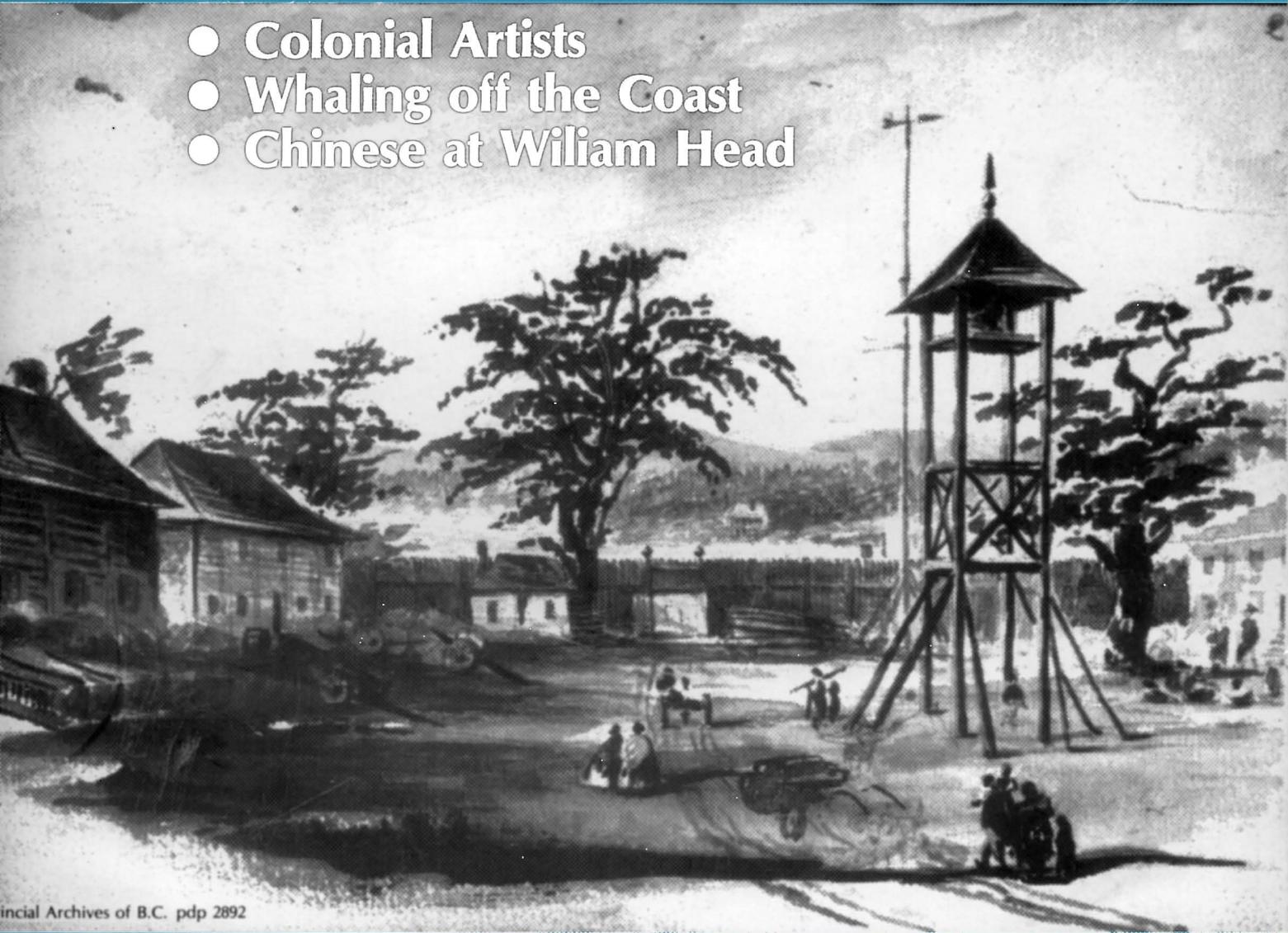


BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL NEWS

VOLUME 16, No. 4
1983

- Colonial Artists
- Whaling off the Coast
- Chinese at Wiliam Head



On the cover ...

Sarah Crease

INTERIOR OF THE OLD HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S FORT, September 25, 1860
watercolour

Interior views of Fort Victoria are rare. The use of colour in this sketch provides additional information than is evident from contemporary photographs. On the reverse of Sarah's sketches are found identifications and commentaries. She labelled all prominent features including buildings, mountains, roads and people. In this particular instance she recorded the function and history of each building, the height of the flagstaff and belfry, recounted the practise of hoisting the company flag on Sundays and holidays and described the appearance, height and botanical features of the hills in the background.

... story starts on page six.



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To the Editor

The Editor:

I enjoyed reading your article on the Alexandra Suspension Bridge in your Fall 1982 issue.

However, the author failed to mentioned one interesting point. The 1926 bridge is believed to be built on the masonry pilings of the original. On the east bank, the pilings are masonry up to a point, and then there is twelve feet of cast concrete up to the bridge deck. This seems to fit his statement about the newer bridge being twelve feet higher than the original. In addition, the iron cable anchors are still visible beneath the present bridge.

Perhaps you would have information that could confirm this for me.

Mel Atkey
Delta, B.C.

The Editor:

The rather hazy photograph on B.C. HISTORICAL NEWS Spring issue's cover recalled my own somewhat hazy recollection of a visit I made to Soldier's Point in 1911 - my haziness is caused, at least in part, by the fact that I was only three years old at the time.

I was born in Port Essington in 1908 and lived there until 1921. On June 22, 1911 a public holiday was declared to celebrate the coronation of King George V and a group of Port Essington residents

decided to observe Coronation Day by having a picnic at Soldier's Point, located a short distance by boat up the Ecstall River, which joins the Skeena just east of the site of Port Essington.

As this picnic took place 23 years after the 1888 incident the militia-men's camp-ground would have been over-run by new growth and whether any traces remained I can't say. However, I do know that the buildings in the photo across the river were those of Balmoral Cannery, once the largest on the river, which ceased operations more than thirty years ago and is now non-existent. It is regrettable, too, that what remained of the town of Port Essington was almost entirely destroyed by fire in 1961.

Enclosed is a snapshot, taken by my mother, of some of the 1911 picnic participants. I am the child at the left wearing a straw hat and a fancy white collar - fortunately I have forgotten I ever had to wear a collar like that but I do remember the hat. In the centre is my father, A.G. Harris, who was
(continued on next page)



NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for submissions for the next issue of the **NEWS** is September 1, 1983. Please type double spaced if possible. Mail to the Editor, *B.C. Historical News*, 1745 Taylor, Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8.

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(continued from page 4)

manager of Cunningham's store, holding my infant sister. The white-bearded gentleman at the right is Charles F. Morison, one of the northern pioneers. He came to B.C. in the 1860's, worked as a young man on the Collins Overland Telegraph, and later joined the Hudson's Bay Company and for a number of years, probably including 1888, was in charge of the HBC post at Hazelton. In 1911, however, Mr. Morison was employed by Cunninghams at Port Essington.

E.A. Harris
Vancouver, B.C.



The Editor:

The National Museum of Man is continuing the project designed to document the experiences of British Columbian women in the household. Through the process of interviews we plan to compile an historical account of women's experiences focusing on the home in the first three decades of this century (1900-1930). Our interest is the undocumented day-to-day activities of maintaining and running a home in B.C.

We are very interested in personal accounts of women who were students or teachers in home economics/domestic science classes in the province. If you could provide us with any information, we would appreciate hearing from you. Please write:

Behind the Kitchen Door
c/o Modern History Division
British Columbia Provincial Museum
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.

or phone 381-2133.

The material will be permanently housed in the Provincial Archives, and will contribute to our understanding of women's heritage in this province.

Kathy Chopik
Kathryn Thomson
Lynn Bueckert

From the Editor



It's Been Fun

It seems only a short time ago that I started out as editor of the *B.C. Historical News*. The two years and eight issues have slipped by easily.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the British Columbia Historical Association—its officers, member societies and members—for the support it has given to me and the publication. Ruth Barnett, chairperson of the News Policy Committee, has been a rock of support.

All those who have been involved in the creation of the *News* also merit our thanks. Writers, photographers, reporters, proof-readers, typesetters and distributors all did their part and did it well.

I wish the new editor, Marie Elliott, good luck and hope that she will enjoy her association with the *News* as much as I have. Thank you all.

—Maureen Cassidy

P.S. Please send correspondence and articles to Marie directly at her home address: 1745 Taylor, Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8.

Kathryn Bridge

Two Colonial Artists

In the colonial period, 1848-1871, and indeed for some years after, sketching was a popular and common pursuit. It was cultivated especially by the middle classes as a leisure activity. Travellers invariably carried a sketchbook, pencil and watercolours. Both men and women received artistic training; although men could pursue art as a career, women were discouraged.

Colonial British Columbia attracted a wide variety of people from different walks of life. Among them were professional illustrators such as Frederick Whympere, W.G.R. Hind, E.T. Coleman and others who recorded the colony, its inhabitants and events with the express purpose of making a livelihood. Sketches and paintings were sold in the colonies and also sent back to England, accompanied official reports or were submitted to the publishers of illustrated papers such as the *Illustrated London News*, where the sketches were often used as the basis for engravings accompanying articles on British Columbia.

Complementing these professional works are the more numerous works produced by amateurs, often exhibiting a high degree of technical expertise. Because these works were not sold, they often remained in families, passed down through the generations. The Provincial Archives of B.C. is fortunate to hold some of these collections.

The paintings, drawings and prints collection of the Visual Records Division of the Provincial Archives is comprised of over six thousand works of art which document the history of the province and the people who settled it. Of particular interest are the many items dating from the colonial period, which often predate the use of photography in the area, or complement the photographic evidence by documenting scenes or events not captured by photographers because of inaccessibility or technical limitations.

Art works produced by two women, Eleanor Caroline Fellows and Sarah Crease illustrate the rich and varied visual documentation of early British Columbia.

Eleanor Caroline Fellows

Eleanor Caroline Fellows arrived in Victoria, January 1862, aboard the steamer *Cortez*. She had left England in November after her marriage to Arthur Fellows, a hardware and commission merchant, who with his brother Alfred had previously established a business in Victoria. Eleanor's perceptions of the colony were transferred to family and friends in England through extensive letters, often with enclosed sketches. Although no letters are extant, she later utilized them to form the basis of her *Reminiscences*.

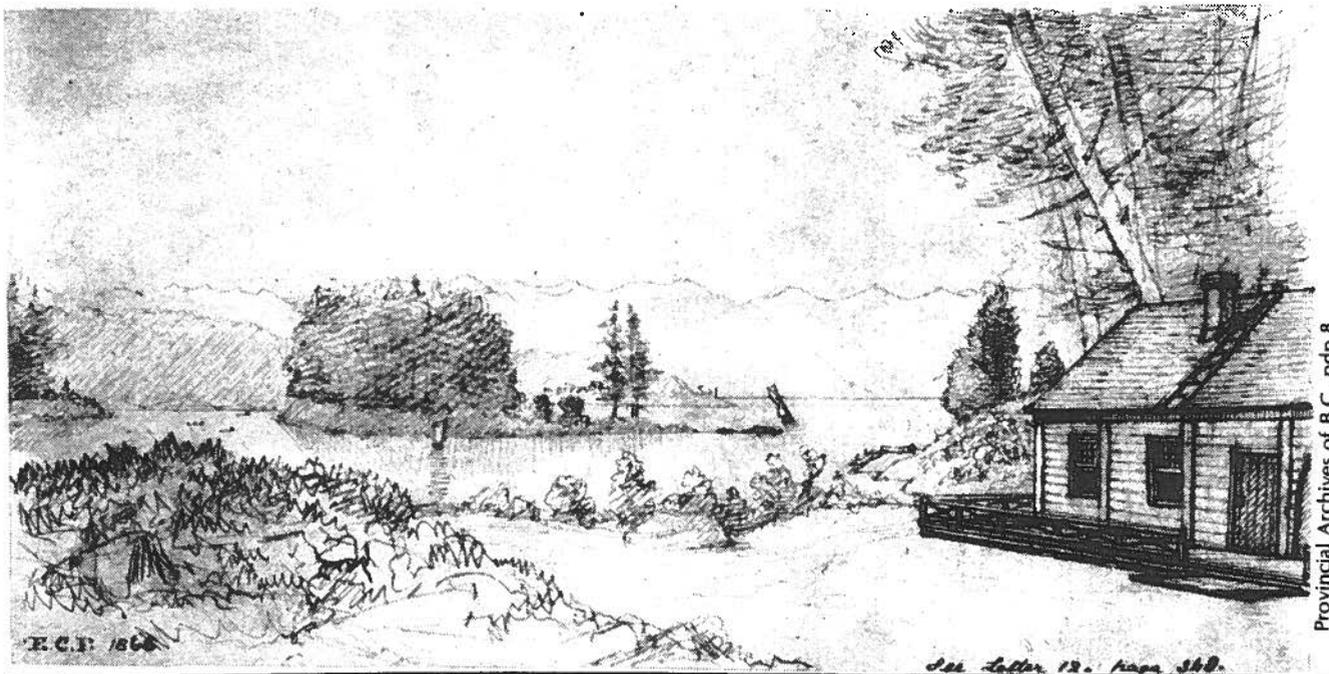
These *Reminiscences*, a lively and often opinionated account of her life, place special emphasis on the years spent in the "Far West". Of particular interest are the accounts of entertainment in the colony, the theatricals and musical occasions, and character sketches of many personalities prominent and not so prominent, which today provide particular insights into the social sphere of the colony.

The Archives holds a series of twelve pencil and watercolour sketches obtained from the artist's daughter. As can be noted in the illustrations, several of these were meant to accompany letters home, rather extensive letters at that!

An examination of a few of these works illustrates the type of information that can be obtained by the historian from drawings.

Eleanor Caroline Fellows
VIEW IN ESQUIMALT HARBOUR LOOKING SOUTH, 1866
pencil

In 1865 the Fellows family moved from their residence on Birdcage Walk to a former Hudson's Bay Company cabin known as Thetis Cottage, on Dyke Point, Esquimalt Harbour. Here was sufficient room for the growing family which included a son, twin daughters and an additional son born in the spring of 1866. This pencil sketch shows the cottage overlooking the view of the harbour with the naval establishment on the opposite shore and the Olympic range in the background.



FELLOWS FAMILY AT THETIS COTTAGE, 1866

left to right: nurse with child Rowland Hill Fellows, nurse with infant Arthur Fellows jr., Arthur and Eleanor Fellows holding twins Mary Clara and Caroline Frances, young Walter Wilson.

This image is one of two confirmed photographs of the Fellows family. It verifies the accuracy of Eleanor's drawing which, though sketched from a different side, delineates architectural detail including window size and verandah style. The sketch and photograph complement each other by each providing distinct yet integral information.



Provincial Archives of B.C. HP 5526



Eleanor Caroline Fellows
INDIAN MODE OF ROCKING THE BABY, 1867
pencil

Describing to relatives in England the new surroundings and life in the colony of Vancouver Island was challenging. It was different than anything experienced "at home". Colonists often included in their letters home, small sketches which were visual aids to their written descriptions. The Aboriginal inhabitants were subjects of particular interest and curiosity. Differences in child rearing, housekeeping and general lifestyles were avidly noted.

Sarah Crease

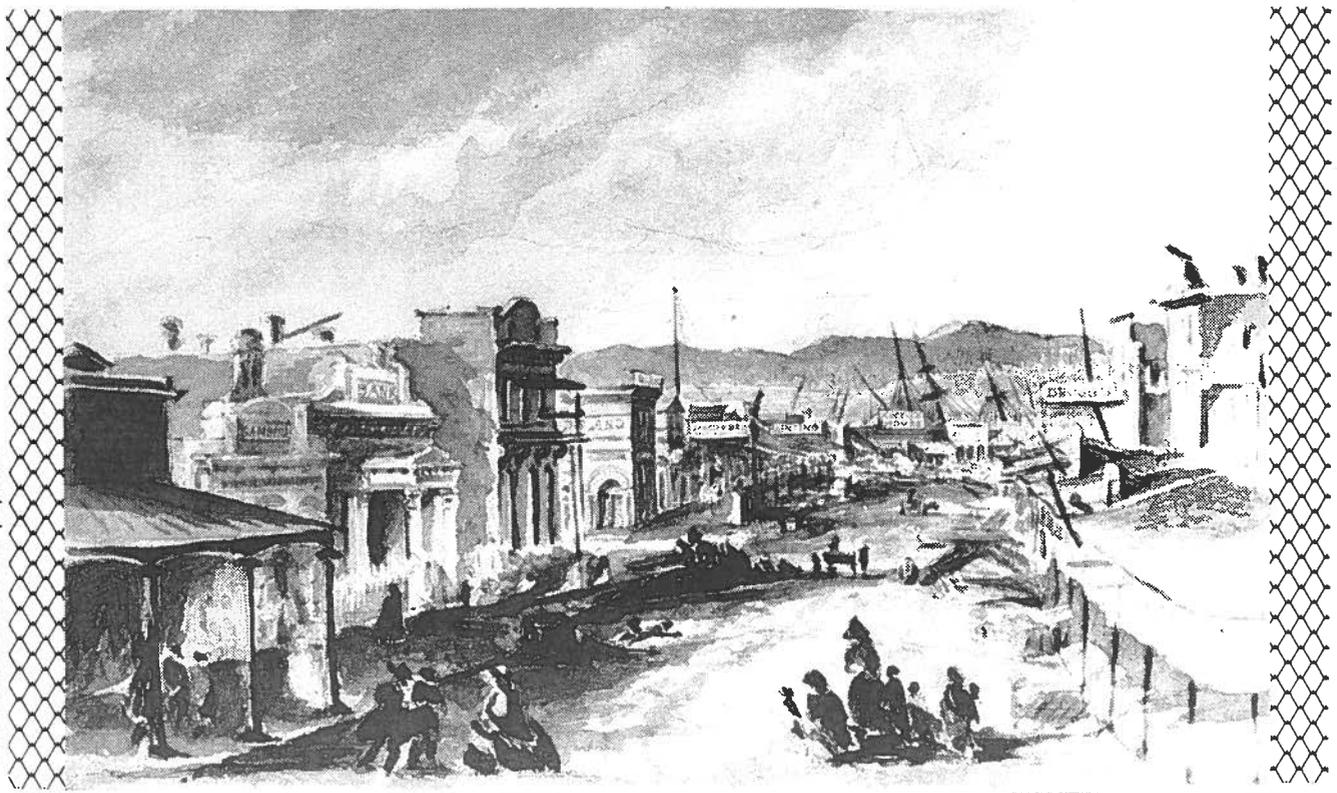
In February 1860, Sarah Crease, with her young daughters Mary, Susan and Barbara, arrived in Victoria joining husband Henry who had reached the colony the previous year and was established as a barrister. They resided in Victoria for a little over a year. In 1861, Henry was appointed Attorney-General of the mainland colony of British Columbia. The family then moved to New Westminster where they remained until 1868, when, after the amalgamation of the colonies, they returned to Victoria and settled permanently.

A prolific amateur artist, Sarah had always sketched the landscape and scenes around her. In 1860, she painted a set of twelve watercolours depicting Victoria which she sent back home to her father. He later entered them in the 1862 London International Exhibition in Hyde Park as the work of "a colonial amateur". These sketches, now in the Provincial Archives are important documents of early Victoria, recording such views as the interior of the Fort, vistas of Fort, Government and Yates Streets, Esquimalt Harbour and James Bay.

While resident in New Westminster, Sarah recorded the city in its infancy. On trips throughout the Fraser Valley and Canyon her pencil recorded settlement and activities. Precise notations were added describing the circumstances and details of each sketch.

Sarah Crease
YATES STREET, OCTOBER 2, 1860
watercolour

This sketch was used as the basis for an illustration in R.C. Mayne's *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, 1862 and later in an engraving for the *Illustrated London News*. In both instances the artist was not given credit. The original version was sketched while leaning out over the street from a second floor window casement. The solidity of brick and dressed granite buildings attests to the optimism of the gold boom while the cluster of ships in the harbour, people and vehicles on the street give the impression of bustle and liveliness.



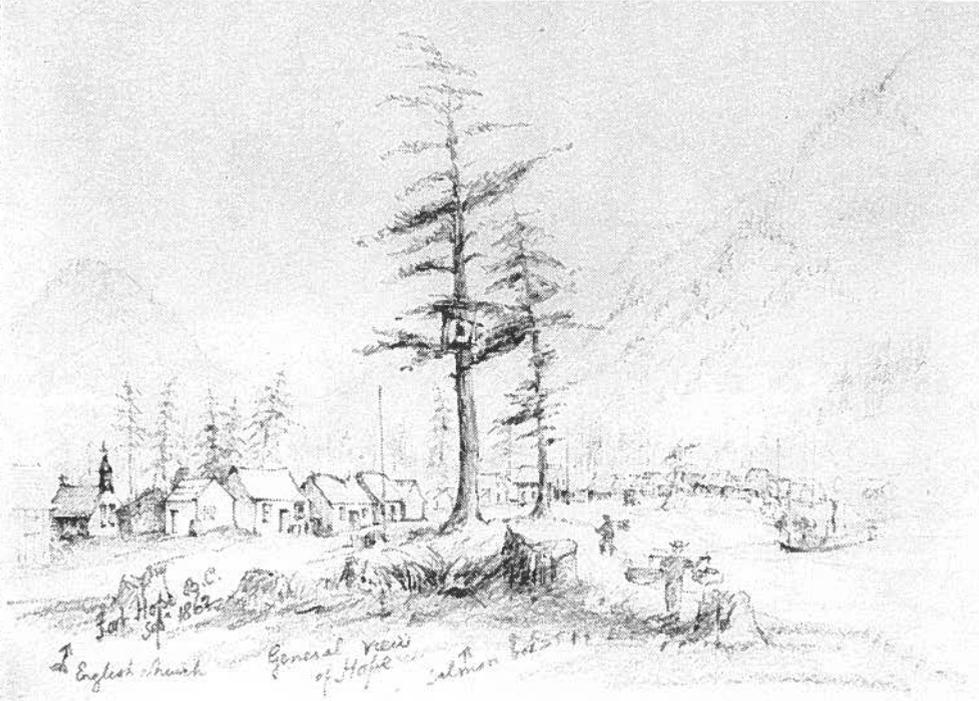


Provincial Archives of B.C. HP 62585

Sarah Crease
INDIAN RESERVE, FORT YALE,
September 1862 (above)
 pencil

Sarah Crease
FORT HOPE, B.C. September, 1862 (below)
 pencil

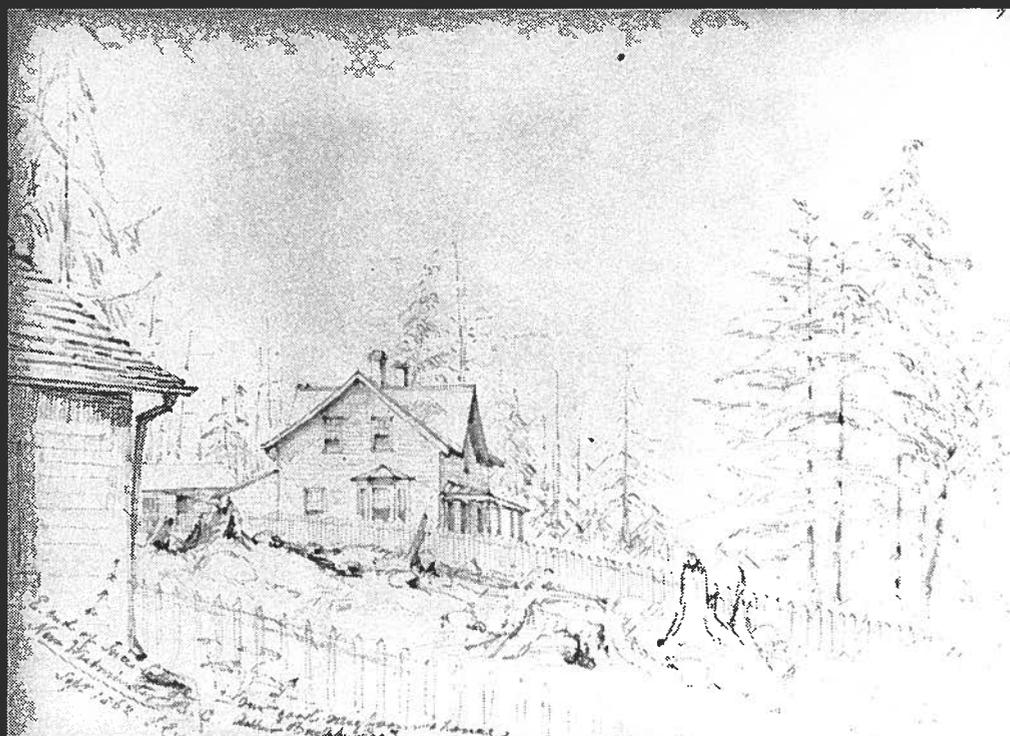
While resident in New Westminster, the Creases often visited nearby settlements of Fort Hope and Fort Yale. These sketches done “on the spot” provide a different perspective than photographic images of the time because they have a candid quality—showing people in motion and viewing the scene from an informal perspective. Again these sketches are titled, labelled, and dated, a real bonus for historians.



Provincial Archives of B.C. HP 62583

Sarah Crease
EAST END OF INCE COTTAGE, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.
September 1862
pencil

In New Westminster the Creases built a home they called Ince Cottage, named after Henry's birthplace of Ince Castle, Cornwall. The townsite, recently cleared, was younger and not as sophisticated as Victoria. Stumps of rubble between the fences attest to the rawness of the new town while optimism in New Westminster's future is reflected by Arthur Bushby's substantial two storey residence.



Provincial Archives of B.C. pdp 4559

Discovery: 1917

The scene in the early spring of 1917 at the Consolidated Whaling Company wharf just outside Victoria's Point Ellice bridge - rebuilt and called the Bay Street Bridge years later - was one of ever-increasing activity. This bustle increased until the last of the eight whalers took on equipment and supplies, had her compass adjusted after the winter lay-over and her crew signed on by the shipping master. The boat then left port for another sixth months on the whaling grounds.

Ten steam whalers once operated out of Victoria but, by 1917, two of them had been sold and converted to tug boats. The eight remaining whalers included the *Black*, *White*, *Blue*, *Brown* and *Green*, called by some newspaper reporters, with a romantic turn of mind, the "Rainbow Fleet". These steamed out from Norway where they were built and all were registered in Liverpool. The other three were the *Orion*, the *St. Lawrence* and the *W. Grant*. The last one was shipped in sections from Norway and assembled at Victoria Machinery Depot.

Many young Victorians went whaling for one season only and, as it was seasonal work, they were out of work over the winter. It is understandable that they turned to employment of a more permanent nature.

There would never be more than one or two green hands signed on one vessel however, and men with previous experience got the preference.

The whaling company kept a small wharf crew, under Moses Kiel, busy all winter as vessels were stripped and all their gear packed ashore to individual bins in the large rigging loft which had once been a sail storage loft for Victoria sealers. They also took ashore the six-inch circumference manila whaling lines from the two rope lockers of the vessels, 480 fathoms from each. These would be dried out, carefully examined and, when necessary, replaced each spring.

During the winter months "Mosey", as everyone called him, cleaned and painted the crew's quarters with his small gang. He knew his business, having been a former sealer. It was when the time neared for the whalers to start taking on

gear and renewing cordage that old "Mosey's" tension mounted. He could be heard screeching from one end of the wharf to the other. He was stores-keeper along with his other duties and, like stores-keepers everywhere, parting with even the smallest item hurt!

At the upper end of the wharf closest to the bridge was a small donkey boiler, used to steam out the large steel drums after they had been drained of whale oil. The drums had two heavy steel belts around them for strength and to make it easier to roll them around the wharf. Each drum held ninety gallons, so, at slightly over nine pounds per gallon, each ran over eight hundred pounds.

Sometimes in a test of strength, some of the tough old Norwegian whalers would grab a hold of one end of a barrel and up-end it. This annoyed Mosey as he was only a little fellow and would have to get two of his men to set it down again on what he called "an even keel".

Whale Oil

These large drums would be taken to the whaling stations of Sechart, Cachalot, Rose Harbor and Naden Harbor, filled and brought back to Victoria by the whaling tender *Gray*, after which they might be taken to Seattle to be shipped to other destinations. When the season had come to an end, the old *Gray* might venture as far south as San Francisco with a mixed cargo of whale oil and fertilizer made from the residue after the whale meat came from the cookers. The bones, many tons of them, were kept until the end of the season, when they were ground up and, with the rest of the whale offal, produced fertilizer much in demand at the time.

Two coopers worked on the wharf in the spring, busy making new wooden barrels and repairing older ones. They held about thirty-two gallons and were made especially to contain spermacetti, that crystalline-looking substance of oil tissue from the case of a sperm whale's head. The spermacetti couldn't be loaded into the large steel drums as it solidified so, when it was to be emptied from a wooden barrel, the head of the barrel was

simply knocked in.

This year there were five Newfoundland captain-gunners on the whalers - all previously sealers and all crack shots. When sealing ended in 1910, they just naturally turned to whaling.

From memory of sixty-six years ago, there were Captains John Anderson of the *Blue*; Willis Balcom of the *Black*; Bert Balcom of the *Green*; Jack Christian of the *White*. Gunner of the *Brown* was Canute Halvorsen, and William Heater had the *W. Grant*. The other two whalers had gunners who came from their farms in Norway under two-year contracts. One of these, named Arivson, was a cheerful man in his 50's, devoutly religious. He continuously sang hymns in Norwegian and just as religiously bummed tobacco from anyone who happened to be on the bridge with him at the time.

The information which I write about was garnered in five whaling seasons with Capt. Anderson on the *Blue* and acquired over the years in conversations with other whalers. It should be noted that a lot of the information contained here has been by word-of-mouth. Whalers received little media coverage — a few lines when they left port and a few more when they returned in the fall. Now that whaling has come to an end, people are suddenly showing a great interest in what

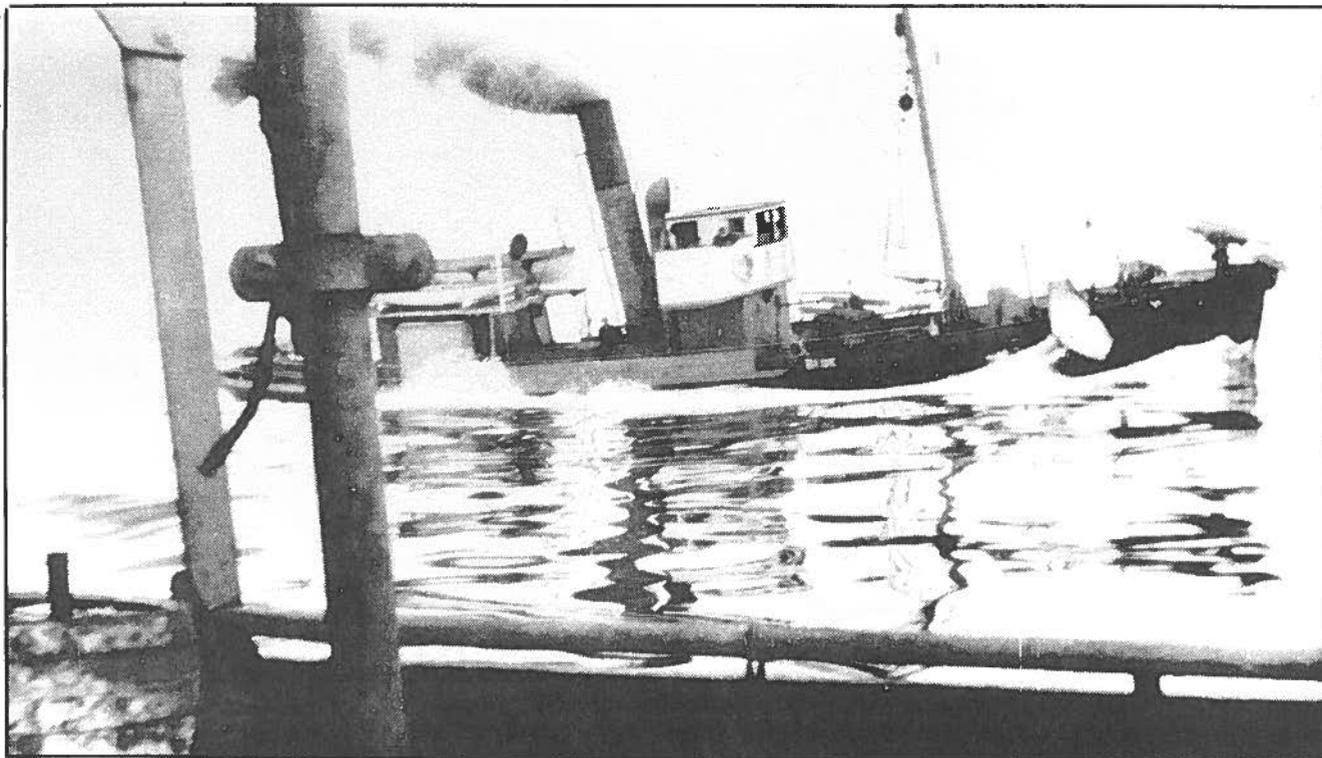
once was an industry employing thousands.

Whaling stations have come and gone leaving little to mark their departure. In 1916, for example, when I was a young tugboater, I heard of a whaling station started in Pages Lagoon, a few miles north of Nanaimo, where, in two short years (1907-1908), the two whalers working there killed most of the whales in the Gulf of Georgia. They were humpbacks. Plant and equipment was then moved to Sechart, in Barkley Sound, where the S.S. *Orion*, working nearly all year round, took over three hundred whales.

In 1917 the harvest of whales off Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes seemed to average out at about 50-55 whales per vessel, not a good season but a break-even operation, depending on the price of oil and fertilizer, and maybe enough encouragement to try for a better season in 1918. None of us knew or cared if the company made money as long as we were paid wages, plus a lay or incentive for each whale taken.

That year, 1917, five of the captain-gunners were Newfoundlanders and the other three were Norwegians. There were three bunkhouses on the whaling stations, one each for Japanese, Chinese and whites. In the white bunkhouse was the blacksmith, one of the most important men on

Victoria City Archives



The *Blue* with a sixty-foot fin back alongside, heading for Naden Harbor.

the station. It was he who straightened out the harpoons, bent and twisted from striking the large heavy bones of whales. This was in addition to the hundreds of other jobs he might be called on to do around the whaling station.

One of the most versatile of these blacksmiths was Carl Larsen, or "Grandpa" Larsen as he was called. He had been brought out from Placentia, Newfoundland, under the company's usual two-year work contract in 1909 and 1910. In later years he even made the heavy harpoons right on the wharf property at Point Ellice - claws, shanks, the whole bit except the head socket which was of cast steel. A gruff man of few words, it was fascinating to watch him at work with an assistant, tapping out instructions with his hammer on the anvil while his assistant stood ready with whatever was required.

Many of the men in the white bunkhouse were from Newfoundland. Some of them were hard-working flensers, others labourers, out under the two-year contract. Most of these men were fishermen back home and, should a seaman be required on any of the whalers through sickness or any other reason, one of these men would fit in and more than pull his weight.

"Full and Plenty"

On 28th March 1917 the crew of the *Blue* was called to the office of the whaling company where, in the presence of Capt. Anderson and the shipping master, Capt. George Kirkendale, we were signed on after hearing conditions of employment, pay scales and the old, old promise of a dish of "Full and Plenty".

I was now an able-bodied seamen on the vessel's articles, paid \$45.00 per month, plus a lay or bonus for each whale taken. This was a sliding scale, depending on the species of whale, the most desirable being sperm and blue whales. The blues were also called "sulphur bottoms" because when they rose to spout it looked like a sulphur match glowing in the darkness. Each of these meant a bonus of \$2.50 for the sailors, the mates and captains being paid more. Pinbacks and humpbacks meant \$1.75 each and the smaller sei whales paid \$1 each.

Late the next afternoon the *Blue* was plowing away along the west coast bucking a strong and chilling west wind. I was at the wheel on the open bridge where I had been for the last three hours while most of the crew were below sleeping off hangovers. Chilled to the bone, I had been sea-

sick as usual, vomiting sporadically much to the disgust of the old pilot Jim Mathews. When finally relieved of the wheel by my watchmate, Bill, I tottered into my bunk in the foc's'le, grateful and exhausted.

We make a few hours stop at the first whaling station, Sechart, with some special supplies and then on towards Cachalot, the next whaling station in Kyuquot Sound which everyone called Kyuquot. The *Blue* stopped over for a few days and this was where Capt. Anderson started training his crew in the business of chasing whales. At this time of year there always seemed to be a pair of California grays cruising around the sound.

The crew got to know how to chase the whales, load the gun with a harpoon and then arm it with its cast-iron bomb and pound of smokeless powder. The gray whales were so cagey the *Blue* never got within shooting range of them. When they did get the occasional gray it yielded a pink colored oil instead of the amber colored oil of other species.

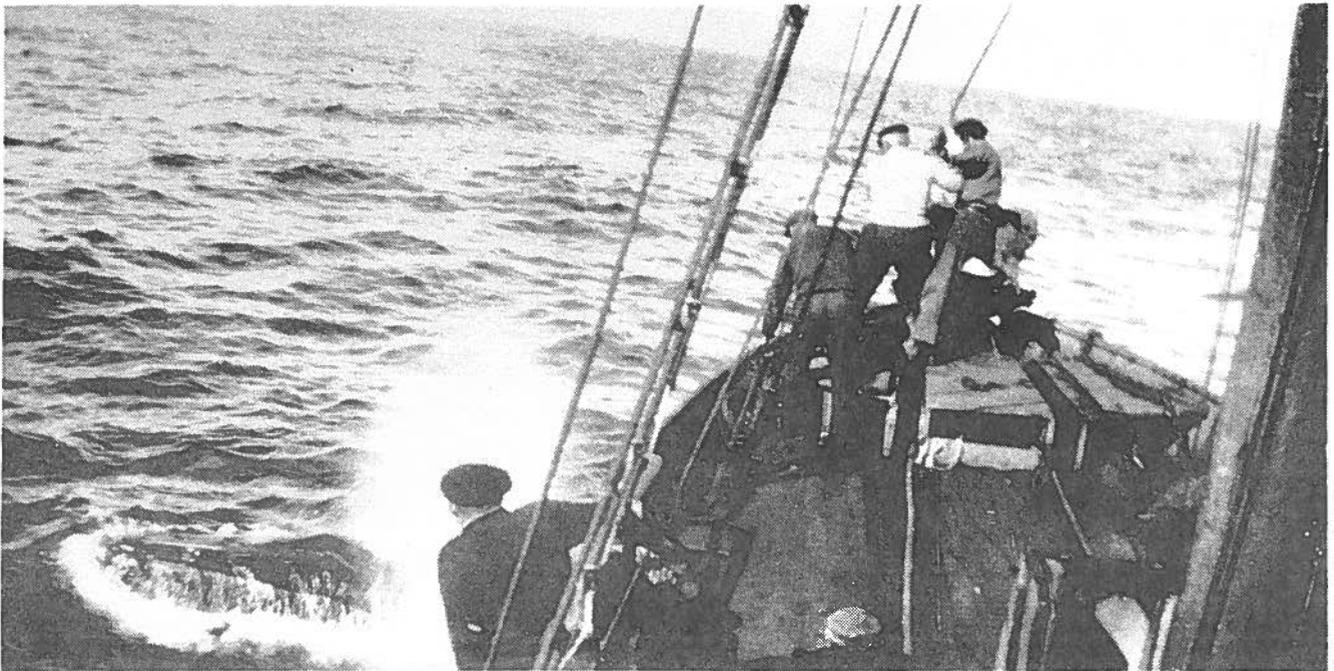
The *Blue* steamed on up to the Rose Harbor station after a few days of drill and then whaling started in earnest. The second whale that *Blue* took that season was another bull sperm on May 1, ten miles south-west of Cape St. James. Old Bill, my watchmate, told me that they had never taken a cow sperm so it would seem, at this time, that only bulls travelled in pods. Years later cow sperms were taken and they proved to be much smaller than the bulls.

When the *Blue* took the first sperm into Rose Harbour and the flensers went to work, Bill pointed out to me the large tank of oil on the whale's head. He said it was of the highest grade and called "spermacetti". The flensers baled it out of the whale's head very carefully and kept it separate from the blubber and rest of the carcass.

Ambergris

They also looked carefully at a sperm's intestines when they opened him up to see if there was any ambergris in him. Capt. Anderson brought one in a few years before and it had contained ambergris worth \$56,000. When Capt Anderson was asked if it was true, the Captain said: "Yes, that's true and the company game me an extra bonus of \$450." He was very likely the only man on the station who could identify ambergris because he had the opportunity to examine it closely. While it resembles a chunk of rotten blubber to some extent, he said, the rule of thumb was to take your

Captain W. Heater of *W. Grant*, assisted by crew, is finishing off a humpback whale by hand-lancing.



Victoria City Archives

sheath knife and run it through the mass, the back of the blade first, rather than cutting. If it were ambergris a tiny fibrous-like material would cling to the back of the knife blade.

Working around and off Cape St. James, it was a lonely sea except for another whaler or an occasional steam halibut fisherman. Sometimes going ashore to walk on the black sand of Luxana Bay, I wondered if many others had ever walked on this deserted beach until Old Bill told me, "Hell, there was a Captain Dixon of the Royal Navy surveying around here in 1787 in his ship the *Queen Charlotte*. How in hell do you suppose all these places got their names?" With that I lost the feeling of thinking maybe I was the first to explore out-of-the-way places.

The *Blue* kept on hunting until the weather worsened in mid-October and whales became scarce. Then it was time to think of returning to Victoria. It hadn't been too good a season, the boats probably averaging about fifty whales each.

I was signed on by the Shipping Master in Victoria on 28th March 1917. I was signed off by the Shipping Master in Victoria on 27th October 1917. With lay money I averaged \$58 a month for the season while the going rate for deckhands on tugboats that year was \$50. So I came out a little ahead and, while I hadn't completely conquered sea sickness, I could take a pretty good bouncing

around and still carry on.

Within hours of being paid off at the whaling company's office at Point Ellice, my Norwegian friends would be in their old haunts close to the waterfront, chewing and spitting Copenhagen Snuff which they called "Snoose" or "Scandinavian Condition Powder".

They would have one scoop of beer after another. They would sing Norwegian songs, and soon they would shout: "Bring on the girls" to some old madam who would be running the joint in which they found themselves.

Within a few days the girls, madams, and saloon keepers would have most of the whalers' money and then the madams would supply these old whalers with just enough booze and lodgings and a few dollars until they could find employment on other vessels and even some longshoring to tide them over until once more it was spring and time to think of going whaling again. That was the way of it year after year as long as whaling meant something to Victoria.

I went back to tugboating over the winter but I, too, would head for Point Ellice again with Captain Anderson and the *Blue* and sign on for another season, this time as second mate.

Captain Donald B. Macpherson was born in Victoria in 1899. He spent five seasons on the Blue. He is now retired after a lifetime as master of tugs & ferries in B.C.

A Photograph Album

Chinese at William Head

J. Robert Davison

A little remembered “Chinese invasion” of British Columbia was called to mind recently by the gift to the Provincial Archives of a curious photograph album. Donated by Mrs. F.R. Rockhill, the album belonged to her father, Dr. H. Rundle Nelson, who was the Medical Superintendent at William Head Quarantine Station near Victoria from 1913 to 1923.

During those years, the station played temporary host to an estimated 88,000 Chinese coolies, who had been mustered to serve in labour battalions in France in World War I, and who passed through William Head both en route and again on their homeward journey. The Chinese arrived by ship in charge of the military, who put them up in tent camps that accommo-

dated at times some 7,500 or more. They moved on as soon as transport ships or trains were ready.

Photographs in the album, many taken by the Victoria photographer Trio, document the arrival and departure of the Chinese, and their austere, often tedious life in the camp. Several photos, such as the one shown on page 20, picture the disembarking Chinese undergoing preliminary medical examination.

A later reminiscence recalled that upon the arrival of the first contingent of Chinese, Dr. Nelson, watching the ship dock, remarked to a waiting officer, “What shall we do if they have the smallpox?” Ironically, the first man down the gangplank did, indeed, have smallpox, necessitating quarantine of all 2,000 coolies in the

“Coolies at work” at the William Head Quarantine Station is the caption of this photograph from the H. Rundle Nelson Album. A Trio photograph.



Provincial Archives of B.C. 95911

first draft.

Boredom under constricted and restricted conditions was the chief problem for the men, idled by inactivity. At one point, the tension and impatience mounted until serious trouble seemed imminent. A solution was found when the Chinese were put to work collecting and cutting wood for the station, which they gathered from driftwood strewn out along the coast. They also balked at western food and were soon left to prepare their own communal meals.

The more artistic among them amused themselves and the local populace by producing handicrafts from materials at hand. Mrs. Rockhill notes: "Periodically the Officers would invite prominent ladies from Victoria to come and see some of the crafts the Coolies made and quite a number would supply silks and embroidery threads and put in orders for cushion covers or brass shells etched ... This all helped to keep some of the Coolies occupied, which was quite a problem with so many there. The brass shell I have was done around 1918 by No. 132 of the Coolie Labour Corps; they just used a sharpened nail to make the design."

Accompanying the album were the two letters reproduced below. One, a translation from the Chinese, is a copy of a letter from a coolie, Joe Hwei Chun, to his relatives in China. We have no record of his eventual fate. The other is a report written by an army sergeant in April, 1920, recording an incident among the Chinese at William Head awaiting transport back to China after the war.

From our viewpoint today, the letters are enlightening for what they reveal not only about individuals (not to mention ferocious marine life), but about contemporary attitudes.



Copy of a letter from a Chinese coolie to his relatives in China.

My dear Father and Mother-in-law.

Your son-in-law left on the 5th month, 3rd day we went aboard ship and started on our journey and travelled till the 24th. We have arrived in English Canada from where we take a train and in about 16 days we will arrive in France your Son-in-law has not yet arrived in France.

My journey has been one of peace and tranquility under the protection of the Heavenly Father and I have met with no dangers or hardships, every day we have all we want, our eatables, clothing and everything we want are

excellent.

I hope that Mother and Father-in-law have no anxiety about me, I hope that all the members of the Church prosper and don't backslide because the Kingdom is near and we are controlled by destinies.

I thank you for taking care of my wife as she is bound to fret about my absence and furthermore present my compliments to the two families, my sisters-in-law and the eldest daughter-in-law, and I wish you all a tranquil farewell,

Your Son-in-law,
Joe Hwei Chun
in reverence.



*Coolie Repatriation Camp
William Head
Victoria, B.C.*

*Lieutenant Heritage
William Head*

1st April, 1920

Sir

In compliance with your request I beg to submit the following description of the devilfish episode which occurred some months ago, when one of our Chinese charges was attacked by an octopus while engaged in gathering mussels, crabs, and other presumably edible material on the beach.

The incident occurred somewhere about three o'clock in the afternoon, the fatigue parties had just been disbanded for the day and I was making my final tour of inspection to ascertain if the work had been thoroughly carried out in accordance with my instructions, and I had just reached that part of the camp which abuts on the wharf when I observed a large number of coolies rushing over the rocky hill which forms the southern bastion of the compound and apparently running towards some common objective, or central point of interest, as they were all moving in one general direction. They appeared to be abnormally excited, as they were gesticulating frantically, and ejaculating vociferously, a circumstance which interested me to such an extent that I too joined the procession to ascertain the meaning of their unusual perturbation.

After pushing my way through the dense crowd who were congregated on the southern slope of the hill, and on all other points of observation adjacent to the sea, I observed a struggling crowd on the further rocky shore of the small bay which

lies just back of the No. 3 latrine, who were evidently the cynosure of all eyes, and on pushing through the crowd to a better point of observation, I discovered that they had effected the capture of a very large octopus, measuring fully eight feet from tip to tip of the tentacles, and weighing approximately in the neighbourhood of one hundred and fifty pounds, which according to their statement had opened the offensive by wrapping its tentacles around the leg of an incautious chinaman whose contiguity to the water had rendered such an action possible, and attempted to pull him into the sea, an assertion which was substantiated by the fact that they were still engaged in disentangling its tentacles from his leg when I arrived, and I have very little doubt that if it had not been for the timely arrival of succor he would have been dragged under water.

I may say that Lance Corporal Wilson of the C.M.P. saw the remains of the monster a short

time after on the ablution table where he could form a fair estimate of its size, although by that time the major portion of it had been expeditiously converted into "chow-chow" by the omnivorous Chinamen.

They appear to be very numerous as four others were subsequently captured here, one of which weighed in the vicinity of one hundred pounds.

I have Sir

The honour to be

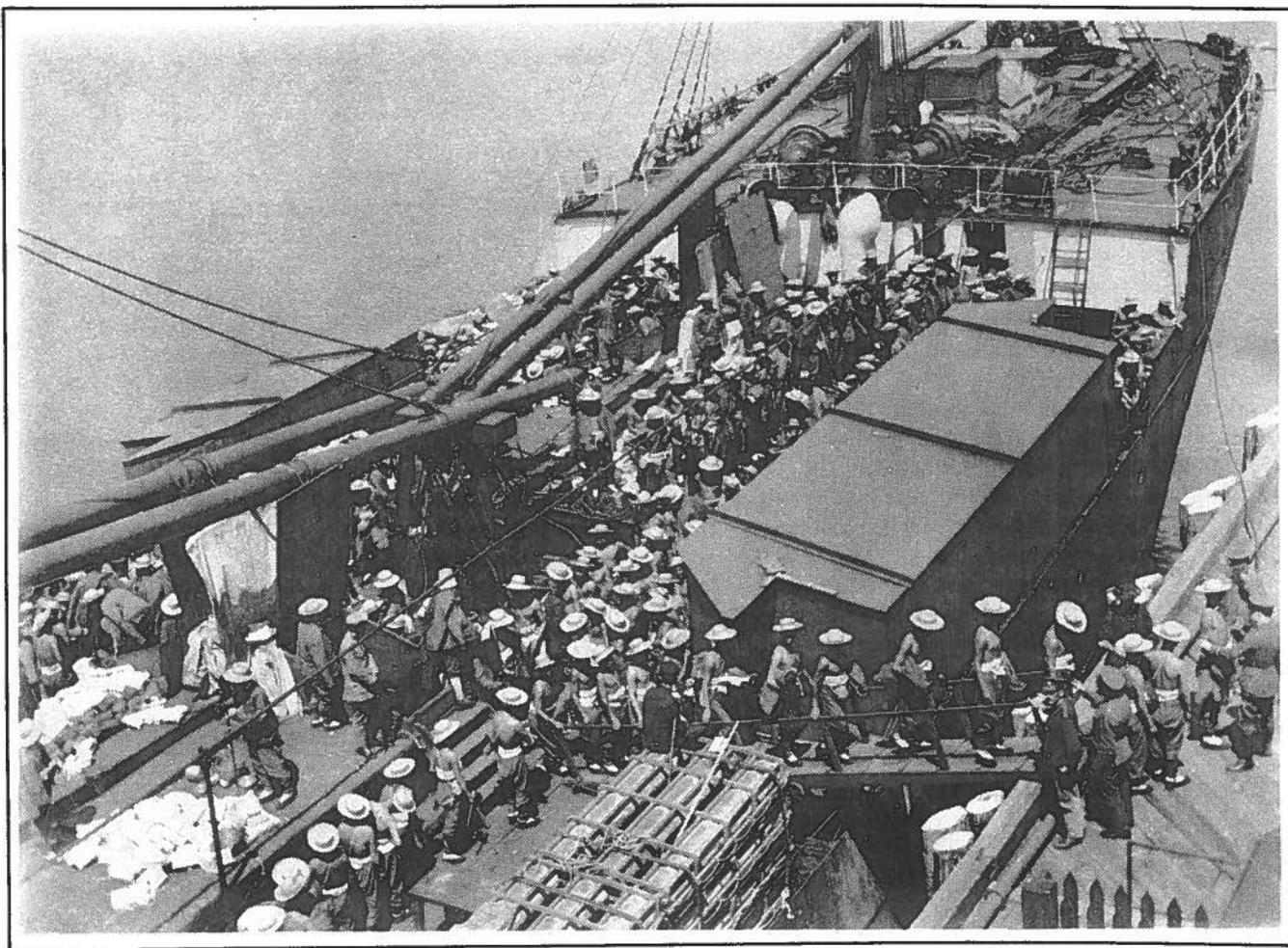
Your obedient servant

(sig) John W. Thompson Sergt.

P.S. This incident was duly reported to Sergt. Major Scribbens at the time.

J. Robert Davison is a photo-archivist in the Visual Records Division of the Provincial Archives of B.C.

"Dr. Hunter examining coolies" is the caption for this photograph in the Nelson album. A Trio photograph.



The Main Trail to Chilliwack Lake

R.C. Harris

The Hudson's Bay Company cut the first recorded trail up the Chilliwack River in 1855, improving the Indian trail which joined the nine Indian villages between Vedder Crossing and Chilliwack Lake.¹ The Company was looking at the Chilliwack River as a possible route to the interior as early as 1847. A letter dated 23 March 1848, Fort Vancouver, from James Douglas and P.S. Ogden to J.M. Yale at Fort Langley, comments:

We have perused your account of the disasters that befel Simon Guille in his journey up the Chalway-ook, and the abortive results of the voyage, which do not give a very favourable opinion of Simon's courage or hardihood.

The course you afterwards pursued ... to establish the route by Fraser's River ... has met with our warmest approbation.... we have ordered the Brigades of Thompson's River, New Caledonia and Fort Colville with their returns to Fort Langley—and you may therefore expect them about the first week in June next...²

Between 1857 and 1860, the North American Boundary Commission further improved the main trail, which followed the right (north) bank of the river all the way to the lake. At Vedder (Cultus) Crossing, the main trail diverged high above the river, over Promontory ridge, to avoid the floodplain, where the river crowded against the ridge.

The last Whatcom trail, from Bellingham Bay in Washington Territory, also used the Chilliwack River and Lake route. It came by Cultus Lake on the side of Vedder mountain, crossed the Chilliwack River at Vedder Crossing, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company trail up on the Promontory.

The main stem of Chilliwack River flows north from Washington state to Chilliwack Lake, where it is dammed in its major valley by a coarse boulder

moraine. It then runs west, parallel to the border. Five major creeks and Cultus Lake augment it from the south, which made it of particular interest to the two surveys of the international boundary, c. 1858 and c. 1901. The Chilliwack watershed gave access to twenty-eight Monuments: numbers 41 to 68.

Just above Vedder Crossing, the Chilliwack River bursts from the mountains through a rocky gap, and continues to the Fraser River over a flat alluvial fan by several channels. The flat fan can be displayed by joining the four adjacent current 1:25,000 topographic sheets, and colouring the 5 foot contour intervals.

Until the 1870s, the main channel flowed north-east, but over the next decade, with the natural instability resulting from accretion of the delta, it shifted its course westerly, until due west through Vedder Creek to seasonal Sumas Lake. In the 1920s, the Vedder, now a river, was redirected by the senior governments via the new Vedder Canal into the Fraser River at the mouth of Sumas River. Meanwhile, the old channels, including the Atchelitz and the Luckakuck, have almost dried up.

Boundary Commission

The North American Boundary Commission, 1857-62, made some of the early maps of the Chilliwack River. Both the British and American sections of the Commission made good final maps, but more of the American field notes, traverses and sketches, which led to the final maps, seem to have survived. Many of these show the Hudson's Bay Company trail from the mouth of Chilliwack River, passing over the shoulder of

Mount Tom on Promontory ridge, returning to the upper Chilliwack River by the mouth of Ryder Creek, and thence to Chilliwack Lake.³

These boundary survey maps also show the Whatcom Trail in its final (DeLacy) location, coming by Cultus Lake. Several chain and compass traverses of the trails survive, enabling one, for example to follow the H.B.C. trail from the depot (station 448) at the mouth of Chilliwack River to the junction with the Whatcom Trail (station 143).⁴

One American sketch map, c. 1858, plots rough contours and gives spot heights at several stations along the H.B.C. trail, confirming the Mount Tom route.⁵ Going southeast over Promontory ridge these elevations are written in pencil, and confirmed alongside in ink, as 179 feet, 698 feet, 1027 feet, 1268 feet, then descending easterly to the Chilliwack River valley via the mouth of Ryder Creek at elevation 360 feet.

Lt. Charles Wilson, R.E., describes a journey over the horse trail on the Promontory in his journal. Leaving Chilliwack Depot for Chilliwack Lake on July 27, 1859:

... the greater part of this day's journey was through low land, very thickly timbered; the soil, to judge from magnificent Indian potato fields I passed through, excellent; at last, going over a very high hill [Mount Tom], I descended to the valley below and found our first halting place by the Chilliwack river....

Lt. J.G. Parke of the Corps of Topographic Engineers, U.S. Army, and Chief Astronomer and Surveyor for the U.S. section of the Boundary Commission, reported on their work of Spring 1859 as follows:

The trail from the [Chilliwack] Depot to Chilliwack Lake was reopened, and made practicable for pack mules, requiring bridging, corduroying and heavy grading. The high water of the streams, and the great quantity of fallen timber, made the work very heavy, and required a strong force.⁶

Until the name Chilliwack was finalised quite recently, it was quite variable. In 1860, the Royal Navy charted it as Silliwak. More creative spellings were Chilo-we-yeuk, Tshithwyook, Tsilli-way-ukh and Schelowat.

Whatcom

In the spring of 1858, leading citizens of Whatcom [now Bellingham] appointed a committee to improve the Indian trail crossing the peninsula between Bellingham Bay and the placer mines on the lower Fraser River. When steamer service to Fort Hope began, the committee

decided to reroute the far end of their Whatcom Trail through the Cascade Mountains south and east of Hope, intersecting the Hudson's Bay Company's main Brigade Trail to Thompson River somewhere north of the Skagit River headwaters. The Chilliwack River valley was chosen as the route to bypass Hope (and Governor Douglas' head taxes and mining licences).⁷

The antecedents of the new Whatcom Trail up the Chilliwack River are described by its engineer, Captain W.W. DeLacy, in his comprehensive completion report addressed to the "Commissioners of the Trail from Whatcom to Thompson's River", and published in the local newspaper *Northern Light* for September 4, 1858:

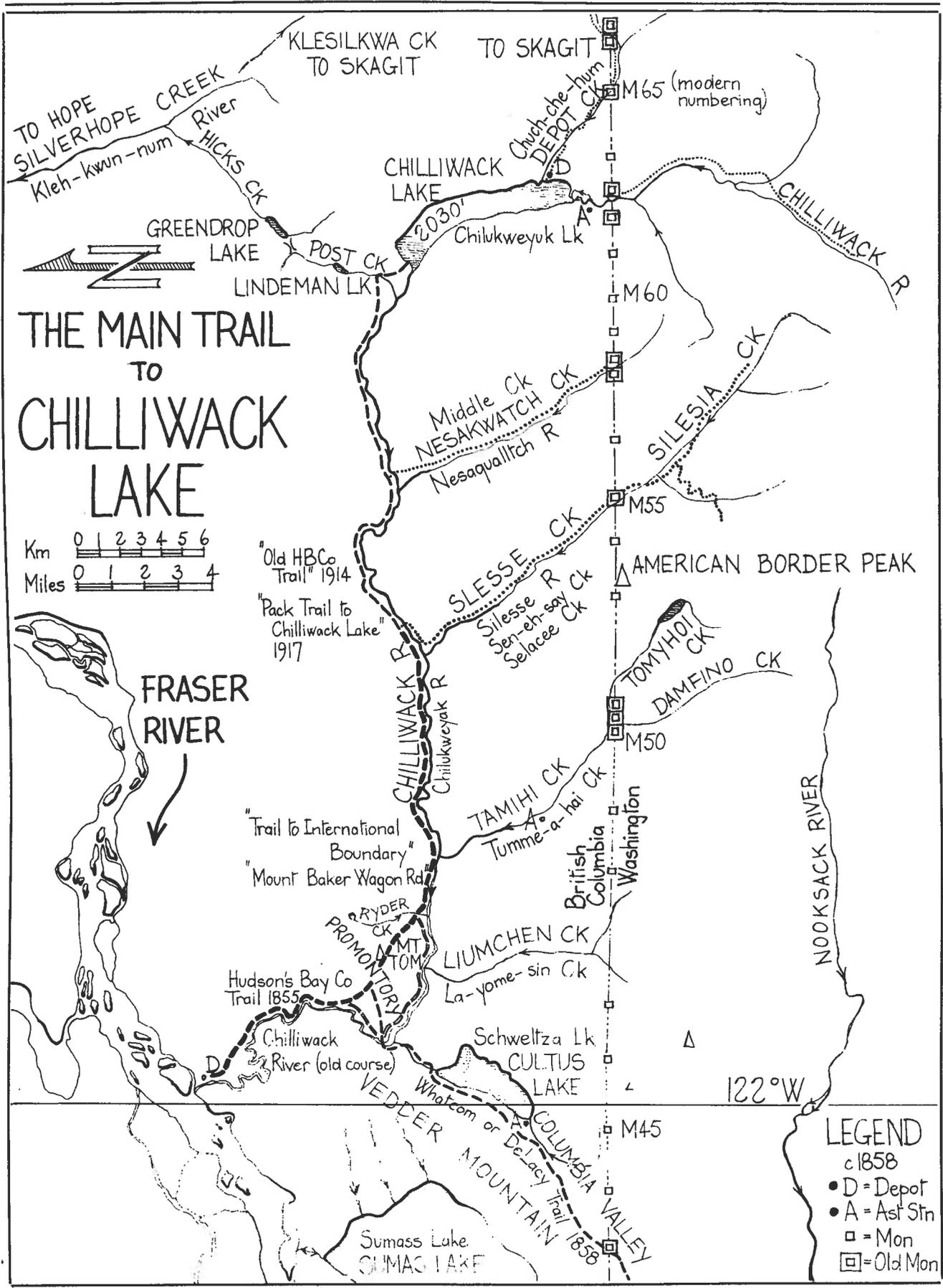
Capt. R.V. Peabody who ... had been to Lake Chilliwheok, or Summit Lake, while on duty connected with the Boundary Commission.... continued on with me to the Chilliwheok River, where he obtained Indian packers for me and placed me on the old Hudson Bay Trail, which was cut out by the Hudson Bay some three years ago to Summit Lake, and then abandoned in consequence of their being unable to get round the Lake.⁸

One may ask why DeLacy did not use the Lindeman-Greendrop lakes corridor, as is now used by the Centennial hiking trail to reach the Skagit valley from the outlet of Chilliwack Lake. DeLacy was aware of it, as he returned this way from one of his explorations between Chilliwack Lake and the Skagit. It is also laid out clearly on the Boundary Survey maps. He probably adopted the Boundary Survey's trail up Depot Creek, though higher and longer (even crossing back to the United States at one point), because it was already being built, and was liable to be kept open at least as long as the survey ran.

Captain DeLacy's efforts were duly noted by the Hudson's Bay Company. Writing from Fort Vancouver on May 20, 1858, to W.G. Smith, Secretary of the Company in London, England; Dugald McTavish reported:

The Americans are making strenuous efforts to open a communication to the Thompson's River Country from this Territory; some miners have gone up there from here by the Columbia River and Okanagan, whilst a number of others are now busily occupied making a road from Bellingham Bay, by the Chil-we-ack river and take across the Cascade Mountains to the Shi-milk-a-meen [now Tulameen] Valley which I need not say, is an operation of some magnitude....⁹

From time to time, the Chilliwack River route



was reconsidered as a route to the Interior. Donald Maclean of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hope, reported to Colonel Moody on 7 July 1859:

...the name of the Indian who is acquainted with the route by the way of the Chilquahuck and Skatchee Rivers to the Seemelclemen [Tulameen] Valley is "Sah wow-witz", a native of Harrison's River.¹⁰

On the 9th of February 1865, Robert C. Cowan, formerly of the Royal Engineers, and having served nearly four years with the Boundary Commission, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Victoria, with the same idea, begging

to suggest to His Excellency the Governor the practicability of a new and shorter route to the Similkameen Valley, via Sumas, Chilukweyuk and Skagit rivers....

It was a decade after the boundary survey before serious mapping and exploration resumed up the Chilliwack River. A system of townships six miles square was laid out east of the Coast Meridian, starting in 1872. Of interest to the Chilliwack River are Twps. 22, 23, 25, 26 ECM which extend to Tamahi Creek. These were met from the east in the 1880s by the Railway Belt townships, laid out west from the 6th Meridian. The relevant Railway Belt townships, working upstream, are Nos. 1 and 2 of Ranges 29, 28, 27 and 26.

As late as 1913, the Chilliwack River trail upstream from Slesse Creek was named "Old Hudson's Bay Trail" on a map of New Westminster [Land] District.¹¹

Like any other work of man, a trail needs regular use and maintenance, and it is not surprising to read of more recuttings of the trail to Chilliwack Lake. J.W. Macoun, Canadian botanist to the second survey of the international boundary, reported in 1901:

Having learned from Mr. McArthur [surveyor] that his progress up the Chilliwack River was very slow on account of the difficulty he was experiencing in cutting a trail through the dense forest, I decided I would remain on the outskirts of the forest until he had reached Chilliwack Lake.¹²

Mining activity up Slesse Creek, just over the border, stimulated the building of the "Road to Mount Baker Gold Mines". The Minister of Mines Report for 1898 states:

Very rich samples of gold bearing quartz have been taken out of the new mines located near the international boundary line south of Chilliwack.... A road is being constructed from Chilliwack to these mines, [at the head of Slesse Creek]

Construction of the Mount Baker wagon road began in 1898, and continued to 1905. This was the

first level road along the north bank of Chilliwack River from Cultus [Vedder] Crossing Bridge to Selica [Slesse] Creek Bridge.

...to Selica [Slesse] Creek Bridge, the distance, approximately, being 16 miles. It was opened principally to facilitate the transportation of machinery and supplies into the Mount Baker Mining District, and a very considerable amount of supplies, etc., have been taken into the mines by pack trains.¹³

In 1911, at the height of the Steamboat Mountain excitement on the Skagit River, the citizens of Hope were pained to find that Chilliwack residents were hoping to reopen the Chilliwack River route to the Skagit, thus bypassing Hope.¹⁴ The British Columbia Electric Railway Company considered extending its New Westminster-Chilliwack line up Chilliwack River, with the same objective.

By 1924, the wagon road up Chilliwack River had not progressed east of the Mount Baker trail crossing at the mouth of Slesse Creek. The Minister of Mines reported in 1924 that:

The [Dolly Varden] group is reached from Chilliwack by wagon road to Hipkoe's ranch, about 15 miles from Chilliwack. From that point to the outlet of Chilliwack lake is a distance of 30 miles over a fairly good horse-trail.

There was still only a horse trail to Chilliwack Lake in 1930, when another Minister of Mines report noted:

Chilliwack Lake is reached by auto to Allison's ranch, about 15 miles from Vedder's Crossing, and from there by saddle-horse another 32 miles.... The trail follows a good grade throughout, and in the event of important mining operations could be converted into a road at nominal cost.

The dense forest, already mentioned by botanist Macoun and others, was logged with the aid of the Vedder Logging Company railway, which ran from the Fraser River to Chilliwack Lake. It followed the east bank of Vedder Canal, crossing what is now the Vedder River on a heavy log bridge just below the present steel highway bridge. This log bridge lasted until the 1950s.

Three more crossings of the Chilliwack River were made by the railway before reaching the lake. The timber trestle over the flats below Slesse Creek was pulled down in the 1970s but much of the old road bed is still driveable, or has become part of the new Chilliwack Lake Road.

Remains

What remains of the Hudson's Bay Company and Whatcom trails in the map area? North of the Promontory, the main Hudson's Bay/Boundary Commission trail is now Chilliwack River Road.

On the Promontory, part of Extrom Road carries the old trail over the south shoulder of Mount Tom. The easterly return of the old trail to the Chilliwack River at the mouth of Ryder Creek makes a descending traverse of an interesting ridge along the crest of the cliffs of glacial till bordering the Chilliwack River. It is unlikely that more remnants of the trail will be found closer to Chilliwack Lake.

The Whatcom Trail entered British Columbia on the west side of the Columbia Valley at monument 43, "the last iron pillar", according to Marcus Baker's list of locations and descriptions of the original boundary monuments, compiled about 1900 when the two governments were preparing to resurvey the boundary more thoroughly.¹⁵ The trail climbed above the Commission's Schweltzer astronomical station (now Lindell Beach) at the south end of Cultus Lake, running along the 1000 foot contour to the north end of the lake. There is now a cart track on this line, but in the 1930s, it was still a trail.¹⁶

More field work is required to confirm where the trail crossed the Sweltzer and Chilliwack rivers, and its route up to its junction with the Hudson's Bay trail on the Promontory. Some fragments should still be found up Depot Creek near the Skagit divide, though Depot Creek was logged in the 1970s.



¹ *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, October 1950. Marian W. Smith, "The Nooksack, the Chilliwack and the Middle Fraser". Local Indian tribes, languages, villages.

² Provincial Archives of British Columbia (PABC): A B 20 V20d (also M571). Mar 23, 1848.

³ United States National Archives (USNA): Record Group 76, Series 69, Map 12 [U.S.] *Progress Sketch; Campbell, Parke, North Western Boundary Survey. 1857. 1:120,000* (shows "Hudson's Bay Co. Trail" over the Promontory). Neatly traced on linen.

USNA: RG 76/69/52-1. Untitled "contour" map, Sumas Lake, Hope, Skagit; shows trails, camps, caches, astronomical stations. c. 1858 1:150,000.

Surveyor General of B.C.: 2 L13F R.E. Survey Office [Capt. R.M. Parsons, R.E.] No title. Sumas Lake to Chilliwack Lake. May 17, 1860. 1:63,360. An unfinished tracing.

USNA: RG76/69/51. U.S. sketch map, vicinity Vedder Crossing. Shows Brigade Trail and "Whatcomb" Trail. c.1860 Gives some traverse stations. No scale.

USNA: RG76/67/1 and 2. British official boundary map sheets Nos. 1 and 2, centred on Sumas and Chilliwack lakes. c.1862 1:120,000.

USNA: RG76/66/7 and 6. c.1862 U.S. official boundary map sheets Nos. 7 and 6 covering same ground as the British sheets preceding 1:120,000.

USNA: RG76/66. 1866. Campbell and Parke "Maps of Eastern and Western Sections" of the boundary from the Coast to 110° West and 46° to 49° 30 North. Very detailed. 1:720,000. A summary of their work. U.S. Boundary Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

⁴ USNA: RG76/69, Field Sheets 101; 111 Traverses along trails, such as "Sweltza-Sumass; Brigade Trail; Whatcom Trail. c.1858 1:5000.

⁵ USNA: RG76/68/1. [U.S.] Sketch map, coast to Skagit River. Gives numerous elevations, and Indian toponyms. c.1859 1:120,000.

⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, Bulletin 174. c.1901. Marcus Baker, "The Northwestern Boundary of United States". A compilation of data from the first boundary survey records.

⁷ Map of New Westminster [Land] District Issued by "London and British North America Co. Ltd". 1913. 1:63,360

⁸ "Nooksack Tales and Trails". P.R. Jeffcott Chapter V. 1949. "The Gold Rush of 1858 and the Whatcom Trail"—the definitive story of the trail.

⁹ PABC: GR 332, v. 3. May 20, 1858, p. 198-201. A manuscript transcript.

¹⁰ PABC: Colonial Correspondence, File 1062a, Letter 3, July 07, 1859.

¹¹ See number 7.

¹² Geological Survey of Canada. Summary Report XIV 1901. p. 158A.

¹³ Report of Public Works; 1903, 1904.

¹⁴ Hope News [newspaper]. Mar. 14, 1911. p. 1. "Chilliwack's Bluff", and "Scrap over Steamboat".

¹⁵ See number 6.

¹⁶ Letter from Dr. W.E. Ricker to R.C. Harris with copy of 1937 paper on "Physical and Chemical Characteristics of Cultus Lake, British Columbia". Feb. 16, 1981. Fig. 1 is a map of Cultus Lake and environs. The trail contouring along Vedder Mountain at about 1000 feet "was in very good condition, having been maintained by the federal Railway Belt forest warden, who lived near the lake".

News and Notes

British Columbia Historical Association's Annual Convention, New Westminster, June 1983



John Spittle



John Spittle

Past-president Ruth Barnett with Valerie Francis (right). Valerie assists Archie Miller at Irving House and was largely responsible for organizing the convention.

Alan Woodland, Chief Librarian for New Westminster and guest speaker at the B.C.H.A. Annual Convention banquet together with Gerry Andrews (right) who was made Honorary President of the B.C.H.A. at the convention.



John Spittle



Archie Miller, Curator of Irving House and our guide on the walking tours. Here he is speaking at the Fraserview Cemetery.

Highlights of the Annual General Meeting

Treasurer

For this year the dues are \$1.00 per member of each Member Society, plus another \$4.00 if a member wishes to receive the *British Columbia Historical News*—\$4.00 for four issues each year means that the member receives each copy at about half the cost of production.

It is hoped that Member Societies will actively encourage their own members to support the *British Columbia Historical News* by taking out a personal subscription.

The cover price of the *British Columbia Historical News* was set at \$3.50 per copy; the Individual Subscriber rate was raised to \$8.00; and the Institutional Subscriber rate to \$16.00 annually, effective Volume 17.

Council also decided that the post office box number should be located where the treasurer lives—at present, in Vancouver. Correspondence about the content of the *British Columbia Historical News* should be sent to the Editor (Marie Elliott, 1745 Taylor, Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8), but matters about subscriptions and addresses should be sent to the post office box. Other correspondence on general matters should also be sent to the post office box. (Post office box numbers are not easy to come by at most convenient post offices and I will ask again in early July. In the meantime my home address should be used rather than the post office box number in Victoria.)

—Rhys Richardson
2875 W. 29th
Vancouver V6L 1Y2

Because our society is best described as “a union of organizations” rather than “an organization of persons”, our delegates approved a change in name from “British Columbia Historical Association” to “British Columbia Historical Federation”.

The constitution, having undergone six revisions by Rhys Richardson, treasurer, was approved by the delegates with only minor alterations. Mr. Richardson, with the assistance of Tom Carrington and John Spittle, has spent three years on this project.

Our federation is hoping to take part in the upcoming annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History on October 4-7, 1983, at the Empress Hotel, Victoria, at the invitation of Bob Broadland, Heritage Conservation Branch, who is local arrangements chairperson.

A change in fee structure, whereby membership and magazine subscriptions will be collected separately is under consideration by the council and was passed by the delegates.

President Barbara Stannard announced that Honorary President Anne Steveson of Williams Lake, has been made a Lifetime Member, and that Col. G.S. Andrews, Victoria, has been made Honorary President.

The slate of officers for 1983-84 remains the same as for 1982-83, with the exception of Frances Gundry, secretary, whose resignation was accepted with regret. Don Sales, Nanaimo Historical Society, will assume this responsibility.

Plans for next year's annual general meeting are now well under way. It will be held at Vernon from May 2-4, 1984.

—Marie Elliott

News and Notes

Reports from the Branches

North Shore

The North Shore Historical Society meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month with the exception of July and August.

Our meetings have been varied in content and have consisted of speakers, films, and video programs. One especially memorable evening was spent with Mary Bentley who spoke on the petroglyphs of Gabriola Island and provided us with a hands-on experience of making our own petroglyph rubbings from her personal casts.

In addition to the monthly meetings the Society has published a news letter each month which contains notice of meetings and articles written, when possible, by the members of the society.

On July 1, 1982 the Society sponsored a bus tour of a few historic sites in the Fraser Valley. This event was financed by a grant from the federal government and the ten hour day was spent in visiting Westminster Abbey at Mission, the Harrison Mills Store Museum, the Chilliwack Museum, and Fort Langley together with the museum there and the museum of agricultural machinery. This proved to be a popular event and we are planning another "happening" for July 1, 1983.

1982 saw the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the City of North Vancouver and the society was represented on the committee which planned the jubilee events.

Also this year saw the 100th birthday of Mr. Walter Draycott and last month the society viewed a video tape made by Mr. Bill Baker and Mr. Draycott about five years ago. I have this tape on a ½ inch VHS Video and would be willing to lend it to a member society.

The Society is undertaking the publishing of a manuscript of Mr. Draycott's in which he chronicles his immigration to Canada and his struggles in the railway building days of the Grand Trunk Pacific in Northern Ontario. This is a large task and will take us two or three years to

complete.

I take this opportunity to invite members of other Societies to visit with us on the North Shore on the meeting dates specified above.

Robert W. Brown

Victoria

In the week before the Victoria Day holiday, the Victoria section held a 2-day exhibit at the Hillside Mall. This gained us new members, membership renewals, and a chance for some of the general membership to do a shift on the stall.

The chief attraction on the easel-type noticeboard by the stall was the reprint of "A Bird's Eye View of Victoria (1878)". It was a real people-stopper. Many of those who examined it closely learned that James Bay really was a bay which was crossed by a bridge, that the Empress Hotel and the Causeway did not yet exist, and that residential streets like Southgate ran between open fields.

At our May meeting we were told that our July 9 summer outing would include a visit to the satellite tracking station near the Duncan - Lake Cowichan road.

Our Oral History group has two projects planned. A letter to the *Times-Colonist* editor asked for information about personnel on CPR coastal ships of the past, and said that we wished to contact war brides living in the Victoria area. The phoned replies to the second request netted us about one hundred names. Two of them were from World War I. Most were from the British Isles.

We also learned that the book "War Brides" by Joyce K. Hibbert is in the Greater Victoria Public Library system. (This book, published in 1978 by Peter Martin Associates Limited, has a perceptive and lively introduction by Mavis Gallant and an appendix showing a break-down by countries

from which the thousands of dependents came).

Our 1982-83 speakers have covered a variety of topics. In April Provincial Archivist John Bovey spoke on the work done by the Provincial Archives in preserving and restoring paintings, photographs and papers. In May, Colonel Gerald Andrews, first teacher at the Kelly Lake School in the Peace River area, told us about life in a Metis Outpost. His address was full of fascinating facts presented with humour and those human interest touches that help to make history come alive.

— Ruth Chambers

Alberni

ALBERNI DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

No we haven't made a mistake. Our new name is the result of dropping the "museum" part only. Not only have we changed our name, we have, thanks to the City of Port Alberni, changed our location, and with much pleasure. Thank you, City Fathers for both our past and present homes.

We have not changed our original purpose of preservation, presentation and publication of Alberni District history. Originally we looked after artifacts, photographs and archival material but when the Alberni Valley Museum was born into

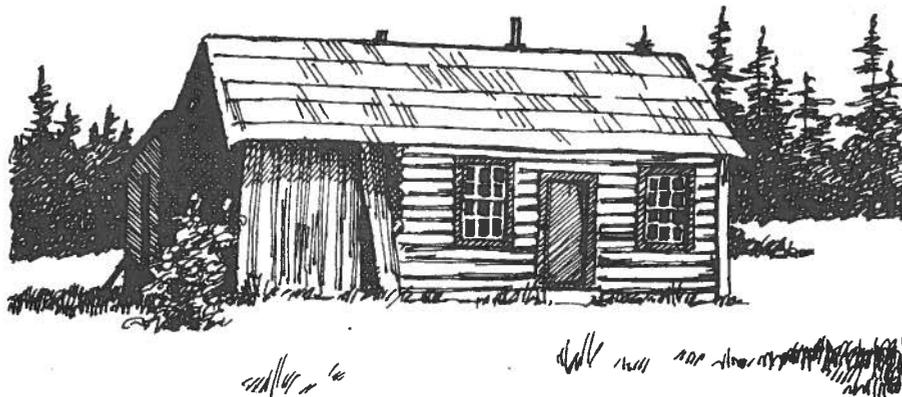
the Echo complex we had it take over the care and feeding of our artifacts and photographs, leaving us, in the old Army Camp firehall "Workshop" with the tending of archives.

With the recent expansion of the museum and our invitation to enter and make our historical home in the lovely, new, fire proof and temperature and humidity controlled atmosphere, we encountered some confusion. As volunteers dealing exclusively with archival material it seemed more accurate and descriptive to simply drop the "museum" from our title.

By way of a house-warming gift the society, thanks to a generous gift from the local Rotary Club, was able to give a microfilm reader to the museum. We also purchased microfilm from the Provincial Archives that covers newspapers from 1907 to 1967. To top off the new service the *Alberni Valley Times* gave, on permanent loan, its microfilm from 1967 up to the current date. The reader is of course available to the public as well, for use in historical and census research and such similar needs.

Society members have been busy developing archival files since before the official expansion opening, thanks to the excellent co-operation of the museum staff, and are currently open for business.

— Ruth Roberts



M. ROBINSON
CRAIG HOUSE 1890

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Burrville shortly after completion in 1906. It has now been relocated to the Deas Island Regional Park.



British Columbia Heritage Trust

News from the British Columbia Heritage Trust

The Trust helped establish employment for fifty-one British Columbia university students this summer. The purpose of the program is to provide students with opportunities to develop skill in heritage conservation and to promote employment that makes a demonstrable contribution to the heritage of British Columbia. Through the Student Employment Program, the Trust provides funds to organizations such as historical, museum and heritage societies who then directly employ the students.

Five historical societies received funds for summer students:

- The Penticton Branch of the Okanagan Historical Society received a grant for a student to undertake an inventory of Penticton's commercial and residential heritage buildings dating from 1908 to c. 1945.
- A grant was awarded to the Steveston Historical Society for their student to develop a program to promote local heritage awareness among young children.
- The Peachland Historical Society received funds for a student to complete their heritage building inventory and to prepare a walking tour of the community.
- A student worked for the Vancouver Historical

Society on the Vancouver Centennial Bibliography project.

- The Central Okanagan Historical Society required a student to prepare "as found" drawings of Kelowna's significant heritage buildings and to prepare conceptual drawings showing potential adaptive reuse of these buildings.

Other grants of interest recently awarded by the Trust include:

- ★ The Greater Vancouver Regional Parks Department received a grant of \$25,000 to assist with the restoration of the Burr House, built in 1906, which was owned by the Burr Family for three generations. This lovely example of Victorian architecture was relocated to the Deas Island Regional Park where it will be restored.
- ★ The Maple Ridge Historical Society was awarded a grant of \$20,650 to restore the former St. Andrew's Church. Built in 1888 of bricks made on the site, it is located on the original Port Haney townsite. The building served as a church until 1956 and will now be restored as a little theatre, concert hall and meeting place.
- ★ A grant of \$7,000 was awarded to the District of
(continued on next page)

Political Memories on Tape at S.F.U.

Three-hundred hours of taped interviews with some of Canada's most important political figures are now housed in the Archives at Simon Fraser University.

Conducted as an oral history project by writer-broadcaster Peter Stursberg, the interviews feature the political memories of such people as Senator Forsey, former governor general Roland Michener, post-war finance minister Douglas Abbott and socialist Grace MacInnis.

Stursberg, an adjunct professor in Canadian studies at Simon Fraser University, began the oral history project in 1978 in collaboration with the Public Archives of Canada and the Parliamentary Library.

The two federal institutions and, through special arrangement, Simon Fraser University Archives, are the only repositories of the material in Canada.

SFU Archivist Donald Baird says the collection represents an important expansion of the research function of his department. "These tapes provide a valuable and unique perspective on our country's recent political history and they will serve as an invaluable information resource for researchers in this part of Canada."

Stursberg says the project is an ongoing one. To date the recollections of forty prominent Cana-

dians have been recorded. Most will be freely available.

The collection's longest interview took place with Grace MacInnis. Twenty-two hours of discussion covers her life and the lives of her husband, Angus MacInnis, and her father J.S. Woodsworth.

Stursberg's first interview in the project was in 1978 with Senator Norman Paterson, 95 at the time, who recalled working with early Canadian politicians Mackenzie and Mann.

Other interviewees include Senator Carl Goldenberg, Walter Harris, Davie Fulton, Douglas Harkness, Jack Davis, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside and Robert Thompson.

These materials join 150 Stursberg interviews already amassed by the Public Archives of Canada, Parliamentary Library and SFU. The earlier interviews were completed during Stursberg's research for his four books on prime ministers Diefenbaker and Pearson.

Transcriptions for the two collections total more than five million words.

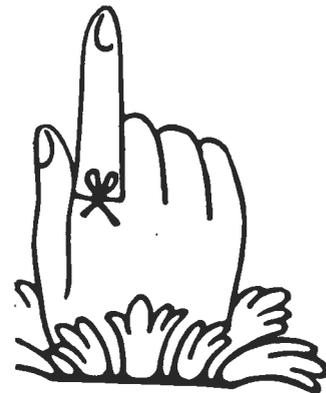
Heritage Trust

(continued from page 30)

Chilliwack to purchase property adjacent to the Yale Waggon Road. The property will be protected from encroaching development and its historic significance will be publicly interpreted. The road was constructed in 1874-5 after Chilliwack residents had petitioned the British Columbia government for it in 1872.

- ★ The Hallmark Society of Victoria received a grant of \$7,000 to undertake an inventory of Art Deco and Art Modene buildings in Victoria.

Roberta J. Pazdro



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Bookshelf



KITIMAT MY VALLEY. Elizabeth Anderson Varley, Terrace: Northern Times Press, 1981. pp. 288, illus. \$23.95 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper). (Northern Times Press, Box 880, Terrace, B.C. V8G 4R1)

The years from 1890 to the end of World War I witnessed an influx of white settlers into northwestern British Columbia. The children of those hearty enough or foolish enough to stay and make their mark are now beginning to write the story of those years. Helen Meilleur in *A Pour of Rain: Stories from a West Coast Fort* (Victoria, 1980) writes of life as the child of a storekeeper in Port Simpson; Walter Wicks in *Memories of Skeena* (Saanichton, 1976) covers growing up at the mouth of the Skeena River; and Jack Mould in *Stumpfarms and Broadaxes* (Saanichton, 1976) discusses the Bulkley Valley-Lakes country.

Kitimat My Valley by Elizabeth Varley is a spirited

account of growing up in the sparsely-settled Kitimat Valley during the early years of the century. All the old themes are covered—there are wolves and favourite dogs and harrowing crossings of rivers—but the author manages to transcend these frontier commonplaces and tell a story which is convincing, informative and compelling. This is due partly to the author's honesty: there are blemishes on the actors in the story. It is due also to the detail of the account of day-to-day life as the first white child born in the Kitimat Valley grows up.

Kitimat My Valley can join Meilleur's *A Pour of Rain* as a regional work which deserves to be read provincially. Both works are about white settlements in northwestern British Columbia which did not survive. The white community at Port Simpson is no more and the present town of Kitimat has nothing whatsoever to do with the farm life of which Varley writes. That farm, and the farms of those around it, had been abandoned long before Alcan built its model townsite for workers at the smelter.

One would be hard put to learn much precise information about the local history of the Kitimat region from this account. This is more of a memoir of the George and Martha Anderson family and their friends than a strict history of the Valley, although the main themes of early Kitimat Valley history are there.

There were no correct answers to last issue's contest, so here is an additional hint: the city is one which recently had some connection with the British Columbia Historical Association!

Contest

A recent book, *To Market, To Market: The Public Market Tradition in Canada* by Linda Biesenthal (Toronto: PMA, 1980, \$22.95) is a handsomely illustrated study of public markets across Canada. It does not, however, include photographs of the oldest continuing public market in British Columbia. In what city is it located?

The *British Columbia Historical News* will award a copy of *To Market, To Market* for the first correct answer drawn in our spring contest. Entries should reach the editor (P.O. Box 1738, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y3) before September 1, 1983.



Bookshelf

The reader will learn little more of the curious Kitimat-Terrace dog sled mail run, for example, than that there were Husky-Malamute mongrels in the Anderson back yard. The expected selection of Kitimat as the terminus for the Grand Trunk Pacific transcontinental railway is reflected in George Anderson and George Raley laying out a townsite for sale out of farm and mission land.

What Mrs. Varley is able to do with great success is convey a good answer to the question, "What was life like then?" The book is worth reading just for her observations about the women at the Methodist mission at Kitimat Indian Village and about her mother as the archetypical pioneer hostess who could feed twelve extra travellers at the drop of a hat, but who sometimes had little time for her daughter.

One serious drawback in the account is a lack of an explicit listing by the author where her information came from. Material taken from Methodist sources about the early years of George Anderson at the Kitimat mission and the arrival of Martha there is acknowledged, if only vaguely. All the rest is presented as the memory of the young Elizabeth.

The explicitness of the account, the detail of the memory seems too precise to be just memory. A transcript of a verbatim conversation witnessed by the child at four is presented. The reader is constantly told how deep the snow is, when high tide came, who said what, how many members were in a survey party. There is allusion to a diary kept by George Anderson; one suspects it was used frequently in writing the book.

The reader deserves a better map than the one provided. In general, however, Northern Times Press of Terrace has done better than average in the design and printing of this kind of book.

Kitimat My Valley manages to keep reader interest throughout. In fact, sometimes it's downright hard to put down.

Maureen Cassidy taught local history for several years at Northwest Community College.



New Titles



The British Columbia Heritage Trust assisted with publication of these new titles:

Helgeson, Marion S., ed. *Footprints: Pioneer Families of the Metchosin District, Southern Vancouver Island, 1851-1900*. Metchosin School Museum Society, 1983. 316 p., ill.

MacDonald, A. David, ed. *Penticton: Years to Remember, 1908-1983*. City of Penticton, 1983. 146 p., ill.

MacDonald George, *Haida Monumental Art*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. 217 p., ill.

Maud, Ralph. *A Guide to British Columbia Indian Myth and Legend*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1983.

Norcross, E. Blanche, ed. *The Company on the Coast*. Nanaimo Historical Society, 1983. 86 p.

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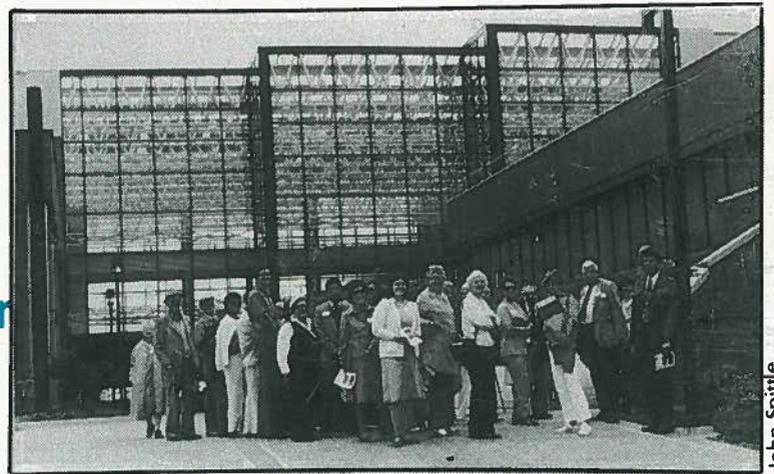
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Snapshots of the 1983 B.C.H.A. Annual Convention held at New Westminster



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