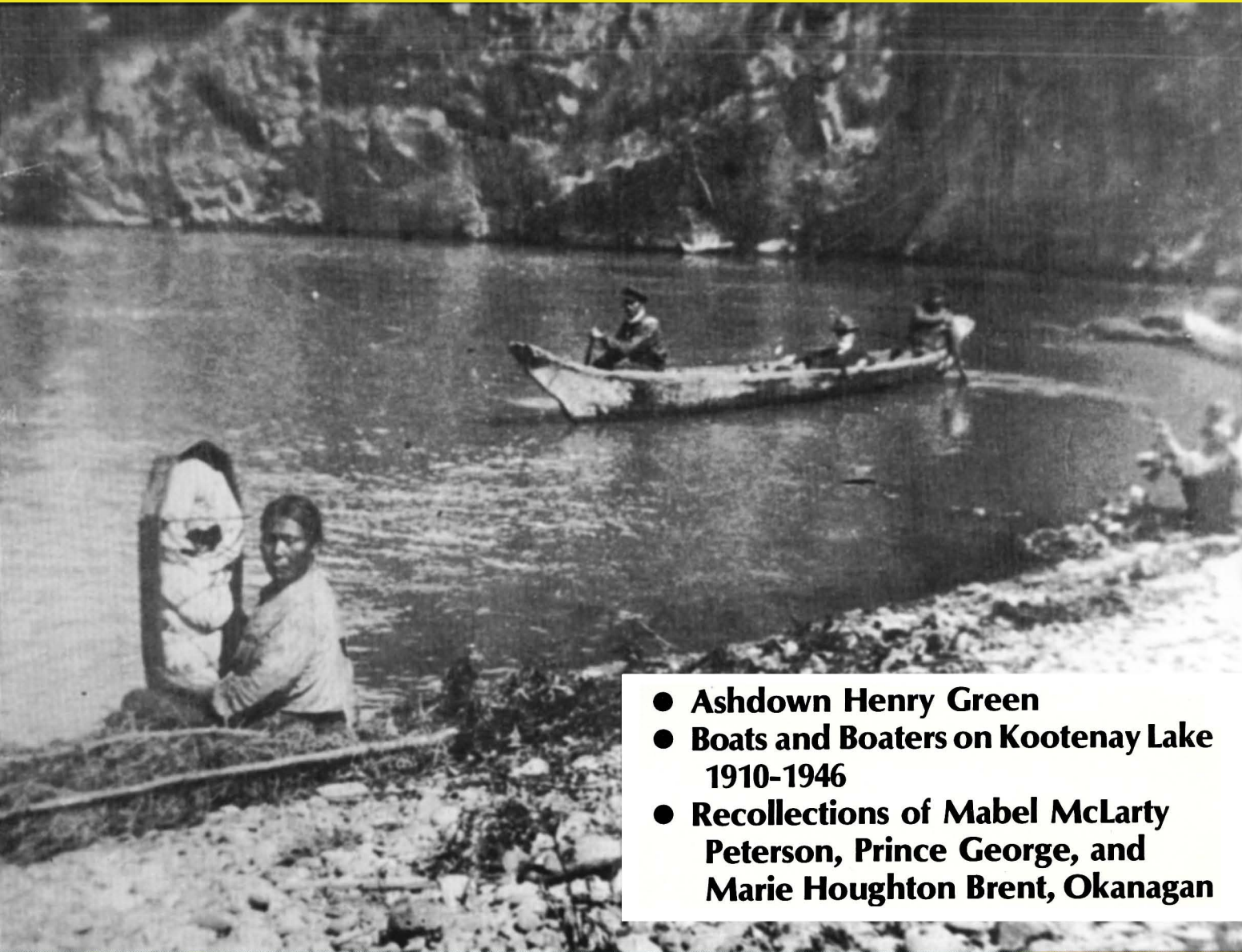


**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

VOLUME 18, No. 2  
1984

# HISTORICAL NEWS



- **Ashdown Henry Green**
- **Boats and Boaters on Kootenay Lake  
1910-1946**
- **Recollections of Mabel McLarty  
Peterson, Prince George, and  
Marie Houghton Brent, Okanagan**

On the cover...

Ashdown H. Green on the Nass River on survey, 1906.

Story starts on page 5.

## MEMBER SOCIETIES



Member societies and their secretaries are responsible for seeing that the correct addresses for their society and for its member subscribers are up-to-date. Please send changes to both the treasurer and the editor whose addresses are at the bottom of the next page. The Annual Report as at October 31 should show a telephone number for contact.

Member dues for the year 1982-83 (Volume 16) were paid by the following member societies:

- Alberni District Historical Society, Box 284, Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7M7
- Atlin Historical Society, P.O. Box 111, Atlin, B.C. V0W 1A0
- BCHA — Gulf Islands Branch, c/o P.O. Box 35, Saturna Island, B.C. V0N 2Y0
- BCHA — Victoria Branch, c/o Margaret Bell, 1187 Hampshire, Victoria, B.C. V8S 4T1
- Burnaby Historical Society, c/o 5406 Manor St., Burnaby, B.C. V5G 1B7
- Chemainus Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 172, Chemainus, B.C. V0R 1K0
- Cowichan Historical Society, P.O. Box 1014, Duncan, B.C. V9L 3Y2
- Creston & District Historical & Museum Society, P.O. Box 1123, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0
- District 69 Historical Society, P.O. Box 213, Parksville, B.C. V0R 2S0
- East Kootenay Historical Association, c/o H. Mayberry, 216 6th Avenue S.,  
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 2H6
- Golden & District Historical Society, Box 992, Golden, B.C. V0A 1H0
- Hedley Heritage, Arts & Crafts Society (1983), P.O. Box 218, Hedley, B.C. V0X 1K0
- Ladysmith New Horizons Historical Society, c/o Mrs. V. Cull, R.R. #2,  
Ladysmith, B.C. V0R 2E0
- Lantzville Historical Society, c/o Susan Crayston, Box 76, Lantzville, B.C. V0R 2H0
- Nanaimo Historical Society, P.O. Box 933, Station "A", Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5N2
- Nanooa Historical & Museum Society, R.R. #1, Box 5, Kinghorn Rd., Nanoose Bay, B.C. V0R 2R0
- Nootka Sound Historical Society, Box 748, Gold River, B.C. V0P 1G0
- North Shore Historical Society, c/o Mrs. Elizabeth L. Grubbe, 623 East 10th Street,  
North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 2E9
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- Saltspring Island Historical Society, c/o Mrs. Olive Clayton, R.R. #3, Comp. 4, Scott Pt. #1,  
Ganges, B.C. V0S 1E0
- Sidney & North Saanich Historical Society, c/o Mrs. Ray Joy, 10719 Bayfield Road, R.R. #3,  
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- City of White Rock Museum Archives Society, 1030 Martin St., White Rock, B.C. V4B 5E3
- The Hallmark Society, 207 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 2K8

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## Letters to the Editor

### Cowichan Knitting Exhibit

I am currently doing research for an exhibit on Cowichan Knitting to be shown at the UBC Museum of Anthropology during Expo 86. I am looking for old, hopefully dated photographs of people wearing Cowichan sweaters or related photographs from the Cowichan Valley area for the exhibit and the accompanying monograph. If there is information on where the sweaters were purchased and who knit them, even better. Photographs will be returned.

Margaret Meikle  
Curator, Cowichan Knitting Exhibit,  
Museum of Anthropology  
The University of British Columbia  
6393 N.W. Marine Drive  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

### Kerrisdale Historical Society

The Society is interested in hearing from people who lived in the Kerrisdale area of Vancouver and can contribute information for a forthcoming book, *The Trail to Point Grey*. Contact the Society's office at 5670 Yew Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 3Y3.

### The Black Cultural Centre

The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia is making a national search for artifacts to furnish their Museum, which would "depict and interpret" their history and background in Nova Scotia. Interested contributors are asked to contact Henry V. Bishop, Curator, P.O. Box 2128 East, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2W 3Y2.

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## Back Issues of the News

Back issues of the *News* can be ordered at \$3.50 each plus postage from the Editor.

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### NEXT ISSUE

Deadline for submissions for the next issue of the *News* is March 1, 1985. Please type double spaced. Mail to the Editor, *B.C. Historical News*, 1745 Taylor Street, Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8.

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## J.W. Ashdown Green

# Ashdown Henry Green

## Civil Engineer, Land Surveyor and Amateur Ichthyologist

Little has been written of Ashdown Henry Green, a Land Surveyor who was active in British Columbia from 1862 to 1918. He participated in early explorations and was one of the many immigrants who contributed to the orderly settlement of the province.

Green was born on Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, London on August 12th, 1840. He was educated at Charterhouse School and the Neuweid in Germany. He passed his Civil Engineering examinations in England and was proceeding to India in that capacity when doctor's orders suggested a cooler climate, so he decided to emigrate to British Columbia.

He arrived in Victoria on August 23rd, 1862 after passage on the steamships *Atrato* and *Pelican*. He never returned to England. In Victoria he became a partner of F.W. Green (no relation), the city surveyor or city engineer as he would now be called.

In 1865 he explored the Selkirk Mountain Range to locate a route for a government road to Canada, this being prior to Confederation. The diaries of his Columbia River explorations are on file at the Provincial Archives in Victoria. On August 28th he wrote of his problems with Indian packers who complained of their loads, and pleaded sickness, so that a whole day was taken up in persuading them to work. On August 30th he found that in filling his order for supplies the Hudson's Bay Company had substituted coffee beans for beans, so that his small party was carrying two hundred pounds of coffee. On October 19th, when he received additional supplies from Kamloops, he was given orders by Joseph Trutch to report to Mr. Dewdney on completion of the current project. His return to Victoria, as described in his diary, gives some idea of the problems of travel at that time.

*Dec. 9 Started from Savona's ferry at 8:00 a.m.*

*Stopped to wait at Boston's. Rode on afterwards to Cornwallis.*

*11 Reached Cook's ferry (Spence's Bridge).*

*12 Walked to Lytton.*

*14 Reached Salter's 42 Mile House.*

*15 Rode on a wagon to Boston Bar.*

*16 Reached Chapman's Bar.*

*17 Arrived at Yale.*

*18 In Yale expecting steamer but as I was afraid that it might not arrive made arrangements to go down in a canoe.*

*19 Started in a canoe with eight other men who were going down. Stopped at Hope for half an hour. Reached Hicks' Ranch.*

*20 Made a portage over the ice in the orchard. Reached Harrison mouth.*

*21 Found the river blocked up about four miles from the mission. Nearly shipwrecked. Walked down to the mission.*

*22 Crossed the river on the ice. Some of us went through and were saved with difficulty. Reached the Indian Ranch where we camped.*

*23 Went on telegraph trail to Langley.*

*24 Arrived at New Westminster at 6:00 p.m.*

This was a real change in lifestyle for a young man who had come out from England only three years before at the age of twenty-two.

Green must have settled in the Cowichan Valley in the late 1860s, because in 1870 the Cowichan Agricultural Exhibition was held at his farm near Somenos Lake. In March of 1871 a meeting of residents of Cowichan was held at the mission school house for the purpose of forming a lending library. Green was one of the eleven men present, and a motion was passed that the meeting enrol themselves in a society to be called the "Cowichan Lending Library and Literary Institute".

### CPR Survey

In 1871 Green was appointed Divisional Engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railways working on the location of the CPR line across British Columbia, and held this position until 1880. He surveyed the Howse Pass to Yellowhead area in 1871-1873, and his diary outlines some aspects of survey life in those days.

July 4, 1871 Met Mr. Moberly.

24 Crossed the divide between the McLeod and Pembina Rivers. Camped on a small stream that flows in to the latter.

31 Reached Lobstick.

Aug. 1 Reached Thickwood.

May 5, 1873 At about ten o'clock came in sight of a large cinnamon bear feeding in the open valley. The Indian Alec shot him and after taking as much of the meat as we could carry conveniently we resumed our route.

7 Johnny caught a pike.

11 Alec shot two geese.

Aug. 4 Got rid of the old Indian at last. This will reduce our consumption of grub as he was three man-power with his knife and fingers.

9 Got Johnny out of bed and put him under a tree. He is very weak and I am sorry that I have nothing to give him to keep up his strength.

14 Started in company with Mr. Hall's train for the McLeod. Put Johnny on horseback but on a tree striking his leg he fainted and we had to take him off. Packed him on a hand barrow as far as Mire Creek intending to take him to the McLeod on which I hear I shall find a canoe.

21 Johnny's leg very much swollen in the evening so had to poultice it.

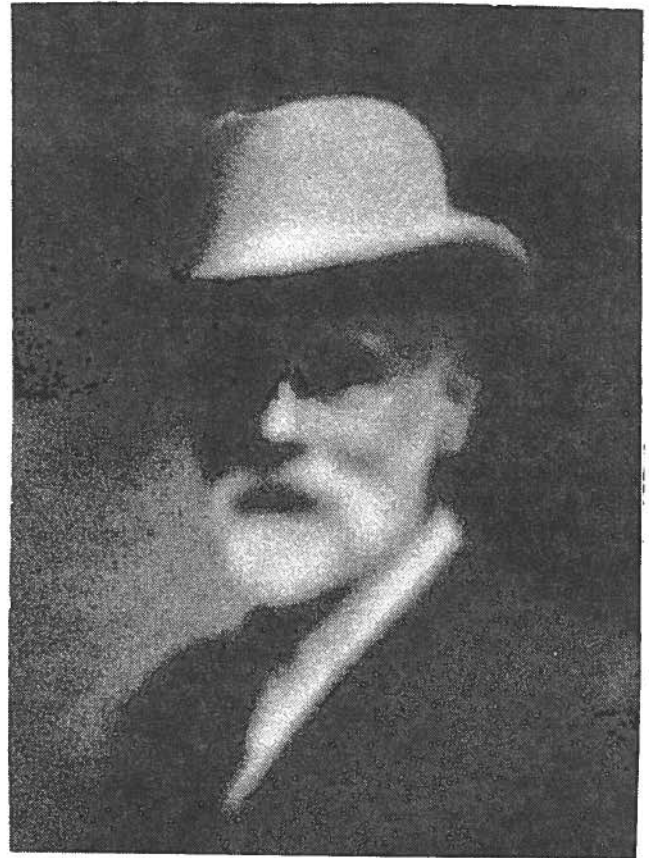
26 Johnny's leg very much swollen. I am afraid that I shall have to lance it to relieve it.

27 Opened Johnny's leg under the knee and reduced the swelling.

Sep. 6 Johnny very feverish.

There is no further word of Johnny so we must hope that he survived. With no antibiotics or sulfa drugs known, medicine was largely a matter of cleanliness, rest, poultices and hope.

In 1874 Green was appointed a delegate from St. Peter's Church, Quamichan, to attend a convention held in Victoria for the formation of an Anglican Synod. Other delegates from the area were Edward Marriner, A.S. Morley, R. Woods, and Mr. Crease of Victoria. Also in 1874, Green was elected to the North Cowichan Municipal Council from the Quamichan ward. The Municipality had been incorporated the previous year. On January 19th the Council met and appointed Mr. Green as Warden, or reeve to use a term that came in to use six years later.



Ashdown H. Green

Courtesy J.W. Ashdown Green

Green carried out a survey of Saltspring Island—the South end in 1874 and the North end in 1875. Records show that his monthly salary was one hundred and fifty dollars at this time. The survey seems to have been routine—the following are some excerpts from his diary:

Jun. 8, 1874 Received instructions to survey Saltspring Island.

9 Landed at Maple Bay.

10 Went to Burgoyne Bay. Camped half-way between Burgoyne Bay and Fulford.

11 Went with Ackerman to look for posts of old survey and found two. Went to Ford's and looked around generally.

14 Killed a big buck. Very fat.

22 Found Gyves had trespassed about seven chains on Welsh for a distance of ten chains.

July 10 Discharged Hozier (chainman) for laziness.

---

30 Johnson got lost. This man is the biggest fool that I have seen in a long time.

31 Had a fall and damaged the sights of my circumferentor.

In the 1875 Cowichan Voters' List No. 51 Green was listed as: Green, Ashdown H., Civil Engineer, Somenos. In 1878 he surveyed Bare Hill and the Cowichan Indian Reserves.

In 1879 Green married Miss Caroline Guillod of Comox. Miss Guillod had come out from England to keep house for her brother Harry Guillod, an Anglican Catechist. Harry Guillod had in 1863 owned a one-third share in a sawmill at Chemainus but became a Catechist serving at Victoria, Alberni and Comox. Mr. and Mrs. Green moved to Victoria and had two children, Caroline born 1880 and Ashdown Thomas born 1882. Mrs. Green died in 1883 and the two children were sent to England to be raised by Green's brothers.

### **Indian Department Surveyor**

Green joined the Indian Department in 1880 as a surveyor. Early surveyors of Indian Reserves were called on to serve in many roles. They acted as negotiators, interpreters, mediators and census takers. They advised the Indians on such matters as soil comparisons, land values, and the ultimate precise location of reserves, in order that the maximum advantage would rebound to Indian occupants from actual surveys.

Peter O'Reilly, as Indian Reserve Commissioner, in 1886 allotted ten reserves to the Laich-Kwil-Tach Tribe, but left the boundaries indefinite because at the time of his visit to the area all the Indians were away. When Green arrived only the local Chief, Quacksister (also known as Captain John, Quack-sus-tut-la, and Quocksister) was present with six young men and wanted an immediate decision. Green reports:

*I informed them that before I came to any conclusion I intended to examine the land and make a survey of it, and when I had done so I would ask the white settlers with whom they were at variance to attend and I would render my decision ... I am pleased to report that my decision gave satisfaction to all concerned, and I think rightly so, for while the Indians are awarded the site of their houses which had been omitted by Mr. Sproat, the whites obtain access to the sea, the head of steamboat navigation on the river being now within Messrs. Nunns' claim ... the chief claimed compensation for a*

*small potato patch of about two rods which is not included in the Reserve, and also some clearing done by the Indians and valued by me at five dollars.*

The diary of Fred Nunns, who with his brother Jack were the first European settlers in Campbell River, tells of the activities of Green in dealing with a boundary dispute. The Nunns had spent several weeks in Victoria trying to get action to settle the boundary between their property and adjoining Indian lands. Jack Nunns writes that on April 29th, 1888, Green arrived with a chainman and a cook, and had full power to deal with the case. There was also an application from a syndicate for a 30,000 acre property. Green would not deal with Quacksister, the local Chief, to that chief's annoyance, but sent to Qualicum for Wamich, the real Chief. At a meeting on May 4th, Green, the Nunns brothers, and the Indian representatives fixed a boundary line under which the Nunns brothers lost five chains of land, would do some ploughing for Quacksister, and would pay him five dollars. At this time the land was valued at one dollar per acre. Quacksister was pleased with the outcome and after the Nunns had completed the ploughing they became friends. Quacksister planted potatoes, turnip and carrot seed distributed by Green.

In 1888 Green married Constance Clara Anuata Dumbleton, a daughter of Henry M. Dumbleton (1821-1909) of Rocklands, Regent's Park, Rockland Avenue, Victoria. Three sons were born to them: Rupert, born 1890, who died in infancy; Arthur Ashdown, born 1891; Geoffrey Walter Ashdown, born 1894, killed in Royal Flying Corps 1918.

### **Ichthyologist**

Green was a keen sportsman. He published the following articles on the fishes of British Columbia:

1891 *Journal of Natural History* Vol. 1, No. 1., "The Salmonidae of British Columbia" and "The Economic Fishes of British Columbia"

1893 *Journal of Natural History*, "Notes on the Occurrence of a New and Rare Fish in British Columbia"

He identified nine types of fish not previously seen in British Columbia waters, and caught two types of fish, previously unknown, which were later named after him:

1893 Lake Chub (*Couesius Plumbeus Greenii*)

1895 Lobefin Snailfish (*Polypera Greenii*)

---

He designed a streamer fishing fly, the "Ashdown Green" which was a recognized pattern.

His collection of preserved fish was the nucleus of the fish exhibits in the British Columbia Provincial Museum (Bulletin No. 68, Second Edition, 1961, Fisheries Board of Canada).

At some time prior to 1894 Mr. and Mrs. Green returned to Duncan where Mrs. Green resided until 1910. Green was travelling in B.C. most of this time because of the nature of his employment. They occupied a house in Duncan which was later to become the Silver Bridge Inn. This house had a tennis court by the river until one night, with the Cowichan River in flood, the tennis court swept away. They also had a cottage at the end of McKinstry Street which Green gave to his son Ashdown Thomas in 1914, on the occasion of his marriage to Gladys Dumbleton, of Victoria.

Mr. and Mrs. Green participated in community functions. Newspapers and diaries tell of Mrs. Green presiding at numerous Tennis Teas and picnics. In 1894 she hosted a party at her home at which fifty people were in attendance for dancing to piano and violin. A month later an even larger affair was held. At the Cowichan Horticultural, Dog and Poultry Show held in Duncan July 2nd, 1900 Mrs. Green took prizes for her roses, geraniums, and potted plants. Green's smooth-haired fox terrier took first prize in its class. Mrs. Green was active as an organist at St. Peter's Church, Quamichan, and assisted with the choir, also participating in local concerts.

### Nass River Survey

In 1906 Green surveyed in the Nass River area of the province. A photograph at that time shows him, very correctly dressed, being transported on the river by two Indians in one of the old-style, high-prowed canoes. His interest in the unusual caused tension while he was working on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Seeing a woman with the elongated skull produced by binding the head when she was young, as was practised by some tribes, he unthinkingly exclaimed, "I would give anything to get that skull". For the remainder of his stay there were guards close to the woman at all times.

Mr. and Mrs. Green left Duncan for Victoria, apparently in 1913. On the death of her mother in 1915, Mrs. Green inherited the Dumbleton family home at 1750 Rockland Avenue, which had been built by her father in 1892. Green retired from

practice as a land surveyor in 1918 and died in Victoria in 1927 at the age of eighty-seven.

His son and daughter, sent to England in 1883, returned to Duncan. Caroline married John Norie of Duncan in 1903. They farmed in Somenos but sold the farm in 1913 and emigrated to England. A son Geoffrey Green is in France, and a daughter Mary Myneer in Australia. Ashdown T. Green died in Duncan in 1921, but his widow, Mrs. Gladys Stone, is now (1984) living in Victoria. Arthur Green is no longer living.

Green stated at one time that he had been everywhere in British Columbia except Barkerville. Since he was active from 1862 to 1918—he was still doing surveys in 1918 at the age of seventy-eight—he was probably right.

### Sources of Information.

- (1) *One Hundred Years at St. Peters*, David R. Williams, 1977 Edition.
- (2) *Cowichan My Valley*, R.I. Dougan, 1973, Third Edition.
- (3) *Recollections of Mrs. Gladys Stone, Daughter-in-law of Ashdown H. Green.*
- (4) *Files of the Cowichan Leader.*
- (5) *Files of the Duncan Enterprise.*
- (6) *Diaries of Ashdown H. Green in the British Columbia Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C. covering the Saltspring Survey 1874-1875, the 1871-1873 Howse Pass Exploration, and the 1865 Exploration of the Selkirk Range.*
- (7) *Bulletin No. 68 (2nd Edition) 1961 Fisheries Research Board of Canada.*
- (8) *The Diaries of Mary Marriner, Cowichan Bay, B.C. covering the period November 1894 to February 1925.*
- (9) *Biography of Henry Ashdown Green from the Journal of the Corporation of Land Surveyors of British Columbia.*

*J.W. Ashdown Green is the grandson of Ashdown Henry Green, and a member of the Cowichan Historical Society.*



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Patricia Roy

## **“The Father of Confederation” in Ross Bay Cemetery**

### **John Hamilton Gray (1814-1889)**

Among the “Fathers of Confederation” who attended the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences in 1864 were two John Hamilton Grays. One spent most of his life in Prince Edward Island; the other, after a long career in New Brunswick politics, spent some seventeen years in British Columbia and is buried in Victoria’s Ross Bay Cemetery. The latter John Hamilton Gray would have undoubtedly been pleased by the decision of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to commemorate his final resting place with a plaque, on November 30, 1980. Gray had once complained to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, “I helped to work out Confederation but others got the honors.”<sup>1</sup>

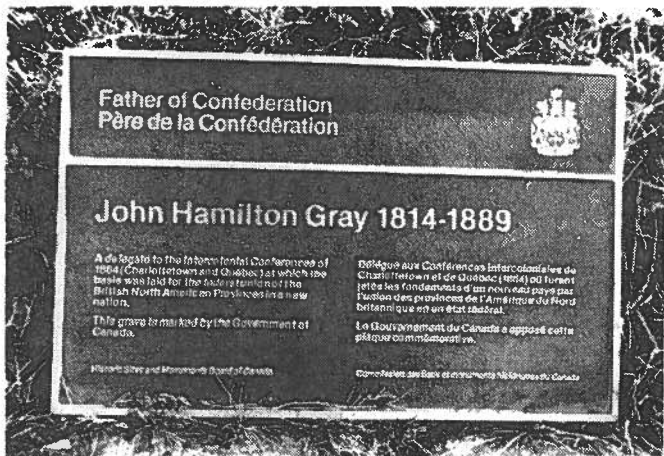
Despite his birth in Bermuda (1814) where his father was serving in the Royal Navy, Gray had strong British North American connections. His grandfather had been a Loyalist settler of Nova Scotia. Gray himself was educated at King’s College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and was called to the New Brunswick bar in 1837. By 1850 he had been elected to the New Brunswick Legislature, and at various times sat as a member of the Executive Council and served for a time as Attorney-General.

As a prominent member of the New Brunswick Legislature, Gray attended the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences. He had already indicated his support for Maritime Union as a forerunner of a union of all the British North American colonies, and had long favored the construction of a railway to link them. On his return to New Brunswick, Gray, who had “pretensions” of being an orator with “a rich redundancy of expression which made him effective at one time, boring at another,”<sup>2</sup> joined Samuel Leonard Tilley in trying to win popular support for Confederation. Despite their

arguments that Confederation would mean lower taxes, Gray and Tilley would not allay New Brunswickers’ suspicions of Confederation and Canada. In the general election of 1865, the Tilley government was defeated along with all the MLAs, including Gray, who had been at the Quebec Conference.

Gray was disappointed by the absurdity “that the petty jealousy of small Communities” could defeat imperial policies and imperil the future of British North America<sup>3</sup> but he was not downcast; he realized the defeat was temporary, that the new government was weak and divided. Indeed, little more than a year later, thanks in part to the political maneuvering of Lieutenant-Governor Arthur Gordon and the fear of an invasion by the Irish-American Fenian Brotherhood, the supporters of Confederation were again in power. Gray’s faith in Confederation had been fulfilled. In 1867 he was elected by acclamation as a Conservative M.P. for St. John.

When he was passed over for the Speakership of the House of Commons, Gray looked for another government appointment, possibly to provide him with greater financial security than a political career offered.<sup>4</sup> To John A. Macdonald, Gray seemed an ideal person to become a Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Although Chief Justice Begbie thought, “a third judge is unnecessary as twenty-one wheels to a coach,”<sup>5</sup> and George Walkem referred to Gray as an “empty-headed favourite,”<sup>6</sup> Macdonald went ahead with the appointment. The prime minister believed a third judge could resolve differences of opinion on the bench.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Gray was familiar with the civil and criminal law of the original four provinces and could discuss with Judges Begbie and Crease “the points of difference between the laws of the Dominion



and those which now obtain in British Columbia.”<sup>8</sup> As well, no British Columbia lawyer would accept the “starvation salary” which the Dominion government paid the appointee.<sup>9</sup> Although Gray accepted the post, both he and his wife always felt aggrieved by his inadequate salary and he consistently hoped for a better position, specifically that of lieutenant-governor.<sup>10</sup>

Gray arrived in Victoria late in October 1872. The *Colonist* observed that “in appearance the new judge is as gray as his name, wears side whiskers and moustache, and is exceedingly affable and gentlemanly in his manner.”<sup>11</sup> Within weeks, Gray was “everywhere popular” and “his style and manner on the bench as compared with his colleagues” had excited such “marked and universal expression of approbation that he had had “to suppress an outburst of applause” following his remarks on the administration of justice in the Dominion.<sup>12</sup> Even Premier George Walkem admitted that Gray did “his duty to the best of his ability” and that “the bar prefer Gray with his faults” to Begbie and Crease “with their crass ignorance of their profession” and their opposition to reform in the administration of justice.<sup>13</sup>

Gray’s chief fault was his inability to keep his family expenses (he had seven children) within his means. When he sought nine months’ leave in 1880 to attend to his own and family health needs, his creditors wanted to stop him for he owed “everyone right and left”.<sup>14</sup> When a tradesman with a judgment against Gray sought to have Gray arrested, Judge Begbie used several legal technicalities to delay the judgment until after Gray’s steamer left for California.<sup>15</sup>

Gray did improve his health. During his final eight and a half years he led an active life. In addition to his judicial duties he served as a

member of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration and on a Commission that went to Washington in an effort to arbitrate the Behring Sea dispute. He also helped organize a Victoria branch of the Imperial Federation League. On June 5, 1889, however, after an apoplectic seizure, Mr. Justice Gray died in his seventy-sixth year. Among the pall bearers were Judges Begbie and Crease. That fact and the legacy Begbie left a few years’ later to Gray’s near destitute widow<sup>16</sup> are indicative of the respect and friendship he earned in British Columbia. The marker in Ross Bay Cemetery gives him some of the national honor and recognition that eluded him in life.

[Ed. note: This is adapted from a talk given at the unveiling of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board Marker, 30 November 1980.]

#### Footnotes:

1. J.H. Gray to John A. Macdonald, 1 September 1886, Public Archives of Canada, John A. MacDonal Papers, #209872-7.
2. Peter B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 235.
3. Gray to A.T. Galt, 9 April 1865 quoted in William M. Baker, *Timothy Warren Anglin, 1822-96: Irish Catholic Canadian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 79.
4. S.L. Tilley to John A. Macdonald, 16 March 1872, Macdonald Papers, #126175-6.
5. M.B. Begbie to H.P. Crease, 7 September 1872 quoted in Alfred Watt, “The Hon. Mr. Justice John Hamilton Gray,” *The Advocate*, vol. 25 (March-April 1967), p. 59.
6. Quoted in C.M. Wallace, “John Hamilton Gray,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), vol. XI, p. 374.
7. *Colonist*, 29 June 1872.
8. John A. Macdonald to H.P. Crease, 30 November 1872, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 19, p. 212.
9. John A. Macdonald to J.W. Trutch, 3 July 1872, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 18, p. 111.
10. J.H. Gray to J.A. Macdonald, 29 April 1881, Macdonald Papers, #174948-57 and Gray to Macdonald, 1 September 1886, Macdonald Papers, #2099872-7.
11. *Colonist*, 27 October 1872.
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13. G.A. Walkem to J.A. Macdonald, 29 October 1880, Macdonald Papers, #134491ff.
14. Loc. cit.
15. David R. Williams, “... *The Man for a New Country*”: *Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie* (Sidney: Gray’s Publishing, 1977), p. 164.
16. E.G. Prior to J.A. Macdonald, 30 March 1890, Macdonald Papers, #242200.

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Naomi Miller

## Boats and Boaters on Kootenay Lake 1910-1946

The history of exploration and development in the Kootenays is closely tied to canoes, sternwheelers and freight boats. Paddlewheelers were supplemented with dozens of small craft — rowboats, outboard boats, dories, “crocodiles”, launches with inboard engines, rafts, and the occasional sailboat. These served as personal transportation for homesteaders, trappers, prospectors, hunters, ranchers, firefighters, police and missionaries as well as those out for a picnic, a joy ride, or a fishing trip. Those of us who lived along the shoreline of Kootenay Lake knew the sight and sound of all the regular users of the waterway north of Kaslo. Each boat owner knew emergency landing places, and which homes welcomed a traveller waiting out a squall.

Most small boats were given tender, loving care by their owners. They were, in most cases, the lifeline between home and town. Each boat was cleaned and painted every spring (or every other spring). The better boats rated spar varnish. The others were treated with caulking (a smelly seaweed stuff) and then painted with marine paint. The main colours were white, battleship grey, and a dark green. Reds and a cobalt blue came in in the '40s, either more expensive or less reliable than the old standbys.

There was a friendly rivalry between owners of Elto and Johnson outboard motors. Dad always insisted that Eltos were more reliable. We knew they sounded smoother than the rough sounding Johnson. Both, however, were easy to maintain with trouble arising from water in the gastank, or a wave splashing the engine, cutting off power from the battery, or a shearpin breaking on a piece of driftwood. The boat owner carried a simple tool kit (pliers, screwdriver, and shearpins), a spare can of gas mixed with the prescribed amount of oil, a funnel and a bailing can. The bailing can might be one carefully shaped with tinsnips, but usually was a tobacco or pork 'n beans can. Boat cushions, preferably with firmly sewn handles, were filled with kapok which allowed them to double as life

preservers. Deep, tub-shaped lifeboats were a trifle awkward to manoeuvre, not meant for speed, but bobbed like a cork in even the most severe storm. Lapstreak runabouts or double pointed rowboats were easy to handle in swells or calm water. The broader, flatter runabouts with V-shaped prow gained their greatest speed when calm waters permitted them to plane along the surface. The flat bottomed river scow or “crocodile” was utterly helpless and hopeless on a rough lake. Each boat had its own character. Each boat had its own story.

There were three boats that were run in the line of duty or on errands of mercy. They belonged to the B.C. Forest Service, the Provincial Police, and to an Anglican rector. The *Amabillis* was a sturdy 38-foot launch, painted battleship grey, that belonged to the B.C. Forest Service. It took the resident forester from Kaslo to do log scaling at timber limits up and down the lake, to check on booms formed and towed down to one of the sawmills, or to direct the fighting of forest fires. She could easily carry a dozen or so men, with rudimentary tools and pumps needed to create fireguards, to the beach nearest to the fire. My father was frequently employed to freight groceries up to the forestry crew, to supplement the trips made by the *Amabillis*. There were times when a wind reversed the direction of a fire and the *Amabillis* had to hastily evacuate the crew, perhaps to another beach, sometimes to withdraw across the lake to home or to Kaslo.

The police launch was not quite as big as the “fire boat”. It was used for emergency work or to patrol for hunting and fishing licenses. One rescue mission I recall involved a careless fisherman who nosed his rented boat ashore at Campbell Creek, walked up the creek to the canyon, and returned to find his boat had drifted away. He tried in vain to hail passing trollers. He was stranded. He did have the sense to collect driftwood and build three bonfires (the emergency signal for outdoorsmen in trouble).

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These fires became evident as dusk fell. Mother used the old crank telephone to notify police of the three fires clearly visible to us but probably not clearly defined from Kaslo. We watched the lights of the police launch reflected in the calm water. The bonfires went out. The police boat cruised north and disappeared into a cove. When it reappeared, the launch came directly across the lake, towing a small rowboat — our rental boat. Dad brought a pair of coal oil lanterns to our boat dock to guide the pilot. The policeman cheerfully lined the truant boat to me, while the sheepish tourist mumbled thanks and retreated to his cabin.

The third mercy boat was operated by Rev Raven while he was rector of St. Marks Anglican Church, Kaslo. This gentleman had been an Inspector in the Northwest Mounted Police before studying theology. I remember viewing his boat on the grey choppy lake with a lone figure grimly gripping the tiller. We later learned that he had gone to comfort the widow of a suicide victim at Johnson's landing.

There was a mission boat which plied the lake from time to time. Dr. James Calvery, a Methodist minister in Kaslo, ran the boat early in the century. He organized the Navy League, taking the boys for many trips on the lake and for camping holidays.<sup>1</sup> Dr. George R. Kinney, United Church minister and famed Canadian Alpine Club member, ran the mission boat in later years. He presented programs in rural schools combining a bit of Bible study with the showing of early silent films.

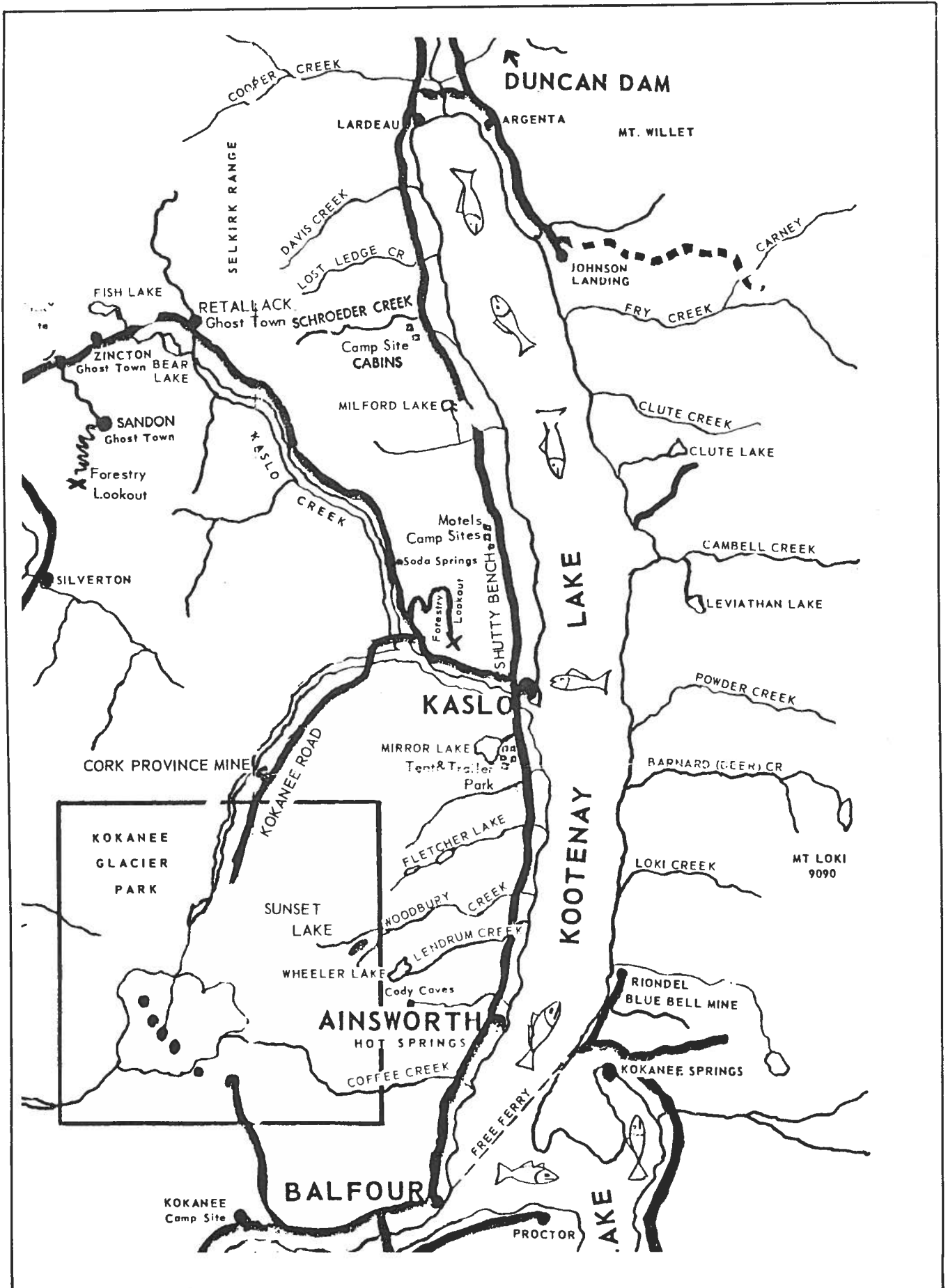
Many young people used a boat or a canoe while courting or honeymooning. I know of several couples who opted for a camping honeymoon on a remote beach. My own parents were one of those couples. They travelled down the lake in the summer of 1925. On my last boat trip to Fry Creek (1946) I came upon my silver-haired U.B.C. Zoology professor and his bride. Dr. B. had been a widower for years. He found happiness that summer supervising some student ichthyologists on Kootenay Lake, and honeymooning with the charming new Mrs. B. Then there was the old artist who lured a lovely lass to accompany him in his battered old launch for a camping trip. His sketchbook revealed that he had spent many happy hours with her posed in the nude on distant beaches. They did get married eventually because an infant arrived exactly nine months after the camping trip.

One groom rowed eighteen miles to meet his bride. Augustus Thomas Taylor was a sturdy

Lancashire farm lad who came to the Kootenays about 1920. After he had built a log cabin and prepared a garden, he was able to send home for his intended Catherine "Lill" Wells. He was to travel aboard the S.S. *Moyie* to meet her at Proctor. For some reason he missed the *Moyie* at Kaslo, so grabbed the nearest rowboat and plied the oars furiously. He said, "I was only a little bit late, and Lill forgave me when she saw my bloody hands. I'd never rowed more than a mile, at most, before in my life".

One unusual vessel that sailed once a month for several years was a coffin. Mr. Barrow of Johnson's Landing built his own coffin six or seven years before his demise. He declared that he did not want it to leak when the time came for him to be "Six feet under". To ensure this he regularly put it in the lake, and sat in it, and paddled it around the bay. In his declining years Mr. Barrow hired a pretty girl as housekeeper. She accompanied him during his annual summer migration up and down the lake. She packed the big canvas tent and all the camping pots and pans into a miraculously small bundle, loaded them in the centre of his 18-foot boat, neatly tucked the old man on the front seat, and daintily stepped to the rear seat where she competently handled the big outboard. The coffin was watertight, and the boat was, too. It was kept a gleaming white with green gunwale and interior finish.

Kaslo had several boatbuilders over the years, but Roy Green was the official boat builder from the time he arrived in 1927 'til he retired. Roy learned the art of canoe construction as a youth in Peterborough, Ontario. He practised several trades besides canoe building, including house construction, heavy construction, plumbing and steelworking. But boat building is what he enjoyed most. This he did in a brick building across from where the S.S. *Moyie* is berthed today. He, with his half brother W.J. Bill Hendren, built many small power boats, rowboats, and river boats.<sup>2</sup> He built his own boat *Snoogy* with sufficient space for two bunks under the high prow. *Snoogy* was 18 ft. 6 inches long, with 5 ft. beam and 4 ft. freeboard, powered by an 18 H.P. Johnson outboard. Though she was a shade bigger than many of the boats, *Snoogy* was light enough to pull up on the beach instead of being moored offshore with inboard boats. The honorable boat builder sat on Town Council for thirteen years, seven of those as Mayor. He was also curator of the museum aboard the S.E. *Moyie* for twelve years.<sup>3</sup>



Andy Jardine's *Princess Margaret* was one of the good weather flotilla. No sign displayed the unofficial name of this craft which was a small cabin on a large raft. Andy had it rigged up with sail and rudder so that he could float to the north end of the lake before spring runoff started. At the mouth of the Duncan River he harvested the best logs which came down the river at high water. He boomed some logs to be sold to sawmills, and he loaded his raft with five cords of wood. Occasionally, his entire load was cedar, which he sold at a good price for making shakes and shingles. Sometimes it would be cordwood for sale or use at home. In good years he would make about four trips up and down the lake, leisurely camping in sheltered bays for his overnight stops.

A migrant piano tuner camped up and down the lake, stopping at various homes to earn grocery money. Hector Angus and his native bride lived mainly on a fish, bannock, and berries diet. They travelled by canoe, camping at sheltered beaches like the ones at Deer Creek, Fry Creek, and Lost Ledge. He went to remote homes that boasted a piano and offered to tune the precious instrument. His pay was often in fresh baking, fruit, vegetables or eggs - a welcome supplement to his camper's diet. Two of the three homes at Birchdale had a piano. There were some at Johnson's Landing, Argenta, and Shutty Bench. He might find enough work at Kaslo, Ainsworth, Deans Haven, Balfour or Queens Bay to enable him to stay out all summer, or he might have to return to Nelson before he was able to afford the luxury of tea, sugar, flour, and lard. The piano owners were pleased to have their pianos tuned, but found their nostrils offended by the odors of unwashed garments worn by the eccentric genius.

One settler augmented his income by growing bedding plants in his greenhouse at the site of the present Ashram near Kootenay Bay. Mr. Graham-Brown took orders from customers then delivered them in his old grey launch. This little Englishman also arranged for his older daughter Joan to belong to the Kaslo-Shutty Bench company of Girl Guides. Joan was ferried across to Ainsworth in the launch every Tuesday morning. The mail bus driver took Joan, and her bicycle (in season) on board the bus. Her patrol leader met her at the bus in Kaslo. The two of them cycled to Shutty Bench where they spent the rest of the day working on tests or badgework. This time was available because Joan and Naomi were both taking school by correspondence. They attended the late afternoon meeting at the home of Mrs. Wallace, the Guider, or walked to the Masonic Hall in Kaslo



Lucy and Alan Allsebrook and "Rip", 1926

for an evening meeting. Next morning Joan was returned to the Kaslo bus depot for her ride to Ainsworth, where Mr. Graham-Brown would be waiting with rowboat or launch to take Joan the two miles across the lake for a late lunch. There was no road on the east side of the lake at that time.<sup>4</sup>

Our family went fishing when time and opportunity permitted. The happiest fishing season came when my brother was six years old. Dad gave Eric a fishing rod for his birthday, and took him out to try his luck. An hour later they were back thrilled with a twelve pound Kokanee salmon. A week later Dad figured that his birthday might be lucky, too. He fixed his old bamboo rod in a simple clamp and rowed across the lake. Then it hit! A twenty-four pounder dragged Dad for almost half a mile near the Campbell Creek bluffs. Finally he played it, tired it, and netted it. He let out a war whoop of joy which we heard three miles away. I was lucky, too, using the same bamboo rod, and rowing the same twelve foot Peterboro boat with a Lethbridge tourist as my companion. I hooked and landed a thirteen-pound salmon.

Later it became routine for my brother or myself to accompany any tourist who requested a guide/companion. We enjoyed most of our outings and sent home satisfied customers eager to return to our parents' tourist camp. I had one

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frightening experience, however, when I was fourteen. Mr. R. normally went fishing with his son in a boat powered with a 3½ horsepower outboard. This time he brought neither his son nor his own boat, and he was fresh out of hospital recovered from a heart attack. I was given the task of rowing him for a few hours fishing. We were not lucky close to home, so Mr. R. requested that we go across to the bluffs. There he had one strike — but did not land the fish. He reluctantly agreed it was time to head for home. A wind built. I pulled the oars till I was near exhaustion. He insisted on taking a turn at the oars. The few minutes he rowed gave me sufficient rest to take over again. But Mr. R. had already turned grey. He remained a poor color while I stroked and prayed, “God let me get this man home safely without another heart attack”. I was truly thankful to reach a firm, familiar beach.

Kootenay Lake has, or had, an Ogoopogo. I saw that legendary creature one July day when our neighbour, Tom Williams Sr., used our “Muscrat” to go to town on some special errand. My brother and I accompanied him to handle mother’s errands. We had just rounded the Big Point when the engine stalled. While Mr. Williams was looking for the cause of engine failure, we were drifting on a calm, calm lake. It swam noiselessly between us and Chicken Beach. Then with a slight raise of its head, and a gentle “splosh” it was gone. Mr. Williams crossed himself, pulled the starting cord, and pointed the Muscrat towards home.

Other boating memories include chilly trips to church at Christmas, watching Dad deliver a boatload of apple boxes to the Kaslo wharf for shipment to the Prairies, and hauling sacks of chicken feed from the Farmer’s Institute home for Mother. Sometimes we patrolled the crude telephone line from Shutty Bench to Kaslo. The phone line was so rudimentary that an outage might be corrected by lifting the wire out of the water where it sagged or had been knocked by a falling tree limb. Last but not least, I recall travelling to high school by myself in a twelve foot Peterboro rowboat. And I remember the excitement of the Kaslo Regattas.

The Kaslo Boat Club was founded in 1900. In early years they conducted races for sailing boats. Later a full fledged Regatta was organized for power boats.<sup>5</sup> This two-day event featured boat races, displays of aquaplaning (the forerunner of water skiing), relay races, and a day of competition for swimmers and divers. Its existence was threatened by the Depression but it was World War II which terminated this wonderful gathering of boat owners. The final Regatta was held in 1939.

Dad entered two or three categories with his little Muscrat and the bigger Otter. We had one shield at home which was earned a few years earlier when a teenaged neighbour navigated the Otter to win in the ladies runabout class. The smaller boats entered were mostly local — their class defined by the horsepower that they used. Each successive race was speedier than its predecessor. The little racing shells were truly exciting. Almost always, one or more contestants spilled at the outer turn. The driver would be picked out of the water by staff in the big white judges’ boat, and a safety crew would tow away the race boat. The final race was for the biggest and best inboard cruisers. Their crews were nattily attired in gleaming white, with navy blazers and caps decorated with gold braid. Cruiser class participants included Dr. Moline from Spokane, Jack Godfrey, a haberdasher from Nelson; Dr. Shaw, a dentist in the *Baby Molar*; Jack Gilbert, a barber, in his world class hydroplane,<sup>6</sup> and others. Regatta Days were exciting days—the highlight of the summer for competitor and spectator alike.

In the early 1950s a road was built to the Duncan Dam site with extensions north to Trout Lake and thence to Revelstoke, and south to Argenta and Johnson’s Landing. With the coming of roads, boats became an option, not a necessity. Kaslo now boasts the world’s largest inland marina run by the Jones Boys. The beautiful boats they sell, service or rent are a far cry from the little boats which the early settlers had to depend upon for personal transportation.

#### Footnotes

1. *Kaslo Diamond Jubilee 1953* by Mrs. M. Ringheim, p. 45
2. *Pioneer Families of Kaslo*, Kootenay Lake Historical Society, p. 84
3. *Ibid* p. 85
4. *Like Measles - It’s Catching*, Anne Gloin, Girl Guides of Canada 1974, p. 67
5. *Historical Kaslo 1966*, Kootenay Lake Historical Society, p. 46
6. Gilbert’s world championship boat is on display in the museum in Nelson, B.C.

*Naomi Miller is a long-time member of the BCHF, and currently 1st Vice President. She believes that we should be actively collecting the history of our parents’ era.*

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**George David Birch**

## **She Came Before The Railway** **Mabel McLarty Peterson, A Pioneer of Prince George**

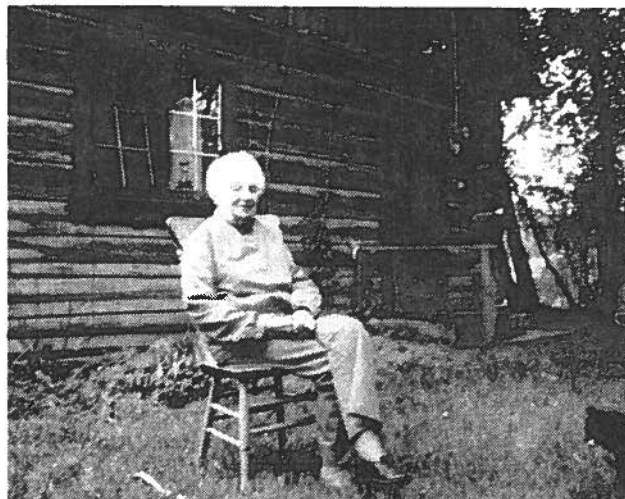
Mabel McLarty Peterson, now eighty-nine years old, is one of the tiny, dwindling number of pioneers who came to Fort George, now Prince George, before the arrival of steel. Sixteen year-old Mabel and her brother, Ivan, fourteen, came to join their homesteading father, David McLarty, in the winter of 1911. It was not until more than two years later that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, later absorbed by Canadian National Railways<sup>1</sup>, reached the little pioneer settlement in north central British Columbia.

Mabel Peterson still lives in the simple one-and-a-half storey log home built by her late husband, Ernest, in 1940. They moved to the small acreage on the shore of Ruby Lake, some twenty miles from Prince George, back in 1928. Winters now she spends with friends at a senior citizens' residence in town.

A visit with Mabel Peterson is wonderfully rewarding. Her memory of everyday events and pioneer conditions of seventy or more years ago is remarkably clear and sheds valuable light on our knowledge of those early days of white settlement in the north.

Seventy years ago last January, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway reached Fort George from Edmonton. The company had completed the extremely difficult section along the Skeena River and through the Coast range from Prince Rupert to Smithers, by October 1913. On April 7, 1914, Edson J. Camberlin, president of the railway, drove the last spike, one mile east of Fort Fraser. Within weeks, the first through train bringing passengers from the east steamed into Fort George.<sup>2</sup>

Before the railway era, travel to and from Fort George was primitive. It was possible to journey from Edmonton to Fort George via Jasper and the Yellowhead Pass. But this involved the traveller in an extremely dangerous trip by raft or canoe through the foaming white waters of the Grand Canyon of the Upper Fraser near Tete Jaune Cache.<sup>3</sup> Drownings here were common, and this route was seldom taken by other than the most daring adventurers.



George David Birch

**Mabel McLarty Peterson**

Quesnel, an important community on the old Telegraph Trail since the 1860s, received regular stage and wagon service from the south. During the summer season, around the turn of the century, passengers could take a steamboat from Soda Creek or Quesnel, up the Fraser to Fort George.

In 1909 construction of a wagon road was begun between Blackwater Crossing, on the Telegraph Trail, and Fort George, a distance of some sixty miles. There was no road house between these points, so until one was built travelers had to camp out under the stars at night.

The eighth issue of the *Fort George Tribune*, dated Saturday, December 25, 1909<sup>4</sup>, carried the following illuminating story:

**MADE THE TRIP IN 3½ DAYS**  
*Ed Harrison of Quesnel made the trip from that place to Fort George in 3½ days with a sleigh load of passengers. He left Quesnel on*



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*Friday at noon and reached Fort George on Monday evening — He started on the return trip at 2 o'clock on Thursday and intended to be in Quesnel on Saturday evening. He says he could make the trip in two days. The distance is 100 miles.*

The paper, in another article, informed its readers, most of whom were in the outside world, that the normal time for the journey was four days. In 1984 travelers make the one hundred and twenty-five kilometre trip (75 miles), along the more direct and modern Highway 97, in an hour and a half by car.

In 1909 the Prairie papers were beginning to carry stories of hardy men who were hacking out farms and laying claim to tracts of forest land, in a small settlement at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako rivers, in the hinterland of British Columbia. The name of the fledgling community? Fort George.

Mabel Gertrude McLarty had been born fourteen years earlier, November 15, 1895, into the farm family of David and Mary Watson McLarty, near Riding Mountain, Manitoba. Mabel's mother was practical and diligent while her father, Mabel recalls, was always a bit of a dreamer and adventurer, ever in search of a new frontier to overcome.

While mother faithfully and lovingly reared her family of six active and intelligent children, father worked variously at farming or house building. A fully qualified carpenter, and not a lazy man, father never failed to provide for his family. But he constantly dreamed of carving a home for them out of the western forest.

You had to be willing to rough it, the newspaper stories said. In winter, the temperature at Fort George might fall to forty below. Summer brought mosquitoes and blackflies. Work was hard and money not always plentiful. You had to be prepared to fish and hunt, and to grow your own vegetables. Imported food was almost unaffordable. At a time when one hundred pounds of flour sold for \$3.20 in Winnipeg, the same sack brought \$18 in Fort George.<sup>5</sup>

But look at the opportunity! A hundred and sixty acres of good land near the Nechako River. All you had to do was make a good-sized clearing, build a simple dwelling, and live on the property. And it was yours — clear title!

So it was decided. Father and Uncle John, his younger brother, a lay preacher, set out by train on the CPR, in the summer of 1910, for British Columbia. The plan was to go on ahead and

prepare a home for the family before bringing mother and the children out to join them.

Leaving the CPR at Ashcroft, the frugal pioneers spurned the convenience of the British Columbia Express Company's horse-drawn stage, and set out on foot for Fort George, close to three hundred miles north by a narrow, winding wagon road, the famed Cariboo Trail. It was tough going, but they were strong men responding to a challenge in true pioneer spirit. And it was great adventure — hiking along together by day, camping by a cozy fire at night, sometimes on a river bank or by the shore of a lake. Within a few weeks, the brothers trudged wearily into Quesnel, in those days a much larger and more important community than Fort George.

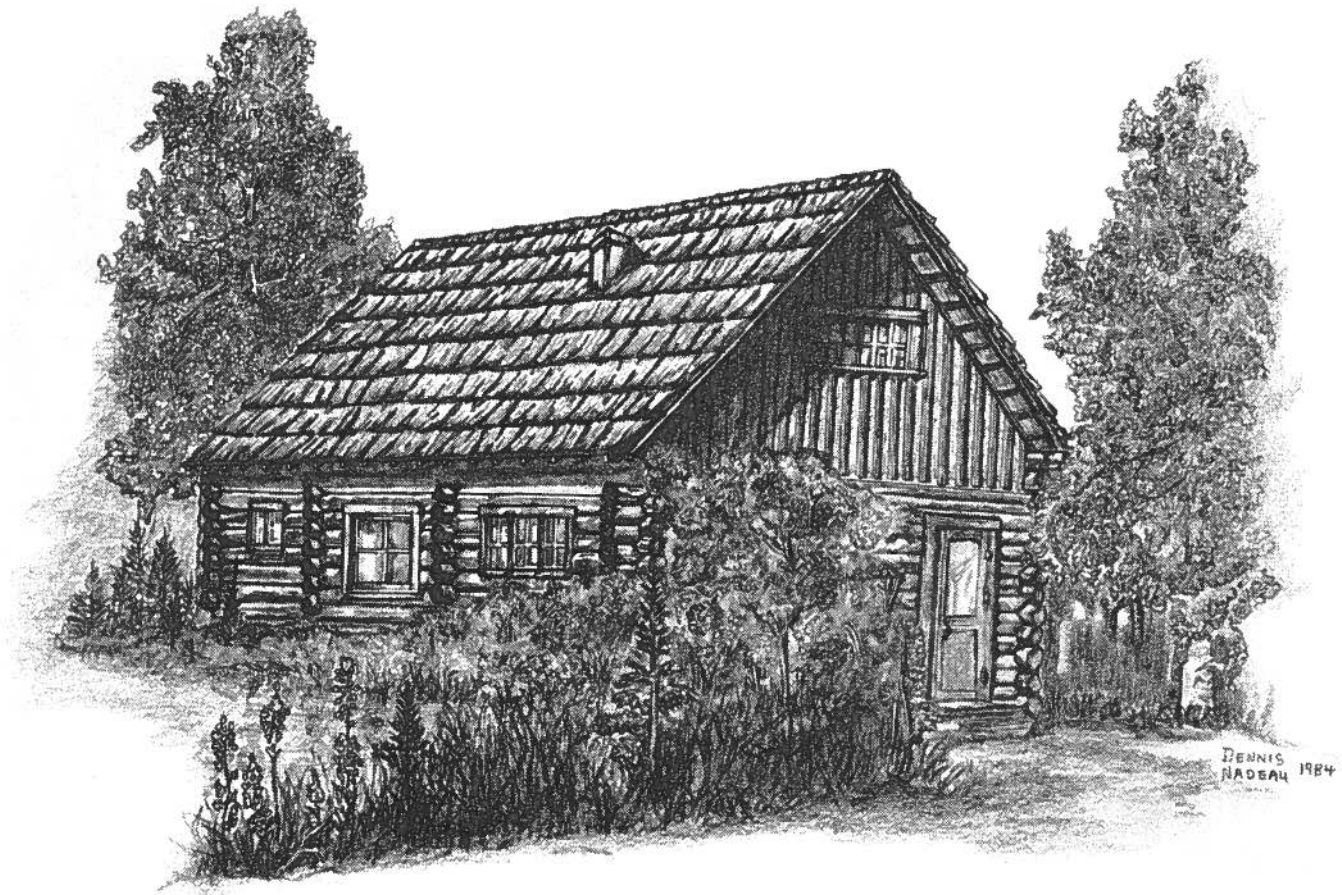
From Quesnel the McLarty brothers took passage up the Fraser on the express company's stern paddle wheeler which ran biweekly up to Fort George. After the arduous foot journey from Ashcroft, the trip upriver on the "BX" steamer must have seemed like the epitome of luxury in spite of the fact that passengers had to get off the vessel and walk while the ship was guided through the dangerous Fort George Canyon.

Once in Fort George, the brothers joined the small but growing group of thirty-five or forty men who had already obtained pre-emptions (homesteads) from the Crown. They were soon at work cutting down trees for their cabins. Land had to be cleared by hand, logs cut and peeled and put into place manually, and a clearing prepared without benefit of horse power. That first winter, even if they could have afforded a horse, the cost of hay was simply prohibitive — \$100 a load.<sup>6</sup> (1984 price: approximately \$70).<sup>7</sup>

In spite of these obstacles, David moved into his cabin about the time the first snow flurries began to fill the cool October air. John chose to live in town that winter and occupied a tent. The brothers completed John's cabin and clearing by the following summer.

By this time, David, who was getting tired of batching, sent for two of his children, Mabel, who would soon be sixteen, and fourteen-year-old Ivan. He needed the comforts that Mabel's feminine touch would provide, and the sturdy assistance that Ivan could render. To bring mother and the other four members of the family out to a tiny, three-room cabin in the wilderness just wouldn't have been practical.

Mabel and Ivan readily responded to father's call. Leaving the CPR at Ashcroft, the two youngsters took the express company's sleigh north to Fort George. They were seven days and



Prince George artist Dennis Nadeau has sketched the Peterson home as it appeared in 1940 when built by Ernest Peterson.

nights on the way. What an adventure for two spirited, intelligent teenagers in that long-ago winter of 1911! The memory of their wonderful, seven-day sleigh ride through the wintry Cariboo is almost as fresh in Mabel's mind today as if she had taken the trip last year.

All day long, and well into the evening, they glided down the narrow, snow-covered trail in the great passenger sleigh drawn by six big draft horses. A second large sleigh, loaded with freight, was hitched to the first and pulled behind. Every twelve miles or so they stopped briefly at a road house for refreshment or to change horses or drivers.

In the more important centres, such as Clinton and Quesnel, the driver supervised the loading and unloading of freight. At night, driver and

passengers bedded down in primitive accommodations for a few hours' sleep. Mabel recalls that in Quesnel they all slept in one large room where the freight was stored. Mabel at this point was the only female passenger. So the driver thoughtfully curtained off a corner of the room for her with blankets. "You'll be all right", he encouraged the girl. "Your brother is right close by on the other side of the curtain". At four in the morning he would arouse the sleepy youngsters for another marvelous day on the snowy Cariboo Trail.

Finally, arriving in Fort George at noon on Saturday, December 11, 1911, two weeks to the day before Christmas, Mabel and Ivan received a heartfelt welcome from father and Uncle John.

Mabel remembers that Christmas dinner that year was simple and typically pioneer. Turkeys,

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shipped from Vancouver, stayed fresh only if the weather remained below freezing. But the price of fowl was outrageous. Eggs were twenty-five cents apiece! So Mabel roasted grouse shot by father and Uncle John, substituted baked beans for potatoes, which were also far too dear, and brightened the festive board with dried peaches which Father has providentially managed to obtain for the occasion.

During the long winter months, Mabel kept house while the men worked at clearing and peeling logs. And she did her share of this too. During the evenings she would read stories to father and Ivan, often leaving the door of the stove open to allow the fire to cast its flickering yellow light on the page. Father's favorite tales were about pioneering and the gold rush. Sometimes they used candles, but never kerosene. They didn't want to waste money on new lamps which would only be superfluous when mother arrived in the spring with all their household effects.

Mabel tells many stories about that first year on the frontier: how they lived on beans and bacon for breakfast, dinner and supper for a full three months, then discovered they could buy turnips quite reasonably from George Ovasko who grew vegetables at Otway; how they used to cross the Nechako River in a crude wooden cage or cable car boarded by rope ladder during the winter months when the river was frozen; how they celebrated when Father shot a deer, and how they kept the venison from spoiling by hanging it in a well father had dug. (First they fried the meat, and then covered it, in a bucket, layer by layer, with lard.)

These and many other tales graphically depict the plucky life on the frontier that Mabel lived with her father and brother so long ago.

Another two years would pass before the railway would come to Fort George. Communications were still crude. Local telephone service was about to be inaugurated. Fort George was connecting into the "Telegraph Trail". And the mail came in only twice a month — by stage and steamer in the summer, and by sleigh during the winter months.

In May of 1912, mother and the rest of the family came out from the Prairie to join the pioneers, and they were all happily reunited. Father had built a big addition to the cabin. What excitement! Mother and the children began to plant a vegetable garden in the clearing. Father shot big game. And never again would Mabel and Ivan have to subsist on beans and bacon.

That summer Mabel's mother and the children picked many quarts of blueberries, raspberries

and strawberries which, even then, grew profusely in the wild along the roadsides or in clearings in the bush. But supplies for canning were either not available or were too expensive for thrifty Mary McLarty. Her pioneer initiative took over, along with some help from her husband and the children. The children were sent out to gather empty beer bottles from the townsite. These were of the old, long-necked variety then in vogue. Father then tied a piece of wool, soaked in kerosene, around the shoulder of the bottle. Lighting the wool produced a narrow ring of weakness around the bottle. Father knocked it on the table, the neck broke off cleanly, and presto, mother had her canning jar.

To seal the jars, full of wild berry jam, Mother melted down the hard casein used to cover the slabs of bacon, then a staple food in the north. A thin coating of this glue, poured on the surface of the blueberry jam, for example, and allowed to harden, provided an inexpensive and effective seal.

Not long after her mother's arrival, Mabel went to work on the first telephone switchboard in Fort George.<sup>8</sup> She recalls that there were thirty telephones in town, and it was possible to have five conversations going simultaneously. She then lived in the house where the exchange was located. The switchboard was kept open from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. During meals, or when she was doing housework, a buzzer signalled that someone was calling the operator. Mabel would come running.

By January of 1914, when the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway line reached town, Mabel, who had taught herself shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping when the switchboard was quiet, was working in the office of the weekly newspaper, the *Fort George Tribune*.

Sad to say, Mabel had to be at work the day the first train came in from Edmonton. She regrets to this day that she missed that historic event.

However Mabel was not one to let little things like that get her down for long. And she did make use of the railway. She fondly remembers one outing in particular. The Laird boy, Harold, invited Mabel and her sister to go canoeing with him. The three young people took the train to Miworth, eleven miles west of town, in the evening. Harold Laird had loaded his canoe and paddles on the baggage car before they set out. Disembarking from the train out in the country, he and the McLarty girls leisurely paddled all the way back along the winding Nechako River to Fort George in the soft light of the Cariboo moon on that warm summer night back in 1915.

Seventy-three years have come and gone since Mabel McLarty Peterson came to Fort Goerge by horse-drawn sleigh in that far-off winter of 1911. The first automobile did not arrive until 1912. She worked in the first telephone and telegraph office, in the first newspaper office, and later in the first law office. She saw the narrow wagon trails converted into wide, paved modern highways. She witnessed the advent of two great railways and a major airport. The population of some two hundred or so has swelled to sixty-eight thousand. There are schools, hospitals and shopping centres. The little ferries, and quaint cable cars are gone, and bridges span the Fraser and the Nechako.

Prince George has grown to become the important centre of an immense logging industry. Enormous pulp mills manufacture vast quantities of paper. Mile-long trains, running on continuous-weld track, haul thousands of tonnes of coal through the city daily to the Pacific, for shipment to the ends of the earth.

But not much seems to have changed in Mabel's little log house on the shore of Ruby Lake, thirty kilometres northwest of town. Apart from the electric lights and telephone, the visitor might easily fancy himself to be in an earlier world. A simpler, less complicated, friendlier world. The kettle sings on the woodstove, and Mabel Peterson, in her sweet, kindly way, is there, just as she has always been, to offer a welcome cup of piping hot tea to the traveler — along with a generous helping of wonderful pioneer memories.

- 1 F.E. Runnalls, *A History of Prince George*, Second Edition (Prince George, 1983), p. 81
- 2 Runnalls, p. 132
- 3 op. cit. p. 50
- 4 Interestingly, John Houston actually published the paper on Saturday, Christmas Day, 1909, though no mention of Christmas was made in it.
- 5 Mrs. Peterson recalls this price. But prices seem to have varied considerably. Runnalls gives the price of flour as "\$12 to \$16 per hundred." op. cit. p. 113
- 6 Runnalls, p. 113.
7. Prince George Experimental Station. *Agriculture Canada*, June 28, 1984
- 8 Guy Lawrence, *40 Years On The Yukon Telegraph* (Vancouver, 1965), pp. 99, 100

David Birch is a freelance writer, living in Prince George.

## Writing Competition



The British Columbia Historical Federation invites submissions of books or articles for the second annual competition for writers of British Columbia history.

Any book with historical content published in 1984 is eligible. Whether the work was prepared as a thesis, or a community project, for an industry, or an organization, or just for the pleasure of sharing a pioneer's reminiscences, it is considered history as long as names, locations, and dates are included. Stories told in the vernacular are acceptable when indicated as quotations of a story teller. Please include the selling price of the book, and an address from where it may be purchased.

Submit your book with your name, address, and telephone number to:

British Columbia Historical Federation  
c/o Mrs. Naomi Miller  
Box 105,

Wasa, B.C. V0B 2K0

Book contest deadline is January 31, 1985.

There will also be a prize for the writer submitting the best historical article published in the *British Columbia Historical News* quarterly magazine. Articles are to be submitted directly to:

The Editor,  
*British Columbia Historical News*,  
1745 Taylor Street,  
Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8

Written length should be no more than 2,000 to 3,000 words, substantiated with footnotes if possible, and accompanied by photographs if available. Deadlines for the quarterly issues are September 1, December 1, March 1, and June 1.

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**Elsie G. Turnbull**

## **Recollections of Marie Houghton Brent**

It was my friend Goldie Putnam who told me about Marie Houghton Brent. Living as she did, at Inchelium, Washington, on land that had been part of the Colville Indian Reservation, Goldie was well acquainted with Marie, a woman through whose veins flowed the blood of both white and Indian. She was the daughter of Captain (later Colonel) Charles Frederick Houghton and Sophie N'Kwala, daughter of Chief N'Kwala of the Okanagan Indians. In her were mingled attributes of both races, a source of great pride throughout her long life. So it was that on a June day in 1958 we drove over the Sherman Pass to the valley of the San Poil River, where Mrs. Brent was spending her last days in a nursing home in Ferry County. Although living now in the United States, six miles below Republic, a leftover mining town of the 1890s, she had been born on British territory. A tiny gray-haired woman of 86 with a crippled hand, her eyes still bright yet dimming with age, she greeted us with courtesy and quiet pride.

"I was born when British Columbia history was being made," she stated simply. "The cream of the earth moved west and found kindred spirits here. My mother's people had been the real rulers of the country for generations and her forefathers went back to Pelk-a-mu-lox who was recognized in the Book of Ethnology published by the Smithsonian Institution as chief of all the Indians from Spokane north to the head of Okanagan Lake. He was a friend of the white man, bringing the first ones he met to Colville and begging them to stay with him always—"You and I, your children, my children and their children, as long as the water runs and yonder hill is no more. You shall not want, your children shall not want. We have furs to keep us warm in the cold!" For this suggestion Pelk-a-mu-lox was killed by a chief of the back mountains of Lillooet, afraid of losing his grip on his people. He was succeeded by his son N'Kwala (called Nicola by Hudson's Bay traders), a man noted for sagacity, prudence and fair dealing. His name has been given to succeeding chiefs and to a lake, mountain, plateau and a river.

Marie's father was Charles Frederick Houghton, born in 1829 at Glasshare Castle, Kilkenny, Ireland, the son of a barrister. At the age of 17 he joined Her Majesty's 57th Foot, taking an inactive part in the last days of the Crimean War. On his return to Ireland he joined the regiment at Clonmel, serving at several stations in Ireland and England. In 1863 he took his discharge with the rank of captain and set out for British Columbia with his Irish friends, Forbes and Charles Vernon. Intrigued by the rolling hills covered by bunch grass which promised fine rangeland, Houghton and the Vernons pre-empted acreage between Okanagan Landing and Priests' Valley, the site of the present city of Vernon. Houghton had difficulty in his pre-emption but finally acquired his full military grant of 1450 acres in the Coldstream valley. He thus became the first owner of the famous Coldstream Ranch, purchased later by the Governor General Lord Aberdeen. Houghton and the Vernons had come to an arrangement whereby they purchased the ranch and Houghton acquired property at the Landing.

Settling down to raise cattle and horses, the 24-year-old young captain fell in love with Sophie N'Kwala, granddaughter of famous old Chief N'Kwala who officiated at their wedding. Marie was born on December 5, 1870 and baptized at Okanagan Mission June 1, 1871. Her brother Edward was born in 1872.

Involved in frontier affairs, Houghton spent some time looking for better trails through the mountains, especially a route from the Cherry Creek mines to the Arrow Lakes. He has been credited with finding the trail through Fire Valley, which is now the Monashee Highway. In 1871 he was elected to represent Yale riding in the House of Commons in the first election after British Columbia entered Confederation. According to the story, only two persons turned up at the nomination meeting, a blacksmith and a barroom roustabout. The blacksmith offered the name of gentleman-farmer, Captain C.F. Houghton, who had paid well for services to his horse. The other man seconded this nomination and Houghton

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thus became the member by acclamation for Yale and Kootenay, a vast, sparsely settled area. He sat for just one session and did not contest the election in 1872.

Suddenly Houghton's rustic interlude in the Okanagan ended. His young wife died and the two children were left with their grandmother. Writing about this Marie states that her mother's two younger brothers and a sister died of tuberculosis. Then she adds: "My mother Sophie N'Kwala died of a broken heart soon afterwards." Edward Houghton was put with a friend of his father, Mr. Tronson, to go to school with his boys. Marie was raised by her great-aunt, Teresa N'Kwala who was married to a Frenchman, Cyprienne Laurent. Teresa taught the sober child the traditions and ancestry of the tribe which in turn she had learned from her father, the old Chief N'Kwala. Of her own father Marie states simply: "My father was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Canadian Army at this time."

Houghton had returned to the military career abandoned when he left Ireland and came to the Okanagan, but which he would pursue for the rest of his life. After attending Gunnery School in Quebec for four months in 1873, he was appointed Deputy Adjutant-General for Military District #11, British Columbia, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He organized the militia and suppressed a riot at the Wellington coal mines during his command. In the spring of 1879 he married Marion Dunsmuir, the third daughter of Robert Dunsmuir, owner of Wellington Colliery. In the early 1880s, Col. Houghton assumed the office of Adjutant-General for Military District #10, Manitoba, taking an active part in putting down the Riel Rebellion. Then he was transferred in 1888 to Montreal, to be in command of Military District #5, Quebec. In 1892 Mrs. Marion Dunsmuir Houghton died at the age of 36, leaving no children.

Col. Houghton then sent for his daughter Marie to join him in Montreal, a broadening experience for the girl. She attended grand balls and unofficial functions, and accompanied her father on inspection duties to Quebec and Three Rivers. Everywhere she was "so nicely treated," but as she remarked, "The little mountain girl was a convent girl all the same." Proud of her father, she wrote: "I got my father's memoirs, all his military life of forty years, twenty-one as Adjutant-General—what a stretch of toil and responsibility! No one but a soldier could have endured that, but he loved his men and boys. No matter what they did he always just smiled at them."

In 1897 her father returned to Victoria, where he died the following year and was buried in Ross Bay cemetery. Marie went back to her beloved Okanagan. She married William Brent, son of an early settler, and they farmed an acreage near Vernon which had been part of the reserve of her great-great-grandfather. During those years she wrote stories of her mother's people for Reports of the Okanagan Historical Society. Looking back into the past she recalled long winter afternoons when Indian children listened to magic stories of righteousness and heard lessons from dark unknown depths of tribal history.

That day, when Goldie and I chatted with her at the nursing home in Ferry County, William Brent was dead. She was alone, treasuring her mementoes from two differing cultures. She considered the land of her forefathers, now shared with white men, the most beautiful and colorful in the world. But she said: "Canada needs her Indians. When all the different races that now dwell in the confines of Canada are finally fused into one—the future Canadian race will be better for the infusion of the blood of this virile and individualist race." Despite her crippled hand and fading sight she was still striving to tell the story of the Indians and the white men in earlier times, and to instill in children of today values taught by her forefathers.

References: Sixth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society  
Thirtieth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society  
Letters from Marie Houghton Brent to Elsie Turnbull, written in 1959.

*Elsie G. Turnbull has written several books on the history of Trail, and numerous articles on the Kootenay/Okanagan regions.*

# News and Notes

## News from the Branches

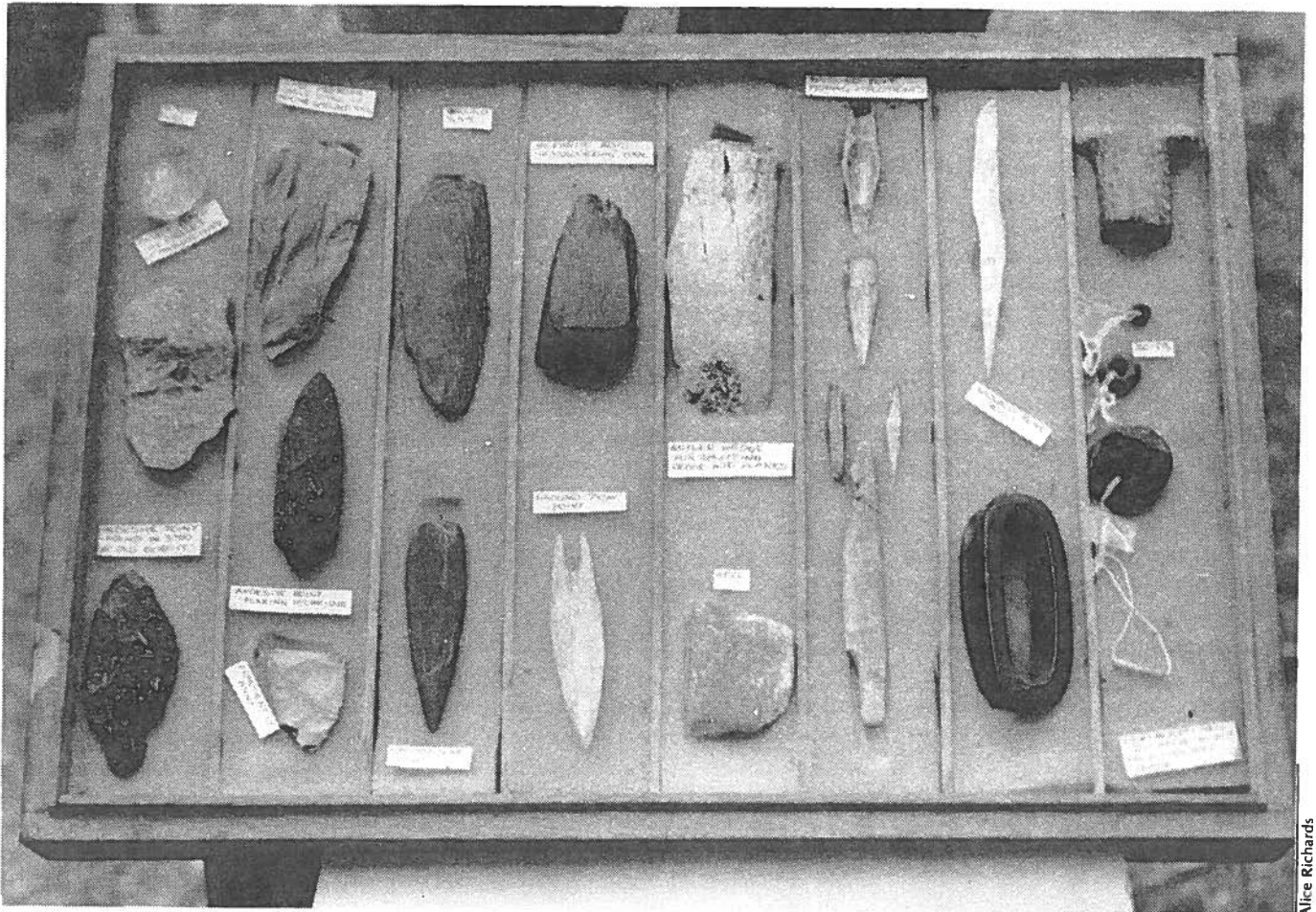
### Gulf Islands

#### A Field Expedition

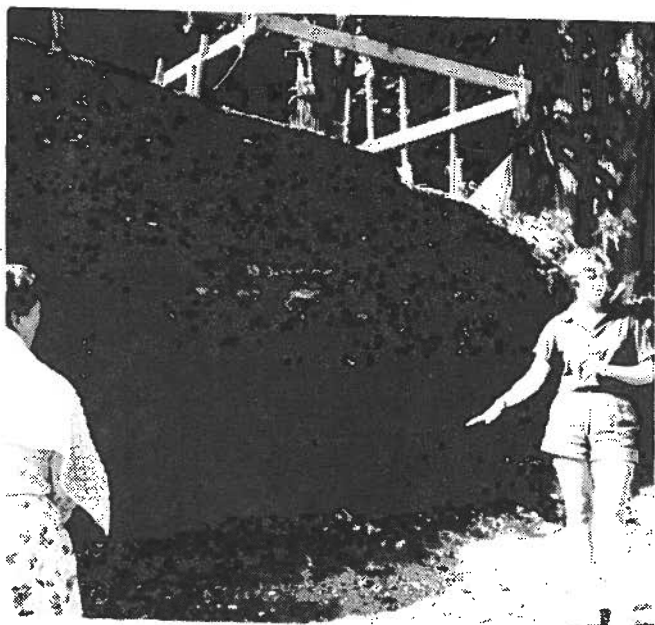
For several decades there has been a Gulf Islands Branch of the BC Historical Federation. Many of its members are descendants of pioneers, and all members appreciate the beautiful setting that has permitted many fine archeological sites to remain relatively undisturbed. Unfortunately, a University of British Columbia survey completed some years ago reported that wave erosion was beginning to destroy some valuable archeological evidence.

Local branch members were delighted at the announcement that Simon Fraser University archeological team planned to work three summers on the canal between North and South Pender Islands, and that the work would be directed by Dr. Roy F. Carlson who had supervised the Helen Point dig on Mayne Island.

It was therefore decided to combine the annual meeting with a visit to the Pender site. Almost forty branch members from Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna met at the canal on August 24th and were escorted round the site by Dr. and Mrs. Carlson and three graduate students Lou Beram, Heather Moon and Richard Gain. Since the canal was dredged in 1903 it is estimated that 60% of the original midden has been swept away by wave action. The SFU team have driven a large number of vertical shafts into a sloping bank to try to reach a sterile level (i.e., with no signs of human habitation).



Alice Richards



Ralph Brine

Visitors examine the erosion and strata of the midden at high tide level. Scaffolding for excavations at a higher level are visible at the top of the bank.

Tentative suggestions are that the site was occupied for seasons of three to four months as long as 3700 years ago. Shellfish such as still grow around the bay were an important food item. Core samples from probes have been riddled through  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh screens to isolate plant seeds and pollens from which a botanist may deduce temperature and rainfall ranges. The visitors were fortunate to examine a cache of twelve projectile points that had been discovered, and were shown a display case of artifacts made of quartz, basalt, serpentine and obsidian. Particularly interesting were adze blades, a larger than usual labret made from an antler, and a spool designed to fit inside the ear-lobe. The findings will be analyzed all winter at SFU.

As many as 5000 visitors visited the Pender Canal site last summer, indicating the need for the services of a guide for the next two years, so that the archeological team may continue their work uninterrupted. With this thought in mind the Gulf Islands Branch voted to contribute \$100 to Dr. Carlson, and also to write to the Heritage Conservation Branch of the provincial government, suggesting the need for additional funding to pay for the services of a project guide.

—Kathlyn Benger

## Creston Historical Society

The Society hosted a group of visitors on August 12, 1984, to retrace a section of the Dewdney Trail, which runs north from the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Picnic Area. The hike provides a thought-provoking contrast between the very devious route forced upon footsloggers and pack trains, and the modern, direct crossing of the marshy flats. Twenty-five visiting members from Cranbrook, Marysville, Kimberley, Fernie, and Wasa, plus a dozen Creston families, did the short walk (two miles) to Williams Falls and the site of the Hudson's Bay Company's Little Fort Shepherd. A hardy few went the full six miles to Midgley's Landing with veteran hiker Ray Massie.

The Dewdney Trail was built in 1865 and used until the railway pushed through to Kootenay Landing. Points of interest include Chinese rock work close to the footbridge across Summit Creek, glimpses of the nearby wetlands, then view points high on a rocky ridge from where the hiker can see great expanses of the flats and Wynndel nestled in a hollow at the foot of the Purcell Mountains. The Williams property yielded some green apples, a few bent cooking pots, and four boots which showed that the owner had very small feet. Beyond Williams Creek the trail was a cut near the foot of a steep hillside. A turn led us into a cedar glade where we viewed the walls of a tiny cabin once occupied by Shorty Boulton. Further up the draw was a larger cabin—Cummings cabin—reputedly won, with 300 acres surrounding it, in a poker game. We then padded over moss covered rocks, out toward the Kootenay River, back through the trees, and finally down to a rounded rocky promontory where our guide indicated the anchor points for the McLoughlin Ferry. This cable ferry took man and beast across to Lewis Island. The Dewdney Trail is still visible across this island. Trekkers forded the shallows on the far side of the island to regain firm land and the meandering trail which led to Fort Steele and the Wild Horse goldfields.

A few minutes further down the Kootenay River is Midgley's Landing. The first building we sighted was the barn and blacksmith shop. About 100 yards away, tucked between amazingly big boulders, is the framework of the house where Tom Midgley was murdered in April 1929. Tom Midgley lived in Nelson during the winter and on



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this farm during the summer. He had just returned to prepare the home for summer when he was shot in his bed and dumped in the river. The body was found by Provincial Police, and taken to Nelson for burial.

The Creston Historical Society has marked some of the sites, and some forks in the trail. More signs are planned for those hikers who explore without a tour guide. The trail is clearly defined for the most part, and the few vague parts are marked with surveyors' tape. Crestonites claim there is an alternate route on a bench above the lower trail. This bench is so fouled with logging debris that it is presently rough bushwacking along this route. Should, however, a trail crew be put to work there, a loop trail would provide further enticement for the hiker. The lower route, preserved in a corridor which loggers were persuaded to leave, has the physical, natural, and historical attractions to be truly worthy of preservation.

For further details contact Frank Merriam, Box 2995, Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0. Phone 428-7456.

## **Chemainus Valley Historical Society**

The Society now has 36 members and we hold four regular meetings a year on the last Monday in March, June, September and November.

Our interesting speakers have included Osric Murrell of Chemainus who lived on Thetis Island in the early 1940s in pre-ferry days. He delivered the mail, ran a taxi boat service to various islands and also ran shopping trips between Thetis Island and Chemainus.

At our September meeting we had as our speaker, Gerry Smith of Chemainus, who runs the Horseshoe Bay Inn located in Chemainus. This Inn was opened in 1892 and is one of the real historic buildings in the town. Mr. Smith told us the history of the Inn and about former owners and distinguished guests who had stayed there. The old guest registers have been kept and two of the well-known guests from the past were Dale Carnegie and Robert Baden-Powell. The building where we had been holding our meetings had just been sold and we were looking for another meeting place. Mr. Smith invited us to hold future meetings in the dining room of the

Horseshoe Bay Inn. We quickly accepted his kind offer and it seems fitting that the Historical Society should meet in this historic building.

## **DOROTHY BLAKEY SMITH MEMORIAL**

A fund has been set up in honour of Dorothy Blakey Smith, B.A., 1921, M.A. 1922 (U.B.C.), M.A. 1926 (Toronto), Ph.D. 1933 (London), D.Litt. 1978 (U.B.C.), who died on December 10, 1983. The money collected will be used to endow a prize to be awarded to an archives student at the University of British Columbia. Friends who wish to send donations may send them to the University of British Columbia, care of Byron Hender, Awards Office, University of British Columbia, GSAB Room 50, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5. Please add a note that the donation is towards the Dorothy Blakey Smith Fund.

## **The Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia**

Three members of the Society recently received appointments to the Canadian Jewish Society: Cyril Leonoff is now vice-president, and Irene Dodek and Allan Klenman will serve as directors for two-year terms.

Membership in the JHSBC is available by writing the Society Office, 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, V5Z 2N7. Annual dues of \$7.50 single and \$10.00 family include a subscription to *The Scribe* and supplementary publications.

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## Islands '86

The Centre for Pacific and Oriental Studies, in co-operation with Islands '86, are presenting a series of symposia. These symposia are intended to increase awareness of island issues in preparation for a major conference to be held at the University of Victoria on May 8-10, 1986. Two of these symposia are scheduled for the 1985 spring term:

### ISLANDS (18)86: A CENTURY AGO IN THE PACIFIC

The Frontier in Fiji, Hawaii, and Vancouver Island in the 1880s

This lecture examines the nature of frontier society, the relationship between the settler communities and local peoples, and the development of early commerce in the three islands.

Speaker: Dr. James Boutilier, Head of the Department of History and Political Economy at Royal Roads Military College and an Adjunct Professor of Pacific Studies at the Centre for Pacific and Oriental Studies, University of Victoria. Dr. Boutilier has researched and written widely on topics concerning the history of the Pacific islands.

Tuesday, January 29, 1985

7:30-9:30 p.m.

University of Victoria, Begbie Building, Room 157

Fee: \$5.00

### DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND

Four prominent Vancouver Island residents will present their views of the direction open for Vancouver Island in the future.

Speakers: Dr. Peter Baskerville, Department of History, University of Victoria will open with an historical overview of development planning on the island. Then Victoria Mayor Peter Pollen, James Bay Community Project Director Robert Dill, and Dr. Bruce Fraser, President of Malaspina College, Nanaimo, will present and discuss the options for our island's future.

Tuesday, March 12, 1985

7:30-9:30 p.m.

University of Victoria, Begbie Building, Room 157

Fee: \$5.00

Please register with University Extension, P.O. Box 1700, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2 Phone 721-8451.

## Heritage Trust

### 1985 Student Employment Program

All applications from local organizations must be received by the Heritage Trust office by Friday, March 1, 1985. These applications will be reviewed by the Board of Directors in late March. You will be advised of the decision regarding your application by April 15. At that time, if you do not have a student available from your community who meets the basic criteria, we will assist you. Students must have completed third year or above at a British Columbia university studying in one of the following disciplines: community and regional planning, archival studies, history, archaeology, anthropology, architecture, cultural geography, and fine arts.

If you have any questions regarding the application, please contact Pauline Rafferty, Program Manager, at Victoria 387-1011 local 300.

## Museums and Archives

### HISTORY CAPTURED AT DELTA MUSEUM

The mere fact that Delta had a Post Office in 1867, seven years before the metropolitan city of Vancouver, is a good indication of the amount of history that oozes from this community. The first recorded land holding in Delta was in April of 1857, and the area was incorporated on November 10, 1879. Much of this information is put before your eyes at the Museum, which is located in the old municipal hall at 5848 Delta Street. The museum features a parlor, kitchen and bedrooms, furnished and decorated in the style of the old Delta homes. Indian basketry and pioneer artifacts related to the area are displayed, together with numerous other interesting items. A

together with numerous other interesting items. A new maritime section focuses on the commercial fishing industry of the area

—Rhea H. Juvik

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## Vancouver Maritime Museum

### THE HISTORY OF CANADA'S NORTHWEST PASSAGE: An Exhibition of Paintings

The Vancouver Maritime Museum is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of paintings by the renowned Canadian marine artist, Peter E. Robinson, in honour of the 40th anniversary of the voyage of the R.C.M.P. vessel, the *St. Roch* through the Northwest Passage in 1944.

Born in Montreal, Mr. Robinson studied under the guidance of Group of Seven artist Arthur Lismer while attending McGill University. His interest in the sea and its ships is rooted deep in the experience of his own life. At the age of 24 he foresook a promising engineering career to join the Royal Canadian Navy. During an eight year span, he toured the globe and spent considerable time in the Canadian Arctic.

His shipboard experiences fostered tremendous interest in the historical role and significance of ships in Canadian waters. He carries his respect for the sea, its ships, and its men into each painting where he imparts exacting detail into a historically accurate, albeit impressionistic, setting.

The series of 16 paintings in the Northwest Passage exhibition trace the history of exploration from Cabot in 1508, to Frobisher (1576-1578), Davis (1585-1587), Henry Hudson (1610), Baffin (1616), Cook (1778), Parry (1819), Franklin (1845-48), Amundsen (1905), the *St. Roch* (1942) and the *Manhattan* in 1969. The exhibition will be open daily until the Spring of 1985.

## The Vancouver Museum

### IN GEAR: Classic Cars/Classic Clothes 1905-1985

Eighty years of automobile history comes to life as The Vancouver Museum presents IN GEAR, a unique exhibition of fashionable automobiles and fashionable clothing from 1905 to 1985. The exhibition is presented with the assistance of the British Columbia Transportation Museum and

the Vintage Car Club of Canada. IN GEAR is the largest exhibition mounted by the Museum during its 90th anniversary year.

Each car is displayed in an innovative and historically evocative setting with mannequins wearing authentic clothing of each era in the city's history. Vancouver's oldest automobile, a 1905 Oldsmobile originally purchased by lumber baron John Hendry, is displayed in front of the famous Hollow Tree in Stanley Park. A 1911 Stanley Steamer 10 h.p. Roadster gets a fill-up at Canada's first gasoline station owned by Imperial Oil in Vancouver in 1907. A 1912 Detroit Electric owned by an elderly resident of Victoria's famed Empress Hotel sits in the hotel driveway.

Later model cars include an elegant 1929 Packard Rumbleseat Roadster dropping off golfers to the Quilchena Golf and Country Club. A rare 1936 Cord Model 810 Sedan waits for smartly-dressed partygoers at the Commodore Ballroom. And teenagers sit on the running board of a 1927 Ford Model T "jalopy" parked in front of the original White Spot Restaurant on Granville. Even the futuristic three-wheel Rascal is on display.

## Archives, Automation and Access

March 1 & 2, 1985

University of Victoria  
Victoria, British Columbia

This interdisciplinary conference explores current theory and practice concerning computer applications and user access in archives. It will be of interest to researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as archivists, information scientists, librarians and record managers.

Confirmed speakers include David Bearman, Terry Eastwood, Theodore Durr, David Mattison, Susan Rosenfeld Falb, Tony Rees, Richard Janke and other distinguished scholars from North America.

Further information and registration forms can be obtained by writing to:

Catherine Panter  
Research Coordinator  
Vancouver Island Project  
Room 404, McPherson Library  
University of Victoria  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8W 2Y2



Peggy Yeatman and Stan Beech helped Quadra residents trace the history of their island homes.

Campbell River Museum

## Campbell River Museum

Campbell River Museum and Archives Society provided a novel Archival information booth at a recent fall fair on Quadra Island. The booth acted as a mini archives of reproduced photographs, maps, letters and articles set out to assist residents to research the history of their homes and property. Old time residents working in pairs provided the most exciting aspect of the booth, swapping stories to bring long forgotten people and places to life for a constant flow of interested people.

For many people the Museum's Archives booth was a first adventure into the labyrinth of archival research. The booth acted as an introductory sampling to the rich and varied historical sources available within the community.

Jeanette Taylor  
Campbell River and District Museum and Archives

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# British Columbia Historical Federation's Annual Convention, Galiano Island, May 2-4, 1985

## THEME: Islands 1774-1985

First, the program: Tentatively it includes a pre-history paper to be delivered by an archaeologist from the Museum of Man (field trips will likely be part of the seminar program mentioned later); "Canoes" by Philip Shackleton; "The Spanish on the Pacific Northwest Coast" by Jack Kendrick; Local History by Mary Harding, and more.

The ceremony to mark the official beginning of the building of the replica *Sutil* is scheduled for May 4. Our banquet will be a really big historical show under the direction of James Barber (*Mushrooms are Marvelous*); John Edwards (*The Roman Cookery of Apicius*); and Rosemary Walker. Tomas Bartroli is our guest speaker.

All accommodations have been arranged to include breakfast. Those staying at Galiano Lodge, bed and breakfasts, or on boats will have breakfast cooked for them; and for those staying in chalets, cottages, etc., the fixings will be in the fridge. Average costs, based on double occupancy for land accommodation will be \$25 per night. Campsites at Montague Harbour Provincial Marine Park will be reserved for those making early arrangements.

For those who wish to come to Galiano by charter boat and live aboard at Montague Harbour Marina for the duration of the conference, we have several options. Ships have top-notch accommodation, including showers, TV, etc. The vessel *Argonaut II*, is the former United Church Mission Boat *The Thomas Crosby*. This classic will sail from Sidney or False Creek, depending on arrangements, and will cost \$82.50 per day (Sidney departure) or \$86.25 per day (False Creek departure). Another alternative is a non-classic charter which will sail from Sidney at a cost of \$51.50 per day. Reservations for charters are required before February 15.

Seminars by the B.C. Museums Association are being arranged for May 1 and 2 and other seminars will follow the conference. More on these later.

Cultural and Arts Exhibits will be mounted to coincide with the conference.

The Budget Committee has not set registration fees yet but they probably will not vary from the Vernon schedule with the exception that all lunches will be included in the cost.

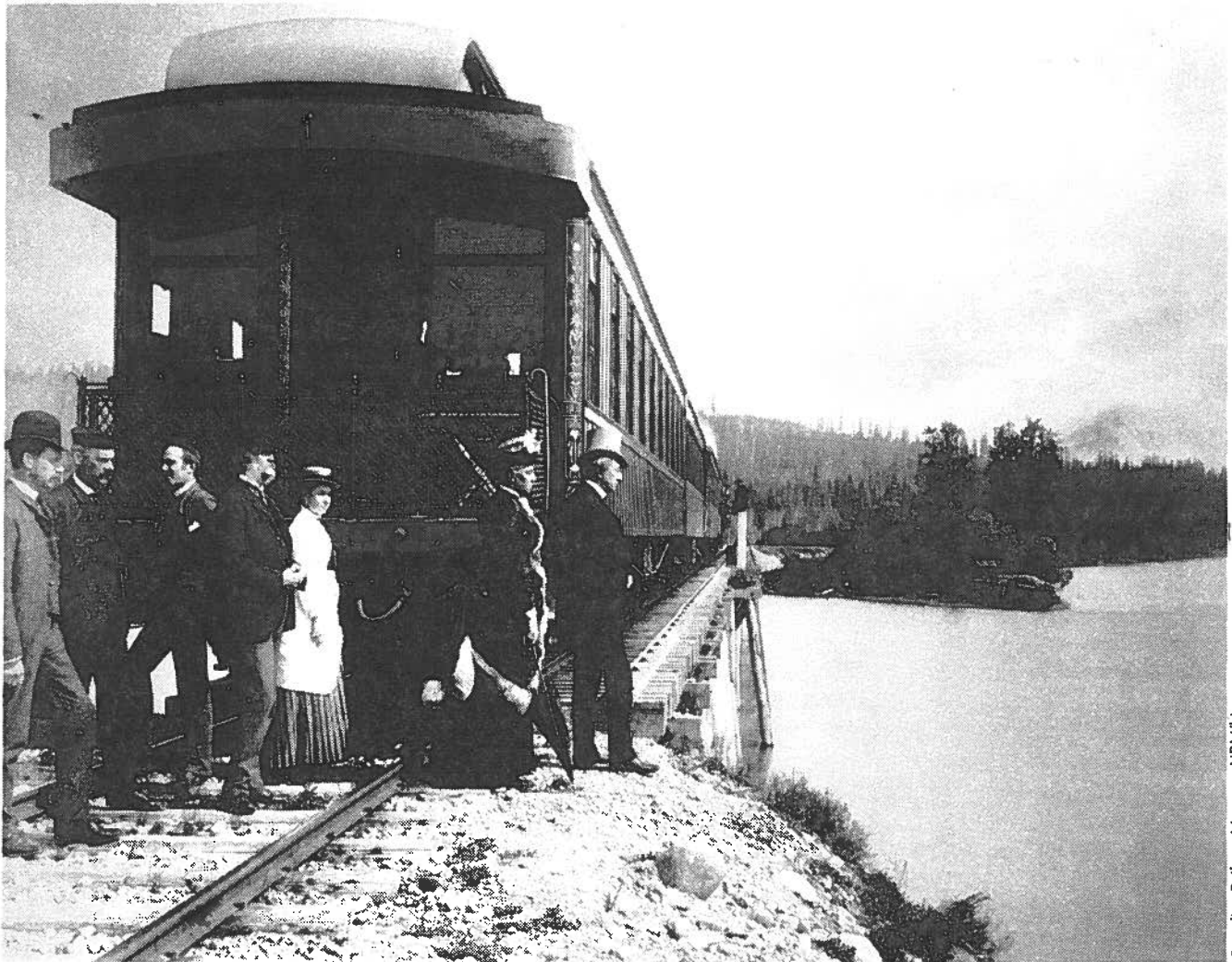
For more information or to make reservations write to us at Box 10, Galiano, B.C. V0N 1P0, or telephone our Accommodations Convenor, Bill Callaway at 539-5457.

Galiano's best to you!  
The Galiano Historical and Cultural Society



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Canadian Railway Museum, NRM(fb)

## Contest

One of the ladies in the picture is well prepared for the British Columbia coast because she has her umbrella at hand. Who is she?

If you can identify the lady you may win a copy of *Winners & Losers, Gamblers All: Memories of Historic British Columbia* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1984). The book contains handsome colour photographs by Michael Breuer, with a lively text by Rosemary Neering.

Send your answer to the Editor, *British Columbia Historical News*, 1745 Taylor Street, Victoria, B.C. V8R 3E8, before March 1, 1985.

# Bookshelf

*False Creek: History, Images, and Research Sources.* Robert K. Burkinshaw. Vancouver: City of Vancouver Archives, 1984. Pp iv, 81, illus., maps.

As work proceeds on the site of Vancouver's Expo 86, along the north shore of False Creek, those interested in the history of Vancouver should applaud the timely publication of the City of Vancouver Archives' *False Creek: History, Images, and Research Sources*. This book will provide many residents and visitors with a much needed overview of the history of one of the city's more distinctive districts. Furthermore, because so many of the features of the False Creek landscape—such as the mudflats of upper False Creek, the shipyards and sawmills—which played vital roles in its early story, no longer survive due to neglect, fire or the pressures of redevelopment, this book will help us to recall what False Creek was like before its recent transformation.

Produced as an occasional paper for the Archives, the book is meant simply to introduce the reader to a feature of Vancouver's history. Author Robert K. Burkinshaw cautions in his introduction, "It is not intended that this history tell the whole of the complex story of False Creek." Instead, he focuses "on what are considered to be the major developments in and around the waterway and on the changing ideas of Vancouver's citizens and officials concerning the role of False Creek in the city's life." Burkinshaw accomplished his goals very competently. Acknowledging the summary nature of the book, and its value as an aid to research, Burkinshaw states, "Researchers wishing to explore aspects of False Creek's history in greater depth will find guidance in the footnotes and in the bibliography."

Beginning in the 1790s, when Spanish explorers Don Jose Maria Narvaez and Don Dionoso Galiano as well as Captain George Vancouver of the Royal Navy apparently skirted False Creek, Burkinshaw quickly describes the discovery of the inlet by Captain George H. Richards of H.M.S. *Plumper* in 1859. He notes its long-term use by local Indians, who placed fish traps on a sandbar which later became Granville Island. He traces the appearance of the first logging operations around the waterway, the first bridge across the inlet in 1872, and the first industrial enterprise, a slaughterhouse opened at the Westminster Avenue Bridge (today's Main Street) in 1879.

In successive chapters, Burkinshaw describes the key elements which shaped the development of the area since 1886. His second chapter, covering the period up to 1914, illustrates the rapid transformation

of False Creek from quiet backwater to a bustling industrial district and secondary harbour for the city. For this reader, the most interesting section of the chapter was that reserved for the story of the prolonged civic struggle against the fixed span trestle erected across the entrance of False Creek by the Canadian Pacific Railway in late 1887. This battle, which lasted many years, enabled the CPR to gain new land and tax concessions from the city. It did not, however, remove the offending span until the turn of the century. The story brings home the dominant role the CPR has assumed in shaping not only False Creek and Vancouver, but the Canadian West in general.

Subsequent chapters, covering the years after 1914, review such key changes as the reclamation of mudflats of upper False Creek for railway stations and yards, the creation of Granville Island as an industrial area, and the rise and fall of shipbuilding, sawmilling, and other industries.

The sections dealing with several massive redevelopment proposals for the area, which failed to get beyond the conceptual stage, were of immense interest. A 1905 recommendation called for a major dock basin to be created in the upper inlet—east of today's Main Street. A 1912 report suggested the conversion of Kitsilano Point into a giant new harbour and warehouse district. In 1950, two candidates for mayor—including the successful F.J. Hume—supported the concept of filling the basin and covering it with arterial highways. One starts asking, "What if...?"

The concluding section focuses on the dramatic rebirth of the entire waterway and surrounding lands, which has been proceeding since a 1968 vote by City Council to lift the industrial designation of False Creek. It has, of course, been re-emerging as one of the city's primary residential, recreational and cultural areas.

Burkinshaw is to be commended for producing a readable, concise description of one of Vancouver's most rapidly changing districts. His text is supplemented by an excellent selection of maps and photographs, which help the reader to visualize the rich history of the area. My only suggestion is that the book might have been more appealing to a wider readership had the author incorporated more descriptive and anecdotal passages. The voluminous reminiscences about the history of Vancouver in the J.S. Matthews Collection and newsclipping files at the City Archives, no doubt include much rich material of this nature. One excellent example of a descriptive passage, which was included in the text, was the

statement that, "as late as the winter of 1901, waterfowl were so plentiful on the marshy mudflats that the constant shooting by hunters raised complaints from nearby residents [information derived from the City Council minutes]." It also brought home the radical and rapid change long-term residents have witnessed. However, since False Creek is intended as an overview, the incorporation of far more descriptive or anecdotal details was perhaps considered unnecessary.

The City Archives and the British Columbia Heritage Trust are to be applauded for supporting the publication of this book. For the Archives, it is an appropriate means of reaching many members of the public, who may never visit the Archives itself. It also illustrates that archives play a key part in the preservation of our heritage. In the case of False Creek, where so much of the earlier built environment is gone or altered beyond recognition, Vancouver's archival legacy has permitted Mr. Burkinshaw to reconstruct the history of the district.

*Bill McKee, the archivist of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, is author of Trails of Iron (1983) and has written several articles on park development in Vancouver.*

*Cutting Up The North: The History of The Forest Industry in the Northern Interior.* Ken Bernsohn. North Vancouver: Hancock House, 1981. Pp. 192, illus., p. \$19.95.

In *Cutting Up The North*, Ken Bernsohn has produced the first book on the forest industry of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, the area surrounding Prince George. Bernsohn, a journalist familiar with the Interior forest industry, is a frequent contributor to forest industry trade magazines and has produced a chapbook on the history of the IWA in Prince George. To prepare *Cutting Up The North*, Bernsohn spoke with some 300 people involved in the industry, consulted local newspapers, and investigated a variety of other sources. Reflecting Bernsohn's journalistic experience, the book consists of 28 short chapters, each about the length of a magazine or newspaper contribution.

The main theme of the book is explaining government policy and the interaction between the industry executives and government people. The Forest Commissions and Acts since 1910 are covered in some depth, outlining their implications for northern lumbermen. Especially satisfying are the chapters that deal with two important issues of the period after 1945: the implementation of sustained-yield practices in forest management and the utilization of "third band" timber to produce wood chips. By encouraging sawmills to process "third band" timber, which was being left in the bush, the government helped spawn the pulp industry in the

Northern Interior. Interviews with Ray Williston, Minister of Lands and Forests from 1956 to 1972 and the architect of the capital-intensive industry which developed in the 1960s; Bob Williams, the "radical" NDP Minister of Forests; and Tom Waterland, Williams' Social Credit successor, provide candid insights into the creation of provincial forest policy.

The chapters on government initiatives (and lack of initiatives), however, only make up a small portion of the book. Interspersed between these chapters is the history of the forest industry in the Northern Interior. While the history is of the "scissors and paste" variety and subject to minor errors of fact, Bernsohn does outline the basic features of the industry's development: the fledgling sawmill industry which barely managed to survive the years 1910 to 1939, the rapid expansion in the number of small sawmills during World War II, and the creation of a consolidated, heavily-capitalized industry based on pulp production during the 1960s. Other chapters contain a discussion of problems faced by the Forest Service in administering government policy, thumbnail sketches of active forest executives and the corporate style of their firms, casual sociological observations on the working class, colourful descriptions of union struggles, comments on the growth of the conservation movement in the 1970s, and explanations of technological innovations.

The history of the forest industry in the Northern Interior is a vast topic, and Bernsohn has cast his net wide to include as much as possible. Unfortunately, this scattershot approach leaves little room for systematic analysis or the cultivation of a cogent thesis. Like the organization of the book, Bernsohn's writing style is eclectic, informal, and at times flippant, but the work is worth reading. It is the only book on the Northern Interior lumber industry, and of much interest to those who live under the umbrella of this giant economic enterprise. For those interested in the history of the province or the development of forest policy, the book illustrates that there is a story to be told which exists beyond the pale of the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

*Gordon Hak, a resident of Mackenzie, is writing a thesis on the forest industry in British Columbia.*

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*Mission on the Inlet: St. Paul's Indian Catholic Church, North Vancouver, B.C. 1863-1984.* Lascelles, T.A. O.M.I. 63 pp. illus. Available from St. Paul's or from the Oblate Provincial House, 1311 The Crescent, Vancouver, B.C. at \$4.50 per copy.

Those interested in the history of missions to the Indians of British Columbia or in the heritage of the Squamish of North Vancouver will welcome Father Lascelles *Mission on the Inlet*. He produced it for the centennial of St. Paul's Indian Church, North Vancouver and as "tribute to the Squamish people," and the Oblate missionaries who served them. Father Lascelles, a recent Oblate pastor of the parish, draws on original French mission reports to chronicle the birth of the mission, the construction of the church and school. He uses photographs and oral history to enhance accounts of the work of Bishop Paul Durieu and parishioners Andy Paull and Dan George. Lascelles also notes the labours of catechists, bell ringers, and bazaar convenors. The Appendix explains the work of the Save St. Paul's Indian Church Society. Since 1978 its members have restored the church with the assistance of the Squamish band, the Catholic Archdiocese, the Oblates, local governments and the British Columbia Heritage Trust.

Father Lascelles is to be commended for his clear explanations of traditional Catholic practices. Also welcome is his frank acknowledgement that although early missionaries respected Native languages and leaders, they condemned other aspects of Native culture such as winter dancing.

Today, Oblates like Father Lascelles see things differently. Yet readers of *B.C. Historical News*, who remember the old days and earlier Oblate historians like A.G. Morice, may still be startled to find Lascelles quoting a 1966 pastor's announcement that the Church had been repaired thanks to the proceeds of three potlatches as well as church and band grants!

I hope Father Lascelles goes on to do more work on Squamish history from missionary and from local sources, particularly regarding such twentieth century developments as this rapprochement between the potlatch and the pulpit. He might well begin by looking at the economic context for both in "*Man Along the Shore!*" *The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront. As Told by the Longshoremen Themselves* (1975). Its references to St. Paul's parishioners Andy Paull, Dan George, Louis Miranda as members of the "Bows and Arrows" longshoring gang provide intriguing leads to follow.


Jacqueline Gresko teaches history at Douglas College, New Westminster.

*Mayne Island and the Outer Gulf Islands: A History* Marie Elliott. Mayne Island: Gulf Islands Press, 1984. pp x, 152, illus.

In *Mayne Island*, Marie Elliott tells the story of the most important of several Gulf Islands, other than Saltspring, at the southern end of Georgia Strait. Cut off from the central flow of British Columbia's history, the islands of Mayne, North and South Pender, Saturna, and Galiano evolved at their own speed and in their own unique ways. While historians have generally ignored this corner of the British Columbia coastline, focussing instead on the nearly metropolitan centres of Victoria and Vancouver, Elliott's book confirms the observation that British Columbia is a region of separate communities, each deserving historical examination in its own right. *Mayne Island* will be followed by a second volume on the history of the remaining outer Gulf Islands.

Above all, Mayne Island's history is about water transportation. Marine vessels created the economic and social lifelines that sustained European settlement. At the same time, ships like the Hudson's Bay Company's sidewheelers *Enterprise* and *Princess Louise* in the early 1880s, the *S.S. Iroquois* of the early 1900s, the C.P.R.'s *Princess Mary* from the 1920s to 1951, Sparkie New's *Lady Rose* in the 1950s, and the British Columbia Ferry Corporation's *Queen of the Islands* in the 1960s defined the boundaries of island development, establishing limits to economic and population growth and, by maintaining economic distance between Mayne and the outside world, moulding the distinctive outlook and identity of islanders. Particularly instructive is Elliott's discussion of the transportation crisis of the 1950s. Rising costs generated higher freight rates, disrupting the agricultural economy based on exports of fruit, vegetables, and especially hothouse tomatoes to Victoria and Vancouver. The population of Mayne, the two Penders, and Saturna fell 20 per cent from 1951 to 1956, exposing the islands' vulnerability to fluctuations in transportation service and cost. Similarly, the provincial government's takeover of Gulf Islands ferry service after 1959 opened a new era of growth and prosperity for Mayne, making it today a popular middle class vacation centre.

The book's second theme, the character of Mayne Island society, includes a discussion of community institutions, ethnic composition, and social practices. As the descendant of two pioneer Mayne Island families, Elliott offers a social perspective that is at once intimate and well informed. In addition to uncovering substantial documentary evidence, the author employed her personal contacts with local pioneers to good advantage through informative interviews. The resulting portrait of island society is, understandably, a sympathetic one of social harmony, hard work, and achievement. According to Elliott, an essentially egalitarian social structure



denied class tensions and racial prejudices their corrosive influence. Certainly, the small population of the outer Gulf Islands, numbering only about 1100 in 1956, makes difficult the development of social generalizations that have provincial significance. Furthermore, statistical evidence about economic, demographic, and voting patterns would have sharpened the volume's social analysis. Yet, Elliott's comments about relations between Japanese and white residents substantially contribute to our understanding of racism in British Columbia. The Japanese, comprising one-third of the island's population, had been enormously successful in agriculture and fishing, conducting one-half of Mayne's commerce in 1940. Japanese residents had also been accepted socially by their white neighbours. This observation challenges the conventional interpretation that anti-Japanese feeling was pervasive throughout coastal British Columbia at the time of the Japanese evacuation in 1942.

Despite their limitations, Elliott's generalizations about Mayne Island society place her study apart from most community histories, which too often merely recite information about local notables. *Mayne Island* will also raise public awareness of the unique Gulf Island heritage that must in the future be protected from disruptive and unsympathetic economic development.

*Robert McDonald, who teaches history at the University of British Columbia, is professionally interested in the history of recreational land and privately enjoys holidays on the Gulf Islands.*

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Historians and heritage conservationists were saddened to learn that *Heritage West* has ceased publication. The magazine was supported by the British Columbia Heritage Trust with assistance from the Heritage Canada Foundation, and provided readers with a broad spectrum of articles on historical preservation.

The Vancouver Centennial Commission History Resource Committee has prepared a resource guide to help groups and individuals research their history for the upcoming Centennial. Entitled *Exploring Vancouver's Past: An Informal Guide to Researching Local and Family History in Vancouver*, this 32-page guide includes all the basic information you need to get started and keep on going. It may be ordered from Vancouver Centennial Commission, P.O. Box 49386, #3374 Bentall 4, 1055 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1L5.

The October 1984 issue of *Journal of the West* (Vol. XXIII, No. 4) is devoted to the history of Western Canada, and edited by Dr. Ian MacPherson, University of Victoria. A number of articles concern the history of British Columbia.

Researchers interested in the Genealogy of Ontario will be pleased to learn that the Genealogical Research Library has published *People of Ontario, 1600-1900*, in three volumes. The Bicentennial First Edition is available from the Research Library, 520 Wellington Street North, London, Ontario N6A 3P6, at \$195 for the three volume set.

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