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**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

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# HISTORICAL NEWS



- **CF-FHW: B.C. Provincial Police Aircraft**
- **D'Arcy Island Leper Colony**
- **John Robert Giscome: Jamaican Miner & Explorer**

**The Beaver float plane has played an important part in the history of British Columbia.  
Story starts on page 5.  
B.C. Provincial Museum Photo.**

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# BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL NEWS

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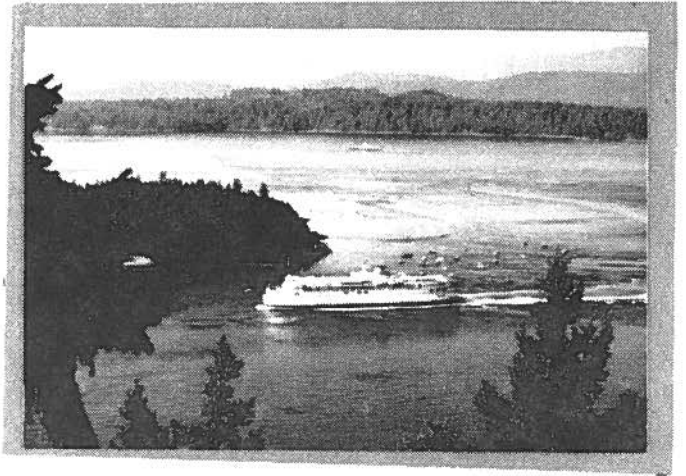
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The B.C. Historical Federation gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the British Columbia Heritage Trust.

# BCHF CONVENTION — Galiano Island, May 2-5, 1985

Information and registration forms should have been distributed by member secretaries in mid-March. Late registrants may contact Christine Axmann, Registrar, Box 10, Galiano, V0N 1P0. Special rates are available for one-day attendance. Please note: Saturday, May 4th, agenda has been changed because of ferry schedules. The Annual General Meeting will take place at 1:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.

Member Societies are requested to bring enough copies of their annual reports to share with others attending Annual Meeting, and a copy for the editor of the *B.C. Historical News*. If time permits a brief oral report may be requested by the president at the meeting.



Overlooking Active Pass from Bluffs Park, Galiano Island.

**B.C. Ferries has introduced a new reservation system for automobiles taking the Tsawwassen to Gulf Islands ferry. Please consult your ferry schedule for instructions well in advance of the Convention dates. Advance vehicle payment is required to confirm a reservation. Telephone Vancouver 669-1211.**

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R.G. Patterson

## CF-FHW: The British Columbia Provincial Police Forces Beaver Aircraft

In 1949, a new branch of the British Columbia Provincial Police Force was created. It was to be known as the Air Division. With this Division, the Force made one of its last major purchases, a Beaver float equipped aircraft whose call letters were CF-FHW. The Officer behind the purchase of the aircraft was Noel Arnold Beaumont. He was born on November 28, 1911, at Consort, Alberta. On July 6, 1935, he joined the British Columbia Provincial Police at Vancouver as a probationer with the Emergency Squad. From there he moved to the Mounted Troop which was headquartered at Oakalla prison farm. A short time later, Beaumont transferred out into the field to Dawson Creek; however, he was only there a year or two and then rejoined the Mounted Troop. Shortly thereafter he transferred to the Marine Division and Police Motor Launch #9 which was stationed at Campbell River.

On June 30, 1941, he purchased his discharge from the Force and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Initially, he spent fourteen months as an R.C.A.F. flying instructor at Trenton, Ontario, then he went overseas, where he was attached to Royal Airforce 256 Squadron flying Mosquito aircraft on night raids. Towards the end of his time overseas, he acted as Flight Commander for the Squadron. At the end of the War, he was discharged from the airforce, with the rank of Flight Lieutenant. Once back in Canada, Beaumont rejoined the British Columbia Provincial Police on January 14, 1946, and was posted back to Campbell River. A year later he was promoted to Skipper third class, in charge of P.M.L. #9.

Beaumont's flying experience convinced him that an aircraft would greatly assist the police with their day-to-day work. He began to

promote the idea of acquiring a float plane for the Force, and gathered information on aircraft types. He favoured the De Haviland Beaver because of its manoeuvrability and versatility. He also did a comparison and contrast study on running a police boat versus an aircraft. The results showed that an aircraft would be far cheaper to operate and maintain per mile per year. This data, along with Beaumont's flying time, was forwarded to Police Headquarters in Victoria. The impact of this material on the Headquarters staff was effective, because in March, 1949, a DeHaviland Beaver seaplane. was recommended for purchase. However, delivery was not obtained until October 27, 1949.

CF-FHW arrived in Vancouver from the factory painted silver, with a sage green engine cowling and stripe down the length of the fuselage. On each of the passenger doors was the police crest. The aircraft was equipped with the regular radio required by the Department of Transport plus direction finding apparatus and F.M. radio to keep in contact with the police cars and other fixed stations throughout the province. The purchase price for CF-FHW was thirty-two thousand dollars.

Owing to the late delivery, and unfavourable weather conditions, its potential was not fully realized in 1949. Nevertheless, by the end of the year seventy-seven hours and fifty-five minutes were flown, covering a distance of 7,460 miles. It was anticipated that six hundred hours would be flown during 1950 on police and game patrols, in areas not really accessible by normal means of transportation. On January 1, 1950, Beaumont was transferred to Vancouver to be in charge of the Beaver. A year later he was promoted to Sergeant Pilot. The co-pilot for CF-FHW was a New Zealander, H.J. Thomas. Thomas had more



Sgt. Noel A. Beaumont (l.) and Engineer H.J. Thomas (r.) in cockpit of CF-FHW.

than 3,700 flying hours to his credit in both war and peacetime flying. As well, he had experience in air engineering and flight maintenance, all of which made him an invaluable member of the flying team.

CF-FHW flew out of Vancouver until the takeover of the Force by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on August 15, 1950. After the takeover, both CF-FHW and Beaumont transferred to the Air Division of the R.C.M.P. CF-FHW continued in service with the Force until it crashed, and burned on August 6, 1958, on a mountainside six miles south of Penticton, British Columbia, while on a search for a wanted murderer.

Beaumont remained with the R.C.M.P. until his retirement on October 16, 1967. After that, he flew commercially for a few years, finally retiring to live in Richmond.

The value of the aircraft was proven in many ways. It was used for transporting men, investigating crime in remote places, spotting escaping criminals in co-operation with police radio equipped transport, bringing help to the injured, inspections of remote detachments by senior officers, patrols along remote sections of the coast, traffic surveys and aerial photography.

*R.G. Patterson is a curator with the Modern History Division of the B.C. Provincial Museum.*

## **D'Arcy Island 1891-1907**

When Captain, later Admiral George Henry Richards sailed into the Gulf of Georgia in 1858, he named one of the numerous islands D'Arcy. Thirty-three years later, D'Arcy Island became British Columbia's first leper colony. It is difficult to believe that this beautiful, well-wooded island, now a 207-acre Provincial Park, has such a grim history. Alerted that leprosy was indeed abroad in British Columbia, Victoria's health officials had a large wooden shack of unplastered and unpainted wood erected on D'Arcy Island. Governed by fears dictated more by panic than reason, the Mayor and Council of Victoria instigated the isolation of leprosy victims on D'Arcy Island. Part of the land reserve, the island was made available to the city when a remote area was needed.

Although leprosy had been very much in evidence in New Brunswick throughout the nineteenth century, the first case of suspected leprosy in British Columbia was discovered under macabre conditions. On Saturday, the first of April, 1882, the body of a Chinese labourer was found under the city council rooms in New Westminster.<sup>2</sup> The man had been strangled then hung upside down from a beam some six feet from the floor. Under the body the murderers, purported to be compatriots, had burned paper and clothing. This was later said to have been an effort to destroy contagion.

The *British Columbian* newspaper of April 5, 1882, reported that the odour and smoke had first attracted the attention of neighbours. When the reporter from that paper went to the scene, he examined the body and found it had been badly burned. The murdered man, Ah Kye, had been laid up for four months with a sore foot in the premises where his body was found. Not surprisingly, Coroner Trew suspected foul play, and impounded a jury who returned a verdict of death by strangulation. Although several individuals were interviewed, no one was ever apprehended.

Rumours of leprosy cases in other parts of the province prompted the health inspectors to scour places where Chinese workers lived. In May 1882, there were as many as 9000 Chinese workers in the province<sup>3</sup>, and many lived under the most primitive conditions. In 1890, the first leper found in Victoria was put into the quarantine station before being taken to D'Arcy Island. He was apparently left alone on the island, and when the Medical Officer visited D'Arcy three months later, the Chinese man had gone.

Anxious to prevent the spread of leprosy, the Ministry of Agriculture in Ottawa arranged for Dr. A.C. Smith to travel from Tracadie Leper Hospital in New Brunswick to Victoria. His experience in treating the disease enabled him to correctly diagnose leprosy. In May 1891, of six Chinese workers in Victoria who were suspected of having leprosy, three were found to be in an advanced stage, two had symptoms, and one man was free of the disease. The leprous men were taken to D'Arcy Island, to what government records described as "comfortable quarters". The men lived in a line of huts under one roof. Their supplies, which arrived four times a year and included coffins, Chinese whiskey and opium, were put in a shed and each man helped himself. Each man had a bed, a stove and a chair. When able, they did their own cooking.

There was no sewage system and water had to be carried from a well originally used by fishermen. Occasional visitors to the island were some missionaries and city officials. So notorious did the island become that one man, on learning that he was to be taken to the island, overdosed on opium. When one white man was isolated on D'Arcy Island, the Chinese shunned him so completely that when he died, they would not even bury his body. Victoria's medical officers visited from time to time and were appalled at the conditions, but they could do nothing to change matters despite representations to government officials.

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Finances, too, proved to be a problem. The City of Victoria found it was being required to maintain lepers from all parts of the province. This they could not do, not only because city coffers could not bear the expense, but because the Council had no authority to spend tax revenues on the maintenance of people sent to the island from other municipalities. After repeatedly refusing any financial support, the federal government eventually acquiesced when British Columbia's Lieutenant-Governor intervened. He suggested to the Ministry of Agriculture that their quarantine division might well be held responsible for maintaining the leprosy victims in quarantine quarters. Forthwith, a grant of \$1000 from the quarantine account was despatched to Victoria in January 1892. The money was to be for the twelve months commencing July, 1891. Eventually accounts showed that the real costs for the twelve months were \$994.10.

Some of the men on D'Arcy Island died, and by March 23, 1893, seven Chinese and one white man remained. That same month, Provincial Secretary, McNaughton Jones, informed the Minister in Ottawa that they could probably get rid of the Chinese lepers if a ship could be found that would take them back to Hong Kong. McNaughton Jones anticipated it would cost \$100 for each man to go to Hong Kong but, "on pressure, they (the shipping line) would take less." It proved impossible to find a ship that would accept such a 'cargo'. By June, the white man and three Chinese had died and some of the remaining Chinese were in a pitiable condition. Denied medical attention, they suffered painful leproic fever and erisipelas. It is not surprising that by 1895, there was a sixty per cent mortality rate on the island.

An arrangement had been made that any municipality sending lepers to D'Arcy Island would pay proportionately towards the cost of their maintenance. Therefore, because Vancouver was paying one eighth of the costs, yet getting no part of the Dominion grant made to Victoria, the Vancouver Council asked Ottawa for a grant for the two lepers they were maintaining. The Minister replied that the grant was for the whole province, not just for Victoria. This occasioned the Vancouver City Clerk to remark that Victoria was taking advantage of the situation. When the 1895/96 accounts showed a \$2713.48 deficit to be met by the taxpayers of Victoria, Charles Raymur, the auditor, asked that the lazaretto be taken over by the Dominion

government as in New Brunswick. Meanwhile, Victoria requested a cheque from Ottawa for \$2000 for the years 1895 and 1896.

Under pressure to assume full responsibility for D'Arcy Island, the Ministry of Agriculture sent out a memo in August 1895. This stated that, by an amendment to the Quarantine Act of 1872, the matter of leprosy pertained to public health and not to quarantine. Therefore, the administration of D'Arcy Island was the responsibility of the provincial government. Whilst each politician defended his own government's view, as well as its exchequer, conditions continued to deteriorate on D'Arcy Island so that questions were asked in the Legislature. It was the medical officers' reports that drew attention to the unsatisfactory conditions under which the lepers had to live. Some of the men suffered the sensory type of leprosy, while others had the tuberculoid type. The latter produced dreadful disfigurement.

When the Minister of Agriculture visited Victoria in June 1897, he proposed that the provincial government take over the lazaretto. That year, when the federal government refused the grant to Victoria, the city's Council reminded Ottawa that the poll tax of fifty dollars, which the Chinese lepers had paid on entering Canada, had been received by the government in Ottawa. The federal government remained firm but granted \$947.59 in March 1898. Dr. Fisher, head of the quarantine service in Ottawa, expressed the opinion that there was no justification for the demands of the British Columbia government. The fact that Tracadie had been taken over by the federal government was insufficient reason for the Ministry to assume responsibility for D'Arcy Island. He also stated that although the lepers were unfortunate, they were still better off than lepers in China. None had ever tried to escape (a stretch of open water lay between D'Arcy Island and the mainland!), and they were as well provided for as was possible in the circumstances. Fisher maintained that for whites, D'Arcy Island would be dismal, but for Asiatics, the conditions answered fairly well. That December the medical officer reported to the provincial government: "This lazaretto is now in a deplorable state. Only one man is comfortably able to work. Two are helpless and depend on the feeble efforts of others. The time has come to provide proper care for these unfortunates."

When Senator Templeman of British Columbia asked what emergency procedures were available should the lepers need help, he



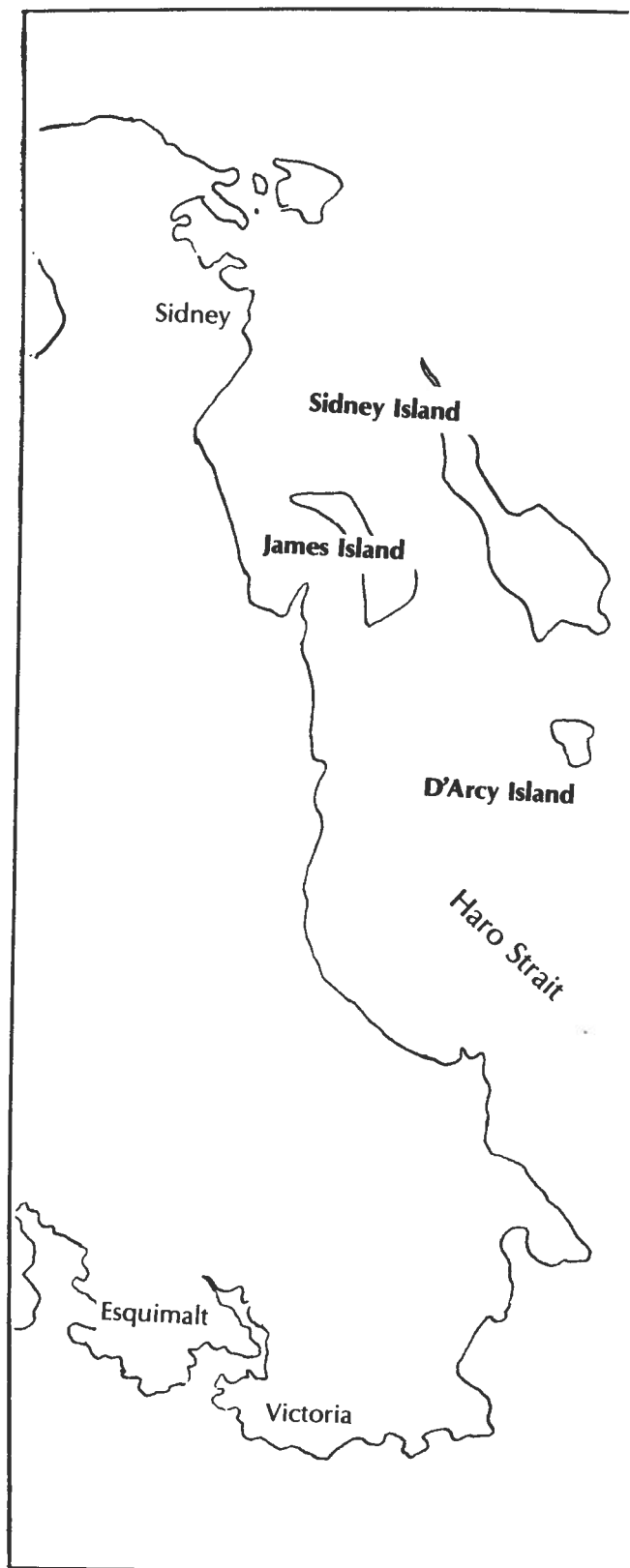
was told that there were always boats passing the island, and there was a flagpole and a flag to draw attention if necessary. On June 15, 1899, when a fire occurred on the island, one nineteen-year-old man Lim S. was burned to death. It was three days before the medical officer knew about it. Records do not show if the standard emergency procedure was followed.

Eventually, negotiations with reference to the poll tax bore some financial fruit for British Columbia. In August of 1900, the province received 25% of the poll tax paid for the year ending June 1900, a sum of \$47,362.50. With money now available, the provincial government could give some consideration to looking after the leper colony. Through an Act amending restriction of Chinese immigration in August of 1903, half the head taxes (raised to \$100 in 1901) paid by Chinese immigrants, went to the province with the understanding that the British Columbia government assume maintenance of the lazaretto on D'Arcy Island. The provincial government agreed to this arrangement and, in September 1903, received \$258,050. In that year there had been 5,177 entries to Canada through British Columbia, less sixteen refunds for Chinese immigrants who returned to China.

The raising of the head tax to \$500 in 1904 effectively slowed the influx of Chinese coolie labourers, so that between 1904 and 1907, the province received only \$18,800.00. Nevertheless, it was a welcome addition to the provincial purse, for by 1904 the economy of the province had slowed, and Tatlow, the Finance Minister, was effecting stringent economies to avoid provincial bankruptcy. But by now the amount received from the poll tax was far in excess of the amount that was estimated for the upkeep of D'Arcy Island—only two lepers remained there in May 1904.

Other cities and municipalities continued to have to pay maintenance until the provincial government formally took over D'Arcy Island in January 1905. By August, the population of the leper colony had increased to six. That same month, C.J. Fagan, the Secretary to the Board of Health, visited D'Arcy Island. He found conditions had not changed despite the increase in funding that the province had enjoyed.

In his subsequent report to the Attorney General, Fagan recommended that the patients be sent to a place where treatment was available. There was still no attempt being made by the British Columbia health authorities to relieve pain and suffering. Fagan suggested that the lepers should be located closer to Victoria.



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Believing that the Chinese immigrants should be more closely inspected, he went so far as to say that immigrants from infected areas should not be allowed to land. Such a ruling would have excluded Asiatics, a state of affairs that the provincial government in British Columbia had long sought. Fagan then travelled to Tracadie to inspect the leper hospital there. He returned to Victoria by way of Ottawa, where he urged the Ministry to take over the care of the lepers in British Columbia.

Shortly after Fagan's report, the Attorney General of British Columbia wrote to Ottawa stating that it was only simple humanity to help the lepers. Because the provincial government had no regulatory powers over the entrance of aliens, he wrote, the federal government should assume full responsibility for aliens who developed leprosy after entry to Canada. The Attorney General further suggested that the Chinese lepers on D'Arcy Island should go to Tracadie where there was a hospital for lepers.

By the end of 1905, the provincial government decided to assume responsibility for the Chinese lepers. Dr. F. Montizambert, Director of Public Health Services in Ottawa, asked Dr. Fagan for advice on looking after the lepers. An Order-in-Council granted D'Arcy Island to the provincial government in March 1906.

In writing to Dr. A.T. Watt, the Superintendent of Quarantine Services in Victoria, Dr. Montizambert outlined two courses of action which might be followed. D'Arcy Island could continue as a leper colony with buildings being erected and facilities installed, but Dr. Montizambert felt there should be a medical officer so that "attention would be paid to the patients and proper treatment rendered to their specific and other maladies." (This was the first time that anyone in Ottawa had expressed any concern for the treatment of the lepers as patients needing medical attention.) Alternatively, Dr. Montizambert suggested that the lepers could be transferred to Albert Head. In this way they could be under the supervision of the Quarantine Officer at William Head. By the summer of 1906, plans had been drawn up for the station at Albert Head.

The health authorities could not have anticipated the ire of the Victoria and Metchosin residents when they found out that a leper colony was to be established at Albert Head, a favourite picnic area. Residents wired Ottawa and held a public meeting of protest on July 30, 1906. In August, Premier McBride received a petition with two hundred signatures.

Residents expressed their fears that the lepers would escape and terrorize the neighbourhood. So intense was the opposition that the plan to develop Albert Head was dropped. Instead, changes were wrought at D'Arcy Island. By April 1907, a guardian (at a salary of ninety dollars per month), and a Chinese interpreter (at thirty dollars), had been placed on D'Arcy Island. Weekly supplies of fresh food were sent over, treatment with Chaulmoogra oil was begun, and ulcerated limbs were disinfected and dressed.

Five months later, a tramp steamer made its way out of Victoria harbour. On board were the eight Chinese lepers who had been persuaded to return to Canton to take up residence in a Presbyterian mission leper village. For each man there was three hundred dollars in gold waiting for him on landing. With the inmates gone, it was decided to burn the old shacks on D'Arcy Island and erect, at a cost of \$500 each, two cottages in case they should be needed in the future for Chinese lepers, pending deportation. The island was the home of the leprous until 1924, but 1907 saw a new beginning.

In the year ending March 31, 1908, part of the federal Department of Agriculture's Annual Report read, "All cabins burned." There can be no estimate of the distress, misery and the shattered dreams that lay in the ashes.

*Ilma Gourley a high school teacher in Vancouver, received a Canada Council Award in 1984 to write a history of leper colonies in Canada.*

#### Sources

Primary documents held at the National Archives of Canada; Medical Services Branch, Ministry of Health and Welfare; William Head Penitentiary, Victoria, B.C.; and Provincial Archives of British Columbia.

Published sources include Ernest Hall and John Nelson, "The Lepers of D'Arcy Island", *Dominion Medical Monthly*, XI, no. 6 (Victoria, 1898); *Annual Reports, Medical Officers of City of Victoria, 1895-1904*; the *British Columbian*, April 5, 1882.

Although the World Health Organization has deemed the term "leper" to no longer denote a patient who has leprosy or Hansen's disease, because of the undesirable connotations associated with the term historically, this writer has retained the term as used in the documents researched.

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Linda Eversole

## John Robert Giscome: Jamaican Miner and Explorer

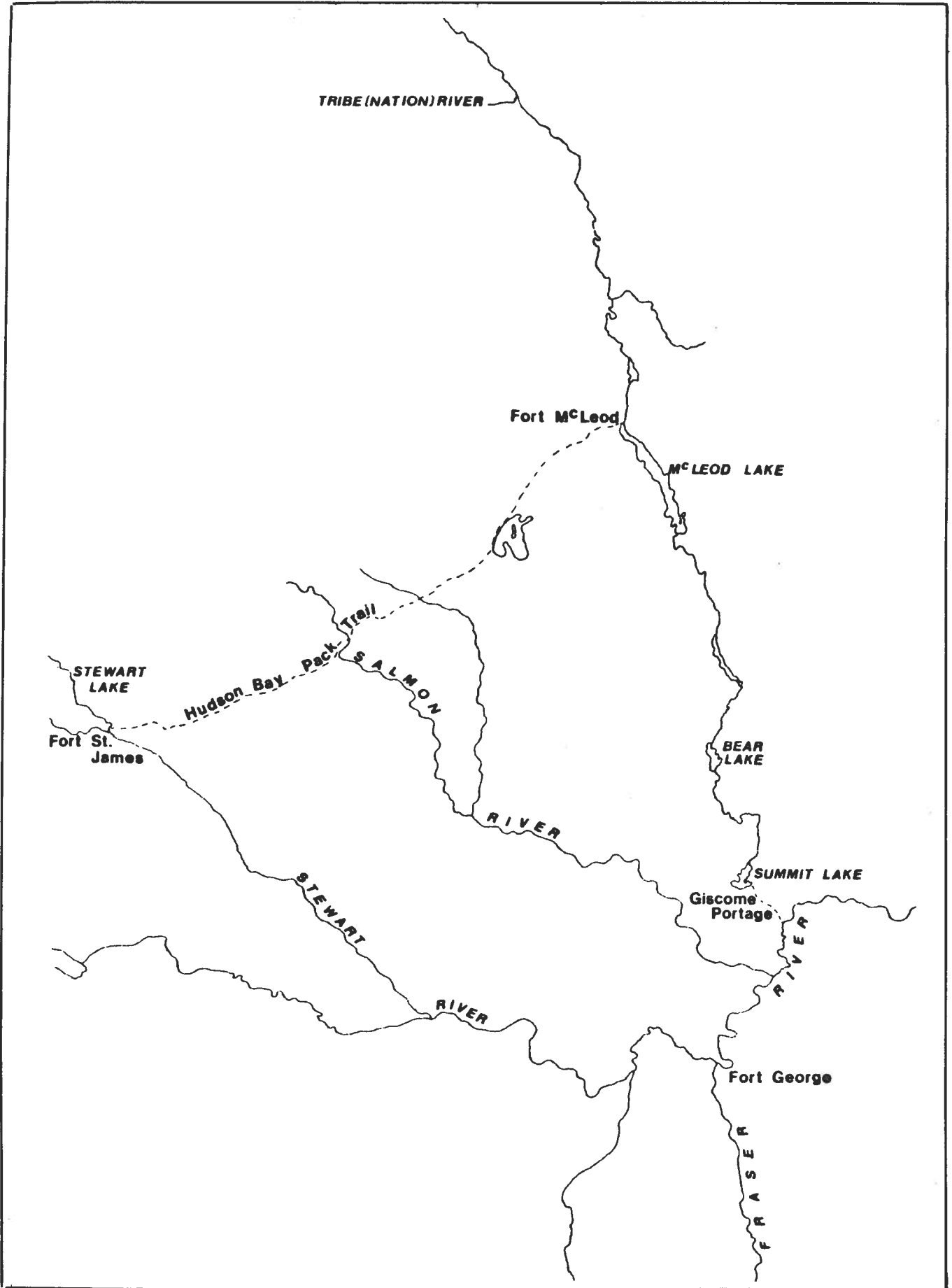
The discovery of gold on the Fraser River in 1858 initiated a massive migration to the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Goldseekers representing many nationalities made a contribution to the development of the Province by opening up new territory. These individuals were more than mere fortune hunters for they were often in the vanguard of exploration. Their journeys into untested and little known areas were often followed by detailed reports on the environment around them, much of which was of great assistance to those who followed. While little specific information remains on these early miner/explorers, some insights into their lives can be gained through newspaper references, mining reports, and government records. One individual who spent much of his life mining and exploring the remote territory of northern British Columbia was a native West Indian, John Robert Giscome.

Giscome, the eldest of three children, was born in the settlement of Enfield, Parish of St. Mary, Jamaica in about 1832.<sup>1</sup> He grew up in a tumultuous period in Jamaica's history. The years prior to his birth were marked by a growing, and often violent movement against slavery in the Colony. In 1833 a Bill was passed in British Parliament prohibiting slavery, and a long difficult period of adjustment to new economic structures commenced. Declining land values, widespread unemployment with few social services, and a growing poverty level population forced many Jamaicans to seek employment outside the country. A common destination was Panama where an American company, prompted by news of gold discoveries in California, had begun work on a railway across the isthmus. It was believed that the isthmus rail

route would prove to be the most expedient from the east coast of the United States. Reportedly by 1854 2,000 Jamaicans had joined the work force in Panama.<sup>2</sup> The railway was completed in 1855 to link up with a steamer service that had been plying between the west coast of the isthmus and San Francisco for some years. Many of the labourers, upon completion of the rail link, joined the gold seekers on their way to California. John Giscome was likely part of this group as family members recall that he and his sister had emigrated to Panama.

Little is known of Giscome's activities in the California gold fields. However, it is known that many Black immigrants quickly became disillusioned with the State's discriminatory policies. By the late 1850s an exploratory group was organized by the Black community of San Francisco to investigate the possibility of moving to a more favourable location. The Colony of Vancouver Island was amongst those proposed, and with the encouragement and support of Governor James Douglas, migration began in the Spring of 1858. Upon arrival many proceeded directly on to the gold fields of British Columbia. As several members of this original migratory group were later associated with John Giscome as business partners and friends, it is reasonable to assume that he emigrated at or near the same time.

Although he was to retain Victoria as his home base, by the Fall of 1862 Giscome had located near Quesnelmouth where he pre-empted property adjoining that of another West Indian, Henry McDame.<sup>3</sup> McDame's background up to this time is relatively obscure. He apparently was born in the Bahamas about 1826<sup>4</sup> and came to the Colony of British Columbia in 1858. It is not known if Giscome knew him before 1862, but



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they were to remain partners in various mining endeavours for many years. Both men possessed an enquiring and adventurous spirit that drove them to prospect the most northerly parts of British Columbia. Consequently, in November, 1862, after hearing the report of miners William Cust and Edward Cary, who told of gold deposits in the Peace River area, they set off on what was to be one of their longest and most arduous prospecting trips.

### **Giscome Portage**

Travelling mainly by canoe they made a reconnaissance of much of the water system between the Fraser River at Quesnelmouth and the Peace River. From there they continued along the Peace and across the Rocky Mountain Portage to the Smoky and Red Deer Rivers in the North-west Territories, now part of present day Alberta. Along the way they encountered a few other miners who had reached the Peace River district by following a route that went via Fort George to Fort St. James and then along the Hudson's Bay Company pack trail to Fort McLeod. However, Giscome and McDame, who had been forced by weather conditions to winter in Fort George, decided to follow a route described to them by local Indians. After a few false starts they arrived at a place on the Fraser River, from where they made a portage of nine miles to a lake, now known as Summit Lake. This trail, later known as the Giscome Portage, became the object of much interest to other gold seekers and eventually became part of the main access route to the northern gold fields. Although this trail was known to the Indians and early fur traders, Giscome and McDame's journey focussed new attention on the route and by 1871 pressure on the government, largely in the form of a petition, prompted the construction of a wagon road over the portage.<sup>5</sup> Travel by this route, however, was such an uncommon occurrence at the time of Giscome and McDame's initial journey that it prompted a congratulatory demonstration at Fort McLeod.

Visited the Company's Fort on the latter lake, when a salute of about 30 shots was fired, with firearms, in honor of the arrival of the party through this route which had never been traversed by any others than Indians.<sup>6</sup>

As the area did not have the appearance of "gold country", their stay was brief and they set off for the Peace River which they reached on May 18th.

At the junction of the Finlay and Peace Rivers they met William Cust who, with his partner Edward Cary and several other miners, was working the area with good results. They too commenced mining and spent several weeks following the Finlay for a distance of 140 miles, exploring an upper branch which they named the Vermillion River for its colour. However, as they met with only minimal success they retraced their steps to the mouth where several miners were encamped anxious to hear their report.

### **The Peace River area**

Still not satisfied with the mining prospects the two partners decided to continue their journey along the Peace River. On the 19th of July they reached the Rocky Mountain Portage, where they buried part of their provisions and packed the remainder the 15 miles across. From there they constructed a raft which took them down river to Fort St. John. At the Fort

... they were most hospitably received by Mr. Barroussa, the company's officer in charge. Of all the company's posts which the party visited they represent this to be the finest and best kept for.<sup>7</sup>

Barroussa had caused some excitement among the miners the year before when he had told Edward Cary and Pete Toy about finding gold as "big as the end of his finger", but believing it of little value had thrown it away.<sup>8</sup> This in part had precipitated the journeys of miners such as Giscome and McDame, who wanted to explore the truth of the statement.

They remained at the Fort long enough to construct a canoe and then continued on to the Smoky River. Enroute they stopped at Fort Dunvegan where the officer in charge, Mr. Shaw, advised that by taking horses they could cross to the headwaters of the River in three or four days, rather than the three or four weeks it would take by water. However, they opted to continue by canoe to enable them to make a careful reconnaissance of the entire stream. About seventy miles upstream they noted some strange geological formations.

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... at the junction of Smoky and Red Deer Rivers, they came upon the collection of volcanic openings or fissures whence the river takes its name. The hill on the immediate bank of the river is from 200 to 300 feet high, and contains upwards of thirty funnel shaped apertures about the size of stovepipes, emitting dense columns of smoke and strong sulphureous gases, but no flame, the aperture glowing like a live coal ... all the banks are covered with deposits of pure sulphur ...<sup>9</sup>

After Giscome gathered sulphur specimens to take to Victoria, they proceeded further upstream but found no promising gold deposit. On their return trip to Dunvegan and Fort St. John they encountered "Black Jack" Smith,<sup>10</sup> a miner from the Finlay, who told of gold discoveries on the Tribe (Nation) River north of Fort McLeod. The party hastily retraced their steps to that locality but by the time they arrived it was late in the year and the weather had turned very cold. They mined for awhile with some success, but on October 26th snow began to fall, and they decided to pack up and return to Quesnelmouth. Almost exactly a year after they had first started, they arrived back announcing their intention to revisit the Tribe River as soon as possible to prospect the river thoroughly to its headwaters.

In December of the same year Giscome returned to Victoria and made a full report of the expedition to the *British Columbian* who printed it under the heading "Interesting from the Rocky Mountains—Notes of a Prospector from Peace, Tribe and Smoky Rivers—Good Diggings Found."<sup>11</sup>

Giscome and McDame did return, but by 1870 were mining on the newly discovered German-sen Creek in the Omineca district. They spent several years here and it was during this period that Giscome became involved in an unfortunate incident in his life. With the proceeds from his mining endeavours he began to invest in real estate and property mortgages. It was one of these mortgages that put him in serious trouble. In late 1871 Giscome was charged with assaulting another Black miner, William C. Port of Quesnelmouth. Apparently Port had defaulted on his mortgage, and Giscome, who had reportedly been lenient with Port for some years, finally accompanied him to a stable where he attempted to take Port's horses. A scuffle ensued and Port received an injury to the head, which he claimed was a result of Giscome striking him with an axe. Giscome, who denied this, claimed he

had been hit first, and that Port's injuries came when he fell among the horses and was kicked. Port claimed his injury incapacitated him for several days and that his speech and sight were seriously affected.

The case was heard in County Court, but was moved up to the Supreme Court because of the discrepancy in testimony. By the time they came before Matthew Baillie Begbie it was believed by many that Port had been "shamming" and this was supported by the testimony of the medical officer, Dr. Chipps. Four individuals who had known Giscome for at least ten years each, came forward as character witnesses. They described him as quiet, peaceable, upright, and honest, and a man who was never involved in altercations. This testimony, and other witnesses, all who contradicted Port, led to a verdict of not guilty. Begbie noted in his summation that an assault was justifiable if only one blow was given in answer to a first blow.<sup>12</sup>

### The Cassiar

The ordeal over, Giscome returned to the mines of Omineca. By this time the area had become very popular and with the completion of the wagon road over the Giscome Portage, hundreds of miners had begun moving into the region. Giscome and McDame, always ready to explore new areas, decided to move up to the Cassiar district. In early 1873 a party of miners had discovered rich gold prospects near Dease Lake.<sup>13</sup> The following year several other miners arrived including Giscome and McDame. Some came overland from the Omineca and Peace districts while others arrived by steamer from Victoria to Wrangell on the coast, and then travelled up the Stikine River to Dease Lake. Giscome and McDame centered their exploration on the northern part of the Dease River and finally settled on a promising creek, later known as McDame Creek. With several others they formed the Discovery Company and commenced mining. Gold Commissioner Sullivan in his report to the Minister of Mines in August, 1874 noted their progress:

I learn that a new creek has been discovered ... now known as McDame's Creek.

Mr. W.H. Smith, a member of the Discovery Company on said creek, arrived here a few days ago and brought with him nearly six hundred dollars in gold dust, taken out of his claim, the proceeds of a few days work;

... as timber is very scarce in that section mining operations are carried on in a very primitive mode ... as the miners have not had time to erect wing-dams for the effectual working of the deep ground...<sup>14</sup>

The scarcity of timber did not deter the Discovery Company. By early November they had sawed lumber, packed it in a mile, and erected four hundred feet of a wingdam and built sluices. Within thirty days they had extracted gold valued at \$6,000.<sup>15</sup>

Giscome and McDame and their partners continued to mine the area for several years. Sometime in the early 1880s McDame returned to Omineca, but by 1884 was "broke" and in the hospital in Victoria. After his recovery he found a partner, Samuel Booth, who staked him to another exploration trip to Omineca, where he died sometime before 1901.<sup>16</sup>

Giscome in the meantime had remained in the Cassiar district until 1890 when he returned to Victoria. Having invested the major part of his earnings in real estate, he spent his remaining years buying and selling properties scattered throughout Victoria. He seems to have lived a quiet life and, despite his property holdings, lived in a boarding house.<sup>17</sup> On June 24, 1907 he died at the age of seventy-five of a cerebral hemorrhage and was buried in Ross Bay Cemetery.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps because of the lack of family his grave was never marked.

The probate of his will revealed an estate valued at approximately \$21,000, mostly property in Victoria and some lots in Albany, Oregon.<sup>19</sup> The sole beneficiary was his landlady, Mrs. Ella Coones, who, with her husband Stacy, was part of the original Black colony from California.

Unlike many pioneers, John Giscome and his partner Henry McDame have both been remembered in British Columbia place names: Giscome in Giscome Portage, Giscome Rapids, Giscome Canyon, and the former sawmill town of Giscombe; McDame in McDame Creek, Mount McDame, and McDame Lake. In addition, the Heritage Conservation Branch is commemorating the Giscome Portage with the erection of an interpretive sign. This will be placed on the Hart Highway north of Prince George where a portion of the Portage is extant.

*Linda Eversole is a research officer with the Heritage Conservation Branch.*

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The information on John Giscome's early life in Jamaica is from correspondence between the author and Mr. Henry Giscombe of Kingston, Jamaica, a relative of Giscome's.
- <sup>2</sup> Sir Allen Burns. *History of the British West Indies*, p. 664.
- <sup>3</sup> Cariboo Pre-Emption Records PABC—GR 112 vol. 9 fols. 46 & 47, Sept. 16, 1862.
- <sup>4</sup> Canada. Census—1881. District 187 - Coast-Cassiar.
- <sup>5</sup> British Columbia. *Petition Respecting Trails to the Omineca Mines*. PABC - GR 983.
- <sup>6</sup> *British Colonist*, Dec. 15, 1863 p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Daily Chronicle* Nov. 20, 1862.
- <sup>9</sup> *British Colonist*, Dec. 15, 1863, p. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> "Black Jack" was a well known miner in both the Peace and Cassiar districts. His real name was Nehemiah Smith, although in some newspaper reports he is referred to as John Smith.
- <sup>11</sup> *British Colonist*, Dec. 15, 1863, p. 3.
- <sup>12</sup> B.C. Supreme Court. Notes of Proceedings *Begbie's Bench Book* July 24, 1871 - Jan. 16, 1873. PABC - C/AB/30. 3 N/7. Reports on the incident are also found in the *British Colonist*, Mar. 11, 1871 p. 3 and the *Cariboo Sentinel* Mar. 25, 1871 p. 3 and Nov. 4, 1871 p. 3.
- <sup>13</sup> "The Discovery of the Cassiar Gold Fields" *Report of the Minister of Mines*, 1875, pp. 606-607.
- <sup>14</sup> *Report of the Minister of Mines*, 1874, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>15</sup> *British Colonist*, Nov. 5, 1874, p. 3.
- <sup>16</sup> *Report of the Minister of Mines*, 1901.
- <sup>17</sup> B.C. *Directories* 1890-1907.
- <sup>18</sup> British Columbia. Ministry of Health. *Vital Statistics. Verification of Death Particulars* John Robert Giscomb [sic].
- <sup>19</sup> British Columbia. Dep't of Attorney-General, Probate Court, Will - John R. Giscome - #2679, Probate File - #3081.

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## NEXT ISSUE

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

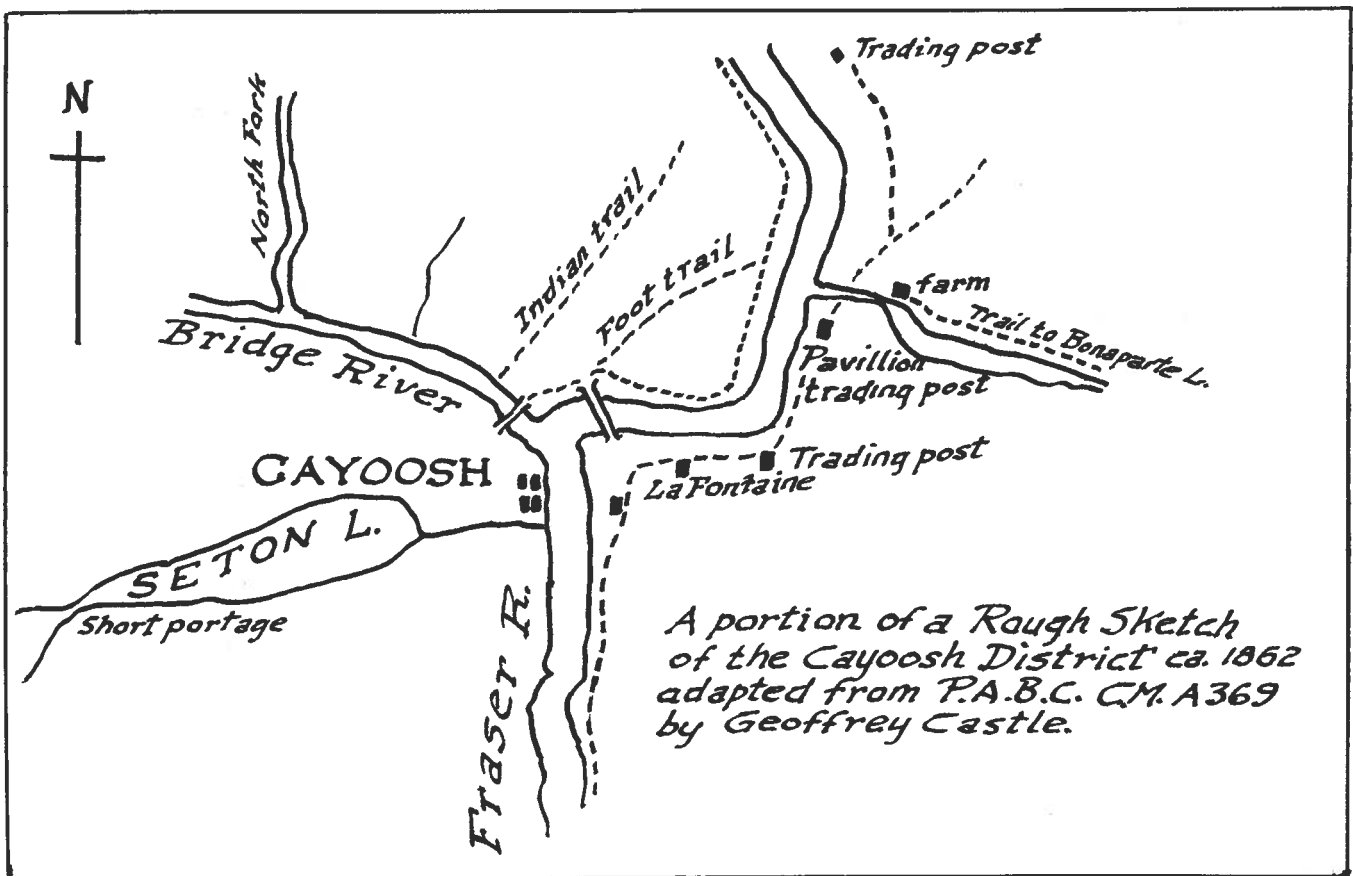
## LANDMARKS

### Geoffrey Castle

# The First Burial in Victoria's Jewish Cemetery

At ten o'clock in the morning of Saturday, February 2, 1861, Dr. Featherstone arrived to examine the body of Morris Price who had died from multiple knife wounds received when he was attacked in his store the previous night. Price, a hardworking Prussian, had, in the space of a few years, succeeded in establishing himself in Victoria, New Westminster, and Cayoosh. He was considered to be quiet and inoffensive with no known enemies.

Since some gold coins and a quantity of gold dust were clearly visible and nothing seemed to be missing from the store, the motive for the murder was unclear. The only clue was a bare footprint. Constable Robert J. Flynn offered a reward at his own expense for information leading to the identity of the person or persons responsible for the brutal slaying of this unfortunate storekeeper. Within a few days, thanks to the efforts of the local citizens and Mr.





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Price's fellow Freemasons, the reward was raised to \$1,500. Such an amount was substantial considering it would purchase and furnish a home at that time.

Three days later, Skoominolo, a Shuswap Indian, was arrested. He implicated two others, Sheoopa and Chioopalaski. It was the latter who explained that Sheoopa was distraught following his father's death and felt compelled to give vent to his feelings.

It was not until March 28 that a committee was set up to receive the body of the deceased in order to provide a suitable burial. The remains were sent to Victoria aboard the Steamship *Otter* because the Victoria Lodge was the nearest one to Cayoosh. The following day, the coffin was placed in a hearse and a sombre procession, with the Freemasons of Victoria Lodge number 1085 leading, wound its way from downtown to the new Jewish cemetery on Cedar Hill Road.

Upon arrival at the cemetery, the Masonic ceremony was held first, after which the Hebrew burial service was performed and the body was lowered into its final resting place. The *Colonist* reported that the whole ceremony was most impressive and charged with considerable emotion. It was a significant occasion because Morris Price was the first person to be buried in Victoria's Jewish cemetery.

Two years earlier, on Sunday, February 5, 1860, the dedication service of the cemetery had been performed. Located on high ground, near the edge of Victoria, the provision of a burial ground represented the fulfillment of a major wish of the small Jewish community on the west coast of British North America.

On April 12, 1861, Matthew Baillie Begbie reported to Governor James Douglas that the murder of Morris Price was both deplorable and extraordinary. He also stated that Skoominolo and Sheoopa were under sentence of death for the crime. The third person, Chioopalaski, because he was co-operative with the police, and less directly involved, was sentenced to twelve months hard labour on the lesser charge of manslaughter.

### References

Elwin, T. Letter to W.A.G. Young. 16 February 1861.  
"Burial of Morris Price." *Colonist*, 7 May 1861, p. 3.  
Begbie, Judge Matthew B. Letter to W.A.G. Young. 12 April 1861.

*Geoffrey Castle is an archivist with the Provincial Archives of British Columbia.*

## Victoria, B.C. April 27-28, 1985

### Heritage Cemeteries in B.C. Symposium

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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.

# News and Notes

## INTRODUCING...

BCHF President Leonard G. McCann



Leonard at work on the next exhibit for the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

Visitors to the Vancouver Maritime Museum never fail to be impressed with its waterfront location, the magnificent *St. Roch*, and the special displays on maritime history that are mounted throughout the year. The curator responsible for these exhibits is our president, Leonard McCann.

Born on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, Leonard received his early education in Shanghai and in the Philippines. His family had been resident in China since the mid-19th century. Fortunately for us, Leonard completed his education on the eastern side of the Pacific, in Victoria and Vancouver. After a television career in Vancouver and Toronto, he worked on new exhibits at the Kelowna Centennial Museum, the Royal Canadian Engineer's Military Museum in Chilliwack, the Vancouver Maritime Museum,

and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. He became curator of the Vancouver Maritime Museum in 1976.

Leonard has shared his special knowledge of British Columbia's maritime history in *The Honourable Company's Beaver*, and in numerous articles written for *Heritage West*, *Harbour and Shipping*, *Museum Round-up*, *Snaug*, and *Vancouver History*. He has served as a member of the Executive Council of the B.C. Museums' Association, president of the Vancouver Historical Society, director of the Nautical Heritage Society, and in 1985 became a founding director of the Roedde House Preservation Society in Vancouver. Please read his special message for BCHF members on the following page.

# The Future of the B.C. Historical Federation

## A Special Message from the President

1. *The objects of the Association shall be: to encourage historical research and public interest in history; to promote the preservation of historic sites and buildings, documents, relics, and other significant heirlooms of the past; and to publish historical studies and documents as circumstances may permit.*
2. *The purposes of the Federation are:*
  - a. *to stimulate public interest, and to encourage historical research, in British Columbia History;*
  - b. *to promote the preservation and marking of historical sites, relics, natural features, and other objects and places of historical interest;*
  - c. *to publish historical sketches, studies, and documents.*

The first is from the Constitution of the British Columbia Historical Association as published in its *First Annual Report and Proceedings* in October, 1923. The second is from the Constitution of the British Columbia Historical Federation as registered under the Society Act, July, 1983. Sixty years apart—but, fundamentally, no real difference in purposes and objectives. And the 1983 statement is just as praiseworthy and valid as the 1923 one. So, what is the problem, if there is one? It is that the rest of the outside world has altered—but the Federation/Association's objectives have not. Or rather, it is the field that the Federation once felt was its sole domain that has altered. It has not just altered—it has been pre-empted, and in such a way that I feel we must consider very carefully our continuing purposes and objectives, and possibly redefine them in the light of contemporary interests.

Let us join the intentions from the two Constitutions and see what has become of them in today's world. "To promote the preservation and marking of historic sites, buildings and natural features." This is now an activity actively undertaken by local, provincial and even national Heritage organizations. "To promote the preservation of ... relics ... and other objects". This is now an activity largely carried out by museum operations and associations—both local, provincial and national. "To promote the preservation of ... documents". There is a


Provincial Archives Advisor now, and many historical societies and museums have their own well-established archival holdings.

Well, what is left? To promote and publish B.C. History? That is certainly an expanding field. Seriously, is this the territory that is now left to the B.C.H.F.? Remember that in 1922, when the above objectives were stated as being the essence of the organization, museums, archives, and heritage concerns were not separate parts of the social scene and civic organization, and these objectives were not really defined with any clarity. It has only been post-World War II that such concerns have emerged to take on a distinctive form and interest of their own, and with their own distinctive supporters. These supporters—and many of you can be numbered among them—are, in the larger context, all supporters and promoters of an understanding of British Columbia history, and you are welcomed and appreciated. But now, with its declared fields of interest being actively occupied by other organizations, the B.C.H.F. must consider its own future direction. Your Council will be very pleased to receive from member councils and individual members some considered expressions as to how that future should be determined. We would appreciate receiving your thoughts in writing.

—Leonard G. McCann,  
President

## A Special Message from the Vice-President Is Your Historical Society "On Track"?

Historical Societies experience highs of enthusiastic participation alternately with doldrums of despair and disorientation. The provincial council of your British Columbia Historical Federation offers the following suggestions to point the way to meaningful activities. Each group should assess its progress in terms of the objectives of the local society. Your



constitution probably urges you to record history; preserve history (aural histories and archives); preserve, or encourage preservation of, historic sites and local artifacts. Further objectives, sometimes unwritten, urge your society to create and maintain favourable relations with the community as a whole. History buffs should be prepared not only with information but also to *enthuse* children in classes or youth groups about their history and heritage. Fund raisers should complement rather than compete with other community groups. Cooperation and contributions from citizens or organizations should be given a public "Thank You".

Good Public Relations requires plenty of advertising, well in advance, about interesting programs presented by your group. This advertising should contain a sincere invitation to the general public. Are you cooperating with the Town Council and/or Chamber of Commerce for special events? Have you thought of encouraging local students by offering a prize for merit in social studies or history essays? Are your archives available to the local newspaper? Are you interested researchers? Do your by-laws limit the time an individual may hold office? Terms of one or two years reduces stagnation, burnout, and deification. Teamwork promotes success.

Every member should pause and evaluate his/her commitment to the local group. What is the group doing right? What else could it do? What else would you like to see done? What are you willing and able to do to arrange that your group undertakes your suggested program? (It might be as simple as making a few phone calls once you have consulted the executive about dates and times.) Do you need help or advice from the provincial Historical Federation? B.C.H.F. can, for example, offer information and advice to writers or would-be writers.

Each of us joined a historical society because of an interest in history. Perhaps we wanted to support the development and operation of a local museum. If this museum is now the responsibility of the municipality, why not honour staff and supporters at a social gathering such as a pot-luck supper or wine and cheese party? If our aim was to participate in producing a book of local history, we realize that research and recording can be ongoing to make it easier for the writers of that "next volume". Perhaps all we wanted was the entertainment provided by good guest speakers. Now is the time to investigate groups with parallel interests such as a heritage building restoration committee. Invite

them to participate in a program with your society. Enjoy history by sharing with others, especially senior citizens at a drop-in centre or living in a retirement manor. Analyze your community. Praise your group for its accomplishments. Look wide. Your opportunities are many. Participate in future projects, for your personal as well as your group's well-being.

The British Columbia Historical Federation wishes to assist and encourage local historical societies. The Federation council consists of eight elected table officers, the past president, and the editor of the BCHF magazine, plus the president of each local branch society. Every society represented at the Annual Convention should ensure that its president (or a deputy) attend the Council meeting on Thursday evening prior to the reception and again Sunday morning after elections and the banquet. The other two council meetings are held in different centres, one in the fall and one in the winter. These are attended by representatives from societies fairly close to the meeting place.

What do you visualize in a "job description" for your BCHF Council? The Council currently arranges for production of a quality magazine, provides assistance to writers, and engineers excellent Annual Conventions. The *B.C. Historical News* is a glossy magazine edited quarterly by a volunteer using material submitted by friends of the magazine. The magazine's column, *News from Branches* provides a forum for sharing, as do the reports given at Annual Meetings. Writers can experience the pleasure of seeing their articles in print in the magazine, or have books evaluated by the Book Review Editor. The BCHF provides everything from helpful hints and short-term loans to full-fledged seminars for writers. Books receive praise and publicity when submitted for the writing competition. The author of the best history of the year earns the Lieutenant-Governor's medal. Members of the executive will attempt to answer questions or give suggestions if they are approached. Possibly this group could achieve a higher profile if benefactors could be found to endow a scholarship for university students majoring in B.C. History. The 1985 Convention on Galiano Island and the 1986 Convention in Vancouver are planned and promise to be very interesting events. Bring your suggestions and concerns to the convention or write to: Mrs. Naomi Miller, Vice President, British Columbia Historical Federation, Box 105, Wasa, B.C. V0B 2K0.

## Honour Roll 1923-1985

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1925 "	"	"
for the 4 years ended 1929		
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1968		Mabel Jordon
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1983 Lieut.-Gov. Henry P. Bell-Irving	Anne Stevenson	Barbara Stannard
1984 Lieut.-Gov. Henry P. Bell-Irving	Col. G.S. Andrews	Barbara Stannard
1985 Lieut.-Gov. Robert G. Rogers	Col. G.S. Andrews	Leonard G. McCann

*Editor's Note: There are a few blanks to be filled in. Can anyone help?*

# Bookshelf

*Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and the Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-1890.* Barry M. Gough. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1984. Pp. xvii, 287, illus. \$27.95

With this book, Barry M. Gough, Professor of History at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, completes his trilogy on the maritime history of British Columbia (the first two books—not in order of publication—are the award winning *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579-1809* and the authoritative *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914*). *Gunboat Frontier* is the fourth volume in the continuing Pacific Maritime Studies Series published by the UBC Press.

Gough is at his best in this book about the policing actions of the Royal Navy in the waters of coastal British Columbia. He is at one with his subject and his easy-going style is enlivened by his familiarity with the area gained from his personal explorations of the many bays, coves and islands described in his narrative. Furthermore, this is a well written, solidly researched and amply illustrated book, which draws from archival sources in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Explanatory footnotes—located at the back of the book—and an impressive index complete Gough's history.

The purpose of this book is to examine the administration of Imperial authority, and the extension of that authority when it collided with the native cultures of British Columbia. Imperial policy was created in Westminster and administered by distant colonial officials such as Sir James Douglas. Enforcement of that policy in coastal British Columbia often fell to the Navy and its Royal Marines who were ordered to quell native disturbances with a show of force. When trouble loomed on the coast, the cry "Send a gunboat" was heard in the halls of Westminster. The gunboat on the frontier was the symbol of authority—hence the author's title.

Professor Gough focussed his attention on the period 1846-1890 and, rather than pursue a chronological format which might disrupt topical continuity, he divided his work into three distinct parts. Part 1, "Company and colony" compares mid 19th century native and white societies and traces of development of the colony of Vancouver Island through the 1850s. Part 2, "Putting out fires", reviews colonial Indian policy and naval policing actions against slavery and liquor trafficking. This section concludes with an examination of the exercise of colonial authority as practiced in colonial British Columbia and Alaska. Part 3, "Extending the frontier",

analyzes post Confederation Indian policy to 1890, missionary activity and naval support—with an excellent section on William Duncan of Metlakatla—and closes with an examination of the final days of gunboat diplomacy on the west coast. Gough closes his book with an appraisal of his subject: gunboat diplomacy.

*Gunboat Frontier*, and the entire three volume set for that matter, will have wide appeal for it will be of value to many different readers: naval historians, ethnologists, anthropologists and the general reader eager for new knowledge of the history of this coastal area we call home. Gough's readers will also note that this is not a book which adopts a glorious "might is right" approach or an apologetic tone; rather, it is a sensitively written study of how the Navy, Gough's "amphibious policemen", dealt with conflict between two cultures on a collision path.

*Brian A. Young of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia has a long-standing interest in Maritime exploration.*

*Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on Women's Work in British Columbia.* Edited by Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro. Victoria: Camosun College, 1984. Pp. vii, 434, illus., \$12.00 (paper).

This volume weighs in (on a not very reliable kitchen scale) at 1 lb. 14 oz., or 840 grams, if you insist on metric. It is therefore not very practical for reading in bed. The bulk is increased by a massive academic paraphernalia of notes and bibliography. For example, three papers under the head of "Health", in all 22 pages, are defended by 10½ pages of notes and bibliography.

Any of eleven sectional general subjects may be represented by one, two, three or four researchers, who worked on sub-topics. "Health" is subdivided into: "The Search for Legitimacy, Nurses' Registration in British Columbia", "Vivian Dowding: Birth Control Activist, 1892-", and "Reducing Maternal Mortality in British Columbia: an Educational Process". One finds that Dr. Isabel Arthur (a familiar "school doctor" figure of this reviewer's Nelson school days) was, in 1917, addressing a meeting of the province's medical health officers, crusading for pre-natal care.

In fact, a lot of "crusaders" appear in these pages, under "Education", "Labour and Auxiliaries", and many another topic—and, of course: "Politicians". Under this last heading, one section presents photos and capsule biographies of the 23 women who have been elected to the B.C. Legislature. Fuller attention is given to the first, Mary Ellen Smith, elected in 1918, and to Tilly Jean Rolston, elected in 1941.

Somewhat puzzling is the title, "The Peacock and the Guinea Hen: Political Profiles of Dorothy Gretchen Steeves and Grace MacInnis". Having reported a full session of the Legislature for a weekly provincial newspaper, I don't think of these two women as a pair, but as two of a trio, wherein the third was Laura Jamieson. All three were well educated women, wise and witty. Having also known both peacocks and guinea hens, species given to malevolent, hoarse screaming, I am puzzled by the title. As the author makes no reference to the reason for this choice, one is left wondering why she felt it apt.

Other members of the local societies composing the B.C. Historical Federation may not be recognized in the material before me. However, among member contributors, I do note: Jacqueline Gresko on "Mary Moody's Pioneer Life in New Westminster", and Elsie Turnbull on "Women at Cominco during the Second World War". A list of "Women in Whose Honour B.C. Schools Have Been Named" includes Anne Mackenzie Stevenson (past honorary president of the Federation). It is somewhat startling to see a "?" under the head of "date of death", in the case of one who still vigorously attends annual meetings. Then the realization presents: most schools have been named after the death of women so honoured.

The two editors of this volume have made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the social history of our province. They point out that this volume supplements, rather than replaces their earlier *In Her Own Right*. The preface informs us that this collection is drawn from papers presented at the first "Women's History in British Columbia Conference," sponsored by Camosun College in 1984. The physical production of the book was entirely handed (at remarkable speed!) by that College's students, under faculty supervision; surely a remarkable achievement for one of our community colleges!

It is to be hoped that existing and possibly further "Cuts! Cuts!" to educational funding will not curtail further such productions.

*Clare McAllister, a member of the Victoria branch, has long had a special interest in social policy.*

*Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands.* Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard. Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983. Pp. 176, illus., no price given.

The authors introduce this book as "a cultural and historical description of the Klahoose, Homalco and Sliammon Indian people living along both sides of the northern Strait of Georgia". They have produced an attractive, well written ethnology with a brief history and a wealth of accompanying photographs. It is a work that should appeal to general readers as well as specialists.

Bouchard and Kennedy have worked extensively among the Indians of British Columbia. Their fieldwork under the auspices of the British Columbia Indian Language Project has yielded an impressive array of publications, including *Shuswap Stories* (1979) and *Lillooet Stories* (*Sound Heritage* vol. 6 no. 1, 1977). The present study focuses upon an often overlooked area of northern Coast Salish culture. Anthropologists have generally been more interested in the northern neighbours of the Coast Salish; the aggressive, materially rich Kwakiutl. Homer Barnett attempted to redress this imbalance, gathering material during the 1930s that would eventually be presented in *The Coast Salish Indians of British Columbia* (1955). *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* does not supplant Barnett's earlier study. It offers instead an entertaining and often enlightening supplement.

The book is based upon interviews conducted between 1971 and 1981 among a small group of informants, including several relatives of people interviewed by Barnett. In many respects these informants are the real authors here, providing the raw material that Bouchard and Kennedy have woven into a cohesive presentation. The text is littered with illuminating quotations covering a broad spectrum of traditional knowledge. Information is arranged into standard ethnographic subject areas: culture and language, subsistence, rites of passage, social organization, tool technology and so on. None of these topics is treated in depth and very little interpretation is offered. As noted earlier however, this is a descriptive rather than a theoretical work. Speculative ethnology would be an intrusion.

The descriptive approach chosen by Bouchard and Kennedy is particularly effective in their examination of material culture. In most instances well-chosen photographs clearly illustrate the text. When Bill Mitchell explains how to make a canoe bailer from red cedar (p. 74), photographs on the facing page allow us to watch as he works. Other examples of this successful integration of text and illustration include Rose Mitchell's description of basket making (p. 76-78), and Elizabeth Harry's demonstration of salmon drying techniques (p. 27-30).

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Another highlight of *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* are the myths and tales collected chiefly in chapter ten but sprinkled elsewhere through the text as well. The authors contribute a brief but informative accompanying commentary in which they remind us that "the myths lose so much in translation that we are severely limited in our ability to appreciate the subtleties of the language and the performance. For, in the hands of a skilled storyteller, the stories are performed, not simply told". Nevertheless, these stories are fascinating in themselves, allowing us a rare glimpse into a rich oral tradition.

The latter chapters of this book are less successful. These deal with the effects of white civilization and culture upon the Indian. This is an important field of study, but one that deserves more attention than it receives here. Chapter thirteen consists of little more than two extensive quotations illustrating government reserve policy. In light of the ethnographic material that precedes it, this historical afterthought is awkward and unnecessary. If these chapters had been eliminated, perhaps we could have had a few more folk tales or a longer look at material culture.

As good as *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* is, it could have been better. The inclusion of some comparative material for example, would have strengthened the book considerably, enabling the reader to see this northern Coast Salish culture in relation to other cultures of the coast. Criticisms aside, however, we should be grateful to Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy for preserving this valuable account of traditional Indian ways and making it available to a wider audience.

*Peter Smith, a Victoria resident, has special interests in history and anthropology.*

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Patricia Roy is the Book Review Editor. Copies of books for review should be sent to her at 602-139 Clarence St., Victoria V8V 2J1

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

The British Columbia Photographers Directory, 1858-1900. David Mattison, Camera Workers Press, Box 684, Victoria V8W 2P3. Pp. 100, illus., \$18 (paper).

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## WANTED—BOOKS

**Good, used Canadiana for our BCHS Convention May 2-5, 1985.**

The Vancouver Historical Society will hold a sale of second-hand and antiquarian books at the Annual Conference on Galiano Island, May 2nd-5th, 1985. This sale is again in aid of the Vancouver Centennial Bibliography Project, which is almost ready for publication.

The Committee is looking for donations of good used books, preferably Canadiana. If you have any books which you would like to donate to our book table, please bring them with you to Galiano, or write Anne Yandle, 3450 West 20th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6S 1E4. (Note: we are unable this year to take any new books to sell on commission.)

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## Contest

**President Len McCann drew the winner's name at the recent BCHF Council meeting. None other than Archie Miller, Curator of Irving House, New Westminster, is the lucky recipient of *Winners and Losers: Gamblers All* by Rosemary Neering.**

**Watch for a new contest in the next issue of the News.**



## NEW BOOKS: ENTRIES IN THE 1984 B.C. HISTORICAL FEDERATION'S WRITING COMPETITION

These books are available at local bookstores or by mail from the address following the title.

*Recollections 1909-1984 The Women's Canadian Club of Vancouver*

Editor - Hilary K. Blair, 34 pages, \$3.00

Order from: The Women's Canadian Club of Vancouver

409-207 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H7

The club from inception to present.

*West Kootenay: The Ghost Town Country*

Author - N.L. Barlee, 176 pages, \$11.95

Order from: Canada West Magazine

General Delivery  
Station A  
Surrey, B.C. V3S 4P2

A glance at mining history, and the degeneration of most of the old busy mining communities into ghost towns.

*Growing Up British in British Columbia*

Author: Jean Barman, 259 pages, \$29.95.

Order from: University of B.C. Press

6344 Memorial Road  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

*A history of boys in class-based private schools in British Columbia.*

*False Creek: History, Images and Research Sources*

Author - Robert K. Burkinshaw, 81 pages, \$5.95 plus \$1.91 postage

Order from: City of Vancouver Archives

1150 Chestnut Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9

A brief history in words, pictures and maps of the False Creek area.

*Whistle Punk - Volume 1*

Editor - Gord Currie, 32 pages per issue, 4 issues - \$10.00; 8 issues - \$18.00

Order from: Curries Forestgraphics Ltd.

2035 Stanley Avenue  
Victoria, B.C. V8R 3X7

An ongoing anthology of stories from the logging industry.

*Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-1890*

Author - Barry M. Gough, 287 pages, \$27.95

Order from: University of B.C. Press

6344 Memorial Road  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

The Royal Navy brings British law to the West Coast Indians.

*Blue Bows and the Golden Rule*

Authors - Margaret Lang Hastings & Lorraine Ellenwood, 138 pages, \$5.00

Order from: The Secretary

Provincial Council of Women of British Columbia

Mrs. Evelyn Fingarson

308 - 5777 Willingdon

Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4B1

Acknowledgements of the contributions made by participating groups and organizations to the B.C. Council of Women

*Forging a New Hope, Struggles and Dreams*

Hope and District Historical Society, 470 pages, \$35.00 plus \$2.00 postage

Order from: Mrs. Frances Thomas

RR #2, Silverhope Road  
Hope, B.C. V0X 1L0

An anthology of Hope, Flood and Laidlaw 1848-1948

*The Destiny of British Columbia - Confederation or Annexation?*

Authors - Charles Hou & Marlena Morgan, 134 pages, \$12.00

Order from: B.C.T.F. Lesson Aids Service

2235 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

Quotations from arguments 1866 to 1871 as to why B.C. should confederate with Canada or be annexed to the United States of America.

*Vancouver the Way It Was*

Author - Michael Kluckner, 239 pages, \$39.95

Order from: Whitecap Books Ltd.

1086 West 3rd Street  
North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3J6

One hundred years of Vancouver's history illustrated with 42 watercolour paintings and many old postcards and photos. Biographies and stories presented in short articles.

*Vancouver's Orpheum: The Life of a Theatre*

Author - Doug McCallum, 40 pages, \$5.00

Order from: City of Vancouver

Social Planning Department  
453 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

A beautifully illustrated history of the early theatre and its preservation as a Historical Building

*The History of the O'Keefe Ranch*

Author - Stan McLean, 192 pages, \$9.95 plus 75¢ postage

Order from: Mr. Stan McLean

4005 - 12th Street  
Vernon, B.C. V1T 7Y5

A brief history of the famous O'Keefe Ranch near Vernon

**Mysterious Powell Lake**

Author - Carla Mobley, 96 pages, \$7.95  
Order from: Hancock House Publishers  
19313 Zero Avenue  
Surrey, B.C. V3S 5J9

A story of the characters of the lake presented in a simple and entertaining way.

**Growing Up in the Valley**

Author - Imbert Orchard, 79 pages, \$4.50  
Order from: Sound & Moving Image Division  
Provincial Archives of B.C.  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Stories and personal experiences of some early settlers in the Lower Fraser Valley

**Bunch Grass to Barbed Wire**

Heritage Committee, Rose Hill Farmers Institute, 226 pages, \$25.00 plus \$1.50 postage  
Order from: Mrs. W. Philip  
Box 49  
Knutsford, B.C. V0E 2H0

A beautiful history of the communities south of Kamloops from homesteading to present day.

**The McQueen Story**

Author - Phyllis McQueen Smith, 149 pages, \$15.00  
Order from: Kootenay Lake Historical Society  
Kaslo, B.C. V0G 1M0

History and memorabilia of the McQueen family of Kaslo.

**Yellowhead Pass and Its People**

Valemount Historic Society, 622 pages, 1,230 photos, \$40.00 plus \$2.50 postage  
Order from: Box 850  
Valemount, B.C. V0E 2Z0  
Attn. Aleda Bain Phone (604) 566-4324

An excellent anthology with hard cover.

**48th Report of the Okanagan Historical Society**

Editor - Jean Webber, Osoyoos, 207 pages, \$7.00 plus \$1.50 postage  
Order from: O.H.S. Treasurer  
P.O. Box 313,  
Vernon, B.C. V1T 6M3

An anthology with detailed history of packing houses, plus pioneer families. Soft cover.

**Walachin (Catastrophe or Camelot)**

Author - Joan Weir, 104 pages, \$7.95  
Order from: Hancock House Publishers  
19313 Zero Avenue  
Surrey, B.C. V3S 5J9

The background and history of the short-lived settlement of Walachin.

**Discover Barkerville - A Gold Rush Adventure**

Author - Richard T. Wright, 140 pages, \$6.95  
Order from: Whitecap Books  
1086 West 3rd Street  
North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3J6

Details of Barkerville past and present.

## 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 1985 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, 1986.

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.

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL FEDERATION

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Please submit manuscripts to Helen Akrigg.

## JOIN

Why not join the British Columbia Historical Federation and receive the *British Columbia Historical News* regularly?

The BCHF is composed of member societies in all parts of the province. By joining your local society you receive not only a subscription to *British Columbia Historical News*, but the opportunity to participate in a program of talks and field trips, and to meet others interested in British Columbia's history and the BCHF's annual convention.

For information, contact your local society (address on the inside front cover)... No local society in your area? Perhaps you might think of forming one. For information contact the secretary of the BCHF (address inside back cover).