

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

November 2004

420 Fraser Street, Lytton, B.C.

Issue 5 Number 3

SCHOOLTIME PIONEERS



School in the Lytton Community Hall, 1937
Teacher: Miss Gwen Baker

Back Row

Robbie Muir
 Frank Stevens
 Red Arnold
 Charlie Richardson
 Morris Foisy
 Pat Stevens
 Shirley Dyce
 Barbara Muir

Middle Row

Dorothy Lee
 Beverly Dyce
 David Muir
 Lil Richardson
 ? Foisy
 Netty Cename
 Jimmy Lee

Front Row

Ernie Stack
 Eleanor Gioia
 ? Richardson
 Dan Stevens
 Patsy Williams
 Charles Arnold
 ?

For many former Lyttonites visiting our museum, the favourite photographs are the school class pictures. They generate many memories of friends and teachers long gone or at least lost track of.

It is from one of these teachers that we have acquired most of the class pictures we have, so she will be my person of many memories today.

Mrs. Gwen Miller was not only a well-loved instructor of children, she was also a valued and respected member of our community.

Gwen Baker was born in Winnipeg in 1916. She came to Lytton in 1937, after graduating from 'Normal School', a training school for teachers. She was thrilled to be appointed to the brand new 2-room 'Lytton Superior School', Lytton, B.C.

Her first class was to be a Grade 1 - 4 class, monthly wages \$80 per month (annual salary \$800 per annum) and room and board had been arranged at the Brophy House @ \$45 per month.

Gwen arrived in Lytton late at night via the CPR and was met by her host, Mr. Ed Belknap. The next day must have been a bit of a shock for the eager 22 year-old city girl. The school had not yet been finished!

She found herself teaching in the big old Community Hall, with movable desks



*The old Annex at the Lytton Elementary School which was demolished in August 1975.
Courtesy Dorothy Dodge*

and an easel blackboard, with about 22 little people running around in that big room.

September was a challenge, but October was also basketball practice time in the Hall two evenings a week, which meant that all the desks, blackboard and supplies had to be piled on the stage after school, and put back in the morning before school.

This went on for 4 months, until the new school was finally finished. (This school was later referred to as the Annex and was torn down in 1975).

In July of 2004, Gwen attended a reunion in Kamloops and was approached by Shirley Egles (nee Florence), who was one of Gwen's students in 1937, in the old Community Hall. She had many happy memories of her time in 'Miss Baker's' class.

Gwen soon settled in and found Lytton a very friendly town. She taught piano

lessons on Saturdays, thanks to the Belknaps kindly allowing her to use their piano, and in fact, started a 'school piano fund' because the school did not have a piano. Gwen sponsored card parties in the beautiful lobby of the New Lytton Hotel, due to the generosity of the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Tony Medori, and people were charged 25 cents each for the fund. The Students Council also helped and eventually they managed to save \$400, with which Mr. Ber Rebagliati found them a good second-hand piano. That piano is still being used in the elementary school!

Two years after Gwen came to Lytton (1939) a dashing young man named Wilson Miller also arrived. He went to work in B.R's General Store.

In 1941 Gwen and Wilson were married. They left Lytton in December of that year and in January 1942, Wilson enrolled in pre-enlistment training in Vancouver, B.C., and from there attended various other training stations.

He got his Wings in Yorkton and took further training as Instructor. Wilson was a flying instructor in Centralia, Ontario, while Gwen lived in Exeter, Ontario, and had their first child, Jack.

Wilson was later posted to Comox for training on Lancaster Bombers, and then posted to Halifax to be shipped overseas. However, the war ended on September 28, 1945, and he did not have to go!

The Millers came back to Lytton in 1949, and bought BR's General Store on Main Street.

The terrible Lytton fire of 1949 burned the store down almost before they got started. They set up a temporary store in the old building where the hotel pub is now, and started rebuilding their store. The cause of the fire was never definitely discovered.

Later on they built a house above the CPR tracks and, as time went on, they had two beautiful daughters.

The store was sold in 1962. Gwen went back to teaching in 1966, in the old Annex, with the help of Mrs. Peggy Chute.

Gwen continued teaching in Lytton until the family moved to Merritt in 1969, where she was appointed to Grade One in Bench Elementary School.

Gwen retired from teaching in 1980.

While in Lytton, Gwen, who had been in Girl Guiding since the 1930's, became the Girl Guide Captain in Lytton, from 1959 to 1969. Gwen later became the Thompson District Girl Guide Commissioner and later still was appointed Yalakon Division Commissioner. These last two appointments entailed traveling to Lillooet, Bralorne, Clinton, Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Boston Bar.

She was also a hard-working volunteer for the ACW (Anglican Church Women), and was presented with a Life Membership in the ACW in 1969. When Gwen left for Merritt, we lost a valuable and dedicated volunteer.

Update: Mrs. Miller is now 87 years old and is still incredibly active! She lives in Kamloops now, and would be very pleased to hear from old friends! Her address is:

Mrs. Gwen Miller,
Cariboo Manor,
831 Serle Road,
Kamloops, B.C.
V2B 6L8



LYTTON GAOL



Business as usual after the 1949 fire.

*Wilson Miller - BR's Store
Maurice Floyd - Lytton Meat Market
Courtesy Dorothy Dodge*



The Gold Rush of 1858 hit the area now called Lytton with an influx of humanity from all over the continent. "The Forks", as the resulting town was named, had very little law and order and no place to incarcerate the 'bad guys' if such were caught.

In June 1859, a letter was written to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, by the Justice of the Peace for Lytton 'city', H.M. Ball, requesting that he be given the authority to purchase a cabin which could then be remodeled as a jail.

The purpose of this jail would be to lock up offenders of the peace. The building would have to be of "sufficient solidity" for the temporary security of the prisoners, but would be a cheaper solution than the construction of a completely new building.

In July 1859, Mr. Ball received a reply, asking for more specific information regarding cost. Mr. Ball informed the Colonial Secretary that the purchase of a cabin would be estimated at 30 pounds, including necessary renovations.

By October, Mr. Ball received permission to go ahead, leaving it up to him to see to the job. Judge Matthew B. Begbie had visited Mr. Ball in April 1859, and they had already discussed what a suitable building should look like, so Mr. Ball immediately went ahead with the project.

A solid log cabin was purchased, and renovated to contain a kitchen and three cells, two cells for prisoners and the third was used as a storage room.

In July 1860, Mr. Ball again wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting that "... Constable John Hills be given 4 pounds monthly in consideration of the extra duties entailed as Lock-up Keeper, as these duties were performed in addition to his duties as Constable, and at times were both responsible and onerous." This arrangement was also agreed upon.

For all the attention paid to 'security', in 1862 one Christian Homan, charged with maliciously and feloniously setting fire to the dwelling house of Eugene Comber & Co. at Kanaka Bar, did effect

his escape from jail. He did this by cutting away the lower sill of one wall in his cell and loosening the upper board, apparently with a hatchet, and forcing out one of the boards between his cell and the storeroom with a large pair of scissors, from there breaking a window in the kitchen and escaping. *(Sure does beg the question: how did Homan get hold of a hatchet and scissors?)*

What really ticked off the lock-up keeper, Mr. Ross, was that on his way out the criminal also stole the following items from the jail: 3 sacks of gold dust, a watch, a pistol, 2 pairs of boots, 1 pair of pants, 1 cap, 1 knife, and a carpet sack to carry it all away - all belonging to Mr. Ross! He personally offered a \$500 reward for Homan's capture.

Homan was captured two months later and received a ten year sentence!

This incident caused Mr. Ball to write yet another letter to the Colonial Secretary, requesting that hand-cuffs and leg-irons be supplied to the jail.

This Christian Homan must have been a 'real bad guy'. He had previously been charged for feloniously stealing a tin pot with beans in it - value 10 cents! - to which he pleaded guilty and received 2 months in the Lytton gaol at hard labour.

Bootlegging liquor was a common charge, as were drunk and disorderly, assault, and murder. Assaulting a policeman earned you a \$75 fine. In the 1870 case of Latimer VS Boyd, Latimer was charged with shoeing horses and selling beef on the Lord's Day!

There does not seem to be much written history of the building in the early 1900s, but the jail was still there in the 1940's and 1950's, in sad disrepair. When B.C. Provincial police Constable Gray was stationed in Lytton [ca1940's]

the building was no longer used as a jail, but still had many old records kept there, some of which were often seen blowing around the schoolground. Constable Gray used the building as a place to raise his Tahltan Bear dogs.

The building was finally torn down in the early 1960's.



ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE MUSEUM

- Polished Agates and rocks
- Pieces of Jade and Petrified wood
- Old Books
- All issues of the museum newsletter
- Hospital Auxiliary History books
- Old insulators (make great door-stops!)
- Cards - blank inside - each 10 cents
- Photographs - can be copied for Xmas gifts.

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!



NEW ARTIFACTS RECEIVED

1. An old 'curb stop valve' from the original wood stave water-line in Lytton.
2. Binoculars: listed in 1908 Sears Roebuck catalogue as 'Genuine Colmont Field Glasses' - Paris - magnifying power '6x's'.
3. Three old Chinese rice bowls. These were donated by Vic Belknap, who tells us they were from the Hock Sing Tang Club on Herald street in Victoria. This club was an organization that accepted and housed Chinese immigrants until they found work. Each person was provided with a small cubicle where they slept and ate their meals. This was at the time of the CPR construction and the gold rush era. Vic's son, Michael, found them when cleaning out and helping to renovate the building. The bowls are considered to be at least 100 years old.

HELP!

We still need

We are still looking for photographs of the following men for a historical display with a scroll these signed in 1934 in honour of Rev. Stanley Higgs:

John Michell
George Thomas
Jim Quinn
Henry McCarty
Harry McKay
Jimmy Stone
William Sampson
Arthur Skuki
George Wish

We just wish to COPY these photographs, and will return them immediately.

A LAMP IS A LINK TO HISTORY

The lamp pictured at the right was the trademark tool of a train conductor. The conductor was the most senior of the train crew, outranking even the train engineer. It was the conductor who was responsible for the train and from the time the train left the station until it was safely at its destination, its operation was under the control of the conductor.

The following is an excerpt from a job classification:

Conductors coordinate and supervise rail travel of passengers and freight.

Train conductors are in charge of the operation of their train. They begin a trip by learning about what they are transporting and where it is going. They discuss the route and timetable with the engineer. While underway, conductors contact radio dispatchers to learn about upcoming track conditions and changes in the route. They pass on this information to the engineer. Conductors use two-way radios or cellular phones to communicate with the engineer and dispatchers. Some read about switching instructions on their on-board computer terminal. Train conductors work to get passengers and freight to their destination safely and on time. Once the

trip is complete, they record departure and arrival times, and any problems or delays that occurred during the trip.

On passenger trains, conductors direct staff, who provide boarding, maid, porter, and meal services to customers. Once the passengers are on board, conductors signal engineers when to pull out of the station. They also collect tickets or fares and answer questions from passengers.

Conductors on freight trains record the contents and destination of each car. They make sure that cars are added and removed at the proper location. They supervise workers who inspect and repair equipment to keep the train in good working order. During emergencies, they direct workers to set out signals to warn other trains.

Work Activities

The following list of occupational tasks is specific to this career.

- Verify time with engineer to ensure departure follows timetable schedules.
- Review schedules, switching orders, and shipping records to obtain cargo loading and unloading information.
- Coordinate crew activities.



- Signal engineer to begin train run, stop train, or change speed.
- Confer with traffic control staff and engineer to give and receive instructions.
- Supervise workers who inspect and maintain mechanical equipment.
- Inspect sealing procedures of freight cars, record car and seal number, and confirm route and destination of car.
- Monitor and chart train movements to estimate arrival times into station or yard.
- Direct staff in the yard to switch track, change traffic signals, and couple or uncouple trains. May make these changes themselves.
- Observe track to make decisions about how to accommodate incoming and outgoing trains.
- Document any changes or problems on train or in transport.
- Observe and communicate with passengers. Resolve problems to ensure their safety and comfort.
- Collect fares and answer questions from passengers.

Another trademark of the conductor was his home-away-from-home, the caboose. Lytton's caboose is shown

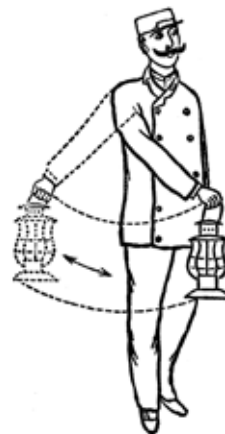
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MOVE AHEAD.
A motion up and down.
See Rule 108.



MOVE BACK.
A motion in a vertical circle.
See Rule 109.



STOP.
A motion crosswise with the track.
See Rule 107.



REMEMBER OUR HOSPITAL!

As we are still being denied our new Health facility, let us take a look back at the hospital as it now stands. This photograph shows the sod-turning of the building we have been using since 1937. The hospital staff at the time are shown 'digging in'!

Left to right:

Phyllis Dalton R.N., Margaret Dunstan; Tillie McIntyre (Laundry); Lizzie Joe; Mrs. Royal (cook), Jock Muir (maintenance); Lorna K. Richmond R.N.; Ruth Price; and Mrs. Munn (Mother of Rev. Eric Munn).

Right now we are operating our health services with a bare-bones staff that is stretched to the absolute breaking point.

What are we doing about it? What are **YOU** doing about it?

Are we really going to sit on our butts and let I.H.A. take all our services away? Maybe it is about time we went back to the media for a little help.



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here, and a quick tour would find many of life's necessities:

- a stove to heat the caboose and cook food
- cupboards to hold china and bedding
- a water tank and sink
- a desk and chair
- benches with storage for equipment and medical supplies
- a toilet
- chairs up high at the raised cupola
- holders to keep oil lamps



Lytton's caboose, once a working rail car, now houses a historical railway display.

Courtesy Richard Forrest



Some cabooses were decorated with rocking chairs, pictures and everything else to make it a home. They became, literally, the home of the conductor.

The conductor would use the schedule for the train and the signals along the right-of-way to co-ordinate the movement of the train along the tracks.

While the train was travelling, he would sit in the upper area of the caboose, called the "cupola" and watch for derailments, hot boxes (wheel sets that overheated), cars uncoupling and any of dozens of other perils that might befall the train under his care.

Being at the back end of the train, the conductor would have to signal the engineer at the front of the train to move forward, backwards or stop. An intricate series of lamp movements was worked out to communicate at distances of several hundreds of yards. Three of those signals are pictured on page 5, in illustrations taken from a 1900's Dominion Atlantic Railway Rules and Regulations Manual (*courtesy of Joe Chute*).

When the two-way radio became practical, the conductor began to direct train movement by radio.

Still later, the technology was developed to tell if train equipment or track repair equipment is on the track, or if rails are broken. Sensors are now used to spot hot boxes and train integrity. Global Positioning Systems are used to track train movements. Everything is monitored at a central location and relayed to the train crew by radio.

Now, the train conductor is a profession that is in decline.