

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

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420 Fraser Street, Lytton, B.C.

Issue Number 3

A HISTORY OF THE THOMPSON RIVER BRIDGE AT LYTTON

We've all been watching the building of our new bridge with great excitement! I, for one, thought the old bridge would have to fall down before another was ever started.

Many changes will be happening - buildings will be moved or demolished, concrete walls will be built, we'll be driving over the railroad instead of across it,

we won't be watching logging trucks and semi's trying to make the corner at 6th and Main without taking out the sidewalks in front of the ambulance station - mostly good changes.

One topic that has often come up is: "Which bridge is this - the second? third? fourth?"

I decided to find out. After much digging and reading, I finally remembered that I had the information in the museum all the time. I just needed to put it together.



March 1, 1875. There were four bids, which included the lowest bid of \$7,500.00 from Thomas Spence, who built the bridge at Cook's Ferry, now called Spences Bridge. For some reason, his bid was not chosen.

The highest bid was for \$13,300.00, which as we will see was actually closer to the finished total.

The contract specified a first class 'burr truss' timber bridge across the Thompson at its junction with the Fraser. This bridge, when completed, was to have 6 spans of a total length of 426 feet.

There were many problems with this bridge.

It had been surveyed and sites selected by a man from the Lands and Works Dept., Victoria, B.C.

It soon became obvious to road Superintendent Arthur Stevenson that the main span would be impossible

In our Archives, we have all the notes on the building of the Cariboo Wagon road accesses to the Thompson River and the bridges from the investigations done by Kumsheen Rafting, and Bernie Fandrich kindly loaned me other materials.

THE FIRST BRIDGE

The first Lytton Thompson River bridge contract was awarded to James McIntosh on August 18, 1874. His bid was \$8,500.00, and the bridge was to be completed by



The second bridge across the Thompson River at Lytton

to construct at 133 feet, and must be at least 140 ft. The piers must be planked up to within 5 feet of the corbels and filled to a height of six feet with rock. The piers were to be bolted and leaded to solid rock on both sides of the channel. This extra work would cost at least \$900 and was authorized Feb. 16, 1875.

In April of 1875, the river had risen 30 feet and work had to be stopped until the water subsided. However, by July the water had risen to 51 feet and all their precautions were for naught - the piers were carried away by the high water.

It was necessary to start all over again; new plans, new contract, same old contractor. Now the price was upped to \$13,501.00. The bridge would be 5 feet higher, and the main span would be 160 feet.

This bridge was finished in 1876, far

By 1878, this 'lurching' now showed a 2 3/4" spread, and by 1883 there was a curve of about 2 feet of lean and a sag of 4 or 5".

Stevenson was actually instructed to post signs at either end of the bridge, warning people to ride or drive over the bridge at no faster pace than a walk! (*And we thought our present bridge was in bad shape!*)

In 1883 the bridge was reported to be in unsatisfactory condition (I guess!) and it was feared the whole centre span would have to be replaced. However, once the whole superstructure was straightened, braced, tied and strengthened, it was deemed safe once again.

"In 1894, unprecedented floods of summer caused the total destruction of the large traffic bridges on the Thompson River at Savona's Ferry, Ashcroft, Spences Bridge and Lytton."

(Public Works report, 1894)



THE SECOND BRIDGE

In 1895, under the guidance of Supt. A. Stevenson, and at a cost of \$9,210.00, a new bridge was constructed.

It was composed of: one 200 foot Howe Truss span, 2 only 80 foot Howe Truss spans and approaches. It was 6 1/2 feet higher than the first bridge, and 70 feet above low water mark.

The base of the piers measured 90' x 16' and rested on bedrock. Each was constructed of 25 pieces of 12" x 12" timber, ranging in length from 40 feet to 70 feet. The whole was substantially cross-tied and sway braced.

THE THIRD BRIDGE

In 1913, it was decided to replace this second bridge with a third bridge.

This bridge is the one being replaced now. This third bridge consists of one 250 foot deck riveted steel span, two 70 foot and one 50 foot deck plate girder spans and 2 steel bents supported on concrete substructures consisting of 2 piers, four pedestals and one abutment.

There is a timber trestle 210 feet long at the south end. This bridge was completed at a cost of \$37,996.00. The bridge was completed May 14, 1914, and the old bridge was torn down.

If you are interested in the technical aspects of the bridge, we have a list of materials needed for the first and

third bridges, including how much was paid out for hay, grain, team hire, rope, blacksmithing, etc.!!

THE FOURTH BRIDGE

The fourth bridge, now under construction, has an estimated opening date of June 30, 2001, and an estimated final completion date, of Sept. 30, 2001.

Just for comparison's sake, the awarded value of this bridge is \$9,854,800.00, and this does not include the removal of the old piers.

That will be awarded in a different contract.

So there you have it. You want more detail? Come to the Lytton Museum and Archives.

Dorothy Dodge, Curator

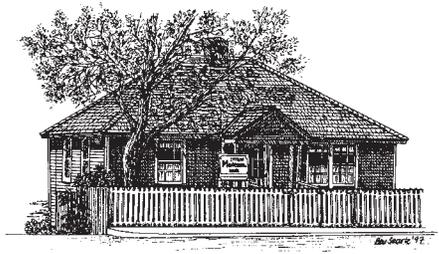


Pictures used in this issue:

Picture of first and second bridges across the Thompson are courtesy of the B.C. Archives.

Picture of the present bridge is courtesy Dorothy Dodge

Picture of Lytton with Joss Temple is property of the Lytton Museum and Archives



MUSEUM NEWS

Over the last few months, Richard Forrest and his wife Joan have been assembling new windows for the museum building, with the help of volunteers Jim Steer, Chuck Keeble and Joe Chute.

The windows were assembled in the basement of the Forrest home. In late April, one window was installed as a test by Richard and Jim, with help from Joe. On Sunday, May 7, seven more new windows were brought to the museum.

Richard and Joan spent six hours installing the windows, with help from Peggy and Joe Chute.

The new windows are special U.V. coated, double-pane units and are a very valuable addition to the safety features of the museum contents.

We would never have been able to afford these changes without the skills of Richard, Joan and the other volunteers, so willingly volunteered, and the generous grant from the Village of Lytton that paid for the materials.

A very sincere *THANK YOU* from the Museum Committee.





PROFILE:

NELLIE (McKAY) RUSSELL

Nellie's father, John McKay, homesteaded in Botanie Valley in the 1870's.

Nellie was born on the ranch in 1905, the youngest of 12 children. In 1935, she married Jack Russell, and they had three children, Lois, Lorna, and Jack. She now has 7 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren to keep her young!

Nellie was born into a world where there was no television, no phones, no cars - a world of good, hard working people who taught her love of family, love of the outdoors, and the life skills needed on a busy ranch.

Nellie did it all - helped with the haying and cooked for the haying crews and her family, chased pigs up the mountains to their summer range, dug potatoes, kept a large garden, killed rattlesnakes that threatened her

family, and one stormy night in 1920, she rode a horse 6 miles to town to get the doctor, and then rode back, and she was only 15 yrs. old!

Nellie has seen two world wars. In WW1 her two brothers, Jim and Sandy, went off to help defend their country.

She also lived through the great Depression, but the family did not feel deprived of much as the ranch supplied most of their needs.

One thing especially remembered were the times, usually after dinner, when the elders carried on great conversations and sometimes heated political discussions, or told and retold exciting hunting stories. Much more fun than television!

As Nellie grew older, she became interested in softball and other sports, including racing horses down Main Street in the July 1st celebrations.

The Russells moved to Fraser Street in Lytton in the early 1940's.

Nellie still has one of the best gardens in Lytton, her daughters refer to her as a 'Chef Supreme', and still, at 95 years of age, she sets a wonderful table and bakes the most delicious pies!

She still sews for her great grandchildren and she plays a mean game of crib, which she wins 95% of the time.

Nellie loves Bingo and the Casino, and just never misses a party or a trip to anywhere. However, she has given up demolishing rattlesnakes, but only because there aren't any in Lytton!

Nellie is an invaluable source of information for our museum. She remembers the old days like they were yesterday, and we have referred to Nellie many times when we need to identify people or places in old photographs.

Congratulations go out to Nellie Russell on her 95th birthday, and we wish her many more happy years and happy memories.



HORSES & TRAILS

The horse, as we know equus caballus today, evolved on the great grassy plains of the Americas two million years ago, although their four-toed, dog size, ancestors date back some 55 million years.

Equus (13 hands high, pony size) wandered westward into Asia-Europe-Africa some 2.5 million years ago. About 10,000 years ago they became extinct in the Americas along with the giant buffalo, mastodons & the sabre-tooth tiger.

The Spanish invasion of the Americas in the early 1500's returned the horse to its home range. The 'warm-blooded' Arabs and Barbs (now 15 hands high) were a far cry from their earlier American ancestors.

The Pueblo tribal revolt of 1670 enabled the horse to spread throughout the western tribes. By 1710 the Nez Perces horse herds in Washington numbered in the thousands. By late 1750's most of the

plains & mountain tribes had acquired horses and had developed an equestrian-based hunting culture.

The pre-white-contact native trade-route, with suitable grass forage for horses, suggests that the Nlaka'pamux may have obtained Nez Perces and/or Crow tribal horses out of the Columbia River up-lands via the south Okanagan or the Skagit Rivers into the Similkameen, thence north to the Nicola and the Thompson River.

The Lytton Centennial book indicates that in 1808 a couple of local young men were visiting (*their girl friends, things haven't changed much in the past 250 years*) at Pavilion and met Simon Fraser. They rode all night to inform their relatives, who were then waiting to meet the stranger at Kumsheen (Lytton).

These young men must have been competent riders to travel some one hundred kilometers during a long June night, which would indicate that the Nlaka'pamux people probably acquired horses around the 1770's.

A Kamloops researcher advised the author that the North Okanagan/Shuswap people were not riding the wild horse that had migrated into their territory at the time when the American Fur Company established 'Fort Kamloops' in 1812.

From the late 1700's to mid 1800's the Hudson Bay Co., with pack trains of 250 horses and native wranglers, supplied the HBC interior posts, following ancient native trade trails.

Local native packers had carried on

their own inter-tribal trade along the same trails. Local Nlaka'pamux families would take ten to fifteen horses loaded with thousands of sun-dried salmon east to trade with the Kootanies for buffalo robes.

Prior to the 1848 gold strike a horse trail ascended the Stein (Last Chance Creek) Valley to a salt lick via a ford just north of the present hand ferry.

Comparing maps of the 1850's with contemporary logging roads maps, many roads now follow the same routes as much older "Indian Pack Trails".

The Botanie Road is a prime example. A native trade trail and later a HBC Brigade trail ran from Yale to Lytton, primarily along the east bank of Fraser's River. The horses & mules swam the Thompson, while packs were ferried over in a row boat, then along the Fraser to Alkali Road for the 'short-cut' to the Botanie Valley, finally skirting High Mt., down Hat Creek to Clinton and north to the upper Fraser Gold Fields.

Cataline and local packers with forty to one hundred animals (about ten animals per wrangler) could make the trip to Barkerville twice in a season. Lytton at that time had the facilities and corrals or stock yards to over night hundreds of pack animals and their wranglers.

After the opening of the Cariboo Road and throughout the 1870's the Harper boys with local riders trailed hundreds of 'beefs' from their Cariboo Ranches, through down town Lytton to Yale, then by barges to Victoria. *Now that would be a great movie!*

During the construction of the BC Railway through Lillooet, early in the last century, local teamsters transported freight by wagon on a five day round trip from Lytton to Lillooet.

Local old timers may recall the July 1st horse races down Main Street and sports ground at the 'old airport' site with its race track, and the suicide race down the big sand hill.

During the early 1900's the CPR maintained a set of stock yards in town for the convenience of the local ranches. Ranchers and cattle buyers being what they are, there must be some great stories and pictures of that era.

In the 1930's a local native rancher wasn't satisfied with the low price the out-of-town buyer offered him, so he told his boys to "take em home". That buyer didn't change his offer till the herd was going over the old wooden bridge across the Thompson. The boys just kept on riding toward home with their herd.. Rumour has it that at the next month's sale the buyer started off by offering the top Vancouver beef prices.

Anyone having pictures or stories of the white ponies around Kane's Field, the draft horse east of the Botanie, the "Lytton Mountain Ponies", or horse and ranching in general please talk to Dorothy at the museum.

Graham Everett
Historic Trails Outfitters





THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING DEITIES

The next time you pass the Braeden Lodge Motel parking lot (south side of the motel), stop and reflect a moment on the history of this spot.

There was once a Chinese Joss Temple there - built by the Chinese in 1881, to house the deities: Kwan Yen, the goddess of mercy who gave courage to her worshippers, Shen Nung, God of Cereal and Medicine, and the God of Anger. There had been an epidemic among the Chinese working construction on the CPR, and they believed this happened because the Gods were angry that the people had forsaken the Gods of their ancestors. Therefore, they built the Joss House, or Joss Temple, installed

their idols, and worshipped them. Unfortunately, they built their Temple on Dominion property, which they did not own.

The Chinese worshipped these idols, and would bring the choicest foods to lay at their feet. They also brought imitation money, and lit tapers and burned incense. Hobos travelling by on the CPR soon got to know about this and would sneak in at night and steal the food. This caused concern in the community because these Hobos often lit fires and partied there.

Guiseppe Taverna lived next door. He had a burning desire to own the land the Joss Temple was on to make room for a chicken house! He applied to the Crown to buy this land and pointed out

that the Chinese did not own it. There was a great furor, involving the Dominion Gov't, the Chinese Gov't of Sun Yat Sen, and the Chinese Benevolent Society, and many Chinese people who came from all over the West to worship in the Temple. However, after a fight lasting for 27 years, Taverna finally became the owner of the land on which the Joss Temple rested.

The story goes that Taverna put the Gods and Goddesses in his woodshed for safe keeping. That was the last time anyone ever saw them. None of the descendants of the Taverna family ever saw them, and they were never mentioned at family gatherings. Where are they hidden? Were they sold? Taverna seemed to have a healthy respect for their power, so it is hard to believe he

destroyed them. My husband and I even explored the old CPR culvert which is directly behind the Taverna property, but found nothing.

We would gladly give the Deities a home in our museum if we could only find them! Full details of this fascinating story, including a file of correspondence some inches thick, is apparently available at the Kamloops Land Office. The Bridge River-Lillooet News printed an article on this story, by George Murray, and we have a copy in the museum that is available for purusal.

Dorothy Dodge, Curator



PHOTOGRAPHS:

We have over 1100 photographs now, all copied and in Browse Binders. We accept orders for copies, either lazer, computer, or from negatives, if negatives are available. Museum policy states that if a photograph needs to have a negative made before a print can be supplied, the charge is \$6.00 for the negative, which the museum keeps, plus \$2.25 for a 4"x6" print, GST charges, and mailing costs, usually \$.96. Total cost in this case is usually approx. \$10.00.

For Sale at the museum:

Chunks of petrified wood:

\$2.00 to \$10.00

Ski Club Crests (1960-1980) \$3.00 ea.

Rifle Club Crests (1940-50's) \$4.50 ea.



Can anyone identify the people in this picture?

The caption on the back is simply:

Family Portrait!
Vancouver Summer of 1973

Please phone the museum @ 455-2254 or Dorothy Dodge @ 455-2268

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

The Lytton Museum and Archives Committee has recently completed the revisions to their Constitution and Bylaws, and this document is available in the museum for perusal by those interested.

An explanation of some of the rules governing the acceptance by the Museum of artifacts and archival materials follows:

ARTIFACTS:

When artifacts are given to the museum as a **gift**, an acquisition receipt is signed by the donor. The Museum then becomes the sole owner of the item, and that item is under the complete control of the Museum Committee. However, if the donor wishes

to **loan** the item to the Museum, it is done on a yearly basis, and the loan must be reviewed every year.

ARCHIVES:

When archival materials, i.e. textual materials, cartographic materials, photographs, etc. are given to the Museum as **gifts**, a Deed of Gift Agreement is signed by the donor. This gives the Museum full control and ownership of these materials, **except** where the donor lists certain restrictions.

If, in the case of photographs, the materials are **loaned** to the Museum, i.e. for copying, a Loan Form is completed. When the items are returned, the donor and curator both sign the Loan Form to show the return has occurred.

Our Mission Statement declares, in part, that we "...have been established to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret objects of cultural, artistic, and historical value to the Lytton area...".

To accomplish this, we depend on the citizens of Lytton, past and present, to bring in all those fascinating old objects being stored in dark basements, and those boxes of Estate papers and photographs containing the histories of our area families.

What may be useless junk to you will probably be important links in Lytton history.



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