Stories of the Gold Rush Fort Langley to Fort George

GOLD RUSH TRAIL

CONTEST

See Page 19 for details

Gold Rush Trail JOURNAL

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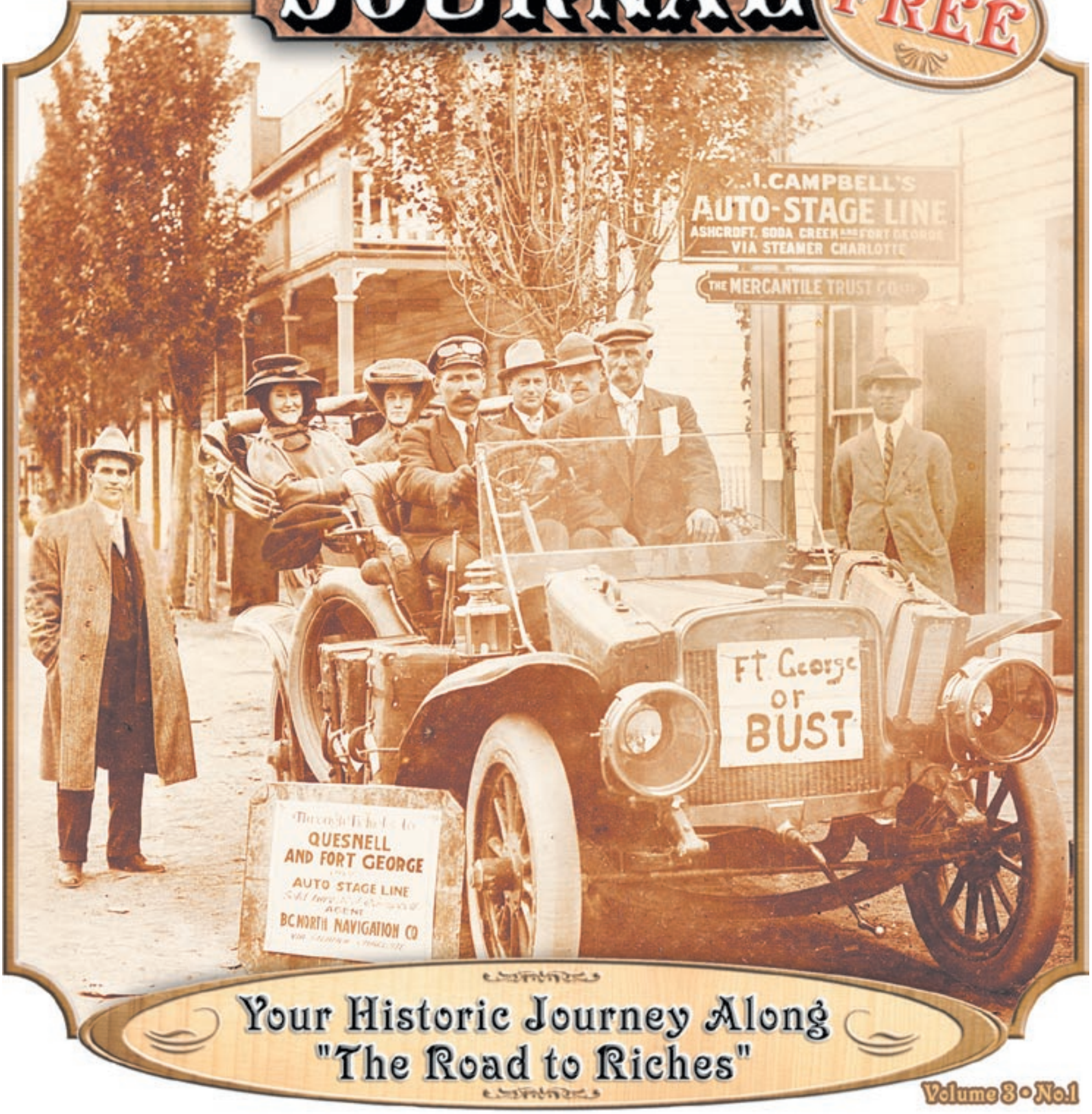

Your Historic Journey Along "The Road to Riches"

Volume 3 • No.1

Welcome to The

GOLD RUSH TRAIL

N

Prince George

Wells

Quesnel

Barkerville

Likely

Horsefly

Williams Lake

100 Mile House

Clinton

Kamloops

GOLD RUSH TRAIL

Lillooet

Cache Creek

Ashcroft

Lytton

Merritt

Pemberton

Whistler

Boston Bar

Yale

Princeton

Squamish

Kilby

Hope

Vancouver

Xa:ytem

Fort Langley

Victoria

The Gold Rush Trail Journal

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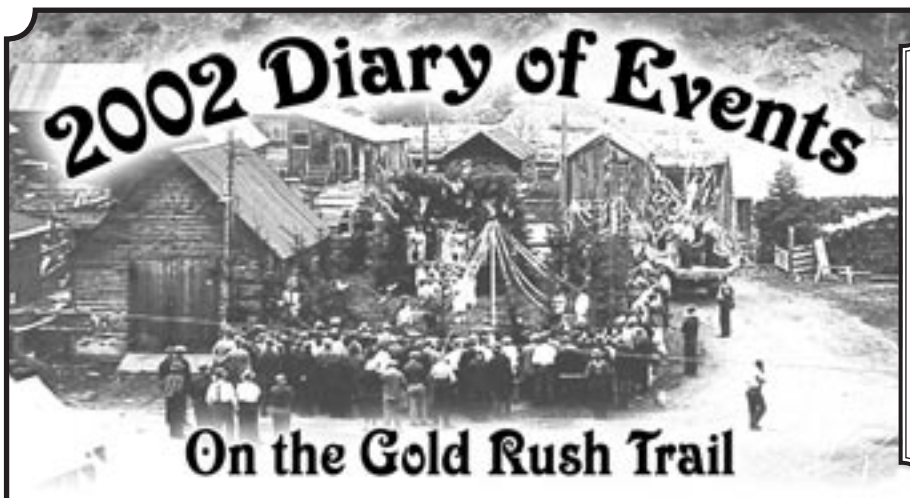

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Hope.....604-869-2021
Horsefly.....250-620-3440
Langley.....604-530-6656
Lillooet.....250-256-4308
Lytton.....250-455-2523
Prince George.....250-562-3700
Quesnel.....250-992-8716
Williams Lake.....250-392-5025
Wells.....250-994-2323

June

21st National Aboriginal Day Celebrations 10am-4pm. Williams Lake, (250) 392-3918 or (250) 398 0158.

21st Jack O Clubs Casino & Music Hall grand opening in Wells, BC 1-866-994-3222.

22nd Morgan Owners Car Club Adventure arrives in Barkerville.

22nd-23rd Fort Langley Railway Days. Exhibits featuring: operating models, rail memorabilia and railroad photography. (604) 856-8908.

23rd Hike For Hospice, River Front Trail Park Quesnel, (250) 992-1218

28th-1st 76th Annual Williams Lake Stampede. (250) 392-6585 or 1-800-71-RODEO(717-6366)

29th Williams Lake Loggers Sports Festival at Boitanio Park. (250) 392-7191.

29th-1st 4th Annual 100 Mile Gathering of the Dancers Competition PowWow. 100 Mile Ranch Property. (250) 395-2481 ext. 213

July

1st Dominion Day Celebrations. Celebrate Canada's birthday the way they did in 1870. Barkerville, (250) 994-3302

1st Outdoor Pool Party at Lytton & District Chamber of Commerce

1st Canada Day Celebration. 108 Mile Ranch. (250)395-2354

1st Canada Day in Fort George Park. Prince George (250) 563-8525

2nd Billy Barker Days Parade beginning at 10 am Downtown Quesnel, (250) 992-1234

3rd 24th Annual Gold Rush Fun Run . (250) 992-8200 @ Quesnel Rec Centre

5th-7th 4th Annual Sacred Whistle Memorial Pow-wow. Quesnel, (250) 747-2900.

6th &7th "Williams Lake Rendevous" Black Powder Shoot @ W.L. Sportsman Club. (250) 392-3976 or (250) 989-5513

13th-14th Spanish Cowboy Music Weekend with Los Californianios in Barkerville. (250) 994-3302

18th-21st Billy Barker Days. Quesnel Family Festival. (250) 992-1234

19th-21st Quesnel Amateur Rodeo , Alex Fraser Park. (250) 249-5170

27th BC Old Time Fiddlers Contest @ Blackburn Community Hall. Prince George (250) 562-4039.

27th-28th Cattle Drive arrives in Barkerville.

28th Fiddle Treat Concert @ Gibralter Room. Williams Lake (250) 398-7665

August

1st Wells Tinman Triathalon (250) 994-3498.

2nd-5th Barkerville Reunion (anyone who has worked here is invited).

3rd Barn Dance at Crystal Waters Guest Ranch. (250) 589 – 4252.

3rd-5th Brigade Days. Discover Canada's fur trade heritage at Fort Langley National Historic Site. 604 513-4777.

9th-11th 4-H Show and Sale @ Alex Fraser Park Quesnel, (250) 992-8335

10th Williams Lake "Art Walk" (250) 392-2533.

11th-12th Williams Creek Fire Brigade Picnic. Horse Carriage races, Fireman's games and more. Barkerville, (250) 994-3302.

15th Fireman's Ball. (250) 994-3240

15th-18th Prince George Fringe Festival. (250) 564- 8413

24th Mid-Autumn Festival. A traditional Chinese celebration honoring Barkerville's Chinese Heritage. (250) 994-3302

24th Sixth Annual Eldorado Gold Panning Championship. Barkerville.

24th-25th Prospectors Car Club. Gold Pan "Sneakout" & Car Show (250) 249-5858

25th Hose Carriage Races. Barkerville (250) 994-3332*29

30th-1st Quesnel Fall Fair @ Alex Fraser Park. (250) 747-1512

September

1st Williams Creek Fire Brigade Picnic. Games, races and contests for all to enjoy. Barkerville, (250) 994 –3302

2nd Barkerville Children's Sports Day.

7th Cariboo Country Nite @ Watch Lake Community Hall. 70 Mile House (250) 456 - 7668

7th-8th Cariboo Harvest Fair. Williams Lake, (250) 392-3938.

8th Outriders 11th Annual Fall Fair Horse Show @ the 100 Mile Fair Grounds. (250) 397 – 2897.

10th Wine Festival @ Williams Lake Complex. (250)398-7665.

13th Wells, Ducks Unlimited Dinner. (250) 994-3302*23/324

14th-15th Open Air Concert in Barkerville. (250) 994-3332.

27th-29th Heritage Learning Weekend. (250) 296-4432.

28th Annual Mennonite Fall Fair @ Civic Centre. Prince George. (250) 562-3711

October

5th "A Taste Of Quesnel" at Artisan Charity Auction & Diner Quesnel, (250) 992-1218

18th-20th Homes, Hobbies, and Horsepower @ the Multiplex. Prince George, (250) 562- 2454.

26th Celebrate Oktoberfest/Harvestfest at various locations throughout Aldergrove. (604) 856-6229.

Please note, all information correct at time of going to press.

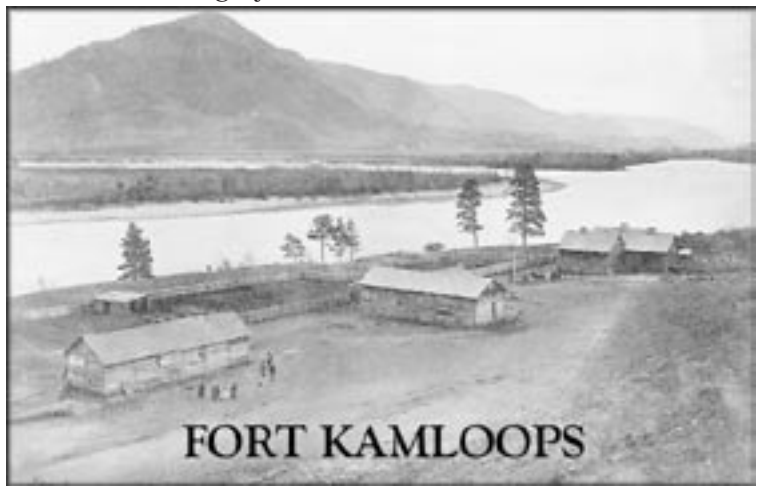
Features

Disclainer: Readers please note that many of the articles published in the Gold Rush Trail Journal are taken from much older periodicals and original documents and may reflect veiws concerning race gender, financial status, height, weight, origin etc. that were widely held at that time but do not necessarily represent the opinions of the publisher nor staff of the Gold Rush Trail Journal. The editiorial staff has made the decision to retain in all instances the original text and meaning of these articles in order that the Journal may be a window on our heritage rather than a filter. In this context, we hope that you enjoy the paper and learn something from reading it.

The Brigade Trail

The Fur Trade Routes Before The Gold Rush

Well before the gold rush that brought thousands into the Cariboo a fur trade route connected Fort Langley on the lower Fraser River with Fort George (now Prince George) on the upper Fraser and other forts beyond. Between the 1820s and 1850s the Hudson's Bay Company used a well-defined travel route to send furs out of the interior of British Columbia to markets in Europe and Asia. The same route was used to supply the inland forts with trade goods. The trade was primarily an exchange of goods between two worlds -- the native and non-native -- although the Europeans were far outnumbered by the Aboriginal peoples who knew the land and how to move around it.


FORT KAMLOOPS

The fur trade routes in the interior of British Columbia were a combination of overland trails and waterways that connected far-flung fur trade posts with the rest of the world. Between 1806, when Simon Fraser of the North West Company established the first fur trade post west of the Rocky Mountains at Fort McLeod, and 1858, when the gold rush turned BC into a colony of Great Britain, the fur trade was the economic basis of European settlement west of the Rockies.

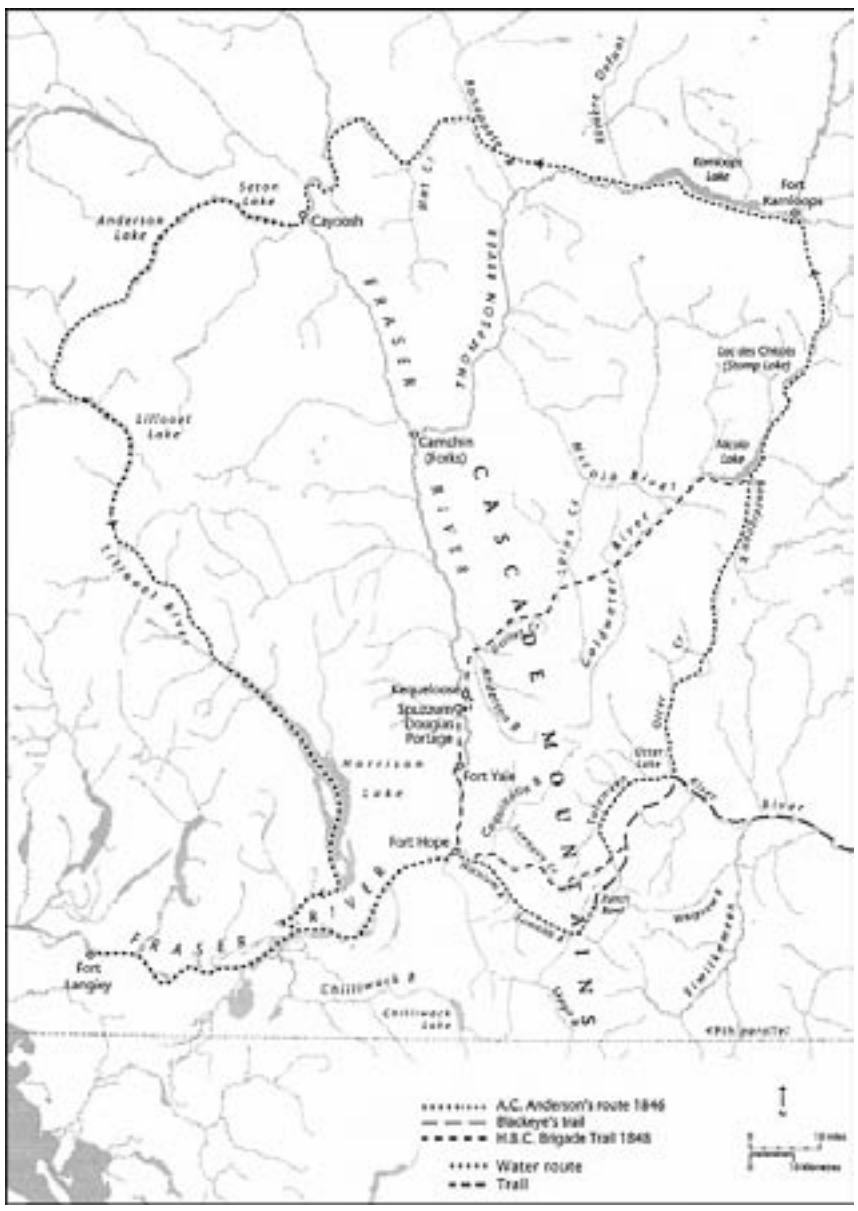
Along these ancient routes voyageurs of the fur trade companies carried supplies inbound and furs outbound. Annually these brigades collected the harvest of furs from New Caledonia, as central BC was called. Each year, on their return, they resupplied the forts with trade goods. In the early years of the trade, a long-established route followed the Okanagan Valley to the Columbia River and Fort Vancouver. Although Fort Langley was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1827 on the lower Fraser River , it was not until after 1846 when the boundary was established along the 49th parallel between British and American possessions Fort Langley became of greater importance.

After 1847, supplies from Great Britain were sent first to Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island, then by ship up the Fraser River to Fort Langley were they were transferred to batteaus that went farther upstream as far as Fort Hope (and briefly FortYale). From Fort Hope fur brigades using trains of horses carried the furs over the Cascade Mountains and then north to Fort Kamloops and northwest to Bridge Creek (now known as 100 Mile House). Present Highway 97 generally follows the brigade trail north as far as Alexandria where batteaux and canoes went on to Fort George and beyond to Fort St. James, the "capital" of New Caledonia.

Brigades consisted of several strings of horses and about a dozen men with each horse carrying two bales weighing 41 kg (90 lbs) each. A brigade from Fort Langley to Fort George would leave in the spring, travelling approximately twenty days one way, the return trip would take place in the fall. Many of the horses were raised at Kamloops and Alexandria where pasturage was good.

Now and then, there were accidents along the way, especially on the river portions. On Manson Mountain in the Cascades occurred the unfortunate death of Paul Fraser in 1855, Manson was not well-liked by the voyageurs who 'accidentally' felled a tree that on the tent where he was sleeping. David Douglas, the famous Scottish botanist, travelled through the interior of BC w stations among the Secwepemc (Shuswap) and Carrier peoples of the interior.

Place names along the route still conjure memories of the fur trade. The Thompson River was named by Simon Fraser at Lytton; Thompson, in return, named the Fraser after his friend. Cache Creek is so-named for the fact a fish cache was constructed there to permit the storage of salmon from the Fraser River for the needs of the employees at Kamloops. The brigade trail skirted Green Lake (so named by the fur traders Lac du Vert) near the famous Flying U Guest Ranch. Horse Lake farther north was named for an incident in the 1820s when several horses drowned crossing the outlet of the lake. Bridge Creek (100 Mile House) nearby was so-named for the logs thrown across the river to permit horses to cross without wading in the steep-banked creek. Lac la Hache was so named for an axe lost in that lake. Alexandria is named after explorer Alexander Mackenzie who was looking for the Pacific Ocean and in 1793 ventured down the Fraser River before heading west near this point to Bella Coola.



The fur trade declined after the Gold Rush and the brigade trail across the Cascades was superceded by the Cariboo Waggon Road up the Fraser Canyon in the 1860s. The Waggon Road straightened out and widened the trail here and there north of 100 Mile House. By 1864, the main fur brigade route between Fort Hope and Fort Alexandria was not important anymore and the forts themselves were catering to miners and settlers more and more.

Today, the legacy of the brigade route is still to be seen (and imagined) here and there. Portions of the overland trail have been preserved in the Cascade Mountains and just west of Little Fort where it climbs to the Thompson Plateau.

Author Ken Favrholdt is a historical geographer living in Kamloops and speci alizing in the history of the fur trade.

Visit the town of Fort Langley and the Historic Fort —for information phone: (604) 513-8787

The Fort Langley Heritage Walking Tour is a must on any visit to the fort, an informative tour brochure is available to guide you with descriptions of the lovingly restored buildings and attractions. Tour highlights include the Fort Langley Train Station, built in 1913, the beautifully restored Fort Langley Community Hall, with its Doric style columns and a most imposing pediment, and St. Andrews United Church, Langley's oldest surviving church, built in 1885.

Glover Road, Fort Langley's main street, features a variety of shops, antique stores and galleries, many of which are housed in well-maintained heritage buildings. Fort Langley is located 2km beyond the southern terminus of the Albion Ferry which enables motorists to make a direct connection between Highway 7 and Highway 1.

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Jock McMurphy: from Crimea to Cariboo

by Timothy Watkins & Simon Sherwood

For Sgt. John McMurphy, the road to Cariboo began in 1840 when he enlisted in the Royal Engineers. It was the start of a 23-year career that would make him the most decorated soldier in the Columbian Detachment.

1841 found 'Jock' in South Africa under siege by the Boers. In his old age he could still describe vividly a night raid on enemy trenches, "bayonets fixed and faces blackened with candle grease." He also recalled with pride his feat of swimming with a line across a swollen river which had already drowned three unlucky soldiers.

The next decade saw McMurphy in the Crimean War, now laying siege to the Russians in Sebastapol. On the eve of battle he wrote home to his wife, urging her to raise their son Johnnie "to be an honour to his Maker and his Country." His letter came to the attention of Queen Victoria herself, who invited Mrs. McMurphy to tea and dandled young Johnnie on her royal knee.

Sargent McMurphy

McMurphy himself would win a medal for bravery dragging a wounded man to safety under the fire of Russian guns. He would also save the life of another young soldier, Sapper Charles Digby, who lay wounded in a hospital tent. Ordered to give Digby a poison draught to end his sufferings, McMurphy refused. Surgeons were amazed when the young man survived. Digby would also join the Columbian Detachment in 1859, and amazingly would marry Annie McMurphy, daughter of his saviour.

Once in B.C., McMurphy spent time in the Cariboo laying out the route for the wagon road. He loved this new country, remarking in his journal how abundant grouse and the streams swarming with trout "bring me back to my young days on the moors in Scotland."

Upon retirement, McMurphy opened an inn, christened Lochlomond House, at the 74-mile post on the Wagon Road. His advertisement in the *British Columbian* newspaper stated proudly: "The Bar will contain civility and the best liquors and cigars." McMurphy's growing family of six boys and five girls helped run the hostelry. Sadly, in the fall of 1865 while McMurphy was in Victoria on business, miners found Lochlomond House deserted and looted it of everything valuable.

The McMurphy family retreated to New Westminster, where Jock's service record helped him find work as a clerk and sheriff. The Detachment's senior soldier died one of the Royal City's most beloved citizens.

THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

THEY BUILT THE CARIBOO ROAD AND TRANSFORMED THE WILDERNESS ... BUT THEIR EXPLOITS WERE NOT WITHOUT FOIBLE

Histories of British Columbia usually treat the deeds of the Royal Engineers with awe. And the accomplishments of these soldiers, both in engineering and in public service, were indeed remarkable. Yet often the Engineers themselves are portrayed as Victorian-era supermen, a "Noble band of British Heroes" transforming the wilderness.

The letters and journals of the Engineers put a human face on these heroes. Officers squabbled amongst themselves, enlisted men drank and deserted, and the work was plagued by accidents, often fatal. What follows is a glimpse into the daily lives of the soldiers and their families, the real people behind the legend.

In 1858, when the Columbia Detachment of Royal Engineers was created, each of the 160 members was handpicked from volunteers. There were several compelling reasons why these 'sappers' (as Engineer privates were known) opted for service on the far side of the world.

Each man would receive 30 acres of free Crown land in British Columbia, later increased to 150 acres in appreciation of the men's work. 30 acres, let alone 150, was an astronomical windfall, which no labourer could hope to attain at home in England.

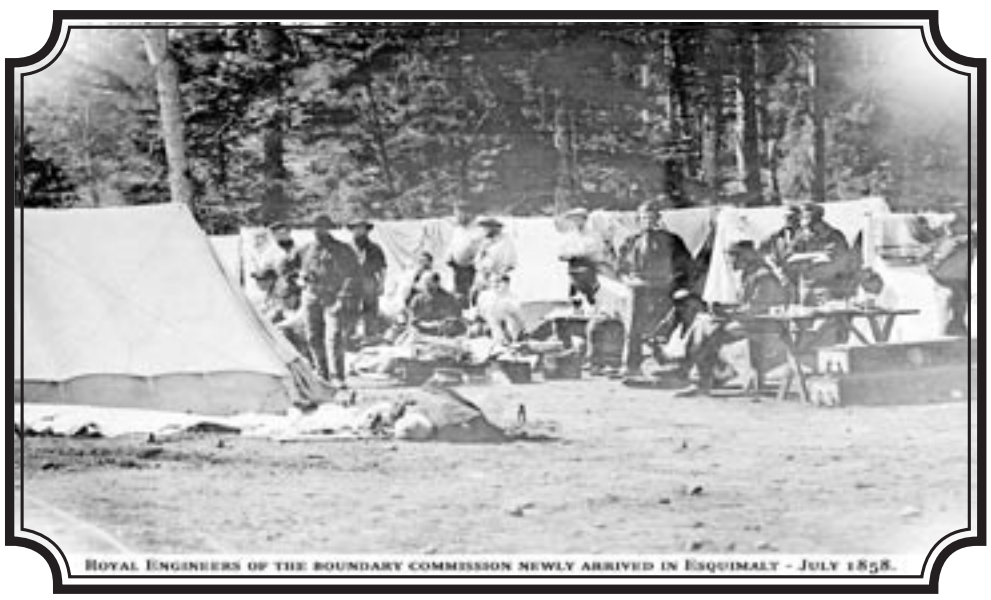
The Columbia Detachment also allowed all its married men to bring their wives and children. The usual practice of the British army when sending a unit overseas was to allow only one soldier in six to bring his wife, the wives of others and all children being left behind. But no less than 36 women and 38 children left with the Detachment in 1858 on board the troop ship Thames City.

As in California in 1849 and Australia in 1851, the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 produced a worldwide "gold fever" which was undoubtedly a motivation for some. At least 11, and possibly as many as 15, soldiers of the Detachment deserted within six months of arriving in the Colony.

So our heroes were drawn to British Columbia by some very mundane motives, including ambition, familial attachment and even lust for gold.

The sappers were chiefly born in rural England, Scotland or Ireland, the children of miners and tenant farmers, the working class of Dickensian Britain. But what set these soldiers apart from the rank and file of other regiments was the Royal Engineers' expectation that each man know a trade - stonemason, carpenter, wheelwright or tailor, for instance. This made them an elite within the army; men used to independent thought and action. This would be of first importance in British Columbia, where much of the work of surveying and roadbuilding would be done by small groups of three or four, perhaps under a sergeant or corporal, days away from the nearest officer.

The progress of the voyage from England was recorded in a 'newspaper' read aloud each Saturday on board the Thames City. There were lighthearted moments, to be sure. Sergeant Lindsay would pass the time baiting loaves of bread with hooks in an attempt to catch an albatross. Amateur theatricals took place monthly, with the men playing women's roles to the delight of the assembled crew, wives and children. However, as the crossing dragged on, tempers frayed. One 'female' performer, Hospital Orderly Henry Hazel, was ridiculed in a string of increasingly cruel letters to the editor which questioned his masculinity. Hazel was



ROYAL ENGINEERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION NEWLY ARRIVED IN ESQUIMALT - JULY 1858.

eventually arrested and court-martialed, perhaps for lashing back at his tormenters.

After six months when the Thames City finally reached Victoria, a large part of the Detachment immediately set out to get very drunk indeed, their senseless forms soon littering the roadsides. Their officers meanwhile contrived to get lost in the wilderness between Victoria and Esquimalt. Despite all this the Colonist newspaper was filled with praise for the new arrivals.

A large part of the Detachment immediately set out to get very drunk indeed, their senseless forms soon littering the roadsides.

The men were quickly put to work shifting cargo from the Thames City to smaller steamers for the trip across the Georgia Strait to the mainland. Many were still under arrest following their night on the town, and some like Sapper Dodd languished in irons. Lt. Lempriere had to post sentries on each steamer after noticing "a good many drunken men at the pier who threw bottles of grog to my men." Arriving on the shores of the Fraser River, a string of four courts-martial was needed to restore discipline.

The officers who commanded the Detachment had their own problems. For instance, a nasty antagonism had grown up between the detachment's commander, Colonel Richard Moody, and Captain Gossett who was to be the colony's treasurer. The feud extended to their families. In a letter home Moody's wife Mary noted, with Victorian restraint: "We are not on intimate terms with the Gossetts, I am sorry to say. We are not very thick with them. He is very trying and she is rather uppish, a fine lady, not fitted for roughing it."

Lt. Sam Anderson described the problem more bluntly:

"(Gosset) calls Moody a driveling idiot. He told me so the very first time I saw him, and that is rather a strong term for one officer to use towards another so much older. I could not help taking a dislike to Gosset from that very fact."

More seriously, Colonel Moody found he could not get along with the colony's governor, James Douglas. They argued for weeks over where the capital of the mainland colony should be and what it should be called. The name "New Westminster" was imposed by officials in England fed up with the bickering. To the men of the Detachment, though, the heavily forested site was simply "Stump City."

At first, the women and children were berthed aboard the HBC brigantine Recovery and the soldiers lived in tents while barracks were constructed. The Detachment's quarters, east of CONTINUED ON PAGE 9