

LYTTON MUSEUM

and ARCHIVES

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Gold (and other good stuff) in “Them Thar Hills”



A photograph from the report noted “Partner Bill Winslow and his tame Cayuse”

by Marie Heaster

You may have heard in the last few months that there is a new gold mine in the area. Some local people have even bought shares in the company. From a news release November 29th, 2005:

“High Grade Gold returned from Drilling at Skoonka Creek...

Almaden Minerals Ltd. is pleased to announce that results have been received from Strongbow Exploration Inc. of an exploration drilling program on the Skoonka Creek property ... confirming the presence of high grade gold mineralization ...

Almaden’s management is extremely encouraged by these initial drilling results

and believes them to be representative of a significant epithermal gold vein system.”

“All very interesting,” I hear you say, “but what does this have to do with our local Museum and local history?”

Well, while helping Dorothy research another museum project, I came across a lovely old book/ledger with the title

Preliminary Mining Report on the Copper Royal Group of Copper-silver-gold Mineral Claims

Owned by John H. Anthony, Esquire,
situated on McKnight Mountain,
Near Lytton, British Columbia

And the date? October 1917.

The Engineer from Vancouver sent to check out this claim had a somewhat more difficult time than those in Skoonka - no pickup trucks, tracked drillers, helicopter transportation, GPS, laser equipment, etc.

The following is an excerpt from his report.

“Acting under your instructions the writer left Vancouver on September 28th ultimo by train, there being two trunk railways, namely the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern, serving between Vancouver and Lytton. After a six hour trip Lytton was reached at night. Next morning the bi-weekly horse stage, carrying the mails from Lytton to Lillooet, conveyed our party to Fourteen Mile Farm, owned by Alfred Ruddock, situated on the waggon road, overlooking the Fraser River, near where Izman

IN THIS ISSUE:

Gold in “ThemTharHills”	1
A Night In Lytton	2
Lytton’s Old Buildings	3
The Repeater Station	4
Nicomen - A Brief History	5
Breaking Winds of Chance	6
What Is This?	8
School Visits	8
Tea and Talk	8

Creek crosses this stage road. Here a pack-horse was secured to carry our camping outfit and food for our stay up the mountain. The climb along the valley of Izman Creek with one of its tributaries, Spyum (an Indian name for bare ridge, like the Gaelic Drumlummon) Creek was successfully made for eight miles, following switchback zigzags of the horse trail to gain height gradually, till the log cabin on the Group was reached, resting among clouds at an elevation of fifty-five hundred (5500) feet above sea level.

The guide, comforter and companion to the writer during the entire trip from and return to Lytton, was Mr. William Winslow, now a resident of that community, who most effectually managed the commissariat, acted as chef, and pleasantly showed the various workings and outcrops, open cuts, shafts, tunnels and winzes, with any other important features concerning these claims."

The Engineer took many photographs which are included in the report, as are estimates of profits that might be realized, what supplies would be necessary and where to obtain them, and how to build a road into the property which would be "suitable for motor lorries to bring in supplies and take out ore."

Five samples were assayed for gold, silver and copper and the report concludes "that here is a most valuable copper property, carrying very large tonnage for future use, affording good profits, long life, and so is a substantial dividend payer in embryo, capable of repaying purchase price, costs of development and equipment in at least 10 years, with a twenty per cent (20%) annual dividend, after complete organization, say in two years time, for more than a full generation."

The report, with photos, map and assay report, can be viewed at the Museum. Do come to visit.



A NIGHT IN LYTTON

[ca1939-1940] by Ethel Wilson.

As we drove towards the sunset, past the deserted orchards of Walhachin, we saw that the sage had crept in again and re-established itself below and around and beyond the small, gaunt apple trees. The sunset was doing queer things to the landscape. Hills before unperceived detached themselves strangely, and what had appeared to be one single rounded mountain was now disclosed as hill behind purple hill. The sky was a violent affair of stormy clouds edged with gold. As we drove rapidly onwards the darkness fell, there was nothing left but vastness and silence, and the scent of the sage on the warm air.

Through the cool arch of the acacia grove east of Spences Bridge we went, and across the Thompson River. You can say what you like about the Fraser Canyon. It is very majestic. But no one has yet praised the gorges of the green, tumbling Thompson River as they should be praised. And yet perhaps it is better not to praise their strange beauty. Let the Thompson River be discovered by each traveler for himself.

White Rapids In Black Night

By the time we had reached the steeper part of the canyon and were approaching Lytton, it was black night with no stars. And yet we could see in the darkness the backlashing whiteness of the rapids beside and below us, and hear above the noise of the moving car the voices of the river.

It was a surprise to descend the steep slope into Lytton and to find instead of the customary quiet of the little town, that a traveling show was encamped there, all lights and loud music. Round and round went the lighted ferris wheel. Round and round went the lighted merry-go-round, with people clasping the horses. Indians moved slowly out

of the darkness into the light and stood watching, or moving about the little midway.

We went into the little fairground, too. All midways have the same odd spurious glamour at night. Of the chief of the midway stars at the Lytton two-night traveling fair was Howard the Lobster Boy. There hung Howard's picture on the painted and concealing screen. Howard was large and pink. He sat upon a sand pile in a marine landscape and looked at nothing. His arms ended in out-size claws or snappers. So did his legs. It was impossible to tell from his picture how Howard moved about.

One of us wanted to go in and see Howard. The other wouldn't go. So we didn't go in.

Some of the Indians stood and looked at Howard's picture, and then they paid their money and went in. Now they have seen Howard the Lobster Boy. Is Howard the subject of some affliction that separates him tragically from the active life of his fellows, or does he put on the snappers in the morning, and at night unscrew them and go to bed? We do not know.

We turned away from the fair and wandered into the main street and down the main street, which with the uncertain illumination of such a little town was both light and dark.

In Lytton, except for the distant clamour of the fair, everything was very peaceful. In this street below the high hills and above the river the war would seem to be on another planet, not on this planet, breaking people's hearts.

If one lived surrounded by the peaceful hills of Lytton it would need a great deal of imagination to believe that the horrible bombardment of London, the city that is at once the dear possession of the Englishman, the Canadian, the

Australian, of everyone of British birth the world over, was in its sixteenth terrible day and night.

But the Lytton people have imagined all that. A large and lighted store window in the main street was filled with a display of Red Cross articles as excellent as any you would see in a large center of Red Cross work. These garments represented a third shipment of completed work about to be sent to the provincial headquarters in Vancouver.

There were pajamas, surgeon's gowns, sweaters, various other garments, neatly finished and correctly folded. There were socks and more socks and more socks. There were refugee garments. In the center was a warm dress with a gay skirt and a brown knitted top that some little girl will love to wear.

A neatly lettered card said that this collection of work came from places as far apart as Spence's Bridge, Keefers, Boston Bar, North Bend and Spuzzum, a distance of about 70 miles up and down that sparsely settled country. Any women familiar with the difficulty of producing work of a uniform quality to meet the wise and exacting requirements of the Red Cross, even in a large center where supervision is possible, must admire the organization and industry that has assembled such a collection of fine work under difficult conditions of distance.

Country Housewife's Contribution

Anyone who is aware of the day-in, day-out domestic duties of a country housewife must appreciate the persistent and intelligent industry of the women who made these clean and workmanlike garments. Any city dweller who lives amidst the constant reverberations of war, has only to be transported to the peace of the Thompson and Fraser Canyons to realize the imagination and sympathy of the women of this

countryside, who do not allow their own peace to possess and isolate them. Here, in the display of Red Cross work in this window of this little town, was the proof of their citizenship and their intelligent will to help their country's need. Spences Bridge, Keefers, Lytton, North Bend, Boston Bar, Spuzzum (and there was another name. What was that other name?), let us praise them.

We turned back to the Brophy House above the river, and went to bed. At 11 o'clock the noise of the fair stopped suddenly as if it had been turned off at a switch, and the silence flowed over again, like the sage brush into the orchards. The tattooed man, the bearded lady, the Indians, Howard the Lobster Boy and all of us one by one closed our eyes in sleep, and soft

Lytton wind blew on and on between the hills.

Editors note:

Author Ethel Wilson once spent three weeks in Lytton, living in the Brophy House, now called the Totem Motel. She came here to write her novel "Hetty Dorval", a fiction story using Lytton as her background. (We have a copy in the museum).

John Haugen found the above article in one of his searches and brought it in for our newsletter. It provides another small window into Lytton history during a time when most of the rest of the world was at war (WWII). Thank you, John!



FURTHER TO 'LYTTON'S OLD BUILDINGS:



This was a feature article in our February Newsletter. I asked our readers to let us know if they thought we had missed any buildings and sure enough, we did!

The Anglican church vicarage (#716 Main) was built in 1890. It is beside

the Anglican Church, which was built in 1922. It has had much work done on it over the years. Thanks to John Murray for the reminder!



The Repeater Station



worked a 42 hour week. Built during the war, the initial duties were to monitor and identify all planes flying over the area, and communicating with them. The weather station was installed in the building during the war.

The building was eventually closed, partly because the equipment became obsolete

Robert Bolan tells us that the CN moved the B&B gang (Bridges and Buildings) into the repeater station in 1978, and it became the Maintenance/Workshop base, until 1999, when it was finally closed.

The building was demolished in April 2006.



ABOVE: Repeater station being demolished April 2006.

Photograph courtesy of Joe Chute.

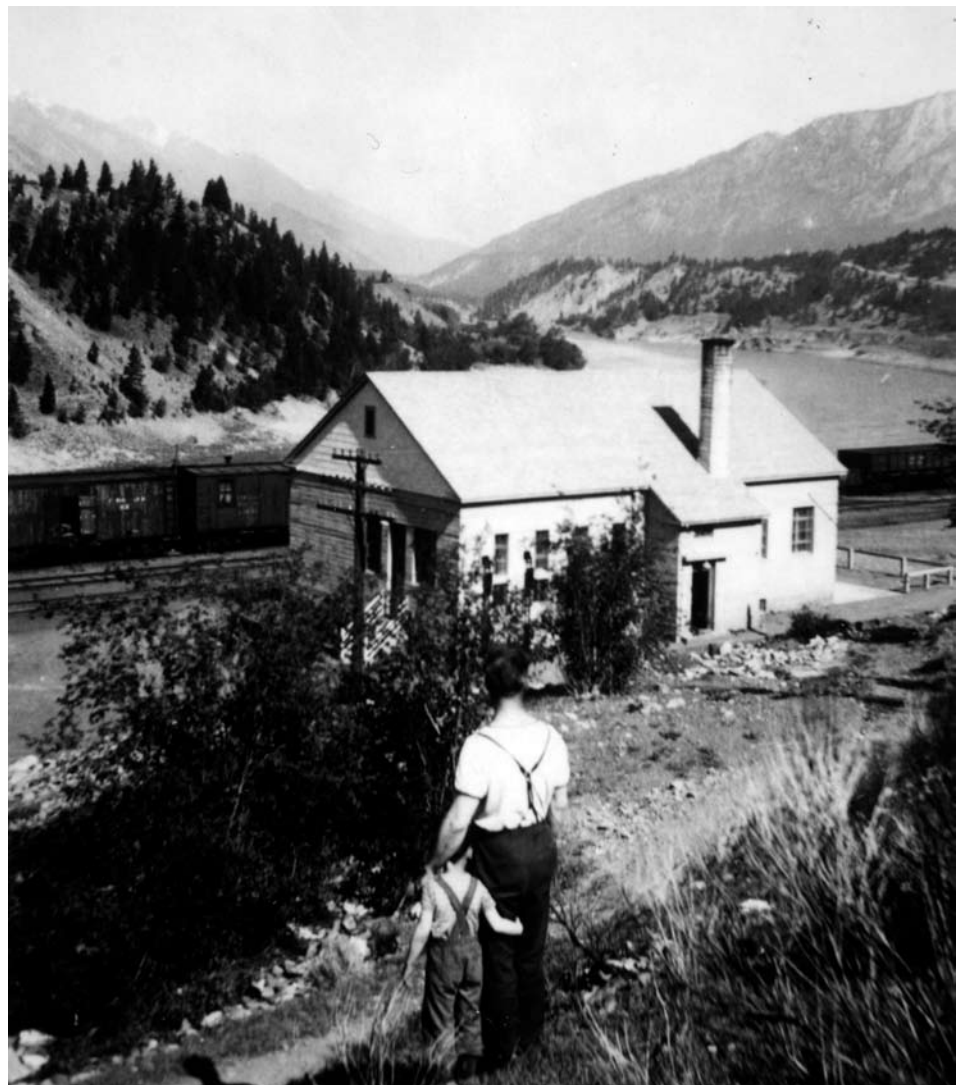
Now you see it... and now you don't.

In 2001, we were fortunate to be able to interview Wels Drake, the son of the first agent to work at the Repeater station. He informed us of the following:

Pacific Communication Systems (PCS) were responsible for installing this system in Lytton. The Canadian arm of the system was the Government Telegraph and Telephone System. PCS joined and trained CN staff to man these stations. The trainer was Max Edgar, brother to one of the agents hired. Stations were built in Seattle, Lytton, 150 Mile House, and eventually Prince George, Burns Lake and Woodcock. The Terminus was Prince Rupert. All stations were manned by CNT except 150 Mile House, which was Dominion.

Our station was built in 1941, and Wick Drake was the first agent. The operation hours were 7 days a week, agents

RIGHT: Wick Drake and his son, Art, standing above the repeater station, 1941.



Nicomen

A Very Brief History

by Bernie Fandrich

In a way, the impetus for the creation of British Columbia can be attributed to the Nicomen Indian Band.

Gold was discovered in British Columbia as early as 1852 and in 1856 it was discovered on the Thompson River a few hundred meters below the mouth of the Nicoamen River.

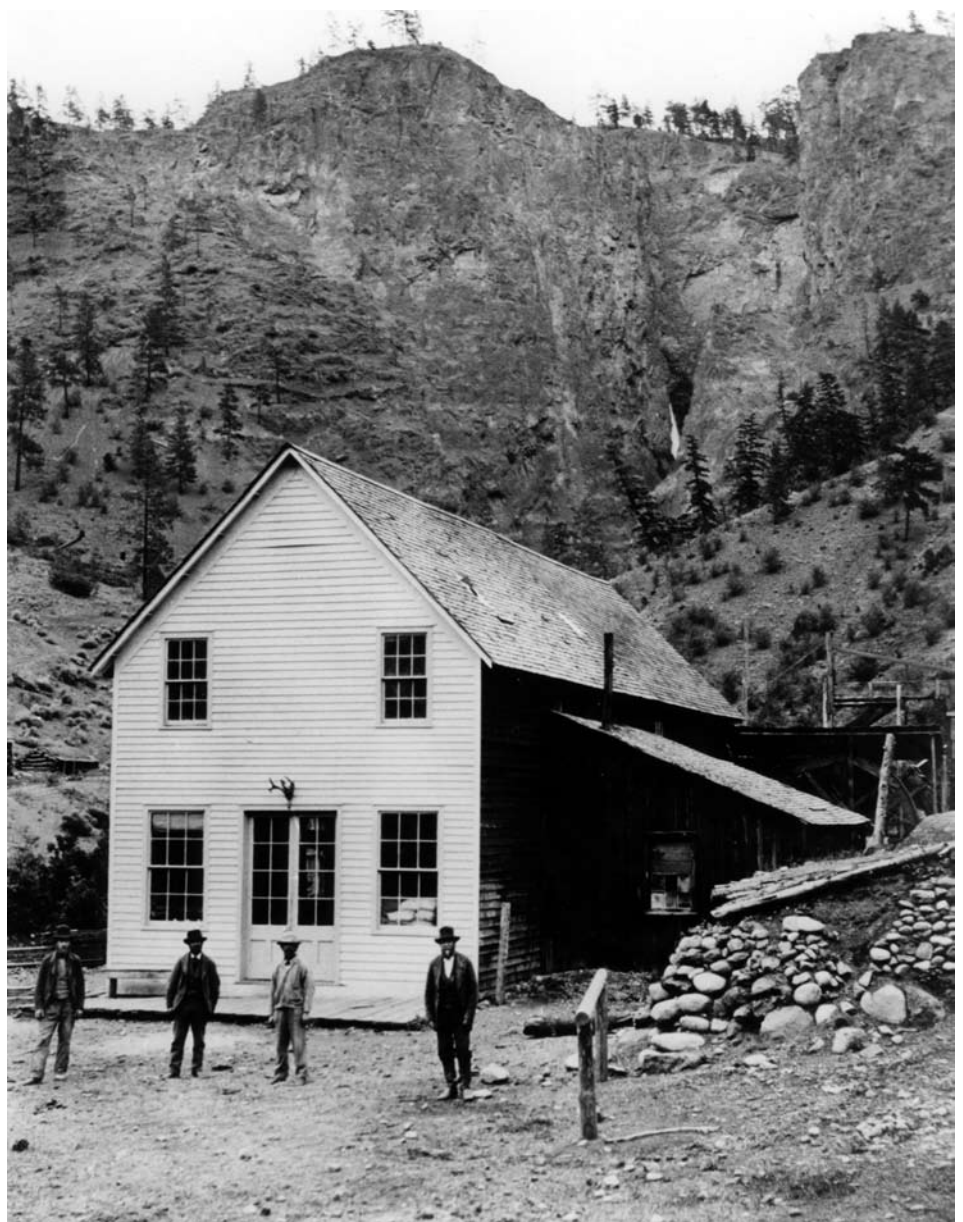
Probably discovered by members of the Nicomen Indian Band, the gold they scraped from the bottom of the Thompson precipitated the great gold rush of 1858.

Gold from the Thompson was sent by the Hudson's Bay Company to San Francisco for assaying. Word about the 800 ounces of gold spread like wild fire in California because the great California Gold Rush had petered out and thousands of men were idle, looking for something to do and somewhere to do it.

Within a few months more than 10,000 of them converged on the almost uninhabited wilderness of British Columbia, including the Nicomen area. It was this influx of miners that brought about a monumental change in British Columbia.

In 1860 Nicomen was located on the Cariboo Waggon Road and a Roadhouse was built. The area was staked by miners and a thriving community sprung up around the hundreds of mining claims and workings that dotted the landscape around Nicomen. For awhile it was even known as Nicomen Mines.

One claim to fame for the Nicomen Roadhouse was a visit by Governor Douglas in 1860. He apparently enjoyed a hearty breakfast there before moving on down the Waggon Road to Lytton.



Nicomen Stopping House (ca 1870) Two story wood frame building with water wheel to the right. Four men in front of building. Nicomen waterfall in background.

Courtesy of Sigurd Teit Collection.

When the CPR arrived Nicomen became known as Thompson Siding and the Roadhouse was operated by a colorful couple, the Clements. She was a strong woman who took no nonsense from anyone, especially boisterous men.

In 1942 Lytton's Lloyd Dodge worked for the BC Public Works Department as a cook's helper at Nicomen. Improvements were being made at the "S" turns a few kilometers south and the work crew were stationed at Nicomen.

One of Lloyd's jobs was to retrieve

the butter and meat that was stored in a cooler that was anchored in the river under the bridge to keep its ingredients cool.

Lloyd remembers traveling on the old Fraser Canyon Highway under the CPR underpass and in 1957 he operated heavy equipment when the Trans Canada Highway underpass was built at Nicomen.

Francis Van Dyke purchased the Nicomen property in the 1960's and lived

Continued on Page 7...

Breaking Winds of Chance



FRANK LLOYD ... WINDS OF CHANCE A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE

by Peter McArthur

GOLD GOLD GOLD!!!

Early in the 20th century a large group of people looking for the Klondike Gold Rush found themselves in Lytton. It was not the Lytton we know today, but a bitter cold Lytton where Dawson City was just over the mountains, while Love, Gold, and Death were all around just waiting to be found. If the mountain passes and river rapids didn't kill you then the villains would.

At least in Hollywood's eyes.

In 1925 the silent movie "Winds of Chance" was shot here. Although most people today have not heard of the movie, some older citizens of Lytton would remember the actors being here. And there were stories of local people who were in the movie just like "The Pledge". It was no secret that the movie was made here, but no one in Lytton had ever seen it, it has never been on TV and had never been shown here.

In the 1960's a group of local people began a search for a copy of the movie. They contacted movie studios, directors, and actors and amassed a large binder of information, including stills from the movie, autographs from the actors and letters. The letters would often say they remembered Lytton or the movie, but they always said sorry, no copies of the movie are known to exist.

Old movies were very fragile because the film they used was highly unstable and would easily decompose if not stored correctly. If the movies survived, they risked being thrown out when old studios closed or when the owner died, and many movies were lost to fire because the material is very flammable. Not only were the old films easily destroyed they did not make many copies of the films, possibly less than a hundred.

So the chance of any movie surviving was small, unless someone knew enough to store the movie properly or copied the movie onto a different format.

In the spring of 2005 I was playing with the Internet and typed "Winds of Chance" into Google and got 12,200 results. It was easy to find out about the movie 1925 B&W Directed by Frank Lloyd, Starring Anna Q. Nilsson, Ben Lyon, etc or about the "book by Rex Beach". However there were too many sites to look at each one. There is a huge amount of information on the Web about everything.

From time to time I would do searches, and scan the results. I wasn't looking for the movie, exactly, I was just surfing the net. Some information said that the movie might still exist but it was only hints. I had no expectations of finding the movie.

Until I read "Thursday, July 25, 2002 9 p.m. Winds of Chance, 1925. A gold rush drama," This site claimed that The Alamo Theatre in Bucksport, Maine actually showed the movie! I read the site several times and phoned Bucksport. The response was what I expected, no one knew what I was talking about, the site was several years ago, there are different people now.... But they would look in their records and see. 10 minutes later they phoned me back and confirmed. They had shown the movie. "Can you tell me where you got the movie from?" "We borrowed it from the National Archives up in Ottawa" and then gave me the phone number and name of exactly who supplied it.

This is it, I thought, I've got it!!!! I immediately phoned the number and.... The recording said "I have retired don't bother leaving a message". So close yet so far to go.

I went back to the Web thinking of the tentacles of all the "Library and Archives Canada" and telephone answering maze I would have to negotiate. Once again I was surprised by the outcome, I simply phoned the general information line and got transferred to Audio Visual and the first person I spoke to said let me see, "yes we have a VHS copy, but you can't

have it". What!! "We cannot release any item without the Donor's permission and confirmation of copyright status."

The Donor was the Newfoundland and Labrador Archives. So in mid March I phoned them. And another classic phone message "We are now closed, we will reopen in June". No one could help me; they were moving the archives and could not access their records.

After a long 2 month wait, in June I phoned back to Newfoundland only to find that they have no records of ever having this movie and why was I bothering them!!!! Ackkkk.

I phoned back to the archive in Ottawa and made them phone Newfoundland. After several days Ottawa says "ok that's settled, but you still can't have it, you need copyright permission".

Nobody knows who owns the film, where it came from or even who to ask.

Back to the web. Library of Congress in Washington is the repository for American Copyright information. But they had no records of the movie. It was suggested that I could spend hundreds of dollars and a lot of time researching the copyright but I thought no. I tried several other sites on the net, there were lots of ideas but nothing fruitful.

I contacted the Copyright Board of Canada, who told me that to confirm the copyright status would take at least 6 months or more and a lot of red tape. However they insisted that I did not need any permission to view the movie for "research or private study". *Clearly that was what I wanted it for. The Archives in Ottawa said "Okay, that's everything, when do you want to come to Ottawa and see it".* Their policy is they will not sell me a copy and will not loan items out. No. No. Never. Never.

I was now peeved so I sent a letter to them all with a copy to our MP. This was all it took. The next day I received an

email saying that they "found a way to get me a copy" of course at my cost.

Like the "Winds of Chance" this story had a happy ending. It arrived and was donated to the Lytton Museum and Archives and anyone wishing to see it for "research or private study" please contact them directly.

This may not be the end of the story. The movie we have is incomplete. It is missing one of ten reels. This is not a major

loss to the story; in fact, it may be a good thing because the movie is long.

However... what if the missing reel includes a walk down Lytton's Main Street before the big fire?

Note: "Winds of Chance" has been transferred from VHS tape to DVD by Jim Steer. Thanks, Jim.



Nicomen

(Continued from Page 5)

there until his house burned to the ground in the 1970's.

He discovered a gravesite at Nicomen in the 1970's and an archaeological dig ensued and 23 graves were identified. Evidence uncovered at the "Van Dyke" site indicates that a trade link existed between the Nicomen people and the Kootanias as early as 1700. They were a mobile people.

Recently, the Nicomen property was purchased by Kumsheen Rafting Resort to provide a scenic and historic lun-

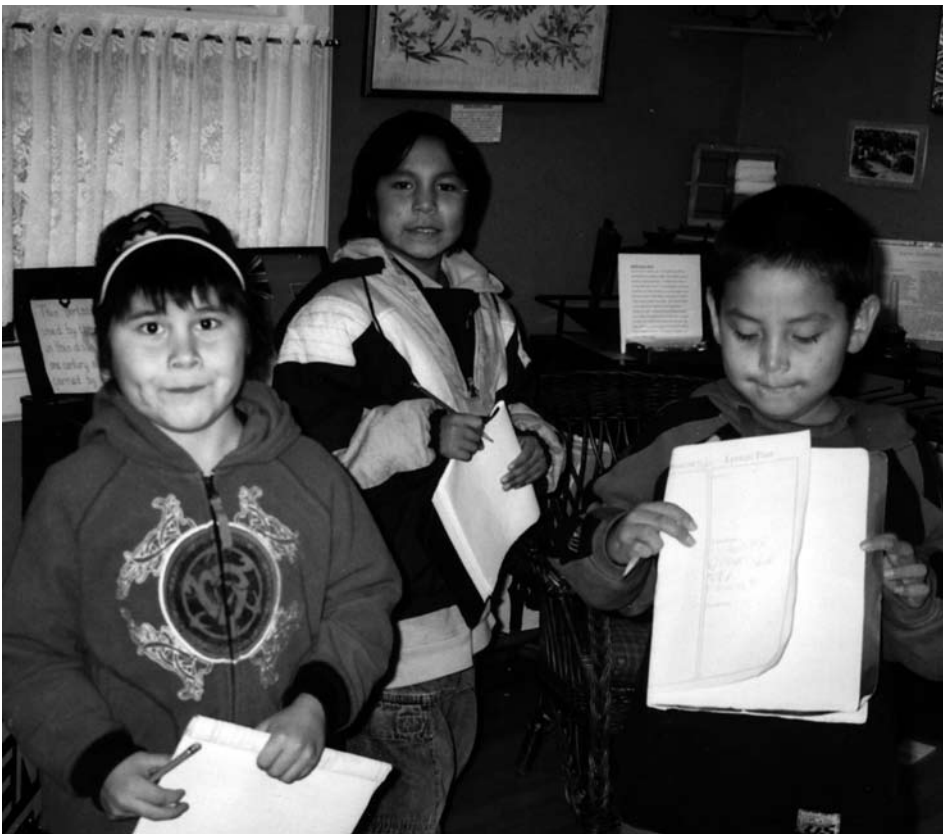
cheon stop for their rafting guests. They walk from the river to the old building that was on the site but that has been given facelift surgery.

Richard Forrest and a Kumsheen crew have added a large deck overlooking the river and falls and have transformed the building into a close replica of the 1860 Lytton Globe Hotel.

The Nicomen Indian Band will be selling ice cream and snacks for tourists and locals this summer. Development plans include a vineyard, RV Park, quad tours, water falls viewing, and of course gold panning.



Kumsheen's Nicomen House under construction in early 2006.



School visits:

We have had one visit with the Stein Valley Grades 3/4 class (pictured at left), which we enjoyed very much. We've also had a visit from the pre-school, and groups of students came for research on their Historical Projects. All classes are welcome - just give us one day's notice to prepare.

Many, many thanks to the Ruff Ryders Tag, Kumsheen Secondary School, for their great help at the Lytton Cemetery. For their Community Service they scrubbed and cleaned eleven grave markers! I'm sure they would tell you that is a hard job, and it certainly is appreciated by the cemetery committee.



Seventh Annual Lytton Museum Tea and Talk

This took place during Heritage Week in February and as usual, it was well attended and we had a great visit with everyone.

This year was a bit different in that we had author Dan Hauka visit and do an impromptu reading from his book 'McGowan's War'. He is very interesting, has a great sense of humour, and is welcome back anytime!

In February we sponsored another author, W.P. Kinsella, to Lytton. Judging from the number of his books sold, he was also very popular.

We must really do this more often!



The rivers do hold on to their secrets! At low water on the Thompson, this object can be found under the CNR bridge.

Does anyone have an answer to what it may be? We know that there was a train wreck in the area, but it does not

look like any railway car or locomotive part. We also know that one of the gold dredges is wrecked just down river at the point.

Was it part of the dredge or part of a railcar load?