houses and poles, the sinking of the collier ship **San Pedro**, a house used to isolate smallpox victims, and the dramatic end of the last owner of that house. All this drama shared in one day last June!

Jack Fleetwood 1914-1998

Duncan's colorful historian passed away on January 2, 1998. Jack Fleetwood became a writer for the weekly **Cowichan Leader** in 1927 and was a reporter or contributing columnist for 65 years. Jack worked at a variety of jobs and could tell stories about all sectors of life in the Cowichan Valley. He had a phenomenal memory and was willing to share his knowledge to the very end. His funeral was held at St. Andrew's Anglican Church at Cowichan Station.

Robert C. Harris, 1922 - 1998

R.C. "Bob" Harris, engineer, historian, mapmaker, mountaineer and naturalist, passed away on February 5, 1998. Harris contributed more than two dozen detailed articles with beautiful accompanying maps to earlier issues of the **British Columbia Historical News**. He was a Captain in the Royal Engineers 1942-46, completed his degree in Civil Engineering at the University of London in 1948, and then came to Canada. He first worked in Ontario but has called B.C. home since 1950.

Cultural Resource Courses at University of Victoria

The Division of Continuing Studies at the University of Victoria:

P.O. Box 3030
Victoria, BC V8W 3N6

are offering a variety of courses, some given over one week on the campus, others by home study. The topics range from Cultural Tourism, Museums at the Crossroads to Heritage Conservation and Collections Management.

For details contact the above department by phone (250) 721-8462, Fax (250) 721-8774 or Email: joydavis@uvcs.uvic.ca

BOOKSHELF

Books for review and book reviews should be sent directly to the Book Review Editor:
Anne Yandle, 3450 West 20th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6S 1E4

Copying People. Photographing British Columbia First Nations 1860-1940. Daniel Francis: Saskatoon & Calgary, Fifth House Publishing, 1996. 150 p., illus. $19.95.

Few travellers today venture to foreign parts without a trusty camera or camcorder dangling from their necks or hanging out of pockets. Indeed, if a photographic device is forgotten, whole ranges of cheap instant cameras, with or without flash, are available from the closest pharmacy. And usually tourists are anxious to take images of the locals to show the folks back home. In many cases the locals happily cooperate, sometimes in exchange for a polaroid or a promise, in other cases the images appear to be exploitative or stolen and ethically questionable. Travel is cheap today (well, relatively so) and those of us who cannot afford the time or the money to go to exotic spots can see them in comfort at home on the television, or possibly on the Internet. We are accustomed, with the click of a channel changer or mouse, to visit anywhere in the world and to see with our own eyes, from many different points of view, a vast display of different cultures and societies.

Photography was not so easily accessible in the period (1860-1940). Daniel Francis has chosen to explore in **Copying People;** but a curious white society was eager for information about the aboriginal people who occupied the far west. Travel was neither cheap nor easy. Many of the early images in this collection of photographs were taken by professional photographers, surveyors, anthropologists, and civil servants. In the earliest days of photography they were constrained by the technology; cumbersome equipment, and fragile glass plates which were easily broken when hauled by canoe or horseback. Long exposure times resulted in stiff strained portraits. The introduction, in 1888, of the hand held Kodak camera made it possible for amateurs to enter the field. Faster lenses resulted in more relaxed subjects. What professionals and amateurs had in common was that their photographs reflected a white world's image of the First Nations people.

Mr. Francis, a freelance historical researcher and writer whose work has chiefly focused on native history and the fur trade in Canada, has gathered together a diverse collection of the images of native British Columbians taken by non-natives. His title reflects his theme. "Copying people" is a translation of a Haida word for camera, which is a play on the word for masks. Mr. Francis believes that photographs, like masks, both reveal and conceal the truth. He shows how many of the photographers attempted to document the "traditional" Indian, with subjects dressed up in costumes and props, while others portrayed their subjects in contemporary dress with an eye to indicate they had joined "civilized" society. Some tried to present the "noble savage" while others preferred to focus on the savage. All influenced the contemporary image of the Indian.

Following a short introduction, which gives a brief history of photography and photographers in the colonial west, the book divides into three main chapters: The Pioneers, 1860-1900; Peoples of the Coast; and Peoples of the Interior. Each chapter contains a very short account of the photographers of the period followed by a generous number of illustrations. The photographs are identified, where possible, by location, photographer, date and archival source. Some are also accompanied by brief historical notes. The book concludes with a list of suggested readings which should prove helpful to those who wish to extend their knowledge of the subject.

Some of the 140 images chosen by Mr. Francis are, perhaps, overfamiliar to those who are interested in the interpretation of the photographic record of First Nations life.. And one wishes that some of them, the Curtis photographs for example, could have been seen in all their original glory. Nevertheless there are many powerful and beautiful images in the collection. There is a haunting quality in many of the faces which is slightly disturbing. As a person of distant native heritage myself I wondered fleetingly about the choices Mr. Francis had selected. Did he fall into the same temptation as the early photographers did and opt for the sensational and picturesque in order to prove his point? Were there other, less dramatic, photographs available to him in the archives and museum he visited which might have shown a different way of life? **Copying People** raises many questions about photography and its intrusion into the lives of First Nations people. This is a useful and relatively inexpensive introductory book for those who have an interest in the subject and it gives a good lead into future study.

Laurenda Daniells,
Archivist Emerita, University of British Columbia.

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Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65. ed. Allan Pritchard. Vancouver, UBC Press, 1996. 307 p. $65.

On May 15, 1862, Lieutenant Edmund Hope Verney made his first "cruize" from Esquimalt to Victoria and back. Writing home, he admitted being "a little nervous of entering the harbour for the first time, as there are many rocks in it." However, he had been given careful instructions and managed successfully. "Everything," he wrote, "promises to be very delightful."

He was twenty-four years old, a veteran of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, and he had come to Vancouver Island to take command of the Royal Navy gunboat **Grappler**.

Throughout his three-year stint, he wrote regularly to his father, Sir Harry Verney, at Claydon House in Buckinghamshire. Theirs was a small world, and they knew everyone, at home, in the colonies, and on the seas between. Verney cautioned, "An immense deal of mischief has been done here in more than one instance, by people's letters from this place being shown about and copied in England: I do beg you to be most careful of mine." Having given fair warning, he launched into gossip, first about governor Douglas, "a wonderful man, but . . . very pompus and ridiculous." The tone of Vancouver Island society left much to be desired; he reported that even the ladies fought like cats. Verney worried about the "poor batchelor bishop", George Hills, a family friend: "poor man, he sadly wants a wife to cheer him up and comfort him, for he has his troubles."

It was a quiet assignment for an ambitious young man, and he chafed while awaiting the promotion he felt was his due. But his eye was too keen and his wit too wry to allow him to languish. He described Esquimalt harbour: "Shiploads of oranges, diggers, and cocoa-nuts arrive from New Zealand, and depart with timber and diggers from Cariboo: the Cariboo diggers are rushing down to Salmon river: the Stickeen (sic) diggers are tearing away to Cariboo, and the Salmon-river diggers are mad to get up to the Stickeen: numbers of the diggers are coming down the country and settling to work at Victoria, and numbers of the Victoria workmen are going up the country to turn diggers: so we are all like the boiling water in a kettle, and no end of bubbles."

On shore he had a house, called "The Small Bower," with a vegetable garden and poultry. He entertained and was entertained. He spent a fortnight's leave touring the Fraser valley.

And he did steer the **Grappler** into more active waters: to Nanaimo, and the new communities at Cowichan and Comox; to Kuper Island to assist the apprehension of murderers; to the San Juans; to Bella Coola, where he went fishing; to Metlakatlah where Mr. Duncan gave him a goat. At Bute Inlet, on a "wet day and uncomfortable in every way", one of his men drowned, and at Millbank Sound the ship ran on a rock.

Trivial or traumatic, everything went into the letters home, along with expressions of concern about friends, teasing messages to his sister, and inquiries about job opportunities. Allan Pritchard's satisfying introduction and notes brief us on who-was-who and what-happened-next in both historical and human contexts.

Phyllis Reeve,
Phyllis Reeve has recently edited A Gabriola Tribute to Malcolm Lowry.

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Wo Lee Stories: Memories of a childhood in Nelson, B.C.. John Norris, Twa Corbies Publishing House, 124 p.,$14.95, paperback.

John Norris, author of **Historic Nelson, The Early Years**, which was reviewed in here in the summer of 1996, has just published this small book of essays relating to his boyhood in the Fairview district of that beautiful interior city. Growing up in the smelter city of Trail, fifty miles away, I spent six or seven of my early summers at

the home of my father's family in Nelson, two blocks from the Norris house, so many of the neighbours' names are familiar to me; the McKims, the Pfeiffers and the Fleurys. The place names, too, are part of a common heritage, — Anderson Creek, Gyro Park, the Fair Grounds, and Walton's Boat House.

Several of my aunts and uncles attended Hume School, as Norris did, but at an earlier time. We all bought our groceries at Fleming's Store, and even as children we thought it prudent that Alderman Ross Fleming had a grocery store when he had such a large family, (all of whom were very musical.) The title, **Wo Lee Stories**, is taken from the name of a Chinese market gardener whose place lay midway between our two homes. We had our counterpart vegetable man in Trail, Way Gun, who filled the same role in our household at Christmas as Wo Lee did in the Norris home — bringing gifts of ginger, lichee nuts and Chinese lilies. While Norris' essays recall many memories of this era, he must have been a particularly sensitive person to have remembered the fine details so well.

Much of the charm of this little collection of childhood memories lies in Norris' ability to remember and describe his feelings of sixty-five years ago. He is able to recall the sense of wonderment aroused by the majestic service of the Church of England and the distinctive language of the Book of Common Prayer, and his ambivalence at being asked to sing a solo by his teacher, Miss Curwen. His description of Duffy, the lifeguard with the beautiful physique, and Annabelle, his fitting consort, going through the elaborate ritual of getting ready to dive, will evoke familiar strains of envy in those of us who were not naturally athletic.

Few of us totally escaped being touched or fondled by at least one teacher or youth leader, or knowing of friends who were importuned in this way, but Norris' description of being seduced into sex play by a cub master is disarmingly real. Likewise his tale of "show and tell" hints at yet another rite of passage that most of us have been through one way or another without suffering any serious emotional damage.

This little volume gives structure to memories that most of us have about growing up-the reticence of parents to talk about where babies come from, the death of a schoolmate, the weaning away from childhood church connections, the mystery of an unattached woman in a settled community, the pride in one's father's occupation and the formative and comforting influence of a good mother in the home.

My only sense of disappointment comes from Norris's restricted account of growing up in Nelson in the twenties and thirties, a veritable paradise for a boy. There were picnics to the Red Sands with its clean, warm beaches, hikes in search of the mythical Burns' Meadows, the spectacle of the three stern wheelers all tied up at the Nelson docks on a summer evening, lit up like the proverbial Christmas trees, the annual speedboat races on the West Arm of Kootenay Lake, repeatedly won by the **Lady Barber** which was owned by a male barber. There was great excitement to watch Captain Dobbin fly his early seaplane, a Fleet, (now hanging in the Museum in Victoria,) on forest fire patrol, but occasionally diverted to conduct an aerial search for the body of a drowned youngster.

But it is futile to speculate about the stories he could have written. Norris has given us a very sensitive account of the ones he has chosen. It is a pleasant read, particularly for anyone who grew up in small town British Columbia between the Wars.

Adam C. Waldie,
Adam Waldie, a member of the Vancouver Historical Society is a native of the West Kootenay.

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Those Lake People: Stories of Cowichan Lake. Lynne Bowen. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995. 217.p., paperback. $19.95

"I have chosen to tell the story of this area through the lives of some of its people." The lives of the people involves, also, their deaths. Death pervades chapter five, for example, which starts with a young married couple buying "the house of a family that had gone fishing and never returned"; the chapter moves swiftly through everyday dangers — the avalanches, the floods, the forest fires — to the story of the Hobson's close call on a runaway speeder, then on to the suicide of Mabel Jones, the schoolteacher, the accidental drownings amongst the float houses, and finally the death of a logger. These are the personal tragedies that Lynne Bowen so sensitively narrates amidst the more positive achievements of the people; yet this is also a work that goes beyond the personal and the private, or, rather, shows how private stories are part of a wider public history. Take the suicide of Mabel Jones. Her death functions to bring ". . . to public notice a problem experienced by many young women teaching in isolated communities throughout British Columbia." The result was a government investigation into rural and assisted schools leading to the appointment of a Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer. This intertwining of private and public brings to life the individual stories of Cowichan Lake, placing them into a context that will fascinate all those interested in the history of B.C.

For those in need of them — or for the refreshing of memory — there are three maps of the area provided, along with a glossary of specialized or localized jargon. The list of sources reveals the breadth of interviews undertaken by the author and others, as well as providing a useful research guide. Lynne Bowen has managed to take all of these fragments and build something coherent which doesn't smooth over difficulties, problems or disagreements; the past isn't idealised or romanticized yet the energy and determination of the Cowichan Lake people is made all the more attractive precisely for that reason.

Dr. Richard J. Lane,
Richard Lane, a Professor of English at the University of Westminster, London, has a strong interest in British Columbia History.

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Hubbard The Forgotten Boeing Aviator.
Jim Brown. Seattle. Portland, Denver & Vancouver: Peanut Butter Publishing, 1996. Foreword by Brien Wygle, 229 pages; $24.95, paperback.

Some people may be put off when they read the word "aerophilatelist" in the foreword to this book, which may be roughly defined as "a collector of air mail covers". Author Jim Brown is clearly more than that, because here he has collected facts and figures, anecdotes and written testimonials, and a whole collection of records which give a brief but evocative glimpse into the early flying days on the Pacific Northwest coast. So don't be put off by that ugly word — it's well worth continuing with the rest of the book. But maybe"book" is itself an inaccurate description; Jim Brown has put together a text which I am tempted to call an "archive". We are given more than accompanying photographs to the written narrative — although these alone would provide a rich visual record of the deeds of the infamous pilot Edward Hubbard who was largely responsible for Boeing's venture into the production of mass-produced commercial aircraft and the successful operation of important early airmail routes. We are also given: reproductions of newspaper accounts and headlines, cartoons, correspondence, copies or original Air Board certificates and various license renewals, reproductions of air mail covers (an important note on forgeries), airmail post office handstamps from Victoria and Seattle, rules and regulations, time-tables and — finally — obituary notices. For those interested in more technical matters, there is an appendix which goes into detail concerning the B-1, CL-45 and Model 80 Boeing airplanes. Anyone who regularly flies on a Boeing 747 will be fascinated by the photograph on page 168: "passengers waiting to board United Air Lines Boeing Trimotor 80." As the accompanying text notes: "This aircraft had comforts air travellers were not used to — the first stewardesses, heated cabin, upholstered and reclining seats, forced air ventilation, hot and cold running water, lavatory, insulated and soundproof cabin, reading lamps and box lunches." Apart from the size of the planes, it seems not much has changed.

If this book is an "archival" collection it also has something that brings the collection alive: the story of Hubbard's life told in twenty-one short but individually fascinating chapters. We are shown the rapid evolution of Hubbard's aeronautical career from mechanic to aviator extraordinaire, working with Boeing and also having independent interests. Jim Brown's passion for accuracy and his respect for Hubbard come shining through.

Dr. Richard J. Lane,

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BOOKSHELF

Raincoast Chronicles 17: Stories & History of the British Columbia Coast. Edited by Howard White, Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, . 80 p., illus. $12.95, paperback.

It goes without saying that Howard White has, yet again, edited a diverse collection of stories and essays about the BC coast that will attract and engross the reader. Issue 17 covers architecture, the West Coast Trail, photography, the BC coast smallpox epidemic, the August Schnarr family of Bute Inlet, and the "Aboriginal Metropolis" of Kalpalin. There are stories, poetry and a hilarious report on the 1919 People's Home Medical Book, with all its advice and moralizing. "The Deer???" by Dick Hammond is a story which hovers between a realistic account of a hunt and the mythical world of ghost stories and supernatural occurrences, where nature outwits man, whereas the poem "The Rock Bandits" by Paul Lawson suggests ways in which technology can destroy not only the natural world, but the men who become addicted to its power. This interaction between humanity and nature structures virtually the entire issue, such as the concern for a respectable access to nature with the West Coast Trail, or the way in which humanity can destroy other cultures through disease.

The Raincoast Chronicles are undoubtedly a great success, but issue 17 does raise some questions that need addressing. While the "spirit" of west coast history has been "captured" as Howard White once suggested was an initial aim of the series, issues such as the impact of the smallpox epidemic on First Nations peoples do not get the academic framework or apparatus they deserve. I'm not suggesting that these popular and popularizing accounts or essays should be written in any other way — the opposite is the case — but I am suggesting that at least some reference could be made to related, accessible essays, such as that on the 1847-1850 measles epidemic in British Columbia found in **BC Studies** 109. Those wishing to follow up the pioneering work of Hannah Maynard and the subject of early photography could profit from knowing that an entire issue of **BC Studies** was produced on photography and British Columbia (issue 52) — and it's available. The essay on Kalpalin, we are told is excerpted from a Harbour Publishing book **The Sunshine Coast**; but surely some more references to relevant essays and documents could have been included? Why are not readers pointed or directed beyond the world of the **Raincoast Chronicles** themselves? A lightweight referencing system or short bibliography would not get in the way, and would serve only to enhance the reader's awareness of BC coast history, through other analyses and stories.

Dr. Richard J. Lane

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Vancouver at the Dawn; a Turn-of-the-Century Portrait. John A. Cherrington. Madeira Park, B.C., Harbour Publishing, 1997. 183 p., $18.95.

Sara Maclure McLagan in 1901 became owner and editor of the Vancouver Daily World and the first woman publisher of a Canadian daily. She was a force in the National Council of Women, the Canadian Women's Press Club, and the Arts and Historical Association. She was an owner, with her brothers, of the Clayburn Brick Company, an overseas Red Cross worker during World War I, and a superintendent of the Vancouver Old People's Home. Her husband, John McLagan, was an influential Liberal and her brother was architect Samuel Maclure. Like Katherine Graham of the Washington Post a generation or two later, she took over the newspaper from her husband and improved on his work. Nevertheless, John Cherrington felt there was insufficient material for a full biography, and decided to combine her story with another project: a snapshot view of Vancouver at the beginning of the twentieth century. Vancouver at the Dawn is intended as "an imagined memoir", Vancouver through the eyes of Sara McLagan. "This memoir," writes Mr. Cherrington, "must be viewed as a work of historical fiction." Alas, it is neither history nor fiction. It is a book which seems to have been written in haste and should certainly be repented at leisure.

Among the facts which author and editor should have checked are the relative ages of Christ Church Cathedral and St. Andrew's Presbyterian, the date of the patenting of the Victrola, and the status of Emily Carr's career in 1901. General Gordon did not fight in the Boer War.

Poor Sara is made to describe her city as "a fun place", but a few pages later, as if to restore a period flavour, uses the presumably Edwardian epithet "My land". She supposedly exclaims: "My land, there were now three dailies serving fewer than 25,000 people . . ." She - or rather, her spokesman - overworks trite adjectives, changes tenses in mid-sentence, and is given to stereotypical descriptions of "pompous Tories" and "preening bluebloods". Snide comments about society women engaging in inane conversation and idle social gatherings of course don't apply to her own friends and her own regular "at-homes". Sara, who insisted on editing and proofreading her own newspaper, must surely be spinning in her grave.

Comments on social conditions, politics and the CPR reek of presentism, seldom supported by direct quotations.

Eventually Mr. Cherrington tires of this disastrous exercise, and crams the final ten years of Sara McLagan's life into two pages. He has not written either of his projected books.

I am not sure I want the "snapshot view" of early Vancouver, but I would welcome a real biography of the remarkable Sara McLagan.

Phyllis Reeve

Phyllis Reeve is the author of histories of St. James Anglican Church and the University Women's Club.

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Union Steamships Remembered, 1920-1958. A.M. Twigg. Campbell River, B.C. Privately Published, 1997.420 p., $39.95, Hardcover.

The Union Steamship Company, organized in 1889 to serve the needs of the burgeoning province of British Columbia's coastal communities, "stopped at almost every community and every inhabited cove from Vancouver to Alaska." The USSC's fleet and the crews aboard them were the "Lifeline of the Coast," and the shock of the Company's passing when it ceased operations at the end of 1958 is felt still.

The significance of the Union Steamship Company is in part measured by the numbers of works written about it, notably Gerald Rushton's classics, **Whistle Up the Inlet** and **Echoes of the Whistle** and the recent book by Tom Henry, **The Good Company.** With the long-awaited publication of **Union Steamships *Remembered***, former USSC purser Art Twigg has lovingly augmented the historic record.

Union Steamships *Remembered* is an essential addition to the literature and one of the core histories. Art Twigg spent years interviewing more than 170 USSC veterans, collecting over 1,000 photographs, and used the wealth of memories and memorabilia to write his 427 page encyclopedic book, hence the title **Union Steamships *Remembered***.

The people, personalities, incidents and occasional accidents that fill the pages bring to colourful life the coastal communities and the ships that connected them between 1920 and 1958. These years were the heyday of the USSC, and for a time so recent seem in today's fast paced world already distant in the age of fast ferries, cellular phones, and the Internet. Art Twigg has ensured that we will never forget those days or the ships that not only linked us, but also defined life on the coast.

James Delgado,

Jim Delgado is Director of Vancouver Maritime Museum.

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Provincial and National Park Campgrounds in British Columbia: A Complete Guide. Jayne Seagrave, Surrey, Heritage House, 1997. 192 p. illus. 16.95.

Whether you are an experienced camper or a novice, this guide to over 150 campgrounds is a valuable tool for any BC trips you might be planning. Details on national and provincial campgrounds include location, facilities, recreational activities, and additional information such as the history of the local site, fish to be caught, if reservations are recommended, local folklore and other fascinating facts. For instance, Fillongley Park on Denman Island is the burial site for George Beadnell, who bequeathed the property to the province. Seagrave points out that the Ethel F. Wilson Memorial Park, located near Burns Lake, is named after the author. As a matter of interest, the lake that was frequented by Wilson and which was the setting for her novel, **Swamp Angel**, is

Lac Le Jeune - a popular campground outside of Kamloops.

The discussion of campgrounds that are deemed "primitive" due to their remoteness, difficulty in accessing them, and/or their rudimentary amenities (such as a lack of fresh water, wood, and/or pit toilets) is limited.

This guide, which is intended for those using tents or recreational vehicles, provides useful background information on such items as selecting a camping spot, registration, and the reservation process that is currently available for 42 provincial and two national parks. Seagrave also provides a thorough list of campground rules and gives many practical tips. For example, she suggests that campers should 'try to avoid areas of stagnant water (mosquito breeding grounds) or spots close to the 'thunderboxes' (pit toilets) which during the park's warm summer months may exude unpleasant odors, attract flies, and offer disturbance from banging doors." She also cautions about potential dangers such as bears, poison ivy, and the swimmer's itch (caused by parasites in the water). Seagrave explains that an application of "skin oil (for example, baby oil) before swimming, towelling briskly, and showering after swimming," will help to prevent the small red itchy spots and blisters; calamine lotion will alleviate the discomfort of the condition.

The next printing of this guide could be improved if Seagrave adds information on other pests, some of which are potentially dangerous: black flies, leeches, mosquitoes, ticks (which may carry Lyme Disease), and wasps (to name a few). A camping holiday can be more enjoyable if one knows how to deal with these pests. The climatic conditions of some parks is a topic that Seagrave might also want to add in her next edition. One mid-August camping trip at Lac Le Jeune was so cold (lows of 2 degrees Celsius and highs of 9) that my family and I decided to cut short our stay because of a lack of warm clothing.

The book appears to be well-researched, but I did find misleading information on one park with which I am familiar. In describing Golden Ears in the Fraser Valley, Seagrave states that "all facilities, including showers, flush toilets, and a sanistation, and wheel chair access are present." This is the situation for the park as a whole; however, the drive-in campgrounds are divided into two distinct sites, Gold Creek and Alouette, and the latter does not have showers. Furthermore, she mentions that the adventure playground keeps "young ones entertained," but does not specify that only the Gold Creek site has a playground.

Seagrave's personal anecdotes enliven the text. For example, in the list of campground rules she notes that alcohol is allowed in campsites and explains that she did not always know this.

I had camped for years before I learned it was okay to consume a glass of wine with . . . dinner. Until then I had guiltily hidden my drink from the park attendant. I thought surely he would expel me for my transgression. On one occasion, discovered and expecting to meet the wrath of the BC Parks employee, I cowered and apologized. All he said was, "You can drink here. This is your home away from home. It is only in the public sections of the park that alcohol is prohibited." From that point on, I've always thought of provincial park camping spots as "home away from home".

Seagrave concludes the book with itineraries for seven-fourteen-, and twenty-one-day camping trips. She points out that "these selections are based on . . . personal experiences and amenity evaluations and are designed to cover pragmatic travel distances on any given day."

My copy of this useful book is already becoming well-thumbed as I begin to plan for next summer's "home away from home" holidays in BC's provincial and national campgrounds.

Sheryl Salloum,
Sheryl Salloum is the author of ***Malcolm Lowry: Vancouver Days*** *(Harbor Publishing, 1987) and* ***Underlying Vibrations: The Photography and Life of John Vanderpant*** *(Horsdal & Schubart, 1995).*

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The Story of the Butchart Gardens. David Preston. Highline Press, 199 p., illus., paperback. $22.95.

The Vantreights: A Daffodil Dynasty. Valerie Green. Saanich: G.A. Vantreight, 1997. 183 p., illus., paperback. $22.95.

The setting for both these books is southern Vancouver Island. Neither could have been written without the co-operation of the families involved. The Vantreight story is an authorized biography of Geoffrey Vantreight Jr., written by a local historian, but published by the subject himself. The author has obtained most of her material from family members and, indeed, in places, the voices of the people interviewed are clearly heard. But she has also checked other sources wherever possible, and it seems evident that Vantreight did not demand a gilded version.

The family had a long history in Ireland as Treights, but on settling in Holland had added the **Van** which was retained when one of them returned to Ireland. John, the head of the Canadian family, came to British Columbia in 1884. His early death meant hardship for the family. Both his son, Geoffrey, and his grandson, Geoffrey Jr., proved to be ambitious hard-working men who took up land and farmed it in order to support large families.

The story of the Butchart Gardens is unathorized, but David Preston obviously had the co-operation of family members. The Butcharts, both Robert and his wife, Jennie, were from Owen Sound, Ontario, descendants of Scottish immigrants. They moved to British Columbia in 1904 to take advantage of the lime deposits in Todd Inlet, necessary for the cement business Butchart was establishing. It seems unlikely that Robert Butchart would have thought of creating gardens in the ground scarred by the depletion of the lime, but he was very supportive of his wife's efforts, both morally and financially. The Butcharts invited the public to enjoy their gardens and, in the early years, served tea to their visitors. It was not until 1941 that admission fees were charged and not until the late 50's that the gardens began to turn a profit.

Both books are well bound and contain photos supplied by the families. The Vantreight story also has good maps of the counties of Ireland and of the Vancouver Island land holdings, family trees, a time line, and an index.

The Butchart Garden story, has, as well as many black and white photos of the gardens and of the family members, a series of beautiful colour shots taken in the garden by the author. There are also a number of inserts which combine a photograph and a verse or some piece of information superimposed on a floral background, a charming feature.

The Vantreight story, according to the author, is a mixture of legend, fable and fact which she claims all biography should be. She is probably right but this family history is also a story of commercial success won by bold, imaginative hard-working people who made the move from farming to agro-industry. The author of **The Butchart Garden Story** claims that Benvenuto, the garden established by the Butcharts, is a legend. And he is probably right, but there could have been no legend if there had not first been commercial success, and neither story could have been told if the natural resouces, the cheap land, the cheap labour, the mild climate, and the rapidly increasing population after the coming of the railroad had not afforded opportunities which the Vantreights and the Butcharts were willing to work hard to seize. Both books make an important contribution to local history.

Morag Maclachlan,
Morag Maclachlan is a member of the Vancouver Historical Society.

History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.

Abba Eban,
from a speech in London,
December 16, 1970.

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