

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

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Fort Dallas – the Fort That Never Was



The view in 2010 from the site of the old Hudson's Bay Company Fort Dallas

Photo courtesy Richard Forrest

The fifty years between Simon Fraser's visit to Lytton in 1808 and the gold rush in 1858 were quiet ones for what we now call Lytton. Except for another exploratory expedition by Simpson in 1828 and a few visits by the Hudson's Bay Company traders from Fort Kamloops, there was little activity out of the normal for the First Nations of "Tlucumjane" (one of the many spellings attempted for the First Nations word for the joining of the rivers).

The H.B.C. had been granted a Trading Licence by the British Government, giving them an exclusive right to trade. This meant, among other things, that the Hudson's Bay Company had the right to protect their territory by restricting access to outsiders. Before the mid 1850s, this was easy to accomplish, as there was little incentive for anyone to travel into the interior.

The trade rules also meant that the H.B.C. was able to think long term.

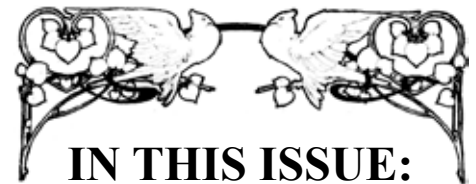
When trade in an area was substantial, they built permanent forts, supplied them with trade goods and staff and established routes to move the goods into the forts and the furs (the main trade item of interest to the H.B.C.) back out to a shipping point for sea transport back to England. They also had to build a relationship with the First Nations that would allow them to trade peacefully over the long term.

It took a year from the time the H.B.C. acquired a fur from a trapper until it reached London where it was sold. This time frame set the pace for all activity. There was little urgency except to have the fur brigades be on time for the annual meeting in Fort Hope.

Sometime in the mid 1850s, this all changed.

It is not recorded exactly when the first flake of gold was brought to Chief Trader Donald McLean at Fort Kam-

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loops or exactly where it was discovered. In fact it was not important as the quantity of gold was very small. It did, however, change the focus of McLean's trading with the First Nations of the area. He instructed his men to enquire about the yellow metal when they traded, and when it was found, they traded iron utensils to help extract the gold.

Gold was found at several points along Thompson's River, but none approached the richness of Nicoamen. At a point just downstream from the landmark we now call "the Frog", the First Nation miners had hit pay dirt.

In a letter to William G. Smith, Secretary, H.B.C., London, on September 1st, 1857, Chief Factor James Douglas wrote that he had received communication from McLean that gold had been found in considerable quantities in the District of Thompson's River, that the richest diggings were within twelve miles of the confluence with the Fraser River and that it would be advisable to build a small trading establishment. Douglas also wrote that no decision on a fort had been made.

On October 22nd, Douglas again wrote to Smith, this time expressing that the "moderate quantity of gold collected would hardly warrant the expense of erecting a new establishment". A letter from McLean, sent on October 19th from Thompson's River, had not been received when Douglas wrote to Smith because, on November 27th, he again wrote, this time entirely positive about the prospects at "the Forks" and proposing that "a small compact trading Post" will be built when the "mineral character of the country becomes better known".

A month later, on December 28th, Douglas wrote again stating that he received a letter from McLean that describes "the country as being highly auriferous" [gold-bearing], and that he will probably establish a Depot there. He also

mentioned that "we will take care to make all our arrangements on the most economical scale" because "We cannot however overlook the probability of other parties benefitting by our labours and outlay, should the Company's Trading Licence not be renewed...".

In less than four months, "the Forks" had gone from a quiet First Nations village to a place that the H.B.C. had to secure with a fort.

Having made the decision to establish a fort, Douglas spared no time in sending McLean supplies and labour to carry out this plan. On February 9th, 1858, Douglas wrote McLean that he had hired André Balthasar (sometimes spelled Balthasard) and Leon Morel and told McLean that he would send them to build a fort, if McLean was still in favour. On March 10th Douglas wrote Smith that he was building a fort and proposed to name it Fort Dallas after A.G. Dallas.

On March 13th, he wrote McLean to inform him that he was sending Balthasar and Morel to build Fort Dallas. His letter enclosed a copy of the contract and plans for the Fort. The contract and plans unfortunately have not survived. Douglas mentioned that McLean should "place the buildings in such a position as you may consider most convenient for business and defence." He also wrote that "the houses forming 3 sides of a square will probably be the better form." Later he wrote to Smith that Balthasar and Leon would build the Fort for a contract price of \$3900 including all labour and materials except for nails and ironwork, which the H.B.C. was providing.

The site of Fort Dallas was evidently left to McLean. He chose a site that would have been ideal, had the world around him not been changing faster than he could imagine.

He found a small area of good earth, able to grow food for the Factor and feed for horses and oxen. It was a suitable

distance from the village at "the Forks" and had access to the Fraser River. Most importantly, two small springs in the mountains above the small flat supplied water all year-round.

Unfortunately, things would change dramatically for the H.B.C. in only a few months.

The actual building of Fort Dallas did not go well. McLean was ordered to supply boats to Anderson and Lillooet Lakes to help with the Harrison trade route, as well as establish a fort on the east side of the Fraser near Lillooet. This new fort was named Fort Berens. All of this certainly strained McLean's resources. Headquartered in Kamloops and supervising projects from Lytton to Lillooet to Pemberton, with no road system, it is no surprise that both Fort contracts soon were behind schedule.

In July 1858, Douglas instructed McLean to turn over Fort Dallas to Mr. Travailot, who Douglas had appointed Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands for the area from what is now Lytton, through Fountain and Lillooet, which Douglas called the District of Fort Dallas.

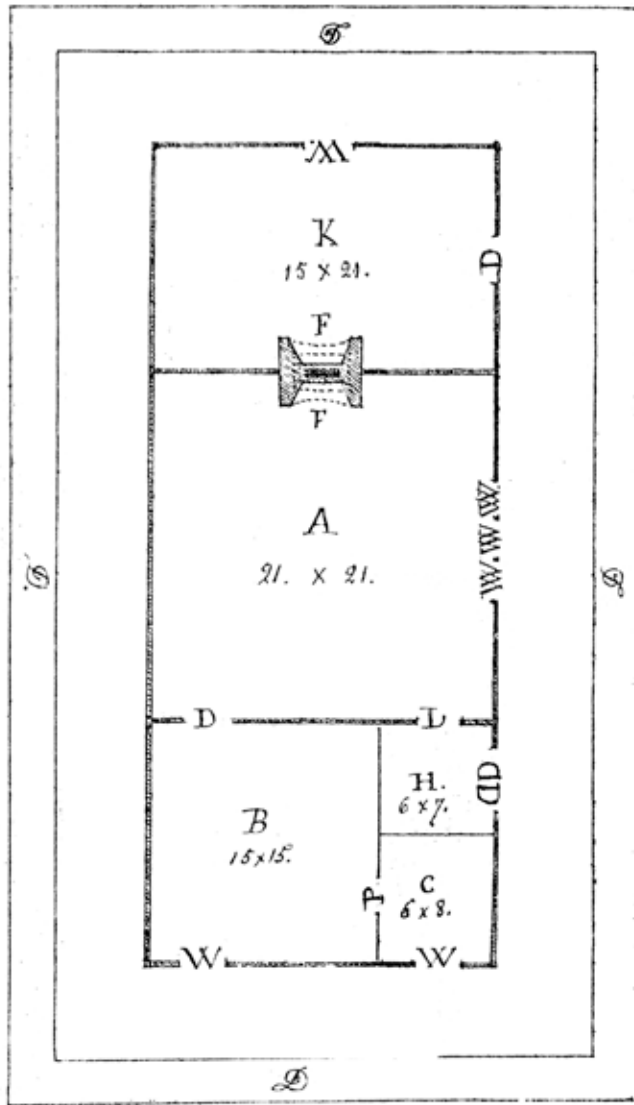
By October 1858, the H.B.C. had lost its Trading Licence, and was fighting for its survival in the new colony of British Columbia. Douglas had been appointed Governor of the Colony and A.G. Dallas was promoted to Chief Factor of the H.B.C.

Dallas almost immediately put a hold on construction at Fort Dallas and Fort Berens, and attempted to get the new Government to grant land claims that would protect the Company's holdings in the colony. Dallas sent two men to secure the building materials at Fort Berens and at Fort Dallas. Fort Berens was in such a state that it was abandoned.

Fort Dallas fared a little better. At least two buildings had been completed there. Neither fort was ever used by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Reference

- A. Council Room.
- B. Bed Room.
- C. Closet.
- K. Kitchen.
- F.F. Fire place.
- W. triple Window.
- W. Windows.
- D. Doors.
- P. passage without door.
- DD Double Door.
- H. Hall.
- C. Closets.



Scale 1/8 of inch to the foot.

W. Travillot
1858

Excellency's orders dated Langley 15 July 1858, it was handed over to Mr. Travillot, Government Commissioner. Some of the window frames, doors &c were used for Government purposes. To this hour the post has never been used by the Company, nor is it likely ever to be. For the above expenditure all we expect to recover is the charge of \$450 in name of Rent. Taking all circumstances into account and the Services rendered by the Company's Officers in the District, the charge is one which I think ought not to be disputed. A new post at Cayoosh (Fort Berens) was also at the same time ordered to be built, by His Excellency. On this there was expended about \$13,000. This post has not yet been used by the Company, nor is it likely to be. The sum expended is a dead loss, consequent very much upon the neglect to which all the Company's business was subjected, by the pressure of the business of the Colony. These are circumstances known only to those conversant with the current events of the time, and they ought I submit to be taken largely into consideration in settling the few amounts now actually claimed..."

(H.B.C. Archives B.226/b/19, pp. 174, 177-178)

A typical plan of a Hudson's Bay Company fort house of about the time of Fort Dallas.

A.G. Dallas suggested that the property and buildings should be rented out to maintain ownership without further expense. This was critical, as thousands of miners were moving through the area, going to new gold finds along the Fraser and Thompson, and many more men were establishing businesses along the route to supply and service them. If not occupied, the buildings and land would certainly be lost. Even the Government was a problem for the Company, as Colonel Moody had expropriated some of

the windows and doors from Fort Dallas to build a Government House in the new town of Lytton.

This matter of rent became a dispute with the Government as Dallas related in his letter of December 13, 1860 to William Young, Acting Colonel Secretary:

"The charge of \$450 for rent of premises at Lytton is a general one. The post was ordered to be built by His Excellency, and it cost about \$3,500. By His

The available correspondence allows us to make some conclusions about Fort Dallas:

- 1) At least two buildings were built, because there is mention of Travillot occupying "the two buildings near the river". While there is no mention of other buildings, more were planned and may or may not have been completed.
- 2) The Fort, including its buildings, was never used by the Company. We do not know if Dallas ever collected the \$450 rent.
- 3) Doors, windows and other hardware from the buildings and/or the un-built structures were expropriated for the Government Building in Lytton. The Museum has several photographs that show this building.

Silk Trains

5) Fort Dallas and Fort Berens were a huge waste of money for the Company: \$3500 for Dallas and \$13,000 for Berens, but they did allow the H.B.C. to claim fifty acres at each site in their land claims with the new Government.

6) The Royal Engineers surveyed the Fort Dallas property when they were working in the Lytton area.

7) A.G. Dallas continued for many years to get Douglas to recognize the claims of the Company to its lands, but by 1864 the Company's land claims were still not settled.

We also know that Louis Hautier had a "Certificate of Improvement" certified on the property described as the "old Hudson's Bay Company's fort" on August 10th, 1865. Whether he obtained the property from the Government or the Company is not clear, but its location is. A map of the Canadian Pacific right-of-way shows Lot 7 G.I. as "The site of old Fort Dallas (H.B.Co.)". This is now better known as the Lytton Lumber log sort yard.

A hundred and forty-five years of development and disturbance by its various owners has eliminated all trace of the old Fort buildings. The land has been worked, backfilled, excavated, graded and otherwise changed to such an extent that nothing remains of Fort Dallas or of any of Hautier's improvements except the cemetery plot he set aside in 1882.

Perhaps this is a fitting end for a fort that never was a fort.

NOTE:

The site is entirely on private property and is part of the Lytton Lumber sawmill grounds. Because of liability issues, they forbid trespassing.

Many thanks to the Hudson's Bay Archives of Winnipeg, Manitoba, The Archives of British Columbia and Hudson Bay Company, Great Trinity Lane, London, England for excerpts of the letters relating to Fort Dallas.

Submitted by Richard Forrest



The silk train, possibly changing locomotives and crew. These stops were timed and recorded, often taking less than five minutes.

Vancouver Public Library, Special Collections, VPL 15641a

Silk trains were single purpose or unit trains with top priority rights on the track and specially constructed railcars.

Their sole purpose was to transport bales of raw silk from Vancouver to Eastern Canada and the U.S. as quickly as possible. They were the King-of-the-tracks between 1887 and 1940.

For these trains it was all about speed: silk is perishable and the priority was getting the silk to market swiftly so it could be converted into *luxury* items like dresses, shirts, ties and scarves.

A single bale of silk could be worth \$800 in 1925. You could buy three, top-of-the-line Harley Davidson Motorcycles in the 1920's with one bale of silk. Each railcar could carry 470 bales, so a fourteen or fifteen car train could easily be carrying more than \$5 million worth of silk.

The railways carried special insurance for their silk trains, and the insurance clock started ticking the minute the silk bales were offloaded from ships in Vancouver that delivered the silk from

the Orient. Rates were usually charged by the hour, and the clock kept ticking until the precious cargo was unloaded at its eastern destination.

The specially built railcars had shorter and lighter suspension and wheel systems that were more like passenger cars than boxcars. They were designed to accommodate high speeds and sharp curves more safely than regular cars. Railway police rode shotgun on every train.

On the flat, open prairies, these trains often travelled at more than 100 km per hour. Pit stops to change crews and switch to fully supplied new steam locomotives happened every 200 km on average, and only took seven minutes. There were relatively few accidents in spite of the speed at which these trains travelled.

However, a derailment a kilometre or so below Spences Bridge happened a few days after Christmas in 1910. The derailment never made the newspapers so the CPR archives have no record of



The silk train under way. Notice the last car - a passenger car that the armed guards and insurance agents would ride in.

Photo origin unknown

the derailment (or so I was told).

However, James Teit, one of the best known personalities living in Spences Bridge at the time, was hired by the CPR to retrieve the bales of silk. Teit kept a record of the experience in his diary.

December 1910

28th. "Fixed canoe forenoon - ran down river after dinner (lunch) to below the wreck, crossed 81 small bales of fine silk and 2 roles of Japanese matting. ["Crossed" probably means that he carried the bales in his canoe from the west, roadless side of the river to the east side where both the railway and Cariboo Road were located.]

29th. "Worked all day - crossed 2 bales silk 2nd class + 3 rolls matting. Salv'ed 100 packages fine silk + 1 bale silk 2nd class. Brought all together foot of rapids below Indian graveyard."

My best guess after reading his diary about the wreck many times, is the train derailed on the corner two kilometres south of the TCH Bridge. The silk bales were swept through the rapid and picked up below it. Teit says it is below the Indian graveyard (near the junction of Hwy #1 and Hwy #8) and that he piled the bales on river left in one spot below the rapid.

Teit also took his canoe down the river from Spences Bridge to Drynoch Siding (about 12.0 km) inspecting the pools and eddies and picking up a few bales of silk along the way. In total he spent 16 days retrieving silk bales as well as bales of goat skins that were on the same train.

On January 3rd he had an accident on the icy river. In his diary he writes:

"Located 1 bale on head of bar between two rapids. In going over there had accident thru pole sticking between rocks + canoe swinging down broadside in riffle hit three rocks one after another - stove in 4 ribs + capsized, all of us swam ashore." P. 36

That evening he related the accident to his mother-in-law, Mrs Morens:

"I was the first one to reach shore and as my feet touched the bottom I turned to see how my companions were doing. Joe Martel was right behind me using a downward stroke with his arms and almost bouncing over the water. Johnny Smith was yelling, "Help, wait for me, I can't swim", although he was flailing his arms around and doing a great deal of splashing, he was making progress". As soon as Teit saw he was going to be all right, he went ashore where Martel was already looking for material to

make a fire. Martel, who had worked on river drives in Quebec and was an experienced river man, kept matches stuck in his thick hair and they soon had a fire going." P 58

Johnny Smith quit his job after the mishap and was replaced by "Indian Drynock Johnny". Teit and his helpers continued the salvage operation for another eleven days without serious incident.

Excerpts from:

Teit Times Vol.1 Summer 1995
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF JAMES A. TEIT -1910-
 Published by Nicola Valley Museum Archives Association, Merritt BC

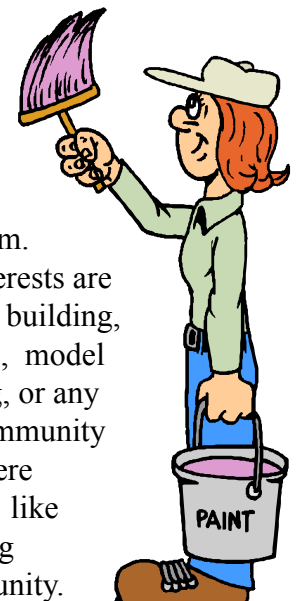
Submitted by Bernie Fandrich
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VOLUNTEER!

Lytton has many volunteer groups, including the Museum.

If your interests are gardening, building, collections, model railroading, or any type of community service, there are people like you helping our community.



JOIN THEM TODAY!



First Fly Fisherman on the Thompson

Submitted by Bernie Fandrich

I came across a very significant discovery while reading an 1859 journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, the personal clerk and registrar of none other than the famous hanging Judge, Mathew Begbie. For most people it would not be viewed as an earth-shattering find, but as a fly fisherman, I was excited.

Here's what Bushby wrote in his journal on Sunday, April 3, 1859:

I went out with Begbie and he tried the Thompson with a fly but with no success – while I lounged on the sand in the sun a cigar en bouche and the Chinook vocabulary en main!! P.154

This is the first written record of the first time anyone fly-fished the Thompson, and probably the first written record of anyone fly-fishing a stream in BC.

Fishermen have occasionally been known to exaggerate the size of their catch, tell stories about how many fish they caught, and if the fishing was exceptional, they may even be guilty of an understatement or two. A couple years after Begbie fished the Thompson, Dr. Walter Cheadle, a young man who chose to travel across the country “just for pleasure”, arrived at Lytton on Tuesday, September 15, 1863. (His journal is fascinating and worth reading in full).

Dr. Cheadle recorded a rather interesting notation in his diary:

“At Lytton we found Captain Ball the magistrate, a very jolly fellow indeed; flies in his hat; told us good fishing in streams about Yale & Hope; none to be killed in Fraser or Thompson.” P.230

Now, why would magistrate Ball be wearing a hat that was displaying his favourite fishing flies if the closest fish was a two or three day ride away on horseback? Obviously it was a tongue in cheek comment and what he was really saying was the fishing in the Thompson was beyond description.

In fact, the morning before, Cheadle had feasted on delicious white salmon in Spences Bridge:

“Breakfast at Mr Cook's; (operator of the ferry – Cook's Ferry) excellent white salmon, fish rather resembling the bass”. Page 230

Almost fifty years later (1907) Dr. T.W. Lambert published a book in London entitled “Fishing in British Columbia”. It has a great section about fishing the Thompson and is an interesting read, especially for anyone who has fished the Thompson.

Dr. Lambert was a surgeon for the CPR for twelve years and obviously an avid fisherman and a keen observer. He accurately describes what later became classified as steelhead trout, but at the time the conventional wisdom was that no steelhead could swim past Hell's Gate on the Fraser River, so he simply referred to the large fish as “rainbow trout”.

“On the whole there is probably no fishing river in British Columbia to beat this one for the size and quality of the fish, though it does not afford the large bags that can be obtained on the Kootenay. It is a very sporting river, owing to the strength of the current, for a big fish is hard to hold if it once gets out into the main current, away from the side eddies...”

“I once was shown at Spence's Bridge three supposed salmon in the winter which had been speared and sold by the Indians for two shillings apiece (less than ten cents). I noticed their perfect condition and bright red side stripe, and, on examining them more carefully, pointed out to an experienced fisherman who was present, and to the proprietor of the hotel and others, that these fish were large rainbow trout. The largest weighed 15lb., the two others 12lb. apiece. This incident happened at Spence's Bridge, on the Lower Thomp-

son...” P.14-16

Are you still inclined to believe Magistrate Ball?

Sources:

FISHING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

BY T. W. LAMBERT, M.A., M.B., B.C. (Cantab.); M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (London).

Late Surgeon to the Western Division, Canadian Pacific Rail-way Company.

Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada 1862-1863

By Walter B. Cheadle

M.G.Hurtig Ltd, Booksellers & Publishers, Edmonton 1971 P.230

British Columbia Historical Quarterlies

The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859

Edited, with an introduction and notes by Dorothy Blakey Smity

Volume 21, Page 154

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

For those that are not fly fishermen: the Thompson River is designated as a Classified Water from Kamloops Lake to the Fraser River This means that special licences are needed to fish it during certain times of the year.

This is because the Thompson is now considered one of the best steelhead fly fishing rivers in British Columbia. Each year fly fishermen invade Spences Bridge in the fall to fish, particularly in the region of the old C.N.R. “Y” (where the locomotives used to turn around), and Gold Pan.

Nlaka'pamux Cultural Heritage Day



As part of BC Heritage week, Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council (NNTC) hosted an afternoon Show and Tell at Lytton Elementary School from 1-7 p.m. on February 16, 2010.

The Show and Tell focussed mainly on cultural artifacts that community members have at home or in collections. People were very interested in this topic. Because of recent developments that have occurred in the area that include the new Thompson River Bridge, BC Hydro removing their diesel generating plant, the new Stein Valley School and water infrastructure works in both the Village and the Band, people have a renewed interest in the archaeological evidence that comes with disturbing the ground in order to develop or change

something.

The day was really well received by the community with over 132 signing the guest book. There were also special guests who came from the Lower Mainland and these included Chris Arnett who co-authored the book *They Write Their Dreams on the Rock Forever Rock Writings in the Stein River Valley*. Chris' wife Barb also came along and she made some interesting connections herself because she is currently doing work with cedar. Chris was also able to record some Nlaka'pamux language that will help in his pictograph work. Jesse Morin, who is doing some work towards a Phd. in jade, found that Lytton has interesting and strong connections in the manufacture of jade implements. He also found out where more treasures from Lytton were taken to and are on exhibit in far off places like Seattle. Many good connections were made that day including a local artist who mentioned that he is going to be keeping in touch

Continued on page 8 ...



Above left: John Haugen shows some of the late Rita Haugen's artifact collection.

Above: Jesse Morin uses his portable analyzer to identify the rock used in this axe.

Photos courtesy Richard Forrest

Nlaka'pamux Cultural Heritage Day

... continued from page 7

with two of the guests as he plans on doing an intense jade carving course. Both Chris and Jesse are studying at UBC.

From Simon Fraser University, Michael Klassen, who is also familiar with Lytton and its rich and storied past, brought with him Ryan Dickie and Heather Kendall, archaeologists that have specialties of their own: Ryan is very adept at being able to make tools, reproductions etc. and Heather specializes in chert. People were able to ask these visitors many things like time periods, what the tools were made from. Some were able to have their collections photographed.

Community members asked many things and one of them was when can we have something else like this. People are interested in showing their collections and one that could be organized is on coiled basketry of the Nlaka'pamux.

NNTC is also interested in compiling a Cultural Heritage Policy and will be asking for input from community members to complete this. If you would like to participate please let Teresa Raphael or John Haugen know at 250-455-2711.

We want to thank all those that came out for a great afternoon and for those that participated by setting up displays. Way to go! So many were truly impressed! So thanks again Kwoiek represented by Tim Spinks, Lytton First Nation represented by Christine Brown, Graham Everett, Albert and Tiffany Adams, Jerry Adams, Raymond Phillips, Cyril Spinks, Lester Charlie, Rod Dunstan and Peter McArthur from the Lytton Museum & Archives. Special thanks to Cyril Spinks, for always wanting to do this, and being ready to do this.

Submitted by John Haugen



Our Eleventh Tea and Talk



Some of the visitors to our Eleventh Annual Tea and Talk. From left: Graham Everett, Joan MacIntyre, Vera Spinks, Dennis Roy and Vivian Roy.

Photo courtesy Richard Forrest

On February 17th, The Lytton Museum and Archives hosted its Eleventh Annual Tea and Talk.

Twenty four guests came for the event and there were many lively conversations at the tables set up throughout the Museum. The browse binders were put out and guests poured over the pictures, sometimes reminiscing and sometimes adding or correcting details.

Everyone took advantage of the Tea and Talk being the only day food is allowed to be consumed in the Museum and enjoyed cookies, squares and other treats as well as coffee and tea.

Many thanks to Joan Craig and Gwendy Lamont, who took time out of their Valentine's Day to clean the Museum for the Tea and Talk and to Lois Brooks and her volunteers that brought treats, coffee and tea for the visitors and made sure that everyone was treated well. Thanks also to the St. Bartholomew's Health Care Auxiliary for the loan of card tables.

Everyone that came and everyone that helped out made this event another success.



Here is the bridge from Volume 10 Issue 2



Tank Hill / Pitquah / Jaws of Death Bridge.

Photo courtesy Richard Forrest

At left is the picture of the Tank Hill / Pitquah / Jaws of Death Bridge that was the subject of the cover story in Volume 10 Issue 2.

This picture was referenced in the article and accidentally left out of the newsletter but was on the website version.

The mutiple names come from the location - on Tank Hill - the location - across from Pitquah and the river location - near the Jaws of Death rapid.