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CONTINUED ON FROM PAGE 7

Queen's Park in New Westminster, is still known as Sapperton in memory of the barracks there. During the summer of 1859 numerous buildings were completed, and work was begun on Colonel Moody's grand home.

But the season was not all pleasant camping by the river. It also brought the great nemesis of the Royal Engineers - mosquitoes. Mary Moody wrote to her mother that after ten days of irritation, she and her children had "surrendered" to the mosquitoes and fled to Victoria. Lt. Wilson, surveying the 49th Parallel near Sumas, wrote:

"I have a gauze bag over my head, and a short pipe puffing to try and keep the 'squitors off'. Washing is a perfect torture, they settle en masse upon you perfectly covering every portion of the body exposed. None of us have had any sleep for the last two nights and we can scarcely eat, exposing the face is such a painful operation. One's hands are literally covered with them when writing and even when wearing kid gloves, they bite through the needle holes in the seams."

"I have a gauze bag over my head, and a short pipe puffing to try and keep the 'squitors off'."

Worse, Wilson noted two of the mules had been blinded and six horses rendered unfit for work, their hides "one mass of sores."

If the mosquitoes were maddening, other hazards of the job could be deadly. Building the wagon roads needed to link the capital to the gold-fields of the interior was an especially risky undertaking. Three sappers drowned in the Harrison River when their boat capsized. Sapper James Duffy froze to death west of Lillooet on the route still known as the Duffy Lake Road. In all, fifteen of the men died during the Detachment's five years of service.



Chapmans Bar Bluff - Cariboo Wagon Road - 1867

Near Williams Lake, Corporal Woodcock took it into his head to leave his loaded revolver in a bag full of spare clothes. Not surprisingly, it went off and shot an unfortunate packer through the thigh. His sergeant commented that same summer on the need to bury dead labourers quickly, as they soon began to smell in the heat of the Cariboo summer.

Murder, gunplay and riot were also commonplace. "As you may imagine," wrote Lt. Wilson, "where there is so much young blood and no female population there are sometimes very fierce scenes enacted & the bowie knife & revolver which every man wears are in constant requisition." In Victoria, he commented casually, "the whiz of revolver bullets round you goes on all day & if anyone gets shot of course it's his own fault."

"Where there is so much young blood and no female population there are sometimes very fierce scenes enacted & the bowie knife & revolver ... are in constant requisition."

Other popular ways to court disaster included rockslides and tree-falling mishaps. A sapper working in the Fraser Canyon north of Yale survived an avalanche but lost part of his hand. Captain Grant reported a tree had fallen on a tent occupied by seven of his men, and that "2 or 3 of the men had been seriously injured getting their legs and arms broken." Another sapper crushed by a falling tree east of Hope had a unique problem - the pious soldier complained no one would read the Bible to him, his fellow soldiers being addicted to "trashing novels" instead.

Following one such shooting, the Engineers took charge of a native accused of murdering an Irishman. One evening the prisoner, wearing only a blanket, "watched his opportunity and darted away from his guard. They were armed with revolvers, and rushed after him firing. But the revolvers had been loaded for some time and hung fire." Sapper Meade tried to leap on the escaping figure, but "the Indian cleverly threw his blanket over Meade, and sped away down the bank towards the river." The naked man is presumed to have drowned trying to swim the half-frozen Fraser River.

Another adventure in law enforcement was recounted by Lt. Lempriere in October 1859. Three men had been found murdered downstream from New Westminster. A posse of sorts set off in search of the native suspects:

"I and Capt. Luard each went in command of a boat with armed men and started up the River. There was also a party of Yankees all armed, one man had no less than 3 revolvers on his waist belt. When we arrived at the Indian ranch we took 3 Indians whom we had some suspicion of. The Yankees wanted to hang one of them right off the bat and requested Captain Luard, the magistrate and myself to go away a short distance saying 'That it would be all over by the time we got back and that no one would be any wiser' - however Captain Luard told them that was not the way we did business. They then said they would put it to a vote, endeavouring to get our men to join them. We immediately made our men fall in, put the prisoners in my boat and returned to our Camp."



Lt. Charles Wilson - RE - of the Boundary Commission

The next day there followed a grisly sequel to this incident. Mrs. Croat, wife of one of the sappers, had lived in fear of Indians since her arrival from England. Hearing news of the murders downriver, she became convinced a native attack was imminent and "in a fit of temporary insanity cut the throats of 3 of her children and then her own." Two of the children fortunately survived. The incident however demonstrates just how real could be the emigrant's fear of the wild and unknown.

These few excerpts from B.C.'s archives may serve to give the reader some sense of the drama and turmoil which the Detachment endured. Yet despite it all, their work got done and done well, and the colony flourished. In the end, perhaps, a little awe may not be out of order.

by Timothy Watkins & Simon Sherwood



Royal Engineers on Parade in Barkerville

The Royal Engineers Living History Group is an informal group of history enthusiasts, dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Royal Engineers and their times. Using period uniforms and equipment, they seek to interpret to the public daily life in the colony of British Columbia some 140 years ago. Each member has chosen an actual historical figure to research and portray, including officers, common soldiers and civilians. The group is privileged to attend as guests at sites including Barkerville Provincial Park, Fort Rodd Hill and Fort Langley National Historic Sites, and San Juan Island (U.S.) National Park. For more information, contact Capt. H.R. Luard, R.E., at (604) 254-4523 or online at sherwood@smartt.com.

QUOTES from the PAST

1863 — CLINTON

Clinton was rather crowded with men and packtrains as we passed thru . . . half the population we found out later was composed of men on their way to the gold fields, and the other half on the way back. The majority had gone as far as Quesnelle before they lost courage . . . only a comparative small number continued on to Williams Creek . . . those that got there reported seeing plenty of gold, but claimed that all the rich ground was taken. We met hundreds of men between Clinton and Soda Creek . . . all advised us to turn back. Bridge Creek (now called 100 Mile House ed.) had many patches of wild strawberries. Further north we stayed the night in a big log house owned by a man named Eddy. A Chinaman had a sick horse . . . Sergeant John McMurphy at Loch Lomond diagnosed the ailment as poison weed . . . and prescribed worm fat.

Harry Jones, former MLA and pioneer of the Cariboo gold rush



Assiniboine, Lord Milton, Dr. Cheadle & party crossing a river ~ 1862

MINER'S PHRASES

1862

“YOU BET”

“YOU BET YOUR GUMBOOTS!”

“YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR”

“PUTTING ON FRILLS”

“PILING THE AGONIES”

“GETTING INTO THE MINES”

“CAVED IN”

“PLAYED OUT”



Rubaboo & Cariboo

THEIR LITTLE KNOWN SECRETS NOW REVEALED ...

You've certainly heard of Cariboo and you know it's a historic region in British Columbia, but what about rubaboo? Well, rubaboo is how many of the gold rush pioneers managed to get to Cariboo and although the origin of the name Cariboo is not well documented, we suspect the two words bear more than a passing similarity; in fact, they may be siblings. The earlier term, rubaboo was used by many native groups to describe a type of meal, or as it is described below:

Rubaboo is the name for a stew made of pemican and any wild vegetables at hand. Boiled in a pot of water, the chunks of pemican would fall apart. Additions - the likes of onion, turnip, asparagus, parsley, sage, bullrush root, cattail heads, dandelion root, wild parsnip, wild carrot, mushrooms, pine nuts, daylily roots, or wild rice, would turn it into an appetizing stew.

Or more simply, according to the book, “*Cheadle's Journal ~ Trip Across Canada 1862-1863*”, rubaboo is defined as made by boiling a piece of pemican or dry meat the size of one's fist in a large quantity of water thickened with a single handful of flour.

Okay, you're thinking, now I know what rubaboo is but what on earth is pemican. Well, aside from being the essential ingredient of rubaboo it is an ingenious method invented by early aboriginals of compacting and storing protein and other essential nutrient. Pemican allowed long distance travel into unfamiliar territory where a food supply may be uncertain or non-existent. According to one source pemican is a native word meaning lean fat.

Consisting of a mix of buffalo fat, meat and berries there were two forms of pemican: “rubaboo”, as described above, and “rowshow” (*shredded pemican with flour, fried bannock, moosemeat, wild rice, fish*). We won't delve further into rowshow as we're certain you've not yet, ...uh, digested, the full concept of rubaboo and pemmican.

In the book “*The Great Fur Opera*”, a satire of the Hudson's Bay Company, author Kildare Dobbs offers this humorous recipe for those wishing to make pemmican at home:

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John A. Roberts

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The simulated leather cover design is a copy of an English writing case owned by E.P. Lee on 1892

“Find some old, dried-out ends of meat and cut off the hard outside crusts. Pound these to dust in a mortar. Add mouldy raisins, buckshot, and a jug of melted, rancid animal fat. Sprinkle with long black hairs and poodle-clippings. Stir. Pour into an old shoe and refrigerate. After six months a greenish fur will have grown on the pemmican. Remove and keep this: it is pemmicillin.”

The above comments may give you some insight into the palette challenging qualities of rubaboo. May it suffice to say that you had to be tough (and pretty hungry) to eat rubaboo but for that matter, you had to be tough to travel in the wilderness of the early west.

Now as for Cariboo, it's a place you arrived at, having eaten all your rubaboo, polished off your horses and ended up carrying everything you owned on your back. Thus the name carryboo or as its become more popularly known - Cariboo! Now if anyone can dispute that this is the origin of the word, we'd like to hear from you.

Under the "Quotes from the Past" banner on this page are some excerpts from Cheadle's Journal as Dr. Cheadle and his party have reach a point of desperation, having utterly exhausted every source of food, and been desperately unlucky in hunting. They turn reluctantly to Blackie, one of their trusty steeds.

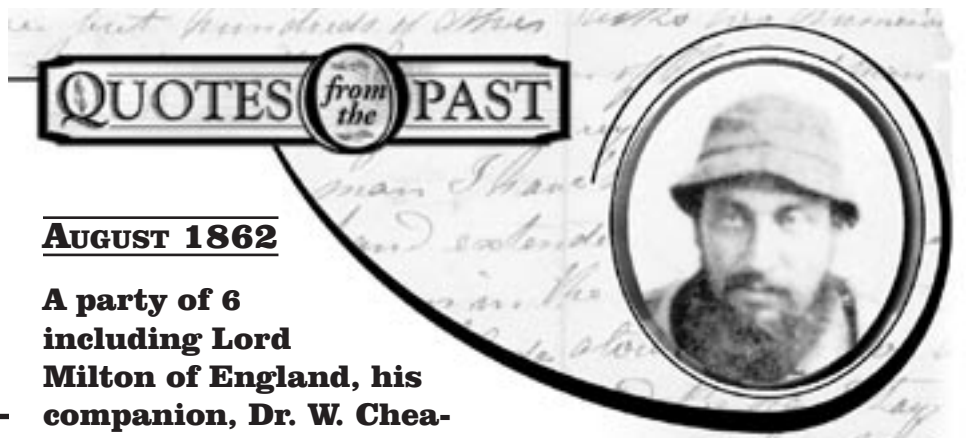
It bears mentioning that these men and woman, (there is a native woman in the party), are travelling in the wilderness, in the summer, when game should be plentiful. Several are experienced hunters and accustomed to living off the land, yet they are on the verge of starvation. It is not an easy matter to live off the land without a great deal of preparation and if you are travelling, carrying all your supplies with you, it becomes a matter of great skill and immense luck to survive. It is a tribute to the early inhabitants and pioneers of our country that they did perservere under these conditions and laid the foundation for future society.

By Ron Young

A Supply Pack

for a party leaving Fort Garry (Manitoba) to travel the overland route to Fort Edmonton

three hundredweight of flour per person, one hundredweight of pemmican, 20 lbs of tobacco, 22 lbs of gunpowder, 56 lbs of shot, 20 lbs of tea, 10 lbs of coffee, 14 lbs of salt, 3 lbs of pepper, a blanket, a buffalo robe, one pair of beaverteen trousers, a revolver, a hunting knife and 8 gallons of rum ...



AUGUST 1862

A party of 6 including Lord Milton of England, his companion, Dr. W. Cheadle (the author of this journal), travel between Fort Edmonton and Fort Kamloops. In their last few weeks of travel they are on the verge of starvation:

“We had no rest all day and no refreshment, starting at soon after sunrise & stopping only after sunset ... All this on a little watery rubaboo.”

“We found immense quantities of beautiful bilberries & stopped a short time to dine on them & gather a few for rubaboo...”

“Frightfully hungry, all of us at night but had only half a belly of rubaboo.”

“Discussion about killing horses very frequent, I wish to starve a little first ...”

“...we had eaten our last morsel of pemmican to breakfast, a piece the size of the fist in a thin rubaboo which served 6 persons, & for dinner only a marten in do (sic) which was very disgusting.”

“Milton vowing to kill a horse if he does not succeed in finding game.”

At this point the party made a grisly discovery.

“... the dead body of an Indian ... the head was entirely wanting, the rest of the body in a sitting posture, crouching with hands over knees over old fire; ... close by lay his axe, his knife & fire bag, a birch basket containing a net, Indian fishhooks & cedar bark, & another with a few onions. Just behind were a number of bones broken into very small pieces evidently to get all nutriment possible out of them ... he had probably killed his horse long ago”

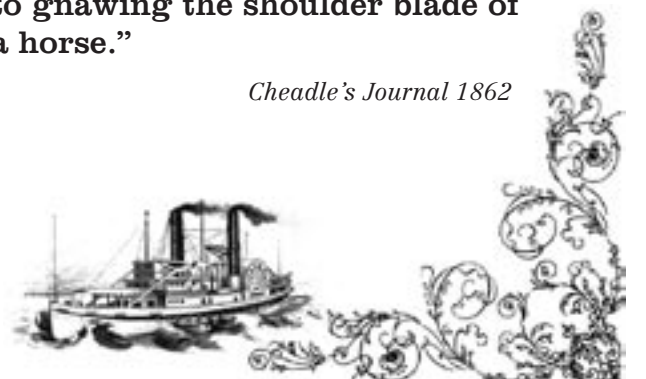
This seems to have set the party's resolve:

“... We agreed to sentence the little black horse to die tomorrow morning ... Soon had some meat in the kettle, & tasted it with anxiety. All found it very sweet & good although lean & a little hard ...”

They were to kill one more of their horses before reaching Kamloops. Their desperation is clear in this passage

“I think of home & its comforts, & the eatables & drinkables till we are quite wild with appetite for them. And then we have no tobacco! What would I give for 1lb shag & a yard of clay, a quart of beer! But I cannot stand this, I must change my thoughts, & resort to gnawing the shoulder blade of a horse.”

Cheadle's Journal 1862



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The Old Station House Gallery WILLIAMS LAKE

The coming of the railway and the construction of the P.G.E. passenger station in the winter of 1919-1920 marked the birth of Williams Lake. In 1982, the Station House Studio and Gallery Society was formed to preserve and restore the old railway building, providing gallery and studio space for artists.

On any given Saturday visitors to the Gallery Gift Shop will find Libby Abbot behind the counter. Libby knows what it's like to live in a railway station! Born Elizabeth Howard-Gibbons, Libby came with her family in 1929 from North Vancouver and moved into the living quarters above the Williams Lake depot, (only after indoor plumbing was installed)! Her father, Edward Howard-Gibbons was Station Master, whose duties in addition to railway business included sending out water bills, managing plots in the cemetery, and providing weather reports. Early memories for Libby were of painting the interior walls with peach calcimine, coal being dumped down a chute in front of the building and the greasy black smoke being emitted by the furnace in the basement. When the train arrived however, the depot became the social center of the town, and even school board meetings were held there!

"I've come full circle now," says Libby of the Saturday job in the place of her childhood that gives her (and her customers so much pleasure.

The Station House Gallery and Gift Shop is the oldest public building in Williams Lake and still functions as a B.C. Rail passenger depot. Exhibitions change monthly and the gallery and shop feature work by local and regional artists, craftspeople, and authors. It is open Monday to Saturday, 10 to 5 p.m. Admission is free.



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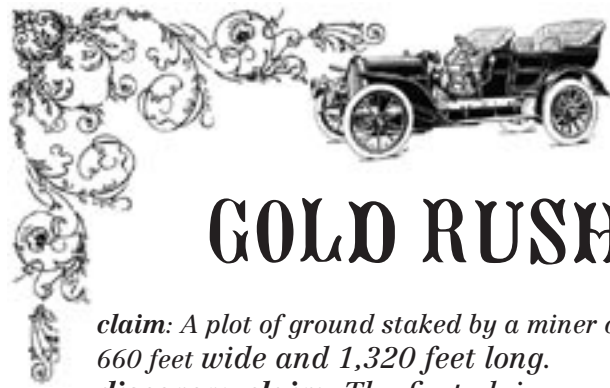
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GOLD RUSH TERMS

claim: A plot of ground staked by a miner on which he can mine, usually 660 feet wide and 1,320 feet long.

discovery claim: The first claim on a creek, staked to include the point of discovery of the gold or other material.

dredge: A large industrial machine that digs out gold or other minerals buried in the rock.

drift: The horizontal tunnel dug out to follow the vein of gold at the bottom of the mining shaft.

gold pan: A large, flat pan in which miners and prospectors wash gravel to look for gold.

hard rock claim: A hillside claim staked in a lode deposit.

hard rock gold or lode gold: Mineral deposits encased in surrounding rock in the hillside, must be crushed and refined to free the gold.

ore: A rock containing valuable minerals.

panning: The process of washing gravel or crushed rock in a pan to separate out gold flakes.

pay dirt: The vein or pocket of dirt containing gold.

paystreak: An underground channel with large amounts of gold, found by sinking a shaft or by drilling from the surface.

placer claims: The claims on a creek where loose gold dust and nuggets are found in buried gravel deposits.

placer gold: gold found in the gravels of streambeds.

poke: A small moosehide bag used to store gold dust.

potlatch: A Native celebration of dancing, feasting, and gift-giving to commemorate an important occasion.

recording a claim: After staking, the miner had to travel to the recorder's office where the recorder wrote down a legal description of the claim location and the miner filed a copy of the location notice.

riffles: Small sticks or boards nailed across the bottom of the sluice box to catch the heavy gold particles as the gravel is washed out of the box.

riverboat: A large sternwheel or paddlewheel vessel powered by steam.

rocker: A small semi-portable gold-washing device consisting of a screen and slanted wash box. The boxlike device is on rockers like a rocking chair. Water is scooped into the box and the box is rocked with a handle to shake the gravel and wash it away, leaving the gold.

scow: A large, flat, bargelike boat made out of sawed lumber.

shaft: A vertical hole dug down to bedrock on a placer or hard rock claim.

sluice box: A long, narrow wooden box about 16 inches wide, 12 inches deep, and 20 feet or more long, used to wash out the gold from the gravel on a placer claim.

smelter: A large factory where ore is reduced in a furnace to separate out metals from the rock.

sourdough: Naturally fermented yeast carried by pioneers to leaven bread and pancakes.

staking a claim: Marking the corners of a mining claim according to the rules of the mining district and filling out and posting a location notice.

trading post: An isolated frontier store where goods were traded, bartered, or sold.

tunnel: A horizontal hole dug into the bedrock of a hillside to look for minerals.

*from the book "Children of the Gold Rush"
by Claire Rudolf Murphy & Jane G. Haigh*





GOLD RUSH TRAIL
Photo Gallery



PHOTOS FROM THE GOLD RUSH & BEYOND



Hauling Freight Over The Old Cariboo Road

It wasn't all up hill



About to embark on the eventful journey from Ashcroft to Fort George

One of the most amusing stories of early freighting days on the Cariboo Road is related in the memories of the late Arthur Haddock of Williams Lake who was a stagecoach driver from 1893 until the transition to automobiles.

It seems that teamster Jack Hamilton, along with two other outfits, was heading for Quesnel, having loaded up at Ashcroft.

They eventually got to the top of the old Clinton hill where they had to change over to sleighs pulled by four-horse teams (presumably because of the winter conditions).

Hamilton's wagon was loaded with 45-gallon barrels of liquor destined for the Hudson's Bay Co. at Quesnel, and while transferring the barrels over to the sleighs one dropped to the ground and cracked open.

It started to leak badly, but as luck would have it, one of the other teamsters had a nest of metal buckets aboard, so everyone rushed to fill them and save as much rum as they could.

Continuing on, each wagon carried four of the "rum buckets" and the temptation of all that "open" liquor was obviously too much for the teamsters.

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Three other four-horse teams on their way down to Ashcroft came in that night, and they got in on the party.

"I was there," writes Arthur, "and everyone had a wonderful time."

He ends the anecdote with a cryptic little remark that "they drank rum all the way of Quesnel." No mention of how long it took, but one can presume there was little left of the 45 gallons by the time they go there.

Arthur also has some colourful stories to describe the awful conditions of the Cariboo Road in those early days.

He tells of how Tommy Harmon was crossing the 101 Mile flat one fall with three wagons when they sank down the mud up to their axles.

He work for two days trying to get them out and finally had to get a light wagon from 100 Mile house and bit by bit take off the 25'000 pounds of freight. Even then it took him two days to get three empty wagons out of the mud.

The stretch of Cariboo Road between the 150 Mile House and the Mountain House was particularly horrendous, and one day the stage coach was coming down the hill and met a bull team going up. The stagecoach driver pulled out to pass and got stuck in the mud.

Bull teamster Harry Strout better known as "Dirty Harry" (shades of Clint Eastwood!) had to use his four yoke of oxen to get the stagecoach back on the road, Arthur doesn't say how long it took.

The notorious 101 Mile flat took its toll even later on in the 1920s, writes

Arthur.

By this time the BX Express had purchased 12 new six passengers Winton cars, and one Monday morning they all left Ashcroft with full loads for Soda Creek.

Arthur and his father left later in a small Buick, not expecting to see the Wintons again - but when they got to the 101 Mile flat, there they were all 12 bogged down in the mud, axle-deep.

Because the Buick was lighter, the Haddocks managed to pull around them and continue on. A mile or two further on, they met a six-horse team coming down empty and informed them of the stranded Wintons.

One can just imagine the teamsters chortling as he pulled the embarrassed Winton drivers out one by one...

contributed by Irene Stangoe from her "Looking Back" series

Letters From The Cariboo

TREASURES FOUND IN VANCOUVER

Glenn Lario, fisheries officer at Williams Lake, is keenly interested in local history, so when he came across a clutch of old papers relating to the Cariboo at an auction in Vancouver some years ago, he quickly snapped it up.

And what a great buy. There were a few old stamps and photos, but mostly letters, dozens of them, dating from the late 1800s up to 1907 ordering goods from the Harvey Bailey & Co. at Ashcroft. The main supply firm for the north, its muletrains and freighting outfits were constantly on the road, carrying everything from mining machinery to silk petticoats. By reading between the lines, you get a revealing picture of life in the Cariboo in bygone days.

For instance, from Quesnelle Forks on November 8, 1898, a William Harris writes: "I expect my wife, Mrs. Harris, to arrive at Ashcroft between the 15th and 20th of this month. Please forward trunks by freight team, also one chamber, one slop bowl, one wash bowl, one pitcher, one soap dish." Can't you just imagine some miner in his rough little cabin trying to get the place spruced up for the coming of the little woman?

Also from Quesnelle Forks in 1897 comes a request from J.B. Hobson, manager of the Bullion Mine, for 1500 lbs. of well-ripened silver or yellow skinned onions (red onions not wanted) "Have the onions well-packed . . . and instruct teamster to protect onions against frost."

Goods didn't always arrive in very good conditions apparently. Robert Wintrip of Barkerville ordered oranges, dates, and figs for Christmas in 1898, with this P.S. "Send them by Express and be sure they don't leave them on the road which they do sometimes."

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W.J. Anders at Alexandria was a mite upset that the seal on the North Carolina tobacco was always broken and the picture taken out. (This would be a 'collectable,' like today's baseball and hockey cards, I imagine.) "I do not mind paying for what I get but not for what I don't get," he wrote somewhat testily. Alex McInnes of Alexandria had just got back from Barkerville on Jan. 25, 1906 when he wrote "times are fearfully dull up there."

Necessities like buggy whips, spittoons, blacksmith coal, and a barrel-top trunk with two hat lids dot the orders and familiar names fill the pages.

H.J. Gardner, (former Williams Lake mayor Herb Gardner's father), who in 1906 was a butcher, grocer, provision and hardware merchant at the gold-mining town of Stanley, sent for 2000 pounds of Hungarian flour; Eagle and Hamilton at Beaver Lake ranch wanted 200 whiskey glasses; and Augustine Boitano (notice no extra 'i' in the spelling) at Alkali Lake ordered 400 pounds of barbed wire and a set of stretchers.

From Williams Lake in 1904, Bob Borland who was living in the Pinchbeck/Borland house (on present Stampede Grounds) ordered dark green trousers and a flour sifter; while the Comer Brothers at the old stopping house (in the Glendale area) wanted 500 grain sacks "the cheapest you have." The list goes on . . .

And you should see the handwriting. Some of the letters are like copperplate with sweeping flourishes, ending with such formal terms as "Yours very respectfully;" others are barely legible and you wonder how Harvey Bailey & Co. could manage to decipher them and send the correct items. Actually the company did a tremendous job in getting freight to their customers in the vast wilderness that was the Cariboo around the turn of the century.

Thanks, Glenn, for the peek at life as it used to be.

contributed by Irene Stangoe from her "Looking Back" series