



Barkerville...then and now

The Cariboo Sentinel^{II}

Vol. 11. No 1. Barkerville Williams Creek, British Columbia

\$1.50

inc. tax



INCLUDED INSIDE

Summer Edition

Gold Rush Trail JOURNAL

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THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

Building the Roads for the Gold Rush

The Royal Engineers were only a tiny military force in the midst of a vast gold rush. Yet they succeeded against all odds in laying the foundations for much of modern British Columbia. And it was road building which became their most dangerous, most frustrating, and ultimately their most important task.

The story of the Royal Engineers and their roads begins in 1858. At the start of that year, the European presence in B.C. consisted of some 300 colonists and a few fur-trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. But in spring news reached San Francisco that gold was to be found on the lower Fraser River. In the next eight months, some 30,000 emigrants poured into the territory.

The new arrivals were mostly American, many of them 'forty-niners' heavily armed and desperate for gold. Conflict quickly broke out with natives in the Fraser Canyon near the gold-bearing gravel bars. Governor James Douglas demanded help from the Colonial Office in London.

The answer to his plea was the Columbia Detachment of Royal Engineers, 160-strong. The Engineers were an elite corps, the repository of scientific and technical expertise in the British army. Officers did not purchase their commissions as was the custom in the rest of the army, but earned their places by passing through Britain's only military college.

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The Detachment's commander, Col. Richard Moody, had drawn up plans for the restoration of Edinburgh Castle which caught the fancy of Queen Victoria herself.

Even the rank and file were skilled tradesman. Among the soldiers selected for the Detachment were trained surveyors, carpenters, stonemasons, draftsmen, printers and musicians. The Royal Engineers were also among the best paid of Britain's soldiers, the privates - called 'sappers' - earning the respectable sum of 1 shilling 2½ pence per day (about 30¢).

All the men sent to B.C. were volunteers, lured in part by the offer of 30 acres of land (later increased to 150 acres) upon completion of service. Their wives and children were also welcomed; when the sailing ship Thames City brought most of these sappers in early 1859, its passenger list included 31 wives and 37 children, including three born at sea during the six-month voyage. It was hoped such measures would give the sappers a stake in the colony's future and help prevent desertion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Events in

BARKERVILLE

HISTORIC TOWN

2002

June 16th

Theatre Royal Summer Show at 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm
(*No Shows on Friday* during the summer season)

June 29th

Theatre Royal Evening Show begins – (*Saturday and Sunday evenings only*)

July 1st

Dominion Day Celebrations. Celebrate Canada’s birthday the way they did in 1870. Children’s races, Tug – O – War, Funny Face Contest, Greasy Pole Climb, and many more fun family events

The Royal Engineers will set up camp in Barkerville after having travelled the Cariboo Waggon Road from Ft. Langley

July 15th ~ Aug 18th

Regularly scheduled presentations of the character of Cariboo Cameron. Check on site schedule for details.

July 28th

Cattle Drive arrives in Barkerville. Come out for some fun and a BBQ fund raising for the Friends of Barkerville, Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society.

Aug 24th

Sixth Annual Eldorado Gold Panning Championship. Panners from all over BC and the Yukon compete in the best gold panning championships in BC.

Sept. 1st.

Williams Creek Fire Brigade Picnic. Bring your box lunch or have one made at one of our fine eating establishments. Fireman’s games, races and contests for all to enjoy.

Last Full Moon of the Summer

Mid-Autumn Festival. A traditional Chinese celebration honouring Barkervilles Chinese heritage. Begins at dusk with a lantern parade through the streets of Barkerville. Bring your own lantern or make one at one of our lantern workshops. Please call for more details (250) 994-3302.

Sept 1st

Theatre Royal evening performance ends

Sept 2nd

Labour Day. Last day of the Theatre Royal and many special attractions.

MANY BUSINESSES & DISPLAYS REMAIN OPEN IN SEPTEMBER.

Sept 20 to 22 & Sept 27 to 29

“A Stitch In Time” Cross-Stitch Retreats.

Oct 31st

Celebrate Halloween with a “Ghostly Town Tour” in Barkerville

Dec 7/8, Dec 14/15 Dec 21/22

Barkerville “Old Fashion Christmas”.
The three weekends before Christmas.
Decorated displays and home baking in the Wendle House. The Goldfield Bakery, Mason & Daly General Store, and Mrs. Neate’s Sewing Room will be open for Christmas shopping. Many displays will be open. Carol singing at St. Saviour’s Church. Special Christmas displays and events throughout the month. Different activities happening each weekend.
Sleigh rides Daily from Dec 14th to 22nd or by reservation.

For Information on special events in Barkerville visit: www.Barkerville.com ~or~ Call 1(250) 994-3302 ext. 29 or email: barkerville@sbtc.gov.bc.ca



The Cariboo Sentinel

Newspaper

"Barkerville Then and Now"

Cariboo Sentinel, Box 24, Barkerville, B.C.
V0K 1B0 ~ Canada

October to May Address: 79f North Third Ave., Williams Lake B.C. V2G 2A3
Phone (250) 392-7119 or E-mail publisher@barkerville.com

Internet <http://www.barkerville.com>

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Publisher & Editor: Ron Young
Graphic Design: Steve McKenna
Administration: Pat Young
Production: Gold Rush Trails Publishing

with special thanks to our contributors:
Timothy Watkins, Simon Sherwood,
Bill Quackenbush
Barkerville Historic Town

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to Richfield 1.6 km

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The Royal Engineers ...continued from page 1

The Columbia Detachment was intended to provide a highly visible British presence in the colony, to counterbalance the pervasive American influence. The sappers were instructed to maintain a “high social standard of civilization.” This role they carried out with enthusiasm wherever they went, building churches, founding public parks, staging theatrical productions, and even playing cricket.

At the same time, the sappers were expected to carry out an extensive program of public works. They were to survey and lay out townsites, beginning with the capital at New Westminster and their own camp nearby known as ‘Sapperton’, and including such major centres as Yale, Lillooet and Vermilion Forks (Princeton). But above all, the Engineers were in charge of building the roads so badly needed to hold the new colony together.

Some of these new roads were for military purposes. For instance, the Engineers worried an invading American army could blockade the Fraser River and cut off supplies to New Westminster. To prevent this, they built North Road connecting the capital to Burrard Inlet, and a road called the King’s Way leading to False Creek. Both survive today, and a glance at a map of Vancouver will show how Kingsway still cuts diagonally through the neat grid of streets created by later urban planners.

Much more ambitious roads were needed to link the coast to the mining centres of the interior. Intense pressure was on Governor Douglas to provide cheap, safe and feasible passage to the gold-fields.

From New Westminster travellers generally caught a paddle-wheeler up the Fraser River. The journey upstream was an adventure in itself, as the steam boilers had an alarming tendency to explode, when the boats were not otherwise busy running aground. However, beyond Yale progress was blocked by Lady Franklin Rock and the rapids above.

To take up where the paddle-wheelers left off, the Engineers set to work improving existing trails to the interior on three routes - the Similkameen Road, the Douglas Road and the Fraser Canyon.

The first of these trails ran east from Hope through the Cascade Mountains to Princeton and beyond. This route was considered critical

to connect new gold finds in southeastern B.C. to the coast. In July 1861 the Anglican bishop John Hills visited a camp of Royal Engineers along this trail in present-day Manning Park.

“It is interesting,” wrote Hills, ‘to see the wondrous change produced in a country by a road.’ Describing the “tangled, rugged, pathless forest” which was the natural state of the land, Hills remarked that the coming of the Engineers meant a “...magic wand of skill and industry has passed over this chaotic mass. You see before you a beautiful road upon which you might canter a coach... Such was the pleasure afforded us today in tracing the progress of the transforming industry of this Noble band of British Heroes.” Some of the ‘Heroes’ may have taken a less romantic view of the proceedings. Hills visited with an injured sapper, whom he found in a precarious state after being crushed by a falling tree:

“His name is Babbage, the pride of the Corps. He stood some 6 feet 2, well made and of great strength. He was the best axeman and would use a lever which no other man could lift... A Leg and an Arm were broke with numerous other crushing bruises. His end has been expected every day since... I visited him ministerially. He expressed his thankfulness, and regretted he had neglected religion. When at home, he had attended service always, twice on Sunday. On asking if he could not get some comrade to read the Scripture to him, he replied, ‘I fear they are all novel readers here.’”

Fortunately Sapper Babbage would recover, although it is unclear if he ever overcame his dislike for modern literature.

Meanwhile, the chief obstacle to speedy communication with the Cariboo region remained the narrow and dangerous Fraser Canyon above Yale. The government’s original solution was to urge steamships to make a left turn at the Harrison River, chugging upstream to Port Douglas at the north end of Harrison Lake. From there miners had built the Douglas Road, a rudimentary path winding from lake to lake until it arrived at Lillooet, bypassing the roughest part of the Fraser.

The sappers thus started in at Lillooet continuing this road northward, making Lillooet ‘Mile 0’ on the upper road to the Cariboo. But the professionally-trained Royal Engineers were not impressed with the amateurish Harrison route.

They did persevere for a time making improvements to the Douglas Road under vexing conditions. First, the lower Harrison River near its junction with the Fraser kept silting up. The Engineers solved that problem with a series of cedar pilings and underwater bulwarks, forcing the main stream into a narrow channel which scoured itself clean.

It was a brilliant solution, and some of the pilings survive today. Unfortunately it meant that Sapper Strutidge had to stand chest-deep in icy water for hours supporting these pilings as they were driven into the riverbed. Lt. Mayne of the Royal Navy called this “a very moist occupation,” and Strutidge was often so numb he had to be pulled out of the river. Colonial officials would later complain at the size of the unlucky soldier’s medical bills when he developed acute rheumatism.

At the same time, Corporal McKenney’s party was building piers in the numerous remote lakes along the route and writing testy letters to headquarters complaining about the wild fluctuations in water levels. An even worse job went Sapper Duffy, exiled to the remotest section of the route, who contrived to freeze to death on a stretch still known as the Duffy Lake Road.

Meanwhile other Engineers were improving the trail up the Fraser Canyon north of Yale. However, changes here had to be hacked out of sheer rock faces and slides were a constant danger. One nearly buried Sapper Colston, who staggered back to Yale in shock with his hand badly mangled. The British army, true to form, charged Colston for his pickaxe lost in the avalanche.

With newer and bigger gold strikes in the Cariboo country, the colony’s attention turned north with growing urgency. Even after the sappers’ improvements, neither the Harrison route nor the narrow trail north of Yale would be adequate for the growing quantities of freight which needed to pass.

Finally Royal Engineer officers persuaded the Governor to give up on his beloved Douglas Road. They proposed instead to replace the trail above Yale with an 18-foot wide wagon road, right through the heart of the Fraser Canyon.

The Engineers would themselves construct the first stretch, working up the west side of the canyon to a spot near Spuzzum where a bridge to the east bank was planned. They began blasting a roadbed out of the sheer cliffs with gun-

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“WHISPERING JIMMY” ON THE WAGON ROAD

Among the colourful figures who built and travelled the Cariboo Road was Sergeant James Lindsay of the Royal Engineers' Columbian Detachment. Lindsay joined the Royal Artillery in 1846, days after his 18th birthday. For many years he served the great guns of Gibraltar. His lieutenant there remembered him as a ‘lang-legget, keen-eyed Scot’ whom he boxed regularly for exercise.

In 1858, tired of garrison life, Lindsay volunteered for the 160-man force of Royal Engineers being sent to the booming colony of British Columbia. Perhaps his decision was influenced by a desire to keep an eye on his sister, married to an Engineer of this same Detachment. Corporal John McKenney was an Irishman whose fondness for drink may explain his eight appearances in the Regimental Defaulters' Book and his two Courts-Martial.

Lindsay was a likeable but eccentric soldier. While sailing from England, he “fished” for albatross with a line from the ship's deck. In B.C. his good friend Sgt. McMurphy recalled sighting “a large Bear a little distance off today - Lindsay started in pursuit but lost it – his only weapon was an axe”! Lindsay was also said to be a bit too fond of his drink. In Barkerville, he is remembered as ‘Whispering Jimmy’ for his habit of gossiping when liquor loosened his tongue.

Sgt. Lindsay's main task was inspecting work done by entrepreneurs who had contracted to build the roads so badly needed in the colony. Lindsay's surviving reports show he was not an easy man to please. “There are a quantity of stumps above the surface,” sniffs one letter. “I consider this to be only a good trail, but not a Waggon Road.”

The Cariboo Road in particular became very familiar to Whispering Jimmy. In 1861 he likely led soldiers guarding the Gold Escort from Barkerville. In 1863 the Engineers' commander, Col. Moody, sent him to resolve a dispute over the route the Road would follow north of Williams Lake. One report even describes how Lindsay, transporting a prisoner, managed the 380-mile trip from Barkerville to Yale by horse and steamboat in an amazing 30 hours.

Upon retirement from the army Lindsay became a policeman, and eventually Chief Constable of Cariboo. For many years he was stationed at the Courthouse in Richfield which stands today. He died in 1890, aged 62, and is buried at Barkerville at the end of the magnificent Road he helped to build.

The Royal Engineers ...continued from page 5

powder. Explosions and rockslides meant the men were in constant peril. Then began the backbreaking labour of hauling logs into place to make cribbing over crevices and ravines.

How did the men cope with the toil and danger? Sgt.-Major Cann may have given us a clue when he wrote to his commander from a camp above Yale on June 12, 1862:

‘Sir, I require as early as possible for the Yale Waggon Road 1000 Feet of Fuze and 6 Crow Bars. We are also out of Rum. Captain Grant told me before he left for Lillooet that he had send by express for Rum which has not yet arrived, so I borrowed 3 Gallons from a Merchant at Yale.’

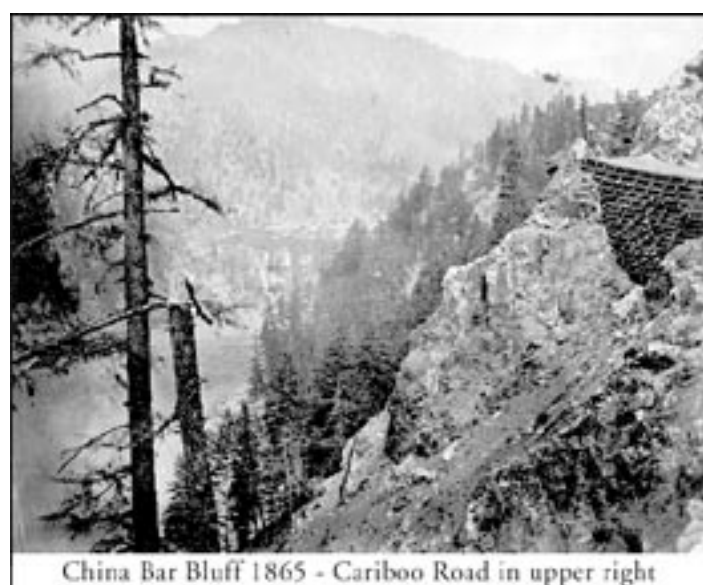
Meanwhile Sgt. McColl had selected a site for the Spuzzum crossing, which was then built by private contractors. The Alexandria Bridge, a later structure built on the very spot chosen by McColl, survives today as a rest area in the heart of the Fraser Canyon.

North of the Canyon, most of the construction was done by entrepreneurs who bid for the right to build sections of the Road, being paid by the mile and with the right to collect tolls. These early public-private partnerships worked largely because the Engineers served as an incorruptible force of building inspectors. The road was rapidly extended north past Williams Lake, eventually reaching Quesnel and the gold fields beyond.

By the time the Detachment was disbanded in November of 1863, their road network was largely complete. The hard work had taken its toll - some 15 sappers had died by 1863, and 11 more had deserted. But most of the men were honourably discharged, settling in B.C. to become innkeepers and policemen, builders and businessmen. All could point with pride to the work they had done in the colony, and especially to their crowning achievement, the Cariboo Road.

by Timothy Watkins & Simon Sherwood

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@smarrt.com.



China Bar Bluff 1865 - Cariboo Road in upper right

Royal Engineers' Vittles ~ “Dampers”

“our fare (while surveying) consisted almost exclusively of bacon and dampers, with tea and coffee. Now and then we might be lucky enough to shoot a grouse.”

dampers were “cakes of dough rolled out to the size of a plate, and one or two inches thick. They are cooked either by being baked in the wood ashes of the fire, or fried in the pan with bacon fat.”



SGT. JAMES LINDSAY, R.E.

May 6, 1863: “...slept at the [Alexandria] mission last night, my horse run away out of the field and I had to tramp home a distance of 26 miles.”

Sgt. John McMurphy on the Cariboo Wagon Road



ROYAL ENGINEERS CUTTING THE 49TH PARALLEL NEAR MOYIE, BC



HOW IT STRIKES A STRANGER

(From the Caribooite)

A stranger arriving on Williams Creek is struck with the grotesque appearance of miners and the singular manner of life which they lead. If he happens to be from an old settled community, he is very apt to place the miner on the same social level with the common laborer of his own country; but on a more intimate acquaintance with him, he discovers that many of the men who wield a pick and shovel have been men of respectable standing in civilized countries; some of them have been lawyers, or physicians, officers (military and naval) and merchants, and accustomed to move in the highest circles of society. But his astonishment at discovering their intelligence is not so great as at the direction their ambition seems to take. It would appear that the climax of their ambition is to excel at card playing. The man who cannot play a good game of “draw poker,” “seven-up”, “freeze-out”, or cribbage”, is voted green horn and unworthy the association of good men and true, while the man who is an expert in those games is envied by man and the admired of all. It is truly a lamentable state of affairs when men whose youth gave promise of brighter things, waste their hours night after night playing poker at limits varying from twenty-five cents to one dollar. Some men it is true play poker with a limit of twenty dollars, but then these are the great men of the country, and they feel the importance of their positions. Perhaps this would be a pardonable offence were they ignorant of the crime they commit; but they are well aware that by thus converting night into day, by going to bed at 2 or 3 o’clock in the afternoon they are shortening their lives by a considerable period, besides rendering themselves unfit to move in good society, when they have an opportunity of returning to civilized life.

Just observe one of those men after one of the sitting up nights, his eyes are red and swollen, generally one boot over the leg of his pants and the other inside, with a face six inches longer than ordinary, in short, a very dejected appearance in general, so much so that a bystander is very apt to exclaim, “There goes the veritable last rose of summer.” As I myself, an immaculate, may venture to give some sound advice to miners. I would recommend them to engage in some practical study, such as useful reading or the acquirement of any modern language, Spanish or French for instance, and I will venture to assure them that if they only expend half the time and energy on the acquirement of any foreign language as they do on cards, they will become quite proficient in the same.

Yours respectfully, CENSOR April, 1866

STAGECOACH TRAVELLERS REGULATIONS

1. Allow at least 5 days each way for a distance of 100 miles, provided the road is good. Carry a gun.
2. Make out last will and testament.
3. It is recommended that you shave head. Indians have no interest in hairless scalps.
4. If the Stage runs away, or is pursued by Indians, stay in the coach and take your chances. Don’t jump out, or you will be either injured or scalped.
5. In cold weather, abstain from liquor or you are subject to freezing quicker if under the influence than if you are cold sober, but if you are drinking, pass it around. Be sure to procure all stimulants before leaving the station for ranch whiskey is not nectar.
6. Don’t smoke strong cigars or pipe on the leeward side. Share buffalo robes with others in the cold weather.
7. Don’t swear, snore, or lop over others. don’t shoot firearms for pleasure while en route, as it scares the horses.
8. While in the statlon, don’t lag at wash basins or in privies. Don’t grease hair with bear grease or buffalo tallow as travel is very dusty.
9. Don’t discuss politics or religion. Don’t point out sites where robberies or Indian attacks have taken place.
10. Don’t imagine you are going on a picnic, for stage travel is very inconvenient.

GOLD MINER’S



10 COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt have no claim than one.
2. Thou shalt not take unto thyself any false claim.
3. Thou shalt not go prospecting before thy claim gives out.
4. Thou shalt not think more of all thy gold, nor how thou canst make it fastest, than how thou wilt enjoy it after.
5. Thou shalt not kill thy body by working in the rain. Niether shall you kill thy neighbor’s body in a duel. Neither shalt thou destroy thyself by getting “tight” or “stewed.”
6. Thou shalt not grow discouraged, nor think of going home before thou hast made thy “pile.”
7. Thou shalt not steal a pick, or a pan, or a shovel, from thy fellow miner, nor take away his tools without his leave; nor borrow those he cannot spare; nor remove his stake to enlarge thy claim; nor cheat thy partner out of his share.
8. Thou shalt not tell any false tales about “good diggings in the mountains” to thy neighbors, that thou mayest benefit a friend who hath mules, and provisions, and tools, and blankets he cannot sell.
9. Thou shalt not commit unsuitable matrimony, nor covet “single blessedness,” nor forget about absent maidens, nor neglect thy first love; but you shalt consider how faithfully and patiently she waiteth thy return.
10. If thou hast a wife and little ones, that thou lovest dearer than thy life, keep them continually before you to cheer and urge thee onward until thou canst say “I have enough; God bless them; I will return.”



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GREAT NEW CARIBOO BOOKS & BEST SELLERS

The Heritage House love affair with the Cariboo started over 40 years ago with Art Downs' classic book *Wagon Road North*, *Historic Photos from 1863 of the Cariboo Gold Rush* and, later, his *Cariboo Gold Rush*. The tradition continues with such recent bestsellers as Dr. Eldon Lee's *Scalpels & Buggywhips* and Dr. Al Holley's autobiography *Don't Shoot from the Saddle*.

Two great reads based on Cariboo history come from the pen of Bill Gallaher: *The Promise—Love, Loyalty and the Lure of Gold*, *The Story of "Cariboo" Cameron* and *The Journey, The Overlanders' Quest for Gold*. Other historic treatments include Branwen Patenaude's two-volume *Trails to Gold* and the pictorial history *Golden Nuggets*, *Roadhouse Portraits along the Cariboo's Gold-Rush Trail*. Richard Wright's *Barkerville* and Irene Stangoe's *Looking Back at the Cariboo-Chilcotin* and *History and Happenings in the Cariboo-Chilcotin* bring more history to life.

Find your own gold with the aid of Garnet Basque's *Gold Panner's Manual* and Jim Lewis's *Goldpanning in the Cariboo* and *Goldpanning, Fraser, Thompson, & Columbia River Systems*.



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The Cariboo Sentinel