

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

December 2010

420 Fraser Street, Lytton, B.C.

Issue 11 Number 3

Chinese Labourers and the CPR



A Chinese crew working on a railroad, with a white man as Foreman. They are laying track and there are three tracks side-by-side.

Photo Lytton Museum and Archives

This article was submitted by Bernie Fandrich and is part of his new book on the history of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers.

To understand the important connection between the Chinese and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), it's necessary to have a look at what went on in British Columbia during the early years of the province.

In 1867, B.C. was a crown colony of Great Britain, separated from the rest of Canada by the Rocky Mountains. The gold rush that began a decade earlier had ended, and the region had subsequently

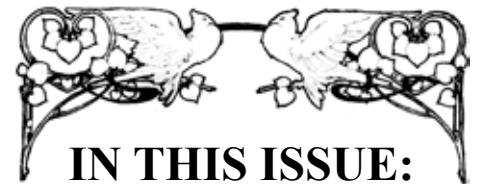
slid into an economic depression and was up to its colonial ears in debt.

U.S. Should Take Over B.C.

Conditions were so bleak that there was a yearning on the part of some people for British Columbia to be annexed to the United States. In 1867, the first of two annexation petitions circulated in Victoria. Addressed to the Queen, it asked that the British government assume the colony's expenses and debts, and establish steamboat service between the colony and Britain. Alternatively, B.C. should be permitted to join the

United States. It is unknown how many signatures the petition gathered or if the Queen ever received it.

In 1869, a group of property holders and businessmen wrote a second requisition: *The Annexation Petition*. It was delivered to American President Ulysses S. Grant by the Alaska Indian Commissioner. (Alaska had recently been purchased by the U.S. and some folks



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thought that B.C. was next on the American acquisition list). The petition asked that the President begin negotiations with Great Britain for the transfer of British Columbia to the United States.

B.C. Joins Confederation

The petitions caught the attention of Canadian politicians, who pushed for B.C. to join Confederation instead of the United States. In 1871, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald promised to build a transcontinental railroad that would link the province to the rest of Canada. British Columbia took the Prime Minister at his word and, on July 20, 1871, joined Confederation.

Work on the railroad was to start within two years of joining Confederation and to be completed within ten years. However, politics, finances and scandal after scandal delayed the start. It wasn't until the Premier of B.C. Amor De Cosmos threatened to withdraw the province from Confederation and join the United States that the Canadian House of Commons finally approved the railroad construction on February 15, 1881. Ten years had passed since the initial promises.

CPR Receives Government Subsidies

The government gave the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, a private company started by a group of executives, \$25,000,000 in cash and 10 million hectares of land suitable for settlement. Property used for railway purposes was to remain free of taxation forever. Equipment imported for building the railway was admitted into Canada duty-free.

The government passed laws that provided a virtual monopoly to the CPR for twenty years. It also agreed to look after the cost of construction of 1142 km of the western rail line, the most difficult and expensive section of the entire line, and then donate it to the CPR. In exchange, the CPR agreed to complete their section of the railway (3060 km) by 1891.

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Onderdonk Builds Western Section for Canadian Taxpayers

The massive job of building the difficult western section fell to 37-year-old Andrew Onderdonk, an American engineer and construction contractor who was the front person for a group of wealthy American financiers. Onderdonk entered into five separate contracts with the Canadian government that covered the construction of the main line in British Columbia from Vancouver (Port Moody, specifically) to Savona's Ferry.

Onderdonk's Contract #63, from Junction Flat (a few km north of Spences Bridge) to Savona's Ferry, was signed on December 15, 1879, more than two years before the government in Ottawa passed the railway act formally approving the construction of the railway. In fact, all four of his contracts to build the railway from Yale to Savona were signed prior to February 15, 1881, the date that royal assent was given to the bill outlining the terms and conditions of the railway. Construction began at Yale in May 1880, more than nine months before the bill was passed in the House of Commons.

...What If?

It's always interesting to speculate on the outcome had Parliament not approved the railway construction in 1881. Approval was not a *fait accompli*, as passage of the bill in the House of Commons required over two months of bitter debate.

It turns out that the Canadian taxpayers paid for the construction of 1142 km of track, including all of the line from Savona to Vancouver. Not only did taxpayers pay for the construction, they donated the land, provided the CPR with huge amounts of cash, and approved a twenty-year-or-until-sold tax-free status to the railway for any land removed from the land grant and sold. Then, upon completion of construction, the government donated the 1142 km of track to the CPR.

It's little wonder that the CPR still displays a culture of entitlement in its corporate offices today. However, I digress.

Onderdonk in a Dilemma

Onderdonk knew that his contracts with the government were below his own cost estimates to build the railroad from Vancouver to Savona. The shortfall was more than \$1.5 million, and he had to find ways to save money.

He had promised the Canadian government that he would first employ surplus white labour from B.C. and the rest of Canada, then French Canadians, then First Nations from Canada and the U.S., and lastly, Chinese.

However, Onderdonk was in a dilemma. He knew that he could not make up for his shortfall without hiring Chinese workers who would accept lower wages than other labourers. He petitioned the federal government and told them the railway simply could not be built unless he was allowed to use Chinese labour. The cost-conscious federal government approved his request, much to the chagrin of the B.C. government.

Although the province already had a sizeable Chinese population following the gold rush in the late 1850s, racism towards the Chinese was widespread. Most newspaper articles and editorial illustrations of the time repeatedly portrayed the Chinese in a degrading way. The Chinese culture was repugnant to white Canadians, who made no effort to understand the virtues of their practices.

Onderdonk Imports 17,000 Chinese

Between 1881 and 1884, more than 17,000 Chinese came to Canada. Several thousand travelled north from coastal areas of the U.S., where they had helped build the American transcontinental railroad. These were experienced railway workers - just what Onderdonk needed. However, he needed many more to meet his business objectives and fatten his bottom line.

In 1882, Onderdonk chartered ten sail-

ing ships and conveyed six thousand men from Guangdong and Fujian provinces in southern China to Canada. Recruitment companies in China advertised the job opportunities and arranged passage on ships. The voyage cost each worker \$40, payable once work began. Workers also paid 2.5% of their wage to the recruitment company.

Workers, mostly uneducated, unskilled, and unmarried, came from a country devastated by two wars that had claimed millions of lives. In the mid-1800s, starvation and poverty were the norm. Most came from rural areas in the two provinces, where they rented their small farms from a handful of wealthy Chinese who owned most of the land. Crippling high rents and taxes consumed the farms' profits, forcing many peasants to borrow money just to feed their families. Given the opportunity to gain financial independence, Chinese labourers eagerly boarded ships by the thousands and headed to Onderdonk's railway in Canada.

Women did not emigrate at first, mostly because of historical tradition and social norms that expected women to be caretakers of family and ancestral roots. A \$50 head tax later prevented migration of the women that wanted to marry the Chinese labourers who remained in Canada after the railway was built.

Three-masted sailing ships took workers from Hong Kong to Victoria in two or three months, depending on the weather. Onboard, they endured extremely crowded conditions; the men below decks slept in closed hatches with bad ventilation; food and water were scarce. At Victoria, the ones that survived boarded ferries to cross the Georgia Strait to New Westminster, where they transferred to smaller boats for the journey up the Fraser River to Yale.

At Yale the Trek Begins

At Yale, the voyage by water ended. The Chinese were divided into groups of 30 men. Each group had a cook, an

assistant cook, a Chinese record keeper who kept track of work hours and other details, and a white supervisor who dealt directly with the record keeper. The Chinese labourers paid for their own work utensils, camp equipment, and cooks.

Once the groups were created, they slowly trekked along the Cariboo Road to a railroad camp at Lytton. As they trudged along, the Waggon Road often disappeared because of blasting or other railway construction already underway. They continued their march to Lytton along narrow trails, carrying their supplies suspended on shoulder poles or in large packs on their backs.

The Lytton to Savona's Ferry section of the railroad was built using primarily Chinese labour. Chinese, white, and aboriginal labour, both from Canada and the U.S., worked on the section from Boston Bar to Lytton, while mostly white labour worked on the section from Yale to Boston Bar, the first section that Onderdonk began in May 1880.

Discriminatory Wage System

Onderdonk's discriminatory wage system paid Chinese workers less than white workers, who were paid \$1.50 to 2.50 per day. The Chinese wage of \$1.00 or less per day was barely enough for survival. As part of their contract, the Chinese workers were required to buy their supplies at CPR company stores, where prices were often inflated. After paying for food, clothing, equipment, and shelter, there was usually little or no money left over. White workers, on the other hand, had their camping gear and cooking gear supplied for free.

During the three winter months when construction came to a standstill, the labourers were forced to whittle away at their meagre savings that on average amounted to \$43 per worker per year. Since many had borrowed money for passage to Canada, the savings often returned to the agents who had lent them the money for their fares.

For a dollar a day, the Chinese under-

took the backbreaking, dangerous jobs. Using simple tools and manual labour, they built roadbeds, bridges, and tunnels along a route that spanned deep canyons and rivers and cut through hard granite mountains. They moved an unimaginable amount of rock and gravel in pushcarts, and on shoulder poles. Chinese worked under extreme conditions, sometimes clinging to the side of a steep mountainside or suspended in the air by harnesses in the skeleton of a partially built bridge. They were unaccustomed to working in the cold and found it intolerable.

Chinese Died by the Hundreds... or Thousands

Onderdonk admitted that more than 600 Chinese died in work-related accidents. Others estimated that several thousand died, some from malnutrition and diseases like scurvy. The exact number of deaths is unknown, as Chinese deaths were not reported by Onderdonk's company.

Safety measures to protect Chinese workers from injury or death were almost non-existent. During blasting, in particular, workers were crushed by collapsing tunnels and rock slides; Chinese were often required to use volatile nitroglycerine instead of the more stable TNT dynamite. One incident occurred in 1883, when a Chinese worker had his head blown off because the work gang was not given sufficient warning of the blast. The white foreman dove into the river to escape the angry workers that attacked him with their tools and rocks.

Families in China were often not notified when someone died, nor was compensation paid as promised by the agents. Usually the bodies were simply buried next to the tracks so work could resume as quickly as possible. In 1891, the bones of more than 300 men from graves in the Thompson and Fraser canyons were collected by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Society and returned to China for burial.

Chinese Honest, Hardworking, Dutiful

Generally, the Chinese were considered honest, hardworking, and dutiful. However, they reacted strongly to defend themselves if they felt the railway contractors treated them unfairly, especially if they were exposed to unnecessary danger.

The worst incident occurred on May 10, 1883 at Lytton. The Victoria Colonist reported the event on May 13, 1883, a few days after the white supervisor was assaulted by the Chinese for an apparent injustice. The white workers retaliated.

An inquest is being held here [in Lytton] today on the body of the Chinaman, Ah Fook who died from the effects of the assault made on the Chinese camp by white men last Tuesday night.

Great difficulty was met in obtaining the requisite number of disinterested jurymen. The inquest opened at 4 p.m. and a few witnesses were examined.

From the evidence it appears that a number of the Chinamen belonging to camp 37 assaulted their foreman

Tuesday morning and that at about 10 o'clock the same night a body of about 20 white men marched down to the Chinese camp armed with clubs and as the frightened Chinese left their houses they brutally assaulted them. One man died from the wounds received and some seven or eight others are seriously injured. The houses were then set fire to and the white men left. It is expected that some assaultants will be identified by the wounded Chinamen; but so far no clue has been found as every effort has been made by white laborers along the line to screen their guilty comrades.

Supt. Todd, who is conducting the inquest, is using every endeavour to discover the perpetrators of this, the most unmanly and cowardly affair that has yet occurred in the country.

The inquest will probably be brought to a close tomorrow morning.

The following day the inquest resumed, but as it was impossible to identify any of the murderers, no charges resulted.

Chinese Work Camp at Kumsheen Rafting Resort

Chinese work camps consisted primarily of canvas structures and were quite portable. They moved along as work progressed. It made sense to be as close to the jobsite as possible. Major camps were established at Lytton, Spences Bridge, Ashcroft, and Savona, with satellite camps in between.

I discovered the remains of a Chinese work camp on the Kumsheen property when developing the resort in 1995. As I levelled a campsite for our guests in the *Back 40* camping area, I unearthed a stash of bones. My first thought was that I had disturbed a gravesite. However, I then found a number of long, perfectly preserved boar tusks. Most people don't have tusks attached to their skulls.

I quickly realized that I was dealing with a Chinese encampment when I discovered the scant remains of cooking pots and several depressions in the

ground. This was obviously the location of a Chinese cookhouse, and as the bones of the pigs were emptied from the pots after making a broth, they were unceremoniously dumped into a hole behind the cookhouse. Not a scrap was wasted. Pork was a Chinese delicacy and nutritionally essential. Onderdonk occasionally supplied the workers with pigs to supplement their diets after deaths caused by scurvy during the winter.

It is estimated that Onderdonk's plan to import Chinese railway workers reduced his cost of building the railway by twenty-five percent, a saving of between three and five million dollars. Onderdonk, the Canadian government and the CPR benefitted from their labour. With their help, the railway construction progressed and B.C. wasn't annexed by the United States.



Museum Commission Elections Update

On November 30, 2010, the Lytton Museum and Archives Commission held its Annual Meeting.

The Minutes of the November 2009 Annual Meeting and the October General Meeting were read and accepted and the Chair submitted his Annual Report.

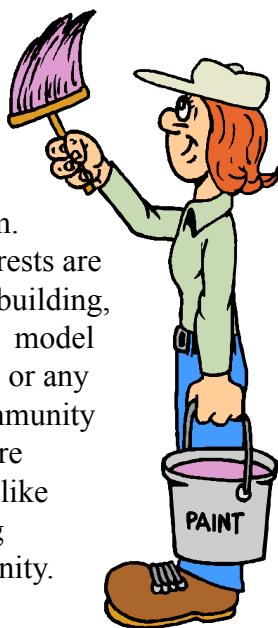
The Financial report was received and then the elections were called.

All positions were filled by acclamation, with Irene Steer being re-elected as Secretary, Joan Craig as Treasurer, Joe Chute as Vice-Chair and Richard Forrester as Chair. Our thanks to Lois Brooks, our Election Committee.

The other significant item that was discussed and passed was to raise the Membership dues from \$5 to \$10 for 2011. The dues had been set in 1995 and never raised, so it was felt that added costs warranted the new rate.

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!

Reverend Koten Benson of the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory sent us this piece.

The priory is located in the Botanie Valley, above Sointula.

Koten had been studying the rock formation at the entrance to Botanie Valley, and was able to make out the shape of the old woman in the rock face.

So, for all of us who see more than stone in the rocks:

This is the story that the land told me:

The Old Woman was very tired - she had been climbing the ridge, carrying the basket, for what seemed like a long time. Her work was almost done. Only one task remained and then she could rest. She climbed slowly for she was very old. When she reached the top of the ridge, she turned around and looked back over all that she had created. She had given everything of herself and now the land was still and complete far below and all around her.

Silently, she blessed each rock and every beloved pool and tree that she had made - each lovingly and completely blessed. Then she blessed the strong wind, which came from her own breath, so that it would always blow away all clinging evil and smoke. She blessed the heat of the strong sunlight, which came out of the warmth of her own vast body, so that it would always melt the ice and snows in the springtime. Next, she looked up and blessed the strong rooted mountains created from her own bones so that they should always stand guard and lead the eye and soul upwards. At last she blessed the strong river that had been poured out from her own lifeblood that it would always flow and bring life to the dry lands.

Finally she turned and looked far below at the most beloved of all - the place where all these elements: wind and heat and water and earth come together to mix and to meld - the meeting of the rivers - the place at the centre of the heart where life emerges and becomes possible.

Then, for the sake of all those who would come to this, the most beautiful place, and love it and make their homes here - in the hearing of all worlds and all times, with all that she had brought into being as witnesses, she spoke, quietly, distinctly, with all power and for all to hear and remember: "Do not kill, do not kill yourselves and do not try to kill me. Do

not steal, do not steal from yourselves and do not try to steal from me. Do not lie, do not lie to yourselves and do not try to lie to me. Do not abuse, do not abuse yourselves and do not try to abuse me. Do not pollute, do not pollute yourselves and do not try to pollute me. Then she was silent and the very rocks and trees reverberated with her voice and her message, and the river and the wind and the sun and the mountain replied, "For all time we will remember."

Only one more thing remained to be done, her own special gift to the future - a place, a space, a treasure valley where there would be stored up, for all to find and use, every plant - leaf, root, berry that could heal and feed - a place of abundance, and of life, and of quiet and spiritual peace. She lifted her basket full to the brim with every good seed and root, and with all love and deep intention she poured everything out. As she did so, a beautiful, calm and blessed valley appeared full of all good things. It was guarded by lovely hills and mountains and a stream of water ran through it, giving life.

She smiled, turned and laid her body down at the entrance to the new valley - to rest until it was time in the far, far future for her to arise and renew the world.

Here ends the story that the land told me. She is still there where she laid her body down so long ago - in the form of the enormous rock at the entrance to Botanie Valley. If you look carefully you can see her, asleep on her side, her head to the north and her basket lying empty where she placed it ready to take it up again in the fullness of time.

Chairperson's Report

November 2010

The past year has been one of significant change for the Museum.

We have run the entire year of 2010 without a Curator and have still been able to have the Museum open for visitors, have received many accessions, both large and small, have accomplished several large projects and received a significant amount in financial support.

As is normally the case, the Museum's success is entirely dependent on the generosity of our members and volunteers and the Village of Lytton.

Dorothy Dodge has been putting in many hours, both at the Museum and at her home, organizing the new accessions. Marie Heaster and Peter McArthur both have spent many hours at the Museum, and our Executive has put in many hours trying to cover all of the tasks necessary to keep the Museum running. Sheila and Robert Bolan have kept the gardens throughout the spring, summer and fall. Joan Craig removed all of the weeds from the side of the building and the back yard. Lorna Fandrich and Joan Craig renovated our main room, making a retail section and arranging displays. Joan Craig and Gwendy Lamont cleaned the Museum before our Annual Tea and Talk. Lois Brooks organized the annual Tea and Talk and the Christmas Luncheon. Many others have provided volunteer hours, and I apologize if I have not mentioned you by name.

The Village of Lytton put in a new heating/cooling system that is keeping the building at a constant temperature. This replaced our old oil furnace and window air conditioner, and has been welcomed by our staff and visitors alike. Many thanks to the Village.

Our back yard project has been progressing nicely. The purpose of this was to make the back yard of the Museum accessible to the handicapped. To this

end, the railroad tracks at the side of the Museum were removed and replaced with a concrete ramp and brick walkway, the speeder/tool shed was moved to a new concrete pad across the yard and pads were poured for the CN tool shed and the dredge spool and the picnic table was moved to the patio area behind the Museum.

The result of this work is that wheelchairs can now be taken into the back yard so that everyone can enjoy our exhibits and rest area. This is a significant improvement that was accomplished without imposing on the Village for funding.

These projects were considered to be too big for our volunteers and were contracted out, with the funding coming from donations, fund raising and retail sales.

Items still on the list to be done are replacing the fence and gates at the road side, putting the CN shed on its pad, bringing the railroad artifacts from the Village yard and building the display for them and building the addition to the present display shed. We are hoping that these will be completed in the spring, before the tourist season. Funding is presently in place to complete most of the items on the list.

The Museum was kept open during the summer with funding made available by the Village. We were provided with funds for two hosts and Tom Peglow and Stephanie Gagnon were hired for the positions. Stephanie worked Sunday through Thursday at the Museum and Tom worked Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Caboose and Friday and Saturday at the Museum. This worked well, and the Museum had a very successful tourist season, with many visitors and good retail sales.

We have had several significant accessions this year, including a large number of items donated by Jim McMillan from his mother's estate. These included many old tools, toys and business items

as well as pictures and paper items. Included are wooden post boxes from the old Lytton Post Office, garage items from Jim's parents' garage and fuel business and several small items.

Another item coming from the same group, but donated by Jim's aunt Olga Floyd, is the Governess Cart, originally from Earls court, but owned since the 1950s by Olga and Maurice Floyd.

We have had several other significant accessions, including a collection of dinnerware from the Canadian Pacific Railway under their 125th Anniversary program and the ship's wheel from the Lytton ferry. The ship's wheel was accompanied by a written history and a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Jurgen Lutter to assist with building a display stand for it.

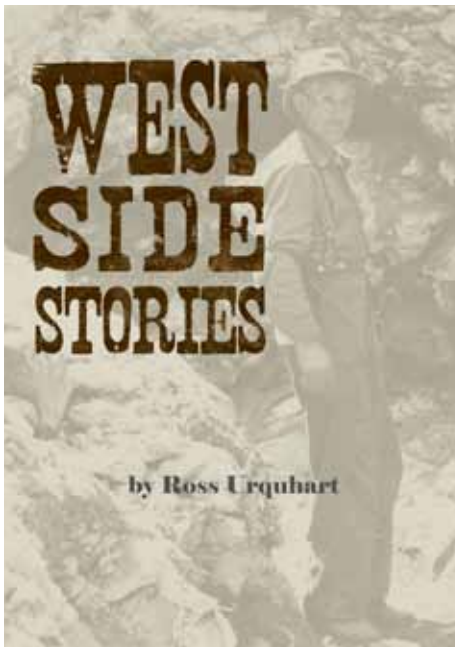
The financial support we receive from our supporters is always an important item in keeping the Museum operating. We have received several significant donations in 2010 and I would like to thank Dr. and Mrs. Strang, Mr. and Mrs. Hal-lisey, Ruby Belknap, Mary and Hugh McCallum, the LFN Ambassadors, Mr. and Mrs. Lutter, June Koropecski, Mr. and Mrs. Bullen, Olive Giles, Mike Belknap, Bob Belknap, Angela Greto and all of the other people who donated to the Museum.

Of course, the Village of Lytton needs to be thanked for its commitment to the Museum and preserving the history of the Village and area. They provide us with the building and property and maintain it. The Village crew did an excellent job of mowing the lawns and the Village completed the furnace replacement. This, along with the siding replacement last year has made our little Museum a centerpiece in Lytton.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in keeping the Museum operating this year. It has truly been a community effort for a community Museum.

Richard Forrest, Chair

Local History — New Releases



West Side Stories

For those who have enjoyed Ross Urquhart's stories in our newsletters over the years, here is the entire collection, brought together in a new book.

With previously unpublished material and all of the stories that have appeared here, this is a great collection of short stories.

Trappers, hunters, prospectors, heroes and homesteaders are all here for us to discover.

A delightful collection of short stories recalling the pioneer days of a still-rugged country, this book makes a welcome addition to the rich history of Lytton and the area around it.

Ross Urquhart wrote these short stories after interviewing many of the people who lived the adventures he relates. For those that he could not meet in person, he gathered stories, bits and pieces, from the many interviews he had with the people who knew them. Ross was also able to have access to unpublished journals.

We are told of Roger, who, with his wife

and two small children, tried to secretly homestead in the Stein in 1912. After a short, somewhat successful, stint of farming and trapping, he disappeared, leaving his wife and children to forage on their own. Ross tells us what happened to the unfortunate Roger, and to his family when he did not return.

What was the mystery of the haunted campsite, where there were voices, but no people?

We are told of the Hicks brothers and their years of trapping and prospecting — the Phillips brothers and their effort to save a bullet. How Adam Klein, a Saskatchewan farm boy became a trapper and Lytton pioneer. He relates the tale of how, in front of a gathering of band members, the Indian Doctors' personal guardians, an eagle and a marten, sprang to life, fighting almost to the death.

We learn why Frank Gott, a pioneer, hunting guide and the oldest man to serve in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War I, was hunted down by a posse and shot, and why the bullet that should have killed him didn't.

And, we are taken for a quick tour of the Stein River Valley, told of the sasquatch and introduced to another side of the grizzly bear.

ISBN: 978-0-9812906-6-9

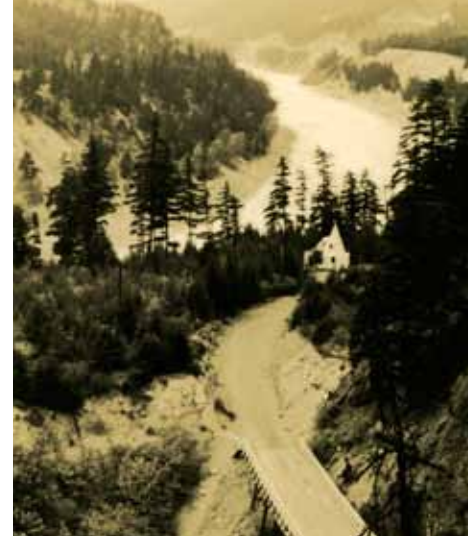
93 pages

\$14.95



Life In The Tee-Pee

by June Koropecski



Life In The Tee-Pee

June and Bill Koropecski built the Tee-Pee Restaurant, a landmark in the Fraser Canyon of the 1940s and 1950s.

For several years, this restaurant near Boston Bar was a stopping place for Canyon travellers and locals alike.

This is June's story, in her own words, of coming to British Columbia, building the Tee-Pee and running the restaurant while raising her family.

The friends and acquaintances, the public that stopped by, the wildlife that sometimes made themselves at home and her family all have their place here.

With illustrations by the author and photographs from the family collection, this book presents the reader not with a simpler time, but a rougher, yet gentler one.

ISBN: 978-0-9812906-5-2

305 pages

\$26.95

Freedom Graphics Press books are available at the Lytton Museum and Archives, the Lytton Visitor Centre and Peoples Stein Valley Pharmacy.



Canyon Trip 85 Years Later

We stopped in Lytton last week, after many years of driving past it, and were pleasantly surprised. Although it was hot up on the highway, there was a nice cool breeze in the town. There was much to see in town with the Visitor's Centre, Museum and Farmers' Market. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to visit the outdoor pool, much to our boys' dismay! On our next trip through the Canyon, we plan to stop and visit longer.

I am sending you a copy of an old photograph that was in my Great Grandmother Amy Pearce's collection. This is a photo taken about 1925, of their car at the signpost at Lytton pointing the different directions to: Vancouver

(175½), Chilliwack (109½), Boston Bar (31½), "Kamloops-Merritt and the Okanagan Direct", Kamloops (111½), and to the back it reads "Prince George" and "Kamloops"

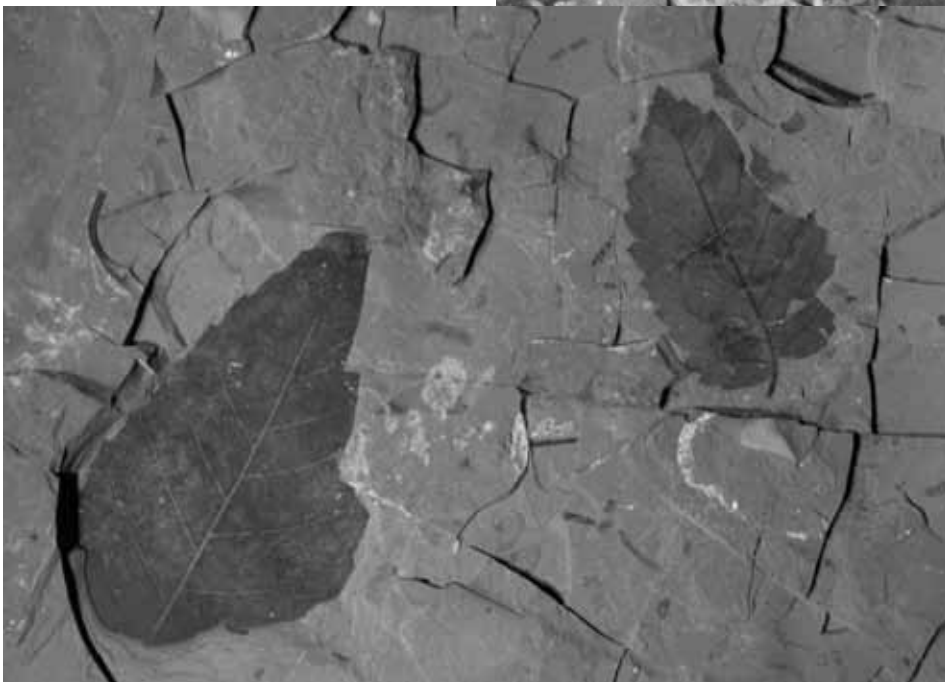
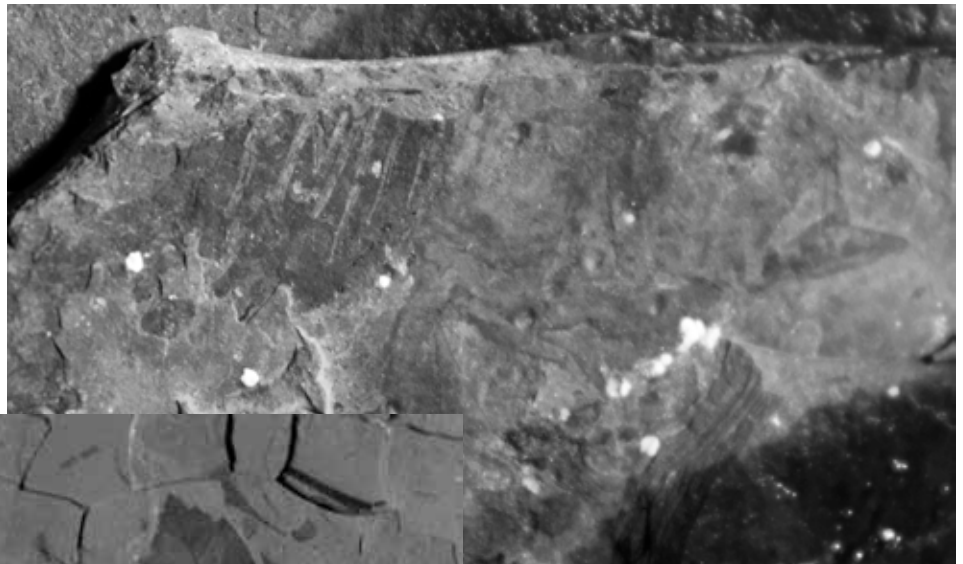
Back about 1925, she packed up her two children and family dog, and headed to the interior (Naramata) via the Fraser Canyon. The car was an old Model T that had to stop at the top and bottom of hills to have the brakes reset. Also, on sections of the road that were just boards over the river, she would send the children ahead, while she drove the car over the rails.

Thanks, Jean Pearce, Ladner, BC

The McAbee Fossil Beds

British Columbia's only fossil mineral claim is controversial, but definitely educational.

In just a few hours, we learned about the huge shallow lake that covered the area 50,000,000 years ago, about the variety and quantity of plant and animal life preserved in the shale and how to find and identify some of the common fossils we would encounter.



In the short time we were there, we met several families on a similar outing, encouraging their sons and daughters to explore and have a truly unique experience.

Above: The ghostly image of an Eocene fish is just visible in the shale from the McAbee Fossil Beds near Cache Creek. The light ribs are visible at left, with the dark eye and jaws to the right.

Left: The leaves preserved on the ancient lake bottom are easier to identify.