

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

April 2003

420 Fraser Street, Lytton, B.C.

Issue 4 Number 1

The Lytton Gold Mine

Jim Johnson was a big Swede who moved to Lytton from North Dakota around the turn of the century. He married a native woman and when the ferryman, Dutch Charlie, drowned, he took over Lytton's Ferry across the Fraser. It wasn't much more than a large, flat-bottomed, rowboat with a cable on each end, and it took only passengers, which meant that your horse had to be tied on the back and towed behind, but it beat the alternative which was swimming for it or racing the train across a trestle - that is if your horse would cross the trestle, and most wouldn't. Frequently horses didn't like being towed behind the ferry either. They would get part way across and decide that swimming should be reserved for the fish and their subsequent attempts to become riding passengers were often moments long remembered by the ferryman.

Jim's predecessor, Dutch Charlie, had by all accounts been a good ferryman, and he successfully operated the ferry for many years until one fateful day when the boat was tossed on a wave and he lost his balance and fell overboard.

Even then, he almost lived to work many more years. Immediately after going overboard he was carried downstream away from the boat but, as it turned out, he showed signs of being an excellent swimmer, much to the surprise of those watching from the opposite shore. Dutch kept his head above water and was making progress toward the east side bank, although he was being swept farther and farther from the ferry. He eventually made it

to the rocks just below the Thompson River outflow and almost to the river's edge, when he passed out with exhaustion and slipped under the surface. All those watching said that if someone had gotten down there to catch him while he was struggling in the shallows, he would have survived.

Being a Lytton Ferryman at that time (and perhaps even today), was not a business for the weak-hearted. Due to spring floods and winter ice conditions the river could be very treacherous, but shutting down the ferry meant no income for the ferryman, so there was always an incentive to push your luck to the limits. In other words: being a good ferryman often meant being a good gambler, thus it didn't surprise anyone that Jim Johnson was a prospector in his spare time.

During the early part of this century the West Fraser was a busy place, with small communities scattered up and down its length and thriving farms in between. The only other crossings were eight miles downstream at Siska, a train bridge where you raced trains to the other side (and whole families occasionally lost), and the John Thomas Ferry sixteen miles upstream, which was a family affair and wasn't manned regularly. So Lytton's Ferry was the major crossing for this area. Consequently, Jim Johnson was a well known local individual and a well informed one.

He was often the first white man the West Fraser Natives talked with for long peri-



This photograph of the Fraser River ferry was taken in 1929. Byron Earnshaw built the first ferry in 1863, and ran it for seven years.

ods of time, and because of this it wasn't a coincidence that Jim was the first to hear about a quartz outcropping - with a highly visible gold content - a few Native hunters discovered while goat hunting up Last Chance Creek.

They told Jim they didn't know how to stake a claim and they didn't care for mining anyway, but if he was interested they would tell him where the ore was.

He followed their directions and found it just above the 7000 foot level on the west slope of a high, rugged ridge that ran between the east and west forks of Last Chance Creek or, as it is now called,

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Remember when...? —

KEEBLE'S GENERAL STORE

Babies' Wear
Ladies Summer Shoes

Keeble's General Store, where the Ambulance station is now.

THE VIEW AUTO COURT

- Chevron Station
- Fully Modern Auto Court

GENERAL STORE FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE

Earl Gatley

The View Auto Court, at the top of the hill, where Bud Wells is now.

Lytton Meat Market

Maurice Floyd

PICNIC HAMS, Per lb.	- - - - -	44¢
PORK CHOPS, Per lb.	- - - - -	50¢

(Order Hams Early)

The Lytton Meat Market - look at those prices!

LEGION PICTURE SHOW

See the HORSE STORY of the year . . .

'Thunderhoof'

The Legion ran picture shows where the liquor store is now.

Walter's Bread

INTRODUCING ALL WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, BROWN BREAD, A NEW KIND OF DOUGHNUTS With Combined Yeast and Baking Powder dough.

- Try Our Sumptuous CREAM PUFFS this week.

FOR THOSE ON DIETS . . .

We make FAT FREE and SALT FREE BREAD for individual orders

Always the Best for Less

Walter's Bread, or the Mountview Bakery, proprietors Walter and Mary Sitko. Their cream puffs and long johns, filled with real whipped cream, were to 'die for'!!!

Children's Book Writers Visit Museum

We had a visit on March 3rd, from writers Larry Loyie and Constance Brissenden, of the Living Traditions Writer's Group. They were doing research for a children's book, the subject being what it was like to live in a residential school. Their research has taken them coast to coast across Canada, involving many schools and former students of the residential schools.

They already have one book published. The title is 'As Long as the Rivers Flow', and is the story of Larry Loyie's last summer before entering residential school in Grouard, Alberta. It is a delightful children's story, including how he cared for a baby owl, how he watches his grandmother make winter moccasins, and how, when confronted by a grizzly bear, the grandmother kills the bear with one bullet, and many other

memories.

The book is well illustrated, well written, and has a sturdy hard cover. The print is clear and easy to read. The book is published by Groundwood books. Watch for it.



The Lytton Gold Mine - from page 1

Stryne Creek. Jim quickly registered a claim on the outcropping. He was pretty excited about this find and in his spare time he built a horse trail into the sub-alpine valley below the claim and a cabin where the trail started its final steep climb to his diggings. The best looking segment of this quartz vein was in a precarious location on the mountainside, making it necessary for Jim to build and hang rope ladders to get there. For that reason he didn't bring out much ore but it was enough to get others interested.

The ore showed a relatively high percentage of gold but according to the mining engineers he hired to examine the ore body, the structure of the outcropping promised a much higher yield farther down. This would require a tunnel and Jim couldn't afford the expense of such an endeavour, but someone within the firm of Grant Brothers Lithographers in Vancouver got wind of the discovery, and in 1927 they formed a partnership with Jim. This addition of financing and promotion is what put the 'Lytton Gold Mine' on the map.

The ambitious plan was to build a camp in the valley on the opposite side of the ridge and tunnel through, and up, along that same quartz seam towards the outcroppings on the far side. The engineers predicted they would be going in on the poorer end of the ore body and progressively getting into richer yield. For the time being the best ore would be taken down into town by packhorse, on their return trips from supplying the mine. If the seam started producing to expectations a tote road would then be constructed into the valley.

Trail builders and packers were hired. Harry Munro, Andrew Johnny and Willie Charlie stayed and worked the mine. Horses and equipment were either purchased or contracted and everywhere there were signs of a big operation. Bundles of shiplap lumber were hauled in on horseback, a mine site with a bunkhouse and a cookshack was established in the valley on the east side of the ridge, log bridges were built across the creeks and logs were

laid through the swamps, forming "corduroy road" sections. Another cabin was put up at the "Forks", where the valley split, so that the teamsters had a stopover on their way up the mountain.

The tunnel was begun with the standard equipment of the day - hand held drills, hammers and strong backs. The man who held the drill would rotate it one quarter turn after each hit until a deep enough hole was drilled in the rock to place dynamite. The rock would then be blown and the rubble cleared away and another hole started. It took a long time to build a few feet of tunnel this way and success or failure often rested on the shoulders of your 'powderman'. The foreman and powderman of this crew, a Mr. Roach, was highly thought of and the peak of the ridge on which this mine is located is now Mount Roach.

Unfortunately this method proved too slow for the owners, particularly since the high elevation of the mine meant it was only free from snow, and thus, workable, for a few months of the year. Consequently, in 1934, it was decided to employ modern technology. A used World War One airplane engine was purchased and horse packed to the mine site along with a compressor, jackhammer, and dump car, complete with narrow track rails. This was quite a feat of horse packing considering the winding, narrow, switchbacked horse trail that lead up the steep canyon into the valley, but the packers were the best around and they had already brought in a full sized cast iron stove for the cookshack so they proved it could be done. They also packed in two hundred yards of two inch steel pipe to feed air to the jackhammer.

This influx of new technology was supposed to be the saviour of the mine but it didn't improve things that much. There turned out to be a few other complications. They had to convert the engines to run on 'dieseline' first and then convert it to water cooled instead of air cooled because it overheated too quickly. Even after the bugs were ironed out of the engine, they found that the compressor didn't produce as well as expected because of the thinner air at that altitude. It still worked much

quicker than a hand drill but the tough truth was they weren't finding the high yield ore they were told was there.

Sometime around the beginning of WWII, work on the mine stopped. Ray Dunstan, who was the licensed trapper in that creek system, was hired to be the caretaker for \$30.00 a month. In 1942 he was told not to bother anymore and that he could have anything left lying around. He packed the powder out and a few tools. Jimmy Johnson, the son of the mine's founder, packed out the rest of the tools except for the airplane motor, compressor, jackhammer and mine car. Then the roofs of the buildings were left propped so they wouldn't sag from the weight of the snow load in the valley. Some years later Jimmy Johnson began using the mine site as a base camp for hunting parties and one night a cooking fire got away and burned the bunkhouse and cookshack.

In the mid 1970's, while Okanagan Helicopter was in the area for another reason they flew up to the mine site and found the engine, compressor and jackhammer in such a well preserved state that they decided to take them to their base in Kamloops. While they were at it they decided to take the mine car too. The airplane engine was so heavy that the helicopter could barely lift it. In fact, it failed the first try and had to dump some fuel before it would finally come clear. These antique mine instruments were flown to Lytton and trucked to the Okanagan Helicopter base in Kamloops where they lay around for a few years. Afterwards, so the rumour goes, they were donated to Cariboo College and the mine car ended up at a museum.

The trail was kept up in future years by Ray Dunstan, who began grazing cattle in the valley during the summer season, and later by Jimmy Johnson for the same reason. The trail is still in usable condition for hikers and backpackers and ample evidence of this mining venture is still visible in both the east and west fork of the creek.

Written by Ross Urquhart, printed with permission.



ANNUAL HERITAGE TEA AND TALK

The Annual Heritage 'Tea and Talk' afternoon is held as an opportunity to get together, talk over old times, look through old photographs, and hopefully identify those whose names don't immediately come to mind. It is always a fun afternoon, and this year we had Ken Glasgow to keep us entertained!

Mrs. Mandy Brown brought in some new books to share with us. Mrs. Brown has been to Ottawa many times as a consultant on Nlaka'pamux traditions. Our museum owns one of the publications she worked on, titled 'Earthline and Morning Star' by Leslie H. Tepper, about clothing traditions. Many people in the Nlaka'pamux community contributed to this work and everyone is welcome to view it at the museum.

One of our projects this year was to put together all the photo albums from the hospital, featuring the residents, new babies, and the staff members. Our guests had a great time going through the renewed albums and were able to identify many people for us.

Thank you to all who visited us (30 guests that day!) and hope we see you and many more of our local citizens throughout the year.



Marie Heaster, Isabelle Glasgow and Mary Sitko pour through our Browse Binders at the Tea & Talk.



Above: Doreen Showler and Mandy Brown enjoy the treats and talk.

Left: Kenny Glasgow pours over the displays.



2003 Tea and Talk — February 19, 2003

LYTTON'S CABOOSE

The year is 1918. The First World War is still being fought in Europe. In eastern Canada, the Canadian Government Railway is taking delivery of the last of an order for box cars which they numbered from 550,000 to 554, 999. Deliveries of needed equipment and materials for war kept these cars busy.

It is still 1918. A group of businessmen have just taken over several eastern railroads, including the Canadian Government Railway. They give this amalgamation of railroads a new name: *The Canadian National Railway*. As part of this transaction, they now have the rolling stock from the acquired companies: locomotives, freight cars, passenger cars - everything, including the Canadian Government Railways newest box cars. In its systematic take-over, the CNR rennumbers all the cars, including one of the CGR box cars which becomes CN 414742.

It is now 1954. Car CN 414742, af-



ter 36 years of carrying goods, is taken out of service and moved to the CNR car shops in Montreal where it undergoes extensive alterations. When the work is done, car 414742 no longer exists. It is now caboose CN 78939 complete with doors, windows, a cupola and a new

colourful paint job. The start of a new job in the world of railroading.

Now CN 78939 provides shelter for the train crews, complete with a stove, bunks and a bathroom. It is cared for by a Conductor who is

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We've already had visitors from Australia and the U.S.A., including Florida, Honolulu and Washington, so people are on the move again. Our visitor count at the end of March was 72.

Did you know that the Rebagliati (Frances) family will be here for the Lytton Days weekend in May? They will be having a graveside service for their mother. Watch for posters stating day and time.

We are on the lookout for a photograph of **Peter Charlie**. Betty Charlie is putting together a family

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

album and they have not been able to find a photo of their great grandfather. Can you help? We can easily have the photo copied and returned to you. Let Betty know, or let us know at the museum.

Museum memberships are due - \$5.00 each.

RARE BIRD FOUND!

Well, not really! We do have a lost duck in our possession, though. He's a wooden duck, about an inch thick,

and has the number 4756 stamped on his side.

Apparently a participant in a river "duck race", he was found on the banks of the Fraser River near the mouth of the Stein River. If you can identify him or give us his history, please come to the museum or the Info Centre and solve our mystery!



sponsible for the caboose and travels with it on its many trips. The cupola provides a means by which the crew can visually inspect the train when it is running and prevent accidents when wheel bearings become over-heated.

By the year 1984, railways all over North America were disposing of cabooses as being no longer necessary as the age of automation and communication was upon us. Slowly the cabooses disappeared from the end of freight trains. Even caboose CN 78939, on a work train in northern Alberta, was caught in the change. This meant that old style wooden cabooses were being retired because there was an abundant supply of newer steel cabooses for the work trains that serviced the tracks. CN 78939 now wore an instruction sheet giving orders that it was to be scrapped.

About this time, the Lytton and District Heritage Society heard about the elimination of cabooses from active service and contacted the CNR to see if there was a chance of obtaining one. After months of waiting everyone was surprised to receive notification that a caboose No. 78939 would be available for the sum of one dollar. Shortly thereafter CN 78939 arrived at the CN storage track below Lytton.

While everyone was glad to see the caboose in town, no one was sure how to move an object which measured 36 feet long, 9 1/2 feet wide, and 15 1/2 feet tall, weighing just over 20 tons, up the hill from the storage track and through town to the Legion lot. An unexpected answer to our quandary came via the RCMP. The Sergeant-In-Charge of the local

detachment had a few contacts with the CPR which resulted in the arrival of a vehicle which the CPR used for moving disabled railway cars by road. CN78939 was taken aboard and proceeded to the Legion park, gingerly inching its way under the abundance of phone and power wires which crossed Fraser Street. On arrival it was found that, because we had laid our ties on the ground, the rails were higher than those of the ballasted storage track. CN78939 had to roll uphill by itself, something that it was not used to doing. Once again the RCMP had the solution: a winch on a police car. At the end of a long afternoon our caboose finally came to rest where we wanted it.

Many people from town have been instrumental in restoring it. The Lions Club replaced the deteriorated siding, others have painted it several times, both inside and outside. Others have set up displays for the public.

This year is the car's 85th birthday. It is older than the Canadian National Railway. In 2000 it had 462 visitors, in 2001 there were 633 visitors, and last year 1,298 people passed through the car.

Much of this increase is due to the car being open more hours each year. All of the staff are volunteers and they find the experience interesting. The public is very interested in trains even though many of them have no idea what a caboose is. Europeans are surprised how large the car is and how much equipment it contains. Many of our American neighbors wonder why we have two railroads going through the same canyon. All wonder at the length of our trains. Our working model of the railroads

in the canyon helps us explain much of this.

We need more volunteers. If we had seven people to volunteer for only one day a week, we could keep the caboose open every day during the tourist season. Don't worry if you haven't much knowledge of railroads. We didn't either when we first started out, but we have learned a bit and will be pleased to share it with you. If you would like further information drop in to the Info Centre.

Submitted by Joe Chute



BOSTON BAR/NORTH BEND COMMUNITY REUNION

MAY 25, 2003

BOSTON BAR COMMUNITY HALL

Agenda:

10:30 - Coffee & Cookies - visit with friends or take a school tour:

North Bend School - 10 to 12 o'clock

Boston Bar School - 9:30 to 12 o'clock

12 o'clock - Cold Buffet Lunch

Price \$7 includes a chance for a door prize.

1:30 pm - Guest Speaker Branwen Patenaude speaking on the gold rush days and early mining, with a slide show presentation.

2:30 pm - May Queen slide show by Cathy Harry.

3:30 pm - Visit with friends, check out our browse binders and photo displays

Contact: Joan Blakeborough

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LYTTON'S CEMETERIES



There are many cemeteries in the Lytton area and because they are an interesting and important part of our history, I would like to start a series, featuring one cemetery in each edition of our newsletter. Our subject for this paper will be the Lytton Highway Cemetery, across the Trans-Canada Highway from Kumsheen Secondary School.

In the Fall of 1986, the Village Council first appealed to the community for volunteers to help clean-up and map the village cemetery. There were no maps and precious little information available on any of the graves, and the weeds were so high no one could find the grave markers.

A group of 9 or 10 volunteers came together, and with the help of Exton/Dodge Land Surveyors and volunteer Lee Desmarais, 160 survey points were recorded across the cemetery. The cemetery was divided into blocks, and our hardy volunteers, in groups of 3 or 4, set out with tapes and pencils in hand. Each grave, or mound, or tree had to be measured to the existing survey points, each corner of each grave measured to a triangle. It sounds complicated, and it was, but we had an

amazing supervisor in the person of Marie Heaster. Somehow, she took all our scribbles and made sense out of them! It took several months but we now have complete records.

After the measuring, it was necessary to examine every gravestone, and record every mark or letter on same, including the carver's name. We then took photographs of every marker. We have a file in the village office which includes envelopes for every grave, with the photo and any other information we have generated for that particular grave.

We cleaned every marker, repaired those that were broken, repaired fences with the help of Mr. Liivam's Secondary students, and Mr. Ward's I.E. class built our tool shed. We salvaged a Kiosk and Mr. Dodge repaired and painted it. Volunteers built the rock wall around the shed. The Lytton Lumber mill donated the lumber needed for the fences and the shed.

Mrs. Heaster is still donating her time to keep our cemetery map up to date.

Every year we have a one-day cleanup where some 2 dozen volunteers rake

pineneedles and branches and discover muscles they never knew they had! As you can see, we would have nothing if it weren't for the little community that VOLUNTEERS!

Our grave markers tell their own story. The pioneers that built our town - the Rebagliatis, the Anthonys, the Fossella families, the Arnolds, the Johnsons, the Bakers, the Lorings, the McKays, the Blachfords, the Chongs, the Gammies, the Van Dykes, and so many more are remembered there.

The Anglican Church, St. Paul's, was first built within the cemetery grounds.

Church families, including Archdeacon Richard Small, Archdeacon E.W.W. Pugh, Bishop Eric Munn, and Emily Crease are there.

First Nations families are represented, as are the Chinese from long ago.

There are also many 'unknown' grave mounds. The Village Council is considering putting up a cairn in this cemetery so that families can add brass plaques displaying the names and dates of loved ones whom we know are buried there, we just don't know where.

We welcome visitors to the cemetery. Please sign the registry while you are there.

VOLUNTEER!



Lytton has many volunteer groups, including the Museum.

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

JOIN THEM TODAY!

Lytton Girl Guides visit the Museum



Lytton Girl Guides Visit the Museum — Chelsea Verzola, Emily Ng, Elizabeth Ng and Tiffany Adams with Leader Angela Brown in back.

Lytton Girl Guides visited the museum on February 26, 2003. There were 10 guides in all, and two leaders.

We had several girl guide items from the past on display, some of which were inherited from the wonderful Brown Owl, Berit Rasmussen.

The girls looked very sharp in their uniforms, and asked some insightful and interesting questions. They were here for about 45 minutes, and we thoroughly enjoyed their company.

The leaders, Angie Brown and Irene Adams, are to be congratulated on the good job they are doing.



LYTTON MUSEUM and ARCHIVES

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