

ALEXANDRA BRIDGE
FRASER-CANYON
B.C.

Proposals for designation of
a new Park Facility

A delegation by
Director Lloyd Forman,
Ottawa, June, 1984.



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER-CHEAM



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER-CHEAM

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DEPT. _____

FILE No. _____

The Honourable Charles Caccia,
Minister of Environment,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario

June 4, 1984

Dear Mr. Minister:

re: Alexandra Bridge, Fraser Canyon:
A delegation.

We are writing to you in connection with the designation of the Old Alexandra Bridge as a Park facility. We understand that the Provincial Government has shown some interest in establishing a Class A park in the vicinity of the old Alexandra Lodge and of the new bridging area. However, we are of the view that the historic significance of the bridge warrants recognition at a national level and that national historic park status is long overdue. Local reports indicate that the Old Bridge is showing signs of deterioration and that the physical structures built in and around the area are now falling into disrepair. In addition, connecting routeways and historic trails which once crossed the area are being obliterated by time and alternative land use.

The unique character of the Fraser Canyon and the feats of engineering displayed in the construction of not just one but two national trans-continental rail routes and the major national road artery through the area are sufficient in our opinion to warrant appreciation by Canadians everywhere. There is currently no publicly owned interpretive stopping point in the Canyon which attests to the importance of this area as a centre of national transport and resource industry history.

A project of this nature has long been supported by local residents. Further, the location of the Bridge in a sparsely populated area of the Canyon makes it particularly attractive for the development of an appealing public facility.

It is our hope that you will afford this proposal serious consideration and the highest priority. In the interim, should you require further information please feel free to contact either of us, at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Mary MacQueen

Mary MacQueen

Director, Electoral Area B

L. Forman

Lloyd Forman

Director, Electoral Area A

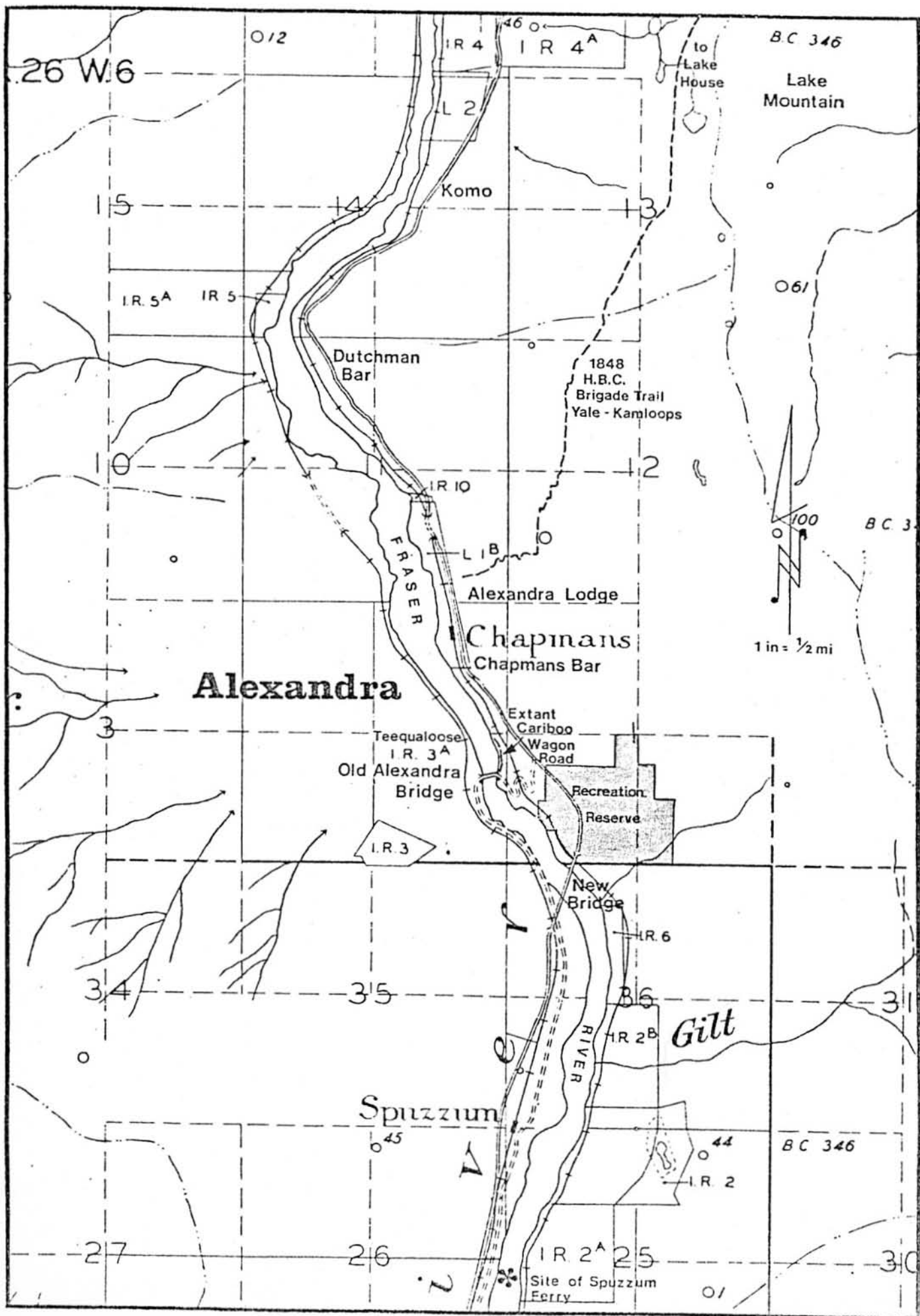
c.c. Mr. Alex B. Patterson, M.P.
Regional Director, Parks Canada, B.C.
Regional Director, Parks Branch, Ministry of
Lands, Parks & Housing

LOCATION, FEATURES, AND LAND STATUS

ALEXANDRA BRIDGE

FRASER CANYON

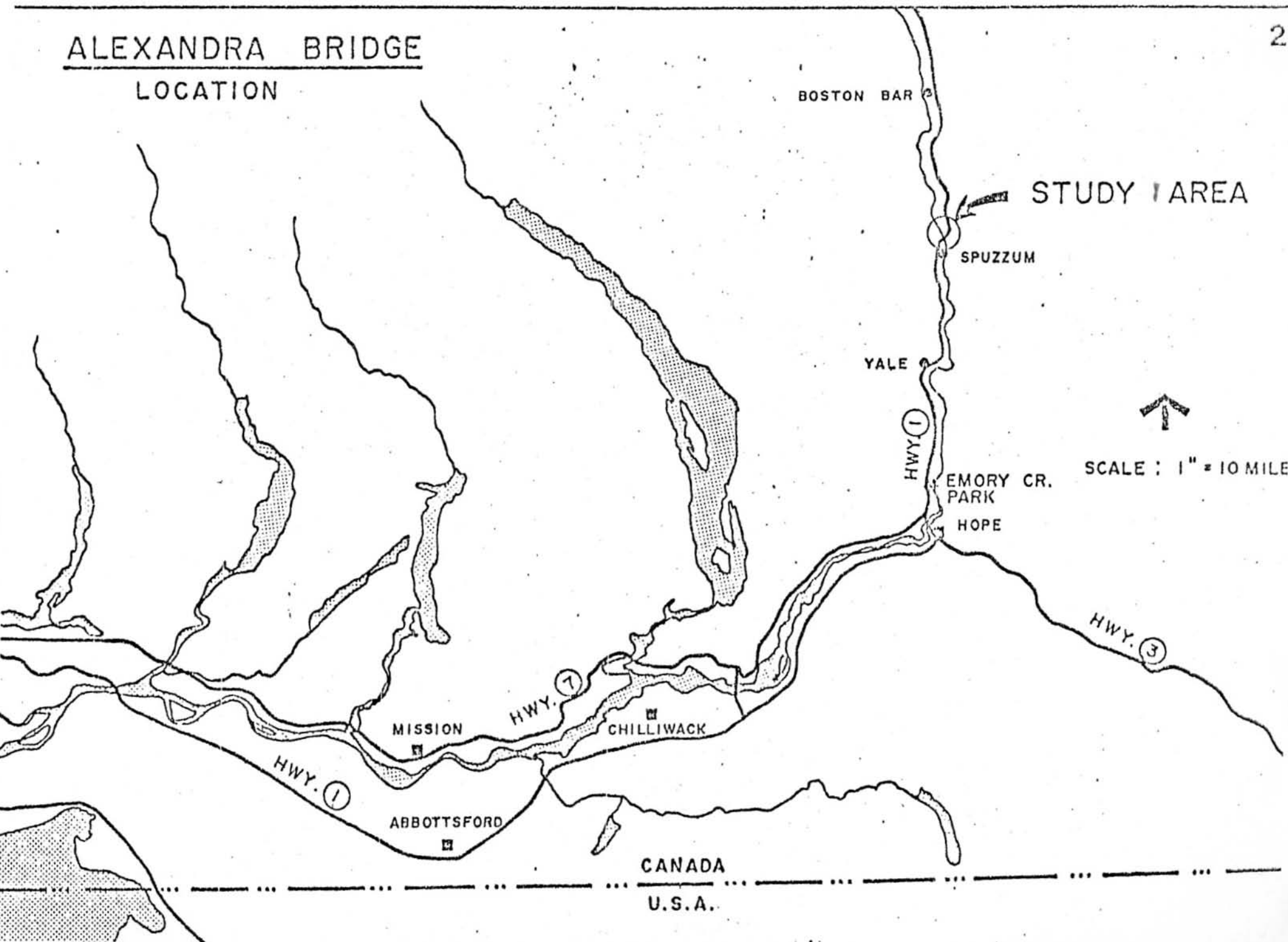
- Fraser Canyon is among the most important transportation corridors in Canada.
- Historically, it was one of the most significant transportation routes for settlement of the Province.
- There is currently no major interpretive centre in the Canyon which records the significance of the area for transportation, mining, engineering and fur trading.
- The Alexandra area is surrounded by remains of other historic features such as:
 - i) a large and ancient Indian camp
 - ii) remains of the Cariboo Wagon Road
 - iii) remains of the Hudson Bay Company brigade trails
 - iv) the location of former bridges across the River.
- The Alexandra area is separated from established communities and therefore offers opportunities for park designation without what is perceived by some to be negative implications of such development for adjacent land uses.
- In excess of 10,000 vehicles/day use the route during the summer months. The tourist facilities in the Canyon are suited to day use and transient opportunities. A national historic interpretive park would be compatible with and would in turn both complement and benefit from the established patterns of tourist recreation use.
- Despite the hard work of individual agencies and community groups, many of the physical structures and of the artifacts are deteriorating, have been destroyed or are becoming vulnerable. Attempts at preservation, interpretation and display have, at best, been individual and piecemeal. A major initiative at this time could serve to act as a catalyst in the preservation of a valuable piece of our Canadian heritage and culture.
- There is neither a public park nor a public interpretive centre for the unique physiographic features of the Fraser Canyon.

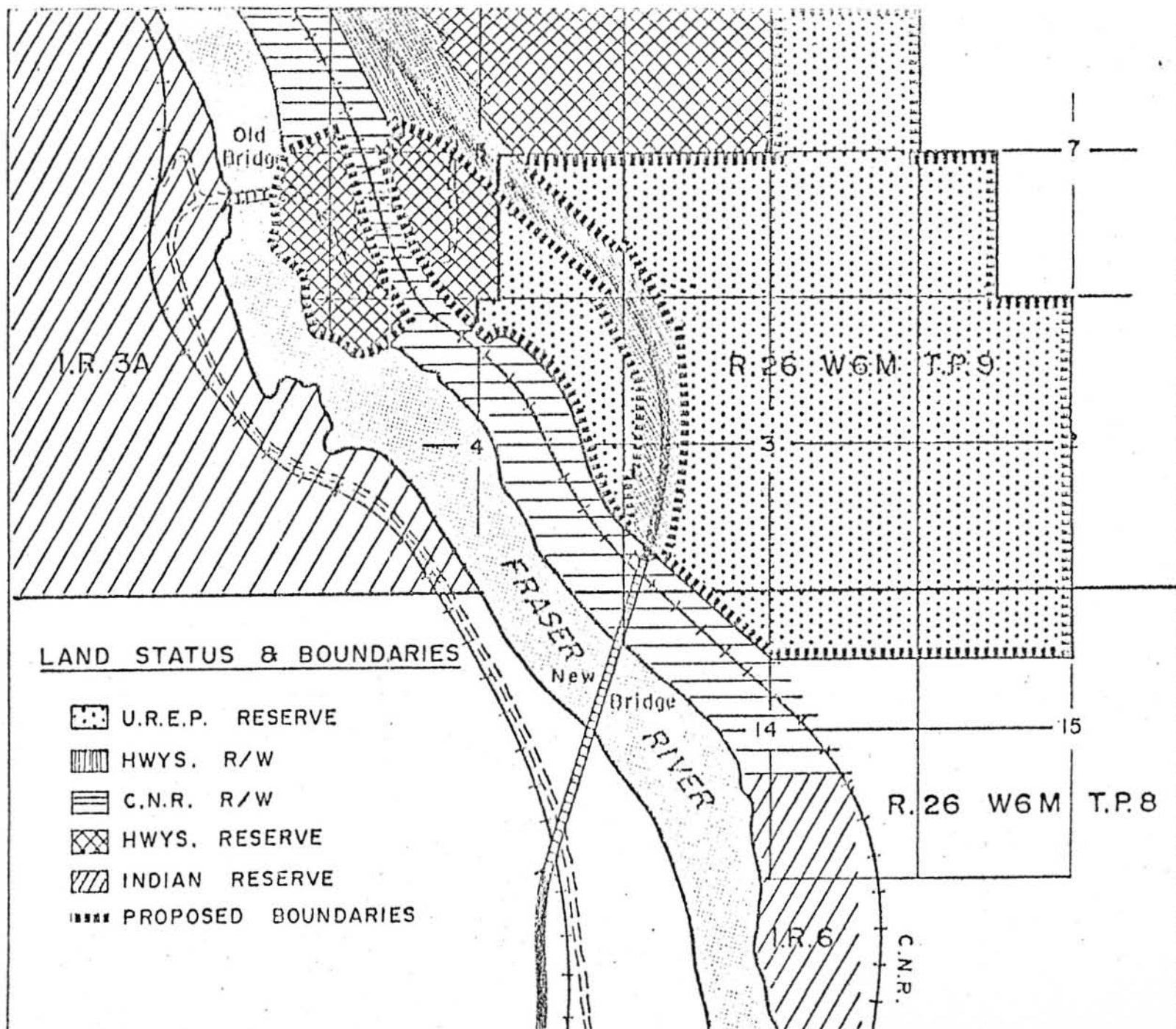


ALEXANDRA BRIDGE

LOCATION

2





PLANS AND HISTORIC NOTES

EXTRACTS FROM THE LILLOOET
-FRASER HERITAGE RESOURCE
STUDY

Heritage Conservation Branch
Province of British Columbia

Old Alexandra Bridge (1926)

The old Alexandra Bridge is located about one-half mile upstream from the present highway bridge. It may be reached by following the old road down from the present highway on the east side of the river. The old road is drivable as far as the C.N.R. tracks where a foot path leads directly to the bridge.. The bridge is still in fair condition, though showing signs of deteriorating since its abandonment in 1963. It provides an excellent view of the Fraser River. A short section of the original Cariboo Road of 1863 can be seen near the bridge on the east side of the river.

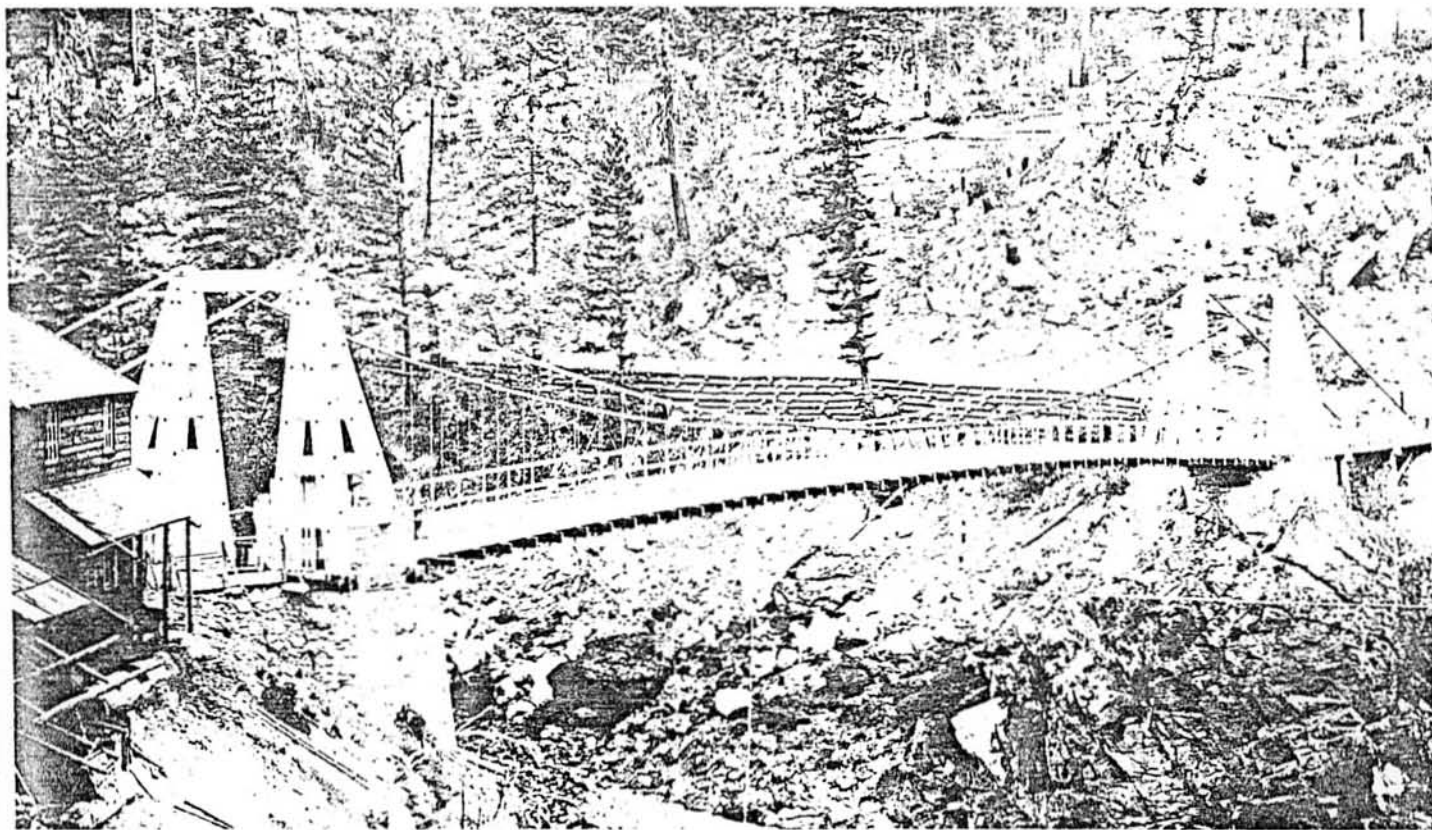


View of Alexandra Suspension Bridge from
West Bank of Fraser River

HISTORICAL NOTE: ALEXANDRA SUSPENSION BRIDGE

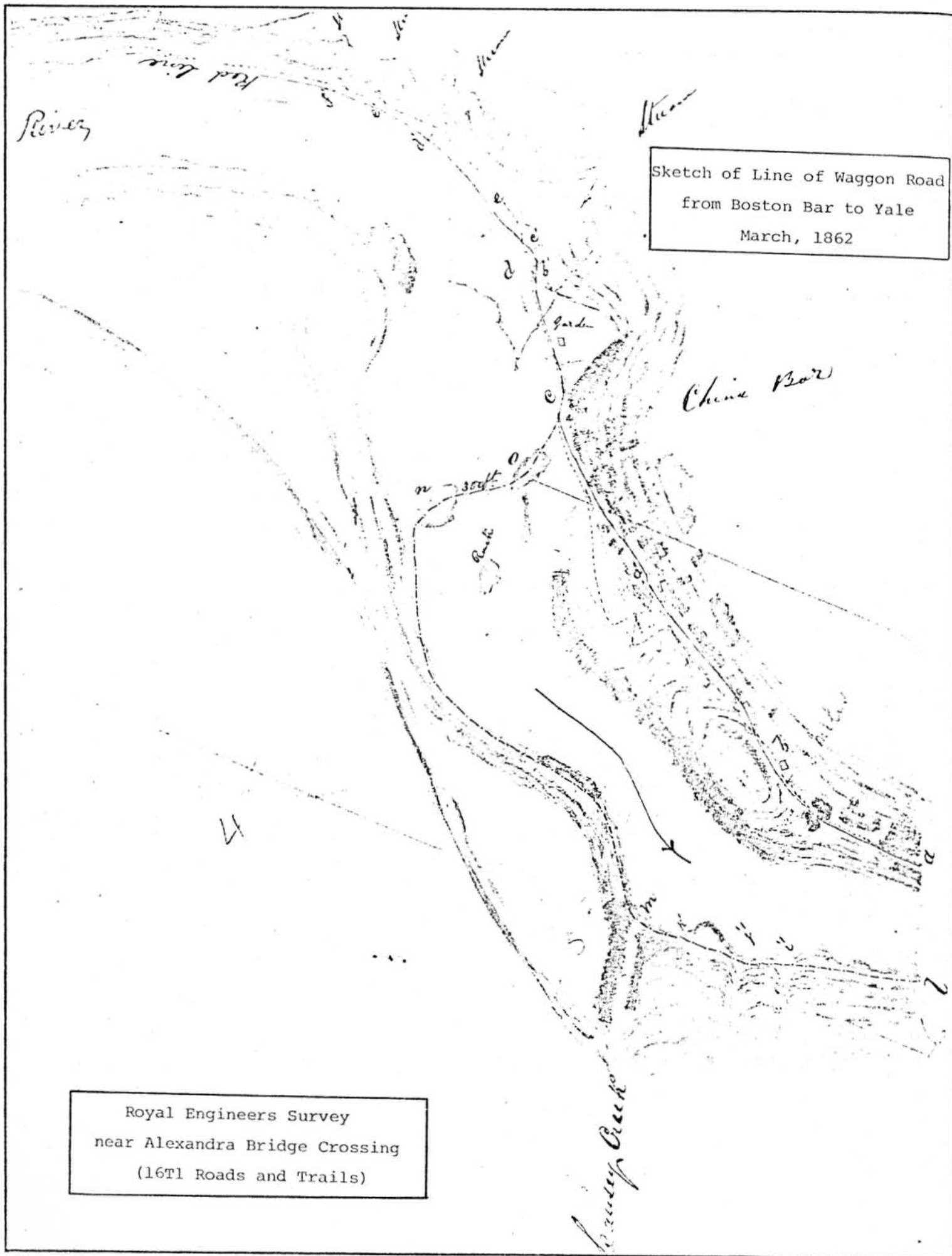
The Alexandra Suspension Bridge was built in 1926 under the direction of A. L. Carruthers, the Provincial Bridge Engineer. It replaced the original bridge that was built by Joseph Trutch in 1863. The original bridge fell into commercial disuse in 1885 with the completion of the C.P.R., but it remained functional for local people until it was damaged by the flood of 1894. By 1912 it was in such a state of disrepair that the cables were cut. When work finally got under way in the early 1920s for construction of a motor road from the coast to the interior, the existing suspension bridge was erected.

The present suspension bridge was in use until 1963, when the new highway bridge was built. Although the new highway bridge spans the river at a wider point, its design permits travel across it at modern highway speeds and avoids crossing the railway tracks.



(PABC)

Original Alexandra Suspension Bridge built in 1863.
Toll House can be seen on left.

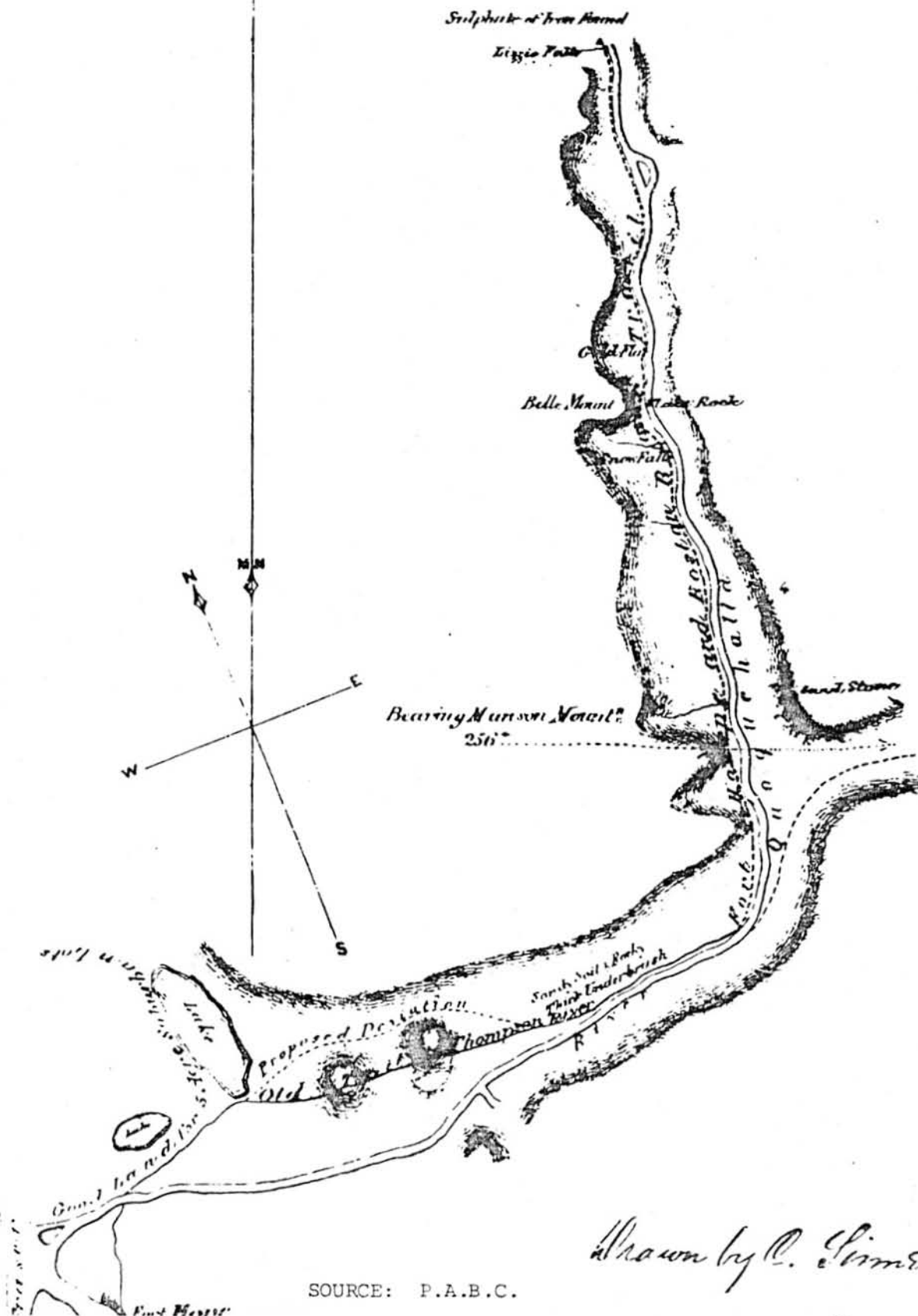


Sketch of Line of Waggon Road
from Boston Bar to Yale
March, 1862

Royal Engineers Survey
near Alexandra Bridge Crossing
(16T1 Roads and Trails)

SKETCH OF PART OF THE TRAIL FROM FORT HOPE TO QUIYOME

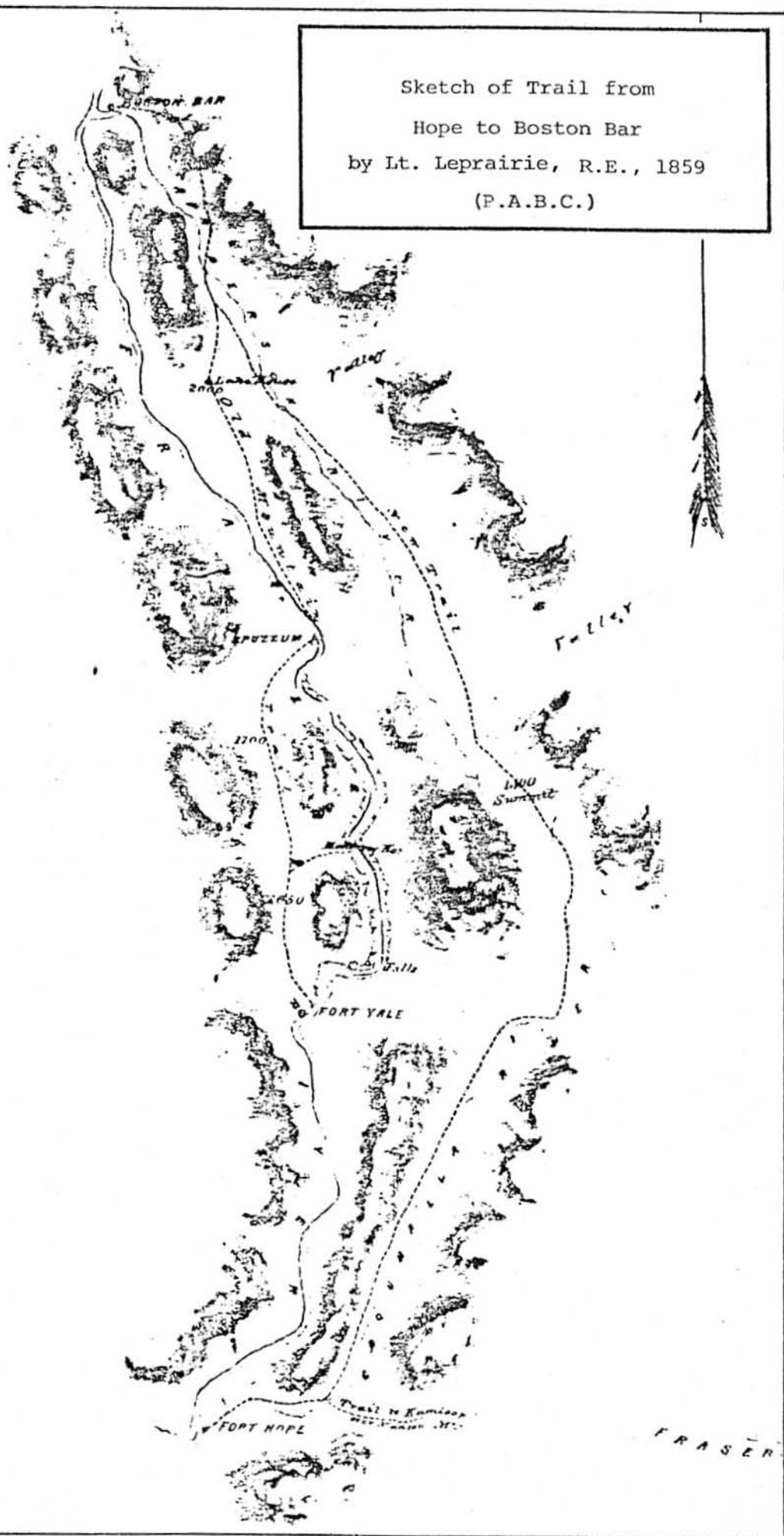
*Accompanying Report of Capt Lemprière 28th May 1859
R.E.*

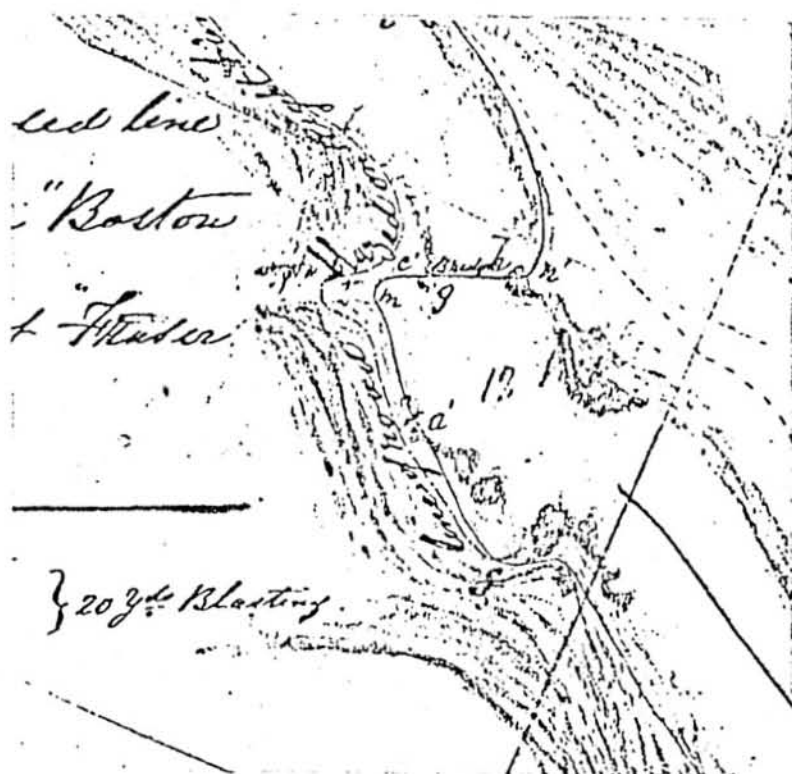


Drawn by C. G. Smith & Co. 1859

SOURCE: P.A.B.C.

Sketch of Trail from
Hope to Boston Bar
by Lt. Leprairie, R.E., 1859
(P.A.B.C.)



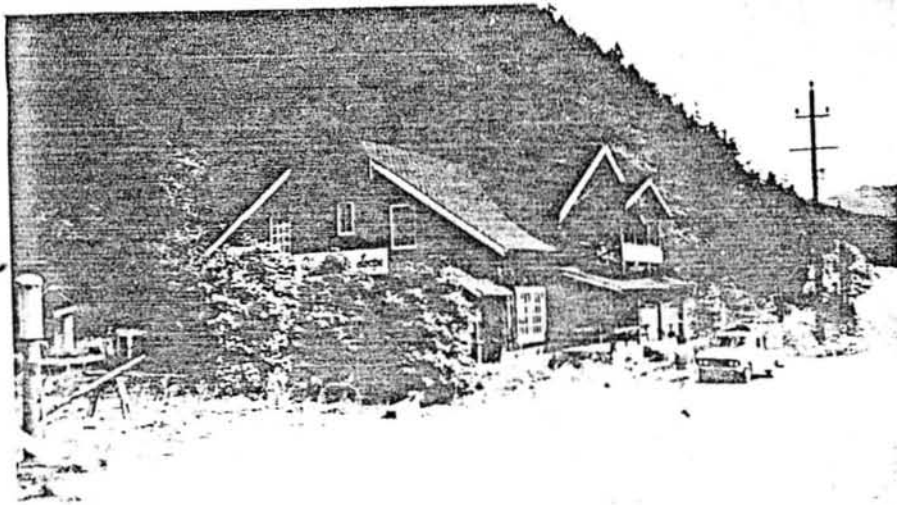


Royal Engineers' Sketch showing proposed
location of Alexandra Bridge in 1862
(L.S.B.)

Yale D.L. 1B G.1 (14 Mile House: Alexandra Lodge)

The 1865 survey of D.L. 1B G.1 shows a wagon road running parallel to the Fraser River and an old trail, possibly the trail from Lake Mountain, crossing the north boundary. Three groups of buildings, one of which was the 14-Mile House establishment, are also shown.

The Brigade Trail of 1847 is easily traceable from the lodge to the site of Lake House on the ridge above.



Present-Day Building known as Alexandra Lodge

Original Alexander's House



Alexandra Lodge

Date: c. 1930

This vernacular structure can best be described as "additive architecture." The hipped gable of the south section, the triangulated brackets under the main front gable, and the projecting extremities of the vergeboards are all details that were popular in the 1920's, but the unusual massing of the building and the diversity of window and wall treatments indicate that the building has undergone many alterations. Window



Alexandra
Lodge

The product
of many
alterations.

types include double hung two light over two light, double hung six over six, and twelve light single sashes. Wall materials include shingle and clapboard on the north section and vertical split pole on the remainder. The intent or cause that brought about the strange roof formation to the north is difficult to imagine. The end result is a building of somewhat picturesque confusion.

The first mention of the Alexandra Lodge in the British Columbia Directory occurs for 1874—"W L Alexander, hotel and store, Chapman's Bar, 14 Miles." In 1929, the Directory lists "Alexander Hotel" under Spuzzum. From Frederick Dally's photograph of the Alexandra Lodge it appears to be an expression of the New England style of architecture with the addition of a covered verandah, a popular mid-Victorian modification. However, photographs of the Alexandra Lodge as it now exists indicate either that the original Alexandra Lodge was destroyed sometime after 1878 or that it was extensively altered around 1929. Even the site of the present structure is different from that of the old Alexandra Lodge.

Significance: local.

Hudson's Bay Company Brigade Trails

Portions of the Brigade Trail explored and opened up by A. C. Anderson in 1847 can still be found today. The best preserved section of Anderson's Brigade Trail is located between the site of Alexandra Lodge and the summit of Lake Mountain three miles to the northeast. The trail starts in thick bush just north of the present Alexandra Lodge and switchbacks steeply up to the top of the ridge about 3,000 feet above the Fraser River. The ridge top is fairly flat and open, containing a number of small lakes and ponds. No traces of the old Lake House once located in that vicinity have been discovered.

Associated with Anderson's Brigade Trail are several minor trails which gave access to the Fraser River for the mining activity that occurred about 1858. The main trunk trail that led to this area at that time was the Boston Bar Trail. It went from Hope via the Coquihalla River, Boston Bar Creek and the South Anderson River to intersect the Brigade Trail east of Lake Mountain. The most noteworthy of the lesser trails associated with the Gold Rush is the one up 17-Mile Creek. It is still in fair condition and intersects the Trans-Canada Highway three miles north of the Alexandra Lodge.

The original Brigade Trail crossed the Fraser River at Spuzzum, and south from there followed a secondary valley system to Yale, thus avoiding the canyon proper. All that is left of this section, also known as the Douglas Portage, is a mile or so of trail that follows the steep ridge west of Mary Ann Creek at Yale. Logging roads and power lines have obliterated the rest of the route.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD
OF DIRECTORS OF THE REGIONAL
DISTRICT OF FRASER CHEAM ON
JUNE 10, 1980

FREEMAN)
PRETTY (

Resolved that Provincial park management at Sasquatch and Chilliwack Lake Parks be improved; that when additional Provincial parks are opened in the Region that adequate funding is available to assure proper management; and that priority be given to the development of a campground in the Fraser Canyon area.

Carried

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A
PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN CONNECTION
WITH THE UPDATE OF THE OFFICIAL
REGIONAL PLAN IN BOSTON BAR ON
MAY 1, 1980

7. Recreation Development:

The area has great recreational potential, and strong opinion was expressed that few incentives are provided at present for growth in this sector of the economy. Specific proposals included:

- (1) A major re-stocking program by Fisheries on the Nahatlach system which has very few fish at present.
- (2) Development of improved camping facilities in the Nahatlach Valley.
- (3) Release of Crown land and development of cottage sites in the Nahatlach Valley.
- (4) Development of a "rest area" for tourists along the Trans-Canada in the vicinity of Boston Bar.
- (5) Development of a Provincial Park with camping facilities in the area. This proposal was discussed in the context of competition with private enterprise, but the consensus was that little competition existed and that different markets were served by public and private campgrounds.