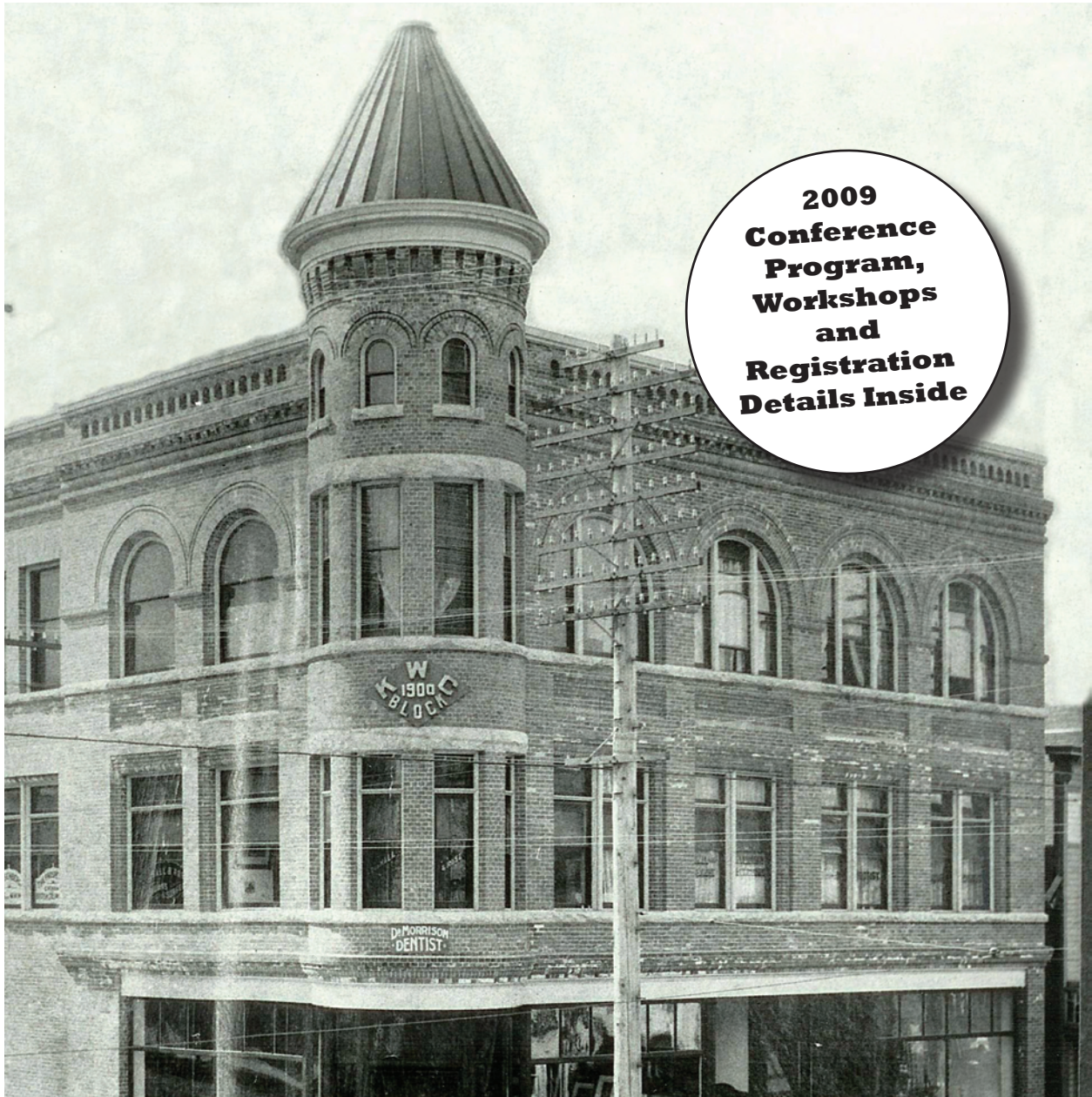


# British Columbia **HISTORY**

Journal of the British Columbia Historical Federation | Vol. 41 No. 4 | \$5.00



**2009  
Conference  
Program,  
Workshops  
and  
Registration  
Details Inside**

**This Issue: It's All About Nelson | 2009 Conference information | and more**



## British Columbia History

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**Cover Image:** KWC Building c. 1902  
Touchstones Nelson photo

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“Any country worthy of a future should be interested in its past”  
W. Kaye Lamb, 1937

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

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

Applications should be submitted to: Marie Elliott, Chair BC Historical Federation Scholarship Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

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# British Columbia **HISTORY**

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If you are reading this in a public library in British Columbia, that is due to the generosity of the Hudson’s Bay Company Foundation, which has subsidized your library’s subscription as part of its contribution to the commemoration of British Columbia’s Sesquicentennial in 2008.

We hope you will enjoy reading the magazine.  
Information about subscriptions may be found on the inside front cover.

# The Corner and the K-W-C

By Patricia A. Rogers

Patrica Rogers is a Nelson based writer. She contributes frequently to BC History.

“If you build it they will come,”<sup>1</sup>. and come by the thousands they have to Nelson’s historic downtown core. Although Nelson was not the backdrop for the Universal Pictures movie it certainly was a field of dreams, a tabula rasa, for the talented architects of the day.

One of these talented men and the most prolific, Alexander Carrie, designed a structure that has been the anchor of Baker Street since its completion in 1901. Stand anywhere on Baker Street and your eyes are drawn to that most distinctive turret at the very centre of our city. Unbeknown to many is the fact that at one time there were four turrets at this very cross street and only the Kirkpatrick Wilson Clements Block has withstood the test of time.

By 1900 the shantytown that became the City of Nelson was gaining in respectability. The Ward Creek gorge that bisected Baker Street had been filled in and the stage was set. With budding entrepreneurial spirit large stone and brick edifices were being constructed and the southwest corner of Baker and Ward Streets was not immune.

According to the Nelson *Daily Miner* the Bank of Montreal had cast covetous eyes on Lot 10 of Block 10. They had recently retained architect Francis Rattenbury to draw plans for a new bank and this corner was perfect. Mr. Rattenbury attended at Nelson and announced that he did not believe, with the proximity of Ward Creek, that foundations could be constructed that would adequately support his building. With that the Bank of Montreal “swapped Titles” with the owner of the lots of the present day site of the bank.

However, “swapped” is not quite accurate. The activity on this corner allows for a brief glimpse into land speculation in early Nelson.

On April 4, 1899 the Bank of Montreal sold Lot 10 to Frank Fletcher and Arthur E. Hodgins for the sum of \$10,000. Frank Fletcher purchased the share of Arthur E. Hodgins on March 5, 1900 for the sum of \$1,000 and on the same day sold Lot 10 to Austin Henry Clements for the sum of \$10,500.00!

On June 25, 1900 A. H. Clements purchased an equal share of Lot 9 from John Andrew Kirkpatrick and Charles J. Wilson for the sum of \$1.00. Prior to this sale the Title had changed hands ten times since 1891! On June 30, 1900 J.A. Kirkpatrick and C.J. Wilson purchased an equal share of Lot 10 from A.H. Clements for the sum of \$1.00. The K.W.C. partnership was now on equal footing, the land was secure and both lots were consolidated into one holding. As an



Alexander Carrie c. 1912  
Courtesy of the Wallach Family

interesting aside, Charles J. Wilson was the great uncle of the actress, Margot Kidder.

Partners were added and deleted over the next few years until the building was purchased by A. (Annie) MacDonald in 1905. This company, A. MacDonald and Company of Winnipeg, eventually became Canada Safeway Limited. A. MacDonald continued to hold Title until November 12, 1929 when the building was sold to the K.W.C. Company. This Company retained ownership until the sale to the present owners in 1973.

The K.W.C. Block, to be built of pressed brick with marble trim, would be 3 stories in height and cover an area of 60 x 120 feet with a 30-foot frontage on Baker Street. The corner store was to be occupied by the Canada Drug and Book Company, with the adjacent store, on Baker, the Kirkpatrick Wilson Company (Mercantile). The Ward Street frontage would house The Palm (Confectionery) and the West Kootenay Butcher Company. The main entrance would be on Baker Street. The estimated cost was \$35,000.00!

On April 9, 1900 the work commenced. Just as today the use of local contractors was preferred and these were employed by Alexander Carrie. T.L. Bilderbeck was awarded the excavation contract; he estimated 3,700 yards of earth would have to be

1. Kinsella, W.P. *Shoeless Joe*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 1996.

removed. Shackleton and Laidlaw supplied the masons. Their estimate for the foundations and Ward Street retaining wall was 1,000 yards of masonry. W.G. Gillette was awarded the general contracting; and the Lawrence Hardware Company would complete the steam heating, plumbing, gas fitting and sheet metal work. Pressed brick and terra cotta was to be supplied by Ernest Mansfield.

While the exterior of the building was nearing completion plans were made for the interior fittings. The Kirkpatrick Wilson Company would have fittings of the "latest model" of "native woods with mirrors placed at intervals." The third floor had been leased by Mrs. F.J. Squire to furnish 28 rooms as "sleeping compartments" with "parlours" and "toilets." Skylights and light wells were employed in the darker recesses.

The second floor consisted of offices occupied by: Galliher and Wilson (Lawyers), The Prospectors Exchange, Drs. Hall and Rose (M.D.), Dr. Morrison (D.D.S.), Charles Waterman (Auctioneer), Arlington Mines of Erie, B.C., Graeb and McIntyre (Brokers), Ashnola Smelter Limited and the Similkameen Valley Coal Company.

The K.W.C. Block was the largest business block in the city and according to *The Tribune* one of the finest in the province. It was completed at a cost of \$42,500.00!

Many will remember Mann's Drugs. Edward Mann was the nephew of William Rutherford, Druggist. Mr. Rutherford was with the Canada Drug and Book Company until he opened his own store in this same location eventually evolving into Mann's Drugs. A drug store was a constant in this one location for over 70 years. Edward Mann was responsible for placing the clock in the turret

When Nelson was in an economic downturn Baker Street evidenced the loss. The street looked forlorn and in need of a face lift. With the Downtown Revitalization Project of the mid 1980s came a breath of fresh air and the rebirth of the Queen City - as well as the K.W.C.!

The K.W.C. Block today is assessed at over \$1 million. It retains retail stores on the first level and private apartments on the second and third floors. Due to the plans of architect Carrie, the fine workmanship of the local contractors, the natural resources of the West Kootenay and the care of the present owners, the K.W.C. Block has not only withstood the test of time, it will be here long after we have passed. •



KWC Building c. 1902  
Touchstones Nelson photo

# A Kootenay Saga: The Revelstoke Police War, the “Kidnapping” of Premier Robson and the Rise of “Pothole” Kellie

by Bill Laux

This was the last article Bill sent to BC History and I've been waiting for an appropriate time to publish it

Bill Laux was a man of many talents, known for his endeavours as an artist, a writer, a builder of buildings made of mud-cement bricks, a small hydroelectric plant operator, as well as an exotic evergreen tree nurseryman but for BC History readers he was a historian searching out the stories about the early mines and railways of the West Kootenays and eastern Washington state.

He passed away in October 2004.

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was built across the Northwest Territories to the Rockies on Dominion lands. In British Columbia, the province owned the Crown lands but was so keen to get the railway that it agreed to convey “in trust to the Dominion” a belt of land 20 miles on each side of the proposed route. From this the CPR could select its grant lands on completion of the line. For the cession of this land the Dominion was to pay British Columbia \$100,000 per year. This arrangement created a belt of Dominion land through the province from Kicking Horse Pass to Port Moody. Missing from the agreement was any reference to whose laws were to govern the Railway Belt and whose police were to enforce them. The Dominion government and the CPR assumed that they would be in charge; the British Columbia government believed that it retained this responsibility. It was all very abstruse but it came to a head in Farwell/Revelstoke, in 1885.

Arthur Stanhope Farwell, born in Derbyshire, England in 1841, the son of a clergyman, arrived in Victoria in 1864. His surveyor's skills were much in demand. Farwell served as provincial Surveyor General 1872 - 1878. After Walter Moberly discovered the Eagle Pass route to the Kootenays, the provincial government sent Farwell and Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, also a surveyor, to lay out a road from the Sicamous steamer landing to the Columbia River at Big Eddy in 1883.

Closely following them was Gustavus Blin Wright with his men who were building the wagon road then being surveyed. Wright had built large sections of the Cariboo road and was now betting that the next big gold strike would be in the Kootenays. The government hoped that the Eagle Pass road would encourage the Kootenay mine owners to ship their ore out over this route to New Westminster. As a mineral route, however, the road was a failure as there was no smelter on the Coast to treat those Kootenay ores.

With the CPR's announcement that it would build via the Rogers and Eagle Pass route, Wright's road was at once crowded with men headed east, all wanting to get in on the CPR construction. Wright was waiting for them at Big Eddy where he was building a sawmill and had taken the contract to



construct the first bridge across the Columbia.

Farwell was there as well. His experience as a surveyor convinced him that the CPR would have to cross the Columbia at a point just below Big Eddy and he at once applied to Victoria for a pre-emption grant of 175 acres on this spot plus an additional Crown Grant of 1000 acres for a town site. His application was dated October 20, 1883, just as he and Sproat had finished their Eagle Pass survey. Not waiting for his grants to be approved. Farwell began laying out the town he named for himself. Farwell's land ran from the present Revelstoke golf course east to present Rokeby Street, then south to the River and back along the river bank to the golf course. It was an ideal site for a town. Wright was building his bridge, the Columbia River steamers could have their landing on Farwell's Front Street and the Canadian Pacific would have to buy their right of way, station grounds and yards from him. Title to Farwell's grants was issued January 13, 1885 with the CPR crews already across Rogers Pass and clearing their line down the Illecillewat River. Farwell awaited their arrival confident that he was about to become very rich.

When the CPR graders entered Farwell's grant



Golden the workers found plentiful liquor awaiting them and drunken trouble soon broke out. Sam Steele and his NWMP from their Wild Horse Post were immediately dispatched to the railroad camps to enforce the Dominion prohibition on alcohol. The government and people of British Columbia, who had waited 15 years for the promised railway, were in no mood to concede anything to the Dominion government. When the railway arrived in Farwell, the province was issuing liquor licences to everyone erecting a tent or building a log hotel. It refused a request to rescind Farwell's grants and was perfectly content to see its citizens get as much as they could of that railway payroll.

Along with the new town site a NWMP barracks and jail was built in early 1885 at the top of the Douglas Street hill to administer Dominion law and keep alcohol out of Revelstoke. Sam Steele was

an angry William Van Horne had no choice but to pay Farwell for his right of way across this "illegal" provincial townsite. A small, temporary station called "Gold Hill" or "Second Crossing" was grudgingly built on the north side of the track between present Charles and Ford Avenues. But Van Horne had a surprise for Arthur Farwell. There was a large area of flat land half a mile east of Farwell where the CPR track emerged from the Illecillewat Canyon. There the railway laid out a Dominion granted town site of its own with yards, station, streets, a hotel and lots for sale. It called the place Revelstoke after a substantial British investor.

The CPR forbade liquor in its work camps or anywhere near them and the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) enforced this rule with vigour. As construction passed Kicking Horse Pass and entered British Columbia, the Dominion rule still held: no alcohol was allowed within the Railway Belt. British Columbia, however, allowed the sale by anyone who held a valid liquor licence. Liquor licences were a valued source of revenue for the cash-strapped province and the province readily issued them. As soon as CPR construction arrived at

called away to the Northwest or Second Riel Rebellion but he left Special Commissioner George Hope Johnson in charge. A half mile away in Farwell, the Provincial government had appointed Gilbert Malcolm Sproat as stipendiary magistrate and big Jack Kirkup as chief constable of Farwell/Revelstoke. With the two towns full of wild and rowdy railway labourers and alcohol freely available in Farwell, the legal situation was murky. Special Commissioner George Johnson was enforcing Dominion law prohibiting the sale of alcohol while Kirkup was upholding provincial law permitting its sale.

With two rival police forces, each jealous of their own authority and enforcing conflicting regulations, a clash was bound to come. It happened in the hot summer of 1885. One of George Johnson's NWMP men came upon a man bringing a pack train of liquor into the Railway Belt and arrested him. When Johnson brought the man before Magistrate Sproat the packer pleaded that his act was perfectly legal under Provincial law. Sproat agreed and issued a warrant for the arrest of the Dominion constable and sent a provincial constable to Douglas Street to make the arrest. On his arrival at the NWMP barracks

*A. S. Farwell, Surveyor-General (left)*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo A-01295

*Gilbert Malcolm Sproat*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo A-01770

## The Lardeau City Misadventure

*Like his misguided pothole adventure Farwell made an unlucky choice for what he hoped would become the Kootenay metropolis, Lardeau City. To get in on the Lardeau mining boom he bought land in 1893 on the floodplain at the head of the Northeast Arm of Upper Arrow Lake and had it surveyed into the town site he called Lardeau or Lardeau City. This, he intended, was to become the commercial centre of all the mines being located up the Fish River and over the Badshot Range on Lardeau Creek.*

*J.M.Kellie used his power as Minister of Mines to have 513 miles of trails built to reach the isolated mines in his riding but his Lardeau road project was an embarrassment. He had the government build a road from his town of Lardeau City up the right bank of the Fish River, over a difficult mountain and down to cross the river to Camborne with its mines. But it was a road which connected the Fish River Mines to a muddy village with no steamer connections whatever.*

*Lardeau City was separated from the Northeast Arm by a wide mudflat, which prevented steamers from landing. The Camborne mines had to use Thompson's Landing to send out their ore over a road they built themselves in 1895. In spite of Kellie's political connections and persistent advertising as the "Centre of the Lardeau," which it was not, Lardeau City was a failure. It was mostly washed out by the great storm and flood of 1894, which also destroyed Killarney (Edgewood) and a good part of Kaslo.*

*Kellie's political and business rival, Hewitt Bostock a wealthy Englishman, who owned the Province newspaper, established a rival town of Comaplix two miles west of Lardeau with a dock for steamers and a large sawmill. At this, what remained of Lardeau City including its hotel, picked up and moved themselves over to the new town.*



the provincial constable was arrested by Dominion Commissioner Johnson, who tried him and sentenced him to jail for interfering with the duties of a Dominion constable. Sproat then sent another constable to arrest the Dominion constables and he too was arrested by the NWMP. An angry Sproat then issued a warrant for the arrest of Special Commissioner Johnson and swore in twenty men to act as special officers to arrest him. This posse captured Johnson and two of his constables, the remaining Dominion officers barricaded themselves in their headquarters and prepared to defend themselves if Sproat should attack. The standoff did not last long, George Johnson was released on bail and left both towns. One by one, most of the NWMP men discreetly took their leave as well. Sproat and Kirkup then took over the policing of both towns.

On September 23, an alarmed Dominion government sent in Colonel J.F. McLeod of the NWMP

to investigate. Sproat and McLeod, sitting jointly, presided over a hearing on the matter and concluded - that George Johnson and his deputies had been at fault in arresting legitimate Provincial police constables. They decided that henceforth the Dominion constables would police the Railway Belt east of Farwell, that is, Revelstoke to Kicking Horse Pass, and Provincial police would enforce the law in Farwell and from there west. Sam Steele returned and set up a new headquarters in Farwell to police and seize any alcohol east of that point. After the railway was finished and the CPR selected its Railway Belt lands the Dominion police withdrew.

While a compromise over the question of policing had been reached, the matter of land titles continued to be confused as ever. The Dominion government had been disposed to give grants of land within the Railway Belt to businesses and corporations seeking to develop the area. It granted land in Farwell to the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company but as the province had already granted this land to Arthur Farwell, it refused to register the grant. Similarly, it refused to register a Dominion grant to Kootenay Smelting and Trading Syndicate comprising 320

acres extending from present Government Road nearly to Mackenzie Avenue and from the river to the CPR right of way.

With the province refusing to honour Dominion grants and the Dominion government refusing to recognize provincial grants, no one in Revelstoke/Farwell could obtain a legally registered title to any property. The town had no hope of incorporating as long as this situation persisted. The smelter shut down, demanding a title before it would spend money to shore up the riverbank where erosion was undermining its works. Banks and other businesses refused to locate in such a chaotic place. Many hopeful businessmen simply left for Nelson, Golden or the Okanagan. The hope that with the arrival of the railway, Revelstoke/Farwell would become the trading centre and metropolis of the Kootenays faded.

Arthur Farwell sued the Dominion government





*Constable John Kirkup  
of the Provincial Police  
(left)*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo A-02263

*Farwell on the Columbia  
River, 1885*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo I-30817

for his rights. The case of Regina vs Farwell dragged on for ten years while the town waited. Finally, in February 1894, the Supreme Court of Canada announced that Farwell was to surrender his provincial title and receive in exchange a Dominion title to all 1175 acres of his grant minus those properties the Dominion government had granted to others. Still, it took three years after this decision before the first Revelstoke title deed was issued. Local squabbling and apathy delayed incorporation until 1899. By then Nelson was the undisputed administrative and commercial centre of the Kootenays. Many blamed Arthur Farwell who prudently moved to Nelson. His attempt to enter politics never succeeded as the voters of Revelstoke were solidly against him.

It was not only the businessmen and residents of the Railway Belt that resented the dual authority imposed on the CPR lands. Miners were outraged to find that they had to register all claims within the

Railway Belt with both governments. The Dominion claimed jurisdiction over "all minerals." while B.C. claimed jurisdiction over "precious metals." The Illecillewaet mines in the Railway Belt were on galena deposits containing lead, silver, zinc and gold and on these the province assessed a tax of 5% on all gold and silver mined in the Belt for a period of 25 years following the completion of the railway while the Dominion government demanded \$105 from the miners for each location within the Belt. This dual taxation, the angry miners insisted, was wrong and a detriment to the development of a mining industry in the Kootenays. Along with double taxation, the hard rock miners were still grappling with outdated laws drawn up for the placer miners of the 1860s.

While the miners were the single largest group in the Kootenays they found themselves without effective representation at Victoria. The MLA for Kootenay, Col. James Baker of Cranbrook, was

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*J. M. Kellie, M.L.A.*  
*for Kootenay*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo G-09892

obsessed with his coal and his railway schemes and had no time for the Railway Belt miners. Angry and rebellious, the miners found their champion in "Pothole" Kellie. James M. Kellie was born in Coburg Ontario in 1848. By 1884 he was in Golden prospecting and with his two partners, Kellie bought three placer claims on Canyon Creek, some eight km. south of Golden. There were two deep potholes on this creek and Kellie and his partners were sure they had gold at their bottoms - if they could somehow be drained. The three men set to work that winter to whipsaw lumber to build a flume to divert the creek past the potholes. By spring it was complete, however, a sudden snow-melt sent a torrent of water down the creek taking their flume with it. Patiently, they set to work to saw and carpenter together another flume and then with buckets they slowly bailed out the two potholes. Finally, reaching the bottom, in great excitement, they dug the last few feet of sand.

What they found was not gold, but only the decayed leg of a mountain goat. J.M. Kellie from then on was known as "Pothole" Kellie.

In 1889 "Pothole" Kellie was on the Illecillewaet River above Revelstoke where he had located several mining claims showing silver. Like the others working in the Railway Belt, he was incensed at being taxed by two governments. He became well known in the district among miners as an outspoken foe of both governments and the CPR, which was now levying an additional charge of \$20 on each mining claim located on its grant lands in the belt.

In Revelstoke, Kellie joined a group of twelve miners meeting in Teetzel's drugstore on Front Street in Farwell to protest Premier John Robson's unfair taxation of their mines. When the group learned that Robson would arrive on the train from Golden where he had been speaking in favour of his supporter, Colonel Baker, they decided to confront him forcibly.



The determined miners met Robson's train and invited him to stop over for a day and listen to their complaints and have the mining situation explained to him. Realizing that these angry men were willing to use force, the Premier was obliged to let himself be removed from his car and escorted to Cowan's hotel. The "kidnapped" Robson was kept in his room while the miners rushed out handbills to advertise a public meeting with the Premier for the following night. A large crowd attended, not only miners but most of the local businessmen as well. Robson had to sit through the evening listening to speaker after speaker attack his mining legislation as ignorant, obsolete, unfair and a hindrance to the mining industry. When he was at last allowed to speak, the Premier reminded his audience that in the coming June 1890 election the Kootenays were for the first time to have a second MLA and that he would be glad if it were someone familiar with mining matters who might advise him



*The Honourable John Robson, Premier from 1889 to 1892*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives  
photo A-01718

members increased the size of claims, clarified the rules for holding them, provided for mill site claims and introduced a new section on lode mines. Kellie was, like all miners, blunt and forthright in language and unwavering in his support of the independent miner. He canvassed his district faithfully, soliciting the views of every miner he met and stubbornly insisted that the money paid by the Kootenay miners in taxes, licences and fees should be scrupulously returned to the Kootenays in the form of appropriations for road, trail and bridge building to link the small miner with his market.

The decade of the 1890s saw the proliferation of Kootenay mines draw in an increasing population. In the provincial election of 1894, Kellie was returned with a handsome majority for the new riding of West Kootenay-North. By 1898 West Kootenay elected 4 members to the legislature and had a voter's list with 6115 names. Kellie, now as Minister

in the legislature. As the meeting came to a close "Pothole" Kellie was among those submitting their names to stand for that election. The other candidates were Arthur Farwell, whom most were blaming for the land titles mess, W.M. Brown, proprietor of the Columbia House hotel, one of first men to cross Gus Wright's bridge in 1884, and J.W. Haskins, of the Farwell Volunteer Fire Department.

As for Premier Robson, at his next stop in Kamloops, he took the platform to blandly proclaim that he had the mining difficulties well in hand. When the returns came in for the election, the miners had won. Their man, "Pothole" Kellie, defeated W.M. Brown by one vote (46-45) and the unpopular Arthur Farwell was not far behind with 40 votes.

"Pothole" Kellie went to Victoria and got himself on the committee drafting the new Mineral and Placer Mining Act. Together with CPR lawyer, George Cowan, Kellie and the other committee

of Mines, defended his district vigorously, loudly complaining that his "Kootenay Kow" was being milked of its riches to support poorer and unproductive districts like the Okanagan and Cariboo.

His slogans were long remembered. In 1964 the author was told by an ancient Trout Lake miner that the magnificent legislative buildings in Victoria had all been built with Kootenay gold and silver. Not true, of course, but this had long been one of "Pothole" Kellie's contentions, that his beloved "Kootenay Kow" was being milked for Victoria's aggrandizement. The loyalty of this Lardeau miner to his long ago champion suggests the power Kellie had been in his district.

"Pothole" Kellie held his legislative seat for ten years and earned the respect of the legislature for plain talk and passionate defence of the small miner.

The great influx of miners, merchants, tradesmen and others into the Kootenays had turned the original rude mining camps into sizable towns.



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The unincorporated towns of Nelson, Rossland, Trail, and Grand Forks were administered by the provincial government which received substantial tax revenues but returned only a pittance in grants for improvements. Again crying that Victoria was still shamelessly milking the “Kootenay Kow,” Kellie and the other interior MLA’s forced the passage of the “Speedy Incorporation of Towns Act 1897” which allowed towns to incorporate without the usual six months waiting period. Immediately, the towns of Rossland, Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks incorporated themselves and were now able to claim those tax revenues for local improvements. Revelstoke, however, was unable to use the new act as its status was still before the courts in the interminable Farwell vs Regina.

Kellie was elected for the last time in 1898. His usual support eroding with the miners’ and railwaymen’s unions now urging support for Socialist candidates. Kellie acknowledged that his miners’ world had changed. He did not run in 1900 and retired from provincial politics after losing the 1903 election. In blunt, miner-like language, “Pothole”

Kellie summed up his political career, “whether my political actions were wise or otherwise I am not a judge. All I know is that I have done what my conscience dictated, and I commanded my own respect.”

The Railway Belt lands which had created all the problems turned out to be largely semi-desert land unsuitable for agriculture. The CPR selected its grant lands from the heavily timbered mountain regions and those riverine lands along the Thompson and Fraser which could be farmed. As for the rest, the Dominion government privately sold 4,900,000 acres mostly in the Peace River Block but the remainder, which no one wanted, was transferred back to British Columbia in 1930 and dual sovereignty in British Columbia ceased. •

# An “Umble Tradesman”: Thomas Harris First Mayor of Victoria

By Robert G. Dennison,

What a sight! Old John Butts walking slowly and ringing a bell before Thomas Harris, the huge 300 pound plus butcher, proprietor of the “Queen’s Meat Market on Wharf Street” riding his favourite horse George. Attired in a Prince Albert coat, black trousers, top hat, polished boots, a thick gold watch chain strung across his chest and his ever present riding whip in his hand,<sup>1</sup> Clerk of the Beacon Hill Race Course, the bearded Harris told all spectators in his booming voice to clear the track.

This day was Her Majesty Queen Victoria’s birthday celebration, the 24th May 1859. Even at what was considered the edge of the British Empire,<sup>2</sup> the community of Victoria did not feel the great distance from the Mother country with such celebrations. In their minds they represented England, they were England, with their gallant navy, and a mélange of characteristics found in their native land. This day, however, was also a time to socialize and bind them together with this invisible thread that connected them in a reminder of who’s who in the scheme of things. Today there would be fun for all ages, the races, “catching pigs by their tail, climbing a greased pole and running in sacks,” with a grand ball to follow.<sup>3</sup>

According to Mary Cheney Ella’s diary, the Beacon Hill races had been run as early as 1856, and horse racing had been part of the small community’s life even before this time.<sup>4</sup> Certainly horse riding was integral for transportation and as part of the pastimes of many newcomers, particularly visiting naval officers who were eager to demonstrate their skills dashing across the unfettered countryside. This was not lost on the young daughters of the HBC officers, many of whom were accomplished riders, who knew they were in for a very enjoyable time at the lavish parties and dances provided by their parents.<sup>5</sup>

With the discovery of gold in the interior of British Columbia the Victoria community had passed through great changes. Once the word was out a never ending stream of people descended on the small community. The first wave was that fateful April morning Sunday, April 25, 1858 when the steamship *Commodore* sailed into Victoria harbour, at 10 in the morning. According to *Shipping Intelligence*,<sup>6</sup> it landed a large noisy group of passengers and part of its freight then left for Port Townsend. It followed the same procedures with Bellingham Bay as the next port of call for discharging cargo and then on to Nanaimo arriving at the Hudson’s Bay Company’s coal depot



Thomas Harris, first mayor of Victoria  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives photo A-01332

to load coal. The vessel then returned to Victoria May 1, unloaded more freight and sailed again for San Francisco touching several communities before it arrived at its home port on May 5.

Gold had jerked Victoria unceremoniously from its slow comfortable way of life. The *Victoria Gazette* reported that at least another 15 ships, advertising Victoria and the Fraser Mines, were berthed in San Francisco ready to sail for Puget Sound.<sup>7</sup> Men were

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## NOTES

1. City of Victoria Archives. Photograph of Mayor Thomas Harris (1867). Photo Number 98509-01-939 (M06974). See also *The British Colonist*, May 20, 1859. (Racing Advertisement), and Edgar Fawcett, *Some Reminiscences of old Victoria*. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 60.

2. Richard Charles Mayne. *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (New York: S.R. Publishers Limited Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 1.

3. *The British Colonist*, April 25 & May 20, 1859. The proprietor of the Union Hotel provided refreshments under a large circus tent on the race grounds, while the race dinner was to be held at the Royal Hotel. Tickets were two dollars each.

4. James K. Nesbitt (ed). “The Diary of Martha Cheney Ella, 1853-56”, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, 7 (1949), 264.

5. Mayne. *Four Years*, 31. Sir James Douglas’ home was a good example. Many Bay men had open houses particularly when H.M. navy was in port. Even Bishop Cridge had people in for musical evenings.

6. *The Daily Alta California*, May 6, 1858. See also: *The Daily Alta California*, April 21, 1858. *Ship’s Intelligence*. The following freight bound for Vancouver Island included 95 packs of liquors, 409 packs of groceries and provisions, 59 dozen hardware and mining tools, 5 dozen drugs, 25 boxes of candles, 2 boats, 6 cases of gunpowder, 26 dozen ale, 27 packs of dry goods and clothing and 14 cases of boots and shoes.

7. The *Victoria Gazette*, June 30, 1858.

8. Dorothy Blakey Smith (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), 161.

9. The *Victoria Gazette*, June 25, 1858, displays Thomas Harris' Butcher shop advertisement. His note to the electors of Esquimalt in the *British Colonist*, March 26, 1862 states "I have been a resident in Victoria nearly four years..." Therefore he must have arrived between April and early June, 1858.

10. The Liverpool Records Office, England to Robert G. Dennison, October 9, 2007. Copy of the *Liverpool Census*, 1851, (H0107/21813-f-644a), page 43 verifies his birthplace as Herefordshire not Hertfordshire. Almeley is only located in Herefordshire.

11. General Register Office, Southport, England to Robert G. Dennison, August 1, 2007. *Certified Copy of Birth Certificate for Emily Harris*, born December 17, 1851.

12. The *Daily Colonist*, November 30, 1884.

13. The Liverpool Records Office, England to Robert G. Dennison, October 9, 2007 Copy of the *Liverpool Census*, 1851 (H0107/21813-f-644a), 43.

14. General Register Office, Southport, England to Robert G. Dennison, August 24, 2007. *Certified Copy of Marriage Between Thomas Harris & Eliza Dickinson*, at St.. Nicholas Church, Liverpool, England, March 20, 1848.

15. *Ibid.*

16. The Liverpool Records Office, England to Robert G. Dennison, October 9, 2007. Copy of the *Liverpool Census*, 1851 (H0107/21813-f-644a), 43. The three domestic servants were Elizabeth Cole age 24, Jane Seville age 23 and Elizabeth Rowley age 17.

being attracted from all over the world including deserters from many ships' crews, settlers, all kinds of speculators, and Hudson's Bay Company workers all blinded by the lure of possible riches. Young men from aristocratic families, journeyed from England, in their tailored clothes and fancy prospecting outfits, with no knowledge of the hardships they would encounter, and swaggered around the community. It did not take them long to return to Victoria with no gold and only the rags on their backs willing to take jobs they had ridiculed a few weeks earlier.

Because these transients used Victoria as the center to purchase supplies and passage to the mainland, shelter was at a premium and a tent city mushroomed forming a canvas canopy on any vacant land. Before the gold rush very few town lots had been purchased as the Hudson' Bay Company had picked most of the prime areas around the fort. Now with the constant stream of speculators, town lots were snapped up. Not all people, however, kept traveling on. A number remained in the community buying land and setting up businesses, increasing the small population to several thousands. Even Dr. J.S. Helmcken boasted he sold one of his lots for a "very handsome profit."<sup>8</sup> By this time all the community's resources had been stretched to the limit. The Church of England tried to accommodate the newcomers in its church on the hill, but as the Rev. Edward Cridge lamented the building would only hold about 400 worshippers. Unfortunately the Fraser River did not produce gold diggings during the high water of the spring freshet and hundreds of disgruntled miners returned to California. As a result Victoria's businesses and real estate became liabilities.

Thomas Harris arrived in early 1858.<sup>9</sup> One of the most flamboyant residents, with his noticeable size and confidence he gave off an aura of the finer luxuries of life. Harris, who was born in Almeley, Herefordshire, 1818,<sup>10</sup> arrived in Victoria with his wife Eliza, two young daughters and three step-sons in tow. The youngest child Emily was born in Liverpool, December 1851.<sup>11</sup> Harris' obituary briefly mentions he arrived in California by 1853 and then traveled on to Victoria by 1858 but little else is known about their journey.<sup>12</sup>

Before leaving England, his eldest step son, Robert, age 15, in 1851, had been employed in Liverpool as a "timber merchant's" apprentice while Frank, age 11, and Charles, 7 years still attended school. Their half-sister Eliza was just over one year old, Harris himself was age 34 and his wife Eliza 33.<sup>13</sup>



*Eliza Harris, wife of the first mayor of Victoria*  
Royal BC Museum BC Archives photo G-01056

His wife had been previously married at age eighteen and became a widow shortly after the birth of Charles Dickinson. Thomas Harris was a widower at the time when he married Eliza in 1848.<sup>14</sup> What did he do in Liverpool? His father Zaccharias was a farmer,<sup>15</sup> but according to the 1841 *Liverpool Directory* Thomas Harris had been a victualler at 100 Stanhope Street moving to 2 Stanhope Street by 1845. Not long after he branched out as an estate agent and established Harris and Harding, estate agents and auctioneers. Continuing his occupations the 1849 directory lists him as an estate agent and victualler residing at 117 Tithebarn Street. He declared his occupation as auctioneer on his marriage certificate and that both

he and Eliza were living at the same address, "at the time of marriage," March 20, 1848. When Emily was born in 1851, the Harris' family had already moved to 90 Bridgewater Street, Liverpool. To help Eliza with their larger premises three female domestic servants were engaged.<sup>16</sup>

When Thomas Harris arrived at Fort Victoria, he lost no time in advertising his skills and wares in the first *Victoria Gazette* with the claim that he could supply, "all kinds of meat to Hotels, Restaurants, Private families and shipping, at short notice."<sup>17</sup> The next few years were a flurry of activity for Thomas Harris & Co., as the step-sons were included in all aspects of the butcher business. His first butcher's shop was rumoured to have been set up in a tent with a sheep on credit from the Hudson's Bay Company but by June, 1858 he had opened the "*Queen's Meat Market*," on Wharf Street, (corner of Johnson Street and Waddington Alley). A little later during the same year he was haggling with Charles Kerr over the delivery of several head of cattle and back payments for pasturing fees.<sup>18</sup>

He soon became a Victoria fixture and townfolk would see him in front of his butcher's shop arranging his hanging meat carcasses or engaging many of the locals who cared to pass the time of day. His produce by all accounts was first class and the *Victoria Daily Standard* gave praise to its exceptional quality particularly his Christmas meats.<sup>19</sup> With his stepsons Robert, Charles and Francis (Frank) Dickinson, he managed two stores in Victoria and another in New Westminster named *Harris & Co.*<sup>20</sup>

The firm prospered. When Lady Franklin visited Victoria in 1861, her schedule included supper with the Thomas Harris family.<sup>21</sup> Harris was described, at this time as a rich butcher living in a "substantial building of brick." All this appearance of wealth was apparent to Lady Franklin's group. "He is making a great deal of money, is living in as much comfort as can be obtained in the colony," reported her niece Sophia Cracroft, and both women were pleased with the visit as "everything was in good taste without affection of any kind"<sup>22</sup>.

The Voter's List of 1859, shows the opportunist Thomas Harris as owning freehold property in Esquimalt and a house with land on Broad Street in Victoria.<sup>23</sup> He applied for pre-emptions on many acres of land including on Barkley Sound, North and East Saanich, New Westminster, Esquimalt and Victoria.<sup>24</sup> Having pasture and being able to get cattle whenever he wished initiated a partnership with John D. Carroll,

a grocer, liquor dealer and also owner of the Brown Jug Hotel. Both men collaborated, planned to finance and build the first screw steamer in the Victoria area for transporting cattle and passengers. This small steamer, christened the *Emily Harris*, after his youngest daughter, was launched at the beginning of 1861.<sup>25</sup> The vessel was an instant success, and described by the *British Colonist* as "one of the most beautiful craft we have ever beheld." It began a regular freight and passenger run up the coast to Nanaimo, particularly for consignments of coal. Later Harris sold his share to Captain Frain, a long time resident of Victoria. In 1871 the steamer's boilers blew up and the vessel sank with the loss of the captain and most of the crew.<sup>26</sup>

Central to all his activities was Thomas Harris' great love for horse racing. As previously noted, in 1859, he was involved as Clerk of the Course and, when horse racing became more regulated, later as judge and steward. He even rode in several races challenging the Hon. H.D. Lascelles and won even though his mount was sucking wind at the finish line. In addition, he had other jockeys ride his horses in the races. Harris was a founding member of the Victoria Jockey Club, 1861. The members drafted a set of regulations for the "promotion and advancement of Horse Racing in Vancouver Island and its Dependencies."<sup>27</sup> Now dissatisfied horse owners could present any presumed discrepancies in the May or November races.

Despite the disappointments in the spring of 1858, the gold rush did bring an influx of miners and businessmen to Victoria and increased its population. This created a demand for local services. During the 1862 elections for the House of Assembly, the pioneer government body, several candidates supported the incorporation of Victoria as a city. "Raising taxes is not the stumbling block," editorialized the *British Colonist*, "but the reluctance of elected members who would have to have some outside pressure for it to come about." While the House of Assembly mulled over the incorporation bill, Harris was elected to it when Captain Gordon, representative for Esquimalt, resigned in March 1862.<sup>28</sup>

During his term in the House of Assembly from March 31, 1862 to August 14, 1862<sup>29</sup> Harris became involved in several matters involving community concerns. He spoke up for farmers and land owners who found the land fees and payments a heavy burden and proposed to reduce land fees and suspend payments through the winter. This was an unpopular motion.<sup>30</sup> Although mocked by his colleagues he was

17. The *Victoria Gazette*, June 25, 1858.

18. In the Superior Court of Civil Justice, 1858. *Kerr v Harris*. (Box 1, pp. 136-14, PABC). See also: *Attorney General's Opinion for Transfer of New Westminster Wharf*, 1865. Thomas Harris v Henry Holbrook, (Crease Collection Add. MSS 54 No. 1459 Box 1 file 2, PABC).

19. The *Victoria Daily Standard*, December 23, 1870.

20. The *British Columbian*, November 16, 1864.

21. Dorothy Blakey Smith (ed) *Lady Franklin Visits The Pacific Northwest...February to April, 1861 and April to July, 1870*. (Victoria, British Columbia, PABC, No. XI, 1974), 17-18. Lady Franklin would be about 69 years of age in 1861 visit. According to her biographer Frances J. Woodward, she could not even walk a mile.

22. *Ibid.* p.19.

23. The *British Colonist*, December 1, 1859

24. British Columbia Department of Land & Works (GR-0766 Box 4/ file 9 &. Box 2/ files 5 & 28. PABC).

25. The *British Colonist*, January 4, 1861. The vessel was 100 feet long, 54 feet wide and about 6 feet 6 inches in depth. It was considered well built for strength, speed and durability.

26. Jaques Whitford. *Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement Project: An Archaeological Overview Assessment* (Victoria, December 19, 2005) After loading Nanaimo coal, on August 14, 1871, the vessel was returning to Victoria when the boilers exploded. Captain Frain, the cook and one passenger were lost while others were badly burned but rescued. The boat is still in 21 fathoms of water in the Trincomali channel.

27. *Rules And Regulations of the Victoria, V.I., Jockey Club*. (Printed at the British Colonist Office, 1861) CIHM No.17230.

28. James E. Hendrickson (ed). *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871*. v 2, p.153

29. *Ibid.* List of Members of the Second House of Assembly.

30. *Ibid.*, Tuesday April 15, 1862 (Second House 3<sup>rd</sup> Session p.356).

31. *The British Colonist*. August 8, 1862.

32. *Ibid.*, April 1, 1862.

33. *The British Columbian*. August 16, 1862.

34. *The Vancouver Daily Evening Post*. November 8, 1865.

35. *The Victoria Daily Colonist*. May 23, 1862.

36. *The British Colonist*. September 24, 1862. The newspaper lists the 13 sections for Ordinance on Nuisances and the 9 sections for the Ordinance to Regulate the Construction of Foot-paths. The city was also very concerned about smallpox.

37. *Ibid.*, August 30, 1862

38. *The Victoria Daily Colonist*. August 3, 1952.

39. Victor E. Virgin. *History of North And South Saanich Pioneers and District* (Saanich Pioneer Society, Victoria, 1959), 79

40. *The British Columbian*. August 12, 1863.

41. *The Vancouver Daily Evening Post*. November 23, 1864.

42. *The British Columbian*. November 16, 1864.

43. *The British Colonist*. November 9, 1864.

44. *Ibid.*, March 29, 1865. See also: *The Vancouver Daily Evening Post*, February 15, 1865. There is no indication the Harris family returned to England at this time.

45. *The Victoria Times*, March 23, 1865.

not intimidated by them. When the bill for fixing interest rates to a loan was discussed one member told Harris he didn't know what he was doing. "Springing to his feet with a bound which made the frail building shake to its very foundations," Harris, the burly butcher, requested the member be called to order.<sup>31</sup>

As the year wore on the House finally incorporated the city Victoria. Harris had already resigned his seat in the House of Assembly and was easily elected as mayor in Victoria's first municipal election.<sup>32</sup> The election was elected by a show of hands with the High Sheriff counting them. "The process," the *British Colonist*, informed the public, was carried out in "perfect order and decent behavior." Even the *British Columbian* of New Westminster raved about the choice for mayor claiming, "he will make a proper good one."<sup>33</sup> Yet, Harris saw his support dwindle over the next three years. By the third term, the *British Columbian*, pointed out that the constant bickering clouded the community's progress as Victorians sought to escape the frontier image.<sup>34</sup>

What did Harris do while in office? He and his council set about with great gusto to improve the pioneer environment of Victoria by regulations featuring uniform standards throughout the community. Their first meeting room was in the police barracks and certain council members were infuriated when Commissioner of Police Pemberton did not provide a suitable room. They wanted the Mayor to swear in special constables and turf him out. Needless to say Pemberton continued the business of the police court and did not acknowledge their request.<sup>35</sup> Gradually this problem was solved. The council attacked the state of the city and, to much applause, the beefy mayor told the councilors and audience that he would do his best for Victoria. After several committees reported back on the state of the community, two "Ordinances" were drawn up, in September 1862. No area was to be exempt and all Victoria had been scrutinized. The ordinance on nuisances was divided into 13 sections and featured rules stating that slaughterhouses, tanneries, or any other "offensive trade or occupation," would be fined. Animals roaming at large, location and care of privies, "houses of ill fame," illegal fences, water from bath houses, refuse thrown in the streets and harbour, and speeding within city limits would not be tolerated. Not only were the regulations aimed at healthier living conditions but the ordinance on building footpaths guided citizens in safety for the

community.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout all the petitions and requests the new Mayor never lost his sense of humour. For instance he disappeared from view while conducting city business with a "loud crash and a heavy fall, which jarred the house and set the doors and windows to rattling loudly." Slowly his bald head and then his smiling face appeared above the judge's bench. He was holding the broken chair "its dilapidated appearance reminded us of a crushed eggshell", reported the *British Colonist*.<sup>37</sup> Harris also enjoyed playing simple tricks on others. Herbert Kent recalled meeting Thomas Harris, a huge and jovial man, who had just had a late breakfast of boiled eggs, toast and tea. Unseen by young Kent, Harris turned an eggshell upside down and pushed it toward the young lad. Naturally when he went to crack it open it was empty but he was rewarded with a real egg that he ate heartily. Kent also remembered the big man on horse back riding around Victoria.<sup>38</sup>

At the end of July 1863, Harris attended the Saanich elections for a member to the House of Assembly.<sup>39</sup> While in the area he checked over his isolated North Saanich Hall Farm. As drove on the Saanich Road the harness broke free from his wagon dragging him over the rough terrain inflicting a broken collar bone and fractured leg as well as a variety of cuts and bruises.<sup>40</sup> Due to his injuries he had to miss several council meetings and reduce his activities and never regained full use of his limbs. Still he managed to return to his civic duties several months later and was elected for two more terms.

While Mayor Harris busied himself with his farm, butcher business, racehorses, fraternities and civic duties, his wife Eliza besides attending all mayoralty functions was very active in community helping organizations. Taking care of family and home was not as fulfilling as aiding others. The bride ships, the orphanage, the female hospital, and numerous family visitations, were just a sample of her involvement. Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Cridge, Mrs. W.J. Macdonald and the Christ Church womens' *ad hoc* committee provided many little known types of services for the community. In fact Mrs. Harris and the church ladies were the initiators of the new female hospital and she had the honour to lay its first stone, November, 1864, at the top of Pandora Street.<sup>41</sup> Later it would amalgamate with the Royal Hospital.

While the female hospital was celebrating, the *British Columbian* carried a notice from Thomas Harris thanking New Westminster and British Columbia for



supporting Harris & Co., "Butchers & Cattle Dealers" since 1859. Continuing he wrote, "I have this day disposed of my business to the Dickinson Brothers."<sup>42</sup> In continuing this business the brothers promised to continue the excellent service of Thomas Harris. They also informed the Victoria public that they had established a first class shop on Government Street opposite the Bank of British Columbia. Robert Dickinson would run the New Westminster operation and Edward & Francis would handle the Victoria premises.<sup>43</sup> Was this the beginning of Harris' financial woes? It was well known he made money but lived and spent lavishly. In a surprise announcement Harris also let it be known as his "family about to leave for England in the early part of April, his entire stock," was for sale. This included horses, carriages, harnesses, saddlery and bridles, all to be auctioned off at a later date.<sup>44</sup>

His North Saanich Hall Farm, an area of six hundred acres,<sup>45</sup> was immediately leased by Arthur Bunster the brewer. Bunster had always complained about his lack of land but could now supply his brewery with all the barley and grain to expand his business. With this lease in place Harris named March 30 for the auction of an impressive array of animals, farming implements, seed and cottage furniture to be sold without reserve. North Saanich Hall Farm went on the auction block September, 1865.<sup>46</sup> About the same time, Harris put up for auction all the family's "superior furniture" including a "7 octave piano forte by Kirkman." Despite such drastic actions the stout butcher filed for bankruptcy in 1867.<sup>47</sup>

Family and financial problems with creditors began to take more of a toll than was realized, and if this wasn't enough the question of the clergy reserves caused great rifts in the community by 1865. The Anglican bishop, George Hills had fenced off all the church land with the intention of dividing it into lots for sale to make the diocese financially self supporting. This action caused a great hue and cry from the community as the lands had always been viewed as the "lungs of the city," where families could walk and play in an unfettered park like setting. Town councilors wanted to pull down the fence and after several threats the Bishop retained an injunction against the city. It was a complicated land ownership battle relating back to the 1855 land glebe given to the Reverend Edward Cridge by the Hudson's Bay Company. Harris was reluctant to oppose his own church and was so unsure of the city's legal power to restrict the Bishop that his colleagues applied for a *mandamus* to force him to call for a vote on the topic.<sup>48</sup>

In 1866 after his third civic term, Harris sought to represent the Cariboo in the Legislature. However, due to irregularities the Mining Board refused to acknowledge him as the district representative.<sup>49</sup> Needing an income after his bankruptcy, he opened the "Family Market" butcher shop on Government Street, next door to London House.<sup>50</sup> He tendered successfully for the contract to provide meat for the "gaol at Victoria" and the "lighthouses."<sup>51</sup> Still his being the lowest tender was not profitable enough to keep his butcher's shop afloat and in 1871 Sir James Douglas bought the building housing his store along with three others for \$16,000. He finally gave up the butcher business by auctioning off the rest of his stock at his Cedar Hill Crossroads pasture in October, 1873.<sup>52</sup> In 1873 he was elected Sergeant at Arms for the Legislature and in 1876, High Sheriff of Vancouver Island. During these years his two daughters married the Wilson brothers. In 1869 Eliza married Thomas and in 1872 Emily married William.<sup>53</sup>

With his daughters gone and his old injuries causing complications he became more and more depressed and after a short illness Harris died in 1884.<sup>54</sup> Many people attended his funeral while Bishop Cridge performed the service. Sadly two years later his widow Eliza caught a pulmonary disease and passed away while visiting her eldest daughter Eliza in England.<sup>55</sup> •

46. The *Vancouver Daily Evening Post*. September 1, 1865.

47. The *British Colonist*. March 30, April 11 & April 25, 1867. Thomas Harris was required to make a full listing of all his estate and effects for Chief Justice Needham.

48. The *Vancouver Daily Evening Post*. September 21, 1865. Mayor Harris refused to put a motion to the vote of the Council in his official capacity. A *mandamus* granted by the Chief Justice would force him to comply.

49. The *British Columbian*. October 26, 1866.

50. The *Victoria Daily Standard*. June 20, 1870.

51. Hendrickson (ed). *Journals*, v 4, 109-110. This spelling of "gaol" was used at this time.

52. The *Victoria Daily Standard*. September 20, 1873.

53. The *Daily Colonist*, December 18, 1872. The first marriage in the new Christ Church Cathedral performed by Dean Cridge was between Emily Harris and William Wilson. Eldest daughter Eliza Harris married Thomas Wilson earlier in 1869 and later they moved to England.

54. *Ibid.*, November 30, 1884.

55. General Register Office, Southport, England to Robert G. Dennison, Certified *Copy of Death Certificate for Eliza Harris, October 25, 1886*. Mrs. Harris passed away at 68 years of age, while visiting her eldest daughter Eliza at her home The Bounds, Hernhill, England. Cause of death was Chronic Bronchitis and Contraction of the Mitral Valve. See also: The *Daily Colonist*. November 16, 1886.



## B.C. Historical Federation Nelson Conference, May 14–17, 2009

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👉 **THEME: History in your Neighbourhood**

👉 **PLANNED FEATURES:**

- Full-day circle tour: SS Moyie, Sandon, Nikkei Interment Centre, scenic drive...
- Tour of Touchstones Nelson
- Celebrate the (Rattenbury) Courthouse centennial
- Enjoy a historical play or Kootenay storytelling
- Heritage tours of Nelson
- Stay at the 111-year-old Hume Hotel

👉 **WEBSITES historical organizations:**

- [bchistory.ca](http://bchistory.ca) (BCHF)
- [touchstonesnelson.ca](http://touchstonesnelson.ca) (Touchstones Nelson)
- [klhs.bc.ca](http://klhs.bc.ca) (Moyie)
- [slocanlake.com/sandon](http://slocanlake.com/sandon) (Sandon)
- [newdenver.ca/nikkei](http://newdenver.ca/nikkei) (Nikkei)

👉 **WEBSITES promotional sites:**

- [nelson.ca](http://nelson.ca) (City of Nelson)
- [discovernelson.com](http://discovernelson.com) (Nelson C.C.)
- [ilovenelson.com](http://ilovenelson.com) (commercial)
- [humehotel.com](http://humehotel.com) (Hume Hotel)

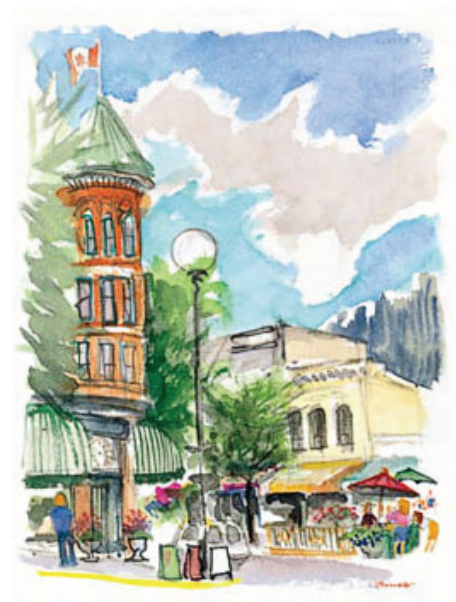
👉 **WEBSITES neighbourhood delights:**

- [kootenay-lake.ca](http://kootenay-lake.ca) (Kootenay Lake)
- [kootenay-lake.ca/lakeside/Nelson/heritage](http://kootenay-lake.ca/lakeside/Nelson/heritage) (Nelson's heritage buildings)

👉 **CONTACT:**

- Ron or Frances Welwood 250.825.4743 or [webeditor@bchistory.ca](mailto:webeditor@bchistory.ca)
- Touchstones Nelson 250.352.9813

👉 **SPONSOR: Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art & History**



Painting: Robert Amos, courtesy Heritage Society of BC Nelson today (top), courtesy Alistair Fraser Nelson c. 1910 (bottom), courtesy Stan Sherstobitoff



# British Columbia Historical Federation

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME, 2009

### Theme: History in Your Neighbourhood

**Regional publications** may be purchased from:

- Touchstones Nelson or Otter Books in Nelson, 398 Baker Street
- BCHF Writing Competition and Gray Creek Store books (Tom Lymbery) at the Hume Hotel
- Main venues on the circle tour (Friday)

**THURSDAY, MAY 14:** Registration at Hume Hotel, Lydia Room

**WORKSHOPS:** 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

1. Dollars & Donors: How to Write a Successful Grant Proposal
2. Defining Community Investment in Heritage: Touchstones Nelson, a success story
  - Includes buffet lunch as well as refreshments for morning and afternoon breaks

Dinner on own

**7:00-9:00** — Touchstones Nelson (TN) Opening Reception including *Sternwheelers of Kootenay Lake Virtual Exhibit*. TN's third consecutive project sponsored by Virtual Museum Canada.

**FRIDAY, MAY 15:** Registration at Hume Hotel, Lydia Room

**7.30 a.m.** — Advocacy session (Hume Hotel, Emporium Room – Breakfast may be ordered)

**9:00 – 5:00: Silvery Slocan Heritage Tour** will include stops at Kaslo's SS Moyie, a National Historic site, traveling along the former Kaslo-Slocan Railway, the ghost town of Sandon and its Museum, New Denver's Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre and Japanese gardens, and a trip along the spectacular Slocan Valley

- Wear sensible walking shoes, bring warm clothing and a camera
  - there may be snow in Sandon and the Museum is unheated!
- Includes Tour Guide, Admission to all three Venues, a Bag Lunch (beverage, sandwich, fruit, dessert), water and a copy of *Silvery Slocan Heritage Tour* (book)
- Regional publications are available for sale at each venue: SS Moyie, Sandon Museum and Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre

**Optional:** Explore Nelson on your own or with a guide – visit Touchstones Nelson (admission via conference name tag), Nelson's Rattenbury Courthouse, Nelson Fire Hall Museum, Nelson Art Tour: Craft Connection, Kootenay School of the Arts, Mermaid Gallery, Capitol Theatre, etc.

3:30 Brewer Tour @ award winning Nelson Brewing Company

## **FRIDAY** cont'd

Dinner on own

**8:00:** *Lakewood*: a play at the TNT Playhouse, Anglican Church Hall, Ward and Carbonate Streets. Lakewood, the summer residence of S.G. Blaylock (1879-1945), a few kilometers east of Nelson overlooks Kootenay Lake. Those on the Silvery Slocan Heritage Tour will pass by this magnificent, Tudor-revival mansion and its exotic gardens.

## **SATURDAY, MAY 16:** Registration at Hume Hotel, Lydia Room

**8:30-12:00:** Hume Room, BCHF Annual General Meeting with coffee, juice and cookies available

**12:00:** Hume Room, Buffet lunch

**1:30:** TN Museum of Art and History, TN Heritage Walking tours, free time

**6:00:** Hume Room, Awards Reception and Banquet with Susan Hulland, Storyteller. Susan and coauthor, Terry Turner, were second place winners for the Lt. Governor's Award for Writing in 2003.

## **SUNDAY, MAY 17**

**9:30:** Nelson Memorial Park (Cemetery) tour — sign up at the Registration Desk

### **Other Kootenay Offerings:**

- Regional Museums
- Kaslo May Days, Sunday-Monday
- Doukhobor Discovery Centre, Castlegar

# British Columbia Historical Federation

Sponsored by Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History

**Annual Conference at the Hume Hotel, Nelson, B.C., 15-17 May 2009**

REGISTRATION: **one form per person**

Please photocopy or download from <http://bchistory.ca/> if you need additional copies

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (including area code) \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY AND POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Member Society (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Member Society Officer (signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Member rates apply to members of a Member Society — if you are not such a member, join up!

**THURSDAY WORKSHOPS:** Indicate Workshop (full day)

1. Dollars & Donors \_\_\_\_\_ or 2. Defining Community Investment in Heritage \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \$ 45.00 Non-Member: \$ 70.00

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if you wish to receive information about future workshops and conferences [  ]

## REGISTRATION FEES

Early Bird deadline is **15 March 2009**; Regular registration deadline is **17 April 2009**. Late registrations will be accepted subject to the availability of space. (Dates refer to postmarks)

**BASIC REGISTRATION** (Reception, Admission to Touchstones Nelson, General Tours, Buffet Lunch and Awards Banquet)

Member: Early Bird (\$150.00) or Regular (\$175.00)

Non-Member: Early Bird (175.00) or Regular (\$200.00)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**FULL REGISTRATION** (Basic Registration plus Silvery Slocan Heritage Tour)

Member: Early Bird (\$240.00) or Regular (\$265.00)

Non-Member: Early Bird (275.00) or Regular (\$300.00)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SILVERY SLOCAN HERITAGE TOUR** (max. 82) — all day Friday, May 15

Member: \$110.00 per person Non-Member: \$125.00 per person

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**LAKWOOD**, a historical play — Friday evening, May 15

@ \$10.00 per person

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TICKETS:** THURSDAY Reception

@ \$15.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL banquet tickets

@ \$45.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

SUB-TOTAL (Guest Tickets) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Cancellation policy: Total paid less \$20 administration fee**

TOTAL enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form and Payment either by

CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO **TOUCHSTONES NELSON**

or

CREDIT CARD: MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: Mo. \_\_\_\_\_ Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

Three digit number on card verso [in signature panel]: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO

BCHF Conference 2009  
c/o Touchstones Nelson,  
502 Vernon Street  
Nelson BC V1L 4E7

For email advice: [info@bchistory.ca](mailto:info@bchistory.ca)

**Personal information is collected under the authority of British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Act and may be used by the British Columbia Historical Federation for registration purposes.**

If you provide an e-mail address (verso), you will receive confirmation of your registration. For confirmation by regular mail please provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. Receipts will be included in the registration kits.

1. Food sensitivities? Please list below
2. Special accessibility requirements? Please describe below

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL FEDERATION

## **CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

14 MAY 2009—9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

Hume Hotel, Nelson, BC

### **REGISTER NOW**

#### WORKSHOP 1

##### **DOLLARS & DONORS: HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL GRANT PROPOSAL**

Lynne Milnes returns with this popular workshop presenting the key items that foundations look for in successful grant proposals e.g. clear language, accurate budgets, timelines and deliverables etc. Lynne will emphasize relationship building, research, what to do and what not to do when approaching a foundation and how to steward the relationship.

Are you responsible for writing grant proposals or do you oversee others who write foundation grants? This workshop will interest directors, members, treasurers and bookkeepers—anyone concerned with revenue procurement in non-profit organizations.

Speaker: Lynne Milnes, Development and External Relations Officer for the University of Victoria has been involved in the non-profit world in BC for decades serving on boards in the executive and leadership capacities. For the last 10 years she has been employed as a full time fundraiser and has raised over \$11 million for various charities.

#### WORKSHOP 2

##### **DEFINING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT IN HERITAGE**

###### **Touchstones Nelson, a success story**

Join Leah Best, Executive Director of Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History, and others in a discussion about community investment in culture. Learn how Touchstones and other organizations are reinventing their role as memory institutions, and consider how we will tell the story of British Columbia in the future.

This workshop will interest anyone involved in the redefinition of their organization's facilities and service delivery.

Speaker: Leah Best, Executive Director of Touchstones Nelson.

This day includes a behind-scenes tour of Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History.



Cost for each full-day program:

◆ \$45 for members of BCHF member organizations ◆ \$70 for non-members

Lunch and refreshments are included in the registration fee.

To qualify for the lower fee, membership status must be authenticated by providing the signature of an officer of your member organization, or the BCHF membership secretary.

Register using the main conference registration form and payment method.

See the BC History Web site: 2009 Conference [www.bchistory.ca](http://www.bchistory.ca) or call 604 466-2636

**SPACE IS LIMITED — REGISTER EARLY**

# “You Come”, Nelson’s Chahko Mika Carnival of 1914

Token History

by Ronald Greene

Ron Greene is the current president of the BC Historical Federation.

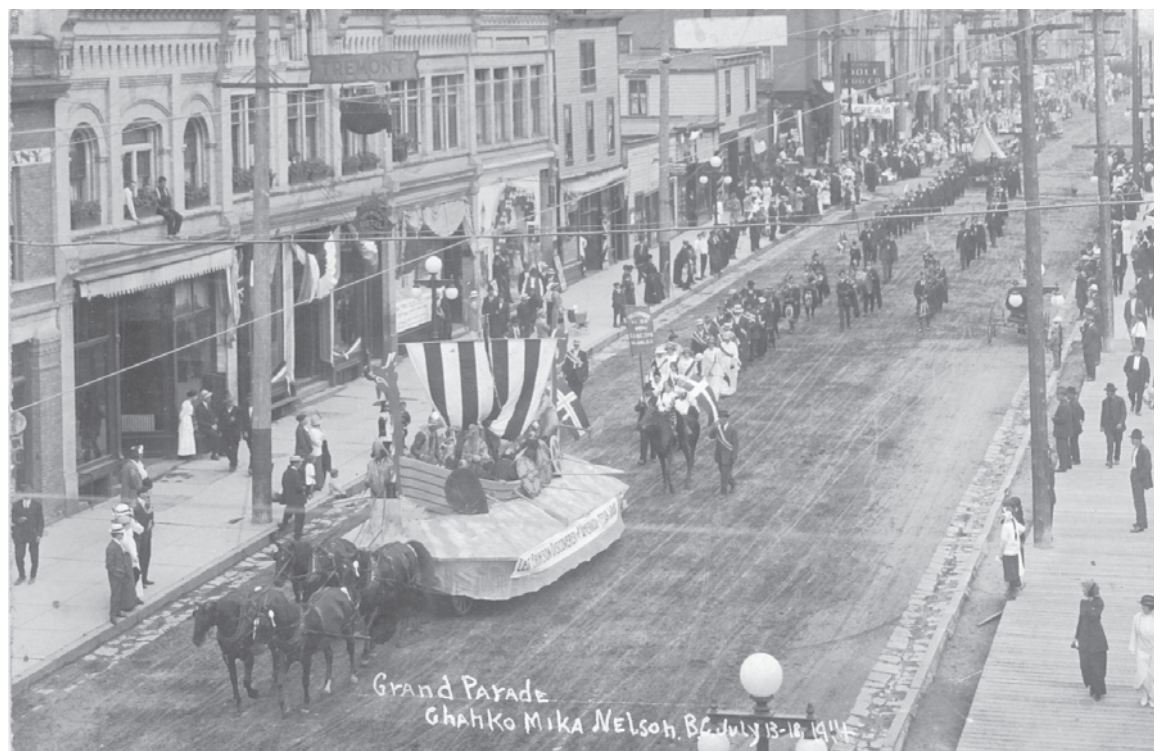
Possibly after viewing Victoria’s very successful Water Carnival of August 1913 some energetic citizens of Nelson decided to organize a carnival in Nelson for 1914. The first reference to a carnival appeared in September 1913<sup>1</sup> announcing a prize of \$25 for naming the proposed event. Already there was a provisional committee which consisted of a number of prominent citizens to organize the event. It was also mentioned that a company would be formed to operate the event.

In November it was announced that the successful name was Chocko-Mika, Chinook for “You Come.”<sup>2</sup> Three names had been selected from the 67 proposed, and the suggestion of R.A. Cockle of Kaslo won over Kootenay Karnival and Carnagatta at a meeting held November 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>3</sup> The spelling of the name very quickly morphed into Chahko Mika. By late November the dates had been set for July 13 to 20, 1914<sup>4</sup> and events proposed included land sports, a rifle shoot, a flower show, and a multitude of water sports and races, and more events were to be added later. In January 1914, the chairman of the committee in charge, H.W. Rust, was quoted as saying that the intention was to promote a carnival which would be of interest to Nelsonites, and also attract visitors from the coast, neighbouring provinces and south of the

line (U.S.). The water sports were more fully outlined as rowing contests, launch races, canoe races, and swimming competitions. It was anticipated that there would be lacrosse, baseball and athletic competitions on land. A desire was also expressed that many of the normal sporting competitions usually spread throughout the summer would be concentrated in one gala week. The gun club was going to manage the shooting competitions and the Y.M.C.A. was going to manage the athletic competitions. A parade was in the planning stage as were get-togethers of pioneers, veterans and fraternal organizations.<sup>5</sup>

It was proposed to incorporate a company to raise as much as \$12,000 by selling shares. Pledges of \$3,000 were made within several hours of the announcement being made. The Nelson Carnival Company, was incorporated on March 5, 1914.<sup>6</sup> Its list of subscribers to shares is long, but there is little else of interest on the file. With World War I starting just weeks after the carnival everything changed and there was not to be another Chahko Mika. The company did not continue to operate after the carnival, nor did it file the required annual reports and was dissolved September 15, 1921 by the Registrar of Companies.

In February the manager of the Seattle Potlatch, John W. Pace, was invited to confer with the committee and discuss plans for making the event







successful. Mr. Pace was one of the applicants for the position of manager of the carnival, but had also offered to act in an advisory role. As it turned out Mr. Pace was unable to come to Nelson. Some twenty-two fraternal organizations gave hearty endorsement to the event and a Fraternal Day. This included the Moose, Eagles, Knights of Columbus, Knights of Pythias, Sons of England, Oddfellows, the Canadian and the Independent Orders of Foresters, the Orange Lodge, the Legion of Frontiersmen and others. In February a Nelson resident, George Paterson, was appointed as manager of the Chahko Mika at a salary

of \$125 per month.

The election of the Queen of the Carnival appears to have been held in the usual manner of the day. People bought votes for the candidate of their choice, with the recipient of the most votes being crowned. Miss Dora Jordan was named the winner on June 29<sup>th</sup>, in the same issue of the newspaper that announced the assassination of Archduke Francis, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife. Miss Jordan received 5,525 votes, with Miss Ida Frost being in second place with 4,493. The duties of the Queen included presiding over all the social events and riding

*Chahko Mika Arch to the midway in 1914*  
 Touchstones Nelson photo  
 94.193.3 with thanks to Shawn Lamb

*Chahko Mika Grand Parade (opposite page)*  
 Ron Greene Collection

Notes

1 *The Daily News*, Nelson, September 13, 1913, p. 4

2 Edward Harper Thomas, *Chinook A History and Dictionary of the Northwest Coast Trade Jargon*, Metropolitan Press, Portland, Oregon, 1935 says that Chahko is a verb "to come" and Mika is the second person singular, "You" and so a more literal translation might be "Come You"

3 *The Daily News*, Nelson, November 6, 1913, p. 1

4 although it later was shorted to July 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> inclusive

5 *The Daily News*, Nelson, January 23, 1914, p. 7

6 GR1526, B.C. Registrar of Companies, BC002419, British Columbia Archives microfilm B05136

7 *The Daily News*, Nelson, July 14, 1914, p. 8

8 *The Daily News*, Nelson, June 27, 1914, p. 10

9 Weldon B. Cooke, died in an airplane accident at Pueblo, Colorado, Sept. 6, 1914. For more details on his career see [www.earlyaviators.com/ecooke.htm](http://www.earlyaviators.com/ecooke.htm). *The Daily News* spelled his name a number of different ways.

10 *The Daily News*, Nelson, July 3, 1914, p. 8

11 *The Daily News*, Nelson, Chahko Mika reports ran in every issue from July 14 to July 20<sup>th</sup>. The flight surpassed that seen at the annual fruit fair two years prior. On one occasion Mr. Cooke was unable to get the plane into the air due to weather conditions.

12 *The Daily News*, Nelson, July 17, 1914, p. 8

13 *The Daily News*, Nelson, July 18, 1914, p. 1

14 *The Daily News*, Nelson, July 20, 1914, p. 1

50c Chahko Mika Fobs 50c

25c == Chahko Mika Buttons == 25c

J.O. PATENAUDE  
Manufacturer of Artistic Jewelry,  
Watchmaker and Optician.

on a float in the parade. A grand carnival ball was given in her honour. Miss Jordan was attended by Princesses from Grand Forks, Trail, Rossland, Fernie, Cranbrook and Kaslo. A diamond set medal for the Queen and medals for the princesses and the queen of the rose festival were designed by Mr. Paterson and produced by local jeweller, J.O. Patenaude. Mr. Patenaude also advertising souvenir Chahko Mika fobs for 50 cents, and Chahko Mika buttons for 25 cents.<sup>7</sup> Another jeweller, J.J. Walker advertised brooches in a wide range of colours from 25 cents to 50 cents. Pennants and picture post cards were other souvenirs widely available.

A few weeks before the carnival it was announced that the old steamer, Nelson, which had been recently dismantled, had been purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and was to be burnt as part of a spectacle.<sup>8</sup> Weldon B. Cooke,<sup>9</sup> of Oakland, California, brought his hydroaeroplane – what we would call a seaplane today – and planned to make five flights over the six days of the carnival. Throw in a drilling competition, a wild west show, a midway and a tug-of-war between the Scots and the Scandinavians and you have just about everything that a person could want to see. The civic arch at Connaught Park was moved to Vernon Street to be placed in position for the week.<sup>10</sup>

When the first day of Chahko Mika arrived an early morning rain had left the streets in poor condition and the parade was postponed until the second day, July 14<sup>th</sup>. Another contributing reason was that the Pathe Freres Motion Picture Film Company, who were planning to film the parade and other events did not arrive in the city until the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>. The parade proved to be the most impressive one ever seen in the Kootenays and Mr. Cooke's flight was a "triumph for airman" exceeding the duration of the longest flight previously seen in Nelson.<sup>11</sup> The weather had steadily improved and the regatta opened on the 16<sup>th</sup> under ideal conditions. The Nelson was burnt that evening and must not have been much of a spectacle as *The Daily News* mentioned it only as prelude to the gathering of pioneers and an interesting talk by Walter Moberley, the earliest of the old-timers. The 16<sup>th</sup> also saw some 400 pioneers and native sons and daughters born before 1897 register at the log-cabin headquarters at the recreation grounds. A list of these people and the dates of their arrival was printed.<sup>12</sup> The regatta was reported as "Magnificent." The Portland, Oregon senior fours, Pacific Northwest champions, won that event over Nelson, but the

Nelson's junior doubles, George Gore and E. Murphy, won their event to the delight of the home-town crowd. The result of the middle weight Dominion boxing championships angered the crowd. They thought that Frank Barrieau won the match, but the referee awarded it to the defending champion, Billy Weeks.<sup>13</sup> The Chahko Mika ended on the 18<sup>th</sup> with a Battle of Confetti at the midway on Vernon Street.<sup>14</sup> The opinion expressed was that the Chahko Mika was a great success. However, no financial figures were ever forthcoming. •

*Patenaude's advertisement showing the fob (opposite page) microfilm from the Daily News, Nelson*



# The Restoration of the 1223

This text comes from the City of Burnaby Arts and Culture pages on their website [www.burnaby.ca](http://www.burnaby.ca)

The restoration of the 1223 was undertaken by a group of dedicated volunteers: the Friends of Interurban 1223. The Society was formed in 2000 and was responsible for the work of the restoration, as well as raising the money to complete the restoration project. The Museum's conservator provided technical advice and support for the five-year project.

In September 2001 the deteriorating car was moved from the Burnaby Village Museum, where it had been stored outdoors since 1971, to a warehouse on Royal Oak Avenue. Once it had been given some time for drying out, the tram was taken apart, with each piece inventoried. The sides of the tram were removed, leaving only the floor and roof, with the roof held up by metal scaffolding.

The Friends persevered with the project, recruiting volunteers, raising money, and finding suppliers to donate materials and services. A few of the projects they undertook as part of the restoration include:

Removing 90 years of paint layers from the original cherry and oak interior and refinishing and varnishing the wood to its original beauty

Drafting patterns and repairs of the original steel side beams and structural posts to support the wooden side structure of the tram. After years of exposure to the elements, much of the wood was rotten. The new beams and posts ensure the structural integrity of the tram.

Entirely reconstructing the seats, including having casts made for the 18 iron seat frames in the tram, working with a foundry to recreate the seat frames, and finding a supplier that could replicate the original twill weave rattan upholstery. Each individual seat had to be machined and adjusted to ensure smooth movement of their reversing mechanism.

Rewiring the tram's electrical system, including the interior system that lights the interior, and the wiring to the switches, controllers, and motors that operate the tram.

Missing brass hardware was recast and produced, including luggage racks, window hardware, and handles.

Working with other tram restoration groups to locate pieces that had been collected from sister cars of the 1223. Some of these items were donated to the Friends – including the controllers. Others pieces were loaned to them so they could use them to make patterns – including the trolley pole base. Countless other tasks were completed by the volunteers and their supporters. By the time the project was complete, the Friends of Interurban 1223 had contributed over 20,000 volunteer hours and generated over \$550,000 of cash and in-kind support for the project.

## The 1223 in Retirement

In the 1950s, electric railway service was replaced by buses. The 1223 was retired from service in 1958. It was one of only seven B.C. Electric Railway cars that was saved from destruction: the car became the property of the Burnaby Historical Society. The Society put it on display at Edmonds Loop, at Kingsway and Edmonds.

During the 1960s the car was vandalized. The decision was made to donate it to what is now the Burnaby Village Museum. The car was put on display, but its continued exposure to the elements led to a proposal by the Burnaby Historical Society for its restoration. In 2000, the Friends of the 1223 was formed to undertake the restoration project. •



1223 under restoration  
2006  
John Atkin photo

# From the Heritage Society of BC

## The Ruby Nobbs Award Pixie McGeachie

Pixie McGeachie has given over 30 years of her skills to preserve, promote and celebrate the heritage and history of Burnaby and British Columbia.

Pixie was first drawn to the history of Burnaby while she was the editor of the Burnaby Examiner. She developed a keen interest in writing about history, turning out columns and books through a successful career as an author. Pixie wrote her first Burnaby book, *Bygones of Burnaby*, in 1974. Other books have included *Burnaby – A Proud Century*, which celebrated the City's 1992 centennial, and in 2002 a biography of the city's namesake: *Land of Promise: Robert Burnaby's Letters From Colonial B.C.*

Pixie contributed many hours volunteering to establish Burnaby's Heritage Village in 1971. She has always been a force within the Burnaby Historical Society, serving as President from 1991 to 1993, and she was a member of Burnaby's Community Heritage Commission for six years. For 20 years Pixie was the Community Archives volunteer archivist, gathering thousands of rare and valuable photographs and documents of the city's history, which now form the core of the new Heritage Burnaby Website's photograph collection.

Pixie also took charge of Friends of Interurban 1223 just when this project to restore one of the last interurban trams needed a leader. The Friends' volunteers contributed over 20,000 hours and generated over \$550,000 in cash and in-kind support. She saw this project through to completion with accolades, and a Heritage BC award in 2006. The City of Burnaby has honoured her with a special heritage award and the Kushiro Cup as 'Citizen of the Year' in 2002.



PIXIE McGEACHIE WITH INTERURBAN 1223.

# Book Reviews



Books for review and book reviews should be sent to:  
Frances Gundry, Book Review Editor,  
BC Historical News,  
P.O. Box 5254, Station B., Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

## BE OF GOOD MIND

Essays on the Coast Salish • Edited by Bruce Granville Miller



### Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish.

Bruce Granville Miller, editor. Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007. 323 p. illus., index, \$32.95 paper.

In *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, editor Bruce Miller brings together new scholarship, perspectives and voices, including those of Aboriginal Coast Salish authors, to re-examine the legacy of Coast Salish ethnographic and archaeological research over the past century and a half. Miller acknowledges the late Wayne Suttles' enduring insistence that Coast Salish peoples and their communities should not be viewed merely as a peripheral group, worthy only of "salvage" research. Thus, this volume highlights the distinctive culture and intercommunity social network among Coast Salish villages on both sides of the international border. Each chapter attempts to answer the question, "Who are the Coast Salish?", and to illustrate how fresh answers can be gleaned by investigating multi-layered local Coast Salish histories based on Aboriginal, as well as academic, accounts.

Although *Be of Good Mind* seems geared towards use as a university-level text, several chapters will have appeal for the general reader. For example, Brent Galloway's comparison of American and Canadian approaches to Nooksack-Halkomelem language revitalization contains an inspiring account of how he participates in telephone conversations and lengthy e-mails conducted almost entirely in the Aboriginal language.

Daniel Boxberger outlines how Euro-Canadian courts, based on common law, have dispossessed Aboriginal peoples not only of resource rights, but also of their traditional knowledge and ways of telling their histories. He argues that non-Indian academics, by competing among themselves for authority to speak as/for/about the "Other", have abetted the marginalizing of Aboriginal groups. He urges these academics to acknowledge their complicity and to commit to assisting Coast Salish peoples to take control of their own intellectual property, histories and traditional knowledge. Similarly, Alexandra Harmon challenges ethnographers and historians to acknowledge the rights of Coast Salish peoples to be their own historians and to reclaim, as a modern version of the Aboriginal quest for spirit power, their knowledge of local histories.

An absorbing example of how anthropologists might contribute to a transformed re-telling of Aboriginal history is found in Crisca Bierwert's chapter that recounts how, in 2000, Bierwert and retired anthropologist, Estelle Fuchs, returned to the site where, in 1945, Fuchs made extensive field notes based on the narratives of the late Fred Ewen of the Seabird Island Reserve. In essence, Bierwert and Fuchs take the reader back 55 years to hear, through the meticulous detail of Fuchs' notes, Fred Ewen's colourful recollections of the past, and his complex and shifting views of the "contradictions and transformations in the social fabric of his life" (p. 184).

The insightful essay by Raymond (Rocky) Wilson includes an account of a devastating encounter, in 1863, between Wilson's Vancouver Island ancestral village and a British gunboat. Wilson refers to his ancestors engaged in this encounter as "freedom fighters" (p. 133), protecting their land and resources from colonial invaders. He points out that ownership of all Coast Salish territory and resources was a matter of stewardship, maintained and upheld by intertribal marriages among important families. The colonial and modern notion of individual property rights, he remarks,

is not a problem with Aboriginal definitions of property and ownership, but rather, with the limitations of a government which has rejected the concept of overlapping land claims without attempting to understand it in the context of Coast Salish resource use. Wilson regards the on-going struggle for formal acknowledgment of his people's treaty rights as a way to honour his ancestors, enabling them to become visible again.

Finally, of particular interest to non-academic readers is the spirited reclamation and analysis of Coast Salish place names by Stó:lō Nation director of research, Naxaxalhts'i. Much more than points on a map, he states, place names are layered with meaning. These meanings are key to understanding how stories of creation and mystic transformation of people and landscape, along with histories of extended kin and personal resource use, are manifestations of the Coast Salish life force, enlightening and connecting humans to each other and to all things. His account of the First Salmon Ceremony is a revealing example of how his story parallels academic versions but "just looks at it differently" (p. 85).

The book's emphasis on the importance of Coast Salish people *themselves* defining and controlling traditional Aboriginal knowledge and being accorded the right to speak for themselves in courts and other venues is brought home in Naxaxalhts'i's poignant account of a call he received from a university. The caller wanted to know if the Aboriginal Thunderbird was a raven or an eagle. Naxaxalhts'i consulted with Stó:lō elders who responded two days later. Their spokesperson explained: "The Thunderbird is *shxwexwo:s*. *Shxwexwo:s* is not a raven. *Shxwexwo:s* is not an eagle. *Shxwexwo:s* is its own bird and it's *rea*." (pp. 126-27). This powerful metaphor will enlighten both academic and general readers of *Be of Good Mind*.

Marjorie Mitchell taught Anthropology at Camosun College and is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Victoria.



### Breathing Stone - Contemporary Haida Argillite Sculpture

Carol Sheehan. Calgary, Alberta, Frontenac House, 2008. 191 p., illus. \$50.00 hardcover.

This magnificent book is a celebration of Haida argillite carving that has gone through various stages of survival and renaissance during the past two centuries. It is a unique contribution to Canadian culture because the reader gains a much deeper appreciation of how an ancient, rich First Nations art form originated and has managed, eventually, to influence and enrich another culture. Carol Sheehan has produced a book in collaboration with two photographers, Jack Litrell and John W. Heintz, which is simply stunning. It is much more than merely an art book about argillite carving, as it is a unique combination of the history of argillite carving, a description of the carving techniques and form-lines used in argillite sculpture, and an account of the lives and work of contemporary carvers. Sheehan has carefully selected fifteen outstanding young contemporary Haida argillite artists and has recorded her dialogues with each artist in which they discuss their lives and the influences that led them to become a carver. Each carver explains how they think about and approach their work as Haida. There are photographs of each artist and close-up views of their hands and the way they hold and use their carving tools. Carefully selected examples of each artist's work have been photographed from various orientations so as to reveal the many intricate details of each work and the artist has been encouraged to explain his

objectives and how they were realized in these examples. Their story line is given to enhance the reader's understanding of how the carver has approached his work.

An introductory chapter introduces the reader to the history of argillite carving. Argillite is a unique black stone that is harder than sandstone and softer than slate. It is brittle and fractures easily when worked and occurs in only one remote quarry in the Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) and very few other places in the world. Consequently, argillite carving has become a unique part of the Haida culture. Another chapter describes how one particular carving was created by giving its evolution in the carver's words and in photographs over the six month period it took to create.

Of necessity, there is some repetition between the accounts of each carver's early life and their work as they express their individual views and feelings about what it is like to be a carver and how it is realized in the examples discussed. This becomes a strength of this book as it helps the reader learn about Haida mythology in slow stages and its importance in this culture. The Haida have two clans; the Ravens and the Eagles. Marriage is permitted only between these clans and the society is matriarchal. These clans have family crests that are inherited through the matriarchal line. Many of these carvers were primarily raised by their "naanii" (grandmother) and "tsinii" (grandfather). Each person has a special name usually chosen by their "naanii" that encapsulates their personality in addition to their family name. Their family lineage gives them a very strong sense of their identity and helps them to evolve their individual styles while remaining constrained by Haida traditions.

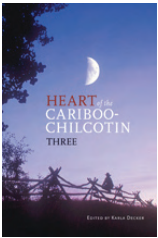
Each artist has a unique but extremely strong vision about how they can play a significant role in preserving Haida art and culture through their creations and through their commitment to foster and encourage younger Haida to follow in their footsteps. Each of them acknowledges the debt they owe their parents, grandparents and other artists in helping them become immersed

in and knowledgeable about Haida culture, art and, in particular, argillite carving. They did not all become carvers early in their lives and some did so after much struggle and hardship. Each of them believes that they have found their own identity through their carving as it has become an extremely important influence in their lives and provides them with a sense of intense pride in being Haida. One carver believes "*When argillite leaves Haida Gwaii, it's like sending postcards to the universe: "Hey! This is Haida"*" They retain a strong link with their work and many would like to see and feel their work again.

Each carver believes that each piece of argillite tells them how it should be carved and what story should be told so they spend many hours contemplating the raw argillite before they attempt to start carving. In one carver's words "*I like to look at a chunk of argillite and ask what could be in there. ... It's all inside the stone more than it's in my head"*. The brittle and fractured nature of argillite means that pieces frequently break off after the carving has commenced so the carver is forced to revise his plans. The raven is the dominant figure in Haida mythology so it is focal in most stories that the carvings tell but the whale, bear, dogfish, halibut, weasel, etc. all have important roles.

Culture is the lifeblood that enriches and sustains our lives for it embodies where we have come from, where we are and where we are going. We preserve ourselves collectively through our culture and have much to learn from the Haida. Everyone interested in their art should own this definitive book as it is an important and valuable addition to our knowledge and understanding of these unique carvings and its cultural underpinning. The production of this book is outstanding and Carol Sheehan has been brilliantly successful in giving the reader a lavish banquet of images and concepts to savour and digest.

*Harvey A. Buckmaster is a retired university professor with strong interests in the arts and BC history.*



**Heart of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, Three.**

Karla Decker, editor. Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House, 2008. 255 p., illus. \$19.95 softcover.



**Stranger Wycott's Place.**

**Stories from the Cariboo-Chilcotin.**

John Schreiber. Vancouver: New Star Books, 2008. 115 p., illus. \$19.00, softcover.

"You can never get enough of a good thing" seems to be the publishing policy for the Heart of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Series. Volume Three's new editor, Karla Decker, adheres to the tried and true formula: a chronological arrangement, with First Nations and women well represented. So once again we have a delightful selection of stories from a special part of British Columbia.

Diana French's thoughtful introduction, tempered by half a century as a Cariboo resident, claims that the Cariboo-Chilcotin was considered the last frontier as late as the 1950's: "...the land can still be giving or unforgiving, depending on its mood." But in spite of hard times, some people managed to do things their own way. Barry Broadfoot's tribute to Cariboo legend Fred Lindsay, "Farewell to an Old Friend", Hilary Place's "Dog Creek Community Club," and Paul St. Pierre's "Joe's Electric and the Truck That Drove Itself" are good examples. Mostly it's an even draw and on rare occasions Mother Nature triumphs. Ann Walsh never wants to see rhubarb again; beaver restored the waterways near

Riske Creek for Eric Collier; and Will Jenkins and Veera Witte learned that motherhood has no bounds when it comes to loons or Canada geese.

Recent research has disproved the historical accuracy of Alex P. McInnes's stories about Peter Dunlevy. But don't puzzle too long over "Looloo" being a "Yabatan Dene"---enjoy "Dunlevy" as a good Cariboo yarn, complete with a knock down, drag 'em out wrestling match.

This book is great for spending a rainy afternoon by the fire, or you may want to save it for bedtime reading. I guarantee you will fall asleep smiling.

Great travel destinations are like beautiful roses. You can enjoy their superficial beauty but look inside the outer layer of petals and there are fascinating whorls to contemplate. John Schreiber, the author of Stranger Wycott's place: stories from the Cariboo-Chilcotin, knows something about this. He was born and raised in the North Thompson area where he soon learned to appreciate all nature had to offer. It is pleasurable to read about his first discovery of the southern Chilcotin and his explorations on foot and horseback. He has taken the time to meet the First Nations peoples and to learn about their ancient trails and meeting grounds. Returning again and again, he delves into the land's history until he meets the ultimate challenge, Stranger Wycott's abandoned homestead. Who was this man and how did he survive in the rugged Churn Creek area?

Schreiber's stories are personal and introspective, but for anyone who wants to visit the Cariboo-Chilcotin region they are a good introduction. For those who know it well, they reaffirm that our province can match any destination in the world.

*Marie Elliott of Victoria researches and writes on the Cariboo and Chilcotin*



**IMAGINING BRITISH COLUMBIA: LAND, MEMORY & PLACE**

Daniel Francis, Editor, Vancouver, BC: Anvil Press, 2008, 256 p., \$18 paperback

The BC Federation of Writers produced this anthology to mark the Province's sesquicentennial. Members were asked to submit non-fiction essays and out of the 100 sent in, 20 were chosen by editor Daniel Francis for their strong sense of place and connection to British Columbia. This anthology features many noted writers whose essays take us into a moment in time.

As I picked up this book to delve into the writings, I noted the purposeful use of "imagining" in the title instead of the more familiar "memories of" or "remembering". In the book's first offering, author and noted publisher Howard White defines what it means to imagine ourselves, observing that British Columbians tend to have a limited view of our place in the larger world. He feels this is in contrast to other societies whose cultural life is recognized and celebrated for its legacy.

In British Columbia our diverse geography and how the individual responds to it is an important factor in defining our collective identity. It is worth remembering that history is not just the distant past recorded, preserved, and studied by our public institutions, but is also in the small stories of individual experiences that may evoke common responses. This publication helps to reveal that notion. Essays such as Shannon Cowan's description of being a "do-it-yourselfer" conquering the wilderness to carve out a home, Victoria Marvin's tentative first feelings about establishing "delicate tap-roots," and Margaret Thompson's search for a "weighty" historical legacy are experiences



that many newcomers over the past 150 years would recognize.

Sights, sounds, and smells that bind us through the ages in our humanness evoke emotions. Trevor Carolan's essay brings us the sensory feelings of our working coast with the kind of detail rarely found in historical accounts. With Dawn Service we share the timeless experience of the awe and fear when one of our indigenous animals, the grizzly bear, lumbers into view. Harold Rhenisch gives us his observations on the natural world and the images that emerge from an imagination fired by these ponderings.

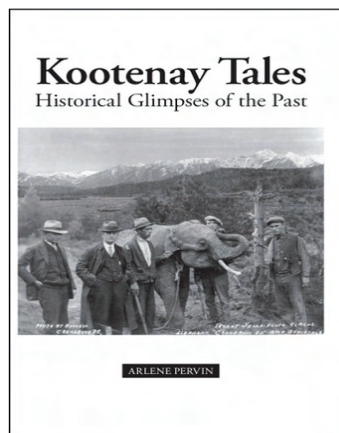
It may be argued that this is as much a historical record as a primary sourced research document. It gives us the thoughts, feelings and impressions of each author in a particular time and space. It reveals opinions and passionate sentiments on issues that are still discussed in the present and likely beyond – the plight of artists for recognition, the established against the marginalized, the urban versus rural - all of which define and illuminate our cultural landscape as surely as academic studies.

I thoroughly enjoyed this publication, identifying with some essays, while others offered a vicarious experience. While reading this book I was also engrossed in Isabel Allende's reminiscences of her life in Chile, *My Invented Country*. Towards the end she describes her feelings on the concept of imagining:

"Who can define reality? Isn't everything subjective? If you and I witness the same event, we will recall it and recount it differently...Memory is conditioned by emotion; we remember better, and more fully, things that move us..."

And that is the pleasure of reading these essays. We can experience the sounds, smells and images of British Columbia that touched these authors' lives. In turn we are moved by our own recollections with a certain pride that this is also our imagined home.

*Linda J. Eversole is a heritage consultant and the author of Stella: Unrepentant Madam*



**Kootenay Tales: Historical Glimpses of the Past.**

*Arlene Pervin. Victoria, BC, Trafford Publishing, 2008. 116p., photos. \$17.95 softcover.*

At first glance this slim monograph gives a great impression with its nine captivating photographs from the Cranbrook Historical Archives and its crisp layout presenting a "unique collection of stories about the Kootenay Rockies gleaned from original East Kootenay and regional newspaper articles." However, after reading it my initial enthusiasm evaporated. This publication is more like an unedited and uncompleted first draft. Perhaps a weakness of self-publishing?

The feature story, "Circuses, Elephants & Fate: the Sells Flotto Circus & the Great Elephant Hunt of 1926," could be an exciting tale, but the author's inclusion of circus history trivia [11/20 pages] unrelated to the Cranbrook story is distracting. Another obvious example of book padding is the insertion of blank (white) pages between most of the twelve thematic chapters. Even though each chapter heading is listed on a separate page, it is repeated in the same oversized type font at the beginning of the chapter — again, more infilling. In reality, this is only a booklet with approximately 70 pages of text. Rather than relying on a back cover promotional squib, an introduction would have helped to link the diverse stories together; and, unfortunately, the title is misleading because it includes only

East Kootenay tales to the exclusion of the West Kootenay. More research is required to expand both the book and its brief, unorthodox bibliography.

This monograph has an abridged similarity to previously published books: F.J. Smyth's *Tales of the Kootenays* or D. Kay's *Come With Me to Yesterday: Tales Retold of Pioneer Days in East Kootenay*: a collection of items of historical interest gleaned from old files of early district newspapers and other sources, telling of some of the more important events and people of the early days in the area.

Unfortunately, *Kootenay Tales* does not live up to its own expectations.

*R.J. (Ron) Welwood lives in Nelson, B.C. and is the editor of the B.C. Historical Federation's website.*



**Making the News: A Times Colonist Look at 150 Years of History**

*Dave Obee. Victoria, B.C., Times Colonist, 2008. 174pp. Illus. no price stated*

Not only did British Columbia celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2008; so too did the *Victoria Daily Colonist*, the predecessor of today's *Victoria Times Colonist*. The publishers and editor, Dave Obee are to be congratulated in producing this generously illustrated coffee table history of Victoria and its environs as recorded in the pages of the *Colonist* since 1858 and the *Victoria Times* since 1884.

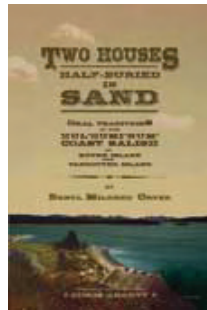
The volume rings true to Amor De Cosmos's first editorial in which he promised to present "a bird's eye view" of the course his paper would follow. Each chapter covers a decade and opens with a short essay by Obee that sets some of the stage for the snippets – extracts from

the newspapers of the day presented in chronological order – that are the main content. Obee quite rightly points to the most difficult task of all in producing the book, keeping it to a manageable size.

Reflecting the varied concerns of a daily newspaper, the snippets cover politics, prominent visitors, the opening of new buildings and roads, the victories of local sports teams, disasters, popular culture, and unusual weather. A few prominent figures such as Robert Dunsmuir, Emily Carr, Francis Rattenbury, Nellie McClung, George Pearkes, Sue Rodriguez, and Steve Nash are the subjects of sidebar profiles.

Obee began his research by reading secondary sources relevant to Vancouver Island's history. It is disappointing that he did not provide any suggestions for further reading. In their variety the snippets provide something for every interest but only enough to whet the appetite. The well-chosen and clearly captioned photographs show how Victoria has changed over time yet how much of it has remained the same. Only in the 1930s do photos from the Times Colonist's own archives begin to appear; the earlier photographs reveal the richness of the archives in greater Victoria. A time line that runs across the bottom of pages, a few maps, and an index enhance the volume that is fine celebration of the Colonist's sesquicentennial. *Amor de Cosmos* would be pleased with these "bird's eye views" of the course of the city's history.

*Patricia Roy is professor emerita of History at the University of Victoria.*



**Two houses half-buried in sand: oral traditions of the Hul'q'umi'num' Coast Salish of Kuper Island and Vancouver Island.**

*Beryl Mildred Cryer. Compiled and edited by Chris Arnett. Vancouver, B.C., Talonbooks, 2007. 326 p., illus., notes. \$24.95 paperback.*

From early 1932 through March 1935 a series of articles on cultural topics from the Hul'q'umi'num' area (six closely related Coast Salish peoples, comprising the Chemainus, Cowichan Halalt, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson and Penelakut) appeared in the *Daily Colonist* newspaper in Victoria, B.C. This narrative material had been elicited from Hul'q'umi'num' individuals and written down by Beryl Cryer, a part-time journalist of upper-class British background. In 1967 the articles were deposited in the British Columbia Archives where Chris Arnett, the editor of this book, found them and prepared them for publication. The articles themselves along with much informative annotation by Arnett ultimately form the major portion of the book.

At the time Beryl Cryer collected these texts, there was no standardized system in the Hul'q'umi'num' community for writing the language, nor had she any anthropological or linguistic training beforehand to help her transliterate the unfamiliar sound system that she heard. In order to render Cryer's transcriptions in a more consistent and readable format, Arnett consulted some of today's Hul'q'umi'num' speakers who use a "user-friendly" orthography.

Arnett provides the social and cultural context in which Beryl Cryer functioned, both within the non-Native and the Native communities. Her life and background are fully described in a very interesting and informative chapter. There Arnett also

highlights Cryer's strengths – her remarkable rapport with her sources and genuine interest in the Native culture, the responsibility she felt in transferring the tales intact to the readers of the newspaper, and her use of the informal scene description as a context in which to introduce the stories told to her. Through her writing, Cryer provided the means for her sources to express their resentment over government policies and treatment, an outlet otherwise not often furnished. On many occasions she documented various women's activities, data not well represented in the extant anthropological literature.

The tales and narratives cover many topics. Descriptions of actual historical events that took place during earlier centuries include texts on warfare between the Hul'q'umi'num' and groups such as the Haida, the Bella Bella, and other Northern peoples. Some tales furnish the only Native account of an event, such as an eyewitness description of the signing of the last Douglas Treaty in 1854 in Nanaimo.

Valuable ethnographic accounts of "the old ways" still remembered but often little practiced by the 1930s, include healing practices, childhood games, wedding rites, potlatches on various significant occasions, and many other aspects of daily life and customs.

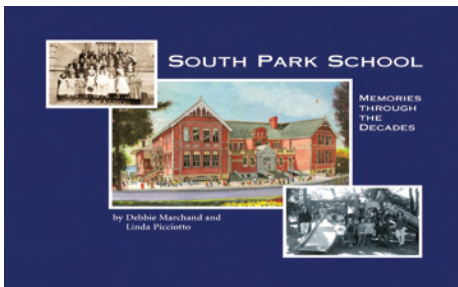
A number of myths and legends tell of the creation of different Salishan-speaking groups on Vancouver Island and Kuper Island, and about the wonders that the Transformer wrought in his travels, changing animals to humans and humans to animals long ago before historical times.

Throughout the book, Arnett has supplied many interesting and illustrative photographs, some of Cryer's family and many of those who helped Cryer by telling her stories and many who placed a role in the stories. The copious footnotes furnish ancillary cross-references to, for example, anthropological studies, translations of Native words (especially place names), and dates for the texts. While these are not absolutely essential to the reading or understanding of the texts, they supply information which will enhance the serious reader's enjoyment

of the texts.

In summary, Beryl Cryer's documentation of Native oral literature is immensely important, gathered as it was at a time when the Hul'q'umi'num' language was still widely spoken and the memories of the events and customs described were relatively recent. One cannot overestimate the value then added to these narratives by Arnett's careful emendations and supplementary data to clarify Cryer's material for the modern reader.

Barbara Efrat is the retired Curator of Linguistics at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria.



### South Park School: Memories Through the Decades

Debbie Marchand and Linda Picciotto. Victoria, B.C., 2007. Available from South Park School, 508 Douglas Street., Victoria, B.C. V8V 2P7. \$25.00 softcover. Phone (250) 382-5234 or Fax (250) 381-3209

There are a number of individual school histories now in British Columbia, but this book stands out because the authors not only chronicle student and teacher memories, they describe how parents, teachers and students went about developing cultural change within the school. Although this book is particularly attractive to the people who were there, it may well be valuable to historians researching education history or social history: how does the culture of a school change? How does it affect the grown-up culture? School histories written by participants are worth looking at as well as government, private, or case reports. Do the attempts to change stand over time?

The second part of the book describes

such changes. The new principal in 1971, Dave Allan, described developments starting with parents who focused on parent involvement in education, which led to the development of a co-operative school, and in 1979 the South Park Family School was established. The participants tell of the transformation with enthusiasm, but acknowledge that it wasn't easy. It is probably safe to say that few of the people involved realized at the start the full depth of the parent's and teachers' commitment, as well as the time and energy it would take. It is much to the credit of many people that South Park continues to function - as a heritage building! - as well as a family school. The students may have realized they were living in history, but they may not have seen themselves as making it.

The authors state that "This publication is intended as a general interest document and not a work of scholarship." It does not contain an index, but the book is organized in chronological order, and each chapter has a "Facts and Events" list that gives contextual information under "South Park and District Schools", "Victoria and British Columbia" and "Canada and the World".

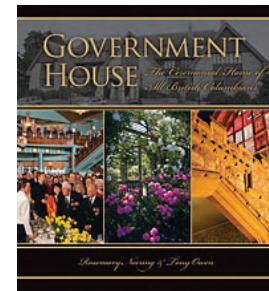
One of the appealing aspects of this book is that the authors have used historical sources as well as contemporary students, families and teachers, and have allowed them to speak for themselves. The reports of early principals, excerpts from *The Daily Colonist*, individual stories and a plethora of photographs give life to a time we don't remember. The more recent memoirs are lively and mostly short. They enlighten the changing attitudes and social context of more recent times.

In 2006 "An enthusiastic group of parents began work on a proposal for an alternative parent-involved middle school." I will be interested to know the outcome. The final section brings the memories to 2007.

I have only one small criticism - not of these authors, but of previous historians who have tagged Agnes Deans Cameron, who was a remarkable woman, as the first female principal. She was born in Victoria, an outstanding product of our own British

Columbia education, and the first female to become a high school teacher - but not the first woman principal. Mrs. S. Hayward (British) was listed in the Annual Report of 1873, and was Principal of the Girl's Department (school) for several years following. Old timers in James Bay when Kingston Street School was in operation would have remembered that Miss Ellen G. Lawson became the Principal about 1884. She was also Miss Cameron's 1st Assistant at South Park after February 1895. There were others listed in the latter part of the 19th Century as well, who deserve their place in history.

Shirley Cuthbertson lives in Victoria and worked for many years at the Royal British Columbia Museum.



### Government House: The Ceremonial Home of All British Columbians.

Rosemary Neering and Tony Owen. Winlaw, B.C., Sono Nis Press, 2007. 24 p., illus. \$39.95 hardcover.

As British Columbians celebrate the sesquicentennial of the founding of the Crown Colony of British Columbia (and with it, the introduction of the name British Columbia into the lexicon of empire), it is fitting that we have a new publication on Government House.

It has been over thirty years since Peter Neve Cotton published his architectural history of the Government House as the *Vice Regal Mansions of British Columbia* and brought to a new generation a sense of the history and grandeur of this notable and renowned estate.

For those seeking an academic treatise on the Government House Estate and the role of the Lieutenant Governor, your quest must continue. I must readily admit the Government

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House Estate (that is, the House, its grounds and outbuildings, etc.) is a special place for me, both personally and professionally. For an institution which predates Confederation and for an estate which have served as the “seat” of our governments through the colonial era into Canada, its history deserves a broader audience.

*Government House: The Ceremonial Home of All British Columbians* is a publication which begins to reach out to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and brings to us an upbeat, updated and generally appealing story of Government House. Rosemary Neering’s writing style and Tony Owen’s photography bring forth the story of Government House, its volunteers and staff in a modern, well paced narrative complimented with lively colour images. Neering notes that Government House is the ceremonial home for British Columbia and our society; and stresses, as did our former Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo throughout her term, that this House and its Estate grounds are not the preserve of the social elites of previous generations but it is open and accessible to all. Throughout the narrative and images there is a conscious efforts to display this and to illustrate that the House and its gardens play host to many events and functions which recognize and honour our fellow British Columbians contributions to our province and the nation.

In an easy to read narrative, Neering entertains and educates the reader through an engaging combination of historical fact, personal stories and highlights of staff and volunteers working behind the scenes. The book has three main chapters with a chapter devoted to the House, the garden and grounds and the events and ceremonials. However, prior to the discussion in the House chapter, there is a nicely worded page devoted to the role of the Lieutenant Governor in our parliamentary system, A very concise review which the general reader, teachers and students should find informative and rewarding.

In the Chapter on the House proper, Neering gives a brief history of Cary Castle (Government House after Confederation) up to the 1957 fire and credits greatly the Lt-Governor Ross and his wife, Phyllis, for their efforts to refurbish the House to its

previous condition. Lieutenant Rogers and his wife Jane carried assumed the mantle and begun major interior renovations, the results of which can be seen in the images of the Main dining room and the second floor rooms, rooms which are seldom seen by the public. The outstanding image of this chapter, for me, is the photograph of the Bill Reid bear mantelpiece illustrates how far we have come as a society that we today readily acknowledge First Nations contributions to our society and province.

I regret that the Rogers’ stained glass window is not seen in its entirety as it is the signature contribution of Robert Rogers term to the Estate. With that image displayed, a fuller description of the heraldic devices displayed throughout the House could have been made. I note that recent Lieutenant Governors (and Joly de Lotbinière) have had their Grants of Arms hung below their official portraits.

It is mentioned and should be reinforced that Government House has a heritage officer assigned responsibility for the historic photographs, paintings, works of art, etc.. A long overdue action which needs acknowledgement and recognition from our historical and heritage communities.

The chapter on the grounds and garden is greatly devoted to a discussion on the changes to the various gardens and to the fulfillment of the original Maclure plans for the grounds. For those of us interested in the botanical aspects, Neering weaves throughout the history and personal stories an amazing number of Latin botanical names to illustrate the variety of the grounds. It is in this chapter, that the importance of the Friends of Government House Garden Society to the modern revitalization of the estate is made known. For Victorians (the inhabitants of the capital city rather than the adherents to the Era) the volunteer work and efforts of this group are readily seen each spring and summer as the dozens of gardeners soldier forth to do combat with the weeds and undergrowth throughout the grounds. It is nice and overdue for their contributions outside and inside the House to be recognized. I regret that there was not time to have more comparative drawings of the earlier gardens and the current gardens; these would be extremely enlightening.

While mentioned in the earlier pages, one cannot underestimate the impact of having the Estate listed as a national historic site and much of the recent revitalization of the Mews and outbuilding flows from that recognition. As the Rosses and Rogers were champions for the House, Neering acknowledges that Dr. and Mrs. David Lam and Iona Campagnolo, followed in the footsteps of Sir Henri-Gustave Joly de Lotbinière, for their strong efforts to make the natural landscape more attractive and accessible. The Lams and the rose garden and Campagnolo for the opening of the southern portion of the estate and its Garry Oak ecosystem to the public. The flowering of the southern portion is late April and early May amidst the giant oaks is simply breath taking. One will need to visit the grounds at that time as there are no images of spring in the field.

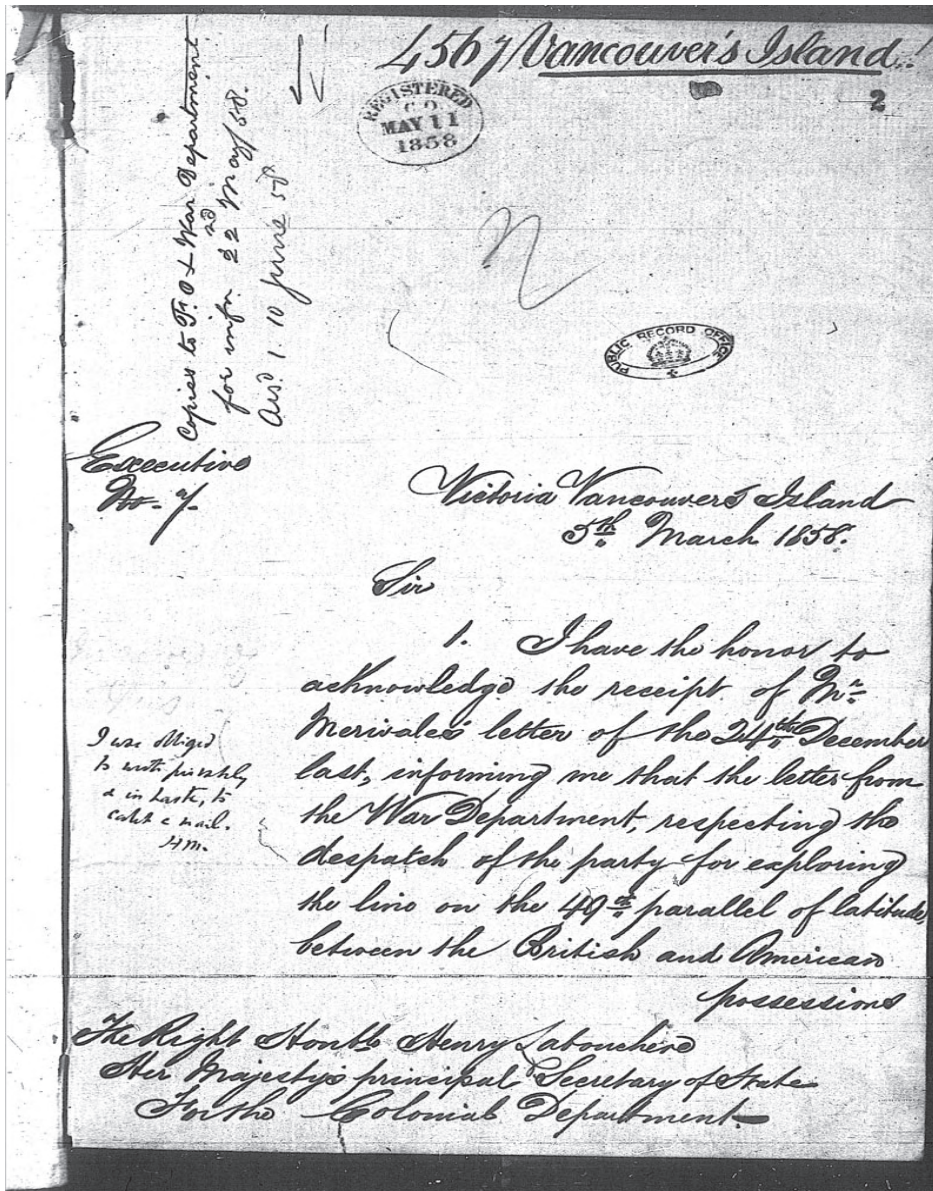
The last chapter lists the events and ceremonials which take place on the grounds every year; the behind the scenes vignettes and the general description of the wide and varied functions (and associated images) reinforces and strengthens the overarching theme of Government House as the “ceremonial home” of British Columbia. The absence of political personages and officials clearly underscores the theme and the focus of the chapter, if not the entire publication.

The publication is targeted as a general interest book with a clear and undiminished focus on entertaining, educating and enlighten a new generation to the majesty of our Government House and its grounds. More than a coffee table book and less than an academic history, it hits its target and scores a bull’s eye.

The challenge remains to the political historians or public administration wonks to develop an up to date history of our Lieutenant Governors. What was the influence of David Lam upon the demise of the Vander Zalm government? What is the impact of having an aboriginal Lieutenant Governor during a time of treaty making? Where is S.W. Jackman when we need him!

Gary A. Mitchell is the Provincial Archivist of British Columbia

# Miscellany



## Announcing the Edgar Wickberg Prizes in Chinese Canadian History for 2009

The Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia (CCHS) is pleased to announce the Edgar Wickberg Prizes in Chinese Canadian History for 2009. The award is named after Edgar Wickberg, Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia and founding president of CCHS. These awards, one each at the undergraduate and graduate levels, are open to current and recent students of post-secondary institutions in British Columbia who have demonstrated promise of research achievement in this area. The amounts of the awards may vary from year to year and will be decided annually.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, Kerrisdale Postal Station, PO Box 18032, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4L3, or contact [info@cchsbcc.ca](mailto:info@cchsbcc.ca)

## Cool Websites

### Colonial Despatches

The colonial despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871

<http://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/>

This digital archive contains the original correspondence between the British Colonial Office and the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. This project aims to digitize and publish online a complete archive of the correspondence covering the period from 1846 leading to the founding of Vancouver Island in 1849, the founding of British Columbia in 1858, the annexation of Vancouver Island by British Columbia in 1866, and up to the incorporation of B.C. into the Canadian Federation in 1871.

### The British Colonist

<http://library.uvic.ca/site/spcoll/digit/colonist/>

The British Colonist, an online archive of the historic British Columbia newspaper. The archive spans over 50 years of The British Colonist, from its beginning in 1858 until 1910, when the paper changed its name to The Daily Colonist. The archive contains approximately 100,000 page images.

### Icelandic Archives of British Columbia

<http://www.inlofna.org/IABC/Welcome.html>

The Icelandic Archives of BC is "a community archives whose purpose is to collect and maintain original documentation and artifacts concerning the history of Icelanders and their descendants in the Province of British Columbia

# New Publication from the British Columbia Historical Federation Celebrates BC's 150th

**British Columbia Historical Federation**  
Special edition celebrating BC's 150th birthday

BC 50 YEARS  
The Best Year in 150

ISBN 978-0-9692119-1-4

## Windows to our past

A pictorial history of British Columbia

Liquor Store - Atlin 1929  
Williams - Vender (on porch)  
Mining Recorder's House SE.105

F. Richardson - General Merchant  
Invermere ca 1920 SE.10

Kildonan Camp ca 1940 Barkley  
Channel NE of Bamfield SE

Civic Market, Corner Pend  
Hastings Streets, Van  
Old City Hall, Regent Ho  
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To celebrate British Columbia's 150th birthday, the British Columbia Historical Federation has published a 24 page booklet with 117 postcards and images from 1880's thru 1930 *Windows to our Past - A pictorial History of British Columbia*.

This exciting publication has many historic pictures from private collections, small museums and member societies. The Federation is most pleased that the majority of readers will never have seen the pictures and information featured.

This is a lovely addition to a library, resource for researchers and an interesting glimpse of British Columbia's colorful history.

Priced at \$5.50, which includes mailing to any address in Canada (\$6.50 to U.S.A. and \$8.50 to other countries) you might like to have a copy for your collection, donate a copy to your local or high school library. Residents of your local seniors' homes would love to reminisce about some of the events featured in this publication. If you wish to include a note to the recipient, include it with your order and we will enclose it with *Windows to our Past* when mailing.

Send your order and cheque to BC Historical Federation, PO Box 63006, Richmond, B.C. V7E 6K4. For additional information contact Ron Hyde at [newsletter@bchistory.ca](mailto:newsletter@bchistory.ca)

# British Columbia Heritage Federation Awards and Scholarship Information

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## **W. KAYE LAMB Essay Scholarships Deadline 15 May 2009**

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

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

Applications should be submitted to: Marie Elliott, Chair BC Historical Federation Scholarship Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

## **BC History Web Site Prize**

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

*Nominations for the BC History Web Site Prize must be made to the British Columbia Historical Federation, Web Site Prize Committee, prior to the 31st of December each year. Web site creators and authors may nominate their own sites. Prize rules and the on-line nomination form can be found on The British Columbia History Web site: <http://www.victoria.tc.ca/resources/bchistory/announcements.html>*

## **Anne & Philip Yandle Best Article Award**

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

The British Columbia Historical Federation invites submissions for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Historical Writing Competition for authors of British Columbia History.

## **Eligibility**

- To be eligible for this competition, books must be published in 2009.
- Non-fiction books representing any aspect of B.C. History are eligible.
- Reprints or revisions of books are not eligible.
- Books may be submitted by authors or publishers.
- Deadline for submission is December 31, 2009.

## **Judging Criteria**

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

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

## **Lieutenant-Governor's Medal and Other Prizes**

The BC Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing will be awarded together with \$600 to the author whose book makes the most significant contribution to the history of British Columbia. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners will receive \$400 and \$200 respectively.

Certificates of Honorable Mention may be awarded to other books as recommended by the judges.

## **Publicity**

All winners will receive publicity and an invitation to the BCHF Award's Banquet at the Federation's annual conference in May, 2010.

## **Submission Requirements**

Authors/Publishers are required to send three copies to the Chair of the Writing Competition Committee.

Barb Hynek

2477 140<sup>th</sup> Street, Surrey, B.C. V4P 2C5

Email: [bhynek@telus.net](mailto:bhynek@telus.net) Phone: 604-535-9090

Books are to be accompanied by a letter containing the following:

- Title of the book submitted
- Author's name and contact information
- Publisher's name and contact information
- Selling price

Submission Deadline: December 31, 2009

By submitting books for this competition, the authors agree that the British Columbia Historical Federation may use their name(s) in press releases and in its publications.

Books entered become property of the BCHF.

**Canada** We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance program (PAP), toward our mailing cost

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## A Look Back

