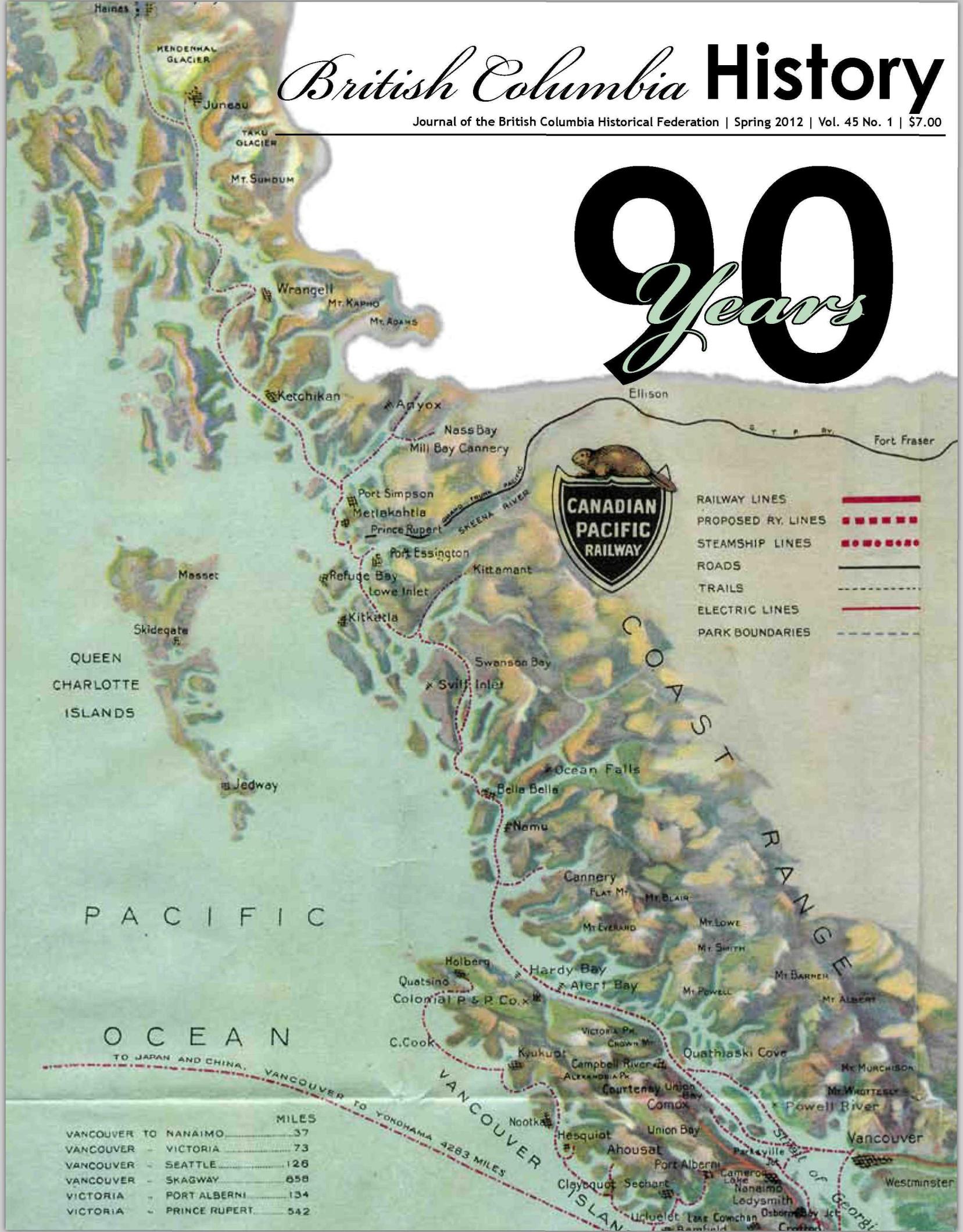


British Columbia History

Journal of the British Columbia Historical Federation | Spring 2012 | Vol. 45 No. 1 | \$7.00

90 Years



- RAILWAY LINES ———
- PROPOSED RY. LINES - - - - -
- STEAMSHIP LINES · · · · ·
- ROADS ———
- TRAILS - - - - -
- ELECTRIC LINES ———
- PARK BOUNDARIES - - - - -

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VANCOUVER TO YONOHAMA 4283 MILES

British Columbia HISTORY

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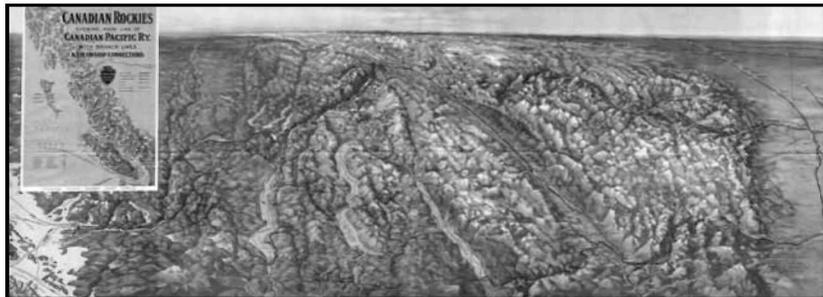
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*Cover image: Detail of map from Resorts in the Canadian Pacific Rockies, Canadian Pacific Railway, 1917. Derek Hayes collection. This map is one of many to be featured in his upcoming book *British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas*, to be published in fall 2012.*

*The following is the caption to the map taken from Derek's upcoming book. It comes from a section called *Marketing the Rockies*.*

*This fine three-dimensional map was published by Canadian Pacific in 1917 as part of *Resorts in Canadian Pacific Rockies*, an extensive booklet for tourists. The map has company rail lines shown in solid red and lake steamship routes in dashed red. Some company hotels are shown, such as Mt. Stephen House, Glacier House, and the Sicamous Hotel. The inset map that is on the front cover of this issue shows steamship connections.*

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"Any country worthy of a future should be interested in its past"

W. Kaye Lamb, 1937

British Columbia HISTORY

Journal of the British Columbia Historical Federation | Spring 2012 | Vol. 45 No. 1

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48 Cabinets of Curiosities

Barbara Hynek, President of the British Columbia Historical Federation, ponders the origin of the "Birdcages" gavel.

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The Website Book Store now has over 80 books on its shelves featuring books and little known self-published books on British Columbia's exciting history. Check the website below for a brief description and information on these books that can be purchased on the site by PayPal.

www.bchistory.ca/publications/store/index.html

Digital Archives

Federation publications from 1923 - 2007 can be accessed from the main page.

Click on the Publications link from www.bchistory.ca

Or go directly to the university library website at <http://bchistory.library.ubc.ca/?db=bchf#>

The archive of BCHF Newsletters can be found at <http://bchistory.ca/publications/newsletter/index.html>

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Find our entry on Wikipedia and add to the discussion.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Columbia_Historial_Federation

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Editor's Note

Best of British Columbia History



In the introduction by the first editor Professor Walter Noble Sage from the *British Columbia Historical Association: Reports and Proceedings* for the year ended October 11, 1923, he states:

In presenting this report to the members of the Association it is necessary that we should crave some indulgence. It is not so extensive as we hope that some day it will become. None the less it represents a real beginning, and if it should stimulate some interest in the study of British Columbian history it will have accomplished its purpose.

In this “Best of” issue I also ask that you grant us some indulgence as we look back over 90 years of the British Columbia Historical Federation. It was a daunting task to select a few articles of the over 200 issues and more than 600 articles. Readers voted for their favourites and a selection was made; thank you to those readers who took the time to send in their thoughts. Please keep in mind the dates when many of these pieces were written; we apologize if there are some statements that date them.

Updates have been made in terms of typographic style; we have the advantage of computers and thus the luxury of an easy ability to use italics. Some editor's notes have been added. Images have been selected that were not necessarily used with the original publication; the early editions did not make use of many images.

We have indulged ourselves with some of the Federation's own history with an article about Frederic William Howay, former president of the BCHF, and current president, Barbara Hynek's contribution to the Cabinets of Curiosities column with the history of the gavel.

The Archives & Archivists column reflects on the future of archives with the advent of digital records.

Speaking of the future, you may have noticed that this issue looks a little different from past issues. We have a colour cover and photos of the authors. This January, the BCHF Publications Committee held some sessions facilitated by our book review editor, K. Jane Watt, to chart the future of *British Columbia History*; your feedback is welcomed as we develop a five year plan.

As I looked over past issues I was struck by the large footsteps in which I follow. Past editors include professors, provincial archivists, authors, and community historians. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to look at our own history and take pride in our accomplishments. I will be talking more about our publication's history at the AGM in May.

This issue only scratches the surface of the wealth of topics that have been written about over the years; I wish we had space to include more favourites.

I hope to see you in Campbell River May 3-6 for our *Blast from the Past* conference!

Andrea Lister, Editor

Submission Guidelines

Manuscripts that have been published elsewhere or are under review for publication elsewhere, will be considered at the editor's discretion.

- Word Count 1000 to 5000.
- Electronic version, with file extension (either .doc or .rtf), will be required should the article be accepted for publication.
- Endnotes, bibliographies, and/or works cited should follow Chicago Manual of Style.
- Photocopies/scans of research material (pages from books, documents, or journals you have used) for fact checking are appreciated.
- Illustrations provided with article submissions are encouraged:
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 - Not embedded in text—send as separate files;
 - Please provide suggested captions for the illustrations;
 - Image credit information must be provided with all illustrations;
 - Low-resolution images may be sent with initial submission in cases where images would need to be purchased from an institution.
- A two-three sentence biographical note about the author.

If a manuscript is accepted for publication, major changes will be cleared with authors before publication. Authors will also have the opportunity to do a final proof check prior to publication.

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Letters from Readers

Touched her Heart

My favourite article is "The Scottish Nightingale Still Haunts Vancouver" by Janet Nicol. Winter 2010 Vol. 43 No. 4, page 5.

It touched a place in my heart. Janet Smith was a young Scottish nursemaid when she came to Canada in the twenties. I came to Canada as a young Scottish bride in the sixties.

It saddened me to read of the kidnapping of Wong Foon Sing by the Ku Klux Klan and the extreme racial prejudice of the times. My Scottish education inspired me with all that was accomplished by Scots throughout the world. Robert Burns, Scotland's greatest poet, knew better. He wrote:

*Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands
mourn.*

Nan Martin

*Member-at-large, BC History of
Nursing Society*

My Favorite Article

Powell, Carol Grant "Family Portraits in Research" *BC Historical News*. v. 31 #1 1997-8 p. 5-8

This article is unique in that it does NOT tell a story, record or celebrate an event, uncover a hitherto unknown fact of BC history or introduce us to a singular, fascinating character.

Instead, Powell instructs the reader and the historical investigator in the art and process of examining photographs. Familial and group photos are recognized as more than 'charming' images of our stiff, solemn Victorian ancestors.

We learn to look more deeply into the images before us and extrapolate information from captions, names, clothing, backdrops, positioning and dates. A sympathy to cultural strictures and customs can lead to a deeper

understanding of characters, times and events.

These characteristics make this article a 'useful' as well as an engaging article.

Frances Welwood

My Favorite Article

Hi Andrea,

You are doing a great job. I hope you get lots of cooperation from across the province.

The article that leaped to mind when I look back over the ten years that I was editor of *British Columbia Historical News* was "British Columbia House. Vol. 24:1, 1990-91". The reason that this was extra special is because John Spittle, a long time colleague in the BC Historical Federation, went to BC House and personally suggested/requested that Garde Gardom write this for us. Two or three letters went between Mr. Gardom and myself (I was not yet on Internet) before the finished article arrived and was printed. Years later I was introduced to Mr. Gardom very informally and he recognized my name instantly.

Naomi Miller

•••••
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• thoughts.
•

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The Pioneer Press of British Columbia

by John Forsyth

Reprinted from *British Columbia Historical Association: Reports and Proceedings* for the year ended October 11, 1923.

An address by John Forsyth to a joint meeting of the BC Historical Association and the Vancouver Island Branch of the Canadian Authors Association, June 5th, 1923.

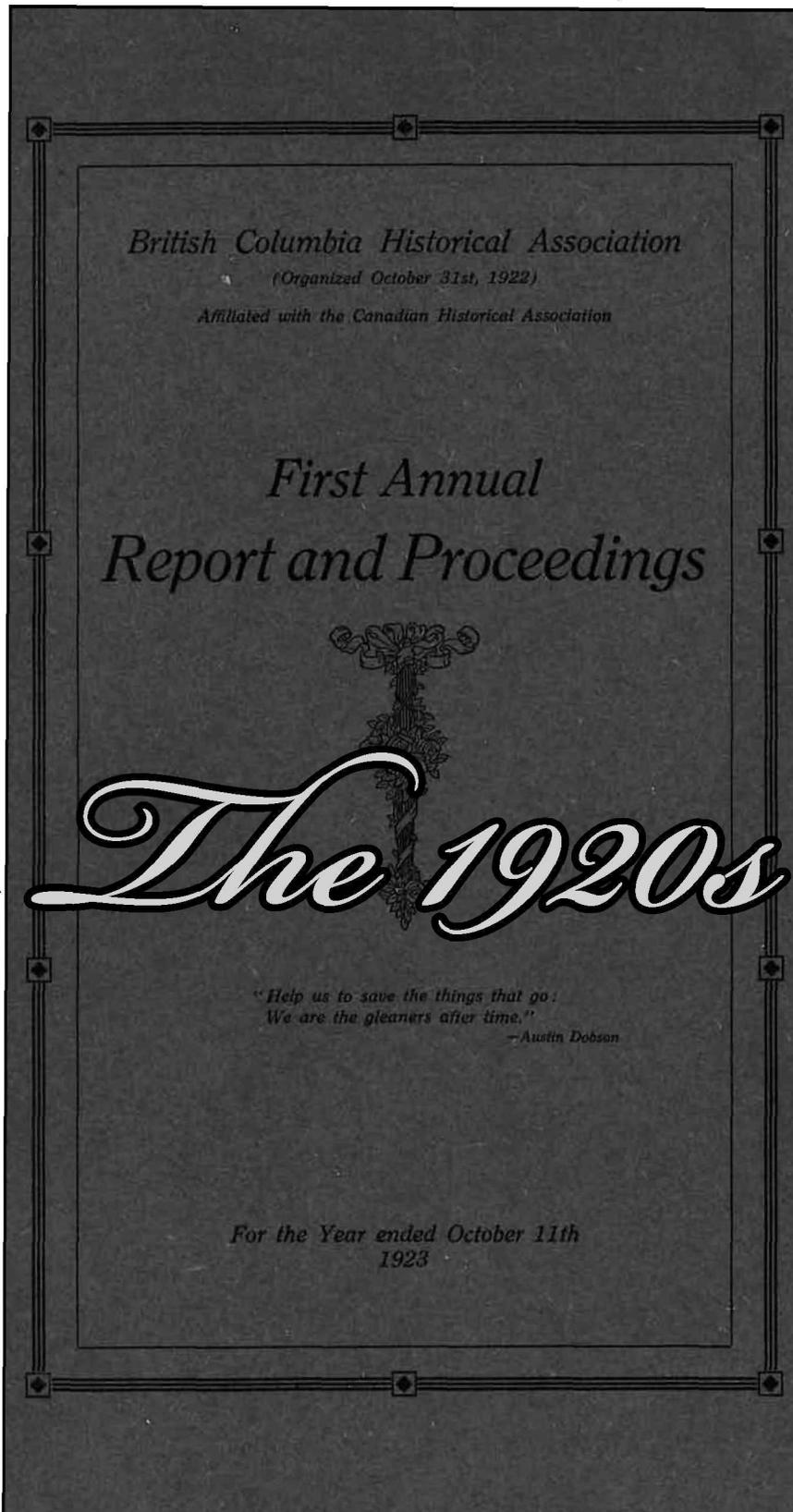
The year 1843 marked the founding of Victoria, and many interesting records have been preserved in the form of individual diaries and official correspondence of those who guided affairs of the infant colony of Vancouver Island. To these we must look for information concerning the early history of this country from 1843 to 1858, as we had no local newspaper until the latter year. True, we are fortunate in still having with us pioneers who can recall many interesting events, but just such happenings as may have been impressed on their memory. The other day I had a good example of this in conversation with one of the oldest residents, Mr. J.R. Anderson. A large-scale map of Victoria was produced, and on this map my friend pointed out in a few minutes what constituted Victoria in 1851. First of all, the Fort with its buildings. On the site of the present Arcade Block there were two buildings 25 feet long; the northern one was a bakery and the southern one Governor Blanshard's residence. Then between View and Yates a small fort was erected in 1851, and Mr. Douglas occupied it as an official residence and office. The stockade was about 50 yards square. At the junction of Douglas and Johnson Streets at the ravine there was a little cemetery.

Between the present post-office and Bastion Street were two log houses about 20 feet long, used by employees of the Hudson's Bay Company.

On the left of Fort Street, just above Douglas, were the Hudson's Bay Company's stables and barns, consisting of two buildings, one about 60 by 40 feet, the other 40 by 25 feet.

The area contained within the present Fort, Vancouver, Courtney, and Broad Streets was cultivated area.

COVER FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION: REPORTS AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 11, 1923





John Forsyth was appointed the Provincial Archivist at the British Columbia Provincial Archives in 1920. He introduced a system for organizing the archives that enabled them to be opened to the public.

There was a house in the vicinity of Burdette and Douglas, where a man named Gullion and his wife lived.

Dr. Kennedy lived in a house on Burnside Road, where it crosses the Colquitz.

Also on Burdette, near Vancouver Street, there was a dairy and cow-stables.

It will be noted that there were very few houses, most of the ground being occupied as farm lands. Among these was Beckley Farm in James Bay, within the area bounded by Government, Superior, Oswego Streets, and Dallas Road.

North Dairy Farm was on Quadra, at the Cedar Hill cross-roads. Staines's Farm was on some flat ground facing Shelbourne Street.

John Tod had a farm at the Willows.

This concluded Mr Anderson's description of Victoria in 1851, and I feel much indebted to him for these particulars, as we purpose having a plan made showing the location of these places in relation to present-day sites.

There was not much progress made in colonization until 1858, which is probably the most eventful year in the history of this country. Many things happened, all as the result of the discovery of gold in [the *sic*] Fraser River. Victoria, hitherto but a sleepy hamlet with a population of two or three hundred, suddenly sprang into a city of thousands.

The Hudson's Bay Company had been given a grant of Vancouver Island in 1849, and this was revoked in 1858. At the same time the Hudson's Bay Company's charter of exclusive trade on the Mainland was revoked and the Crown Colony of British Columbia proclaimed.

With the stream of immigrants from California came two publishers to whom we are indebted for our first newspaper, and this brings me to the main topic of my address.

In the official correspondence and journals is carefully recorded the progress and development of these British colonies in the Pacific, but it is to early journalistic enterprise that we turn for enlightenment concerning scenes and events that are fast fading from memory, as the newspapers of these colonial days furnish many interesting particulars of the careers of men who were destined to achieve success.

To the *Victoria Gazette* belongs the honour of being the first newspaper printed on Vancouver Island. It was published within the Fort grounds by James W. Towne & Co., of California, the editors being H.C. Williston and C. Bartlett. Among those who witnessed the printing of the first issue on June 25th, 1858, were Governor Douglas and officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. The first nine numbers, from June 25th to July 24th, 1858, two issues weekly, were printed on a large sheet, and from thence to the end of June 23rd, 1859, on a smaller sheet; each issue consisted of four pages and cost 25 cents, but latterly the price was reduced to 12½ cents.

Having no telegraphs or international news service, and mails but once a fortnight, this pioneer news-sheet forms a striking contrast to our present-day papers. Perhaps it is well that these limitations did exist, as otherwise we could not now enjoy those little paragraphs, apparently trivial, but nevertheless having such human interest, throwing fascinating side-lights on the character of the people and enabling us to appreciate the conditions existing in a new country.

In our present generation a casual visitor to the editorial department wonders how it is possible to get a readable sheet from an apparently confused mass of clippings, paste, hieroglyphic notes, and the every-day rush of a newspaper office, and few expect that the editor would have drawing-room comfort, but that the publishers of the *Victoria Gazette* did not lack humour is evidenced in the description of their editorial sanctum when they inform the public that the room is more remarkable for extent than convenience. Its walls abound in crevices through which the wind bears with an impartial equality the seeds of catarrh and bronchial afflictions to the editors, proprietors, and typographers. "Its floor is of a shaky character, and where each passer imparts a tremulousness to its surface which occasions the present writing to assume a character that Champion, were he one of our compositors, would find it difficult to decipher." The "editor's desk" is a bundle of printing-paper skilfully poised upon a leather trunk, vibrating with each movement of the writer's hand, and compelling him to double up his person in

the act of preparing "copy" in a manner more curious than graceful.

The editor's easy chair is a Chinese trunk, whose height would be on the level with the desk but for the brilliant idea of increasing the height of the latter by the paper expedient alluded to. Two huge fireplaces adorn our sanctum, these ornaments having been built with a view to convey all the heat as well as the smoke up the chimney. We had designed supplying these fuel-eaters with a pile of lumber belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company stored in the premises, but the printers having occupied it in lieu of a table, we have been compelled to postpone indulgence in that (to us) economical expedient. The pleasant sounds of wood-sawing, nail-hammering, etc., add to the facilities of editorial labour and an occasional procession of Indians cheers and invigorates the writer by stopping and surrounding his locality of labour, and gazing upon his deeds with the expression of intelligence common to the physiognomy of the intellectual race of which they are the representatives.

"Under such circumstances our reader will see that making up an interesting sheet is but a trifling task."

The same issue, June 30th, 1838, makes mention of a pioneer Chinaman in Victoria, though a small number of citizens of the Flowery Kingdom are known to have left California in the Fraser River exodus. "From a sign which appears in our streets, however, it may be presumed that John is among us, as it hears the euphonious and suggestive legend, 'Chang Tsoo.' Doubtless ere long the familiar interrogation of 'Wantee Washee' will be added to our every-day conversational vocabulary."

(To this announcement the following foot-note appears) :—

NB—Since the above was penned a batch of Celestials have landed from the Oregon and are camped in the vicinity of the sign in question. Whether their efforts will be devoted to the washing of gold or of clothing is a point yet to be ascertained, but we shall lay it before our readers at a moment as early as the grave importance of the subject demands."

At this time the gold fever was at its height, and Victoria, hitherto but a sleepy hamlet, suddenly sprang into a town of

between six and seven thousand inhabitants. It was during this excitement that the *Victoria Gazette* came into existence. It was to all intents and purposes a daily paper, being printed five days of each week. Its pages are full of glowing accounts of the rich discoveries in the Fraser River region. Boats could not be built quick enough to transport the miners to this Eldorado, and we find that in "French Ravine," at the back of Johnson Street, more than a hundred boats were in course of construction. A boat to carry six or eight persons cost about \$100, but many of these adventurous gold-seekers risked their lives in frail craft, with the result that a large number were drowned.

This paper underwent several changes in form of name and date of issue. As already stated, the first nine numbers, between June 25th and July 24th, 1858, were printed on a large sheet issued twice a week, and titled the *Victoria Gazette*. From Vol. I., Nos. 10 to 74, July 28th to October 26th, 1858 it was known as the *Daily Victoria Gazette* (being issued five days a week), and from Vol. I., No. 75, to Vol. II., No. 75, it reverted to its old name *Victoria Gazette* and was issued three times a week between October 28th and June 23rd, 1859.

There was also a *Weekly Victoria Gazette* issued between February and November, 1859. The original publishers dropped out and Captain King started another *Victoria Gazette*, which was issued three times a week between December 5th, 1859, and July 30th, 1860, and from thence to September 29th, 1860, it became a weekly under the title of the *Victoria Weekly Gazette*.

For using the same name for his paper, Captain King, a British Army officer, was sued by the former publishers of the *Victoria Gazette*, and it is interesting to note that pending a settlement of the case three issues of the paper, December 12th, 14th, and 16th, appeared without a name. It is said that Attorney-General Carey put King in gaol and that Carey wrote a paper on the *Victoria Gazette*. However, another party continued the paper under its original name for a time.

On July 28th, 1858, Frederick Marriott started the *Vancouver Island Gazette*, and published about eight numbers. It was evidently a paying concern for Marriott, but

This press was brought here from France in 1856 by Bishop Demers and used by Count Paul de Garro while printing Le Courier at Victoria in 1858. It was subsequently used in The Sentinel office at Kamloops. The above photo was taken by kind permission of the Sisters of St. Ann's Academy, Victoria, to whom the press was presented about 1908 by Dr. M.S. Wade of Kamloops.

Editor's note: The press was subsequently transferred to the Royal BC Museum with other items from the St. Ann's Academy Museum; it has formed part of Royal BC Museum collection for over 25 years. For additional information see Jesuit Mission Presses in the Pacific Northwest by Wilfred P. Schoenberg, 1994 and the Canadian Book of Printing by the Toronto Public Libraries, 1940. Also BC Archives and the Sisters of St. Ann Archives.

the people ushered him out of town, as he had acquired \$7,000 or \$8,000 by doubtful methods.

Marriott also published Government notices in a Gazette apart from the above paper. He also printed a French paper called *Le Courier de la Nouvelle Calédonie*, a political and literary journal to serve the French population in this territory. The paper was edited by W. Thornton, with Count Paul de Garro as proprietor, and several numbers were issued between September 11th and October 8th, 1858. It was printed with old-fashioned French type on a hand-press given to Bishop Demers by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of Paris. This hand-press, as shown in the photograph, is reported to have been about one hundred years old at that time, and the first in British Columbia. After doing service for *Le Courier* it was transferred to the *Island Sentinel* office at Kamloops and used for jobbing-work. Here it ended its active career, and about fifteen years ago [about 1908] it was presented by Dr. M.S. Wade, then proprietor of the *Sentinel*, to the "Sisters" at St. Ann's Convent, Victoria, where it now forms one of a series of interesting exhibits in their museum, and where we had it photographed recently.

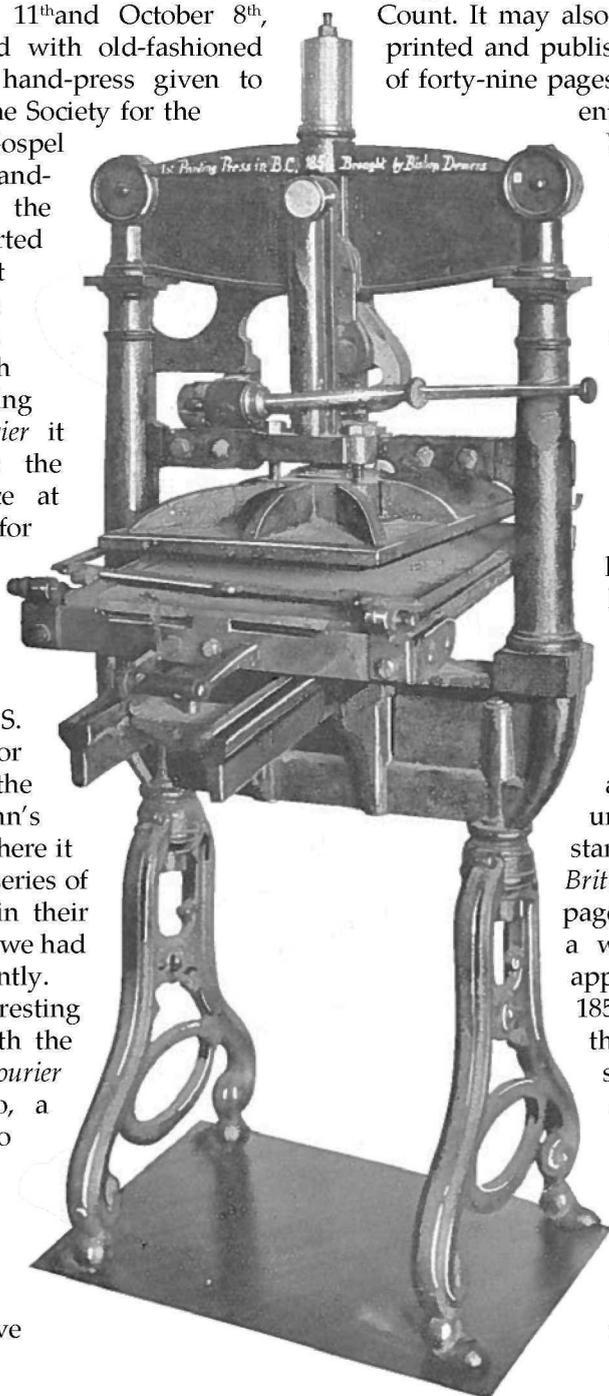
One interesting figure connected with the publication of *Le Courier* was Paul de Garro, a French count who had left France during the political troubles of 1851, in the reign of Napoleon III. When Bishop Demers gave

up *Le Courier* the Count was at a loose end. He took a position as a waiter in a restaurant, where we are told many Victorians would go merely for having it to say that they had been waited on by a real live count. In 1861 the Count, like many others, had caught the gold fever and took passage in the steamer *Cariboo Fly* bound for the Cariboo mines. As the vessel was leaving the harbour it was blown up and among the bodies recovered was that of the Count. It may also be noted that de Garro printed and published in 1858 a pamphlet of forty-nine pages by Alfred Waddington,

entitled *The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or the History of Four Months*. This was supposed to be the first book published on Vancouver Island, but the editor of the *Victoria Gazette* gives priority to David Cameron's *Rules of Practice*, and they also state that a group of proclamations regarding government of British Columbia preceded Waddington's pamphlet, so that this would make it third in order of publication.

It will be seen that many of the early newspapers had a short and checkered career until *Amor de Cosmos* started publishing the *British Colonist*, a small, four-page sheet issued three days a week. The first number appeared on December 11th, 1858, and it continued until the autumn of 1863. The subscription was \$5 per annum, or 25 cents per copy.¹

A *Weekly British Colonist* was first issued on December 3rd, 1859. The first issue consisted chiefly of a review of Waddington's



pamphlet on the Fraser mines, criticism of the Government of the Island, and discussed the question of an intercolonial railway.

Photographic reproductions of this first issue of the *British Colonist* have been circulated at various times, and one of these being of the same size as the original and having no souvenir mark, it bears a striking resemblance to the original. I have seen several of these copies, the owners of which can hardly be convinced that they are not original issues. While the *British Colonist* was still being published another paper called *The Press* appeared. It was published daily with the exception of Saturday and Sunday, although a morning edition was issued on Sundays. The first number was issued on March 9th, 1861, and as far as we know continued until October 3rd, 1862. A semi-weekly *Press* was issued at the same time, as an advertisement to this effect appears in the daily paper.

The Press was published by Leonard McClure, the same person who made the longest speech on record in the Legislature of British Columbia. As the identity of the person who performed this remarkable feat is sometimes questioned, some having attributed it to De Cosmos, it may be well to set down a few details as given by Mr. R.E. Gosnell, who from his long association with journalism and the Government service may be accepted as a reliable authority on the subject. He says:

About 1865 times were very hard, and the previous year a great many tax sales took place. The Legislature was in session, and the twelve months in which to redeem the land was just about expiring. Strong pressure was brought to bear on the Government, and at the last moment a Bill was brought down by message from the Governor extending the time for twelve months to give the owners a chance to pay up their delinquent taxes and get back their land. It happened that De Cosmos, among others, had been a large purchaser at tax sales, and as the Bill had to pass through all its stages by 12 o'clock noon the next day, he and a fellow-journalist, Leonard McClure, also in the House, determined to talk it out. McClure took the floor at 2 p.m.

and spoke continuously for sixteen hours, when De Cosmos took up the discourse and had spoken for six hours when the hour of noon struck and the Bill was lost. It was true that when he finished he was almost inarticulate and all but exhausted, but the great strain was endured by McClure, who, as a result, contracted an illness from which he died later in California. So far from De Cosmos speaking twenty-six hours, he spoke six, and the entire time consumed between the two was twenty-two hours.

On April 27th, 1863, *The Daily Evening Express* appeared, and as far as our library files go it was published up to February 12th, 1865. The first eight numbers bore the title *Daily Evening Express*, and on subsequent copies, although the title *Daily Evening Express* is retained in the body of the paper, the front title is *Evening Express*, and has the royal coat-of-arms. The volumes look odd, as there was no uniformity in the size of the paper. It was published by Wallace & Allen at first on Langley Street, off Yates, and later at Moore's Hall, Yates Street. Another paper circulating at this time was the *Victoria Daily Chronicle*, published by Higgins & McMillan upstairs in Smith's fire-proof building on Government near Yates Street. The *Evening Telegraph* was issued in July, 1866. It was printed on Langley Street, and issued every morning except Saturday and Sunday, but had a Sunday morning edition. Another paper first published in Victoria in 1859 by E.H. King was the *New Westminster Times*, edited by Leonard McClure.

So far I have dealt only with the Colony of Vancouver Island. I now turn to New Westminster, as the publishing centre for the Colony of British Columbia. Here the *British Columbian* was first published as a weekly in February, 1861. Then there was a scurrilous little paper called *The Scorpion*, to be published whenever it was convenient by "Josiah Slumgullion," on St. Patrick's Square, New Westminster, and containing political skits of the time. The first issue appeared on March 11th, 1864, but *The Scorpion's* wit had little appreciation from the public, as only a few numbers were issued. To quote an "Important Notice": "*The Scorpion* will hereafter be

furnished to the public at the greatly reduced rate of one bit (12½ cents) per number. This is just one-fourth the price of the *London Punch*, and no person would for a moment hint that this sheet is not superior in every respect to that miserable rag."

Here and there a little joke at the expense of the Island Colony, such as "Why is the City of Victoria like an undutiful son? Ans.: Because it won't afford house room for its Governor."

On November 2nd, 1864, G.F. Parsons published a semi-weekly called the *North Pacific Times and British Columbia Advertiser*.

Of the early papers published on the Mainland there is one which stands out pre-eminent. This was the *Cariboo Sentinel*, first published by George Wallace, at Barkerville, in June, 1865. The subscription was \$1 per week. It was evidently intended to issue twice a week, but early issues only appeared once a week. The paper changed hands several times. Wallace was succeeded by Allan & Lambert, later Allan & Co., and in 1868 Robert Holloway was proprietor.²

Another New Westminster paper was *The Examiner*, a semi-weekly, first published on November 9th, 1866, by Alex Rose and Henry Havelock, at Columbia Street. Later it was called the *British Columbia Examiner*.

But the unique specimen of journalistic enterprise extant in the Province is a complete file of the *Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette*, which was published in 1858 and 1859 on board the troopship *Thames City*, when this vessel was voyaging from England to the newly-organized Colony of British Columbia with a detachment of the Royal Engineers under the command of Captain Luard. The paper was written by hand, and was read every Saturday night to all on board by the commanding officer. This interesting memento was presented to the Provincial Library some years ago by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Wolfenden, King's Printer, who was a member of the corps.●

Endnotes

1. Editor's note: De Cosmos sold the newspaper to some of his employees in order to devote his time to politics. The newspaper has changed hands and names several times but is still published today as the *Victoria-Times Colonist*. It is the oldest newspaper in Western Canada. It can be read online from 1858- June 1910 at www.britishcolonist.ca.
2. Editor's note: The *Cariboo Sentinel* has been digitized as part of the University of British Columbia Archives: historicalnewspapers.library.ubc.ca.

British Columbia History

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Billy Barker of Barkerville

By Louis LeBourdais

Reprinted from the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, July 1937

IMAGE P-0678 COURTESY OF BARKERVILLE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION ACC. # 1988-9811.1



This article was written for the 75th anniversary of Billy Barker's gold 'find'. 2012 is the 150th anniversary of the founding of Barkerville.

Beyond the fact that he was a Cornishman, had been a pottery worker in the Old Country, and had spent some years at sea before he became a miner in British Columbia, very little is known about William (Billy) Barker, after whom the town of Barkerville, in Cariboo, is named.

At what port Barker left his ship is not known. He joined in the rush to the Fraser River in 1858 and apparently reached Williams Creek early in 1862. Apparently, too, he staked the first "Barker" claim several weeks prior to the first entry in the Williams Creek record-book, now in the Provincial Archives, Victoria, which gives the date as August 13, 1862. The rush to Williams Creek commenced in 1861, following "Dutch" Bill Dietz's discovery of good "pay" above the canyon.

The lead was struck in the Barker about August 21, according to an entry in the diary of Bishop Hills, who made a trip from Victoria to Cariboo in the summer of 1862. This entry, which is characteristically brief, reads: "When lead struck on Barker's claim, about August 21st, all went on spree for several days, except one Englishman, well brought up."

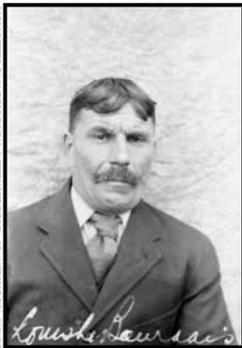
There were seven Englishmen in the original Barker claim, each holding a full interest of 100 feet. Their names and free miners' certificate numbers, listed in the following order, were: W. Barker, 7751; H. P. Walker, 9164; C. Hankin, 272c; R. Dexter, 207c; H. Gabel, 873D; A. Anderson, 874c; and G. Hankin, 9815.

Bob Dexter was foreman of the Barker Company and Charles Hankin secretary. The seven Englishmen, headed by Billy Barker, erected the first building—a rough, log-walled shafthouse—on Williams Creek below the

The 1930s

IMAGE B-06882 COURTESY OF ROYAL BC MUSEUM, BC ARCHIVES





Louis LeBourdais was born in 1888. He was a telegraph operator, life insurance agent, and political figure in British Columbia. He represented the Cariboo District in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia from 1937 to 1947. He had mining interests in the Barkerville area, and in the 1920s and 1930s he travelled around the area gathering historical information. LeBourdais died in office in 1947 and is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery in Quesnel.

canyon. All mining, prior to Barker's strike, was confined to the upper part of the creek, above the canyon—a narrow, rock-walled gulch, perhaps 500 yards in length, which separated Upper Williams Creek and the town of Richfield (which has now almost entirely disappeared) and the lower portion of the stream. Jack Buie built the second log structure, to be used as a store, just across the narrow street and a little below the Barker shaft-house. Around these two buildings grew the town of Barkerville, which, a year later, boasted a floating population of 10,000.

Drinking was the prescribed method employed to give expression to feelings of joy in those early days; and it was to the Richfield saloons, a mile up-stream, that English Bill Barker and his partners hied¹ themselves to celebrate their strike. Barker was a free spender; and there is little doubt that he and his partners (with the possible exception of the one who was well brought up!) put on a celebration which was not confined to the saloons of Richfield. Those of Grouse Creek Town and Antler Town, 5 and 10 miles distant, respectively, would have reaped some of the reward of the Englishmen's new-found wealth.

Barker and his company received little encouragement from contemporary miners up-stream. And there were many times, according to reports which have been handed down, when Barker was sorely tempted to discontinue his shaft-sinking operations. But he was a stubborn man and refused to give in, despite the lack of funds which harassed the company for weeks before the strike was made.

Bill Brown, permanent resident of Barkerville since 1872, who knew Barker well, claims that the company would have been forced to quit sinking had Barker not received financial assistance from Judge Begbie. Bill Brown states that when asked about this afterwards the Judge explained that he let the Barker company have funds to continue sinking their shaft because, in his opinion, financing them would be less expensive than to pay their way out of the country. All seven Englishmen were broke. After they struck it, Barker offered Begbie an interest; but because of his position he refused it. It was pretty generally understood on Williams Creek, however, that the Barker company reimbursed

the Colonial Government in gold for the help they had received through Judge Begbie.

Billy Barker's share—unofficial records credit the Barker with a production of \$600,000—did not last him long. He spent the winter of 1862—63 in Victoria, and it was there that he met and on January 13, 1863, married Elizabeth Collyer, a London widow. Along with a number of other women, some of whom later became the wives of lonely Cariboo miners, Mrs. Collyer had reached Victoria aboard the sailing-ship *Rosedale*, which struck Race Rocks when nearing port on December 12, 1862, and was beached at Ross Bay in a sinking condition.

Barker, who is described as a man of less than average height, stout with heavy body, short, slightly bowed legs, was 42 years of age at the time of his marriage. His face was partially hidden beneath a bushy black beard, plentifully streaked with grey.

He found that he had let himself in for a lot of trouble when he landed back on Williams Creek, in the early spring of 1863, with a woman who, in the evenings, preferred a gay time with the boys to the companionship of a bushy-bearded miner in a log cabin, sitting before a rough stone fireplace in his stockinged feet. With two to three hundred young men to every woman, Billy Barker soon became a freer spender than ever in an effort to hold a place in the London widow's affections.

Barker had a habit, when entering a saloon, particularly after taking a few drinks, of performing a little step dance and singing out at the same time:—

*I'm English Bill,
Never worked, an' never will.
Get away girls,
Or I'll tousle your curls.*

At other times he would shuffle a few steps and call out some of his favourite sayings, which were: "Blue clay, an' the bedrock pitchin'; sulphides of iron, cows' tongues, an' black sand in the pan." Any one of these was a good indication in a prospecting shaft; but a combination of them was almost a sure thing. Cows' tongues, of course, meant well-washed stones, all lying at a certain angle, like those in the bed of a flowing stream.

Barkerville, Richfield, and Camerontown—which sprang up in 1863—64

around John A. "Cariboo" Cameron's claims a half mile down-stream—were plentifully supplied with saloons, and it was not long before Billy Barker's money was gone. And with it the woman!

But not all of Barker's gold was pushed in pokes across the polished bars of Williams Creek saloons. He was free with his money in other ways; loaned out a lot of it, and grub-staked many prospectors to work claims which he knew at the time were hopeless.

By the time the Barker claim was worked out—late in the fall of 1866, according to James Buie Leighton, who, as a boy of 14, reached Williams Creek in the summer of 1865—Billy Barker was broke. But this did not worry him a great deal. He had been in that condition many times, and there were other "Barker" claims on the creek. Prospect—shafts sunk in various places over a three-year period convinced him, however, that paying claims were not so easily found.

In November, 1869, he was reported to have struck a good prospect in a shaft he was sinking on the hill sloping toward Valley Creek, close to the Prairie Flower's ditch, which he called "Barker No. 2." It had long been believed that the ancient channel, to which French, Canadian, Grouse, and Antler

Creeks were tributaries, took its course along the section bordering on Valley Creek.

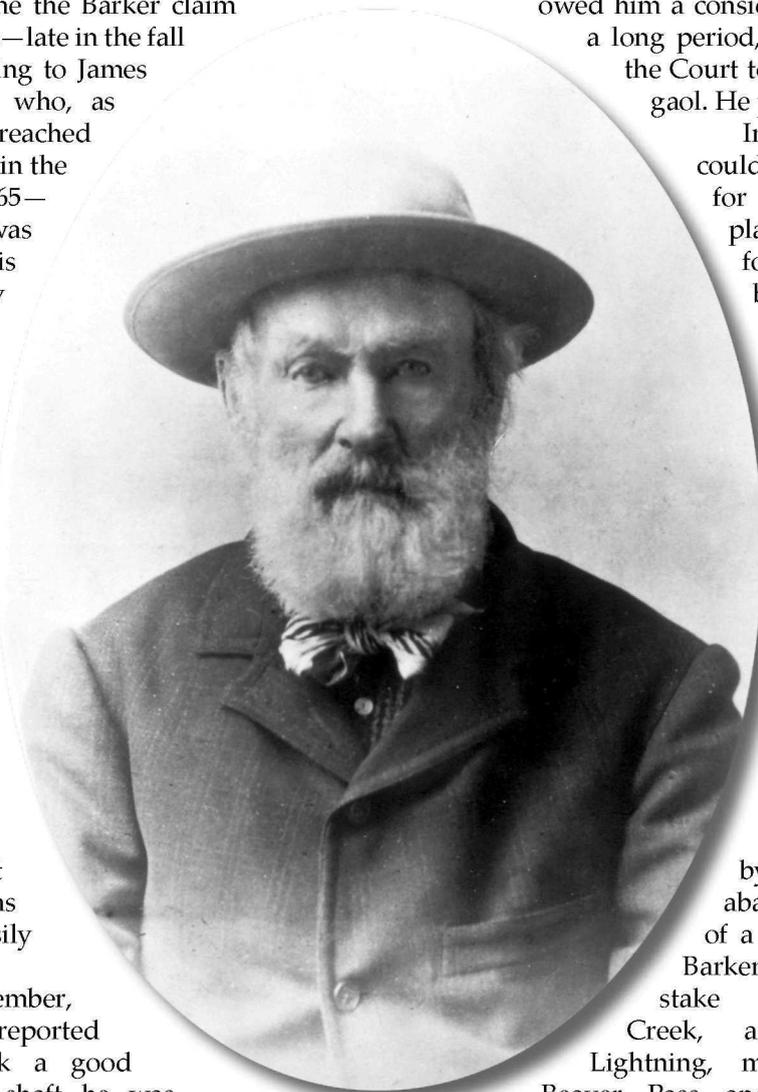
Apparently the prospect petered out, for in less than two months Barker had started to sink a shaft on the left side of Williams Creek, near the Cariboo claim. This, too, proved a failure and Barker was now not only flat broke, but heavily in debt as well. In an effort to recover some of the proceeds of the Barker No. 1, which he had loaned, he resorted to the law.

One particular debtor, who had owed him a considerable sum over a long period, was ordered by the Court to pay up or go to gaol. He preferred gaol.

In those days one could be put in gaol for debt; but the plaintiff had to pay for the defendant's board and lodging during the period of his incarceration. Barker paid this man's expenses for several months, until further financial difficulties finally forced him to discontinue the support of his prisoner.

Pursued by ill luck and abandoning hope of a second bonanza, Barker sought a grub-stake on Poorman's Creek, a tributary of Lightning, midway between Beaver Pass and Stanley. This stream was known and recognized as a "grub-stake" creek on which down-and-outers could work ground which, at the moment, remained unoccupied.

There, with George Munroe, Cy Roe, and Frank Orr as partners, he worked for a time.



William Barker of Barkerville, circa 1860s.

Images on page 11: Top: View from the Williams Creek Bridge looking south onto Barkerville. Image of Barkerville taken from a bridge on Williams Creek. At the north end of town, facing south. St. Saviour's Church, Miners Boarding House, El Dorado, 1934. Photographer Harold McWilliams.

Bottom: Barkerville in 1938.

IMAGE A-01144 COURTESY OF ROYAL BC MUSEUM, BC ARCHIVES



But his bad luck held. Cy Roe became ill and was sent to the hospital in Barkerville, where he died shortly afterwards. And a few days later, in an abandoned cabin below Barkerville, they found the body of Frank Orr. A partly-filled bottle of cyanide stood on a table near the bed and alongside it a note, which read: "I can't live without Cy." The two had been inseparable companions for half a lifetime.

But the grim reaper remained unsatiated. George Munroe was the next to go. Death claimed him suddenly one day as he stood talking to a friend on the road between Stanley and Van Winkle.

For some little time before Barker left Poorman's Creek (now called Donovan) for the lower country to earn a frugal living by working as cook on the government road, a sore appeared on his lower lip. This refused to heal and later developed into cancer.

Broken physically and financially, Billy Barker died in the Old Men's Home, Victoria, on July 11, 1894.

Not more than 200 words were used by Victoria newspapers in an obituary to a man who had brought fortunes to scores of men on Williams Creek in the years which followed Bill Barker's strike. The press of the time made mention of the fact that "in partnership with the late Bob Dexter, Barker's profits, for a few months ran into thousands of dollars a day," and then proceeded to reprove the dead adventurer for being so free with his money

that he failed to save anything for his declining years.²

No mention was made of the good which was accomplished by the money that Barker and his partners recovered from the bed-rock of Williams Creek and freely spent, or lent to their less fortunate contemporaries. It was gold from the first "Barker" that financed "Cariboo" Cameron's trip from Williams Creek to Victoria when he took out the body of Sophia, his wife, who died at Richfield on October 23, 1862. Fifty pounds of the yellow metal were loaned to Cameron by Charlie Hankin, a member of the original Barker company. It was with part of this gold that Cameron purchased additional interests on Williams Creek in the vicinity of the Cameron claim; interests which helped swell the fortune in gold which was loaded on pack-horses when he left Barkerville in October, 1863.

August of this year [1937] will mark the 75th anniversary of Bill Barker's strike which started the town of Barkerville, a log-and frame-building metropolis which, in 1862-63, drew men and women from every part of the civilized globe. •

Endnotes

1. "Go quickly, hastened." *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. Thumb Index Edition. 1998.
2. *Mail*, July 21, 1894.

In the Summer 2012 issue of *British Columbia History*



Riverview: Hospital for the Mind

The Riverview Lands have a long history as a sanctuary for British Columbians; a sanctuary that individuals are working to save as a legacy for future generations of British Columbians.

by Valerie Adolph

Land Under Water

When a severe ice storm caused flooding in 1935, the Coulthard family struggled to recover from the devastation to their Surrey farm.

by Rosemary M. Cunningham

Frederic William Howay: An Intimate Portrait

By Noel Robinson

Reprinted from the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, January 1944

The 1940s



IMAGE FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, JANUARY, 1944

Judge F. W. Howay from a photograph taken in 1923.

Noel Robinson wrote this tribute as part of a series in the January 1944 *Quarterly* to mark the passing of Judge Howay (1867-1943), former president of the BCHF.

In paying tribute to the memory of my old friend Judge Howay I do so with the feeling that anything I may write will fall short of what I should like to write, for he occupied a unique niche in my esteem and affection for a period of about thirty years.

Widely known though he was in Canada, and particularly British Columbia, as jurist, historian, and lecturer, there will be many, even among the readers of this *Quarterly*, who did not know him intimately. It is for these, particularly, that I would endeavour to paint a little pen-picture of one who was not only an outstanding Canadian, but a very lovable and intensely interesting and versatile man.

It is as I knew him during the innumerable afternoons and evenings I have spent with him in the delightful study of his home in New Westminster that I shall always remember him best. Many walls of his home were hidden with shelves of books from floor to ceiling, but it was in this sanctum, the windows of which afforded a spacious view of the great Fraser River far below, where he was surrounded by the pick of his priceless collection of British Columbiana, as well as his more intimately prized volumes of prose and poetry, that he always seemed most at home. There, and in his summer home up the North Arm of Burrard Inlet, where he was an equally happy host, and where I was able to appreciate his talent in backwoods lore—yes, and as a cook and very practical skipper of his motor-launch.

In that room, less than two weeks before he died—and after he had suffered the stroke the effects of which were to prove fatal—he played me two games of chess upon the old chess board that showed signs of its immersion when, upon one occasion, his launch shipped a sea which poured into the cabin while he



Noel Robinson, born 1879, was a Vancouver columnist for newspapers that included the *Vancouver World*, *Star* and *Province*. He contributed historical articles and received a Good Citizen award in Vancouver for his community work with organizations that included the museum society, Little Theatre and the B.C. Historical Society. He co-wrote *Blazing the Trail Through the Rockies*, *the Story of Walter Moberly and His Share in the Making of Vancouver*. Robinson died in 1966.

was playing a game. That afternoon we “boxed the compass” in conversation for the last time upon those literary matters that were so dear to him. His mentality was unimpaired, but we were both aware that he had, in all human probability, received an intimation of the approaching end. It was characteristic of him that this knowledge made no difference to the zest with which he engaged in those games—both of which he won—or in the discussion that followed. He may be said to have died, as he would have wished, almost with his boots on.

He was at that time preparing a programme for the New Westminster Fellowship of Arts, of which he had been the moving spirit for a quarter of a century, and the interests of which, together with those of the Vancouver Dickens Fellowship, of which he was life Honorary President as well as a Vice-President of the parent Fellowship in England, were very close to his heart. This winter the subject of study of the Fellowship of Arts is the Scandinavian countries, their peoples and history, and the Judge had saturated himself in the lore of the Vikings and the prose and poetry of their descendants.

He had an almost phenomenal memory for prose and verse, and this was never more apparent than upon that afternoon, when he quoted to me from memory stanza after stanza of ballad poetry dealing with early Viking history and feats of arms. In the midst of one of these quotations he was reminded of Napoleon’s connection with Scandinavia (Bernadotte). He had a whole shelf of his library devoted to Napoleon, and a picture of the Little Corporal stood upon his mantelshelf. Apropos of this digression he recited a rolling Napoleonic ballad.

Judge Howay, as his friends well knew, and as befitted an historian, had a passion for accuracy. There was hardly one among his historical books dealing with British Columbia and Northwest America that was not profusely annotated. His mind was so well stored, too, with general historical data that, no matter what knotty problem came up for discussion, he would get up from his chair, remove his pipe from between his lips, with the remark: “I think we can find something on that,” and, walking to his shelves, would take down a

book, turn the pages, and with: “Yes, here it is,” read an extract bearing upon the point at issue.

Though a man of less than medium height, Judge Howay was possessed of a cast of countenance, a dignity, and a mode of expression that, in some indefinable way, seemed to add to his stature and impressiveness upon occasion. At other times his fresh complexion, the snow-white curl upon his head, his keen, sometimes quizzical eyes, and the pipe between his teeth, would give him quite a Dickensian air. I can see him now at the annual Twelfth Night revels of the Fellowship of Arts (which are always in the costume of the period being studied), made up as Mr. Pickwick, or dancing Sir Roger de Coverley, his ermine robe flying, his crown awry, when he had impersonated King Henry the Eighth.

In my mind’s eye I can see him, too, very vividly, in tail silk hat and frock coat year after year among the worthies of New Westminster at the historic crowning of the May Queen of the Royal City, a ceremony that has taken place for seventy years. For years he wrote the addresses to be spoken by the May Queen and the May Queen—elect—right down to the last year of his life, when he happened to be away in Eastern Canada, and delegated that pleasurable duty to me.

He was so saturated in the literature and lore of England, from Chaucer, through the Elizabethan era, the prolific age of Anne and onwards; so familiar with the atmosphere of the countryside there, its castles, cathedrals, abbeys, and manorhouses, that it was sometimes difficult to realize that, though he had travelled widely upon the American continent and in Hawaii, he had never visited the Old Country. His intimate acquaintance, through reading, with all the places Dickens has made familiar to his readers and peopled with his characters was encyclopedic, and he was heard at his best in those little cameo-like talks, so full of acute judgment and wit, which he delivered annually to the members of the Vancouver Dickens Fellowship.

Many years ago, as a youth, I found myself reporting a case in court at Worcester, on the Oxford Circuit, when Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, notable son of Charles Dickens, was either counsel for the prosecution or the

defence. If I remember correctly he, too, was a comparatively small man, and his mode of expression and witticisms were recalled to me many years later by similar characteristics in Judge Howay.

By way of contrast with the foregoing, I recall an incident that took place four years ago, when I heard the Judge deliver one of the most eloquent impromptu addresses I ever heard from his lips. He and I had motored 80 miles from Red Deer to the pioneer fur-trading and lumbering settlement of Rocky Mountain House, where are situated the remains of the fort erected by David Thompson nearly 140 years ago, the site being marked by a commemorative cairn. As an explorer, and on account of his fine personal qualities and rectitude, the Judge ranked Thompson very high.

Upon this occasion a dinner was given by the mayor and aldermen of Rocky Mountain House in Judge Howay's honour, and it was preceded by a cocktail party at the mayor's home. At that party the Judge was greatly attracted by a small statuette of a Kentucky colonel. The mayor pressed him to accept it as a memento of his visit, but the Judge demurred. There upon His Worship whipped off the head of the "colonel" and took from the interior a bottle of whisky, with the remark: "Well, Judge, if you won't accept the gentleman as a whole you shall certainly sample part of him." But Judge Howay was a teetotaler!

His love of the sea and ships, and his knowledge of the latter, their construction, and their rigging in the days of sail, was particularly intimate for a landsman. I like to remember how he revelled in recalling the days of Drake and the Spanish Main, and the voyages and explorations of Captains Cook and Vancouver. In connection with the two latter, much valuable material was published from his pen as a result of his researches. For many years he visited Boston annually to dig into the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society for data regarding the early fur-trading on the North American coast.

This is a reminder that he was as well known in historical circles of the Northwest on the other side of the border as he was in Canada, and that he was the recipient of several honours from historical bodies there. In

a recent issue of this Quarterly he paid tribute to the memory of a distinguished historian on the American side of the line, Mr. T. C. Elliott, one of his oldest and closest friends, whose work he admired greatly.

Let me carry the reader back half a century or more in the life of Judge Howay. I have before me as I write a paragraph, yellow with age, which was found among his newspaper cuttings. It is from the columns of the *British Columbian* of New Westminster of about 1890 and was written when the Judge, as a very young man, was about to enter upon his professional career in the Royal City. It is worth printing in full:

Mr. F.W. Howay, a graduate of Dalhousie Law School, who has recently returned home after making a very creditable record in his examinations, has opened a law office in McKenzie St. No. 17, near to Mr. Whiteside's office, and intends to practise his profession in the city, upon which, in common with Ruskin and Dockrill, he has reflected an appreciable honor in his college career. Mr. Howay is only a boy in appearance, but he has shown that there is the right sort of material there. He is on the first round of the legal ladder but hopes to climb to fame through perseverance. And he will probably do it.

How right the author of that paragraph proved to be in his forecast.

In closing this tribute may I add that I have never known a man who possessed in quite so marked a degree the judicial capacity combined with so strong a vein of sentiment—his emotions were very near the surface, especially in later years—pronounced sense of humour, and genius for friendship as Judge Howay. To quote his favourite author, Charles Dickens—it will be easy to keep his memory green. ●

Some Early Historians of British Columbia

By Walter N. Sage

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The presidential address delivered before the annual meeting of the BCHF held in Nanaimo, BC, January 17, 1958; the celebration of the birth of the crown colony.

British Columbia in 1958 is celebrating its centenary: "A Century to Celebrate." It is hardly necessary to remind members of the British Columbia Historical Association that we are commemorating the birth of the Crown Colony of British Columbia and not the centenary of the Province. There seems to be some doubt in the public mind on this subject. Let us hope that many of us here will live to see the hundredth anniversary of British Columbia's entry into the Canadian federation, which took place officially on July 20, 1871.

In this centennial year it seemed useful to discuss with you certain of the early historians of British Columbia. I have chosen six—Hubert Howe Bancroft, Alexander Begg, C.C., Rev. A. G. Morice, O.M.I., R.E. Gosnell, E. O. S. Scholefield, and Judge F.W. Howay. H.H. Bancroft was a San Francisco bookseller who collected a huge library of source materials on the history of the Pacific Slope from Central America to Alaska, including British Columbia, employed a large staff, ran a "history factory," and produced *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* in thirty-nine volumes. Alexander Begg, C.C. (Crofter Commissioner), was born in Scotland, lived in Ontario, and came to British Columbia in 1887. In order to avoid confusion with Canadian-born Alexander Begg, author of the *History of the North West* and editor of the *British Columbia Mining Record*, Scottish-born Alexander Begg, who was appointed in 1888 by the Government of British Columbia Emigration Commissioner to investigate the settling of Scottish crofters on Vancouver Island, appended the letters "C.C." to his name. His one important work, *The History of British Columbia*, published in Toronto in 1894, will be discussed later.

The 1950s

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Father Morice was a devoted missionary priest of the Roman Catholic Church, who was distinguished as a historian, an anthropologist, a philologist and linguist, a printer and publisher, and the adapter of Rev. James Evans' syllabic Cree alphabet to the Athapascan or Déné languages. An extremely able, versatile priest, he was fond of controversy, and was no admirer of H. H. Bancroft.

R.E. Gosnell and E.O.S. Scholefield, however much they differed from each other in character, training, and attainments, may well be considered together. They had one thing in common: they helped to found and build up the Provincial Library and the Provincial Archives at Victoria. Gosnell was an old-time journalist who had a vision of what the library, and later the archives, might become. Scholefield, who was Gosnell's assistant, and became his successor, was also a man of vision. Above all, he was a collector of books and manuscripts, who, in the stirring days of Sir Richard McBride, secured the funds for the library and archives addition to the Parliament Buildings. It should, however, never be forgotten that Scholefield built upon the foundation laid by Gosnell. Scholefield cooperated with Gosnell in the writing of that large leather-covered volume, produced in edition deluxe, and entitled *British Columbia: Sixty Years of Progress*.

The standard history of British Columbia during the last forty years has been the first two volumes of a four-volume work produced by His Honour Judge F.W. Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield. The full title of these first two volumes is *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, that is to 1914. This history will, doubtless, be succeeded by the centennial history of British Columbia, which is now being written by Dr. Margaret A. Ormsby.

Judge Howay is usually recognized as the outstanding historian of British Columbia. Born in Ontario, he was brought west by his mother at an early age. His father had already found employment in the Cariboo. Frederic William Howay's boyhood was spent in New Westminster, a city then filled with memories of the Cariboo and of the Royal Engineers. One of young Howay's friends was a good-looking lad called Richard McBride, better known to us as Sir Richard McBride. Another

great friend was a Nova Scotian, Robie Lewis Reid, whom Howay met when they were both trying the examinations held in Victoria for thirdclass teaching certificates. Reid persuaded Howay to accompany him to Halifax, where they both entered Dalhousie Law School. "Dick" McBride followed them a year later. While attending Dalhousie, Howay began his literary career by writing letters dealing with Nova Scotian affairs to the New Westminster papers. Howay and Reid became law partners in New Westminster and prospered greatly during the early years of this century. In 1907 F. W. Howay became the Judge of the "County Court of Westminster holden in the City of New Westminster." By this time he had begun his serious study of British Columbia and Northwest Coast history and was building up one of the finest private libraries then in existence in this field.

Judge Howay was "learned in the law" and was an extremely accurate and indefatigable worker. He was also a good citizen and interested himself in the New Westminster Public Library. He founded the Fellowship of Arts and was a strong supporter of the Dickens Fellowship. He was a British Columbian, and a "mainlander." He knew Vancouver Island well and was highly regarded in Victoria, but his home was in New Westminster, and as a lawyer he had also practised in the Cariboo. The great contribution of his later life was in the field of the maritime fur trade. Nor should it be forgotten that he was the first President of the British Columbia Historical Association, founded in 1922, and that he held that office until 1926.

Before going more fully into the lives and writings of this group of historians of British Columbia, it would be well to pause for a moment to point out and emphasize the difference between historical source material and historical works. Source materials for historical writing may be drawn not only from archives and libraries, but also from "historical field work," the collection of old-timers' stories, of old letters, newspapers, and pamphlets. Nor can the historian afford to neglect anthropology and its allied sciences. So far we have tended to neglect the history of the native peoples of British Columbia. One important historian, Rev. A.G. Morice, was



UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, [UBC 27.2E5]

Walter Noble Sage was a professor of history at the University of British Columbia. From 1933-1953 he was Head of the Department of History. He wrote on BC and Canadian history. Sage was president of the BCHF in 1938 and again from 1957-1958 Sage died in 1963.

Images on page 18:

Top: Nanaimo's Centennial Cake, 1958, NCA No. 2006033A-P2

Bottom: Princess Margaret at the cutting ceremony for Nanaimo's ten thousand pound centennial birthday cake; BC scenes depicted in the icing.

also a noted anthropologist and a student of linguistics. He was, in fact, an anthropologist before he was a historian. Ever since the early voyages, scientists have been interested in the native peoples, as well as in the flora and fauna of the Northwest Pacific Coast. For well over half a century anthropologists have been working in the British Columbia field, but even the historians have not yet paid sufficient attention to their work.

The historian to-day must be a jack of all trades. He must not only be a frequenter of archives and libraries, he must also be a field worker and collector. He must know enough of the techniques of fur-trading, mining, smelting, lumbering, pulp and paper, fishing, agriculture, hydroelectric power, transportation by land, sea, and air, not to mention atomic energy and guided missiles, to be able to write intelligently on these various and varied subjects. He must be, if not "learned in the law," at least a student of legal, constitutional, and political history. He should be able to read, if not to speak, languages other than his own. Curiosity should be one of his main characteristics. He should always be asking questions, many of which he will never be able to answer. He can never study local history in a vacuum. He must be able to relate it to national, international, and world development.

Above all, the real historian should be humble. He realizes that he knows so little even concerning his chosen field. He should be prepared to admit his ignorance even in his special field and to answer "I don't know." A genuine historian is not a bluffer, nor should he exhibit a "false front" to the world. If possible he should be a man of wide experience and broad sympathies. He must be ready to weigh evidence and criticize. He cannot allow his feelings and emotions to get the better of him. He must stand aside from his work and view it objectively, and yet at the same time be part of his work, just as his work is a large part of him.

In a word, the historian finds and uses source materials, but from them he creates his historical work. It isn't enough to be a good collector, a wide reader, an assiduous searcher in libraries and archives, a scientific weigher of evidence; the historian must also be an artist in the presentation of his materials. He writes best who loses himself in his writing. Then Clio

the Muse descends upon him and real creative historical writing begins. It doesn't happen often. Most histories are not masterpieces, but the work of journeymen or craftsmen, who are paid well for what they do but fall short of being great historical writers.

Judged by these severe standards, probably none of the six historians under discussion would reach the topmost rating. That is hardly to be expected. But all of them were important, and at least three of them—H.H. Bancroft, Rev. A.G. Morice, and Judge Howay—made outstanding contributions in the field of British Columbia history.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, 1832—1918, was a Californian of the Californians. In no other State of the Union, and probably in no other place in the world, could a successful bookseller have become the proprietor, manager, and inspiration of a "history factory," which produced volumes on the history and anthropology of the Pacific Slope, but specialized in Old California. He was born on May 5, 1832, at Granville, Ohio, of New England stock and brought up in what he termed in his volume on *Literary Industries* as "an atmosphere of pungent and invigorating puritanism."¹ In 1848 H.H. Bancroft left home to go to Buffalo, N.Y., where he entered the employ of his brother-in-law, George H. Derby, a bookseller. He started at the bottom and hadn't climbed very far up the ladder when, six months later, he was dismissed by the head book-keeper. His brother-in-law provided him with a supply of books on credit and Bancroft went back to Ohio, where he obtained valuable experience as a book-pedlar. By the end of the summer he was able to pay up his debts to his brother-in-law, to buy a suit of clothes and a silver watch. He was invited back to Buffalo to a regular clerkship at the then satisfactory salary of \$100 a year.

Azariah Ashley Bancroft, the father of Hubert Howe, in 1850 caught the gold fever and left for California. Two years later George Derby decided to send his young brother-in-law to California with a consignment of \$5,000 worth of trading goods. H.H. Bancroft, with his friend George L. Kenny, sailed from New York to Aspinwall, crossed the Isthmus of Panama, and took ship from Panama City

to San Francisco. A new day was dawning for Hubert Howe Bancroft.

Professor John Walton Caughey, of the University of California at Los Angeles, has traced in detail in his *Hubert Howe Bancroft, Historian of the West* the adventures of the young Ohioan in the mining camps and boom towns of California. He underwent an extensive and severe training, but in the end he prospered. On a trip east in 1856 he obtained a line of credit and bought \$10,000 worth of books and stationery. In December of that year he started in business in San Francisco along with his old friend George L. Kenny. The name of the firm was H. H. Bancroft and Company. Although times were very hard, the Bancroft shop prospered. Kenny was an expert salesman and Bancroft was an excellent office manager.

During the Civil War, California remained on the gold standard at a time when the rest of the country was using depreciated paper currency. Bancroft's business prospered greatly, and the proprietor had sufficient money to visit not only New York, but London and Paris as well. His brother, Albert L. Bancroft, had arrived in San Francisco in 1858, and in 1859 was placed in charge of the blank-book and stationery shop operated by both brothers under the title of A.L. Bancroft and Company. In 1858 H.H. Bancroft married his first wife, née Emily Ketchum, a rather strait-laced young lady, who in the best Victorian tradition undertook to convert her free-thinking husband. Until her death in 1869, Hubert Howe Bancroft was, outwardly at least, very religious. His scepticism reappeared later.

On his various journeys, Bancroft learned much. Even in the Eastern United States he found certain customs and mores which shook his early puritanism. California had remade him, and on his travels to and from New York via Panama he had glimpses of Latin-American civilization. Europe was also a revelation to him. He was much impressed by the European leisured classes, although he despised their disdain for work. He realized that there was something more in life than the accumulation of money. He would use money as a means to an end, and that end was cultural rather than plutocratic. Already he was dreaming dreams.

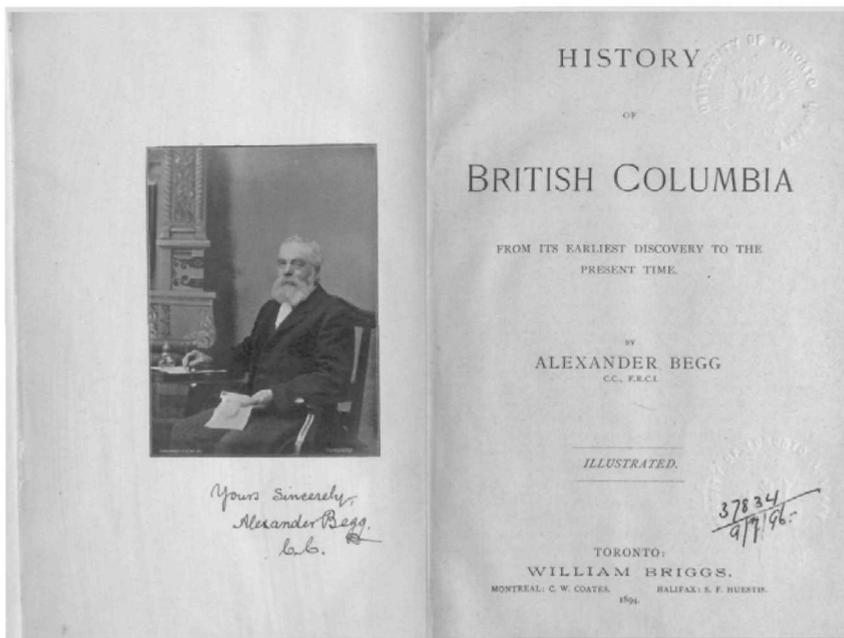
There is no time even to outline how Bancroft gathered his library, found able

assistants, and became a historian. Suffice it to say that if he had not made that vast collection which has been since 1905 the Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley, it would have been quite impossible for later historians and others to have recovered what would undoubtedly have been lost. Even in the case of British Columbia, if Bancroft in the 1880's had not visited Victoria, talked with the pioneers, obtained Sir James Douglas's private papers, and the manuscript histories and narratives of Alexander Caulfield Anderson, John Tod, and many others, we would have lost much valuable material concerning not only the fur trade and the colonial period, 1849—1871, but even the early days of our Province.

Three of H.H. Bancroft's volumes deal with what is now British Columbia: *The North West Coast*, Vols. I and II, and the *History of British Columbia*. Even now at this late date they are essential. No doubt there are errors; for example, Bancroft says that James Douglas married Nellie Connolly. Her name was Amelia. Mrs. Dennis Harris told me over thirty years ago that her father always called her mother Amelia. Bancroft also states that Connolly's first name was not William but James. But these are minor defects. In his review of Caughey's *Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Dr. W. Kaye Lamb quotes with approval a sentence from Bernard De Voto's *The Year of Decision, 1846*: "I have found that you had better not decide that Bancroft was wrong until you have rigorously tested what you think you know."²

One charge often levelled at H.H. Bancroft is that he purloined manuscripts, by borrowing them from their authors and refusing to return them. This story was still going the rounds in Victoria thirty to forty years ago. The late James R. Anderson, son of Alexander Caulfield Anderson, told me that Bancroft had stolen his father's manuscript on the *North West Coast*. It is interesting in this connection to note that practically all original narratives in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley are in transcript form. The original manuscript of the *Fort Langley Journal, 1827–1830*, is in the Provincial Archives at Victoria.

Bancroft's historical methods were, to say the least, unconventional, and his works were by no means all his own compositions.



History of British Columbia from its earliest discovery to the present time (1894) by Alexander Begg

He never claimed that they were. His merchandising tactics were also open to criticism. He was, none the less, a great figure in the historiography of the Pacific Slope, and his reputation will, in all probability, increase rather than diminish with the years.

It is, unfortunately, impossible to make a similar statement regarding Alexander Begg, C.C. His one book of importance, *The History of British Columbia*, has always been and still is almost impossible to use. As indicated above, Alexander Begg, C.C., was a Scot. He was born at Watten, Caithness, Scotland, on May 7, 1825, the son of Andrew and Jane Taylor Begg. He was educated privately but later obtained a teaching diploma at Edinburgh Normal School. He taught school for a time at Cluny, Aberdeenshire. Emigrating to Canada in 1846, he taught school in Ontario. His next move was into journalism. In 1854, with H.F. Macmillan, he founded the *Bowmanville Messenger*; later he established the *Brighton Sentinel* and published the *Trenton Advocate*. He sold out his interest in the *Advocate* to his brother Peter, probably in 1855. In 1858 at Brockville, Ont., Alexander Begg married Emily Maria Lake. They had eleven children—six sons and five daughters.

Begg was employed in the Department of Internal Revenue at Ottawa for several years. Apparently he found the comparative safety of the Civil Service preferable to the wear and

tear of journalism. In 1869 he accompanied Lieutenant-Governor McDougall on his ill-fated expedition to Red River. Begg had been appointed Collector of Customs for the North-west Territories, but Louis Riel thought otherwise. At Pembina, Begg was turned back, as was McDougall, by Louis Riel's "men of the new nation."

In 1872 Begg, while on a visit to the land of his birth, was appointed Emigration Commissioner in Scotland for the Province of Ontario. His headquarters were in Glasgow, but he lectured all over the country. He persuaded many thousands of crofters to settle in Canada. About two years later the indefatigable Begg was establishing a temperance colony at Parry Sound. He turned once more to journalism and became owner and editor of the *Muskoka Herald* and founded the *Canadian Lumberman*.

The *Toronto Mail* in 1881 sent Alexander Begg as its correspondent in the Canadian North-west. He travelled by Chicago, St. Paul, and Bismarck, N.D. For a time he tried his luck at Dunbow Ranch, Alberta, and imported horses and cattle from Montana. His son Robert A. Begg eventually took over the ranch, and it flourished under his management. Another son, Roderick Norman Begg, in 1887 left Alberta to take a position with the *Daily Colonist* in Victoria, B.C. His father followed in a few months and was appointed in 1888 Emigration Commissioner for British Columbia. It was then that Alexander Begg appended the letters "C.C." to his name.

Alexander Begg, C.C., went to England in 1889 and took up his residence in London, where he remained until 1897, directing the Crofter Settlement scheme. During this period he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and of the Colonial Institute. In 1894 his *History of British Columbia from its Earliest Discovery to the Present Time* was published by William Briggs, Toronto. It is a tedious work, which has no index, and it cannot be classed among the more successful volumes in the British Columbia field.

In 1903 the Begg family left Victoria and settled in New York, where five of their sons and one daughter were engaged in professional work. In March, 1905, at the age of 80, Alexander Begg, C.C., died in New York and was buried in Orillia, where he and his wife had lived for

several years beginning with 1877. Mrs. Begg died at the age of 93 in the year 1932. "Old Paste and Scissors," as Begg has been termed by more recent investigators in the British Columbia field, was not a great historian, but in his day he made a useful contribution.³

Rev. Adrien Gabriel Morice, O.M.I., 1859–1938, was noteworthy as a missionary, an anthropologist, and a historian. Born at St. Mars sur-Calmont, France, on August 27, 1859, and educated at Oisseau and the Ecclesiastical College at Mayenne, he was early attracted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He made his final vows in that order in 1879 and was sent to British Columbia in 1880. He had not yet been ordained but, with his companions N. Coccola and J.D. Chiappini, was a scholastic brother of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In 1882 he received ordination and was sent to labour among the Chilcotins, whose language he learned to speak. It was one of the Athapascan language group and introduced Rev. A.G. Morice to the study of what he later termed "The Great Déné Race."

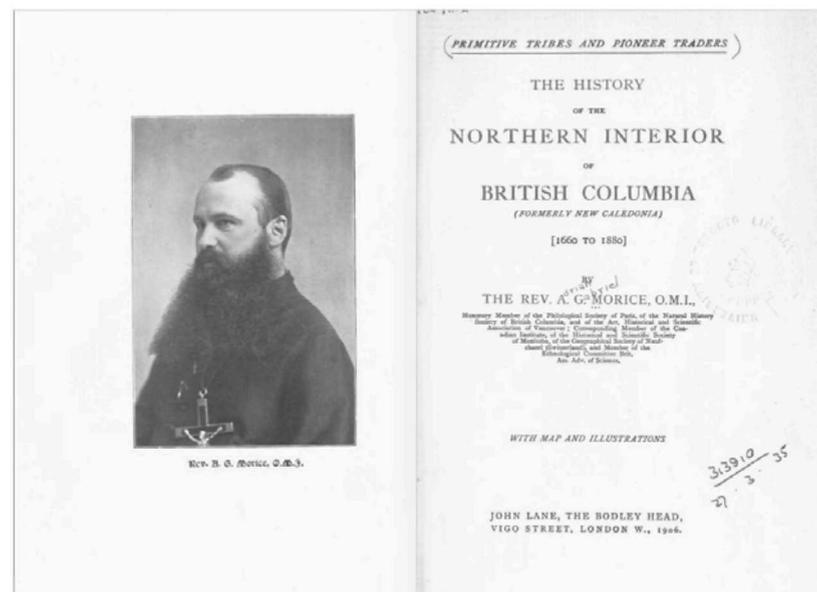
In 1885 he was placed in charge of the Stuart Lake mission at Fort St. James. There he worked out his Déné Syllabery and gave to the Athapascan peoples a written language. What is more, he provided the Carriers of Stuart Lake with a printed language and produced valuable works on his printing-press. Morice became intensely interested in anthropology and linguistics. He talked to the old chiefs and gleaned from them what they knew of the dim period before the white man came. His first book, *Au Pays de l'Ours Noir*, was published in 1897. *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, commonly called New Caledonia* followed in 1904. Bernard McEvoy, of Vancouver, well known to many of us as "Diogenes" of the *Daily Province*, praised Morice's manuscript so highly that the publishing firm of William Briggs, Toronto, accepted it unseen. It was a great success. *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada* appeared in 1910, in two volumes. A three-volume French edition was published in Winnipeg in 1912. During his long life (he survived till 1938) Father Morice published many books and articles in the fields of anthropology and history. He wrote well in both French and English, and his writings

attracted wide attention in Europe as well as in North America. For a time he was lecturer in anthropology in the newly established University of Saskatchewan, which honoured him by granting him its first B.A. in 1911 and its first M.A. in 1912. These degrees were not honorary, but the reverend father was not required to sit for any examinations.

Rev. A.G. Morice, O.M.I., made a most valuable contribution to the writing of the history and anthropology of British Columbia and the prairies. Of his ability and his versatility, there is no doubt. He was a careful researcher and his work was authoritative. Above all, he was a true son of Holy Mother Church. His devotion to Roman Catholicism led him at times to pass very unfavourable comments on Protestants and other non-Roman Catholics. He disliked H.H. Bancroft, and he was unduly severe in his comments on the Right Rev. W.C. Bompas, successively Anglican Bishop of Athabasca, Mackenzie River, and the Yukon. Although he was always obedient to the rules of his order, he was none the less an individualist, and rumour hath it that his fellow members of the Oblate Order found him somewhat difficult at times.

Father Morice spent nineteen of his best years in British Columbia, nearly all in his beloved New Caledonia. He then crossed the mountains and took up his residence in the Prairie Provinces. He was for years in Winnipeg, and part of his later life was spent

The history of the northern interior of British Columbia (formerly New Caledonia), (1660 to 1880) (1906) by Rev. A. G. Morice



at La Fleche, Saskatchewan. He made a great contribution to his church and to Western Canadian culture. Probably the greatest stroke of luck in his life was the finding by Alexander C. Murray, then the Hudson's Bay Company's manager at Fort St. James, of a treasure-trove of old letters and other documents in the attic of the old fort. From these manuscripts Father Morice derived much of his best source material for the *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*, which is usually considered his finest piece of historical writing.

R. Edward Gosnell, 1860–1931, was born at Lake Beauport in the Province of Quebec in the year 1860 and was educated in Ontario. For a time he was a school-teacher, then he became a journalist and worked for various Ontario newspapers. Gosnell came to British Columbia in 1888, the year after his marriage to Miss Alice White, and was associated with the *Vancouver News* and *News-Advertiser*. In November, 1893, he was appointed Provincial Librarian, and the next year played a large part in securing the passing by the British Columbia Legislature of "An Act to establish and maintain a Library for the use of the Legislative Assembly and constitute a Bureau of Statistics." He found a library of about 1,200 volumes which was sadly lacking in organization. He had vision and industry and laid the foundations of the present Provincial Library. In 1894 E.O.S. Scholefield became his assistant. Gosnell in 1896 became secretary to the Premier, and held both positions until September, 1898, when Scholefield succeeded him as Provincial Librarian. Mrs. Gosnell died in 1898, a blow from which R.E. Gosnell seems never to have completely recovered. He became restless and changed his posts frequently. He remained secretary to the Premier until 1901, when he was appointed secretary of the Bureau of Provincial Information. Organization was his strong point, and the Bureau prospered. In 1904, however, he lost this position.

Gosnell was always a journalist at heart, and in 1906 he became editor of the *Victoria Colonist*. The next year, 1907, he was a delegate to a conference on education held in London, England. Premier Mc Bride at this time visited England asking "better terms" for British Columbia. He found R.E. Gosnell a

useful assistant, and probably a quite convivial travelling companion.

When the Provincial Archives was separated from the Provincial Library in 1908, Gosnell became the first Archivist of British Columbia. He held this position until 1910, when he was succeeded by E.O.S. Scholefield. In 1910 and 1911 he performed special services for the Attorney-General's and the Treasury Departments. From September, 1915, to December, 1917, he was again secretary to the Premier.

After 1917 we lose sight of R.E. Gosnell for a time. He went back to Ontario and lived for several years in Ottawa. He seems to have been in the employ of the Federal Government for a while, and he also represented the *Vancouver Star* in the Parliamentary Press Gallery. I met him once in 1922, in the Public Archives of Canada, but he was then but a wreck of his former self. He lingered on in Ottawa, but in April, 1931, returned to Vancouver, where he died on August 5th. In many ways his life was a tragedy. He was brilliant, wrote well, and possessed organizing ability. Unfortunately he lacked both stability and sobriety.

None the less, R.E. Gosnell made a great contribution to British Columbia. In 1897 he issued the first *Year Book of British Columbia*, a storehouse of useful information, historical and statistical, concerning our Province. In 1906 he published *A History of British Columbia*. Two of his best works were done by collaboration. R.H. Coats, Dominion Statistician and "Father of Canadian Statistics," took Gosnell's manuscript on Sir James Douglas, prepared for the *Makers of Canada* series, revised it, drastically cut down its length, and rewrote the volume. It was not really a life of Douglas, but a most useful one-volume history of British Columbia. Dr. R.H. Coats many years ago told me the story of the revision of this volume. My memory may be at fault, but I am almost certain he said that he had never met R.E. Gosnell. Gosnell also joined E.O.S. Scholefield in the production of *British Columbia, Sixty Years of Progress*, which appeared in 1913. It was a weighty tome, beautifully printed, and handsomely bound. Gosnell wrote Part II, the period since federation. On the whole, it was a good piece of writing, probably his best. He was a keen analyst of British Columbia

politics and politicians, and he was also well acquainted with the economic development of the Province. R.E. Gosnell may be forgotten to-day, but historical students should study his writings carefully. He knew a great deal about British Columbia and he told it well.

Ethelbert Olaf Stuart Scholefield received much of his early training in library and archives methods from R. Edward Gosnell. He succeeded Gosnell first as Provincial Librarian and later as Provincial Archivist. Was this the result of chance, or of skilful manipulation, or was it by merit? At this late date it is difficult to tell. Probably all these factors entered into Scholefield's advance and Gosnell's decline. By inference we may state that Gosnell was a bit of an enthusiast who dreamed dreams, worked out schemes, did well for a time, and then got tired. Scholefield was a collector and builder. His real monument is the Library and Archives Building and much, if not most, of its contents.

Born at St. Wilfrid's Ryde, Isle of Wight, on May 31, 1875, Scholefield came to British Columbia, along with other members of his family, in 1887. His father, Rev. Stuart Clement Scholefield, was an Anglican parson who was for a time in charge of a church in New Westminster and later was rector of Esquimalt. Ethelbert, in the best English tradition, attended a private school conducted by Rev. W.W. Bolton. He later entered the Victoria High School, where he had a distinguished record. On leaving school he entered the service of the Provincial Library. In 1894 he was assistant to R.E. Gosnell, whom he succeeded as Provincial Librarian in 1898. In 1910 he became Provincial Archivist. These positions he held until his death, after a lengthy illness, on Christmas Day, 1919.

Scholefield was intensely interested in the early voyages of discovery to the Northwest Coast and in the development of Vancouver Island. He was fortunate in his collaborators—R.E. Gosnell and Judge F.W. Howay. The Judge often spoke to me with kindly affection of "little Scholefield," and sometimes commented on his acuteness. He had been a page boy in the Legislature, and he early learned how to get along with men and how to get the best out of politicians. He planned the Archives Memoirs series and edited three of them, which were published in 1918, the year before his death. He

died before he was 50, and had he lived out the allotted span he probably would have written much more.

C.B. Bagley, of Seattle, writing in the *Washington Historical Quarterly* shortly after Scholefield's death, after praising him and his work, criticizes him rather severely for his broken promises. He always lived under a terrific nervous strain and was continually making engagements he could not fill. He wrote, as has been well said, "with the printer's devil at the door." His work suffered as a result, but he gave all he had to the Provincial Library and Archives of British Columbia.⁴

And now, at long last, we come to His Honour Judge Frederic William Howay, 1867—1943. How is it possible to recapture the Judge and to contain him within a few manuscript pages? The main events of his life have been rapidly sketched above. He was a British Columbian by adoption, but no native-born son could have loved our Province more nor done more to advance the writing of our history. He was easily the greatest historian that British Columbia has as yet produced.

As a boy in New Westminster he became steeped in the early history of the Lower Mainland and of the Cariboo. His father-in-law, William H. Ladner, had come in with the gold-seekers in 1858 and had later taken up land at Ladner's Landing, now Ladner, B.C. The Judge grew up with British Columbia. He witnessed the coming of the railway and vividly recalled "the battle of the terminals." He was a "mainlander," and his sympathies in the struggle between "mainland" and "island" in the 1870's and 1880's were all with the "mainland." It is sad, but amusing, that his resignation of the presidency of the British Columbia Historical Association in 1926 was due to a difference of opinion, which became an open quarrel, between himself and a learned Justice of the Supreme Court, residing in Victoria, on the date of the birthday of British Columbia. Judge Howay was adamant in upholding the date, November 19, 1858, and the place, Fort Langley, B.C.

The Judge was a tireless worker and he was also fiercely accurate. He checked and rechecked his references, and although he made mistakes—we all do—he tried to keep them to a minimum. He exhibited his legal training

in his handling of materials. On the whole he wrote well, but he spoke better than he wrote. There are few brilliant passages in his writings, but he has checked his facts, and the burden of proof is now, as it was during his lifetime, on anyone who challenges his statements. But under all this legal and historical armour there beat a kind and generous heart. He did not "suffer fools gladly," but to any serious historical student he would open his stores of learning and his wonderful library. Time meant nothing to him on such an occasion. I owe the Judge a debt which I can never repay. He checked over the manuscript of my thesis on "Sir James Douglas and British Columbia," not only chapter by chapter and page by page, but line by line. It was excellent training, from which I profited greatly.

Law and history, however, were only part of the Judge's repertoire. He was widely read in English literature, especially in Dickens. He was himself not only a Dickensian, but to a great extent a character which had walked right out of *Pickwick Papers*. He was a bit of an actor and delighted in dressing up and taking part in the Twelfth Night revels of the Fellowship of Arts. He wrote for many years the addresses to be spoken by the May Queen and the May Queen-elect at New Westminster. He was once awarded a good citizenship medal, and an elementary school in New Westminster was named after him.

To list all the historical and other honours Judge Howay was awarded would be tedious. He had an international reputation. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of London, he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, of which august body he was president in 1942. He received the Tyrrell gold medal in history from the Royal Society of Canada. He was for many years the representative of the four western provinces on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. There are now four members carrying on the work which once he attempted alone.

After Judge Howay's death in 1943, Dr. W. Kaye Lamb prepared a bibliography of his writings which was published in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1944. There are in it 286 items, stretching from 1902 to two posthumous publications in 1944. Later Dr. Lamb added a

few more items. There is no time to discuss this lengthy list, but it proves beyond argument that Judge Howay worked and wrote hard.

There was, of course, another side to the story. There always is. Judge Howay, as was Father Morice, was often involved in historical arguments, and I have known him to become quite heated. Usually he had the backing of the older and more reputable Canadian historians, but occasionally he and they went just a bit beyond what was needful in trying to smash an opponent. Dr. J. B. Tyrrell and Judge Howay tried on one occasion to demolish Dr. A.S. Morton, but Morton put up a good argument and, as usual, was unconvinced.

These six early historians of British Columbia all made their contributions. Without them there would be irreparable gaps, not only in source materials, for they were all collectors with the possible exception of Alexander Begg, C.C., but also in the comprehension of what actually occurred in the early days of the white man on the Northwest Coast and on the Pacific Slope. It would be hard to find six men more unlike, but their work somehow now seems to intertwine and to form a firm foundation upon which we and subsequent generations of historical investigators in British Columbia can build. ●

Endnotes

1. H.H. Bancroft, *Literary Industries*, San Francisco, 1890, p. 63, quoted in John W. Caughey, *Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1946, p. 7.
2. *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, X (1946), p. 305.
3. For the above information on Alexander Begg, C.C., see Madge Wolfenden, "Alexander Begg versus Alexander Begg," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, I (1937), pp. 133–139.
4. C.B. Bagley, "Death of E.O S. Scholefield," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, XI (1920), pp. 35–36. I wish to thank Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist, for his kindness in providing me with material on both Gosnell and Scholefield.

The Banning of a Book in BC

by Charles Humphries

Reprinted from *BC Historical News* February 1968

The 1960s



The following is a report of a paper given by Professor Charles Humphries at the January 1968 meeting of the Vancouver Historical Society.

On the morning of Saturday, January 3, 1920, Dr J.D. MacLean, Minister of Education and Provincial Secretary for British Columbia quietly announced in Vancouver that W.L. Grant's *History of Canada* would no longer be used in the schools of the province. "In adding the subject of Canadian history to the high School curriculum," he explained,

this book had been selected for a trial as a text book. After a year, owing to unfavorable comment and as the best results can not be obtained from the study of a text that is the subject of criticism, the department has decided to discontinue its use as a school book. For the remainder of the year teachers will be asked to stress the teaching of Canadian civics.¹

The announcement provoked little initial public comment; two days later, in an editorial, the *Vancouver World* stood squarely behind the cabinet minister and hinted at some of the reasons for his decision:

...The Minister of Education... will find general support amongst teachers and others familiar with the publication.

The Council of Public Instruction which is the authority in control of education in the province, it appears, never authorized the textbook. It has, however, been in restricted use in high schools for some time past; but criticism of some forms of expression and its somewhat anti-British tone has made it unpopular.

It is possible, surely to obtain a book on Canadian history not open to such objections. At any rate the



Charles Humphries joined the Department of History at UBC in 1966, where he taught Canadian history. In addition to his academic activities, he was very active in the preservation of historic sites in British Columbia and across Canada. He was a longtime supporter of the Vancouver Historical Society and the British Columbia Historical Federation. Through the 1980's and early 1990's he was an active member of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and the B.C. Provincial Heritage Advisory Board. Humphries died on June 18, 2005.

decision to abolish the use of this book is wise. History for school purposes is inadequate enough as it is without permitting the suspicion of bias to attach to it.²

After that expression of opinion, there was public silence on the matter for almost a week and then began a modest debate in the columns of Vancouver's newspapers which gradually made clear the substance of the criticism which had caused the book's removal. If it took time for the public to become aware of the causes of trouble, such was not the case for W. L. Grant, the author of the text.

In 1920, William Lawson Grant occupied the office of principal of Upper Canada College in Toronto, a position he was to hold until his death in 1935. Previous to this appointment he had lectured at Oxford University and at Queen's in Kingston. During the First World War, he had served overseas as a major in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and had been wounded in the Battle of the Somme. The book in question had first been published in Toronto in 1914 by the T. Eaton Company. A revised edition had been published in 1916 by William Heinemann in England and by the Renouf Publishing Company in Montreal. It was the latter which became the subject of dispute.

Grant had been aware of criticisms of the book for about a year before its banning in British Columbia. In December of 1918, the *Sentinel*, a publication of the Orange Order, had accused him of displaying disloyalty in the expressions which he used in the book.³ By June of 1919, such criticism was being received by the Department of Education in Victoria, and the Superintendent of Education for British Columbia wrote to Grant:

I...beg to enquire from you whether it would not be possible for you to modify your Canadian history in such a way as to render it acceptable to people of all classes and creeds in this Province. Personally I see nothing objectionable in your book whatever and I need not add that I think it the best Canadian History on the market, but we have in British Columbia some people more loyal than King George V, and others more ultra-Protestant than Calvin and the views of these people

must of course be respected by any department depending on its existence on popular suffrage.⁴

Grant did nothing in the face of these attacks, but they apparently continued with sufficient strength for the next six months to prompt J.D. MacLean to remove the publication from British Columbia's schools.

To the point of its banishment from British Columbia's classrooms, there had only been hints as to what was wrong with Grant's book. This vagueness disappeared, however, when Mack Eastman and W.N. Sage of the University of British Columbia History Department and fourteen school teachers moved to defend Grant and his book in a letter sent to the *Sun*, the *Province* and the *World*. These defenders sketched out Grant's background as proof of his pro-British stance and his reliability as a scholar.⁵ This was an approach not without its flaws, as one critic noted:

A perusal of the letter is all that is necessary to show that there are a good many teachers and some professors plying their trade in the schools and University of British Columbia whose services should be dispensed with at the end of the year, if not sooner. Any class of individuals who would seek to defend a textbook because of the personality of the man who wrote it is employing a system of reasoning which no teacher who is worth a salary should employ.⁶

The argument began and, in the somewhat disjointed debate which then ensued, the chief complaints against Grant's history were strongly enunciated: the book was, in sum, anti-British and anti-Protestant or, to turn it around, pro-German, pro-Roman Catholic and—worst of all—pro-French-Canadian.

On the count of being disloyal to Great Britain, the critics cited several passages which they found particularly useful in sustaining their argument. A few of the keen-eyed started, quite literally, on the first page; and noted that Heinemann was his English publisher. "Heinemann", Grant commented in his own defence

is undoubtedly of German descent, and has about as much German blood in his veins as has His Majesty King

George V. He is himself above military age, but more than one of his nephews, one of whom I knew at Balliol, died in the war fighting for the Empire about which these people are shrieking.⁷

But the text, more than the publisher, provided the critics with their ammunition for the attack. Grant, it was argued, was favourably disposed to the concept of hatred as an essential component of patriotism, a most Germanic idea.⁸ In his discussion of Canada in the immediate post-Conquest period, Grant had written:

Great Britain had thus taken over a people who differed from herself and from her other colonists in North America in race, religion, language, and customs. England and France had been at war for generations; Englishmen and Frenchmen considered hatred of each other to be a patriotic duty; nowhere had the fires of hatred blazed so high as between the Canadians and the English colonists. The religious history of the two countries ever since the Reformation had given Roman Catholic and Protestant loathing of each other.⁹

In providing the background to the Battle of Beaver Dam during the War of 1812, Grant had stated;

...At Queenston, Sergeant James Secord was lying helpless from his wounds. Both he and his wife, Laura, were children of Loyalists, and hated the Americans for the wrongs done to their parents...¹⁰

And, when evaluating the consequences of the War of 1812, he had remarked:

To Canada the war gave an heroic tradition. Men of French, Scotch, Irish, English descent had stood side by side with the regulars of Great Britain and had fought as gallantly as they. It was our baptism of blood, and, so far in this world that has been the only real baptism of a nation. It is less pleasing to think of the long years of hatred of the United States which date from this war; but to many men patriotism is impossible without a little hatred, and memories of the war did much to steady

Canadians in the lean years which were to come.¹¹

These were the chief examples cited as proof of Grant's view of the close relationship between hatred and patriotism. "This," stated one critic, "is exactly what Germany taught in her schools prior to the war, and we are following her example..." He went on:

This is the very way the enemy works with propaganda and under our present lax system it appears there is no trouble for any stranger to publish whatever they (sic) may see fit and introduce it into our schools, and poison the minds of children as they (sic) see fit. This is a British country and if we are to maintain it as such, and raise British subjects we must instil nothing but British ideas and British principles into the minds of the children and have a more loyal and national spirit exhibited in our schools...¹²

Further evidence of Grant's disloyalty was culled from his statements about various British personages. His description of Charles Bailey, "the English official at the Bay", who quarrelled with Radisson and Grosseilliers as "a red-faced and choleric John Bull, who hated Frenchmen",¹³ upset at least one critic. There was annoyance with his descriptions of Pitt as "overbearing" and proud,¹⁴ George III as "narrow-minded", and Edward Grenville as "obstinate" and "tactless";¹⁵ and unhappiness over his decision to quote from Tecumseh, the War of 1812 Indian chieftain, who compared General Henry Procter to "a fat dog with its tail between its legs".¹⁶

Grant was charged with deliberate over-magnification of British military defeats. The fact that he had included a picture of a medal struck to commemorate Frontenac's defence of Quebec in 1690 was put forward in evidence; although no one seemed to be alarmed by the fact that on the reverse side of the medal was a Latin inscription reading: "Kebeca Liberata".¹⁷ And it was argued that he had detailed all too vividly General Braddock's defeat at Fort Duquesne in 1755.

Naturally enough, the material to sustain the accusation that Grant was anti-Protestant and pro-Catholic was found in the initial pages of his *History*, pages dealing with the era of

New France.¹⁸ "Grant's so-called history", declared one sharp-eyed reader,

*is nothing more than a commentary on Canadian history borrowed from the early writings of the Jesuits who, under the guiding hand of Champlain in Canada, and the master mind of Cardinal Richelieu in France were out to bring this North American continent down to the level of Mexico and Peru.*¹⁹

Grant's generous appraisal of the work and motives of the Jesuits;²⁰ his inclusion of a picture of the arrival of the Ursuline nuns in 1639;²¹ and his quotation from Frontenac to the effect that ending the brandy trade would simply drive the Indians to "rum and Protestantism";²² were all cited as proof of his ultramontane and Jesuitical position.

The other side of the charge that Grant was pro-Catholic was pro-French-Canadian, a trait—whether real or imagined—which his accusers found most distressing. It was pointed out that, in dealing with the battle of the Plains of Abraham, Grant had devoted most of a page to Montcalm, his tactics, his wounding and his death;²³ an obvious sign of his basic softness on the subject of French Canada. No one apparently noticed that Benjamin West's quite inaccurate but famous *The Death of Wolfe* occupied another page. His treatment of Riel proved to be another sore point. Statements that Riel "was no coward, and met his fate with something of the high constancy of the martyr";²⁴ and that "the French in Quebec had sympathized with the endeavour of Riel to win justice for their compatriots";²⁵ seemed to drive Grant's opponents into a frenzy.

But it was his words on Henri Bourassa—referred to as "that traitor" by one commentator²⁶—that incensed all. In Quebec, Grant had written,

*there is still a "nationalist" party with, however, a more moderate programme than that of Mercier, and its leader, Mr Henri Bourassa, has always stood manfully for honest and progressive administration.*²⁷

Even Grant considered this phrasing unwise: "...I am willing", he told a correspondent,

to expunge or modify the reference on page 302 to Bourassa, which, though

*correct, is inadequate in the light of his war record.*²⁸

Most of Grant's critics, however, would have been willing to expunge Bourassa himself because of the latter's sharp criticism of conscription and Canada's participation in the First World War.

These, then, were the chief trouble spots in Grant's *History* but, once begun, his opponents did not rest and, lifting statements out of context, read a variety of meanings into them. He was accused of stating that, in the Red River affair of 1869-70, Reil "did nothing more than fight for his rights".²⁹ What Grant had actually said was this:

*...So far, Reil had done little more than fight for his rights, but in March 1870, he put himself for ever in the wrong by the execution on a charge of treason of Thomas Scott, an Ontario Orangeman. Scott seems to have had a great contempt for all French Catholics and for Riel in particular, and had undoubtedly made himself disagreeable, but for the charge of treason there was no evidence whatever, and the so-called execution was a barbarous murder.*³⁰

In his discussion of the English-American traders who arrived in Quebec after the conquest, it was said that Grant had called them the "most immoral collection of men I ever knew".³¹ The author had, in fact, written:

*Quarrels soon broke out between the English settlers and Governor Murray, who called them on one occasion "the licentious fanatics trading here" on another "foul hundred and fifty contemptible suttlers and traders", and on another "the most immoral collection of men I ever knew". His anger was probably due to the dislike of the soldier for the business man. By "licentious" the Governor only meant disobedient to his authority, and by "fanatics" that they were not members of the Church of England, but New England Independents. As for immorality, they were certainly much more sober than the average British Officer of the day, and they made trade and commerce thrive as never before.*³²

While denouncing the supposed tendencies of Grant as displayed in his writing, his opponents chose to ignore passages such as the following which give the lie to most of their comments:

*Thus every Canadian is at once a citizen of a municipality, of a province, of a Dominion, and of an Empire. We must all love the municipality in which we live... But we must love our municipality as part of a province... We must love the province as part of our native land... And beyond even Canada we must love the worldwide Empire...*³³

Most present-day critics would argue that such an admonition has no place in a Canadian history text-book. But, on the whole, they would probably also agree that, if his book had flaws, they were minor and that, in some ways, it presented a fresh and lively interpretation of Canadian history.

Grant had his defenders in 1920, but they could not win the battle against an assault which, an "old boy" of Upper Canada College who worked for the *Province* told Grant, as being engineered by some of the baser members of the Orange Order".³⁴ His book had been banned and it remained in that condition. The only note of the event which the Department of Education took in its annual report for 1919–20 was a stray remark contained in the submission of the Free Text-Book Branch:

*In conclusion, it is desired to express an appreciation of the very valuable assistance rendered by principals in large centres in helping to meet a very trying situation which occurred in January, 1920, when owing to the wholly unexpected demands made for supplies at that time, the Free Text-Book Branch was unable to furnish some of the items asked for on all requisitions presented.*³⁵

Obviously there must have been some scrambling by teachers in January to find something to replace Grant's *History of Canada*.

In an effort to restore his book to the good graces of the British Columbia Department of Education, Grant offered to remove the pictures of the arrival of the Ursulines—although he stated that it no more implied "approval of the

Ursulines or of the Roman Catholic Church than a picture of 'The Temptation' would imply approval of the proceedings of the serpent; and of the commemorative medal of 1690. He would treat Bourassa "in the light of his war record" and would omit "the sentence on page 155 to the effect that to many men 'patriotism is impossible without a little hatred.'" "But", he added,

*I am certainly not willing either to make a book so colourless that it can give no possible offence to anybody, or so partisan that its chief use would be as a club to belabour the priesthood.*³⁶

Grant was also prepared "to add four or five pages, either in bulk or in various parts, with special reference to the West".³⁷ But the Department simply countered that it would wait and take a look at any revised edition, a statement which scarcely provided Grant with the grounds for confidently proceeding with the revision. By February 1, the book was out of all the schools and there was no Canadian history being taught.³⁸

Mack Eastman took a strong interest in the case and continued to press for a new authorization of Grant's book—presumably in some satisfactorily revised form—from the Department of Education; but he could not report that the future looked very promising. Eastman and W. N. Sage continued the quiet fight for Grant's book with the Department of Education, but they got nowhere despite periodic bursts of hope.³⁹ And, later in October, 1921, Sage wrote Grant a letter over which he agonized before sending it off in the mails:

This morning I received a letter marked "Private & Confidential" from Mr. (S. J.) Willis (Superintendent of Education). I gathered from it that there is no chance of your History being again authorized...

*...Opposition to the book seems to have been much better organized & more wide-spread than we knew. You know, of course, my own opinion of the book & of its opponents.*⁴⁰

Grant's book was never again put out on the desks of British Columbia's classrooms.

The militant opponents of the text-book, who certainly won the day, were generally described as Orangemen, and there seems to

Fun Fact

Michael Grant Ignatieff, writer, broadcaster, professor, politician is the grandson, through his mother, Alison, of William Lawson Grant.

be no reason to doubt this. But to offer their opposition and intransigence as an explanation of what had occurred in British Columbia in 1920 is inadequate. The question still remains: why did they succeed in achieving their end?

The composition of the population of British Columbia at that point in time must be considered. 73.7% of the population claimed either British origin or descent while a mere 2.1% could be classified as of French origin or descent.⁴¹ To view it from another direction 50.5% of the population claimed Canadian birth; 30.5% claimed British birth; and 19.0% were of foreign birth. It seems safe to assume that a significant number of that 50.5% would be children of parents of British birth.⁴² Roman Catholics formed only 12.2% of the population and they were handily outnumbered by Anglicans with 30.7% and by Presbyterians with 23.5% and rivalled by Methodists with 12.4%.⁴³

Both French-Canadians and Roman Catholics were even less significant in those urban centres of British Columbia which placed the greatest pressure on the government for its removal of Grant's book. In Vancouver, 79.9% of the population was of British origin or descent, and only 1.9% was of French origin or descent.⁴⁴ Victoria held a population which was 84.8% British origin or descent and but .9% French origin or descent.⁴⁵ And, in New Westminster, 80.8% were in the former bracket and 1.8% in the latter.⁴⁶

In Vancouver, 9.3% of the population was Roman Catholic; 29.9% Anglican; 26.9% Presbyterian; and 12.7% Methodist.⁴⁷ Victoria looked like this: 6.3% Roman Catholic; 40.2% Anglican; 20.3% Presbyterian; and 13.0% Methodist.⁴⁸ And New Westminster divided in this fashion: 9.6% Roman Catholic; 26.8% Anglican; 26.3% Presbyterian; and 17.6% Methodist.⁴⁹ In British Columbia, the ground was scarcely fertile for the growth of generous historical treatment of either French-Canadians or Roman Catholics.

But there was more to it than that. The critics really did not discuss Canadian history; they were talking about the proper handling and dissemination of British history. A sense of Canadian history did not permeate their ranks. They were agitated about the anti-British spirit of the text and they felt as one of their number

expressed it: "These are days when it becomes everybody to show their British loyalty if they have any".⁵⁰ Canada was not their concern; Britain was.

Such feelings, of course, had been heightened by the First World War and out of this combination came the extremism to which Grant's book fell victim. The Orange Order in British Columbia, which claimed growing strength in the province after the conclusion of the conflict, was proud of the fact that "over 35 per cent of the total membership in British Columbia had enlisted for overseas, a sign that Orangemen had not forgotten the basic force and loyal principles of their order."⁵¹ These people were not going to remain silent when the accusation of being anti-British was levelled against Grant.

In his *Memoirs*, Robert Borden noted, in another context, that at the war's end "the state of mind of the people in general" was "abnormal". He continued:

*...There was a distinctive lack of the usual balance; the agitator, sometimes sincere, sometimes merely malevolent, self-seeking and designing, found quick response to insidious propaganda.*⁵²

Emotions roused by the war—particularly bitterness and hatred towards French-Canadians because of their attitude toward conscription—were sustained in strength long after November 11, 1918. In fact, among the extremists hatred of French-Canadians was an essential part of their patriotism towards Great Britain; they proved what they had denounced in Grant's history. And no government in its right mind was going to challenge such feelings if they appeared to have any strength.

In a statement to the *Ubysey* on another matter in 1921, Mack Eastman took the opportunity to defend Grant once more and he sourly observed: "The war has sorely disturbed the minds of many non-combatants!"⁵³ And, in one sense he was right: W.L. Grant's *History of Canada* had become another casualty of the First World War. ●

Endnotes

1. *Province* (Vancouver), January 3, 1920, p.1
2. *World* (Vancouver), January 5, 1920, p.4
3. Public Archives of Canada, W.L. Grant Papers, W.L. Grant to the Minister of Education (Victoria, B.C.), January 14, 1919.
4. *Ibid.*, Alexander Robinson to W.L. Grant, June 20, 1919.
5. *Sun* (Vancouver), January 10, 1920, p.6; *Province*, January 10, 1920, p.7; *World*, January 10, 1920, p.4. Grant was also defended by "Lucian" in a column called "The Week—end" in the *Province*, January 10, 1920, pp. 12–13; "Lucian" was Dr S.D. Scott; see: Grant Papers, W.L. Grant to C.F. Hamilton, January 16, 1920. M. Ross, a retired school teacher, also spoke up on Grant's behalf; see: *Sun*, January 13, 1920, p.6.
6. *World*, January 12, 1920, p.4, letter from J.H. Ingram. Identical letter in *Sun*, January 12, 1920, p.6.
7. Grant Papers, W.L. Grant to C.F. Hamilton, January 16, 1920.
8. *World*, January 10, 1920, p.4, letter from E.E. Sykes. Identical letter in *Sun*, January 10, 1920, p.6.
9. W.L. Grant, *History of Canada* (London: William Heinemann; Montreal: Renouf Publishing Company, (1916)), p.119.
10. *Ibid.*, p.149.
11. *Ibid.*, p.155.
12. See footnote 8.
13. Grant, *History* P. 74.
14. *Ibid.*, p.100.
15. *Ibid.*, p.130.
16. *Ibid.*, p.151.
17. *Ibid.*, pp.82–83.
18. *Ibid.*, p.93.
19. *World.*, March 19, 1920, p.4, letter from W.O. Black.
20. Grant, *History* P. 50.
21. *Ibid.*, p.59.
22. *Ibid.*, p.161.
23. *Ibid.*, p.114.
24. *Ibid.*, p.283.
25. *Ibid.*, p.185.
26. See footnote 19.
27. Grant, *History* p. 302.
28. See footnote 7.
29. See footnote 19.
30. Grant, *History* p. 260.
31. See footnote 19.
32. Grant, *History* pp.120–121.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 377–378.
34. See footnote 7; also; Grant Papers, Mack Eastman to W.L. Grant, January 23, 1920.
35. *Forty Ninth Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1919–1920* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1921), p.C90.
36. See footnote 7.
37. Grant Papers, W.L. Grant to Mack Eastman, January 30, 1920.
38. *Ibid.*, W.H. Sage to W.L. Grant, February 1, 1920.
39. *Ibid.*, W.H. Sage to W.L. Grant, July 22, 1921 and October 16, 1921.
40. *Ibid.*, W.H. Sage to W.L. Grant, October 20, 1921. The opposition was "better organized". On January 13, 1920, a letter appeared in the *World* (p. 4) from W.O. Black which, although strongly anti-Catholic and anti-French in tone, defended Grant and apparently viewed the banning as some dark Catholic plot. Then, on March 19 and March 30, 1920, letters appeared in the *World* (p.4) from W.O. Black – presumably the same man – and they were strongly anti-Grant as well as anti-Catholic and anti-French Canadian in tone. If this was the same man, then someone has taken him aside during a two-month period and showed him the flaws in Grant's book.
41. *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. I: Population* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1924), pp.354-355. The total population of British Columbia in 1921 was 524,582; of this number, 387,513 were of British origin or descent (English: 221,145; Scotch: 104,965; Irish: 54,298; and others: 7,105) and only 11,246 were of French origin or descent.
42. *Ibid.*, p.337. Canadian born: 264,046; British born: 160,752; and foreign born: 99,784.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 752-753. Roman Catholics: 63,980; Anglicans: 160,978; Presbyterians; 123,022; and Methodists; 64,810.
44. *Ibid.*, p.542. The population of Vancouver in 1921, exclusive of Point Grey and South Vancouver, was 117,217. British origin or descent: 93,609; French origin or descent: 2,252.
45. The population of Victoria was 38,727. British origin or descent: 32,821; French origin or descent: 359.
46. *Ibid.* p. 545 Population of New Westminster was 14,495, British origin or descent: 11,706; French origin or descent: 259.
47. *Ibid.*, p.756. Roman Catholics: 10,842; Anglicans: 35,137; Presbyterians: 31,595; and Methodists: 14,968.
48. *Ibid.*, p.760. Roman Catholics: 2,448; Anglicans: 15,562; Presbyterians: 7,877; Methodists: 5,045.
49. *Ibid.*, p.760. Roman Catholics: 1,388; Anglicans: 3,886; Presbyterians: 3,809; Methodists: 2,551.
50. See footnote 6.
51. *Sun*, July 13, 1919, p.24.
52. Henry Borden (ed.) *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, II* (Toronto, Macmillian, 1938), p.972.
53. *Ubysey* (Vancouver), April 7, 1921, p.2.

A Persistent University Protagonist

R.J. (Ron) Welwood

An expanded and modified version of article from *British Columbia Historical News* (Spring 1989).

The 1980s



IMAGE 85-278-26 COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONES NELSON

For seven years the members of the University Club of Nelson tirelessly petitioned the provincial government to establish the province's first university.

More post-secondary institutions have opened in Nelson than in any other city of comparable size in the province—perhaps, even in the country.¹ While the citizens of Nelson are justifiably proud of these academic institutions, another link to post-secondary education goes back to the early years of the twentieth century. Unfortunately this connection has been almost forgotten. The formation and location of the province's first university was a direct result of determined petitioning from the University Club of Nelson.

The passing of *The British Columbia University Act, 1890* and its amendment (1891) inferred that a maturing province intended to provide higher learning for its citizens. "Graduates of any university of Her Majesty's dominions who shall have resided in this Province two months previous to the 31st December, 1891" were eligible for the first Convocation as long as they had signed the register in the Provincial Secretary's office and paid a fee of two dollars.² By the end of the year, 125 graduates became University of British Columbia Members of Convocation.³

According to the legislation, the first meeting of the Senate would have to convene within one month after the first Convocation election.⁴ This meeting was scheduled for 2 July 1891. Unfortunately a quorum failed to assemble because of illness, travel difficulties and a conflict with Dominion Day celebrations, so those members present agreed to adjourn the meeting until 9 July 1891. However, the Attorney General ruled that the meeting was not legal because there was no quorum and, therefore, the motion to reconvene was out of order.⁵ With this deflating ruling, the provincial

university movement came to an abrupt halt and remained in limbo for over a decade.

In November, 1903, at a meeting of the University of Toronto Alumni Association for the Kootenay Boundary district, an invitation was extended to university graduates to hear an interesting academic paper on marine biology.⁶ After the paper was read on December 3rd, the assembly of Alumni and guests resolved to form a University Club in Nelson and a committee was appointed to draw up a Constitution and report back on December 12th. At that time it was proposed that "all graduates and undergraduates of Universities of recognized standing shall be eligible for membership" in "The University Club of Nelson" and that "its purpose shall be the discussion of matters affecting or interesting its members."⁷ Apropos of the newly formed University Club's objectives, R.J. Clark, principal of the high school, delivered a timely paper, "On the Prospects of a Provincial University in British Columbia."⁸

The format for the Club's monthly meetings was usually the same through the years—discussion of "The University Question" and then a paper presented by one of the members, often followed by a spirited discussion. But during the early months, the university issue dominated the agenda and was the subject of lengthy debate. A resolution to establish a provincial university with extensive land grants was unanimously adopted in January, 1904. This motion was later expanded and the *Minutes* of 12 March 1904 record:

That the University Club of Nelson beg to recommend to the Government of British Columbia:

That immediate steps be taken to provide by endowment for the establishment, equipment and maintenance in the near future of a provincial University;

That such endowment, to be ample for the needs of such a university, should consist of the revenues from not less than ten million acres of land;

That, in the meantime, the government should establish as soon as possible, a thoroughly equipped School of Mines, and should add to it, as fast as possible, departments for the teaching

of all branches of applied science which are of special value in the development of the industries of this province;

We beg to point out that in the absence of such institutions a hardship is inflicted upon the boys and young men of British Columbia inasmuch as they must either leave the province to secure such training as will qualify them for the leading positions in any profession or submit to permanent disqualification for such positions.

This resolution was submitted to The Honorable Richard McBride, Premier of the Province and Minister of Education.⁹ Copies were also forwarded to politicians and other organizations, including the University Graduates' Society of Vancouver. When Fernie's Member of the Legislative Assembly, W.R. Ross, introduced the university issue to the legislature in February 1904 the Club was optimistic, but the government remained inactive. Undaunted, the University Club of Nelson continued to lobby politicians and influential organizations while it frequently issued releases to the news media about various aspects of the University Question.

Later that year, the Club formed a University Committee with the sole purpose of dealing with the University Question by developing procedures for presenting this topic to the populace. The Committee's report, tabled at the December meeting, recommended that five percent of revenue from public lands should be set aside by the government as a university fund and that this fund should be administered by a nine member board (all university graduates and British subjects). Two hundred copies of a petition embodying these suggestions, including the reasons for establishing a university, were printed and distributed to the Premier, all university graduates in the Legislature and other interested parties.¹⁰

In the spring of 1905, Rev. J.T. Ferguson read a timely paper on the "Location of a University." He concluded, "the majority of recently established universities have been placed at or near large centres of population."¹¹ This coda became one of the Club's mantras over the years.



Ron Welwood was former Department Head for the Libraries at Notre Dame University, David Thompson University Centre and Selkirk College where, among other things, he amassed an extensive Kootenaiiana collection. He has written articles and book reviews, served as BCHF President and is currently the website editor for the Federation's website.

Dr. E.C. Arthur, Captain, Canadian Army Medical Corps, c.1916.

While the Superintendent of Education, Alexander Robinson, was visiting Nelson that fall, he was invited to a special meeting of the University Club. It was suggested that if a provincial university were out of the question, then assistance should be provided to students to attend elsewhere. Furthermore, "if a percentage of the public domain was set aside," there would be less trouble establishing a university. Mr. Robinson responded that it was still too early to start a provincial university, but he intimated that McGill University would soon be establishing a site in Vancouver and that aid to BC students presently attending eastern universities was a possibility. In response to the endowment question, he did acknowledge that less than one-fifth of provincial revenues went to education and that British Columbia's support was proportionately less than almost any of the other provinces in the Dominion.¹²

In the early months of 1906, two Bills were introduced enabling McGill University to establish a college or colleges in the province.¹³ These Bills were the subject of heated debate both in the legislature and in the press. Even the oft-silent Vancouver University Graduates' Society protested the proposed Bills. The Society also asked the Premier to revive the British Columbia University Acts and set aside public lands as a university endowment.¹⁴ On the other hand, the general feeling of the Nelson Club was "that McGill should be allowed to do all the work desired in the Province provided the educational rights of the Province were in no way interfered with being that these rights should be carefully safeguarded."¹⁵

Evidently the publicity from various sections of the province had some effect on the McBride government because a University Endowment Bill was introduced to the legislature in 1907.¹⁶ Upon review, the University Club of Nelson informed the government that its members were disturbed that the proposed land grant of two million acres did not include revenues derived from minerals, coal and timber thereby rendering the grant inadequate for its intended purpose.¹⁷ However, the Bill, as presented, was passed in April. Even though the members could take some comfort that they may have helped to influence the government, they were not satisfied with a partial victory.

With the passage of this legislation, debate about the "university site" ensued and regional boosterism dominated letters to the editor. "The public interest in the institution's location is becoming pronounced. Unquestionably there will be some rivalry between the Island and the Mainland."¹⁸

At the November 9th meeting, Dr. E.C. Arthur, one of the founders of the University Club of Nelson and a member of its University Committee, read a lucid paper on "University Endowment and Organization." This paper, later printed as a fifteen-page pamphlet, was distributed to parliamentarians and the press. His *Memorials* prophetically stated that

*For three years this club has striven for an endowment at the outset that would forever place the provincial university, when established, beyond the necessity of appealing from time to time . . . to unsympathetic party governments for additional aid, the institutions in the meantime frequently suffering irreparable injury.*¹⁹

He then went on to list two points connected with the organization of a provincial university.

FIRST: the location. The modern tendency is to establish universities in or near the largest centres of population. The city of Vancouver being by far the largest centre of population in British Columbia, I think we must concede that the university should be located in or near that city....

*SECOND: the site. The Province owns a large tract of land at Point Grey, near Vancouver, which I am told by competent authority contains some ideal sites for a university.*²⁰

Dr. Arthur's dispassionate and detailed treatise explained that a large endowment would help provide for buildings, equipment, library and salaries. "By this wearisome quotation of statistics I hope that it is clearly established that very large revenues are required to establish and maintain a modern university in a creditable degree of efficiency."²¹ His *Memorials* concluded with a petition to the government to "give the university the revenues from timber and minerals on the two million acres of land already granted" and to

appoint a Board of Governors "to choose a site and draft a University bill to be submitted to the next session of the Legislature."²²

Indeed, a new *University Act* was introduced and passed in March 1908 (repealing the Acts of 1890, 1891).²³ Shortly afterwards, the Club held a special meeting in Nelson with the Minister of Education, Hon. Dr. Henry Esson Young, where he explained the government's objectives concerning the establishment and endowment of a provincial university, as well as the difficulties encountered in carrying the university bills through the Legislature. "He expressed warm appreciation for the steady support received from the University Club of Nelson, the only organized support he had received from any part of this province."²⁴

Near the year-end Dr. H. Esson Young, as the Provincial Secretary, acknowledged receipt of resolutions sent by the University Club's secretary, Richard J. Clark.

*I notice that you apologise [sic] for what you style 'the importunity of the Club' in regard to University matters, but I can assure you that the Department of Education does not consider such an apology necessary at all. The Department feels very much encouraged that a disinterested organization, such as the University Club of Nelson, should take such an interest in the welfare of the Provincial University.*²⁵

Newspaper accounts in the summer of 1908 implied that the government would soon appoint an independent commission to recommend the location of the university. However, it was not until February 1910 that the *University Site Commission Act* was passed by the Legislature. According to the Act, the Commissioners were to be "disinterested educationalists non-resident in the Province of British Columbia" who were authorized and empowered "to select as a location for the University that city or rural district best suited in their opinion...for University purposes, which selection when made shall be final."²⁶

When an exasperated Minister of Education, Hon. Dr. H. Esson Young, had introduced the Site Commission Bill to the legislature, he indicated that

The government was besieged morning noon and night, day in and day out, by telegrams, inundated with correspondence, swamped with editorials and letters to the press, as regards the site. My office was besieged every day in the week with suggestions that in ninety-nine out of one hundred cases emanated out of purely selfish motives.... We were inundated with arguments from real estate agents, we were inundated with arguments from localities, we were inundated with arguments from deputation after deputation and a mass of correspondence inspired by selfishness from the local point of view,

The Hon. Dr. Henry Esson Young, Minister of Education and Provincial Secretary, 1911.

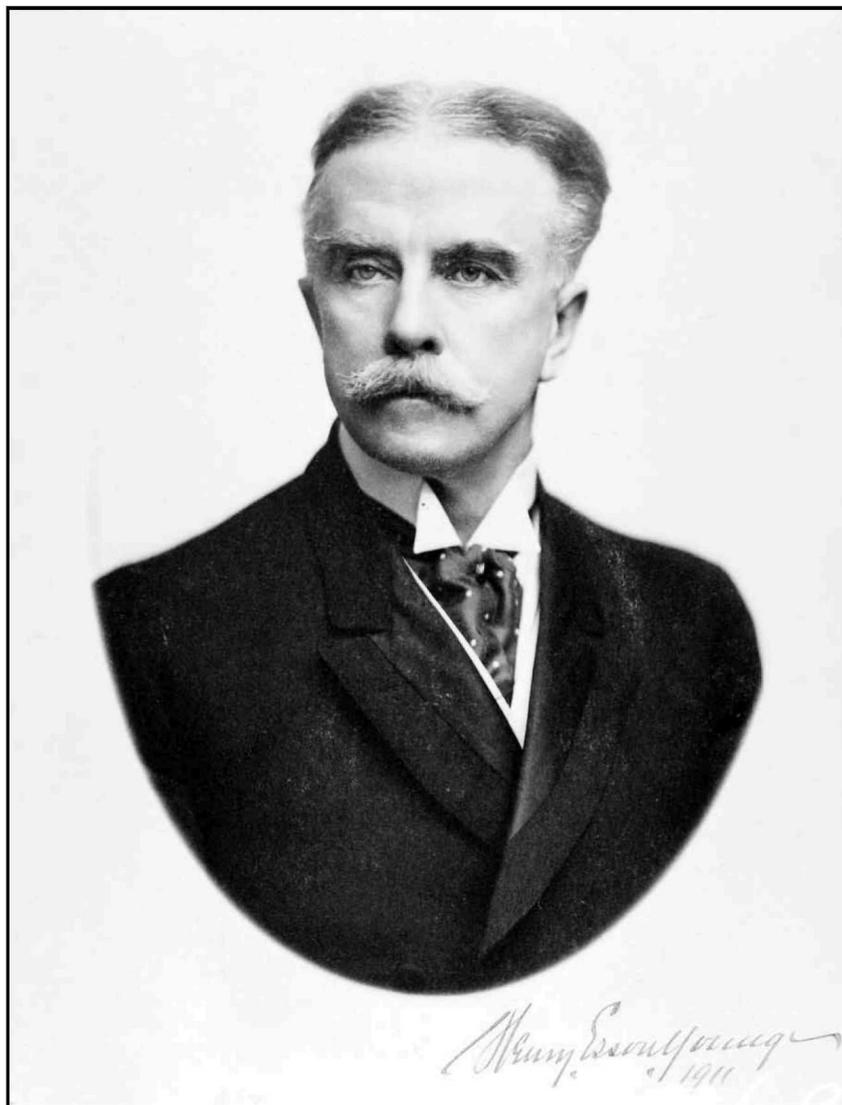


IMAGE A-02547 COURTESY OF ROYAL BC MUSEUM, BC ARCHIVES

by selfishness from a financial point of view.²⁷

In March, a lengthy newspaper article written by F.C. Wade, K.C., on the University Question, was printed in the *Vancouver Province*.²⁸ Wade's article implied that the University Graduates' Society of Vancouver had revived the university movement that had been dormant between 1891-1904. In fact, this Vancouver organization began three months after the University Club of Nelson was established. It held its first regular meeting on 15 March 1904 and after its third gathering on 13 May was inactive until February 1906.

Wade made scant mention of the major role played by the University Club of Nelson; and the Nelson Club's members felt that this omission should be brought to the public's attention. R.J. Clark, a Vancouver resident, but formerly an active, six-year member of the Nelson Club and its University Committee, was asked to take on this task. He succinctly outlined the history of the Club's "steady, earnest and disinterested advocacy

of the establishment of a university" since December 1903.²⁹ Ironically his timely article was published on the same day as the Site Commission's hearings in Vancouver.

Appointments had been made to the Commission by April: Dr. R. C. Weldon (Chairman), Dean, Dalhousie University; Canon G. Dauth, Vice-Rector, Laval University; Dr. Cecil C. Jones, Chancellor, University of New Brunswick; Dr. Walter C. Murray, President, University of Saskatchewan; and Dr. Oscar D. Skelton, Professor, Queen's University. Between 28 May and 28 June 1910, their busy itinerary included visits to Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, North Vancouver, New Westminster, Chilliwack, Kamloops, Vernon (some members went to Kelowna, Summerland and Penticton), Revelstoke, Nelson, and Prince Rupert.

Parochial competition for the university's location placed community interests before the general interest of the province and sectionalism became very evident at the Commission hearings. Delegations were

usually composed of local politicians, Boards of Trade representatives, businessmen and interested individuals. Almost all stressed growth and development (good for local business) or the quality of life (climate, scenery and sports) rather than educational opportunities. Deviation from regional boosterism was rare and the suggestion that a site be somewhere other than in the protagonists' region was almost nonexistent.

However, the University Club of Nelson remained

University Site Commissioners, 1910, L-R: Cannon G. Dauth, Walter C. Murray, Richard C. Weldon, Oscar D. Skelton and Cecil C. Jones.



UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, [UBC 1.1E1685]

steadfast with its contrarian position. Club members reiterated their stance at a meeting in June when two resolutions presented by the University Committee were unanimously adopted:

1. *That we favor placing all faculties as near to one another as possible, and deprecating the scattering of faculties over the province;*

2. *That it is desirable that the university be placed as near as possible to the largest centre of population.*³⁰

In Nelson, the University Site Commission's public sessions were held in the Court House on Friday, 17 June 1910. Not surprisingly, Mayor Harold Selous proposed Nelson as the site for the university. He gave three reasons: a large tract of available land, accessibility to both rail and water transportation, and a healthy climate. The representative from the Board of Trade, W.B. Farris, repeated the advantages of a suitable site, as well as a climate conducive to both winter and summer sports. He added that he was a member of the University Club, but could not attend the meeting when a resolution favoring location of the university near a large centre of population was passed. Farris indicated, "that he dissented, and he wished to say that in this case, the mayor and himself represented 99 percent of the people of Nelson" and he "warned the commission against drawing a distinction between a large and a small city, claiming that it was a moot point in the educational world as to which was a preferable location for a university."³¹

Dr. E.C. Arthur, President of the University Club, stated in his introductory remarks, that

Although the Club represented but one percent of the city's population, according to Mr. Farris, yet it could claim a large measure of credit for the university about to be established. The University Club of Nelson was organized in 1903,

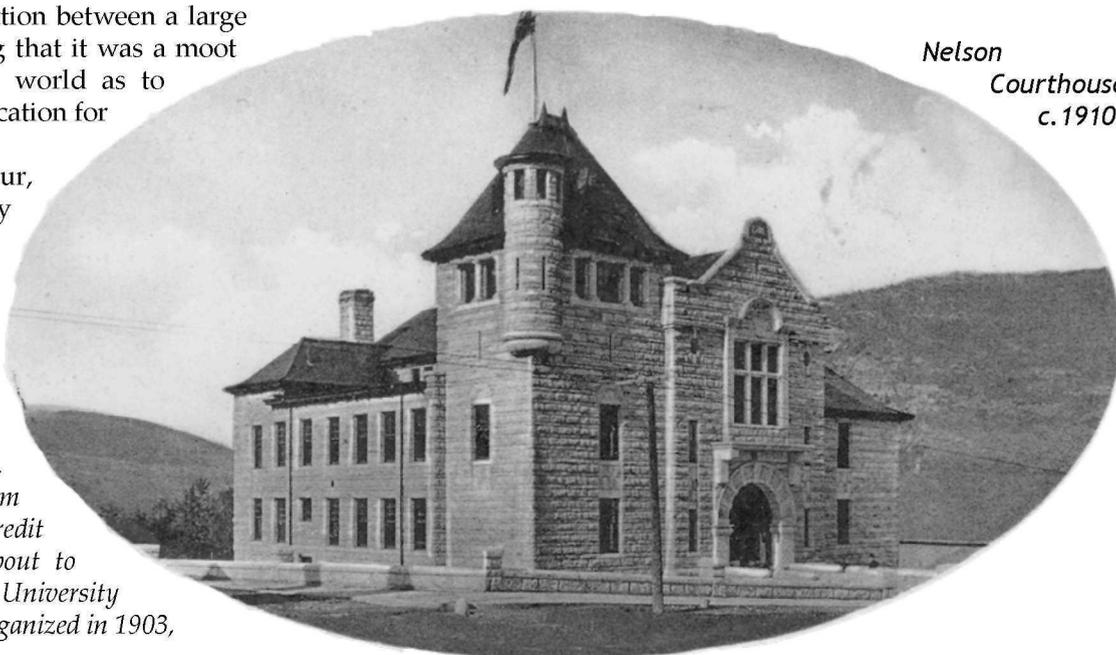
*and at its second meeting it took up the matter of the establishment of a provincial university, and urged it in season and out of season, during the ensuing years.*³²

He also indicated that he heartily agreed with the attributes of Nelson mentioned by the previous speakers and should the city be selected as the university site, none would be more pleased than the Club's members.

Dr. J.T. Ferguson and Dr. Arthur then presented lengthy and detailed arguments supporting the two resolutions passed by the Club earlier in the month (Dr. Ferguson on location and Dr. Arthur on placing university departments within close proximity). Their lucid presentation was "in many ways the best [brief] presented to the commission."³³

In response to the University Club's submission, Mayor Selous feared that Dr. Ferguson's "very clever document" would greatly influence the Commissioners and that it was an injustice to the city "which he felt had been stabbed in the back, he would ask Dr. Arthur to state the membership of the University Club, and the number who voted for the resolutions submitted."³⁴

At this sitting the Chairman invited further comments about climate. Some wildly exaggerated statements were made by a number of speakers.



Nelson
Courthouse,
c. 1910.

Rev. J.P. Westman, pastor of Trinity Methodist Church ... From the climatic point of view, there was no doubt whatever that the Kootenay was better for the students than the coast, and four hours work here accomplished as much as seven hours work there.

J.O. Patenaude, jeweler, said that he could do three times as much work as a watchmaker in Nelson as he could in Montreal. During his business career in Nelson he had employed 15 watchmakers, all of whom were physical wrecks when they came to him and all of whom went away well men. Of the six mechanics he had now, several had worked at the coast and claimed they could do far more work here.

W.B. Farris [Board of Trade] stated that he had spent six months at the coast and found a spirit of depression in the air and every one felt sleepy and slept long hours.

A.M. Johnson said he lived in British Columbia for 25 years coming from Cambridge University. For two years he was at Victoria, and could not work, forgetting in the morning what he had toiled to memorize the night before. He came to Nelson, worked more hours a day and passed with 'remarks'.³⁵

By June 1910, a report was submitted to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in Council: "your Commissioners have visited and made a careful examination of the several cities and rural districts in the Province suggested as suitable University sites, and have selected as the location for the University the vicinity of the City of Vancouver." In a supplementary report, to the Honourable H. Esson Young, Minister of Education: "The University Site Commissioners are strongly of the opinion that the University should not be placed on a site which may in time be completely surrounded by a city. . . . The Commissioners are of the opinion that the most suitable site is at Point Grey."³⁶ The government, true to its word, accepted this recommendation and by March 1911 the *British Columbia University Site Act* was passed into law.³⁷

After almost seven years of lobbying, the University Club of Nelson's goal to have

a university established in British Columbia was close at hand. The Club's primary *raison d'être* had been fulfilled; but should the Club continue?

An academic discussion ensued upon whether the club should disband, having witnessed the accomplishment of the object for which it has worked incessantly since its organization in December 1903, and which was in a leading sense its mission, namely, the establishment of a provincial university for British Columbia. The concensus [sic] of opinion among those present was that the accomplishment of this mission properly marked a stage in the history of the club, at which profound satisfaction could properly be felt; but that there still remained a wide field for usefulness for the club, in fostering university ideals and in contributing to the community life as in the past.³⁸

University Club members continued to meet and discuss educational issues until the last recorded meeting on 2 January 1915.³⁹ There is no indication why it ceased at this time, but one can speculate that with establishment of the University of British Columbia interest waned, particularly because many of its patriotic members became preoccupied and involved in the Great European War.

For almost seven years, members of the University Club had petitioned the provincial government, politicians and other civic officials to establish a provincial university. It was assumed and expected that they would listen to men and women of vision and it was presumed they would consider reasoned intercessions for a provincial university. It never occurred to the members that their views might be cavalierly dismissed. In a society where civility was more evident, citizens were treated with respect by the government and petitions were seriously considered. Fortunately this was an idealistic era for the University Club of Nelson protagonists. Thanks to its members, and the cooperation of non-partisan government officials, the University of British Columbia became a reality.●

Endnotes

1. Notre Dame College, 1950-1963; Notre Dame University of Nelson, 1963-1977—BC's second degree granting university; Kootenay School of Art, 1960-1984; BC Vocational School, 1964-1972; Selkirk College (formerly KSA and BC Vocational School), 1972-; David Thompson University Centre, 1977-1984— a joint venture of University of Victoria and Selkirk College/KSA; Canadian International College, 1988-1998; Academy of Classical Oriental Sciences, 1996-; Nelson University Centre, 1988-2006; The Kootenay School of the Arts (an independent cooperative now part of Selkirk College), 1991-.
2. BC Statutes, *British Columbia University Act*, 1890, Chapter 48, Section 5 and British Columbia University Amendment Act, 1891, Chapter 46, Section 23.
3. F.C. Wade, "University Question Down to Date," *Daily Province*, 2 March 1910, 10.
4. The Senate was composed of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor (appointed by the government), seven members elected by Convocation, as well as representation from provincial-municipal governments and professional organizations. BC Statutes, *British Columbia University Amendment Act*, 1891, Chapter 46, Sections 9, 12.
5. Wade, "University Question," 16.
6. *Nelson Daily News*, 20 November, 3 December 1903.
7. The initial statement, "interesting the members as university men" was amended.
8. University Club of Nelson [hereafter UCN], *Minutes*, 12 December 1903, Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History, Shawn Lamb Archives, UCN fonds.
9. Richard J. Clark to The Hon. Richard McBride, 28 March 1904 and McBride's reply, 31 March 1904, Royal BC Museum, BC Archives, GR441, Box 23, File 5.
10. UCN, *Minutes*, 11 February 1905; "Provincial University— Club of Nelson Graduates Send Memorial to Premier," *Nelson Daily News*, 14 February 1905.
11. UCN, *Minutes*, 11 March 1905.
12. UCN, *Minutes*, 21 October 1905.
13. BC Statutes, *An Act Respecting McGill University*, Chapter 28 (1906) and *An Act to Incorporate the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning of British Columbia*, Chapter 38 (1906).
14. The Society's March protest expressed tacit support of the UCN's 1904 appeal. At the UCN's May meeting, the issue of petitioning the government to set aside endowment lands for a provincial university was discussed. The Club's press release submitted to legislators, various educators and clerical officials was even discussed at the Methodist Conference in Montreal.
15. UCN, *Minutes*, 10 February 1906.
16. BC Statutes, *University Endowment Act*, 1907, Chapter 45.
17. UCN, *Minutes*, 13 April 1907; *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 7 April 1907; *Daily Province*, 8 April, 10 April 1907.
18. *Daily Province*, 13 April 1907.
19. E.C. Arthur, *Memorials of University Club of Nelson with Address on Endowment and Organization of Provincial University* (Nelson, BC: W.H. Jones, 1907), 5-6.
20. *Ibid.*, 8-9.
21. *Ibid.*, 12.
22. *Ibid.*, 14-15.
23. BC Statutes, *British Columbia University Act*, 1908, Chapter 53.
24. UCN, *Minutes*, 28 May 1908.
25. H.E. Young to Richard J. Clark, 8 December 1908, Touchstones Nelson, Shawn Lamb Archives, UCN fonds.
26. BC Statutes, *University Site Commission Act*, 1910, Chapter 51.
27. "University Commission: Dr. Young Condemns Sectionalism Shown," *Victoria Daily Times*, 12 February 1910, 3; R. Cole Harris, "Locating the University of British Columbia," *BC Studies* 32 (Winter 1976-77): 106-107.
28. Wade, "University Question," 10, 16.
29. R.J. Clark, "Correspondence: University Site," *Daily Province*, 2 June 1910, 7.
30. UCN, *Minutes*, 11 June 1910.
31. "City's Claims Placed Before University Commission: University Club Presents Its Views," *Nelson Daily News*, 18 June 1910, 1, 4.
32. *Ibid.*, 4.
33. Harris, "Locating the University," 124.
34. "City's Claims," 8.
35. *Ibid.*, 5, 8.
36. BC Sessional Papers, 1911, *University Site Commission Report*, M13.
37. BC Statutes, *British Columbia University Site Act*, 1911, Chapter 53.
38. UCN, *Minutes*, 8 October 1910.
39. The next page in this Minute book was for 21 November 1930 when the "practicality of reviving the Nelson University Club" was discussed. Instead, it was decided to form "a club devoted to literary, historical, scientific, artistic and other cultural activities . . . not confined to alumni." This organization became the Fortnightly Club.

Archives & Archivists

by Courtney C. Mumma; edited by Sylvia Stopforth

Sylvia is a Librarian and Archivist at Norma Marion Alloway Library at Trinity Western University.

Courtney C. Mumma is a digital archivist at the City of Vancouver Archives in British Columbia. A 2009 MAS/MLIS graduate of the UBC School of Library, Archival & Information Studies, she is responsible for managing the acquisition of the Archives of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. She is the current Vice President of the Archives Association of British Columbia (AABC) and a researcher with the BitCurator: Tools for Digital Forensics Methods and Workflows in Real-World Collecting Institutions project.

Building the best of the digital past, present and future at the City of Vancouver Archives.

Most people think of history as only something that happened many years ago, but history is being created every day. The City of Vancouver Archives' job is to identify, acquire, preserve and make available the best evidence of the city's history—records of its public and private-sector activities and its documentary heritage. Since digital records have increasingly replaced analogue ones in the City government and in many private businesses and organizations, we have been building our capacity to manage our digital heritage as well as we do our traditional holdings.

The records of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games are the first major acquisition for our digital

archives system. The Games were arguably the largest event ever to be hosted in Vancouver and its records have enduring value. We started to work with VANOC, the organizing committee for the Games, as early as 2004, to ensure that their archives would be transferred to us in a timely manner. Digital materials, especially, need to be acquired very soon after their creation because of the risk of format, software and hardware deterioration and obsolescence. Paper records and photographs stored in someone's garage for fifty years are at risk of damage due to poor storage conditions and environmental factors, but they are more likely to be salvageable than the same kinds of records on DVDs or hard drives. For example, bit rot, the deterioration of the tiny pieces that



IMAGE COURTESY OF CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

Mascot Miga with digital video tapes from the VANOC collection

make up a digital file, can happen more quickly than living mould and is less predictable.

Our cutting-edge, open source digital archives system is a legacy of the Games. We are building our digital archives using free and open source software (FOSS) to ensure Vancouver's digital records remain authentic and reliable. Archives favour open source software so that everything we do to the records to protect, store and provide access to them is transparent to the end-user. In this way, open software and open standards are superior to proprietary for archival purposes. Access to source code and the right to freely modify it allows us to control the preservation of digital records over time and does not hold our history hostage to the commercial software market. Digital records 'decay' and must be maintained over time just like their analogue equivalents. Once acquired by the Archives, they must be monitored and maintained. For instance, the best preservation formats change over time and call for massive migrations. Without access to source code, we may be unable to properly migrate data or records into a new or alternative format suitable for future preservation. Scheduled backups and integrity checks are also essential to guarantee trustworthy records for researchers to discover. Changes to electronic documents and information can be very difficult to detect. Because one of the Archives' primary roles is to assure our users that the records we have preserved are authentic (i.e., that they are what they purport to be, and that they have not been materially altered), we are obligated to fully understand what happens to records during all of the various preservation actions.

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*Gretzky lighting
the torch, Sterling
Lorense for VANOC
(2010-02-12)*



IMAGE COURTESY OF CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

From the Book Review Editor's Desk

by K. Jane Watt



Good Fortune

The turn of the year signals an opportunity for reflection. As I was snowshoeing in Manning Park last weekend

I had pause to consider the debts we urbanites above all owe to the creators of BC parks, people who envisioned a necklace of public amenities that link the geography of the province and enrich our lives in so many ways. Reviewer Mark Forsythe delves into the importance of parks and the people who have made sure they exist over the past century. And Rosa Flinton-Brown's review marks a turn from the pristine nature of parks to the challenges and rewards of ministering in Canada's poorest neighbourhood, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Hers is a fitting offering, I think, as today Surrey MLA Jagrup Brar completed his month of living in the area on \$610, an amount that after rent leaves \$108 for food and transportation. Looking tired, he could speak only of the kindnesses he had received from those for whom life on the streets was not an experiment. He expressed his good fortune, his yearning for a hot shower and a game of basketball with his kids.

Books received recently also speak of the deep connections we have to place, most especially those of coastal British Columbia: Edited by Martine J. Reid, *Bill Reid and the Haida Canoe* (Harbour, \$29.95) expresses the intersections art enables between place, identity, and community even as it blurs the boundaries between the utilitarian and the symbolic. "Western art," noted Bill Reid, "starts with the figure: West Coast Indian art starts with the canoe." Reid's work honours the canoe as a complex cultural and visual symbol.

The Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas & McIntyre have recently released *Shore, Forest and Beyond: Art from the Audain Collection* (\$55.00). A companion book to a VAG exhibit of the same name, it is a celebration of the scope of this private collection, art that speaks deeply of human connection to all the corners of British Columbia even as it speaks to the individual collector. Audain began collecting, he notes, "like most people, by buying one picture at a time." His art becomes a part of his life — enlivening its present location even as it pulls along with it into the room all of its connections to human history and stories of place. "Today I buy art," he explains, "in order to live with it at home or in the office, never to store it away in a vault."

And books about BC's art traditions were accompanied by an interesting one about its songs. From Princeton, Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat write under the imprint of Canada Folk Workshop. In 2011, they released *Dead Horse on the Tulameen: Settler Verse from BC's Similkameen Valley*, a collection of verse as described as the "rich store of songs and poems...lodged in the comprehensive newspaper collection of the Princeton Archives." Their

interest in the song tradition of British Columbia between 1900 and 1950 offers some unexpected treats: "When We Get Up At Three In The Morning" extolls the possibilities of transportation after the Kettle Valley Railway was completed in the era of WWI.

*When we get up at three in the morning,
Bemoaning our miserable fate,
And we head through the rain
just in time for the train
To learn that it's four hours late.*

(*Princeton Star*, 5 May 1927)

Two new books about commercial canneries: Richmond's Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society published *The Monster Cannery: The History of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery* to mark the Society's 25th anniversary in 2011 (\$19.95). It is a little gem, beautifully designed and full of surprises, including, for example photographs of the metal stencils used for labeling boxes. One indicates that the fish inside is "FRESH FROZEN WITH THE WIGGLE IN ITS TAIL." Caitlin Press has released *The Good Hope Cannery: life and death at a salmon cannery* by W.B. MacDonald (\$26.95). Built in Rivers Inlet by Henry Ogle Bell-Irving in 1895, the Good Hope cannery has lived the cycles of a resource economy: publisher's information tells us that "Good Hope canned salmon continuously until 1940 and thereafter served company fishermen as a place where they could refuel, eat, buy supplies and have their boats and nets prepared. By the late 1960s, depleted fish stocks and technological advances rendered Good Hope obsolete as a camp." Today it has entered the third phase of its life — a sport fishing resort.

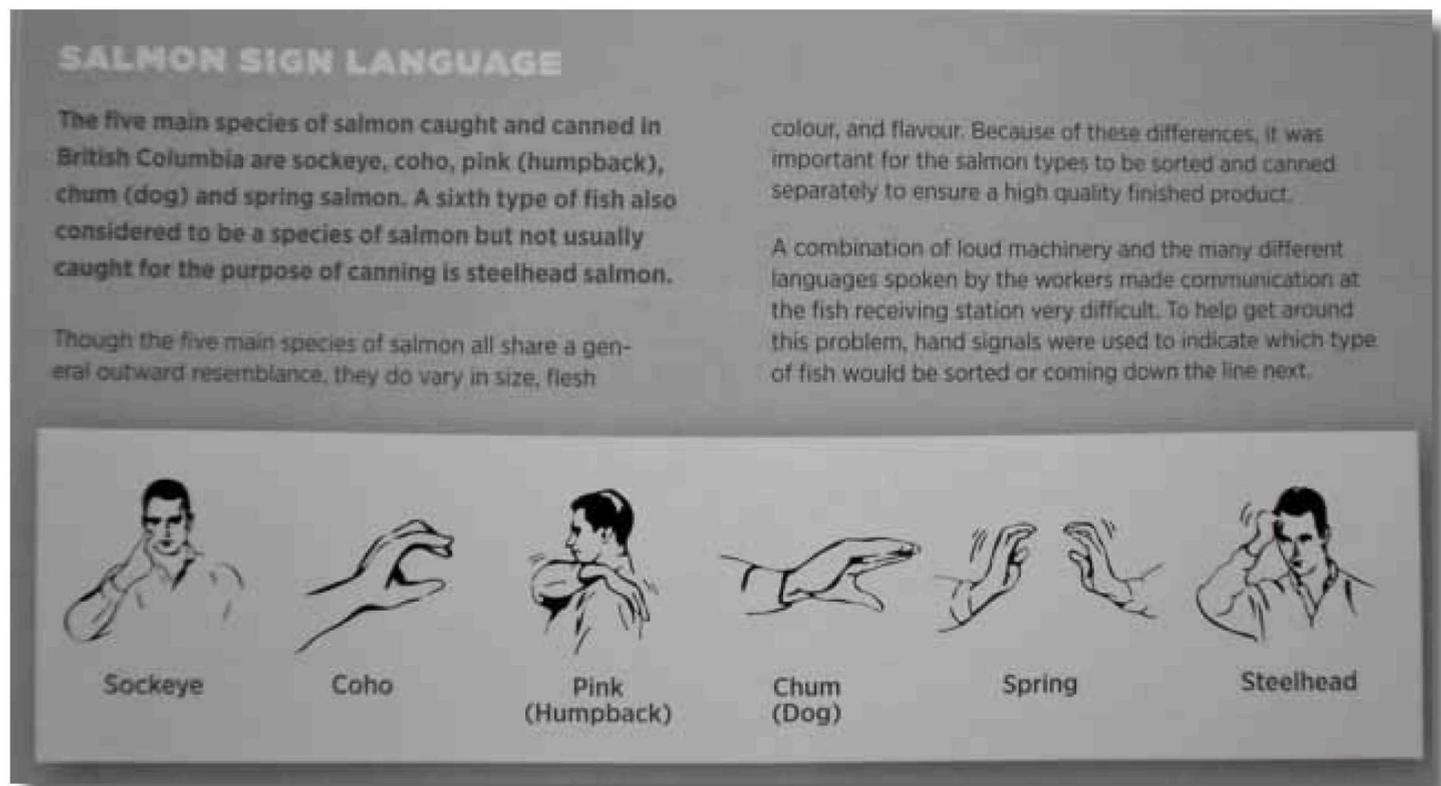
Rick James has another offering on maritime history called *West Coast Wrecks & Other Maritime*

Tales. It is number 21 in the Raincoast Chronicles series (Harbour, \$24.95). Described by James as a “compilation of stories spanning 140 years of British Columbia’s maritime history,” the book offers stories about wrecks from Haida Gwaii to Kuper Island and many points in between. Skookum Press has released a book by James Sirois (with a foreword by Barry Gough) called *Searching for a Seaport: With the 1870s CPR Explorer Surveyors on the Coast of British Columbia* (\$34.95). It takes us back to a time, Gough writes, “when all Canadian eyes and particularly nascent British Columbia ones were fixed on locating a serviceable pass through the Canadian Rocky Mountains and out to Pacific tidewater,” a pursuit “regarded as the essence of progress and the promise of the future.”

And the south coast has received its share of historical research recently

it seems: the Pender Harbour Living Heritage Society has released *Women of Pender Harbour: Their Voices, Their History* compiled by Dorothy Faulkner, Elaine Park and Cathy Jenks with Pat Jobb, Maureen Wright and Karen Dyck. It is a comprehensive history of the last century of settlement - with a lens on the lives of women in the Pender Harbour area. It contains a host of black and white images and stories of women who worked to create homes and community between tideline and forest. Harbour has released *Texada Tapestry: A History* by Heather Harbord (\$32.95). Built on a foundation of over a hundred interviews with locals and old timers about community and the resources of the land - including gold, iron, copper, marble, lime, and timber, Harbord’s history is described as a “captivating book of unforgettable characters, humorous anecdotes and well researched facts.”

The Little Green Valley: The Kleindale Story has also been released by Harbour (\$24.95) Written by Ray Phillips, this story of the Klein family and its settlement on the Sunshine Coast is a colourful one that traverses the territory from Martina Klein’s years in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show to her move to join her sons in the Pender Harbour area. At Oyster Bay she operated the Klein Ranch, growing sugar beets that were “fifteen to twenty pounds and...oats that were so high you couldn’t see the team of horses pulling the mower.” Phillips, whose mother was a Klein, writes a caveat that should be a standard feature of all memoirs of family in a section he calls, “A Note to My Relatives.” Here he muses on the importance of perspective. “Everyone sees and remembers a story in a different way,” he writes,



Detail of page from *The Monster Cannery*, 2011.

Book Reviews

Books for review and book reviews should be sent to:
K. Jane Watt, Book Review Editor, *British Columbia History*
Box 1053, Fort Langley BC V1M 2S4

so I know I will get a lot of flak about this book from the few who were there and lived through these times. I welcome this. If I wrote something different than what you remember, I apologize in advance, but I have done my best to stick to the facts as I know them and have consulted with some of the old-timers for help when I wasn't sure of the details. If here or there a story seems a little rough, just be thankful I have kept away from any of the real dirt.

Phillips's words on the challenges of the memoir set us up well for future columns that will feature memoirs from across the province as well as city stories of Kelowna, Vancouver and North Vancouver.

Until next time. •

British Columbia's Magnificent Parks: The First 100 Years by James D. Anderson



(Madierra Park: Harbour, 2011)
\$24.95.

We can thank poet William Wordsworth for being an early park advocate in 1810 when he described the Lakes District in England as a, "sort of national property in which every man has a right and interest." As James D. Anderson points out in his book, *British Columbia's Magnificent Parks*, Wordsworth's observations marked the first time someone strongly advocated that every citizen should

have the right of access to "unalienated parts of that landscape and enjoy their beauty. And that is the fundamental principle behind the national park concept."

Anderson traces the evolution of British Columbia's parks system from its origin 100 years ago with the creation of Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. The federal government had plans to establish a park on the Island. In reaction, BC Premier Richard McBride locked up a reserve of 203,314 hectares in order to beat them to it. Because the BC government knew virtually nothing about this vast area, McBride sent an expedition of 24 adventurers off to explore the wilds of central Vancouver Island. Led by Chief Commissioner of Lands, Price Ellison, the party included his 20 year old daughter Myra who was at the front of the pack on the final push to the summit of Crown Mountain. Ellison's enthusiastic report about the region to the legislature sealed the future of the area. Our first provincial park was created in March 1911.

Promoted as the "Vancouver Island Alps," Strathcona was subjected to logging and mineral exploration right from its earliest days. A clause in the special act creating the park exempted mining claims and timber holdings, and later legislative changes permitted more mineral claims and damming of rivers. "All of these changes," according to Anderson, "would assure that Strathcona would not only be the first provincial park but the one with the worst history of exploitation."

This is a nutshell underscores the historical tension in BC between developing parks and extracting resources. After spending more than 30 years as an administrator with the provincial government, Anderson brings unique insight to this terrain. He experienced the best and worst

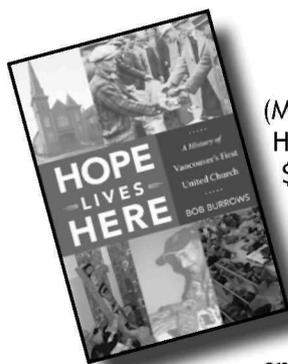
of times: rapid expansion of parks, conservation areas and marine parks, followed by tight budgets, cuts to services and staff — including highly popular park interpretation programs that helped launch generations of biologists, conservationists and people who cared deeply about natural spaces. He documents key changes in policies that were influenced by politics, economics and social change.

For many years parks came under the purview of the Ministry of Forests. In 1945, the Sloan Commission reaffirmed the, "prevailing view that parks were not special places and management was just another aspect of forest administration." This power imbalance shifted as a strong conservation ethic took root in BC, and preservation became a higher priority for governments. Anderson follows the rise of environmental activism, from the Skagit Valley (which was to be flooded for an American dam) to the Stein Valley (facing intensive logging) and the consequent "war in the woods" that erupted around the province. This led to a new process of consultation in the 1990s that pulled together various parties around regional round tables. The Great Bear Rainforest agreement later grew out of this collaboration and is now, "one of the largest tracts of temperate rainforest left in the world."

Hundreds of powerful images illustrate these pages — from a young grizzly dining on grasses at Kutzymateen to moss-encrusted Sitka spruce giants standing deep inside Carmanah/Walbran Provincial Park. James Anderson dedicated this book to the "elders and builders" of BC's Parks system. He can surely count himself among them.

Reviewer Mark Forsythe is host of BC Almanac on CBC Radio One, and co-author of three books, including *The Trail of 1858*.

Hope Lives Here: The History of Vancouver's First United Church by Bob Burrows



(Madiera Park:
Harbour, 2010)
\$24.95.

The story of First United and its work with the East Hastings community in Vancouver is legendary in United Church circles. After reading Bob Burrows' book, I understand more of why that is so. First United's social justice work deserves to be the stuff of legend.

I must admit to reading the book with an ulterior motive. Mainline protestant church denominations are shrinking rapidly and the United Church is no exception. The average age in many congregations is above 60 and climbing. I hear stories of the "glory years" when Sunday Schools were full, when churches were the centres of community life, when money was never a problem and when building new churches was a source of joy and inspiration. But I have never experienced this kind of church. Instead, my church has always struggled with declining numbers, loss of income, and fear of irrelevancy. Between 1987 and 2007, the number of people attending worship in the United Church fell by 48%.

Sometimes the nostalgia that many church people hold for the past frustrates me. I wonder if the "legends" are true. I tire of the refrain, "Where are all the young people?" As I read *Hope Lives Here*, I reflected on this pervasive nostalgia and asked myself "Can Burrows' stories of the past

provide the roots for a rejuvenation of the United Church?"

It seems to me that when First United's worshipping congregation was the largest in the 1930s and 1940s, many people were attending church not for religion but for social activities and events. A successful basketball team, a weekly/daily radio station, a summer camp called Camp Fircom, and a myriad of scouting groups were all services provided by First United. Today, these activities are no longer run by churches but by other not-for-profit organizations and clubs. Because our children find these opportunities elsewhere, many church basements remain full of old Scout troop clutter as members hope for a reemergence of the church's role in these community groups. Many a presbytery or conference struggles to maintain church camps despite overwhelming evidence that families are not as interested in this experience as they once were. It is unlikely that the church will again be the social centre of community life in the same way as it was in the past.

And as for money and buildings? First United's history proves that a lack of money, aging, expensive properties and huge mortgage burdens to build new churches have been the norm rather than the exception for the church. The roots of our future are not to be found through this history.

Today the Sunday morning worshipping congregation at First United remains a fragment of its former self, a small number of people meeting together during the week. The church's mission to its desperate community takes preference over a congregational community life. Some would argue it is not longer a church but has become or is rather a social agency. However, it is clear that the role of faith remains central at First United. Christian values guide and nourish the front line workers, volunteers and those whom

they meet and serve. Could it be that despite fewer members, First United Church and its mission are more alive than ever?

It may be that every United Church is stronger when it focuses on the real needs of its community and worries less about "bums in pews." If we reminisce about a past that will not be repeated, our church will chase its tail. Instead, can we reach out to meet the spiritual yearning in our world? Can we become a primary voice of acceptance, love and peace to our communities? Can we let go of our buildings, our hierarchical structures and our traditions and risk it all to proclaim and experience Christianity, as we know it? *Hope Lives Here* invites us to ask these pressing questions.

Reviewer Rosa Flinton-Brown is a Chartered Accountant who lives in Langley. In 2010, as Chair of Langley United Church, she helped lead her church into voluntary amalgamation with three other United Churches creating new energy for ministry in Langley.

Cabinets of Curiosities

Call to order!

Barbara Hynek, President of the British Columbia Historical Federation, ponders the origin of the “Birdcages” gavel.

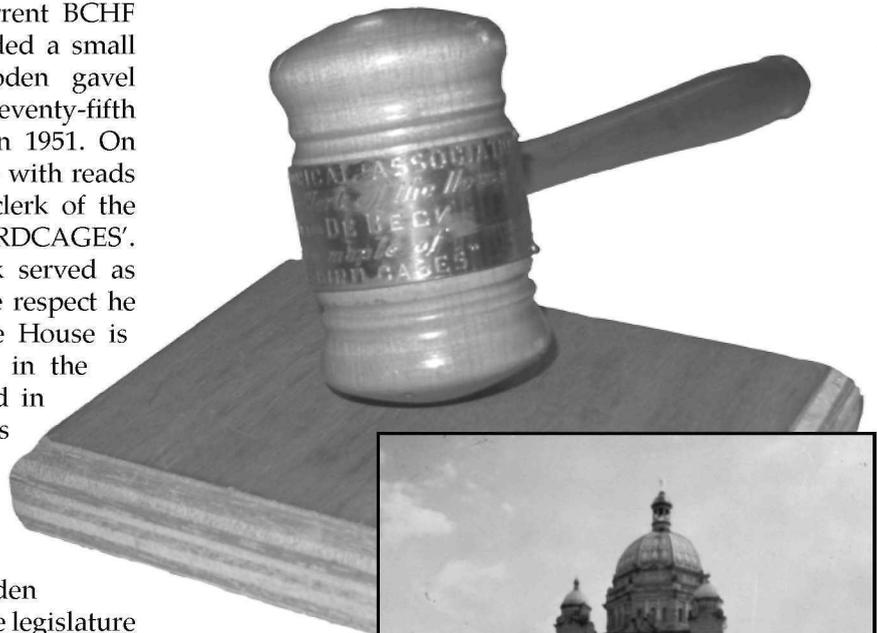
At the inaugural meeting of the current BCHF council in Powell River, I was handed a small black bag that contained a wooden gavel along with a sound block and a seventy-fifth edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, printed in 1951. On inspection the gavel holds a small brass plaque with reads B.C. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION made by clerk of the house Ned De Beck from maple of ‘THE BIRDCAGES’.

As many will know E.K. (Ned) DeBeck served as the Clerk of the House from 1949 to 1973. The respect he garnered from his peers and Members of the House is evidenced by the fact that the main lounge in the Legislative Assembly bears his name. He died in 1975 at the age of 91 and was described in his obituary as “Father of the House”. A name richly deserved both for the ability to maintain the rules of parliamentary conduct and for his gentlemanly composure.

The wood comes from the group of wooden colonial administrative buildings that housed the legislature from 1860-1898 and were nicknamed “the birdcages” because of their fanciful style of architecture.

While the significance of this object can be judged by the prominence of the creator and the origin of the wood, I wanted to find out when and where the gavel was presented to our organization. Looking through the digitized copies of our journal and newsletters I was able to find reference to two visits to meetings by Ned DeBeck, once in 1956 to the Victoria section to commemorate the provincial centennial, and again in 1969 when he was a guest speaker in Vancouver. Unfortunately neither reference mentions the presentation of a gavel. I have spoken with a few past presidents and so far have not discovered how and when the Federation received this gavel. I of course would be delighted to hear from anyone who might know the background.

I will use this piece of our history gently in Ned DeBeck’s memory remembering that according to my dusty Rules of Order, a chair is to refrain from “pounding the gavel”. •



PHOTOGRAPHER: ANDREA LISTER

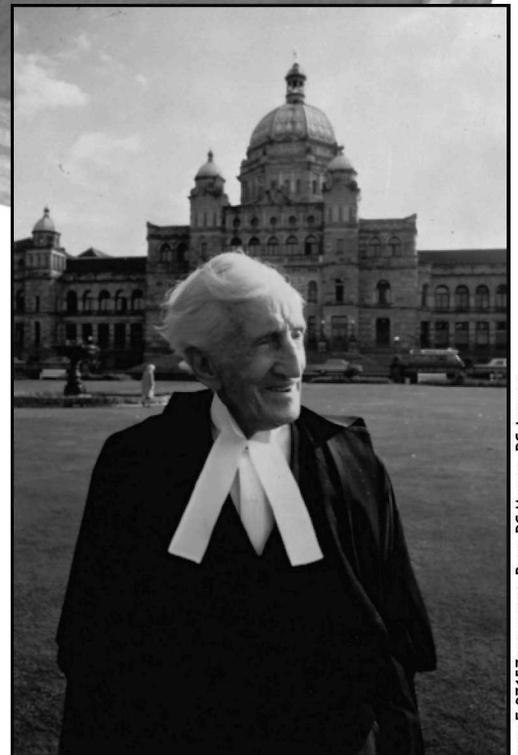


IMAGE E-07157 COURTESY OF ROYAL BC MUSEUM, BC ARCHIVES

E.K. (Ned) De Beck, Q.C. in front of the Legislative Buildings, date undetermined.

••••• Do you have an object of curiosity in your cabinet? •••••

- Send me 300 to 400 words with a high-resolution image of the object, telling me the story of the object. Email your story to: bcheditor@bchistory.ca, or mail it to: Editor, British Columbia History, PO Box 21187, Maple Ridge BC, V2X 1P7

Awards and Scholarship Information

for complete details go to <http://bchistory.ca/awards/index.html>

W. KAYE LAMB Essay Scholarships

Deadline: May 15

The British Columbia Historical Federation awards two scholarships annually for essays written by students at BC colleges or universities, on a topic relating to British Columbia history. One scholarship (\$750) is for an essay written by a student in a first or second year course; the other (\$1000) is for an essay written by a student in a third or fourth year course.

To apply for the scholarship all candidates must submit (1) a letter of application and (2) a letter of recommendation from the professor for whom the essay was written. First and second year course essays should be 1,500-3,000 words; third and fourth year, 1,500 to 5,000 words. By entering the scholarship competition the student gives the editor of *British Columbia History* the right to edit and publish the essay if it is deemed appropriate for the magazine.

Applications with 3 printed copies of the essay should be submitted to: Marie Elliott, Chair BC Historical Federation Scholarship Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

Anne & Philip Yandle Best Article Award

Deadline: To be eligible, the article must have appeared in the BCHF Journal British Columbia History for that year.

A Certificate of merit and \$250 will be awarded annually to the author of the article, published in *British Columbia History*, that best enhances knowledge of BC's history and provides reading enjoyment. Judging will be based on subject development, writing skill, freshness of material, and appeal to a general readership interested in all aspects of BC history.

BC History Web Site Prize

Deadline: December 31

The British Columbia Historical Federation and David Mattison are jointly sponsoring a yearly cash award of \$250 to recognize Web sites that contribute to the understanding and appreciation of British Columbia's past. The award honours individual initiative in writing and presentation.

Nominations for the BC History Web Site Prize must be made to the British Columbia Historical Federation, Web Site Prize Committee, prior to the 31st of December each year. Web site creators and authors may nominate their own sites. Prize rules and the online nomination form can be found on the British Columbia Historical Federation Web site: <http://bchistory.ca/awards/website/index.html>

Best Newsletter Award

Deadline: March 1

Newsletters published by member societies are eligible to compete for an annual prize of \$250. They will be judged for presentation and content that is interesting, newsy and informative.

- Only member societies of the BCHF are eligible
- Only one issue of a society's newsletter will be evaluated
- Submit three printed copies of this best issue from the previous calendar year
- BCHF reserves the right not to award a prize in a given year should applications not be of sufficient quality

Submit three printed copies of a single newsletter issue to: TBA, BCHF Recognition Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, BC, Canada, V8R 6N4

Certificate of Merit

Deadline: March 1

Group or individual who has made a significant contribution to the study, project, or promotion of British Columbia's history.

Certificate of Recognition

Deadline: March 1

Given to individual members or groups of members of BCHF Member Societies who have given exceptional service to their Organization or Community.

Certificate of Appreciation

Deadline: March 1

Individuals who have undertaken ongoing positions, tasks, or projects for BCHF.

Nominations

Any member of BCHF may nominate candidates for Certificates of Appreciation, Certificates of Merit or Certificates of Recognition. Nominations, supported by a letter explaining why the nominee is deserving of a certificate, should be submitted to the Chair of the Recognition Committee by 1 March of each year.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing

Deadline: December 31

Each year, the British Columbia Historical Federation invites submissions for its Annual Historical Writing Competition to authors of BC history; and the winning author is awarded the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing.

Eligibility

- To be eligible, a book must be about BC history and be published within the competition year
- Non-fiction books representing any aspect of BC history are eligible.
- Reprints or revisions of books are not

eligible

- Books may be submitted by authors or publishers
- Deadline for submission is December 31 of the year in which the book was published

Submission Requirements

- For information about making submissions contact Lieutenant-Governor's Award for Writing
- Authors/Publishers are required to submit three copies of their book
- Books are to be accompanied by a letter containing the following:
 1. Title of the book submitted
 2. Author's name and contact information
 3. Publisher's name and contact information
 4. Selling price
- Books entered become property of BCHF
- By submitting books for this competition, the authors agree that the BCHF may use their name(s) in press releases and in its publications

William R. Morrison Email: writing@bchistory.ca Phone: 250-245-9247

Judging Criteria

Judges are looking for quality presentations and fresh material. Submissions will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Scholarship: quality of research and documentation, comprehensiveness, objectivity and accuracy
- Presentation: organization, clarity, illustrations and graphics
- Accessibility: readability and audience appeal

Publicity

All winners will receive publicity and an invitation to the Award's Banquet at the Federation's annual conference in May following the year of publication.

Lieutenant-Governor's Medal and Other Awards

The BC Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing will be awarded together with \$600 to the author whose book makes the most significant contribution to the history of British Columbia. The 2nd and 3rd place winners will receive \$400 and \$200 respectively. Certificates of Honourable Mention may be awarded to other books as recommended by the judges.

Johnson Inc. Scholarship

Deadline: September 15

Canadian residents completing high school and who are beginning post-secondary education. 100 scholarships of \$1500 each for Canada.

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Group in front of Painter family house on the Tyee Spit, 1922. E.P. (Ned) Painter (in shadows on left) and his wife June Painter (standing in doorway in white dress) established a boat building, sportfishing camp business on the Tyee Spit.

Image 11885 courtesy of Museum at Campbell River.

Celebrating 90 Years! British Columbia Historical Federation Conference

Join us for Workshops on Thursday, May 3

Workshop 1: Your Photos: Share the Treasure (full day)

or

Workshop 2: Taking Your Story to Print (in two parts)

and

Panel Presentation: Are You Ready to Publish?

Go to www.crmuseum.ca for more information.

Make sure to join us for the Opening Reception

Welcome, and Celebration of BCHF 90th anniversary

in the Museum Changing Gallery, 7:00pm - 9:00pm