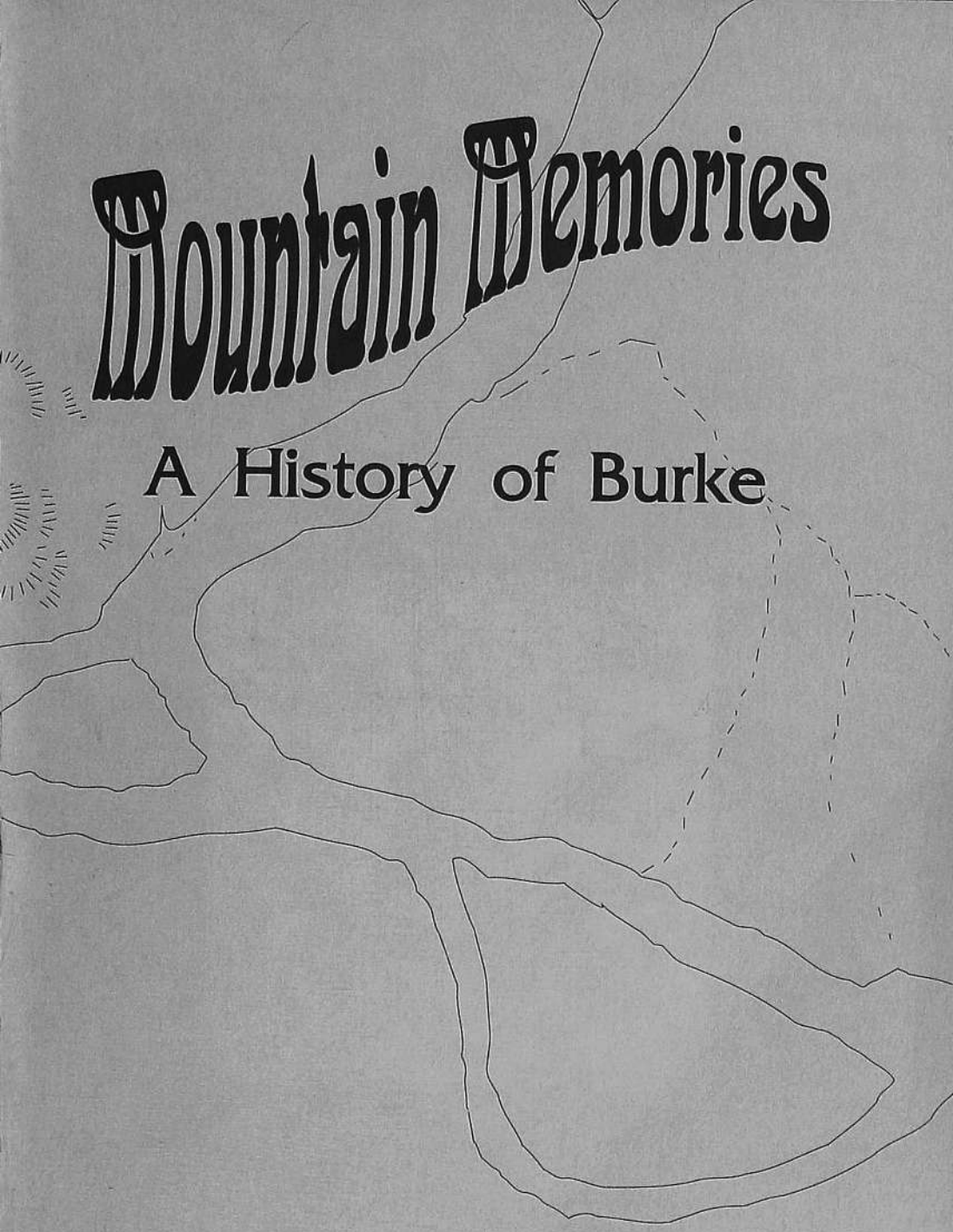
# Mountain Memories

## A History of Burke



Norma K. Campbell

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*A History of Burke*

**Norma K. Campbell**

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Dedicated to my Grandson, Joshua Sprout, who is our future.

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Norma K. Campbell.

# Contents

# 1

# Meet My Mountain

As mountains go, mine is not spectacular. It could be, in another geographical location, but in B.C.? If you have flown across the province on a clear day you'll know Burke Mountain doesn't stand a chance of a glance in the mountainous expanse below.

The mountain would have nothing to lose if its anonymity could continue. Natural erosion would eventually render the slopes bare and start gnawing at its very heart of stone. But man is not content to ride along at nature's tempo. He must put a lash to the land, speeding its demise to match his own. The hand of man will lay heavy on my mountain.

My special interest lies in the wedge of land enfolded in the arms of the Coquitlam and Pitt Rivers, which touches the Fraser in the south and stretches ever wider into the slopes of Burke Mountain. A halo of lakes spreads across the upper levels - Pitt Lake, Coquitlam Lake, Buntzen, Dennett and Munroe. Thus the features of topography provide the

diversity of lakes and rivers from tidal waters to mountain peaks.

Several excellent local histories have been written on Port Coquitlam and the Municipality, but this area largely escaped scrutiny, just as it had resisted discovery to the latest possible moment. Like a slow spiral, development circled around it and finally closed in.

Since the turn of the century a trickle of new residents have scraped out niches here and there, settling without too much notice, amongst the raccoons and skunks. Like one of its seasonal streams, the trickle has gained momentum, until there is alarm that there might be a flood, a new kind of flood in the mountain's history.

And the mountain has had its share of floods, fires and windstorms, but the scars have healed quickly and left it sturdy, the growth and life on its slopes rich and balanced. It has survived logging operations, from oxen to modern day methods. Indeed, one of these lent it the first name I knew it by - The Dollar. Indians of pre-history have left little to indicate great permanent settlements. Perhaps it was their handy back-yard hunting ground when a village grew on the hill that later was called Essondale. They shared the area with the black bear, cougar and brush wolf, who sought the same foods as they themselves. They all survived on the berries, deer, and smaller game from the slopes, and fish from the two rivers which wrap the mountain in scrawny, twisted arms. Earth's proud castle has a special, unique serenity. And yet it is rugged - a boy's paradise of lakes and streams to challenge the most venturesome. During the depression years of the thirties

the mountain, then known as The Dollar, provided excitement and challenge, when nothing else seemed to.

Many residents of the mountain have come because of a nagging need for a change in lifestyle. They are inclined towards a slower pace than is possible in an urban zone; not necessarily a lazier or easier way of life, but one of less mental pressure and of more physical activity. Their dreams shine brighter than the pieces of silver envisioned by those who now eek the unbroken acre to pilfer its beauty, to profit from its geographic and political position.

Progress is inevitable. It is the religion of the day. Dare to suggest caution and you are at once filed under 'S' for suspicious. Yet, so insignificant an appearing creature as man has the most fearsome capabilities. Someone must cry, "Caution!"

The verdant southern slopes of the hillside lie a half hour's drive from Vancouver, the third largest city and busiest seaport in Canada. Its residential value has emerged on the horizon much later than would be expected, giving its dwellers further cause to consider themselves lucky. The trickle of newcomers had become a fairly heavy stream but no great development had surged ahead by the fall of 1974. Then there were rumblings, like stones being disturbed in the river bed, a momentary uneasiness going almost unnoticed at first, but suddenly seeming to form a crescendo. The natives were restless; the municipal fathers tried to look knowing but innocent; the mountain slept on.

Then on December 17, 1974 the news came. The most ambitious housing project in Canada was an-

nounced by the Provincial Government. Housing Minister Lorne Nicholson unveiled the One Billion Dollar plan which was expected to bring an eventual population of seventy thousand to Burke Mountain. Lucky Dollar!

Will you sleep on, proud giant, while Jack steals your gold? Or is it just that you know something that we don't know?

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# 2

# The Spirit of Burke Mountain

Most fairy tales start with 'once upon a time' and most are based on the facts of life. Thus my tale begins:

Once upon a time, a very long time ago, there was a boy called 'Kho-Lam'. His dark hair and slightly Asiatic eyes whispered of the deep past of his Coquitlam tribe. He lived in an Indian village on the side of a hill overlooking two rivers, which came together in a muddy wash below the settlement. One was a dark and mighty river which travelled from the heart of the land for many days before it reached his eyes, and would soon come to the end of its journey to the sea. The other river was strong, too, but it tried to be more gentle. This river came down from a beautiful lake, and the men talked of the green, clear water in the world beyond, water that came fresh from the ice and snow of long ago.

This friendly river was forever being thwarted in its progress, causing it to become angry when the big

river refused to accept its waters. Twice each day, when the sea flooded over its beaches, the muddy water from the big river would turn on the gentle river, shoving and pushing until it travelled far up the smaller river with its salty force. When the churning bits of bark and branches floated to a standstill, Kho-Lam knew the struggle was over and the gentle river would again flow happily along toward the sea.

When he was young Kho-Lam did not concern himself too far afield as he had much to enjoy along the shore. In the springtime he tramped the marshes, spying on nesting birds and startling feeding animals. In the summertime he and his sisters picked tiny berries where the land sloped up from the marshes, using their mother's twined woven baskets as pails. In the winter he delighted in the flocks of quacking, honking birds that stopped to rest. Peace seeped into his heart and his blood sang with the joy of his beautiful world as he made new discoveries.

In the village there was always something interesting to watch and to help with. He was especially interested when food was involved. He would watch as a 3-foot hole was dug and a fire built in it. Stones that were placed on top were allowed to get hot and then greens were placed over them. Then the main food, often of bear meat, was layered and then more greens. At last earth would be filled in over all except a small hole in the top. This, too, was closed after water was poured in. When the meal was ready everyone crowded around to get a share.

But in the village Kho-Lam's heart was quiet. In the village Kho-Lam grew up knowing the terror of sudden attack. His people were called cowards by the

other tribes, so great was their timidity in defending themselves. He was confused by the fears and the jeers brought on by the Kwakiutls, so he escaped as often as he could to the places he loved. Sometimes this was possible only in his thoughts. Many times in the evening after a hot day, he would sit and watch flock after flock of black, noisy birds flying up from the lowlands to the top of the mountain to roost for the night. Then up from the sea would come the lanky, slow-flying bird with feathers the colour of the sky before a sudden rain. It always brought a smile that almost reached his lips, as he travelled with the bird across the sky. It had such long, skinny legs stretched out behind as it flew, making it an easy one to recognize from a distance. The strange attraction to the bird would sometimes change to resentment because the bird would soon be at Kho-Lam's favorite spot even beyond the waters of the gentle river.

Kho-Lam would look down at his own skinny legs that seemed to get in the way more every day. But he knew that some day his would be the sturdy legs of a hunter; his father had assured him of that.

Kho-Lam's escape became a strange attraction and the strange attraction became an obsession. He had seen only as many summers as he had fingers when mystical feelings drew him deeper and deeper into the valley and higher onto the mountain on each visit. His father encouraged him, considering it a good training in self discipline. His mother sighed and teased him, saying that he was looking for his own personal guardian spirit.

"If this is so, then how will I know when I have found it?" Kho-Lam wondered to himself. He looked

at the bright water snake swimming across the river, and at the fat brown animal with its house of peeled sticks. He looked at the shiny head, surrounding big round eyes, watching from out in the river, and he looked at the numerous birds sweeping along its shore. He thought of the great black-furred beast whose eyes met his as they surprised each other while eating berries off the clump of bushes, and he thought of the smooth, silent one whose screams pierced the night on rare occasions. Which one would be his guardian, his totem?

The boy did not desert his people. They were always in his thoughts when he was away from camp, just as his river and creek and mountain were always with him when he was in the village. Why could they not live their simple, honest lives without terror? They were not warlike. They had plenty of food all about them and the winters were neither long nor harsh. They had no ambition for power. They gathered fruit and nuts, they caught fish for food and oil. Game was plentiful in the hills. Life should be easy and carefree.

And it was, except for the shadow. The shadow that hung over them; the shadow of fear. Attacks from other tribes were sudden and devastating. Many of their men had been slaughtered, and many of their women and children had been carried away to be used as slaves. Fear lay like a cold stone in his stomach.

Yet when he was alone he was never afraid. Sometimes he climbed and climbed until he found a small swampy lake with terribly steep cliffs plunging down into the water. At other times he took his canoe and travelled up the gentle river until he was past the

foot of his friendly mountain, and around to its other side, nearly to the big, green lake. Just before the big lake's waves reached him he paddled safely up the silent, icy waters of his beloved creek. The creek came from the most beautiful valley in Kho-Lam's whole world. Mountain after mountain rose up from the valley bed for as far as he could see, until they seemed to melt together at a distant spot. After he left the noisy river the calm stream waters whispered to him and a strange mixture of peace and excitement swept over him.

In the summer large bright blue insects flew about him. They were as big as birds and when one of them caught another insect it clung to the bushes along the shore, eating the struggling creature. Kho-Lam would paddle close to watch and if he held his breath he could hear the tasty morsel being chewed.

But best of all were the big birds. His smokey blue friends with the long legs nested in the area and on rare occasions the fierce-eyed bird, king of them all, flew down from the head of the creek, circling off higher and higher with an assortment of tiny birds darting frantically at him. Many of the tribesmen wished for the spirit of the fierce-eyed bird but Kho-Lam thought of the fierce-eyed raiders, and shivered, and turned his thoughts away.

Thus another summer passed and still another started.

It was during the time that he was roaming the mountain on one of his journeys that Kho-Lam's family was wiped out by raiding Kwakiutl war parties. He arrived back to a broken village. The survivors were silent, crushed. They crept out from hiding places,

but no one would tell Kho-Lam. He wandered around the ruins, knowing, not wanting to know. He stared at the pieces of a prized dogwood bow, knowing by the sinew backing that it was his father's. His mother's treasured rush mats were strewn around outside of the large shelter. Each painful realization further tightened the twist in his stomach. Something was wrong with his breathing; his throat felt like he had swallowed an arrowhead. Like an animal gone mad, suddenly he bolted. Their emotions spent on fear, his people quietly watched with passive eyes. They made no move to stop him.

The birds, the animals, were not there; no swamp, no river existed. His feet carried him on, but he was unseeing, uncaring. He ran until he dropped. He crawled, tore at the reeds, and emptied his tormented stomach. He wanted not to breathe, not to live, but he was on his feet again and again. Finally he arrived at the cold, clear creek. Suicidally he threw himself into the water, but felt only relief from its icy chill on his scorched body. Angered, he tried to stay underwater, but his mind exploded and without knowing he clawed at clumps of swamp grass until he dragged himself onto the sandy beach, and there Kho-Lam slipped into the land of hallucination.

As the sun shone down on him Kho-Lam's mind became violently active. He was at the center of all existence. Forms, shapes, colours spun faster and faster toward him. They fell into his being while more of them formed as quickly as they were consumed. He began to whirl and whirl with them, but gradually his mind grasped out and tried to stop the tortured movement. They slowed and he began to

recognize the forms: the raiders, the roaring fire, the destroyed village, the great bird's eyes, the little darting birds, his sisters, his mother and his father, the mountain.....his mountain!

The whirling pictures slowed to a standstill and dissolved. The mountain stood above him in throbbing silence. All the crevices and fallen trees that had ever sheltered him from fear and rain and cold began to form a pattern. All the secret spots that he had ever found took on new meaning. He had slept many times with his face pressed to the good mountain earth, the smell of cedar reminding him of his home and family....and had not known. He had run in desperation, thinking he had wanted to die, but the deep creek had laughed at him and the mountain had waited and smiled. Darkness and the profound sleep of exhaustion came.

As night creatures stirred the first timid croaking sound reverberated down through the valley. Slowly, faintly Kho-Lam's ears began to listen. He moved a little, bringing his body and senses back together. The sand was hard on his cheek and under his stomach. He opened his eyes and a chill passed over his body as he rolled over and sat up. Everything looked still and white; the moon was high above the Giant White Mountain that guarded the far side of the big lake. The stars were all in place as he looked up, already starting their march across the night sky.

Kho-Lam knew it would be there when he turned. He was sure, very sure of something at last. He took his time, almost shyly. He rose, still watching the

moon over the White Giant and then he turned, letting his eyes travel slowly up the steep wooded slope of his beloved mountain. The haunting cries of night creatures did not falter as Kho-Lam raised his arms to accept his totem. At that moment an exchange was made. For the mountain, too, had accepted something - the Spirit of the boy.

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# 3

# The Fraser

This is the river that built the delta, that brought the people who live here. Burke Mountain is influenced by three rivers - the Coquitlam, the Pitt and the Fraser. The Fraser's waters are pushed back by the ocean tides, and in turn the Pitt River is backed up the length of Pitt Lake. Development has been affected by all three rivers, but the mightiest builder of geographical features has always been the Fraser.

The Fraser, like a dark and savage creature from the past hides its birth in the misty annals of time. After the last great ice-age the river began to collect its melted glacial water. A drop in altitude from the heart of the land headed the swelling waters in the direction of the sea. As it found its way in clefts, left after prehistoric upheavals of the land, erosion cut a deeper and deeper channel. At the same time its shores rose in relief as a result of the disappearance of their burden of ice. Sediment from the dying ice flowed in the water, scouring and moving along all that was vulnerable to its force. The crude suspension gained in density, and the solids in it ground

ever finer. The canyon dropped away abruptly in the lower 90 miles, allowing the river to spread as it travelled toward the sea. The widening, and the levelling off of the land allowed the current to slow down, and as it lost momentum the water slowly dispersed its solids, giving them up to the pull of gravity. Thus the Fraser delta began to form.

The land was convulsed by deep pressures within, millenniums before the Fraser's birth. An indication of this is the numerous seashells I have gathered from a bank of gravel by the Allard Pit, above the present day man-made LaFarge Lake. Although much of pre-history will be locked forever in mystery, there are many signposts left along the aged pathway. As discoveries are made we read new stories - fossilized stories written before the hand of man could write them for us.

We find that nature's whims have shuttled man back and forth on the continent, and geographic features have dictated the pattern of his settlement. As more sophisticated methods of dating material are put into use, sections of the misty story clear a little. Although thousands of years are compacted into a single culture in our minds, still the wide-angle view is there and occasionally descriptive artifacts give us a telephoto detail of a frozen moment from the past.

The story that the Fraser tells began as the last glacier receded. At first there was a fjord reaching out a long arm of the sea to meet the river near our Yale of today. Sites above that area indicate settlements thousands of years older than the ones of the lower Fraser. The earliest signs in the valley are just three thousand years old, compared to those of the canyon stretching back ten thousand years. So the ancient

meltwater channel of the Fraser gives us two unbroken bonds with the past: its perpetual flow of life-giving water, and a record of the peoples who have lived along its shore.

The transition from ice-age to temperate was not direct but gradual over a very long period of time, beginning perhaps 18,000 years ago. Evidence is that the climate passed through three distinct phases in the 10,000 post-glacial years. The first was cool and moist, the second was warmer and drier than today, and the third was cool and moist again. The last stage has changed little in the past 3000 years.

In the lower Fraser canyon area the first of many to ride the crest of geographical change left signs of a simple culture, much less advanced than their contemporaries on the eastern portion of the continent. Isolation and an easy food supply probably contributed to this fact. The following river cultures overlapped the time of development on the newly formed delta.

Three terraces high on the canyon wall, now hidden by trees, show the changes of the river bank during the past glacial runoff. Today's greatest flood level lies 40 feet below the bottom terrace. Remains of ancient villages show the effects of climatic changes. During the dry, hot period, when the streams and smaller rivers dried up, these areas were vacated for ones with more favourable conditions.

During these years the people progressed slowly. They passed from the use of projectiles and stone knives to the use of drills, ground slate blades and harpoons over a period of 6000 years. But it is to be remembered that only the most durable artifacts

have survived the ravages of time. Much of the coastal soil is a poor preservative, due to acidity destroying vegetation and animal matter in a relatively short time. Usages of horn, bone, fibres and skins are guessed at, but actual examples have long since disintegrated.

Cultures changed with the introduction of articles from Asia, via Arctic and Subarctic cultures. Ornaments, blades, bow and arrow, barbed arrow heads and pit houses appeared gradually.

During the time of prehistoric man in the canyon above Yale, the valley was taking shape below. The land which had been depressed by the weight of ice a mile thick, was taking a deep breath after its long sleep, rebounding nearly a thousand feet. And the fjord that the river emptied into received vast quantities of overburden from the interior plateau, itself disrupted and scored by the great glacier. Through the centuries the inlet was transformed by the rich alluvial soil into a bountiful and beautiful new valley. The Fraser, like a mighty god, is at once a ruthless destroyer and a gentle builder.

Man, the opportunist, has been quick to realize its potential and accept its bounty. He lost no time in settling on the valley floor, spreading out as it grew. Villages of the first dwellers in the valley left artifacts that were better preserved because of the calcium carbonate that sea shells had deposited in the soil. So besides the faceted projectiles, knives, chisels, adzes and ornaments of slate and nephrite also to be found are needles, daggers and harpoons of bone and antler.

There is indication that people moved from the canyon to more favourable surroundings, but there is no evidence of an interest in agriculture. Ancient upheavals must have taken place, but these details are forever locked in the vaults of time.

A cultural peak was reached when the people developed woodworking tools that enabled them to build large homes. In art their sculptures were often abstract. Their fishing gear indicates a dependence on sea mammals and fish. In the final pre-history years refinements such as spinning, weaving, mortuary houses, combs and pipes appeared.

The last phase showed the merging of earlier phases with the traditions of the white man and recorded written history. European beads gradually replaced aboriginal ornaments.

Many weird and wonderful theories have been advanced for the origin of the primitive coastal inhabitants. One point that has been agreed on is that their appearance puts them apart from all the other Indians of North America. Asian affinities are always noted when any ethnological studies are attempted.

The B.C. Yearbook of 1897 puts forth intriguing suggestions, such as: "If an 'Atlantis' can account for the Iroquois, there may have been a lost continent in the Pacific to account for the great Tinneh nation of people. Or as the Norseman by way of Greenland reached the North American vinland 1000 years ago, so successive migrations of Tartars by way of the Behring (Bering) Straits or the Aleutian Isles, may have in primitive times peopled this coast... We might, with equal probability imagine a fleet of

junks, storm-beaten, drifting to the west coast of Vancouver Island, and the crews there perforce making a home for themselves."

Charles Hill-Tout was appointed the Western Member of the Special Committee organized by the British Association to carry out an ethnological survey of British North America. He reports in the Yearbook that there is no exaggeration in saying that in physical traits the Coast Indians approximate much nearer to the tribes and races of Eastern Asia than they do to the stocks of Eastern America. He did not think that Asian migration took place within recent times or in one single wave, evidence tending to show that it was at some comparatively distant period in the past, probably before the settlement of the Japanese in their present home. The separation has been too long to affiliate with any degree of closeness any of the present tribes of this province to any of the existing tribes or races now in Asia. But that the ancestors of our present tribes and the ancestors of certain Asian stocks had a community of origin, or once lived in close contiguity is impossible to doubt.

It is for the science of Philology to determine with certainty the ethnological affinities but after so long a separation it is not surprising that there are few similarities in Western American and East Asian languages. Hill-Tout explains that racial traits are the result of slow and gradual processes, effected by varying local conditions, and, once imprinted are indelible, while speech is an organic growth, liable to constant change, the principle of which is well understood and amply demonstrated in our own tongue. Some tribes show a monosyllabic use of the radicals (nouns) of their tongue and a Chinese-like method of

associating these by simple juxtaposition. (The Dene or Athapascan)

Another trait that cannot be ignored is the artistic similarity between West Coast art and the art of the Orient. The very marked similarities are the conventionalized forms and the lack of perspective.

The Japo-Korean language developed under Chinese influences while the West Coast tribes developed under American influences. The melding of a literary language that had been written for some 1500 years with a spoken language of the barbarous people added to the mutation.

The Coast Salish tribes that inhabited the lower Fraser are usually called Stalo, a Halkomelem word meaning 'river', although Franz Boas called them Cowichan and Charles Hill-Tout, Halkomelem, which is the language they speak. The Stalo tribe was much influenced by its neighbours on both sides, due to its situation in a prime food producing area. Every summer salmon runs attracted the people of Coast Salish tribes, some fishing in the river itself while others put up reef-netting stations near the present Point Roberts. Their position also made them an ideal source of slaves for their neighbours to the north, the Kwakiutls.

There are many theories regarding Stalo prehistory. Middens are being exposed even to this day; all enlighten us further. Franz Boas felt that they had occupied these regions for a very long time, with a stable population, whereas Hill-Tout thought that, because of the extension of the Halkomelem language, indications were that its speakers were late-comers to the area. Thus historians disagree.

The Stalo tribe was divided into many sub-groups. The Musqueam culture took in the Fraser delta area, roughly what is known today as Vancouver and New Westminster. The Coquitlam tribe took in the area north of the Fraser, east of New Westminster, up Coquitlam River and as far east as the Katzie tribe. The Katzie covered both sides of Pitt River. Across the Fraser River was the Kwantlen territory. Fort Langley traders called the aggregation including the Kwantlen, Whonock, Matsqui, Hatzic, Nicomen and Coquitlam tribes, the Quoitlans.

Historian William Duff stated that the Katzie tribe controlled Pitt Lake and Pitt River as well as some of the Fraser's banks. He found that at the foot of Pitt Lake there is a site of a very old Katzie village, and he thinks that they even had a camp at the head of the lake. The Fort Langley Journal tells of the more powerful Kwantlens having a village on Pitt River. It is not surprising that a student of these early peoples becomes confused, as the facts are pieced together to tell each historian a different story. Also amalgamations took place even in those ages past.

Duff, on the Coquitlam, writes, "The Coquitlam tribe lived on the north side of the Fraser above New Westminister and up the Coquitlam River. According to Hill-Tout, this was a subject tribe to the Kwantlens. There is also evidence, however, that it was a Musqueam sub-group." The Fort Langley Journal mentions a 'Misquiam' camp near the Quoitle River. (Pitt River is in different records called Quoitland, Quouitlam, Quoitline and Pits River.)

My little story of the Indian boy called Kho-Lam is as good a guess at life in those bygone days, as any of the historians have put forth. The Coast Salish

tribes had many easy foods at their disposal. Seals, porpoises, ducks, geese and swans were plentiful. Deer and elk were abundant in parkland areas so it was not necessary to go into the hills except when they wanted the prized mountain goat for its wool. These Indians used highly trained dogs to herd elk and deer into rivers and lakes to be slain by men in canoes. Fish and mollusks were easily caught and the mild coastal climate provided berries, bracken fern, white clover, acorns, salmonberry shoots, inner bark of maple and alder and many other foods.

The large houses had earthen floors and a fire that would be shared by several families, as the smoke had to escape through the roof holes. The interior was divided into compartments, and rush mats were used as mattresses, cushions, screens and decoration.

Salish tools were harpoons, dip-nets, bows and arrows, adzes, chipped stone points and stone hammers. Weapons were clubs, spears with bone blades, and daggers. The bows were short and made of yew if it was available. Sometimes they used dogwood or willow if necessary. Numerous pestle-shaped stones have been found in areas used by the Salish. Many of these turned up when the buildings and grounds were developed for Essondale.

The Coquitlam, as other coastal tribes, put the bountiful supply of red cedar to use in endless ingenious ways. It was used for water pails, cooking boxes, storage boxes, coffins, cedar-root hats, bark robes and capes, as well as their buildings.

Burke Mountain was wild and free - rich in game and cedar for the Indians. But civilization was on its way.

# 4

## Last But Not Least

We know that Spanish ships travelled the coast in the sixteenth century and that Captain Vancouver charted Burrard Inlet in the eighteenth, yet until Simon Fraser came into direct contact with the Indians of the Delta in 1808, there is no recorded history of them. And so, in this delta region at least, there is a precise line drawn between that which is prehistoric and that which is historic. Is this unique beginning a symbol? Has it run like an invisible thread throughout its growth to this day?

Our segment of the earth evaded discovery as if by some deliberate plan. Of all areas in this agreeable temperate zone, it was the last to be invaded by modern man.

In May, 1808, Simon Fraser left Fort George at the confluence of the Nechaco and the Fraser with a crew of 19, two Indians, John Stuart and Jules Quesnel, to explore the 'Great River', which was named after him.

Fraser wrote of his trip "....I scarcely saw anything so dreary and dangerous in any country....whatever way I turn my eyes, mountains upon mountains, whose summits are covered with eternal snows close the dreary scene." As they left the upper tribes the Indians would no longer travel with them, for fear of the Cowichan nation. When at last the crew reached the lower river the natives were found to be hostile, as they had been warned. So far as it is known this was the first time that an European had seen this country.

In spite of unfriendly Indians and mosquitoes 'in clouds', Fraser made his way past the dense virgin forest where the Pitt and Coquitlam Rivers reached the great river, and on to the Gulf of Georgia, before turning back.

Then for 16 years after this 69-day historic trip down the river there was nothing added to the knowledge of that area of New Caledonia. That is to say the Lower Mainland of British Columbia as known today.

Later (in 1824) Mr. John Work, a clerk under the command of James McMillan, kept a good record of his trip, when they were sent in search of the entrance of Fraser's River and to discover if there was any possibility of navigating it. They left Fort George (Astoria, Oregon) in three boats, provided with peas, oatmeal, flour, pork, grease, rum, biscuits and pemmican. After they reached the Pacific Ocean they ascended the Chehalis River, then crossed country to Puget Sound, then by sea to Mud Bay, north of Boundary Bay. From there they were able to cross the delta of the Fraser River and in two days passed the area where Fort Langley would be built three

years later. Work's journal shows us for the first time how bountiful the great delta promised to be.

The journal entry of December 14, 1824, stated that the soil here appears to be very rich, with the remains of a luxurious crop of fern and grass on the ground. The trees are of different kinds - pine, birch, poplar, alder, et cetera. The men who were hunting visited the upper part of a little river, and reported signs of plenty of beaver, and that elk had been very numerous some time ago.

After leaving Mud Bay they had followed the Nikomeckl River, then a four and a half mile portage brought them to Salmon River, which emptied into the Fraser near the present Fort Langley. Work mentions an island (now McMillan Island) and that some high hills appear to the eastward at no great distance, topped with snow (The Golden Ears?). Work knew that he had found Fraser's river, or as he called it in the journal, the 'Cowitchin'.

In June, 1827, McMillan followed up the exploration in the vessel 'Cadboro', in search of a site for an establishment. At a point a mile within the river the vessel anchored and latitude was recorded as 49 degrees, 5 min, 30 sec, and this point was named Point Garry. The vessel reached a point opposite the Quoitle or Pitt River that evening. Many Indians surrounded the vessel and tried to force their way on board, until the old chief ordered them away.

A few days later a landing place with deep water near the shore was found, the horses were landed and work was started on Fort Langley. The ship's stores suffered theft and threats were made to annihilate the white men if they continued to settle. Later brush fires were started all around them with the same intention. The workers were exhausted handling the heavy timbers and fighting the thick underbrush. The vessel left the fort on September 18, while the inhabitants set up homes and provisions. Indian war parties sometimes passed with a luckless head at the bow of their canoe, a load of spoils from another camp, or women and children prisoners who would become slaves.

In 1845 Paul Kane, a young Canadian artist and historian, arrived on the west coast to record the Coast Indians by brush and pen. Much of his work was done around Vancouver Island, but in his gathering of folklore he made excursions to the mainland. He describes the habit of the chief's giving away vast treasures in order to make themselves appear important. One chief was said to have murdered five slaves, and boasted that no one else could afford to kill so many slaves. Slavery in its most cruel form was carried on by the coastal Indians from the Bering Straits to California, yet was not practiced by interior tribes. Cruelty was not just handed out to slaves, as many of their ritual customs required new chiefs, for instance, to take bites out of men they held in high regard, and to devour small dogs alive!

"I have seen many men of the North-West coast of the Pacific who bore frightful marks of what they regarded as an honourable distinction, " Kane reported. In regard to their food he wrote: "All the tribes about here subsist almost entirely upon fish,

which they obtain with so little trouble during all the seasons of the year, that they are probably the laziest race of people in the world. Sturgeon are caught in considerable numbers, and here attain an enormous size, weighing from four to six hundredweight." Also mentioned were salmon, cod, clams, herring, seal, wild ducks and geese.

After Fraser's time the North West Company was bought out by the Hudson's Bay Company taking over all its activities west of the Rockies from 1821 to 1846. In 1849 three events started to change the shape of things to come. Vancouver Island was granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, the colony of Vancouver Island was created, and the Hudson's Bay Company completed the transfer of its headquarters from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, to Fort Victoria. In 1851 James Douglas started his iron rule of the colony. He acted for both the Imperial Government and the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1858 the name New Caledonia was changed to British Columbia.

In the fall of 1856 gold was found on the Thompson River and later discoveries were made in Fraser River sandbars. Gold fever peaked by 1858 and an estimated 25,000 persons entered New Caledonia, swelling its population of less than 500, mostly during that one year. Even the Governor of Vancouver Island, James Douglas, added to the excitement in a speech in July, 1858, saying, "I think the country is full of gold, and that east and north and south of Fraser's River there is a goldfield of incalculable

value and extent. I have told our Glorious Queen so, and now I tell you so, and, if I mistake not, you are the very men who can prove by your courage and enterprise whether my opinion be right or wrong."

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# 5

# The Development Begins

The rich sandbar just below Yale was worked out in six months and many of the miners left penniless. Others went north to try their luck in the Cariboo gold fields. But the real beginning of white settlement came about when many decided to stay on to farm or find employment in the colony.

Douglas wanted Fort Langley to be the capital of British Columbia, starting the first land speculation in the area. Colonel Moody, in command of the 165 Royal Engineers, felt that it was too far up the river for a seaport, and too vulnerable to attack from below the border. At first he thought Mary Hill, which was west of the mouth of Pitt River, was a good site, being so well elevated, but on advice from his men he moved further downstream. The site on the north side of the river was chosen and named Queensborough. This was later named New Westminster by Queen Victoria. The loud cries of Fort Langley speculators were subdued when Douglas allowed them to transfer their land claims to New Westminster! The land along the Pitt River came close to early development, but for the time being it slept on.

Neither Fort Langley, nor Mary Hill, nor even New Westminster were destined to be the ultimate capital city. In 1866 Vancouver Island and British Columbia were officially amalgamated into one colony under popular Frederick Seymour, the new Governor. In 1867 the Legislative Assembly of the combined colonies voted against Seymour thus making Victoria, and not New Westminster, the capital city. The vote was not without skullduggery, as it is said that the Nanaimo delegate was strongly pro-New Westminster but someone took advantage of his drinking habits to steal the lenses out of his glasses, so that he could not see to read his speech! The world of politics has not changed all that much.

But other changes came very quickly once they had started, and on July 20, 1871 British Columbia became a province. This came after bribery by Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald - with subsidies, assumption of debts, and the promise of a railroad within ten years, linking the Pacific to the railway systems throughout Canada.

By 1879 no track had yet been laid in the province so the first threat of secession was made. MacDonald formed a private company, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, which (after getting massive land grants) undertook to complete the railroad. The first western terminus was Port Moody, but a year later this was extended to Granville, which became the city of Vancouver. Thus the magic wand was passed over Vancouver and though it was not chosen the capital it was to surpass Victoria, New Westminster,

Port Moody and Fort Langley with phenomenal growth.

Our little corner of the world was left to slumber on for another 50 years after Fraser's historic visit. He had come so close on his journey from Fort George (now Prince George) in the north and James McMillan and John Work had approached, strangely enough, from Fort George (now Astoria, Oregon) in the south. Their eyes must have rested on Burke Mountain, and one wonders what visions they might have had.

In my search for the history of my mountain I finally traced down a map in Victoria which was drawn up by Captain G.H.Richards, RN, and the officers of the HMS Plumper in 1859-60. On it the Coquitlam River is named, although it is spelled Coquitlum. The spot marked as Mount Burke is a hill near Addington Point with a marked height of 536 feet. A peak almost directly north of it is marked 3200 feet, but is not named. Evidently the whole area we know as Burke Mountain was not originally intended to be so called.

As well I have a letter from the Department of Energy and Mines, Ottawa, stating that they had very little background information on this name. The letter continued:

> The name was approved by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical names on 3 May 1951 for the feature with an elevation of 783 feet, shown on National Topographic System map 92-G at 49 18 -

> 122 43. The original submission of his name was made by the British Columbia Department of Lands & Forests on 31st March 1951, as being shown on British Admiralty Chart 1922 printed 1926.

Digging a little deeper I wrote to the Hydrographer of the Navy, in Taunton, Sumerset, England, and received the following reply.

> With reference to your enquiry concerning the Mount Burke area of British Columbia, the office records relating to Captain Richards have been searched but no report relevant to his visit to Pitt Lake has been found.
>
> A manuscript survey of the area, dated 1859, is held on which the mountain is quite clearly named. No officer on the expedition was called Burke and there are no lists for 'other ranks'.
>
> Three Burkes were RN Officers (in fact two were Naval Surgeons) in 1859 but they were not serving in British Columbia.
>
> However, Pitt and Addington (also names in the area) were British statesmen and so was Edmund Burke. Perhaps Richards was interested in politics - just a thought!

It seems that, although the mountain was called Burke over 130 years ago, it waited until 1951 to receive official approval for the name. Still that doesn't explain the change in height, nor the present

range of the area, and it cannot be definitely stated that it was named after Edmund Burke.

In the Journal of Fort Langley in 1827 it is shown that the name Pitt's River was already being used, but Quoitle River was also used. And Judge Begbie refers to 'Bedford or Pitt' Lake in his letters written around 1859. These twin names were soon dropped and Pitt was used for both river and lake. They are clearly written on the Captain Richards' map of 1859-60.

It is interesting to browse over the map drawn up by the men of the survey ship, Plumper. Many names are a surprise, considering the whole area was untouched by the white man a scant 50 years earlier. Names noticed are: Mary Hill, Barnston Island, Sheridan Hills, Mount Blanchard or the Golden Ears, Pitt Meadows and Brunette River. Even Roberts Bank and Sea Island are printed on it. And the channel charted into Pitt Lake is exactly the one we use to this day when boating in the area.

It is known that Pitt River was named in honour of William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), who was a British Prime Minister during the Napoleonic Wars. It is named in the Journal of James McMillan, the founder of Fort Langley, in 1827, but it is possible that the river was named on an earlier trip made in 1824, by McMillan's party.

The historic Plumper was an auxiliary steam sloop barque rigged, 60 HP, with speed under steam of about 6 knots. EP Bedwell contributed a fine sketch of HMS Plumper, to The Illustrated London News of March 1, 1862. She left England on March 26, 1848, having been launched at Portsmouth, and arrived at

Esquimalt on November 9, 1857. She remained until January 1861, when she was relieved by the Hecate. She left Esquimalt in January, 1861 in the command of Anthony H.Hoskins, who had brought out the Hecate from England. Captain Richards continued to chart B.C waterways with his new ship.

In the proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London dated May 28, 1860, under the heading British Columbia, the following was written:

> The surveying party, under our associate Captain George Richards, in HMS Plumper, consisting of Messers. Bull and Pender, masters, Lieutenant Mayne and Mr. Bedwell, second master, have as usual worked most industriously during the past season. They have surveyed Pitt and Frazer Rivers, with the magnificent opening of Burrard Inlet, which carries water deep enough for a line-of-battle ship, up to within 3 miles, overland, to the site of the capital, New Westminster. .....They have sounded thoroughly over 420, and partially over 400 square miles.

It will be noted that I have used the historical spelling of place names when taking information from archives material. In early writings Fraser is always spelled with a 'z', while more recently it is spelled with an 's'.

When Colonel Richard Clement Moody arrived at Victoria in 1859 Douglas had already had Captain Richards examine the river for a possible seaport town. He also had warned the Colonel of the poor financial position of the province, but the man had

dreams of public squares and grand architectural designs and the two personalities were soon to clash.

In 'British Columbia From the Earliest Times to The Present' written by the Provincial Librarian and Archivist, E O S Scholefield, early in the century, it is said, "....the earliest history of the territory now known to the world as British Columbia is intimately associated with the apocryphal voyages of glib-tongued imposters and the vague conjectures of the geographer." This probably explains some of the confusion a researcher must struggle through. However many good records have been kept in more recent years - always coloured by the writer, of course.

It was only 50-odd years later that settlers began to discover the excellent home sites in the Pitt River-Coquitlam area. A world traveller, Alexander McLean, had sailed in his 4-masted schooner called The Rob Roy, from Australia to California and in 1849 the McLean family, consisting of wife, husband and 2 sons, arrived in British Columbia, after first being burned out in Whatcom County. Then at Ladner's Landing they were driven out by flooding and a large tidal wave, but McLean got his family, machinery and cattle on board his ship so they were not lost.

What a wild new country he must have felt he had come to! At the mouth of the Pitt River he anchored and travelled by canoe in exploring the Pitt Meadows area, at the time covered with wigwams and Indian villages. He quieted their hostility with gifts so that he was allowed to bring his schooner along to settle and build a cabin.

There the family stayed on their 600 acre ranch, still fighting floods for many years until dykes were finally built. Mrs. McLean died in 1880 and her husband in 1884, but one son, Donald, and his wife stayed on in spite of much advice to leave the flood-prone area. Floods they did have like the severe one in 1894 that inundated the whole valley, taking out bridges. They sold their butter, meat and produce at the New Westminster Market which they reached by boat and later by wagon.

In 1910 Donald sold his farm and built a new home on Pitt River Road in Coquitlamfor his wife and four daughters. The home was later used by the Royal Canadian Legion until it burned down in the seventies. He owned much real estate, and built the house sitting in the bend of Shaughnessy at Wilson for my future in-laws when they arrived in Coquitlam before the City was named. Donald lived until 1929.

It was in 1859 that the Atkins, another family of world travellers, arrived in Victoria via Australia and New Zealand from Ireland. From there they travelled by steamer to the Fraser and at the mouth of the Coquitlam River they pitched a tent to live in while they built a house. Although the family returned to Australia a few years later, one son stayed and took a large part in the formative years of Coquitlam, including holding the offices of Reeve, Justice of Peace and School Trustee. That son was 'Ned' Atkins. He passed away in 1924.

Other early settlers were James Fox (1885), Col. Scott, the Mouldey family (1889) and R D Irvine (the early teacher and first Municipal Clerk), the Mars family (1896) and W Richardson (who settled on a ranch in Pitt Meadows, across from the Minnekhada

Ranch), John Routley and A. Millard. Local names of streets echo these distant names.

First the rivers formed the land and then they brought people to settle on their shores. But the lifegiving waters always demanded respect, and it was to be a perpetual battle between the two - as settlers then, and developers today, have found. In some years, such as 1935-1936, cold weather saw the Fraser frozen over. A young Eve Forrest told me she watched from Mary Hill as the Sampson IV, with a log fastened in front, attempted to clear the ice away. That was the same year my husband remember skating across the Fraser at Haney with his father.

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# 6

# First Boom Days

The great city of Vancouver was yet to be surveyed by the Royal Engineers, when Pitt River and area was already mapped by Captain Richards. But when the following instructions were given by R.C.Moody, the Colonel Commanding, it was the beginning of a still expanding story of the famous seaport. This is, in part, a memo to Captain Parsons, R.E.:

> I wish Corporal Turner and party to proceed at earliest opportunity to Burrard Inlet to revise posts on government reserve for town near entrance.....and then to survey lands property of R.Burnaby and H.P.P.Crease and from thence to lay out claims or survey lands [160 acres each narrow side to shore front] between such points and the village which has been laid out 'en bloc'. (26 January.,1863)

The boom at Derby (old Fort Langley) had been short-lived in spite of the efforts of the Rector, W.Burton Crickmer, who had the first church at

Derby (a church that was built of California redwood because an old report had stated that there was no lumber in B.C.), which was completed in 1859. But the settlement was doomed to failure as Colonel Moody, only 2 months after its inauguration as capital, condemned it because of the lack of depth for sea-going vessels and its poor location for defence. Even the noted Judge Begbie advised, "The place has a desolate look. It is ten thousand pities that the government buildings and church cannot be floated down to the lower places." [In 1882 the church was dismantled and floated over the Fraser's turbulent waters, to Maple Ridge, where it was re-erected at the corner of Laity and River Roads.]

The population of the new province continued to swell, but by 1893 there was a general depression, the first of several to be experienced in British Columbia. By 1894 times were so hard that civic salaries had to be reduced, and to add to the problems there were serious floods in the Fraser Valley. The province had come a long way in less than a century, but not without many difficulties. My little 'neck of the woods' still slept on.

But development came at an astonishing rate in other budding cities of B.C. In spite of the years of head start Eastern cities had, Victoria acquired electric lights in 1882, just one year after Edison's development in New York. The city also had a commercial hydro power plant operating within two years of the first power plant at Niagara Falls (1885). Vancouver was being supplied with electric power from Buntzen Lake in 1903, at a time when many towns in Eastern Canada were still without hydro power.

On February 2, 1882 electric lights - 10 of them, each 2000 candlepower, powered by a Brush dynamo - were turned on in a sawmill at Moodyville (present day North Vancouver). All British Columbia talked about the event. In 1883 street lights were put into effect, and they became the first commercial electric lights in all of Canada. (From Progress, published by B.C.Hydro in Summer, 1971)

Finally things were beginning to stir in the Coquitlam area. Much has been written of the earliest known white settlers, the families of Donald MacLean, Ned Atkins, James Fox and George Black. Local authorities give MacLean the honour of being first, but in the British Columbia Magazine (July-December, 1911) is the following interesting comment:

> The burning question in Coquitlam today is not "When are the C P R going to start work?" but "Who was the first settler, Donald McLean or Ned Atkins?"
>
> Ask the question in the presence of these gentlemen and the fat is in the fire at once. Many stories are told of the hardships endured by the 'old timers'; of how Donald got up in the night, clad only in his nightie and his innocence to chase the wolves from his flocks.

Ned Atkins married an Indian maid called Susan and a true melding of cultures took place. Susan taught Ned to love the streams and trails and her knowledge of herbal lore was put to use often in that new frontier. In turn Ned's understanding of the ways and thoughts of the Indian helped to settle many disputes with whites, and tribal difficulties. After Susan

died it is said that Ned never stopped missing her till his dying day, 17 years later (1924).

Although Coquitlam development started in a normal way, the real estate men and newspapers of the day used such flowery language to predict its future that an immediate boom of impossible dreams were soon being purchased, in the form of pieces of land. The media did not act without reason, as the following from B.C.Magazine shows:

> ...the insignificant Coquitlam of half a century ago, according to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, the president of the greatest transcontinental railway system in the world, is to become the greatest industrial and distributing centre in British Columbia.
>
> In October of last year the C P R purchased and took options on property contiguous to the old holdings of the company to the value of one and a half million dollars. Then a new era dawned for Coquitlam, which is rapidly passing from a quiet community to a bustling railway and industrial centre. Coquitlam has the location, the resources are there, her citizens are imbued with the spirit of optimism, the opportunity has now arrived, and with that great financial corporation, the C P R behind them, the anaemic infant of a year ago is a sturdy youth today, and in a few short years will become a giant in the business interests of the province.

The C P R men had quietly begun a land assembly before the general public was aware of it, so avoided paying top prices. When word got out that this was to be their mechanical headquarters everyone suddenly became aware of the geographical features that made this desirable - level land, situation on a deep-water channel leading to the Pacific Ocean and direct rail connections. The company planned to spend millions on shops (to be the largest in Canada) on a roundhouse, machine shops, yards, coal bunkers and other buildings.

In addition to this the area was considered to be an ideal townsite. It was situated on a vast agricultural plain, with soil of unsurpassed richness, and was protected by mountains that almost surround it. It was said:

> If the C P R did not fully see 25 years ahead 25 years ago, it now sees at least 10 years ahead and realizes that the city it gave birth to on the shores of Burrard Inlet is destined to be one of the two greatest cities on the Pacific coast of America, if not, indeed, the greatest of all.

So move over Vancouver, make room for Coquitlam!

But the heart of the area known as Coquitlam was lifted out when Port Coquitlam became a city on its own, leaving a scattered Coquitlam District which included Burke Mountain, Burquitlam and Maillardville. The city did not take the name of Port Coquitlam until Inauguration Day, on March 7th which was celebrated on April 22, 1913. Before that it was called Westminster Junction. This was because the CPR Railroad called its stop Westminster

Junction. A station was built west of the Coquitlam River, and from it a spur line turned towards New Westminster. This spur was completed at the same time the railroad went through to Port Moody. Thousands of gold seekers who had passed so closely did not swell the budding town, but the railroad did bring a rush of sorts to the area.

The provincial population swelled from 36,000 in 1871 to over 2 million in the next hundred years. Port Coquitlam, like many other brand-new towns, grew as a result of newcomers finding employment in the primary industries of fishing, agriculture and forestry. Since 1951 the development of manufacturing industries - lumber, plywood and metal smelting has meant employment to far more people than the primary industries.

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# 7

# Floods and Fish

The indomitable Fraser brought pioneers to the lower mainland, but once settled a conflict between man and the river began. When the disastrous floods of 1894 struck, the early settlers realized that their hand-built dykes were useless in the face of the Fraser's fury. A Dyking District was formed, but it too had early failures in controlling the angry freshets. In 1897 the Public Works Act provided further funding, but the Fraser was to be heard from for years to come.

The Fraser's tributaries were busy, too! On Friday, October 28, 1921, the weather forecast in The Daily World was : Gales, unsettled, mild, with rain. Not too much warning for what was to come!

The Vancouver paper reported that the rain had brought the water in Seymour Creek up 8 feet and that it was now over the concrete wall constructed the year before. Other North Vancouver creeks were in flood. The rising of the Coquitlam River had cut off communication between Port Coquitlam and the Haney-Hammond District. Fields were

flooded and the C P R was an island in the midst of water-covered tracks. The Gregory Tire Company's plant was entirely surrounded by water. There was a mudslide at Albion so the train was late.

"Some Gale," was the comment of the desk sergeant at police Headquarters. "Not a report of any trouble, though."

But disaster struck Britannia on October 29, and it was reported in the Vancouver paper, "In one of the worst cloudbursts in the history of the Pacific slope, the mining town of Britannia Beach is today a city of the dead. Many of the miners, with their families, were caught like rats when a wall of water swept out of the midnight darkness, swept through the place, carrying houses on its crest and depositing them like so much flotsam and jetsam on the beach."

Attention was drawn to the plight of this town, but Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam Municipality were busy receiving their share of the same storm that weekend. Both the traffic bridge and the railway bridge were wiped out, and much of the town was under water. There were many narrow escapes during the height of the flood and damage was estimated at $200,000. By the breaking of the 25 and 14-inch mains for a distance of three or four miles between Table Bluff and the shingle mill, New Westminster was deprived of its water supply. Wires were strung across the raging Coquitlam River and bread and supplies for marooned families were sent across. Monday's paper reported:

> Floods Subsiding Steadily Around Port Coquitlam - Engineers Building out From Both Sides of River.....Hundreds of visitors

> in automobiles flocked out via Port Moody yesterday to see what there was to be seen....It will be weeks before traffic can be resumed between the Port Haney and Hammond District and the coast.....Chief Pare and Constable Lanoe were able to make some sensational rescues at Essondale during the rush of waters. Repairs have started at Pitt Lake on the wharf.....The damage done to the C P R bridge, the traffic bridge, and to the New Westminster water main are the big items in the disaster... It was not known on Saturday what damage was done to the roads, although it was known that several bridges were gone.

New Westminster received its problem from the storm in the loss of their water supply from Coquitlam Lake. In fact it was New Westminster that sent out an SOS to neighbouring cities.

> Royal City Facing Water Famine...Staggering under a blow, the like of which is even more disastrous than the conditions created by the great fire of 1895 when the lower portion of the town was laid in smouldering ruins, the city of New Westminster, through Mayor Johnston and the city council has sent out an SOS to the neighbouring districts....The greatest danger is from fires. A government dredge will act as a fire boat and the Fraser Mill will pump Fraser River water into the city mains if great need arises....Water will probably be pumped from the Coquitlam River, although it is little better than mud at the

> present time.....Como Lake, which has excellent water, according to Dr. Wilson, the municipal health officer, will possibly be connected up as an alternative.. Coquitlam Dam is not in danger.

Apparently the valley floods continued to destroy during the winter. In a clipping from the Vancouver Archives, I believe saved by Major J.S.Matthews, a report tells that for a second time in recent weeks both railway and traffic bridges over Coquitlam River had gone out. The first flood had carried away two expensive and presumably permanent structures. Otto Hoyem told me he remembered riding out on his bicycle from New Westminster to see the flood damage.

The Fraser and its tributaries have a history of flooding. Since the Lower Mainland has been settled certain years have been well remembered. The spring freshets of 1894, 1936 and 1948 brought the destructive, swollen waters of the Fraser into full play against the dykes and all who tried to contain them. Sandbags and gravel, armies and residents, in Queensborough, Essondale, Fort Langley and New Westminster fought the fury.

But it was not the spring freshet that brought the Coquitlam River into the headlines. Although there is some backwater effect from the Fraser's annual run-off, the high flood flows that come between November and April result from extremely heavy rainfall, usually coupled with a snowpack in the drainage basin surrounding Coquitlam Lake. The 1921 flood was estimated to have a peak instantaneous flow at Port Coquitlam, of between 21,000 and 26,000 cfs (cubic feet per second) and claimed to be the most

devastating flood on record. The 1961 flood was the second largest, but it was at a four to five foot lower level at the Lougheed Highway, than it was at the 1921 flood. Its peak instantaneous flow was recorded at 14,900 cfs, by the B.C.Electric. The third largest flood occurred in 1955, and was just slightly lower than the 1961 level.

Precipitation at Coquitlam Lake averages 143 and at Port Coquitlam 72 inches per annum. The Vancouver Airport receives only 42 inches in a year. The reason for the increase as one proceeds northward is that the lake is within the Coastal Range and a physical effect is felt from these mountains. To add to the problem 75% of this precipitation falls during the six winter months, and 50% of this falls as snow above 530 feet elevation.

The Coquitlam River flows out of Coquitlam Lake, which has a surface area of 3100 acres, southerly into the Fraser River and the distance between the dam on Coquitlam Lake to the great muddy river is just over 11 miles. Its largest tributary is Or Creek which drains a mountainous region south-east of the drainage basin of Coquitlam Lake. This tributary joins the Coquitlam River a mile below the dam. Elevations in the drainage area reach as high as 5500 feet.

In these 11 miles the river drops 422 feet and two-thirds of this fall is in the upper half of the river. This gradient, being quite steep, gives high velocities to sudden river discharges, which means extreme erosive power. Below this the valley tapers, causing channel migration and meander cutoffs. Downstream the gradient is flat and is subject to tidal influence. These variations invite conflicts and problems of pollution. In the days of pre-history a

change of channel was of no great concern, as the Indian settlements were able to blend with nature's whims. But as settlement became more permanent, the river was suddenly restricted to a channel as artificial as a canal. The river didn't always lose the battle as the floods of '21, '55 and '61 show.

Since development the major water rights have been held by B.C.Hydro, earlier called B.C.Electric. The Crown Corporation has the option of giving an assured flow for fish and wildlife habitat, as well as protecting the Coquitlam River Valley from floods by maintaining a reasonable spillway crest level. Eighty percent of the basin is restricted to the public as the lake is a source of water for the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD). Still the drainage basin suffers forest loss because of fire, logging and urban development. Recent plans to build a gasline through the restricted area has mayors of surrounding areas up in arms.

Channel deposits of gravel and sand up to 100 feet deep lie upstream of the C P R bridge, and these are being mined on the west bank. Extreme pollution is resulting from some of the pits, and unfortunately this area is also heavily utilized by salmon for spawning and rearing.

The reach from the bridge to the Indian Reserve has commercial and residential development along it. The lower floodplain, until recent changes by the Social Credit Government, has been mostly farmed by Riverview Hospital (Colony Farm). The many jurisdictions the river flows through causes such a tangle of administrative problems that one wonders if they will ever be sorted out. After leaving control of the G V W D (1.3 miles) it travels through a section

of the District of Coquitlam (5.1 miles), then enters the city of Port Coquitlam (1.7 miles). After that the river is the common boundary for both the city and the municipality (3.2 Miles). Along this last reach land administration becomes even more complicated in that the Indian Reserve takes in one half a mile along the east bank and Colony Farm has taken up 2.8 miles of the west bank, and 1.5 miles of the east bank.

During the 50's and 60's over one million cubic yards of gravel were removed from the stream bed of the river for commercial purposes. It was thought to be of some help for flood control, at the time, but now it is considered to have contributed to an unstable river bed. Besides, Fishery officials believe that the removal seriously damaged most of the spawning areas for cutthroat trout, chum and pink salmon. Then in the late 60's gravel mining got going along the western side of the river, and the river has never looked clean since. Silt and fine sand has destroyed spawning beds by preventing the flow of oxygen to the salmon eggs. Devastation of this age-old renewable resource has concerned a great many caring people.

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# 8

# Gold in Them Thar Hills

In the frontier days of the budding province there was hardship and courage, success and failure. Many were drawn to this new land with visions of untold riches, and all came because they had the spirit of adventure. Some found riches immediately while others built the groundwork for future wealth. Some suffered untold misery and an early death in the rugged world where treasures lay hidden. Gold was the bait that teased them on, from one goldfield to the next. Strikes were reported at various spots along the Fraser, and a final bonanza was realized in the Barkerville area.

And Burke Mountain, too, saw many a hopeful prospector pass her foot, many never to return. Although the reported rich goldfield behind the mountain didn't draw great numbers, no real rush, it afforded a deadly bait for those who did try to find it.

One story that persisted longer than the others was of a half-breed called Slumach, who was said to have arrived in New Westminster carrying a sack of gold

nuggets some time in 1890. The story continued, "After a wild and drunken spree he disappeared, leaving the whole town curious about the origin of his loot. A few months later he arrived to go through the whole orgy again. Apparently his tongue was loosened slightly this time, as he let out the secret that his find was located in rugged creeks deep in the northern area of Pitt Lake. Lost Creek, was what he called the place, and he shared no more with them - soon disappearing again to go for more of his gold.

His luck started to run out after the brutally beaten body of an Indian woman was fished out of the water at the mouth of the Fraser. When several gold nuggets were found in her clothes, great suspicion was turned toward the half breed. He got off the hook when he admitted she had been his helper and he had given her some gold to reward her, but that she had fallen off their raft and drowned.

Later another young squaw's body was cast upon the beach, and this one had a knife in her chest. The knife was Slumach's. The man's current drinking bout came to a sudden end when he was charged with murder, and tried at the New Westminster fall assizes on November 14, 1890. The trial lasted a day, the jury was out 15 minutes, and the verdict was guilty. Slumach died of hanging on January 16, 1891, and the secret of Lost Creek went with him to the grave. Justice moved quickly in those days."

Many a tale grew out of these events, and old-timers for many years swore they were true. Old-timers often dream on about stories, and these stories grow richer as time passes. They do not intend to lie, it is just that the past becomes misty, and stories become

confused with truths. And so some said he had confessed, at the foot of the gallows, to murdering many more maidens, and others claimed he had put a curse on the area where he got his gold. According to any who have searched for the Lost Creek that contained nuggets of gold, the area is so incredibly rugged it needs no curse to claim most men who dare to penetrate its mysteries. And it has claimed as many as 23.

One of the first to set out on a search was a tough and experienced prospector, John Jackson, who was properly outfitted and headed into the unknown mountain area. When he staggered out some time later he was a broken man, but it is said that he clutched a heavy packsack, and it returned to San Francisco with him. His apparent wealth did him little good as he soon died, but here the plot thickens, as he is said to have written a letter to a friend called Shotwell, describing the spot where he found the Lost Creek gold.

Shotwell was too city-bred to attack the mountain, so sold his letter and map for $1000, to a man who headed north to try his luck. When this man failed and very nearly lost his life, he also lost a piece of the map. The letter and the remainder of the map changed hands many times after that, and it is unknown how many actually set out to find the gold. Many were reported early in this century.

In 1937 a prospector from the Kootenay-Boundary District, a man called A.R. 'Volcanic' Brown, decided to try his hand at discovering the gold, after studying the map then held by Hugh Murray, of New Westminster. This man was no newcomer to prospecting, having located the Volcanic Mine ten miles

north of Grand Forks. After losing a fortune on its lack of success, he went on to discover the Sunset Mine on Copper Mountain. This mine proved to be a great producer for 40 years, but Volcanic had, early in its development, sold out his interest for $45,000. This was his second try for the Pitt Lake gold; his first unsuccessful trip had cost him several toes as the result of frozen feet. After he set out this time he was never seen again, but his camp was found by searchers, and in his meagre belongings was a jar of gold that had been hammered out of a solid vein. But by this time the treasure was being called hoodoo gold.

In 1960 Doug Bennie, Bob Gillespie, Thomas Calow and other civilians and police brought out the body of the twenty-third victim of the lure of Slumach's gold. In July that year Lewis Earl Hagbo of Bremerton, Washington, collapsed and died at the 3000 foot level, approximately 7 miles NE of Widgeon Lake. (History of Port Coquitlam)

Every few years a great news article is printed about Lost Creek and its gold. In 1947 a full page was used in the Daily Province. In 1952 the story was revived again, when reporter Bill Ryan and photographer Ray Munro of the Province, took Tommy Williams (the son of Chief Coquitlam William) as their guide. They felt that others were on the wrong track. They knew it was going to be a severe trial of their strength, for they reported that Alfred Gaspard had disappeared in 1950, and that he was the 21st victim. They staked a claim and called it Rymu Coquitlam, and were able to get out alive, if bitterly cold.

In the fall of 1980, still luring men into its treachery, the lost mine drew Mike Boileau and his partner,

Tom Spraggs, into its rugged cliffs and valleys. They started out the easy way, by helicopter to the 3100-foot level, where they then climbed up 3000 feet of sheer rock. Boileau's first partner, Gerald Fleming of Delta, had drowned that summer, in Pitt Lake. He had tried to swim after his float plane, which had broken loose. Another victim after the gold. The two remaining partners staked a claim and returned safely, but with warnings to adventurers on the sudden weather changes, and other risks involved. Boileau reported that geologists have yet to determine whether it would be worth the risk and expense to get into the mine. (Coquitlam Today, October 14, 1980)

So the Giant Mountain sleeps on and nobody has been able to steal its gold, if gold there is.

As mentioned in an early chapter, we grew up calling the mountain that rose to the north of Port Coquitlam and west of Pitt River, simply 'The Dollar'. Not until after the war did the name Burke come into general usage. As children we never questioned the name or its origin. Since writing this history, however, I became interested in the reason we used the name. It seems that early timber limits were once held by Robert Dollar, the lumber man and shipping magnate, the man Dollarton was named for.

An extremely interesting man was this Robert Dollar, who began his logging career as a cook's helper in a remote Canadian lumber camp, after coming from Scotland with his father at the tender age of 12. As he kept a diary of his exploits for 59 years there is much material to be found on him in libraries.

The boy saved his money and spent his spare time learning to read and write, thus by the time he was in his 20's he was buying timber land of his own. He moved to Michigan and later to the Pacific coast, in search of larger timber. By 1882, eight years after he was married, he came up with the theory of selling lumber to foreign markets, and he took a trip to the 'Celestial Empire' to establish a market. He realized that China presented the best trade possibilities in the world.

Having trouble with crippling legislation on shipping regulations in the States, he moved his business to British Columbia. Then finding his profit being lost in high shipping charges he bought a ship of his own, called the Newsboy, and was able to pay for it in less than a year. Thus started his steamship line, a 'half score' vessels in the coast trade and as many more travelling to the Orient.

The next thing he realized was that he couldn't make money running empty steamers on the way back, so he travelled west and arranged to ship mahogany and copra from the Philippines and other raw materials from China and Japan. He, as well as his ships, travelled constantly. He visited all his offices - in Hong Kong, Tientsin, Peking, Hankow, Changsha, and Shanghai, speaking with high officials such as the president of China, General Li Yuen Hung. The former president, Yuan Shi Kai, had decorated him as had the last Emperor of China.

Arriving back after one such trip he recorded in his journal, "On arrival at Vancouver I found that the boys had bought the Port Moody Timber Limits and railroad, including all equipment. This turned out to be a good purchase." (Memoirs of Robert Dollar)

The Port Moody Limits stretched across Burke Mountain. Thus Robert Dollar's magic touched the mountain, and his name stuck for many years.

The late Bert Flynn, a long-time resident of Port Moody, loaned me a book called A Cedar Saga by W. Guy Flavelle which reported:

> Across the valley on the Coquitlam ridge, was limit No 38, consisting of about 10,000 acres. This limit was originally controlled by the Robert McNair Shingle company at Port Moody. For years they took out cedar shingle bolts for their mill. Later they sold the limit to the Smith-Dollar Company which then established a logging dump in the harbour across from the Thurston-Flavelle mill site and ran a railroad back into the limit to log out the fir for their Dollarton operation.

So the name Dollar came to the mountain, but the source of the name was not long on the slopes. After the limit was worked for a few years, using geared locomotives because of the steep grades, there were only smaller varieties left, high on the hillside and on rough ground, and most of what was left ran heavy to cedar. This the Smith-Dollar company did not have equipment to use, and so it was sold to the Hage Timber and Investment Company, for the Thurston-Flavelle Mill. The Smith-Dollar Company had a dump, rails, locomotives, logging cars, and camps on the Coquitlam Limit, and these were wanted by the new company. The equipment was all moved over to the Port Moody limits in 1922-23.

The Thurston-Flavelle balance sheet as of September 30, 1923 showed amongst its investments: Coquitlam Limits (Canadian-Robert Dollar).....$41,693.00.

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# 9

# All Roads Lead to Coquitlam

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> The public, near and far, at last is fairly grasping the fact that there is to be built a railroad and manufacturing town that is destined to become one of the greatest industrial centres on the continent.

So read the B.C. Saturday Sunset report of February 24, 1912. In glowing terms it was reported that Vice-president and General Manager Bury, of the CPR, told in great detail of the company's plans for a terminal at the juncture of the Fraser and Pitt Rivers. A hundred more men would start work in March of that year, under Contractor M.P.Cotton. This bolstered the confidence of the public in Coquitlam as a splendid field of investment.

And invest the people did. It was so well advertised in Eastern Canada that tourists coming west were often heading for the place then called Westminster Junction. Even my father-in-law, a young druggist, bought lots that he never did lay eyes on! A few

men of broad vision, quick to grasp the future of so perfect a spot for a manufacturing center on either side of the railroad - good shipping possibilities, cheap manufacturing sites and cheap power from 2 electric power lines (Coquitlam and Stave Lakes) - gathered up options on much of the available land. They gathered up so much so quietly that when the agents for the CPR found they needed more land than originally thought, they had to buy 1000 acres from the speculators, in order to have room for all their expansion, some $1,000,000 worth. Soon a townsite was plotted for a place to be known as Coquitlam.

The Coquitlam Terminal Company Limited advertised to readers across Canada that business lots were selling for $1000. They claimed that Coquitlam was not a dream, not a prospect; a carefully conceived plan was about to be carried out. A flood of business followed. These investors were men of wealth from all parts of Canada and many American states. There was the Schaake Machine Works ready to build a plant that would hire 150 men. There was F A Bean, millionaire owner of flour mills, purchasing property for a flour mill. Brown and McKay planned to set up a woodworking establishment. Mr. William Owen, the English steel expert, said he would build a $2,000,000 steel plant, consisting of blast furnaces, open-hearth steel furnaces, rolling mills and engineering shops.

Atlantic Realty and Investment Company, Limited of Frederickton, New Brunswick bought 30 lots by wire! The Coquitlam Terminal Company, a syndicate of local and Eastern capitalists, bought 100 lots in the Shaughnessy subdivision for $50,000.

It was even thought that there was coal to be found right in the district. The Coquitlam Star reported: Men are at work delving into the bowels of the earth searching for treasures, and it is stated that it has been found in the black diamond of commerce. Coal of high quality exists in vast quantities, thereby ensuring the industries that are locating in the district a cheap supply of fuel and motive power. On February 13, 1915, the Columbian reported:

> W. Innes, Manager of the Pitt Meadows well, told reporters that "we appear to have struck oil at last". He said the well is now down 1637 feet, and every pull on the baler contained oil. The next few days would determine whether it was in commercial quantities.

Panama Canal was opening. Alberta and Saskatchewan had lost millions of dollars worth of wheat that year for lack of transportation, and Coquitlam sat in the center of the situation. The world's eye was focused on the embryo city, which would grow into a great metropolis handling all this commerce. The Star continued: As a manufacturing center Coquitlam is pre-eminent. It has splendid water frontage, the Pitt and Fraser Rivers with a little dredging allowing deep water vessels of high tonnage to dock, and it is only 4 miles further to the Pacific from Coquitlam than from Vancouver.

But there were scoffers at these great predictions. The Toronto Saturday Night raised the ire of one writer when it answered a reader inquiring about Coquitlam, that there was no Pacific Coast Terminus about Coquitlam, and reports were greatly exagger-

ated. The provoked writer, whose letter appeared on February 24, 1912, said:

> The editor of the department might have inquired from the CPR what the railroad really intends to do at Coquitlam before answering his correspondent. It would take more space than I have here to even outline the extensive plans of the CPR for Coquitlam. It is hard to estimate the damage needlessly done to Coquitlam by the indifferent and inadequate answer given to 'Reader', but the suggestion is that Coquitlam is a 'wildcat', which is, of course, absurd.

The harm, it seems, was slight, as subdivisions appeared and were sold in record numbers. The names of some of these were: Rainier Heights, St. Mary's Heights, Parkinson Subdivision, and many business and industrial sites. A 1912 advertisement raved:

> Coquitlam is advancing with relentless momentum. The forces which are behind it cannot, will not, be stopped by government or man. Coquitlam will pull you if you hitch yourself up to it. A small investment will harness you up with Coquitlam. Then you will have the cheapest and best pull in the land....one that does not depend on somebody else's whims.

What dreams, what hopes, poured into the area, the Coquitlam that was to be politically split into a city and a Municipality. On Inauguration Day, March 7, 1913 Port Coquitlam became a city, breaking away

from the Municipality that had been formed in 1891. Alas, world conditions were to affect her shining promises, to put the whole exciting development on hold. And although growth did come in time, never again were such extravagant terms used to describe the area. Spawned by the CPR, growth expected by the proximity of Vancouver actually was held back by it, as many small cities are, when standing in the shadow of a large city. Yet the men of the day felt that not just the CPR but up to a dozen railroads would be running to Vancouver, and Coquitlam would be standing at the apex of the Vancouver Peninsula.

World War 1, starting a year after Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam Municipality were divided, was a great contributor to its slow-down. After the war businesses that had been put on hold failed to renew plans, and after going ahead slowly into the twenties, fires and floods almost finished the early town. The depression of the thirties brought the final blow that left a bankrupt little city again struggling for survival.

After World War 2, growth began in earnest - finally manufacturing plants, subdivisions, and large malls began to expand and fill both places. Port Coquitlam had a compact area to develop and the Municipality of Coquitlam slowly stretched out to almost encircle it. When Coquitlam had developed and absorbed Fraser Mills, Burquitlam and North-east Coquitlam (Burke Mountain), it then had a larger population than New Westminster.

The history of the City and the Municipality overlapped, and the separation perhaps should never have happened. The North-east section of the Mu-

nicipality, because of its proximity, continued to identify with the City. But Port Coquitlam was a poor, miserable little town when I first laid eyes on it in 1930, a town full of petty politics and prejudice, with its South Side and North Side of the tracks - the South Siders feeling a cut above the North Side dwellers. My father had the misfortune to buy his block of land on the North Side, not that it bothered him in the least! I didn't know, for many years, of all the great beginnings the little place had. I thought it a deadly boring, backward city that had never had an original thought.

Yet, in the past there were men who dreamed of a canal from Burrard Inlet to Pitt River, thus giving Coquitlam a harbor at both her front and back doors. This idea came as early as 1891 when Mayor Oppenheimer of Vancouver sent engineers to survey the route. The only problem that was foreseen was in crossing the Coquitlam River, but that was considered a problem that could be worked out. The idea has raised its head a few times since, but so far has never been applied.

The city has clung onto the 'Port' in its name, although many new residents must wonder why. Port Haney dropped the word early in the thirties, yet it sits right on the Fraser River. Why, then, did the Port come in the first place, and why did it stay? It came as a result of the early high hopes that the city would be at the center of world trade, with its railroads and its ports. It stayed mainly because the word helped to differentiate between the Municipality and the City.

On February 1, 1914, newspapers reported that the first deep sea vessel to be built on either the Fraser

or Pitt Rivers gracefully slid down the ways at the Coquitlam Shipbuilding and Marine Railway Company yards.

> Nearly 1000 persons watched the launching of the Coquitlam City, a $70,000 sailing vessel which will later be equipped with auxiliary engines. She will be engaged in the lumber trade with South America and the West Indies. Keel of a second ship, similar in design, will be laid shortly.

The Coquitlam City was built at a shipyard located at the foot of Pitt River Road, near the mouth of Pitt River, as the result of a Nova Scotian shipbuilder, a Mr. Shaftner, hearing stories of the great opportunities opening up in the area. It was a four-masted sailing vessel, and was built by experienced builders and many local workers. Unfortunately it was ill fated, as it is said to have sunk on its maiden voyage. As well, the builder lost his $85,000 profit in real estate investments, and returned to Nova Scotia. Eve Forrest told me her father argued with the builders because he felt they should not be using green lumber. He later figured it had experienced shrinkage when it reached the tropics, causing its untimely end.

The shipyard did not stop there, however, for during the days of World War 1, the Pacific Construction Company took over the yards and built, under the management of H P Simpson, five wooden ships for the Government of Greece. These, however, were steamships, and they were towed to Coal Harbour to have their engines installed. After the war the yards closed and brought to an end another era.

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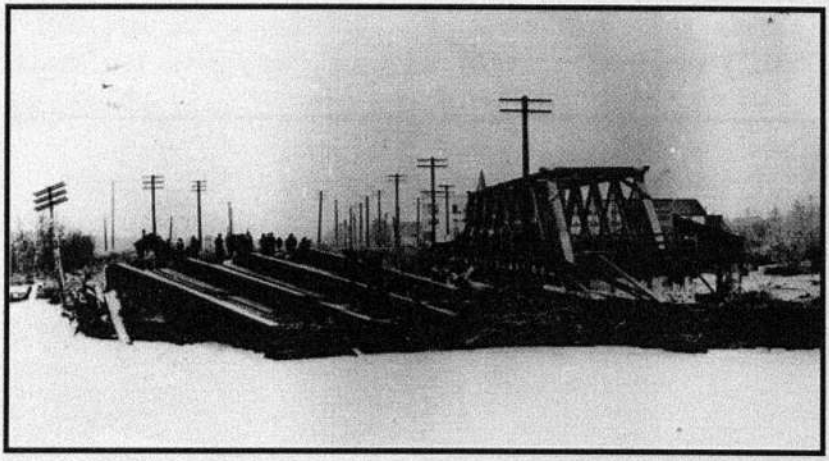
Photo by W. G .H. Campbell


United Church Picnic 1912. Photo by W. G. H. Campbell

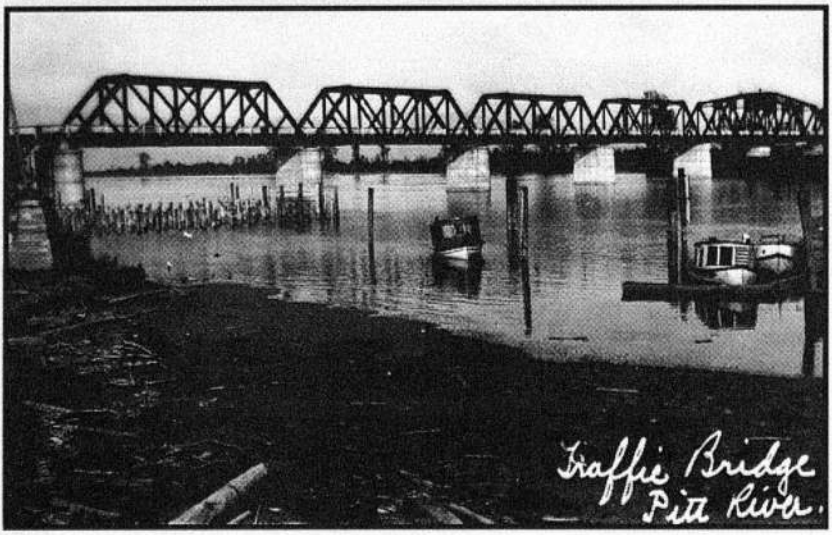


Coquitlam River Flood of 1921.

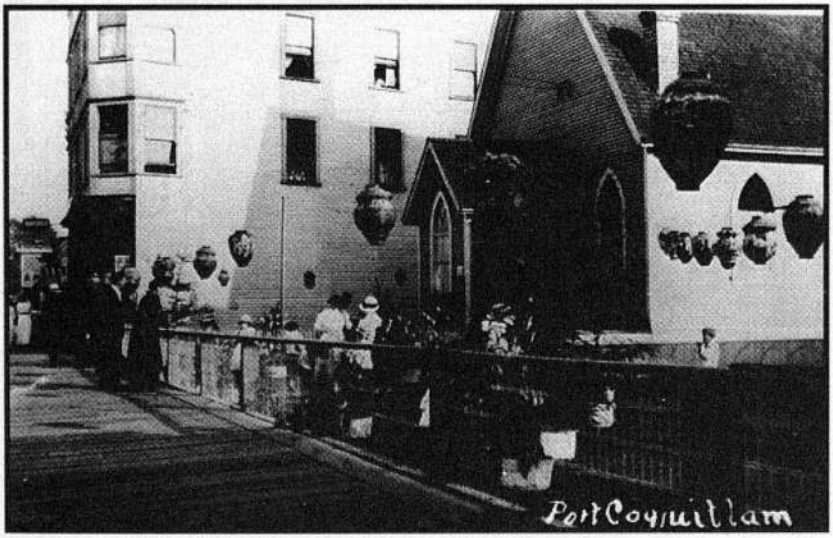
Courtesy of Provincial Archives, Victoria


Dewdney Trunk Road looking West, 1915.

Courtesy of Provincial Archives, Victoria

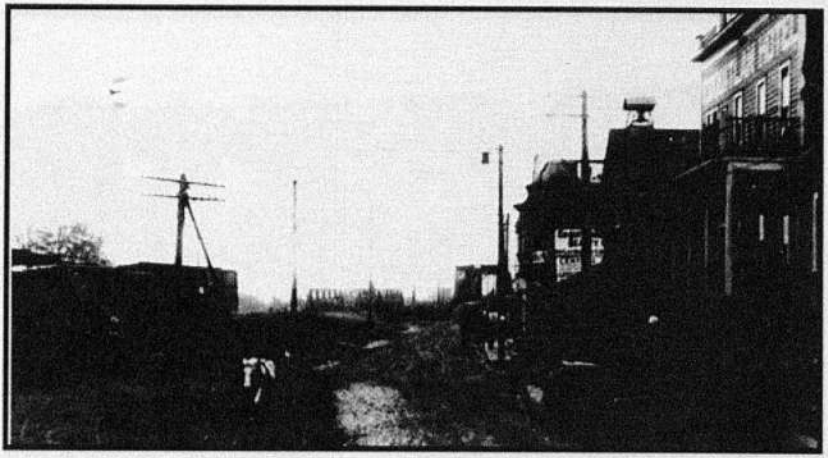



First traffic over the Pitt River Bridge. Photo by W.G.H. Campbell



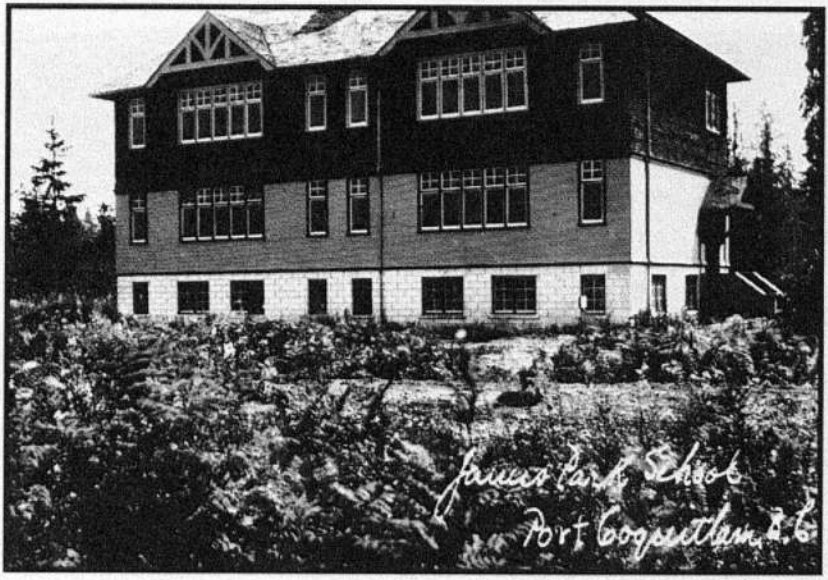

Lawson's Cafe and United Church, Port Coquitlam, 1912-1913

Photo by W.G. H. Campbell



Coquitlam, 1908 or 1909. These buildings were destroyed by fire in 1921.

Courtesy of Provincial Archives, Victoria,B.C.




James Park School, 1912 Courtesy of Provincial Archives, Victoria,B.C.

# 10

# Early Problems

Shortly after the city was organized, forest fires blazed on the mountain and there was extensive damage to lumber stocks. Burke Mountain shows many scars of this and later fires that struck especially hard in 1922 and again in the early thirties. Still the moist slopes grew green and rich again. Only the clear-cut logging left permanent bare spots on the higher slopes. Early fires spread down into the areas where miles of wooden sidewalks were in their pathway, and many of them went up in smoke. Old-timers always mention the miles and miles of sidewalks that fanned out from the business section!

Every early town had, in its history, at least one shattering fire, and Port Coquitlam's came on August 5, 1920. It wiped out the entire business section west of the bridge, some dozen businesses. Said to have started in the firehall, the first thing rescued was the shiny red firetruck! Then it was found that there wasn't enough pressure in the mains until John Mars threw in a by-pass at the intake. Presumably this took quite a bit of time, and when it got going it was found that there wasn't enough hose to do the job.

New Westminster was called, but the one small chemical truck arrived too late to help.

Many people had narrow escapes with burning poles and hot electric wires falling. Heroines of the day were the B.C. telephone girls, who stayed at their posts in spite of shocks coming through the wires. The Coquitlam Hotel, a three-story building went, as did a half dozen stores owned by Robt. Wilson, Son and Company, 2 large stables, a blacksmith shop, and the municipal center. Although scorched, the CPR station was saved, as was the new Gregory Rubber and Tire Company factory.

What the townspeople must have felt, when all this destruction swept through the wooden buildings with terrific speed! And in the aftermath, as an added blow, the city had to pay $60,000 in damages. Later a less tragic fire swept through the other side of town. Yes, Port Coquitlam had its share.

As mentioned earlier, it was just a year later, in 1921, that both of the bridges in town were wiped out by flood, a cruel incident that nearly struck a fatal blow to business and industry still trying to recover from the fires. The city was sliced in two, all connection was lost between east and west.

Clippings show that police chief McKinley, who had helped save the fire truck in 1920, spent the night leading rescue parties by boat. The Myrtle Hotel, which had escaped the fires, was seen to float off like an ark. The Sinclair Jewelry store, a barber shop and several homes went the same way. There were no deaths as a result of the flood, but many close calls were reported; one by the jeweller who was trying to save his stock, others by townspeople who had

gone to the three-story Myrtle Hotel, thinking they were safe.

Again telephone and telegraph lines were broken, and the CPR lost its bridge, as well as pieces of rolling stock. Help was rushed from Vancouver, including sleeping cars for those driven out of their homes. When morning came exhausted workers could hardly recognize their town, as everything that was left was loaded with debris, mud and slime. Once more a new start would be made.

I'm sorry, little city, that I judged you so harshly a few years later.

As unmerciful as the fires and flood had been it took the city a lot longer to recover from the price it paid for early dreams. The population was only 1500 at the time huge loans were taken out. Promoters had talked the city fathers into subdividing practically all the useful land, into a grid system, and soon roads, sidewalks and water mains stretched out into the woods. For that time the loans were incredibly high - $25,000 for a city Hall, $150,000 for roads, $50,000 for water mains, $75,000 for sidewalks, $25,000 for two schools and $15,000 for a new fire truck and hall.

But fate stepped in, in the form of World War 1, and within a year development was halted. Then taxes stopped coming in on 90% of the 33-foot lots. It is said that the city repossessed 20,000 lots!

The city did not go into receivership during the depression, when many others did, and credit is given to John Smith and Roy Leigh, who alone were employees of city hall, and who somehow managed to

keep things running through this dreary period. But it was 42 years later before the people voted to borrow money again for improvements! Since the end of World War 2 growth has been steady, with facilities pushed to the limit. At last the developed city has fulfilled the early dreams of pioneers.

A less-known incident, but more deadly in view of deaths and injuries, was the huge landslide at the quarry on Pitt River. Headlines in the Vancouver World of January 24, 1915, reported:

> HUGE LANDSLIDE AT QUARRY WIPES IT OFF THE EARTH.
>
> Entire plant swept into river and lost....Sixty men have awful experience with avalanche and great death-dealing wave.
>
> Four tons of high explosives set off Saturday night in the Sinclair Quarry on the Pitt River, fifteen miles from New Westminster, loosened ten thousand tons of rock and provided a great enough shock to send a strip of land 75 yards wide and three quarters of a mile long into the river, with sixty men, three of whom were drowned, and five injured.
>
> Quarry equipment, including locomotives, trackage, rock crushers, cabins, and steam shovels, went into the river with the slide, and occasioned a loss of $100,000.

Mr. E. J. Fader of New Westminster, manager of the B.C.Transport Company, who operates the quarry under the terms of a lease to provide stone for the jetty which the Marsh Hutton Power Company is erecting on the Fraser River at Eburne, stated today that there was no doubt but that the force of the explosion had caused the slide. It is believed that the action of the heavy frosts of the past week may have caused the creation of a large fissure in the mountainside which the shock of the blast turned into a destructive avalanche.

When earth and rocks and equipment slid into the river a tremendous wave fully a quarter of a mile long and ten feet high, swept back against the river bank and washed the men into the river. A dense fog added to the danger and risk of rescue. The men injured were taken to the Coquitlam Private Hospital, conducted by Dr. G A Sutherland.

The dead were listed as John H Chisholm, engineer, Joseph Lound, engineer, and Richard Evans, donkey engineer.

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# 11

## Growing Pains

The North-east Ratepayers Association has for over twenty years taken up the battle for the people in their 'No-man's Land'. Conflict results from the use of recreational facilities, as it is much more convenient for parents to use the city's than travel some 8 miles to the municipality's - even though that is where their taxes go. Port Coquitlam's business section also benefits more from the northeast-enders than the Municipality stores do.

There have often been strong feelings over the obvious attachment to the city. And long has been the lament of taxpayers on the neglect of their Municipal Hall to meet such needs as water, fire protection, playgrounds and decent roads. But when the huge NDP Development Program hit the news of 1974, the area was eyed in a different manner. Although the plan did not materialize before the NDP lost power, areas have developed quite steadily on their own momentum.

But after separation Port Coquitlam was ready to boom ahead. A huge party was held to celebrate the

occasion of becoming a city, on April 18, 1913. The first mayor was James Mars and the Aldermen were J F Langan, E S Morgan, R C Galer, A R Millard and D E Welcher. City officials were clerk John Smith, engineer John Kilmer, assessor Roy Leigh and solicitor P J McIntyre.

There was a parade for children and each received a medal which was made for the occasion. There were races and baseball games at the Agricultural Grounds (the hall had been opened in September, 1912 by Premier Richard McBride), and everyone posed in front of the hall for pictures. In the afternoon there was a tree-planting ceremony and a soccer game. Then things wound up with a banquet and a grand ball in the evening.

As the Mayor was a bachelor a need was found to pick a hostess for the day. The Women's Institute was in full swing by that time so the president of that organization was chosen for this honour. It happened that my future mother-in-law, Mrs. Blanche A Campbell, was that lady and she was present at the tree-planting ceremony on the Agricultural Hall grounds. The guest of honour with her was Dr. Esson Young, the Provincial Minister of Education, who also gave his name to Essondale, and who laid the cornerstone of the original James Park School.

My mother-in-law laughed in later years when she remembered the embarrassment she suffered when she had to introduce her husband (W G H Campbell, the first druggist in town) to the dignitaries, as he had arrived at her side covered with mud, after playing soccer.

The children from the mountain enjoyed the day, as they would enjoy all future celebrations, not knowing that they were now from the forgotten area, the fringe people. They would continue to attend Port Coquitlam Schools and take part in daily life there.

While all eyes were on Port Coquitlam the District was a scattered area that was known less as Coquitlam, and more as Burquitlam, Maillardville, and Fraser Mills where many of them were employed. When Port Coquitlam seceded most of the old counselors carried on in the first year of the new city's life. The first in the joined area was Reeve R B Kelly (1891-1897), next was E A Atkins (1898-1903), then Ralph Booth (1904-1908). Later came D E Welcher (1909-1910), then James Mars (1911-1913). It was James Mars as Mayor who started off in the new city, while the District began a line of Reeves.

These were L E Marmot (1914-1916), C W Philip (1917), Marmot again (1919-1922), G Proulx (1923), R C MacDonald (1924-1941), W Oliver (1943-1944) and coming into the post war years, J Christmas was elected in 1945 and stayed for many years. Following his term came Jack Ballard, then Jim Tonn, who continued to be elected until he retired. At time of writing Mayor Lou Sekora has held the position into the nineties.

When the first council meeting was held in 1891 the big issue was getting roads. Except for the railroad, travel was limited to what were mere trails. Pitt River Road was the first real road to be developed in 1862, and soon there was a trail where North Road now exists. John Kilmer, father of long-standing councillor Jane Kilmer, was responsible for laying out many of the local roads.

A community sprang up near Fraser Mills when, in 1909, groups of French Canadians from Quebec were provided with one-acre lots. Soon more French people came and settled, building a church and a school. The area was called Maillardville, after Father Maillard. This has been historically the largest French-speaking community in British Columbia. Although not a political division, in 1913 Maillardville was granted a Post Office. In later years the area was absorbed into the District of Coquitlam.

Along with the political set-up in town, the education of the young is a high priority. No doubt it is the activity that touches everyone even more deeply than the running of the town. All come through those formative years with memories, perhaps scars, mentally if not physically. But the years, some pleasant, some not, prepared one for decisions to be made in the future life of the town.

Going back in history one again starts with the whole area as a single political region. The first teacher at the time was R D Irvine. He and his daughter, Ada Irvine, were to become practically an institution, their careers spanning so many decades. A Miss Dixon was the first city teacher, and this was at Junction School on Schoolhouse Road (now Mary Hill Road). Following her R D Irvine took over from 1893 to 1899. By 1912 there were four schools altogether: Millside, East Coquitlam (at Pollard Road), Blue Mountain and Junction.

James Park School was built the year the city was incorporated, while Central and Glen came in 1914. Ada Irvine ruled Central (and Junction) School from

1907 to 1946. One found it wasn't bad enough to be reminded how much more an earlier sibling had accomplished - some had to hear how much better their PARENTS had done!

Emma Cox was at James Park School from its beginning until 1933, and she started holding May Days in the twenties. She taught all the pupils to dance the Maypole, whistling and clapping her hands in accompaniment. "Come lassies and lads, take leave of your dads," the class would sing the old English song with her. I remember the stately old woman, straggly white hair bunned up under a hair net, long strings of beads swaying on her ample bosom. I don't remember that she read from the bible but after the Lord's Prayer each morning she continued on with her own prayer at some length. She sometimes launched into a sermon during the day - and I don't remember any parent thinking this was out of line. She didn't have to do much strapping but I well remember we received one whack of the ruler for one spelling mistake, two whacks for two.....

Ada Irvine, as mentioned, was at Central for almost 40 years. Although scathingly strict, she was also known for her kindness to the less fortunate. She often took a carload of boys to out of town ball games, which they would never have seen otherwise. Although I dreaded her classes I still have a charming letter she sent me when I was absent because of measles. Her grammar and arithmetic gave many the groundwork to get through high school.

Ada Irvine was ever vigilant in making sure the grade eight girls didn't show any interest in boys. For the 70th anniversary of Central School in 1984, a booklet was made up by the students. They com-

mented that over the years things haven't changed. Haven't they? As late as the thirties there was an imaginary line (always reminding one of the equator) separating the playgrounds and ONE step onto the side of the opposite sex meant a scalding bawling out. But by the seventies the boys and girls were having SOCK-HOPS! Together!

Port Coquitlam High School did not have a building of its own, but was accommodated in the two upstairs rooms of James Park. After Viscount Alexander was built it included junior high, gradually absorbing the higher grades until the present Senior High School was built. Bill Brand was a long-time principal spanning James Park, Central, Viscount Alexander and finally Port Coquitlam Senior High. The pupils from Burke Mountain travelled to these schools, except for a few years that the senior grades had to be taken at Port Moody due to expansion coming faster than construction.

In 1947, after schools in Port Moody, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Ioco were consolidated into School District 43, they lost their identity somewhat, and there was more bussing of students. In 1949 the school district started to add new schools as newcomers to the area began to swell the population. By 1958 the enrolment had soared to 5000.

When the Coquitlam Star was first published in 1911 it was the largest B.C. Weekly, and it was printed for several years by R W Hulbert. During the first World War the Port Coquitlam Review was published by J A Bates, and next the Coquitlam Times lasted for a short time. In the twenties the Coquit-

lam-Moody News was printed. In 1929 J C Machesney established the Coquitlam Herald, which lasted into the eighties. I fondly remember the Coquitlam Herald reporting on Sports Days, May Days, passing lists and local gossip through the thirties. The paper cost one dollar a year, and if you couldn't afford to pay some years it came anyway.

Church groups were formed in the early years of development, and these had their meetings in the Municipal Hall and other buildings. By 1913 there were four churches in town, St.Catherine's Anglican on Dewdney Trunk Road being the first. Trinity United Church (then Presbyterian) at first on Dewdney Trunk, was later moved to Shaughnessy Street downtown. Later it was again moved to Shaughnessy and Prairie Roads. There was a Baptist and a Methodist Church, both on the north side of town. The first Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church was not built until the thirties, then others such as the Evangelical Free Church, the Full Gospel Tabernacle and the Hope Lutheran Church followed in post-war years.

Organizations began to form as soon as settlers came, as man is a social animal. The Women's Institute started in 1909 and soon the Women's Christian Temperance Union was pushing for women's franchise. The Young Ladies' Club enjoyed music and games.

Men started the Ratepayer's Association, the Masonic Lodge and the Orange Lodge. Quite early

there was an Agricultural Society and the Ancient Order of Foresters, while the Elks Lodge came later. The Earl Haig Branch of the Canadian Legion started in 1925.

Health care in the community was not early in coming. When the old James Park School was torn down a 1913 newspaper, The Star, was one of the objects enclosed in the cornerstone. An item in it was a request by the first druggist in Coquitlam, W. G. H. Campbell. He asked those interested in having their own doctor in town to get in touch with him.

At the time there was a Medical Health Officer, Dr. G. .Southerland, and a small hospital on Pitt River Road (the former Marshall family home). This building was in use until the early thirties, and I remember visiting a little neighbourhood girl, Margaret Hunter, there when she suffered a broken leg. This has been the only hospital the area has ever had, so residents made use of the hospitals in New Westminster.

A handful of names stand out in the formative years of the town. When George Roy Leigh, a young schoolteacher from England, arrived in 1912 he became one of these. He first took the position on the Coquitlam Municipal staff and his influence was to be felt for the next 42 years. When the crash came at the time of World War 1 he found himself collector and assessor - but there was nothing to collect, a half million dollar debt, and a promise to build roads, watermains and schools.

Although there was no money to cover the sinking fund the city didn't go into receivership because of the efforts by Leigh and several others in city hall. Restraint was put into effect and bond holders were talked into settling for less. Leigh was secretary of the School Board from 1919 until District 43 (Coquitlam) was formed. In 1925 he was made Justice of the Peace and later Judge of Juvenile Court and Police Magistrate. In 1937 he became Collector and Treasurer at city hall. In 1954 he retired from his position of City Clerk and in 1960 he received the Citizen of the Year Award in Port Coquitlam.

John Smith, a straight-laced magistrate early in the century and City Clerk until 1938 was held in high regard. Although thought to be beyond reproach, my in-laws told of an amusing incident that happened when they lived next door to him. It seems an out-of-season pheasant was thrown into their kitchen one day, with instructions to 'Get this out of sight, quick!' An embarrassed John Smith had seen a game warden coming.

Probably the best known lady from the thirties was gracious and talented Jane Kilmer, who was known as Aunt Jane far and wide. When elected to council in 1928 she was the third woman elected to a municipal council in B. C. , the first in the Lower Mainland. Her pleasant manner was maintained for 27 years on council. She spent her life in the large and solid family home on Pitt River Road, where she helped to raise her nieces and nephew. The oldest building in Coquitlam was reported to be a log house built on her property.

Jane was made a life member of the Women's Institute, the Royal Purple and the Eastern Star. In 1967

she received the Citizen of the Year Award from Port Coquitlam Chamber of Commerce.

From 1925 until 1945 Mayor R C Galer held office, but had started in the early part of the century to be on council. This kindly English gentleman had a style that gave stability in the aftermath of turmoil. He is well remembered in his role as master of ceremonies at the May Day celebrations, laying a wreath at the cenotaph, introducing visiting dignitaries and dancing the lancers with the white-frocked girls in the May Day suite.

Who grew up in that little town in the thirties who cannot hear 'The bear came over the mountain..." played by David's Orchestra, who cannot hear that quaint English voice announcing the "Mai Dai Celee- brai-tion" ?

Charles Davies has left his prints, too. As a contractor he built both city hall and the Commercial Hotel (now called Friscos), both solid and lasting landmarks. He was a long-time Postmaster and was on Council for 21 years, then elected Mayor of Port Coquitlam in 1947 and 1955.

In the depression years most of the steady jobs were at the CPR, Essondale, or surrounding lumber mills. Some survived on their garden produce, chickens, livestock and picking up pennies gathering barberry bark (for cascara products), picking berries, evergreen cones and odd jobs. Many applied for 'relief' from the city. One activity that provided jobs was repairing the large wooden stave water mains, still in use since the boom years. City Hall would be noti-

fied when a passer-by spotted a large puddle on the boulevard. Workers would arrive and proceed to stick a pipe into the ground to listen for the sound of water leaking. Once the leak was located a hole would be dug, a wooden peg whittled on the spot to be pounded into the hole. There was much leaning on the shovels involved, and many world problems solved!

There were some thirty merchants in the city in 1912, along Dewdney Trunk Road and Schoolhouse (now Mary Hill). On the north side of town was the Commercial Hotel and in the downtown area, Lawson's Cafe, which was a hotel upstairs. There was an early theatre but none existed in the thirties. Some silent movies were shown in the Aggie Hall, but it was mostly used for concerts. In the Coquitlam Herald of April 18, 1935 there is an article telling that the ANIMATOPHONE is coming to the hall, brought by the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association who 'will present 12 reels of thrilling, interesting and amusing sound pictures....under the auspices of Trinity United Church. The animatophone is the latest in talkies'.

After the war Joe Pregler built a movie theatre on Shaughnessy Street. An early roller rink had burned down in the great fire but Harvey Forrest brought the young people one again in 1948. It too ended in fire six years later.

Concerts were put on by the Gladys Pratt School of Dancing and Variety Shows by tap-dancer John McDonald. One can recall little toe-dancers Ruth Kilmer, Verna Campbell, Gwen Campbell and others on the stage; beautiful Evelyn Hemphill acting, and musical Ed Bradley singing. One can still hear in mem-

ory's ear tiny Jennie Gardner belting out 'On the Good Ship Lollipop' and Mavis Mouldey bringing tears with 'That silver-haired Daddy of Mine"!

The depression years had been hard, but had not prepared us for the coming loss of classmates after 1939. It was a witty and good natured Willie Kravac who wrote in my autograph, a carefree Bud Baker. Both were lost early in the war. Two next-door neighbours, George and Douglas Davidson lost their lives in the army. As children I remember them proudly telling about their father's exploits overseas in the First World War. The father made it back to tell his tale, but the sons were not so lucky. Joe Zappia lost his life when serving in the army, a quiet dark-eyed youth, several years my junior. Sixteen lives lost, sixteen who had grown up during those trying thirties.

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# 12

# Ranches Along the River

On the survey map drawn by Captain Richards and the officers of the HMS Plumper in 1859, the area between Mary Hill and Burke Mountain is simply marked, 'Low flat grassy land intersected by numerous streams and partially inundated from June to August'. This survey was done during March and April.

Along those grassy lands at least three large ranches were established less than half a century later. The Blakeburn-Wilson Ranch thrived into the thirties, then was broken up and developed into several smaller farms and homesites in the eastern Prairie Road area.

Colony Farm was started by the government as a means of supplying produce to the growing Essondale Mental Hospital complex. The buildings of the Institution were started around 1913 on the high ridge above Coquitlam River, with Colony Farm to the west and lower along the river. For 72 years it produced fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy products as well as providing fish and wildlife habitat and an

enjoyable nature area. For years the farm was noted for the fine herd of cattle it had developed, but in 1985 the Government broke up the ranch and sold the cattle, in spite of the years of effort put into the prize herd.

In September 1986 some 150 local residents walked around Colony Farm, attracting public attention and politicians in the hope that they could influence the government not to let the area fall into private hands, and out of the Agricultural Land Reserve. The British Columbia Building Corporation (BCBC) had applied for permission to develop the land into a golf course by a private concern. The plan was turned down by the Provincial Land Commission. Coquitlam council wants to see the land in Agricultural production and a preserve for wildlife, and most residents want it left in public ownership. The battle continues.

However, one ranch has been kept almost intact, and it is the one which brings into the future the beauty of the past. Early in the century the verdant setting of the Minnekhada Ranch was recognized as a precious piece of land where nature had made a refuge for many forms of wildlife. Also attracting man the marshes and meadows were soon developed by wealthy people. And the natural beauty of the living marshland backed by the rugged rocky foothills of Burke Mountain has been unspoiled by most of its dwellers, and enjoyed by all.

Before the time that Port Coquitlam became a city, affluent Harry L. Jenkins from Vancouver made it his summer home, and gave lavish parties where guests came by private rail car to Westminster Junction. From the station he provided autos and teams to

transport the partygoers to the Minnekhada. There chaperones, nurses, and hayrides offered great care, comfort, and merriment for the visitors on their day in the country. It was the age of gracious living - for a few, a very few.

Following Jenkins' time on the Minnekhada a German Count owned the ranch and continued to entertain Vancouver's social leaders there until World War 1 started.

The Minnekhada was later bought by an Italian Group, who intended it to be divided into farms to be sold to Italian immigrants. Fortunately this plan did not work out, and the ranch was left intact, although a bad fire in 1929 explains the loss of the early elaborate stables and other buildings, signs of that long-forgotten time of elegance.

It was in 1930 that I first saw the ranch, and by this time Eric Hamber, later to be Lieutenant-Governor of B C. (1936-1941), had purchased it and built the present lodge on the grounds. I remember seeing for the first time the game of polo being played, there in the field along the road. It was royalty and Hollywood all rolled into one - even more exaggerated by the fact that the rest of us were in the first throes of the depression.

The next owner was Col. Clarence Wallace, who also became Lieutenant-Governor (1950-1955), and he used it as his summer home, or retreat, and hunting lodge for his friends from the city. He had a trap shooting set-up, complete with an instructor for his less skilled guests.

In 1975 the ranch was sold to the Government during the land assembly of the N D P reign. It was going to provide recreation land for the enormous housing plan on Burke Mountain, mentioned early in this history. Several years later, with a change in government, the development was halted, and once again the beautiful Minnekhada remained intact. But what was to become of this natural wonder nestled at the foot of Burke Mountain, this refuge for wildlife and marsh creatures?

In 1977 the National Second Century Fund purchased the 400 hectare Addington Marsh as a wildlife sanctuary, so it at least was being spared for the future, even if it did mean a division in the property.

Eleanor Ward, Knut Chetney and Alyce Shearer, from the Northeast Ratepayers Association, were very much involved in early plans for the area that would be a nature park. Although many groups and departments took part, it was these Burke Mountain residents who felt more committed than any others, for they were well informed and worked straight from the heart. Quite a few truly caring people by this time had made up their minds that the remainder of the area must be preserved, must go on into the future for all to enjoy. This presented many and diverse problems to be sorted out. Yet it was recognized from the beginning that too many people doing too many things in the area would destroy the fragile nature haven. Soon the very things they had come there to enjoy would be lost.

The property took in 1028 acres and of it 700 acres that were lying in the Agricultural Land Reserve were leased for long term farm use, as it had fallen into the hands of the Provincial Agricultural Land

Commission. D. S. Cheema and U S Mahil & Son leased 222 acres for blueberry and vegetable farming. Mr and Mrs Jim Gaskin leased 181 acres for blueberries. Henry Rothenbusch leased a piece to use for raising prize beef cattle, and Marcel Bouvier & Sons leased 114 acres on which to raise Standardbred horses.

This left over 300 acres of marshes and uplands to be preserved. In 1979 the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission met and moved that an advisory committee be established to study and make recommendations on future use of the property and the Wallace home. Gordon Gram, of the department's staff, co-ordinated and chaired the Advisory Committee meetings.

The Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Branch, the Agricultural Land Commission, Environment and Land Use Committee, G. V. R. D., Heritage Conservation Branch, Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam Municipal Halls, Coquitlam Parks and Recreation, Federation of B C Naturalists, Northeast Coquitlam Ratepayers Association and others.

It was recommended that the 310 acres not leased for farm purposes be designated a Regional Nature Park, and that a lease agreement would transfer responsibility for the Park to the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

And that the GVRD be required to develop limited public parking and basic trails within 6 months, and that they would prepare a Master Plan to include guidelines to enhance the marsh and woodland environment for wildlife.

And that the GVRD establish a Minnekhada Advisory Committee which included the Agricultural Land Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Minnekhada farm lessees and others from the original Advisory Committee, to develop a long-term plan for the use of the lodge which shall be compatible with the Regional Nature Park.

And that the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission apply to the GVRD for an official regional plan amendment: to change the current stage plan map from Upland Rural Area (RRL-2) to Established Park Area (PRK-1) and to change the long range plan map from Rural (RRL) to Park (PRK), and to apply to the District of Coquitlam for a change in zoning from Suburban Residential (RS-2) to Civic Institutional (P-1).

The vast population within an hour's drive of the area assures the future use and need of the park area. Residents of Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Port Moody, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Ioco, Surrey, and all along the north shore of the Fraser River to Mission, can reach it with ease.

Next to the actual ranch acreage is the 700 acre Addington Point Marsh which is leased to the Fish and Wildlife Branch by the Second Century Fund as a wildlife sanctuary. This is not accessible to the public.

The knolls in the area are timbered with western hemlock, western red cedar and Douglas fir. There are clumps of broad leafed maple and vine maple while nearer the lowlands red alder, birch, willow, cascara, mountain maple and mountain ash are seen. The underbrush is made up of salmonberry, huckle-

berry, elderberry, salal, wild blackberry, Oregon grape, ferns, lichens and mosses.

The Minnekhada Nature Park lowlands lie to the east and west of the marsh and includes a meadow located several hundred yards east of the proposed parking area. Stumps in this area show a past history of red cedar and hemlock. Skunk cabbage is found in swampy places and alders support many types of mosses and lichens.

Higher on the knolls Douglas fir becomes dominant but some hemlock and cedar survive in the damper spots at the base of the rocks. On the northwest side of the marsh the soil is high in black organic matter. Runoff from Burke Mountain forms a meandering stream with sand bottom pools which empties into the marsh. Dykes and spillways ensure adequate water for the abundant wildlife such as beaver, muskrat, frogs, fish and shore birds.

The Nature Park has a raised marsh that is much older than the Addington Point Marsh, and is thus able to provide a rare study area. Guided ecological walks would be an ideal use for the park.

The question of access presented many problems to GVRD. As it was felt that people would climb the knolls which could cause injury to both climbers and the ecosystem, a well marked trail should be put along the most obvious route. Trail development would be made in several phases. The first would be to build a walkway from the parking lot off Quarry Road to run behind the cottages to the water outflow, over a new bridge and along the south side of the marsh.

Phase two would clear the existing trail from the parking lot to the meadow, and build a trail from the meadow north to a view point at the west end of the dyke that separates the marsh and brushy marshes.

Phase three would build a northern trail to the knoll, and phase four a trail from the panabode house to Addington Point. Phase five would connect the northern route to the southern route and build a spur to the secondary knoll on the east side of the marsh.

After the sale of the ranch to the B.C.Government, Col. Clarence Wallace held a lease on the lodge for a time. He expressed an interest in seeing the property maintained as a Provincial Heritage asset, complete with much of its contents. It was felt that, like the nature park itself, the lodge would be unlikely to withstand intensive use by the public. Although the Heritage Conservation Branch was interested in the quality of the building, and its history, it did not feel the lodge had 'heritage significance' in the province. The Branch therefore did not have any over-riding interest in the lodge, so any proposed use which was compatible with and respectful of the building was acceptable.

Prior to the dyking of Pitt River in the 1890's the Minnekhada Marsh was part of the river's floodplain and was inundated during spring freshets. After the dykes were built it was fairly dry except for creeks running through it.

In the 1930's the narrow marsh outlet was dammed and several ditches were made. By the 1940's the marsh had been subdivided by two internal dykes and there was a high water level in the north while

the other two sections were drained and cultivated. But during the 1970's, because of neglect and beaver activity the water rose in all three sections. In 1983 Ducks Unlimited drained the marsh to reconstruct the outlet dam and dyke. Loafing islands were built for ducks and geese.

In vegetation, the north marsh has banks of hardhack, cattail and bullrushes while the south has banks of hardhack, reeds, manna-grass, Labrador tea and some spagnum moss. Growing on the dykes is reed canary grass.

Graceful Tundra and Trumpeter Swans as well as large numbers of Ring-necked ducks make this area a very special place. Altogether 81 species of birds have been recorded in the marsh and another 25 species have been seen in Addington Marsh and the agricultural land. Many more are expected to be counted as study continues. Some of those noted in the water are Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Wood Ducks, Common Hooded Mergansers, Canada Geese, Pintails, American Wigeons and Common Goldeneyes.

Shore birds include the Great Blue Heron, Grebes, Bitterns, six kinds of owls, Coopers Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, Ruffled Grouse, pheasants, rails, Stellar's Jays, gulls, pigeons, 3 types of woodpeckers, hummingbirds, robins, vireos, kinglets, Evening Grosbeaks, four types of swallows, the delicately coloured Cedar Waxwing, and many, many more.

Mammals include the American Beaver, American Oppossum, River Otters, Columbian Blacktail Deer, muskrat, raccoon, Douglas Squirrel and Black Bear.

Early in 1983 a 30-car public parking lot was built off Quarry Road. Trail construction was mapped out to be done in seven phases, with the delicate ecosystem kept always in mind. Many of the areas would need boardwalks as the watertable was often near the surface, and what appeared dry would soon become mucky with constant pedestrian traffic. On the higher slopes, frequent treeless outcrops would offer a view of the farm below, and the highest knoll would afford a view of Burke Mountain, the southern portion of Addington Marsh and much of the Lower Mainland west of Pitt River.

On April 29, 1984, GVRD invited the public to be present at the opening ceremony for the district's newest regional park., the Minnekhada. The Honourable Anthony J.Brummet, Minister of Lands, Parks and Housing, presided at the opening ceremonies. There were Pops Bands, face painting and other entertainments during the weekend. The Lodge was open to be viewed and light refreshments were available. It was an exciting day for the people who had pushed so hard and long to see the public at last able to enjoy the beauty of the area. It had too long been a privilege of the few.

Looking back to the forties, Tonie Rentmeester, who worked with Hamber's Labrador dogs and race horses, remembers seeing many times, a small herd of Rocky Mountain Goats on one of the outcrops on the ranch. He last saw them in 1954 when he was flying over the area in a Cessna 150. Looking forward, Ray and Vicki Lawson, a young couple who recently hiked the yet incomplete and still rugged Addington Loop Trail, were enthused about future ventures onto the slopes.

The moisture on the mountainside gives birth to many creeks which feel their way along crevices as gravity pulls them down. Widgeon Creek, reaching back to a glacial era, begins in rushing fury and ends in a peaceful everglade as it joins Pitt River. Munro Creek, dammed by Gillies Gravel Pitt to form Munro Lake , empties into the Pitt north of the gravel pit. MacIntyre Creek and its tributaries flow into the river south of Fox Reach. Smiling Creek comes down from the inhabited slopes and adds to De Boville Slough. Near this stream flowed a lovely little creek that went through our property on the mountain, so we called it Campbell Creek, finding no notation of its name.

The last large creek is Hyde Creek, which at one time was used extensively by spawning salmon. Environmentalists have tried to keep a natural hiking trail along its shores, but heavy development is occurring along its length.

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# 13

# The Coquitlam River

Once upon a time the Coquitlam River was a crystal-clear mountain stream giving pleasure and life to all who knew her. It would be a pleasure to describe this productive stream from the days of the Indian, the early settlers, the years of youthful pleasure afforded by the old swimming holes during the hungry thirties, to the present time. But because of drastic changes in the fifties, changes that have been made under the banner of progress, a whole generation of residents have been cheated of a beautiful, bountiful resource. No longer can boys and girls catch small native cuthroat and dolly varden. Only old-timers can dream of a return to the clean and living river of bygone days.

Stories have filtered down through the ages, of spawning salmon in such abundance in the river that it took a while for a thrown rock to settle to the bottom. So crowded were the fish that the outside swimmers were sometimes forced out onto the shore. The very name Coquitlam grew out of an Indian name for the fish.

The conflicts and confrontations between the multiple users of this, a most valuable resource, led to numerous studies and surveys of the Coquitlam River and surrounding area. The most massive and costly one, done by the Ministry of the Environment from 1976 to 1978, did not reveal any problem related to multiple use of the Coquitlam River that cannot be resolved within the existing administration. Still the problems grow.

Deposits of gravel and sand up to 100 feet deep lie upstream of the CPR bridge, and these are being mined on the west bank. Extreme pollution is resulting from some of the pits, and unfortunately this area is also heavily utilized by salmon for spawning and rearing.

The reach from the bridge to the Indian Reserve has commercial and residential development along it, while the lower floodplain was, until the recent sale of Colony Farm, mostly farmed by Riverview Hospital. Now The B.C.Building Corporation has control over the sale of the property, which is wanted for a golf course, a regional park and commercial enterprises.

According to surveys, even in its present degraded condition the river and its banks receive over 350,000 household days of recreation annually, for sport fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming and canoeing.

There have been natural slides through the years, but these eventually stabilize and the river cleanses itself. The river has produced salmon for thousands of years without the help of man. What the river cannot handle is the day in, day out silt-loading from

inadequate settling ponds run by gravel companies. The problem has been identified by engineers as administrative, not technical, and the responsibility of cleaning up the river is a provincial one, under the Ministry of Mines.

Statistics show the value of a renewed Coquitlam River sport fishery is over $4,000,000 annually. Department of Fisheries records show that the river's stocks were historically of considerable commercial significance as well, for as late as 1951 there were 21,700 salmon produced by the river. Six years later the salmon stocks had dropped 91.6 %, to 1,825. By 1964 there was an additional decline, down to 900 salmon.

The river system included pink salmon, chum salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout. The pink and chum spawned mainly in the lower reaches of the river. Steelhead and coho spawned in the upper reaches to the dam and in several of the tributaries including Scott, Hoy and Or Creek. Starting in the fifties gravel was being removed directly from the river, over one million cubic yards of it, and the pink salmon disappeared completely. In 1965 this destruction of spawning grounds was stopped but still the river declined and public outcry began to be heard when gravel mining then moved to the west banks and silting of the river soon became the main problem as it reached enormous proportions.

A major slide on the upper river valley, which came in the early fifties created silting conditions until 1956. Although called a natural slide, it probably was caused by logging practices which clear-cut the trees on the hillside where virtually no coniferous forest remained. Fern, bushes, and scattered decidu-

ous trees were not able to protect the soil from erosion. The slide remained inactive until the middle sixties, when a blacktop company removed gravel from the area, thus reactivating the'natural' slide.

It is true that natural slides do take place. A large one loaded material onto Pipeline Road, which in turn was removed by the Greater Vancouver Water Board....and dumped into the river! Besides the extreme silting, gravel mining companies have left dangerous cut-banks, crater-sized excavations, altered streams and desecrated parks.

An organization which took up the crusade to save and possibly renew the Coquitlam River was the Port Coquitlam & District Hunting and Fishing Club (and despite its long name it was basically a conservation club) that was formed by a group of sportsmen who were alarmed at the deplorable mis-use of a natural resource. When they met in 1955 they never would have believed that into the nineties the same organization, and many of the same men, would still be on the same crusade.

Although the greatest destruction was caused by gravel removal other river problems were present. There was pollution from an asphalt plant and sewage from Essondale. There was illegal gillnetting of steelhead at the mouth of the river and oil reaching the river from the CPR.

The Club tried to bring back the salmon of historic times, and in 1958 convinced authorities to plant 16,000 steelhead, the first of several plantings. Three years later they reported that of 83 steelhead caught, 41% were marked fish. Continued pressure helped to bring about the Pollard Hydraulic Survey

done by the Department of Lands, Forests & Water Resources for the city of Port Coquitlam in 1961. This chiefly flood control survey would provide a minimum flow of water for the migration and rearing of fish stocks, so the Club urged authorities to make the recommended improvements. Little was done. However, the club continues to maintain hatcheries on the river.

The Coquitlam River Water Management Study, finished in 1978, recommended that the Coquitlam Lake reservoir not be operated above a water level elevation of 493 feet, which is 10 feet below the spillway crest level, for flood storage purposes; to open the undersluice gates when the water level rises above 493 feet, but to close the gates should the flow of the river at Port Coquitlam exceed 12,000 cfs (cubic feet per second). This is the rate that would cause a one in two hundred year flood level.

Diversions have long been considered and the three main sources of obtaining more water are Hixon Creek, Widgeon Lake and Or Creek.

Widgeon Lake is six miles east of the north end of Coquitlam Lake, and it drains into Widgeon Creek and Slough, which flows into Pitt River. Topographic mapping indicates a horizontal distance of about one mile from Widgeon Lake, which has an elevation of some 2550 feet, to the same elevation in the Coquitlam watershed region. Water could be diverted by a mile long tunnel through Burke Mountain without having to raise the lake level.

So the GVWD, the Fish & Wildlife Branch, and the Land Management Branch are all interested in the lake, as are many hikers and sportsmen. Anadro-

mous fish species cannot reach the lake to spawn because of extreme gradients in Widgeon Creek just downstream of the lake outlet. The creek drops a thousand feet in one quarter of a mile. Both anadromous and resident fish populations use the lower reaches of the creek.

A plan to divert Or Creek would run the water along a hillside contour about one mile to the Coquitlam drainage area where the water would form a stream which would find its way to the lake some two miles north of the dam. GVWD finds this plan attractive as the sediment would have time to settle before reaching the water intake. But taking Or Creek water would be the death knell for spawning steelhead, and possibly a great many other species.

Hixon Creek is a tributary of Indian River. In March of 1976 the GVWD applied for a water licence to divert water from the creek to the Coquitlam Basin. Objections to the application were filed by both the Fish & Wildlife Branch and BCHPA. The application was cancelled.

If these three diversions are made it will provide water for the expected growth of the area until the middle of the next century. Both GVWD and BCHPA would have enough water. But what about multiple users? BCFS records show that 12,000 people per year visit the Widgeon Lake and Creek area. Recreational use could be made of a small lake downstream of Widgeon Lake but higher up areas would have to be protected from contamination if the water was to be used by GVWD. Fisheries officials report that coho, chum and sockeye salmon use the lower reaches and concern is felt for any change as a result of a diversion above, in Widgeon Lake.

The Coquitlam Area Mountain Study, started in the early 80's, recommended against the diversion of Widgeon Creek until a real need can be shown for the water. That study covered the area of Eagle Ridge and the Port Moody Water Supply Area, Coquitlam and Widgeon Lakes and their watersheds, Pitt Lake, Burke Mountain Park, Minnekhada Farm and Addington Point Marsh, the Canadian Wildlife Service land at Widgeon Slough, Pitt Polder land managed by Fish & Wildlife Branch and the UBC Research Forest.

The GVWD is planning for a stated 999 years in advance. It is difficult for the many users to make way for saturation population demands that far in the future. But residents understand the need and are interested in plans of safety if a huge volume of water is added to the Coquitlam system. The town has already felt the results of heavy rain on a melting snow pack, the swollen tributaries of Hoy Creek, Maple Creek and Scott Creek, and the ability of the Coquitlam River on a rampage. The years of 1921, 1955 and 1961 have left their scars.

Environmentalist Henry Prante asks, "What will happen to such subdivisions as River Springs and Meadowbrook? And is it not unreasonable to assume that some portions of downtown Port Coquitlam will wash a little closer towards Victoria?"

Have the tunnel and the sluice gates the capacity to release extra water elsewhere safely? The history of the development of Lake Buntzen-Lake Coquitlam watershed started in 1903 when Lake Buntzen #1 went into service for the B. C. Electric on the North Arm of Burrard Inlet. It was the first hydro-electric power plant on the Lower Mainland. Before that

Vancouver received its power supply from a 1500 kilowatt steam plant. In 1914 Lake Buntzen # 2 was completed.

A 170 foot long rock-filled, timber-cribbed, overflow-type dam was first built at the outlet of Coquitlam Lake. It raised the lake 11 feet. Later a 1200 foot long earth and rock fill dam was built, with a maximum height of 100 feet. The spillway section was 250 feet long and there were 3 sluice gates. Some of the water impounded in Coquitlam Lake was diverted through a two and one quarter mile tunnel to Lake Buntzen, which was a balancing reservoir with a concrete dam at its outlet. This was, at the time it was built, the longest purely hydro-electric tunnel in the world! In 1911 the tunnel between Coquitlam and Buntzen was enlarged to 15 feet, twice its original size. A third unit was added to #2 Plant in 1919, giving it a generating capacity of 26,700 kilowatts.

In 1951 all the small units were replaced by a modern unit rated at 50,000 kilowatts, and equipment was installed to permit remote control of the unit from a dispatch office in Vancouver. A 62,500-kva transformer was installed to step the voltage up to 60,000 volts for transmission to Vancouver.

BCHPA Information Service has a story about Mrs. Mona Key, who had arrived at the power plant in 1911 and lived there for over 18 years. She lived in the community of Tunnel Camp where up to 500 men worked at one time and after construction was completed her father moved the family into a big log cabin across the lake. It had been built for the B C Electric's London directors who had used it only once. On a visit to the area in 1972 she remembered the long gone homes, staff house, schoolhouse and

tennis courts. Everything had become grown over since the station started to be run by remote control.

In a 1923 report by the B C Electric Railway Company, called 'Behind the Button' the company bragged that there were operators on duty every hour of the day and a 'system of private telephones, mostly in duplicate, extends from city to power stations and substations, so that in case of interruptions to service, the load dispatcher may communicate at once with any point.' And there was much change yet to come.

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# 14

## Pitt Lake and the Pen

Pitt Lake, the beautiful but rugged tidal lake that washes Burke Mountain's north-eastern shores, has been travelled by the white man for just over one hundred years. It's sudden storms can be violent, and have claimed a number of would-be sailors, too trusting of its wild splendor. On a calm day the 15 mile long lake is a pussycat, smooth and gentle with its waves gently purring against the shore. But sudden afternoon winds can rise, turning the pussycat into a raging lion with pounding strength for a few hours. As evening nears, the pussycat returns and curls up at the feet of the giant trees on the shore.

The channel that has remained the same as when Captain Richards of the Plumper sounded it, is a very interesting natural phenomena. From the lake entrance this channel goes eastward across the end of the lake to the base of the mountain. It then turns north and proceeds for two or three miles, ending near the middle of the lake. On each side of the channel the water is so shallow that sand banks can be seen during low water periods, yet the channel

remains and never silts in, despite a strong tidal flow at times.

There is a trouble spot for those who would dyke the banks, at the southern point where the lake is about to drain into the river. There the water forms a funnel which washes away at the dykes that have been built over and over again. Since 1906 this dyking has been attempted by both individuals and the government, each trying to control the water that flowed over what is now called the Pitt Polder Area. Much of the land was at the mercy of high water during freshet time, and therefore used mostly by hunters. In 1951 all this was to be changed when Pitt Polder Ltd. began a reclamation project in the swampy areas. Farms were established as ditching and dyking proceeded. But in 1956 the break point in the dyke was showing up again.

So in 1957, when the government had completed a road to that point in the waterway, a dyke lying in a different position was started. Rock came from blasting on the east side of the lake, but later the Pitt Polder Company developed a quarry on the east bank of the river. Eight dairy farms are still thriving on the reclaimed land.

During the century the northern end of the lake has seen a logging camp, a fish hatchery, and prospectors searching for minerals. The lake itself has seen log booms, canoes, paddlewheelers, motor boats, launches and tugboats churning up its waters. Birdlife has abounded in and around the lake for centuries, including eagles, hawks, blue herons, cranes, swans, geese, ducks and songbirds of all kinds. The shores have felt the pad of wildlife's footsteps back into the distant past. There still are bears,

cougars, raccoons, coyotes, deer and squirrels as in the day of the hunter. The water often reveals a seal's round head or a fish breaking the surface. Sturgeon of the past can be dreamed about, and likely are still lurking in its depths.

For the vacationer of today plans are being made to improve parking and launching at the lake's outlet, as it is an ideal place to take off into the nearby real wilderness of Widgeon Creek, or the long boat trip to the head of the lake, or to one of the many summer cabins along the lakeshore, or to Goose Island to explore. But the lake has a past long forgotten or not known by most of its present voyagers.

Oldtimers, such as my late father-in-law, called the large island that sits in the channel five miles north in the lake, Penn Island. This has been known as Wright Island, Convict Island and its present name, Goose Island. The name Penn was used because early in the century it was used by the B.C. Penitentiary system. Prisoners found that they could swim to the mainland, making it less secure than supposed. I have heard that pigeons were used at one time, to send messages out to the main prison in New Westminster.

In the Department of Justice Report of July 2, 1902, Sessional Paper # 13, it was written:

> In view of the building improvements contemplated, I have found that we would be short of stone, therefore began inquiries in reference to securing a quarry. I consulted with Mr. Jas.Leamy, Crown Timber Agent, who suggested the setting aside for that purpose, of Goose Island, which is situated

> about 20 miles [by water] from here, in the centre of Pitt Lake one mile and a half from the nearest shore; it consists of about 150 acres, well wooded and is one mass of gray granite. Not only will it supply granite for all time to come, but will materially reduce our expenditure for fuel, if we decide to place a small gang of "short timers" there to open the quarry and cut wood. Signed by J. C. Whyte, Warden.

In the report of December 31, 1903, however the report was:

> It was found that cement blocks would cost much less than stone for the cell fronts. A machine was installed and several convicts instructed regarding its operation. They soon became expert in the work and able to turn out excellent blocks at a cost of less than one fourth the price of stone. All the brick used is made by prison labour, and next winter it is proposed to employ convict labour to cut the wood that will be required for burning brick the following year. It will be cut on the island, in Pitt Lake, recently acquired for penitentiary purposes.

A variation in the name of the Island is shown in the January 30, 1906 Sessional Paper.

> A strongly built camp was erected on Wright Island, in Pitt Lake, where it is our intention to quarry stone for the foundation of the penitentiary buildings.....and cut

> wood. The stone and wood will be towed down the river 20 miles to the penitentiary.

On August 28, 1906 a report was made that there were 142 convicts in custody at the New Westminster Penitentiary. Also reported:

> We have opened up Wright Island quarry, Pitt Lake, situated 27 miles from here by water. We have there 15 convicts under a trade instructor, and expect before the season closes, about the 1st of September, to have about two hundred cords of wood, and five hundred tons of rock for foundations. Next season we hope to do better as it has taken about six weeks to erect log houses, wharf, et cetera.

Yet another name appears in the March 31, 1907 report.

> A quantity of wood to burn brick was cut and stone quarried on Convict Island, in Pitt Lake.....A guardhouse for the accomodation of the convicts working on the island was erected.

In Sessional Paper #34, dated June 17, 1908, a report to the Inspector of Penitentiaries does not name the island:

> The officer's cottages and the warden's residence were all renovated. Four hundred cords of wood were cut on our island in Pitt Lake and brought to the Prison. About half a million bricks were made.

The Penitentiary was put to use for the next 78 years, until 1986 saw the buildings being torn down with plans for housing in the making. It was the end of an era, but long after Goose Island had returned to the wilderness.

Although no great success has come of the mining ventures on the mountains surrounding the lake, it was not for lack of trying. As early as the 1890's mines were worked in search of copper, silver and gold. The Champion and Cromwell Mines belonged to two men called Seymour and Clinton. The Rocket was owned by the Golden Ears Mining Company and the OK was held by the Dominion Mining Development & Agency Company. They were first staked in 1897. These four were later bonded and renamed the Golden Ears Group. In 1898-99 about $35,000 was spent on this small pendant, two miles by one and a half miles in size. The bond then was allowed to lapse and lay dormant until 1920, when it was renamed the Viking Group.

By 1923, 16,000 tons of ore were reported to be blocked out and during the twenties considerable surface construction was done. Plans to install a hydro-electric plant and concentrating machinery ground to a halt with the arrival of the depression. Some shipments were made in 1898 and again in the twenties, and these were mostly in copper. Years ago I collected ore samples from the cribbing extending into Pitt Lake, but very little else remains of the mining enterprise today.

The Standard Group developed a property on the west shore of the lake, about three miles southwest

of Goose Island. The mine workings were 500 feet above the lake, and on the usual very steep slope. It contained low values of gold and silver.

The Maple Leaf property, on the east side of the lake, near Vickers (or Scott) Creek was worked in 1925, but results were poor. In 1928 the property changed hands and was renamed the Katanga Group, and the last report on it was in 1929.

The Cox Claim was five miles up Corbold (or Canyon) Creek, from its confluences with Upper Pitt River. The deposit was in a Harrison Lake Formation, which formed a small pendant. The 1928 B.C. Mines annual report showed the main minerals in the claim were pyrite and molybdenite.

This information was taken from the Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 335. Although not an exciting mineral report, the Department of Technical Surveys gives a romantic quality to the piece with the mention of a misty icefield four miles east of Pitt Lake, and Ring Creek lava-flow in the Northwest corner of the map area. It states that the lava-flow originates in a small cone, and is post glacial. It has split the drainage of the small valley down which it flowed. In this the area shows signs of its beginnings long, long ago.

In 1919 a report was sent to the Surveyor-General in Victoria by D.J.McGugan on the situation in Upper Pitt Valley. He stated that he had completed the survey of the logged off areas into 40-acre blocks. Much of this land had already been alienated and all pre-emptions were occupied.

The valley is up to two miles and a half wide and 14 miles long, flanked by steep mountains on each side. The fall is about 40 feet to the mile. The valley is tapped by the Upper Pitt River, which rises and falls rapidly in times of freshet. It is interesting that the valley soil consists of a layer of alluvial clay three or four feet thick over a layer of sand and gravel. It is thought that this was caused by stream deposits in earlier days when the valley was a continuation of the present lake. The small mountain streams deposited their sediment in the lake, and the water acted as a screen, depositing the fine clay on top.

In 1919 there was quite a settlement in the area, with a store and a post-office at Alvin. The distance of 38 miles to New Westminster was covered by a mail and passenger boat twice a week, in 5 hours. From the head of the lake there was a well-constructed wagon road leading four miles up the valley to the Dominion Hatchery. This hatchery was exceeded in the number of salmon eggs secured only by the one at Harrison Lake. After the fir and cedar were cut down the succeeding growth was largely alder, but good gardens were grown there.

A comment was made in the report that, "Perhaps no area has been so much prospected and combed over for minerals as has this one. It is partly on account of the fact that it lies in a continuation of a highly mineralized belt extending from the Britannia Mine, along the head of Indian River and through to the deposits on Jones Creek; partly on account of the fact of the frequent occurrence of outcroppings of copper and molybdenum, with traces of gold and silver; and partly on account of a popular fable that somewhere in this valley is the location of a lost mine of exceeding riches."

Another area that shows signs of past development is the one around Widgeon Slough. The Land Recording Division (Bulletin #27) in 1934 reported, "Pitt River is here from a quarter to half a mile wide. Widgeon Creek flows south through the township (#41), entering Widgeon Slough, on lower part of which Silver Valley post-office is located, opposite Siwash Island. Dykes have been built to keep high water from the low-lying lands."

While boating past Siwash Island, it is not discernible as an island, as there are many meandering streams in the swampy area. The water is usually calm and smooth in the slough, with overhanging foliage trailing from the banks. It gives one the feeling of being in the Everglades, with so much greenery and wildlife along the way. Going north to where the mouth of Widgeon Creek is reached there is a sudden change to a typical fast flowing mountain stream. Resting along the quiet slough there are banks of white sand, the sand where Ko-Lam, my imaginary Indian boy, found his peace.

Emptying into the river further south is De Boville Slough, where the Pitt River Boat Club had been established for many years.

The mountainous shores of Pitt Lake give birth to many creeks, and the Golden Ears Mountain Range, which reaches 5,525 feet, sends its share of icy waters into the lake. Raven Creek, falling north-westward, shows the remains of B & K Logging, which removed its rolling stock some time in the twenties, before the tracks were lifted. This was a railway operation, connected at its southern end to an Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company spur line. The northern end of B & K ended at a landing some 150

feet above the lake, and logs were skylined down to the booming ground on the east side of the upper end of the channel.

When boating on Pitt Lake we sometimes stopped at Gurney Creek, but as the glacial water ran under the sand it was always an exceptionally frigid bay. It was often the case that places providing good water for coffee were not ideal for swimming, as the chilly water stretched out into the lake at the site. We once found old bricks and some wheels that were the remains of carts that told of former days of activity now long forgotten. In spite of these reminders, and a number of summer cabins tucked in amongst the trees, the lake still has a rugged untouched air about it.

The old troublesome southern end began to be used for boat launching and parking when the road was built into it. Conditions that come along with man became less and less tolerable as dust and garbage and congestion grew worse. In 1986 a park plan was proposed by the Dewdney Alouette Regional District (DARD). It would be called Grant Narrows Regional Park, and would include a lighted public wharf, beaches, a water taxi and canoe facilities. Already, across the river on the Katzie Indian Reserve a lodge has been built, and diners are taken by boat from the existing wharf.

In 1973 the provincial government bought 3000 acres of Pitt Polder. The Fish & Wildlife Branch and Ducks Unlimited developed the northern marshland as a wildlife preserve, and it is now a popular nature study area. The new facilities will bring even greater numbers to the wild but fragile waters of Widgeon Creek and Slough, to the many cold, clear creeks,

and to the scanty beaches of the lake itself. It is hoped that vandalism, environmental damage and just plain over-use will not destroy this unique and beautiful lake, valley and river, which are there because of the eons of evolution that have taken place. As Professor Ian McTaggart-Cowan of UBC has said of such a place, that man should expand his presence with 'sensitivity and enlightenment'.

Wildlife around the lake is not too often spotted from the water, with the slopes so heavily treed and the beaches relatively sparse. But in 1975 one small boy was to have a memorable and terrifying experience with a cougar. Kevin Jones and his sister, of Abbotsford, were exploring along the beach when a one hundred and ten pound cougar grabbed the boy by the head and began dragging him into the bushes. The father came running at the sound of screams, and by threatening with a boat paddle and yelling at the beast, finally scared it off. The boy recovered in hospital.

Later a conservation officer, Jack Lay, tracked the animal and shot it, the price the big cat had to pay for tangling with mankind. He estimated that the cougar was two and a half years old, which fit the pattern of only young cougars attacking humans.

That same day, over the hump of Burke Mountain, a friend of ours was dozing in a peaceful nook, where he had driven up to on the mountain to sleep off a rough 'night before'. In the tranquility of the woods he felt a jarring note. He suddenly woke with the feeling he was being watched. So strong was this impression that a chill went up his spine, but still he could spot nothing. Thoroughly spooked, he hurried to his car and left the no longer serene spot. Later

that day, when he heard the news of Kevin Jones, he just knew he had the answer.

Although there are between 20 and 30 cougars estimated to be living on the north side of the Fraser, between Burke Mountain and Hope, I know many people who have spent a great deal of time on the mountain, who have never spotted one. These are people who are hunters and hikers and woodsmen. Yet I do know of a time when over a hundred people saw one, and that was at my daughter's wedding reception in a hall on the mountain.

It seems that the bench that the Port Coquitlam & District Hunting and Fishing Clubhouse is built on was a very old game trail, and as human occupation on the hillside is very sporadic, animals come to know when they can still use it. This time the animal was unaware that the hall was in use. At the moment when everyone had come inside and was seated to enjoy the dinner, there was a sudden scurry at the north end of the tables, which were set at right angles to the windows. Someone had spotted a cougar walking casually past. Like a swell the tables came to life along the windows as it sauntered along their length. My photographers rushed with cameras to the back door as the visitor moved down along the trail and disappeared. It was a thrill that carried on through the evening, certainly adding to the whole affair in that woodsy setting. It even got the headlines of the write-up in the paper! I realized once more just how much wildlife can mean to people.

Quite a few places have 'pet' monsters to brag about, and Pitt Lake is not without its own special one. Although not widely known, there is a monster that the

Katzie Indians tell about in their legends. This one probably really does exist, and is not a mythical creature at all. The story is of a monstrous sturgeon, which was seen breaking the surface to shake off suckers. The legend also claimed that the sturgeon will not die unless killed by a human.

On the map drawn by the surveyors of the HMS Plumper in 1859 a small lake on the mountain has the notation, 'Lake -From Indian report abounding with sturgeon'. This is north of the 530-foot hill called Mt. Burke on the map, just opposite Grant Narrows. The lake must be Lake Dennett, as Munroe Lake was just a swampy area until dammed by Gillies Quarry. (Grant Narrows is also named on the map, so the new park does not have a very new name.) It doesn't seem possible that, if there were sturgeon in that mountain lake, they could have got there on their own. It is possible that the Indians started some in the lake for their own use, especially since it is known that the fish can stay a very long time out of water without dying.

The White Sturgeon, the one that produces roe for Russian caviar, reaches great size and has a very long lifespan, reaching well over one hundred years old. Other than that not very much is known about this deep-hole-loving fish. Before the turn of the century there was an active net fishery for the sturgeon, and one caught was reported to be 20 feet long, but the fishery dwindled off. Some fishing for them is done to this day, but most are caught along with salmon. The flesh of the boneless, toothless, sucker-like giant is quite good to eat, as we discovered when given a sturgeon by a Fraser River fisherman.

There is no doubt that the big fellow that lurks in the oxygen-short depths of Pitt Lake is a creature linked to several million years past. Our very own local monster.

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# 15

# A Light on the Mountain

Tom and Mabel Holtby have left Burke Mountain, the mountain that absorbed so many years of their thoughts and efforts, that provided their sojourn on the slopes with a dream. Life on the land they left behind has been much enriched by their faith; its history of hardship painted by the soft colours of their good humour.

For ten years weekends were spent on the mountain, before they took up full-time residence there. And rugged as it was, Tom's ingenuity brought some amenities to their early cabin headquarters. On a toboggan they hauled a short wave radio, a lighting plant, a piece of aluminum to hang behind a light bulb in a tree to increase the light. People up as far as Haney asked, "What's that light up there?" My own heredity bestowed on me Norwegian trolls and Irish leprechauns, which explained the light high on the mountain to my satisfaction. Many years later I came to know the real-life people who were responsible for the mysterious light, and knowing them did not tarnish my childhood memories. I wanted Ma-

bel to start Tom talking so she asked, "Tom, how big was our cabin when we started to build up there?"

"Twenty by thirty."

"How close was it to the ski lodge that was built later?"

"About 50 yards. Across the creek." Tom was not the type to babble on, and I was concerned that perhaps Mabel wouldn't be able to entice him into a retrospective mood. But at this point he smiled in reminiscence as he went on. "We took a horse up. We got it at Pitt Meadows; borrowed it from a guy to get the stuff up Strawline Hill. We'd got it up to where the bridge was all washed out, and the horse, he didn't want to cross that creek. The stones were slippery, you know. So we took the feed bag and all the stuff off him and then he crossed it. But he wouldn't let us load him again! Muriel and Ted Lewin, who were giving us a hand, had to carry everything up while the horse walked up without carrying anything. Mabel and I had gone up ahead. When we had to go back to town the Lewins stayed and they spent the whole summer cutting wood. They planned on building a cabin right next to the where the lodge would be.

There was another fellow who was going in on it with the Lewins and he was kind of a wrangatang, so by the time this other fellow had spent a week with them they never wanted to see him again. Later the Lewins themselves separated, so it kind of split the whole works up."

Burke Mountain had a way of weeding out all but the most stalwart of its dwellers in those days, nour-

ishing only those who respected and understood its rugged terrain.

"We had made a lean-to at the back because we had to have a place to sleep when we were working up there....just put up some tree poles and some cedar planks to throw our sleeping bags on. There was just room for the four of us in the lean-to. One night we were sitting around the fire listening to the radio, when out of the dark four people came. They had gone up, got lost and couldn't find their way down off the mountain. They were just wandering around when they heard music.

"It started to pour - it just came down in torrents and there we were with only this thing where Ted and Muriel, Tom and I usually slept. And we had to put four more on. One slept this way and one slept that way; we couldn't even turn over! The thing was just half the width of the cabin, so it was only 10 feet wide. Part of a piece of tent was strung over here and a piece of canvas over there for a roof. Lewin had one of those little army cots and his rear stuck out, so by morning he was soaked right down."

Misery loves company and they had plenty of both that night, but the situation had its own rewards in that the uncomfortable night provided a good belly laugh whenever it was remembered for years to come.

In 1954 Tom was involved in the rescue of a young geologist, who was making a mineral survey for the Federal Government. He and a fellow geologist were in the country behind Coquitlam Peak when he slipped down hill on the snow and cracked his pelvic bone. By the time the companion had hiked out

over the ridge and down various logging roads he was so confused that he couldn't tell which logging roads he had hit. The RCMP got hold of Frank Pobst, the Municipal Clerk, who contacted Rene Gamache and Tom because of their knowledge of the mountain. In Tom's words:

"Rene called and said the RCMP wanted to get a search party organized, while in the meantime the Airforce was going to drop a pararescue team in. Well, the constable in Maillardville, who was at the head of the search, got together Frank, Rene, Fred and several others. We all knew the country to a certain extent. I knew how to get back there but not by the logging roads. Anyway they wanted to get in the shortest way. All this was at six or seven in the evening, so by the time we got to the back slope of Burke Mountain it was 3:30, just before daybreak.

We sat there and it was a wonderful sight....a bright moonlight night and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. You could see right out to the Gulf of Georgia. The moon was making a path of light right across the whole gulf from side to side, a beautiful, beautiful sight. There was snow on the ground but it wasn't all that cold; it was about the first week of July.

As soon as we could see we started to travel along the side that was so steep that we had to hang onto bushes. The snow was in patches in the trees, and I knew it was no use to go over the top because it fell off just as steep on the other side. We skirted a little lake to where there was a ridge running along above the creek canyon. Just about the time we got over the top of the ridge the Airforce plane had spotted the injured man and when we saw the plane we set fire to some bushes and made quite a smoke. The

plane spotted the fire right away so flew in a line back and forth, telling us which way to go. Fred and I left the group then, because they knew which way to go to give aid to the injured man. We were the oldest two, and we were tuckered out."

In the meantime two paramedics and a nurse had been dropped during the night-time, and they had all managed to land in trees. They had ropes to slide down, but the nurse hung up in the trees all night until she got up enough nerve to slide down. When she did come she slid down with her bare hands, taking all the skin off them, making herself another casualty. Her hands were so bad that she had to be flown out for treatment along with the young geologist.

The plane had dropped a survival parachute with cases of supplies. The whole thing got hung up in a tree but the canned food broke loose and fell on the lake ice where some of it was retrieved. The medical kit probably still hangs there with a bottle of rum in it!

The ground crew continued on, the going rough because they had to go along the side of the canyon on the snow, which was hard-packed and also quite a climb. They got to the scene of the accident in the middle of the afternoon, and found they had to move the young fellow a good distance over the snow. They took a parachute that had been dropped and they got him on it and moved him until they got a spot that was flat enough for a helicopter pick-up. It was just dusk when the patient, the two medics and the nurse took off for the hospital, leaving the ground crew to hike back up the ridges until they hit the roads. The logging roads didn't go so high up

the mountain in those days, probably to about 3500 feet, so the hardy crew had some tough terrain to cover. They didn't get back until quite late at night, with mighty sore feet.

Wise from his years of coming to terms with the mountain, Tom tells of his trip back, "The doggone police didn't take any grub with him. I took a pack lunch with a piece of liver sausage and Fred had a lunch with him, but the policeman had only a few chocolate bars and flashlights - no food. When we stopped up on top of the ridge waiting for daylight we lit a fire and had something to eat. We hiked back to just above Dennet Lake, then laid down under some bushes and had a sleep. It was a beautiful hot summer day. Then we came back as far as to where our lease was. We had another sleep there, then kept on hiking down as I'd left my car at the gate. We met old Brownlee, who was logging up there - and he gave us a ride back to my car."

Widgeon Creek hadn't been logged for very long at the time, so their network was not too extensive, but once the other hikers struck one of them they could find their way down off the mountain, being led to the north-eastern wall of Burke Mountain, facing Pitt River. There a private road held by McClelland led out to Quarry Road and civilization. Tom's wilderness knowledge and instincts got the rescue crew into almost inaccessible territory, to an injured boy whose whereabouts were vaguely known. And they had made the climb in the same time as it took the Airforce to muster forces. Then Tom's natural resources got him and his companion back out in much shorter order than following the eastern logging roads would have done. The whole demanding episode had taken much physical stamina and risk to

all concerned, which underlines the responsibility of venturesome people to use utmost caution in regard to their own safety when sharing the rugged slopes. Burke Mountain has claimed many a victim through the years, but this time the mountain lost.

The Holtby affair with the mountain lasted for over 23 years. There were times when Mabel was so horrified at seeing bear tracks 'bigger than dinner plates', that she was sure she wouldn't sleep a wink that night. However, the sedative of exhaustion from hiking all the way up to Monroe Lake soon made sure that she didn't stay awake.

Tom tells of his early days on the mountain: "The first time I came up here in '37 we followed the logging roads up. We got just about to where the road crosses the deep ravine where the creek had a big wash-out. My brother and I hiked up through the bush and we got up into the first bit of meadow country that must have been somewhere below the present ski village. We got up under the crest of the mountain, where it's sloping over. It was all timber - never been touched."

A huge sawdust pile up on the mountain could be seen from the Lougheed Highway, before second growth hid it from sight. Tom said, "It was Brownlee's Mill, and he had another one on the south side of the Fraser, too. I guess he was on Burke Mountain for two years in the fifties. It was a smart deal to cut the wood up there and bring the good part out and leave all the junk up there. Far cheaper trucking."

In 1947 there came one fall night a torrential 48-hour rainfall which saturated the fresh snow above, bring-

ing it all sweeping down the little creek bed. Logs and boulders, loosened by the logging, ground down to bedrock, scouring out a bed that was soon tripled in size. The first thing that held the mighty thrust was a heavy bridge sitting on a great boulder, lashed with cables to stumps and built with big sill timbers. The Holtby's chuckled as they told the story of the mountain's wrath.

"Two men were living right at the bridge in a tent built on a wooden frame. Their side of the creek was a bit lower than the bridge - 20 or 30 feet lower, because it had been graded off flat and they had put their camp right there some 20 feet back from the creek and almost underneath the road up above. A dam formed at the bridge and the water came cascading over everything. The noise must have been something fantastic - in the middle of the night, too!"

"The two men didn't even wait to put their shoes on; they just jumped out of bed and ran! It was a big heavy bridge. You'd never believe it would go out," Mabel added.

"Until then Fletcher's road was good all the way up to the burn where they were logging, but it took the road out up above when the logging slash that had been left lying around came down. You see, Fletcher burned and he got, as far as burns go, a beautiful burn. Of course there was nothing to hold anything back, no vegetation. It was two or three years before anything grew again. It was just a mass of charcoal. He burned in 42-43."

"When it took the top bridge out it also took the bridge out above Pete Anderson's place. Tom and I managed to move a few stones to ford the river

there. We didn't need a bridge any more because the creek had been filled in, but the other washout above left straight walls.

"The road crossed the creek twice; it crossed at the upper level and then it came down Strawline Hill and crossed it again. Down there they had a bridge built up on blocks and plank, about 70 feet long where the creek was quite shallow. It took that out, too, and just left a mass of boulders. There was no way a vehicle could use the road so we started using Center Road, the one we go up now. It was called that because there was McVickers Road and the Strawline Hill Road, and that one was the center road."

McVickers Road had circled around and gone up to the top, too, but McVickers hadn't used anything but horses. "Oh, he had one road that went around the east side, the truck road that went straight back. It went the same level all the way to McIntyre Creek, or very close to it, and that was the only truck route he had. The rest were just horse trails, for a team and a drag."

In one night the face of the mountain had been drastically changed, and progress for its inhabitants was back to square one. Everything bogged down for a while and there was no more logging, just periodic shake-cutting. McVicker had the rights on the timber so kept Fletcher's running as long as it was profitable. After he died, around 1948, his wife tried to run the operation. She had two brothers in New Westminster by the name of Montgomery, who came up and tried to make a go of it. When they decided it was 'no go' she hired several different loggers, who had no better success. It wasn't until she made

a deal with Brownlee that a mill was set up. He opened the old Strawline Hill Road, up to the mill and could truck the lumber out without any trouble. He sawed it on the site, working from the mill and salvaging a lot of fir.

"It got to be a joke, with two or three loggers a year trying to get up to the timber. The only road they could see practical was that Center Road. I know one fellow who brought a tractor up there in the fall and got it about half way up and it sat there all winter. No damage. Nobody went up there, you know!

Brownlee did pretty fair on it, though. I understand that he had a sash-and-door mill. He salvaged that old fire-killed fir at a profit because it didn't even need dry-kilning. It was already seasoned. All they had to do was cut it down and trim off the waste on the outside of the logs, mill it out and it was ready for manufacturing. It had been dead for thirty years, standing there. They could salvage an awful lot, and it was tremendous stuff, you know, a hundred feet high. They'd get one or two logs to the truck load."

A happy gang hiked and tented on the mountainside during the forties. One time, after the others had left, Tom decided to build a lean-to put his tools in for the winter. It was snowing, but he managed to get it built so that they could leave their cots, block-and-tackle, crowbars, axes, and so on under cover. They settled down and got to bed but during the night Mabel woke up sick with horror.

"I woke up and I couldn't figure out what was the matter with my legs, they were so numb. Then I realized that there was something on top of them! I

thought a bear had come into the camp, but here it was the doggone snow that had pulled the tent down on top of us. When we got up that morning Tom finished packing the lean-to, then decided he wanted to stay until the next day, but I wasn't staying another night!"

It was 7 PM and at the end of October and Tom knew it was too late in the day so they would have a tough time making it. But Mabel had her way, and off they went. Mabel remembers," I started out and we were walking on deep, soft snow, and we didn't have snowshoes or skis. We had Nigger with us - he was a little Cocker spaniel. He got great balls of snow on him, poor thing, so he couldn't move an inch. Tom put him in the pack-sack on his back. We had to go down like that, and I don't know how Tom found his way down that mountain, because when you get that much snow all the trails are gone and everything looks different. But he managed to find Hall's cabin and we got in and got a fire going. We had one pork chop in the bag and about 2 teaspoons of peanut butter in a jar."

Well, you've guessed already who got the pork chop and Tom and Mabel enjoyed the peanut butter!. After the gourmet's delight Tom suggested that they crawl into bed, and Mabel wondered what bed? "Well, we'll have to get between those two old bear robes, that's the only thing we've got to cover us with."

Mabel thought of the old bear skins that were hanging outside, and assured Tom that SHE was not getting into them. "Well, you stay there; I'm getting into them," said easy-going Tom, as usual in tune with the times.

"I sat there for a while feeling awfully sorry for myself, then I crawled in with him, but, oh it was awful." Mabel still shuddered at the thought of it. The next morning they walked down the mountain and learned that her sister was just about to send the RCMP out looking for them.

The story reminded Mabel that there were other such experiences that she had weathered in her life with Tom and the mountain. "One night a blizzard caught us up there and when we had got darn near to the canyon we met another couple. It was getting on into the evening so we decided we couldn't possibly make it down. Someone suggested that we go up to the mill another way, and we found a cabin there where we got into by the window. There was no bedding but there were two mattresses so we pulled one over the other and slept between them. That was another time that Tom said either I freeze or I crawl in. There were mice running all through the mattresses. Did you ever sleep with mice?"

We laughed and asked if there were any pack rats up on the mountain.

Tom shook his head. "I've never seen a pack rat; I've never seen a rat of any kind. Lots of mice. I remember once there was a little mouse that came out and up on the table right to the butter dish and started to eat the butter. We just chased it but a friend who was with us took a rifle and shot the mouse. I thought the whole place was coming down!"

After the bridge washed out Holtby's had to relay the lumber for their cabin up the hill more than two miles. They carried two or three 2X4's or planks as

far as they could, then dropped them and relaxed going back each time. In the winter they got some old airplane aluminum for a roof, which they coiled up, strung a rope through, and pulled across the snow. It was about 15 feet long and a foot wide, and was anodized on both sides. This aircraft surplus was a great find when used in defence of the monsoon-type rains on the high slopes of the mountain.

"I'll never forget the winter I hooked the light up, because on New Year's Eve we had the fiercest thunder storm. It is the most horrible feeling in the world when it's below zero and there's a thunder storm. It seems unnatural to have lightning across the snow as it really lights things up. In one of those cold spells, when the air's coming from the north, the temperature starts to drop just at sunset and it goes down just like that!" Tom snapped his fingers. "It gets down between ten above and zero every evening around four or five o'clock on a clear day; then it warms right up again after dark. A down-draft would occur just at sundown; there must have been a terrific amount of cold air overhead and the down-draft just sucked it down. Then it would climb right back up to 25 F, or so. You don't notice it so much at lower elevations, but up there, oh brother! The grade is steeper on the east side and I guess the cold fell down into the Pitt Valley. We had a time keeping the cabin warm then. The rest of the night it would be no trouble at all."

Part of the lure of the mountain was, for the Holtby's, potential for a ski lodge. Before they went ahead with plans for the area around the future ski lodge, they staked a claim at Monroe Lake. Vernon Edge had gone up with Tom to survey it, and that was the very original surveying done in that area.

"It was in 1942 that we staked that and it took about four years to get the lease through. It was forty acres. We didn't stake the other piece, we just simply applied for it, as it was already surveyed. If you can find a piece that is surveyed it cuts the costs down. There was a corner post there, maybe two so I applied along the lake shore. We had to put the application in the Gazette. At first I thought of it for a cabin for ourselves, but after seeing the snow in there I thought it would be a pretty fair place for a ski lodge.

"Anyway Rufus Gilley got wind of it and opposed it, so it came to a hearing. I had Frank Butler, Frank Urqhart and a friend of mine who had gone into real estate, to speak for me. There were other people involved, like Eric Dunning, who wasn't too much in favour but he wasn't really opposing mine, either. At the first hearing they didn't come to any conclusion. They had a re-hearing two or three months later. Gilley's lawyer representing the firm, proposed that they would withdraw their objections to me having a lease on the future ski lodge area, if I would abandon the claim on Monroe Lake shore, and take another piece somewhere else. Their main objection was that I would present a fire hazard to their watershed in the Monroe Lake area, which was quite plausible, all right.

"By that time I had decided that it wasn't as good a ski country, anyway, but I didn't tell them that. I could see that access wasn't good to that part of the lake. To get to Monroe you should come up the other side, and that was too steep. So I was quite willing to give it up and take the other piece. That piece was where the ski lodge was finally built."

Mabel sighed,"Gilley didn't like us very much after that. He once told us that he was very annoyed even with his own grandfather for putting eastern brook trout in the lake because the trout attracted people."

It was the plaintive plea that was to persist for some years to come, KEEP TO HELL OFF MY MOUNTAIN !!

Through the years many migrants stopped a spell but not all displayed that dog-in-the-manger attitude. One who was as happy as a king was John Casey, but Casey didn't have a need to be master of all he surveyed. In fact, he didn't even strive for what others would consider the barest of comforts, squatting a year here and a year there, sometimes in a barn, and sometimes in a shack. Yet the most vivid memory that Holtby's have of him is Casey coming down the trail singing loudly in his very Irish brogue.

He used to visit our place in Port Coquitlam in the thirties. He had helped himself to whatever he needed when our property and buildings had lain unoccupied for years before we purchased them in 1930, so when we moved in he just naturally kept visiting the place. Casey always had a nippy collie dog. When he came to visit mother would groan inwardly, because feeding four kids was a worrisome enough task in those lean years, but she would scare up a meal for Casey. And no matter how carefully she watched him, part of it would be slipped under the table for his dog.

His dog spent a hungry life, but his horses were more pathetic and one harsh winter the SPCA man

was called out from New Westminster, to do something about their plight. The man ordered Casey to get them better lodgings, but at the same time he commented, "They certainly are suffering, but judging by the way that Casey himself lives, they aren't too bad off!"

Casey stayed for a year or more at McVicar's Mill. There were cabins there and the one above the mill had sat until a few years ago, quite a feat in the rain forest that soon claims back its own. Originally there were two below and another on the other side of the mill, which was a big bunkhouse. McVicar used to go up and stay in the summer, in one of the two down below where a little creek ran past the door. Casey's house had a barn right across from it for his horses. It had a little anti-room at the entrance, and the rest of the building was a bedroom. Casey added his own particular decor.

"The mud was so high on the floor that you could hardly walk on it. When we went up there, not a word of lie, the mud was that high stuck on his feet," Mabel held her thumb and forefinger several inches apart. "He walked into the barn through all the manure and muck, and then walked into the house and crawled into bed, pulling up the quilt over clothes, dirty feet and all. I don't know how he survived - winter and summer, he didn't seem to have any heat and he never wore socks. Half the time he didn't wear shoes..."

After McVicar died Casey lived in an old shack on Coast Meridian which was owned by McConnells. "We were just starting to put the cabin together up there and we stopped on the way down to see Casey. He was in an old rickety barn of planks. You could

see through the walls, but he had his cot in there and the horses were in with him." He was a part of Burke Mountain.

And then there was Pete....

"There were quite a number of people cutting shakes on the mountain one winter and everything that was being cut was on Pete Anderson's claim. He had the whole mountain-side at the time and he sub-let it out to half a dozen guys. This was just two or three years after Fletcher had burned and everything was open and clean, no underbrush to bother you, and you could pile wood anywhere. Pete cut the area into chunks and I think there were four or five different shakers cutting cedar. They came in October and worked like mad, even threw up shacks. Then it started to snow, and there were bundles of shakes sitting all over the mountain. Some had horses but they could pull the load just so far, and then the men had to pack them the rest of the way wearing snow-shoes. Pete called them the snow-shoe loggers."

"And do you know, that old devil, he'd watch them swipe from one another and he'd never say boo. He just collected royalties from the whole works of them," Mabel added.

"A lot of them pulled out and never got their stuff; it all got buried in the snow, all over the mountain. Some left pretty fair cabins, but it snowed like the devil in '48 and crushed them down."

Three fellows from the prairies worked on the main claim down by Pete's cabin and they did all right,

but when it was time for them to be getting back to the prairies in March they still didn't have their shakes out. The horse couldn't travel in the snow so they dug out by hand, all the miles from Holtby's place up to Pete's, so that they could get their shakes out.

The first encounter that Tom and Mabel had with Pete was when they had left their car while they hiked up the mountain. When they returned there was a note on it from Pete, with the message, "Stay the hell off the mountain!" But eventually they got on better terms. Mabel felt he must have had a 'past' because he wouldn't tell anyone where his relatives were. He had a family, a son and a daughter, but he wouldn't tell anything about them. He was an American, and talked a great deal about Minnesota. He could read and write English very well, and kept up with the news.

One day Tom and Mabel went with a group, skiing on the mountain and on their way down they called in at Pete's place. He had a burning coal-oil lamp sitting on the table with no chimney on it. He wanted to make them some tea, but every few minutes he would blow the light out, leaving them standing around in the dark. Then he would relight it only to blow it out again every few minutes. Naturally one of the boys got curious enough to ask why Pete was doing this.

"Well," he said, "I ran out of kerosene, so I've got gasoline in the lamp..." Everyone piled out of there in a hurry!

Sometimes the problem of getting caught up at the top in an unexpected snow-storm meant a winter's

work before it was over. And once it meant staying the night with Pete. After spending the week-end working on their cabin Tom, Mabel and Ted got down as far as Strawline Hill to discover that they would have to dig their car out. They got the car across the bridge and had to leave it there. The following weekend they found it buried even deeper, and in the end they couldn't get back down again that night.

Mabel moaned,"We had to stay with Pete and I'll never forget that as long as I live. He had a knot-hole in the floor by his bed and as he'd chew his snoose there would be every once in awhile a PPPPT-TTT into the knot-hole. I wondered what else he used the knot-hole for....I kept my face to the wall all night."

Working every weekend until the week before Christmas they had moved the Model 'A' half a mile and were by then throwing the snow higher than the car so they gave up. "It was a Model A, and the year before that we had gone hunting up the Hope-Princeton when they were just building it, and we got a flat tire. I got out my breadboard and laid the tire on it so Tom could put a red rubber patch on it. It was a quarter as big as the tire! Well, that tire was on the car when it was under the snow and when we dug it out in the spring it hadn't gone flat."

"I eventually got my car out using Pete's horse. We started staying at another cabin further back than his, and when I went in to clean it there had been rats in it. Old Pete told us that those pack rats go over the mountain every so many years, that they travel in cycles, but I've never seen a rat up there."

Although Mabel experienced many a scarey time she was never very far behind Tom when a challenge presented itself. She even packed shakes for Pete when Tom was cutting for him. Tom and Mabel were not long in finding that Pete was cutting all the good cedar while they got all the rotten pieces. Mabel tried to be honest, not sticking all the corrugated ones in the middle, but Pete didn't think much of that. "Oh, I'll never make any money having you pack for me," Pete would scold her furiously.

Tom laughed, "When he took them in to the mill McNairs made him take them apart, anyway. They knew all about Pete and just docked him for the lousy ones in the center."

After the burn there was just head-high brush along the road and one time we were coming down in the Model A when Pete was coming up. There was quite a bit of snow on the ground and we saw the horse coming pulling the sleigh. We stopped but the horse kept on coming, just turned off into the bush to go around the car. And there was Old Pete riding backwards on the tail end of the sleigh. Of course the brush tilted the sleigh, which dumped Pete off. He just sat there in the snow yelling whoa...whoa... We ran out, grabbed the horse, stuck him on the sleigh, and started him on his way again."

In 1966 there was a heavy snowfall, and no one had seen Pete for months. Area dweller Vi Johnson tried to get the authorities to look for him. She met Holtbys in downtown Port Coquitlam and asked their opinion on getting a party in to check him but half an hour later she told them not to worry about Pete

as he was over in the beer parlour. When Holtbys got home they noticed two gunny sacks left at their gate. Inside each sack was a pile of sacks, and they were both so hard they were standing upright. When Tom and Mabel looked around to see tracks in the snow above their place, they could barely see where he had walked across the snow. He had taken the 'sack boots' off then because the road was open from there on down. Pete had come up with the best pair of snowshoes you ever saw.

The ingenious old character lived on bread and tea. Sometimes Mabel would go to his place and boil all his clothes to try to get the smell out of them. But unlike Casey, he did wear good shoes and he always kept his feet dry.

"There was a public health nurse up here one time who heard about the old guy so she thought she should investigate. Pete wasn't too well at the time and she decided he should be taken to hospital. She went after the municipality and when nobody was too impressed she threatened to get him out herself. Finally the municipality relented and sent Bunny Falcon, the Fire Chief, as he had a four-wheel drive for civil defence. George Johnston and I went along on foot as there was only 6 inches of snow, with axes to get the trees off the road. When we finally got to Pete's place he wouldn't come out."

"I haven't had a bath," he said. He was quite proud. They talked and talked, but he wouldn't come out. He wasn't going to hospital when he hadn't had a bath, and he apparently wasn't in any hurry to have that bath. He lived there two more years before he died at about 76 years of age.

Pete had to stay on the mountain. He was an alcoholic. He'd be down town and he'd take a half dozen beer up with him, and he'd stay up there a few weeks. He knew he wouldn't survive if he didn't live that way. His last few years he was in quite a bit of trouble, too. He got into a couple of court cases by threatening people; tried to run several off the mountain with a gun. He figured he had a 99-year lease on the whole damn mountain!

Now Pete himself couldn't make a mountain feud, but he soon found his adversary in a fellow called Harper. He discovered that threatening Harper with his gun brought Harper out shotgunning for him. Then Harper closed the road off where it went through his property and Pete had to open a road higher up off Coast Meridian to get his shakes out. Holtby's also had to use the new upper route to reach the property they had acquired after the skirmish with Gilleys.

"One Christmas after we had bought our property, my brother wanted a Christmas tree, so I took him up behind Lee's and over to our place. And there was Harper with a shotgun, ready to chase us out." Another owner of Burke!

"The Lands Department made a real mess of things. Where Harper Road comes out on Coast Meridian it crosses a piece of land that was an old homestead, a forty acre block, originally. By the time we started going up there the Lees had the north part of it and a chap by the name of Bee had the south part. An Englishman called Barber eventually bought Bee's property and put a gate across the road. When Harper couldn't get out he put a gate up too, in

retaliation. If he couldn't get up, nobody was going to, including us.

"When Brownlee started the mill he had to pay a toll to these guys. When the homestead was split up an old railroad spur that ran in there was made into a logging road, and the government sold the road with the property. And it had been an established road for years! On Harper's they took out a lein on the road for logging purposes only, so Harper could chase off the public but not the logging people.

This was done way back in the thirties on the first piece and in the forties on the second piece. Harper took it over from the homesteader and when it changed hands it had to be surveyed; before it was just a rough survey When it was transferred Harper had it surveyed to get the boundaries set, and that's when we got our piece surveyed. They had to continue the lines down a half a mile further so that put our posts in." On this piece Holtby's built their main residence.

Eventually Harper got fed up and sold to Otterson. The Otterson piece was bought by the Barrett Government Land Assembly, which gathered so much desirable, livable acreage on the slopes, a move that led to Holtby's sale to the government, also.

Perhaps we city slickers down below, in the metropolis of Port Coquitlam had some basis for our 'the Martins and the Coys' banter. There were several families of Martins in the area, and when one street was named Martin it was bound to follow (and it did when the Coqua Vista Housing area evolved) that another was named Coy. Some day someone will come along to organize things, and with a sweep of

acrylic paint, another piece of local colour will disappear into the middens of time, marked perhaps by a sign stating '149th Street and 102nd Avenue'.

Surviving snowpacks and flood, and the cross-fire of the mountain feud, in the end Holtby's outlasted them all, staying in their home on Harper Road for years, a home so tucked into the wild surroundings of the land that it seemed to apologize for being there. They were ready and willing to take on anything and anyone the mountain brought them because they were tough in a wholesome way, but knew when to swing with the punches. It was only the threat of massive development that persuaded them to leave at last. When they packed their belongings to move to Saltspring Island they took their memories with them, but their dreams they left behind to be discovered by those who will love the mountain in the future. There will be engineers and developers with wild visions, but Burke Mountain has a way of remaining ruggedly independent.

Mabel thinks wistfully of the young Lewins and remembers how hard Ted worked when he was up there. She recalls the excitement he caused one day. "I'll tell you how crazy Ted was. He bought a beautiful double-bitted axe, oh it was a beautiful axe. Well, one day we were going to stop for a drink so he takes his double-bitted axe and slams it into a tree, like that...." Mabel swung her arm up like a mighty logger. "Then he gets his drink and he LEANS BACK against the tree! Split his back wide open! His wife knew a bit about nursing so she pushed it together with tapes we had, patched him up until we got him down for stitches in it."

The story brought us a laugh, just because of the ludicrous situation. Time has a funny way of turning things around. Misfortunes can become a source of great mirth for years to come, and delightful times can bring a soft sadness to the heart.

A wilderness ski village exists on the high slopes, but the mountain did not cooperate long with the operation of a ski hill. Some mild winters and the heavy expense of maintaining the miles of roads made efforts to keep the lodge alive prohibitive. After much vandalism it was burned to the ground in the late seventies.

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# 16

# Mountain Dwellers

In 1948, when I worked for Coquitlam School District (43) I requested and received a transfer to Victoria Drive School in North-east Coquitlam. I taught the primary grades with about 36 pupils at this little rural school, with its setting of tall evergreens and silence.

We had very few visitors throughout the school year, but did get checked regularly by the Public Health nurse, Betty Elliot Hoyem. The Inspector of Schools visited once in two years. Mr. Miller, the rural mail man, came after hours to do the janitorial work, and that was about it. Originally the land where it sat had been donated by the pioneer Mounce family.

There were exciting days there, nevertheless. One especially stinging memory resulted when the students were playing in the bushes during lunch hour. An unlucky lad happened to fumble into a large yellow-jacket nest, which resulted in twenty screaming bodies bursting into the classroom. After getting all the children who were free of the stingers sorted out on one side of the room, I grabbed a blackboard

cloth and started pulling off the yellow-jackets from sweaters, coats and bare skin, throwing them down and crushing them on the floor. As soon as I would get the noisy screaming bodies settled down, someone would discover another one and off they'd go again! The windows were soon buzzing with yellow bunches of fury, but they could be swatted later.

In the end one little boy called Brian was a bit hysterical, having suffered the brunt of the attack, so I quieted him by covering him up on the cot at the back of the room, assuring him that they couldn't get him there. I had almost let out a sigh of relief, when the blanket went straight up in the air, along with Brian, who was screaming that there WAS one in with him! He was right.

Then there were the wildlife visits. One day after everybody left for home I began filling in my daybook in the peace and quiet. Suddenly several worried youngsters came thundering up the long outside stairway, and the urgency of their arrival alerted me that something was up. I was not overly impressed when they breathlessly reported a HUGE black bear had just crossed the school yard. This was not a rare thing for any of them to see, because they walked miles on the country roads and occasionally saw one along the way. So I told them to simmer down, wait a while, and go along their way, just as the bear was doing.

"But Muriel has gone after this one; she wants to pet it!" they cried in alarm. Then I WAS impressed, and ran out to haul Muriel back, who wanted to haul the bear back! Muriel Whalley was a true animal lover, a sweet grade one child, one who was more likely to be seen cuddling a woolly-bear caterpillar in her lit-

tle hand than playing tag with the others. Wherever she is today, I'm sure she has animals, hopefully not bears.

Teddy Cyr, a grade two lad, gave us a biology lesson one day by bringing a new-found pet he had acquired. He had been telling us about his great snake with two long front legs, and after listening to his peers' assortment of doubting remarks I asked him if he could possibly bring it to show us. I thought he would back down with some excuse, but no, he said he could do that. Well, maybe he had found some remnant of an extinct species!

I was soon wishing that I hadn't eaten lunch that day, for along came Teddy with his followers, back from noon hour at home, carrying a large covered paint pail. He kneeled down and started to pry off the lid. It seemed to be stuck, and he became quite animated trying to get it loose. Fascinated, we all inched forward, and suddenly off flew the lid and up came an enormous snake - with, sure enough, two long legs sticking out below its head! Kids shrieked and scattered, the snake flopped out over the edge of the pail and headed for cover while Teddy watched his new pet disappear into a ditch. I collected my thoughts (remembering that I was in charge of this circus) enough to realize the poor reptile was simply having a leisurely lunch, swallowing a big fat toad.

We had some interesting news reports at our little school, too. There was the grade one youngster who breathlessly arrived at class obviously having had a traumatic experience, and dying to impress the class with details. I wasn't prepared to hear him announce that, "Dad tried to have our cow bred but she wouldn't." Enjoying the great awe and ques-

tions from his audience about what had happened (while I was searching for a diversion) the news announcer ended with, "She broke her horn right off!"

Phew, well, it could have been worse.

I had learned from previous years that it wasn't too safe to have a morning news time, meant to give the kids a chance to talk to a group. It was the forerunner of Show and Tell, which put some restrictions on the news. It really seemed quite important to beginners to report that "Daddy has diarrhoea today!"

But even with no regular news programme, delicate bits managed to come out in class as little ones like to impress teacher and classmates. Thus it happened one day that a little girl announced, "Eleanor is going to have a baby sister or brother pretty soon." Eleanor, who was totally unaware of the coming event, sat speechless, as I hurried on with lessons. But the cat was out of the bag, and the mother must have been surprised to hear what her little girl learned at school that day.

Christmas concerts have long been a magic time for pupils and parents alike. Across the field from the school sat the Meridian Heights Hall of the 1930's, known for miles around as Dogpatch. In this hall Rudy Soball, a student's father, built a stage, and wires were strung for blankets to hang for stage curtains. One concert evening a heavy snowstorm swept over the mountain and some of the little performers were unable to make it. Certain pieces would be left out, but as curtain time arrived I realized with slight panic that Valerie Lauridsen, who had the opening piece to recite had not arrived. The little girl lived at the Minnekhada Ranch, where her father was fore-

man. I looked around at the eager, excited faces, and saw Leota Johnson there, waiting with the others.

"Leota, could you go on stage and recite the opening piece? You've heard Valerie recite it. Do you think you could do it for us?"

Without hesitation she answered, "Yes, Mrs. Campbell." The sweetest words I could have heard. She bounced up onto the stage and opened the show. I was amazed once again by the capacity children have in learning.

One spring we were struck by a scarlet fever epidemic and the Public Health Officer sent word to us that our school couldn't take part in May Day. This was really silly, as most of the children had older siblings in the other schools, who would be taking part. Not to be without our day of fun, we held our own elections and had our own May Day celebration, crowning lovely Maureen Miller as Queen for the day.

Pupils from that little school are now seeing their own children graduate from high school, few of them having experienced learning as a personal thing, always being organized and regulated and hustled from room to room. The small school with multiple grades taught responsibility for others, and each individual knew he had a part to play in life. Each was important in his own way, and nobody was just a number that could get lost in the maze of education.

Many children in their first school experience make a close connection between mother and teacher. I realized this when one little girl who was helping to

decorate the schoolroom for the Christmas party, innocently asked me if I would be giving everyone a nice present. I explained that it would cost me quite a bit of money to do that. After some thought on the matter she said, "Yes, I guess you would have to get yourself a job!"

I guess those youngsters on Burke Mountain were pretty sturdy as a result of, not only walking many miles to school, but because much of this walking was on mountainous territory. Up to the top of Coast Meridian and further, east to the Minnekhada Ranch, and north to the quarry. Even one child who had suffered from polio pushed that poor thin leg of hers back and forth on the country roads without complaint.

Bob McCowan was a grinning grade three boy when I first met him in Victoria Drive School. He grew up exploring the mountain and I expect that he remembers every nook and cranny on the mountainside, every criss-crossed logging road, and game trail. Burke Mountain was the rugged playground Bob and his pals - Brian Faire, Louie Martin, Dan Burdett, Richard and Peter Hagman, and others - called their own for a few precious years. Recently I discovered Bob living in Grand Forks and in our memories we were able to revisit the mountain side of forty years ago.

Everyone in the area has at least one Pete Anderson story to tell. When Bob took his future wife, Jean, hiking one afternoon they came across one of Pete's many cabins. All was quiet so Jean decided to peek inside, when suddenly from around the corner leaped Pete, yelling and brandishing a picaroon, sending her off with a bloodcurdling scream. Pete

then recognized her companion and said, "Oh, it's just you, Bob." After that Jean and Bob could have the whole mountain to themselves for the day, by kind permission of Pete Anderson.

When he turned 16, Bob got his driver's licence and then was allowed to drive his Grandpa Pearce's old truck, taking Pete's shingle bolts over to Port Moody. Grampa didn't like driving with Pete yapping all the way, but Bob just loved it! He remembers, "I loaded up and drove over to McNairs Shingle Mill in the '40 Ford Pickup. Pete would bring his orange onion sack and fill it with cans from the store. He'd be dressed in an old black suit and a shirt that had been white at one time. We'd go to the Liquor Store, and then often to the Commercial Hotel. I wouldn't wait for him, so he'd take a taxi back to the top of the hill, and get the rest of the way himself."

Pete fascinated the young boys growing up on the mountain. He had a marvelous gun that shot bears and performed other wonderful feats. (Later they realized it was just a plain old 30-30.) Before the end of his time Pete actually had a small transmitter radio, which showed modern day life was reaching even the old man of the mountain.

But what an end for one who had once been a prosperous family man. Bob's Dad knew a millwright at Hammond Cedar Mill who had worked for Pete when he owned a big coastal logging camp that had 60 or 70 men. His kids were well educated, but they had disowned Pete because of his booze problem, the problem that cost him everything, perhaps in the end, including his life. No wonder he at least wanted to own the whole damn mountain!

Bob remembered what they called the Hundred Foot Waterfall. "You went to the first strawline road and turned to the left. At the top of the hill they made a dam, overlooking Coquitlam Lake Reservoir. They sent bolts down a flume that was built by crossed posts with planks on top, which water trickled down. Part of an old trestle was there, where Dollar had logged the mountain. This went over towards Port Moody and logs were dumped in the Bay.

"They tried hauling from up there, but it was just too steep where they had the old mill, for the trucks they had those days. And in the spring the road washed out. So they built a road up the other side, came up from the back where they had a bit of a landing. But at first - right after the war, they had army trucks - those White 6x6's. I remember because one crashed into my Grandpa's culvert. They had no water cooled brakes, no doors, but they had put a set of bunks on them and when they were coming down this time, it got away from them and went into the deep ditch on Coast Meridian.

I asked Bob about some of the other characters he got to know in his wanderings. He mentioned Ab Jenner, who lived on the dyke of Deboville Slough, which flowed into Pitt River. "He told us boys some great stories, when we visited him. He used to trap muskrats and skin them right in his shack. As he talked he would pitch the rat parts out the door. Oh what a stench around the place! Butch Meyers knew him better than the rest of us did, as well as the other bachelor, Hugo, who was further along the dyke. That one had snakes and women tattooed all over him - he was a merchant seaman who had travelled all over the world."

Bill Millard was another bachelor who lived out most of his life on a farm near Bob's home. "He had been a fantastic athlete. Swam like a fish, a beautiful diver, and one of the best soccer players Port Coquitlam ever had, I was told as a kid. He lied about his age and went overseas to the first World War when he was very young. When he came back he was shell-shocked, and lived with the other Millards for a bit.

In his early twenties he moved up on the hill and took part of the old Millard orchard. He had his little house there, and his strawberries and fruit. He never went down town. Mrs. McConnell was his sister, and she brought his groceries for him. In the winter he made violins - never would sell one or give one away. His house was just one big room. He nailed blocks of wood on the floor and on them would be a series of nails in the shape of a violin. In the rafters would be all his pieces of wood drying. He had no electricity, just a kerosene lamp. He made his own tools by using an anvil and an old sandstone with a 14-inch wheel, which he sat and pedalled while he shaped old kitchen knives and files. When he wanted to heat the metal he would simply take off a lid on the stove and put it in, which helped to make all his walls one colour - black.

"His shack had no inside walls, and just tarpaper on the outside. Between the 2x4 studs he hung his violins, which were all carved out by hand, even all those wooden threads on the pegs. Mrs. McConnell would order packages of violin strings from the Beryl McLeod Music Store. On a summer evening he'd sit on his porch playing beautifully, all by ear; never had a lesson. And Ken Norris, a Vancouver city policeman who had the property next to him as a sum-

mer retreat, used to come over, too. He played the bagpipes in the police band."

It sounded like a friendly and compassionate neighborhood. His family used to tether their goats on Bill's pasture, which he had cleared all by hand. He would dig around stumps, burn them, or use a hand stump puller, and slowly his land became pasture. Bill had all the time in the world, as he had stepped aside and let the world go on without him. At least he found his peace there on Burke, dying in the late sixties. That property was later owned by Jolly Sawyer.

Another lonely mountain dweller, mentioned also by the Holtby's, came into focus in Bob's memory. "I can remember the shed Casey lived in. I crossed that way to go into McConnell's. That had been an old logging road past Bill's blackberries, to Ken Norris's, then to Litchfields. We'd come past Trans and that brought us out to David road. Or we could come out at Louie Martin's (the George Martin place), cross through the ravine and go over the back side of the mountain to the Coquitlam River for swimming. It put us out opposite Gallette on Pipeline. There was a natural swimming hole with four big rocks and a little beach.

We'd swim all afternoon and then hike back up that mountain! We'd be just hanging onto branches, pulling ourselves up, it was so steep. One would have to know the rugged territory that these fellows were travelling to appreciate the feat.

At the foot of the hill, on Coast Meridian, there was a beautiful farm, with fields and buildings kept immaculate. It was called the Savage place, which was

the name of a millionaire who had developed it. It was a place of mystery that encouraged no visitors. But the last owner, a man with a name something like Jernes, was a familiar sight, riding his bicycle to town, always sitting so erect on the seat, and always dressed in black, like he belonged to a distant world.

Sometimes Bob went with Brian Faire to deliver papers to this man known as the Sheep Farmer, and once managed to be shown through the huge, austere house. He described his experience, "The man lived only in the kitchen, while the rest was all closed off. His kitchen was painted white and light green, and it was just spotless. There was a sofa, a wood stove and a huge dining table. The rest of the place was beautifully built, mahogany staircases and all.

"We all seem to have a quirk and his was that he never threw a newspaper away. He would sit and read the Sun from beginning to end, fold it in half and add it to the pile. The whole table was built up with newspapers. Everything else was in order, even outside his hay was piled on the fence neatly to dry, but he wouldn't throw a newspaper away!"

Another fellow who travelled down into town just once a month or so for necessities drove a shiny Triumph motorcycle. When he arrived back home he would dust the machine off, lovingly, and cover it up until his next trip. Burke was a good place to escape the confusion of life unfolding in the big centers.

A well known couple of men were the Gillies brothers, Dan and Archie, who tried some innovative crops on their farm. Their strawberry fields had all the women on the hill picking during the season, but they also gave a good try at growing ginseng as well

as other herbal plants. This required a lot of work as the ginseng needed shading, and water was also a problem on the hill, as they weren't yet into pressure systems.

"Dan was a big bruiser - he had been a cop on the beat at San Francisco. There was a third brother they called Doc, who was a professor of pharmacy at Louisville, Kentucky. He got them into these new ideas when he'd come home for the holidays. When he retired in 1954 he brought a new Chev home from the States. He switched the brothers into chickens and they were big in them for years, being one of the first to get into the automated feeding system.

There was a small sawmill on their land, and Dad fixed it up for them, so they were able to skid their logs over to it with horses, and cut lumber for all their chicken houses and the cedar strips for shading their ginseng. All three of the men remained bachelors."

On Galloway Avenue there were places on both sides of the road, but the lower ones are long gone. Some of my pupils came from the lower side, which was later bought up by B.C.Hydro for their power line across the mountain. In the late 40's Leota Johnson, Barbara Chadwick and the Glebe girls, Kathy, Ellenore and Jeanie, lived there. On the top side of the road Erwins had a big piece of land, with huge strawberry fields. The old people had died and their homestead was broken up and sold to Ed Stevens, and to Tom Campbell, the future Mayor of Vancouver (whose place we eventually purchased).

One couple who entertained the local youngsters was Bill Hoddenott, a famous Legion member in Port Co-

quitlam, and his wife, Muriel. He had been shot down when in the Airforce and was a prisoner of war and was in the group that the film, The Great Escape, was about. Bob said, "He had been through sheer hell - had been terribly tortured. All his fingers and fingernails were deformed and the arches of his feet were smashed with rifle butts."

Bob's eyes lit up when he remembered, "We would tie a rope on the back of his old Model A and he would tow us kids up Coast Meridian on our sleighs. And we loved to go to their place, off in the bush a bit, and they had ducks and geese. Their house had a big bay window with a cushioned seat in it, and us kids used to fight to be the ones who sat in it. They had no kids, but they always had cookies and cocoa and comic books for any of us who came."

The road used to end at the gravel pit at the top of Coast Meridian, but later it was pushed through to where Dr. Cornish from Vancouver wanted to raise horses. The road tied into part of Hoddenott's property, at the back. Now there is a Martin and a Coy Road as mentioned earlier.

At the corner of Coast Meridian and Harper, on the road up to the Port Coquitlam and District Hunting and Fishing Club, lived Barbers, where Mackenzie's later resided. Harper was further up the road on the opposite side. Bob remembered the Harper and Barber fight and the cable across the road. Everyone then had to keep to hell off the mountain!

Holts had a pig farm and a mink ranch just above Harper, and their big old house is still standing there. Kolmstead's bought the place later on, but built a new house down from the old place.

"Holts were French Canadians, and if she had you in she would have mink crawling all over her. They'd crawl up her arm and curl up around her neck. She used a Robin Hood flour sack for an apron, and she would wipe her greasy glasses and everything else on it. She was a rotund little thing, but she was a dead-eye Dick when it came to shooting hawks and eagles coming around after her chickens."

Bob went on to describe the Holts. "He raised pigs and when they were farrowing he slept with them, in case anything happened to them. What a smell, between the two of them, with mink and pigs. He was a big man and I never saw him without his gum boots on to wade among the pigs, and even in the summer he wore his toque. Peter (Hagman) was really in with old man Holt and his pig bit. Richard and I didn't like going there - it was too dirty to hang around.

He had an old 2-ton red International, and they went around to auction sales at Pitt Meadows and Surrey, to buy old plugs to butcher and grind up for mink feed. The truck would come grinding up the hill in bull low, and she'd be sitting there eating candy. She had her sheds painted with bull's eyes to warn airplanes not to fly low and disturb her mink, as they would eat their young if bugged."

Hill-billies they were, yet they were the first ones to have a T V set out there in the wilderness. Their son had a Radio-Television business in Vancouver and he gave them one. The Hagman boys and Bob thought that was great and they watched with fascination as Mrs. Holt placed a mirror in front of the set so she could see what she was changing as she fiddled with the back of the set. In those days there

was always something going out of whack with the sets, as early TV owners can testify. She would curse at it in French, but when she got it going she would settle down in front of it with her candy and her mink.

Richard Hagman is now teaching music at Enderby and Peter Hagman is the Manager of a London Drug Store on the coast. The pig business didn't rub off on them!

Bob's Dad and Uncle hand-logged off all of their place with a Reo truck that his Dad had converted to haul the logs, and a donkey they made up. They bought an old boom winch at Hammond and a '28 Chevvy 4-cylinder engine that was all in pieces in a washtub. "A guy had taken it apart and couldn't figure out how to put it back together. Dad bought it for three or five dollars, including the washtub. He took it home and that winter rebuilt it in the woodshed. They logged it all with that and Chubby, the horse."

That wasn't the end of it, as they had to get the logs down to the little portable mill at Trans. "They cut down the Reo and made a trailer and hauled the logs down from Highland to David Road, but there was no planer there, so the lumber was all hauled back home where it sat all of 1949-50, to be air dried. Then Dad started to build under VLA. Their inspector from Port Moody could never get over Dad's building techniques - everything was so strong, in full size, as it wasn't dressed."

The year they were building the house something happened to an export order at Hammond Cedar Mill, and it didn't go to England. As an employee

Bob's Dad got a good buy on what he needed, so was able to do all the walls and ceilings in tongue-and-groove yellow cedar. When they were back to see that house last summer (thirty-six years later) it was still solid and it will probably be there for many more years to come.

Coast Meridian used to have a sharp double-S turn just below the present Riding Stables, but this was straightened out. It was at the foot of the hill where the Hub Store and Gas Station are now. There was a small sawmill there, too. Bob asked me if I remembered it. "A bunch of hill-Billie types moved in and there was a fat man who wore just red underwear tops for a shirt."

This made me recall one cold and icy morning that I was on my way to school in my '35 Plymouth, when I came upon a traffic jam at that very corner. I had to stop, even though I would lose my momentum, as a group of men flagged me down. I stepped out onto glare ice as a big bruiser came over to me and said I couldn't go down Victoria drive as everyone was sliding off the road down that way. I said I HAD to get over it to the school, and he wanted to know why. "Because there will be kids waiting to get into the classroom, and I am the teacher," I told him.

"Oh", he guffawed as he reached out to slap me on the back so I'd appreciate his joke. "You look more like one of the kids!" To his, and my horror, the light blow was all it took to send me flying through the air and landing on my backside on the road that had become an ice rink! His mouth was still open as I crawled into the car, and made it safely if sorely to the school.

Meridian Heights Community Hall, widely known as Dogpatch, sits at the corner of Victoria Drive and Soball Road (which was named after Ruth Soball's Grandfather, an early dweller). Ruth was in the primary grades when I taught her. Her Father later had a little chips and hot-dog stand for the kids attending Leigh School. In the days of gravel roads the two Soballs had the grader contract for Coast Meridian Road. It took two of them as one rode the grader and the other turned the wheel.

After Leigh School was built across Soball from the Hall, the trail that led from that corner to the Sheep Farm on Coast Meridian was developed into, first what the pupils called the Dirt Road, and later a good paved road. It was through this trail that Bob and his monkey-friends swung through from tree to tree. No wonder they watched the clock and tore out when they were dismissed. Quite a bit of competition for arithmetic and spelling!

Bob chuckled as he remembered, "Brian Faire was part monkey, could go hand over hand through the bush. He was terribly strong, and could he climb trees! On our way home from school, once we reached the trail we would see who could go the furthest without touching the ground. We'd climb a maple, then swing down to the next one. I'd come home covered with dirt or soaking wet from the creeks. The contest was on as soon as Brian moved onto the hill!"

Bob laughs at the memories that flood back. "We even came home all through the bush when we went to Viscount Alexander School. Greenmount wasn't pushed through, yet. (It's now a bus route!) We'd come out at Needhams on Mason. There were trails

all through there." I'd like to see a pupil doing that today!

"Eric Patterson bought Dad's last piece as it had big trees there and a creek that swung through the back corner of the place. When we were first there we had no hydro. We had to blow stumps and clear the land first. In 47 or 48 they set the poles and the following year Hydro finally came and strung the wires. Power had ended at the Sheep Ranch before that."

Bob went on, "Mum had brought her washing machine from Saskatoon. There were few families on the mountain so they got together - Pearce's, Lees, Aunt Elsie and ours. Three of them bought a Briggs & Stratton engine, and Dad being a mechanic, converted the washing machine. We packed the machine up to Pearce's, to their screened-in porch. We supplied the machine, the others the motor, and Pearce's water from their good well. We each had a special washing day. You'd give the old thing a pull, and putt-putt, a community washing machine, with all the fumes blowing away on the porch. Mrs. Pearce had a huge wood stove with a reservoir, so there was lots of hot water."

There was no running water at Victoria Drive School until 1948, the year I came. The old pump was replaced by a new well and pump, so the bathrooms were moved into the basement, and no more biffies had to be dashed to through the usually rainy weather.

Louis Martin has tended the horses at Burke Mountain Riding Stables since he finished school. He was another cohort of Bob's, but had quite a different

nature. While Bob was outgoing, Louis was a quiet lad and preferred not to be noticed. But Louis had his talents. At home the family had guinea hens, different types of goats, all sorts of animals, and Louis knew all about them. Louie's Dad had done an exciting thing just for the kids. He had climbed up a big maple and fastened a heavy rope there with knots on the end.

"You could take ahold of the rope, run down the trail, and swing away out over the ravine, landing back on the trail again - if everything went well. If it didn't you'd crash land in the ravine and have to crawl back up again," Bob winced.

One day an old fellow came to the classroom door and asked me to tell those engineers of mine to quite damming up the creek behind the school. Bob was one of those engineers. When I related the incident to him he nodded, "I remember doing that. There were some good sized fish that we were always trying to catch!"

Bob, the boy, was in tune with the heart of the mountain.

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# 17

# Keep the Hell Off My Mountain!

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My mountain's sleep has been disturbed. The base is heavily covered with new housing along Victoria Drive. The Grimshaw farm across from the old school has been torn apart, serviced and built on. Row upon row of housing stretches back from the road. Victoria Drive School is but a memory, in use since early days, but now eclipsed by the much larger Leigh School built on the west side of old Dogpatch Hall in 1963. The yellow building is gone, the hallowed spot where it stood, where hundreds of children embarked on their education, is just an extension of the football field. Time marches with silent steady steps.

The N D P Government's enormous development plan of 1974 has been forgotten. But when the lower reaches of the mountain have been filled to saturation will the steep slopes then be tamed?

Change is perpetual. The hillside where Ko-Lam lived is being heavily housed. The permanence of

Essondale (Riverview Hospital) is showing cracks, as institutional care is being fazed out. Industries along the river bank are busy, the water spanned by wide bridges, and the new Mary Hill By-pass skirting the old swampy areas. The dykes north of the Lougheed Highway, bordered by the now naturalized blackberry bushes, are used extensively by hikers, joggers, dog walkers, bike and horseback riders.

The mighty Fraser still brings its load of silt to the delta at its mouth, still tearing down and rebuilding. The river at present is constricted from changing its bed, because of urban life, but man has to be on constant guard to maintain control, dredging and dyking in its path. It was the ancient and primitive lifeline to the world for Coquitlam, the highway to work for fishermen and loggers into the future.

Simon Fraser began the thread of written history that will not be broken as long as people exist here. In 1808 most countries in the world already had volumes of records dating back hundreds of years, civilizations had come and gone thousands of years earlier on the earth's timetable. Local museums are finally gathering facts and artifacts so that future generations can glimpse a moment of the past, in this very new country. Many artists since the days of Paul Kane have produced excellent memories of the country and its growth.

Development flirted with the Pitt, Coquitlam and Burke Mountain area for decades before it began in earnest. From almost being chosen the capital city of the province (on Mary Hill), to almost housing U B C there. From almost being connected to Vancouver by canal, across the toe of Burke Mountain, to almost being the terminus of a vast railway system.

In recent years it made a bid and could have been chosen as the site for B.C. Place Stadium, which went to Vancouver. Plans are now afoot to move the Pacific National Exhibition to the Colony Farm site. Transportation, as ever the problem, demands planning with vision.

But the area hasn't always been an 'also ran'. It became the home of Coquitlam Center, the second largest Mall in Canada when it was completed, and the first to have the three major stores - Eatons, Woodwards and The Bay, under one roof. Its development since it recovered from the depression days has gone ahead in the great leaps envisioned at the turn of the century. Coquitlam School District #43 felt the early brunt of the sudden population increase, and was forced to send a generation of students through school on split shifts, until building finally caught up.

Vast power projects have brought electricity crackling over the miles from northern dams, making the small Buntzen station a mere drop in the bucket, used only as a backup energy source. Coquitlam Lake water, still prized for its purity, supplies much of the lower mainland with its needs. Inroads of logging and pipelines threaten this priceless resource. To date not a great deal has been done to enhance the situation of floods, fisheries, or recreation along the river in spite of the many detailed and expensive studies done by governments. But proposals for diversions, of directing more water to the existing system from other rivers, abound.

Fish from the Fraser are today involved in international fights, with no one happy about the division of salmon. There has long been concern that the sup-

ply of this important fish could be wiped out. Even in the B C Review of 1906 it is stated that nearly 20 million fish were taken from the Fraser in one season, for canning purposes alone. And that was after 30 years of continuous fishing. At last environmental matters have gained enough importance to put in force the drive to enhance spawning grounds, a natural and disease free method of increasing the fish produced.

Since the days of Robert Dollar the money from the mountain has come from its timber, not its gold. Now real estate is providing silver, if not gold to its dwellers.

From its boom-town beginnings to its doldrums during the depression, from its involvement in World War 2 to its post war development spree, the area has grown into a bustling urban center. But one group has clung to its grassroots beginnings, and that group is made up of the people on Burke Mountain. Many of them belong to the Ratepayers Association, which still meets at 'Dogpatch Hall'. They make it their business to know what plans there are for the mountain. They take an active part in developing such projects as the Minnekhada Regional Park, and persist against odds that would scare the average urban dweller. They know who is running for office in the area.

Most local histories record a profusion of names. Burke's past was not as a commercial center with its resulting prominent people. However the grassroots people of today's Burke are many. There is artist and naturalist Alyce Shearer, who writes and phones influential people constantly, in an effort to keep important environmental issues alive. There is Eleanor

Ward, who has been on all the committees formed for the well-being of the mountain, and has even stood for office on council, fighting to keep Crown Lands from falling into private ownership.. There is Thelma MacAdam, busy in her gutsy fight to keep poisonous pollution from being thrust upon future generations. And there's Hugo Shore, who entered the Mayor's race one term. And Knut Chetney, who received a life membership on the 20th anniversary of the North-east Ratepayers Association, in recognition of his efforts for the area. And there is Maggie Fankboner who keeps me updated on mountain events, and who speaks out against the noise pollution from Westwood Motor Sports Park across the river from the North East Sector. The increasing duration, type and frequency of the pollution invade the residential way of life, and Council has now passed a resolution that the lease not be renewed.

Names that come to mind when Burke Mountain is mentioned are Ann Olsen, Gloria Howarth, who like others have kept politicians on their toes. We think of Eric Patterson, who was instrumental in forming the Volunteer Fire Department on the hill, and Bill Campbell, the first North-easter to hold the office of alderman in the District of Coquitlam. There are the Gilley Brothers, who brought innovative industry to the mountain. These clearly stand out in their contribution, but are by no means the only ones who do. There are still members of old-time families on the slopes - such as the Johnsons, Edwards and Hartwigs. They have untold stories to tell of the mountain's past life. They each could write a book.

Terry Fox, Canada's best known and beloved hero, lies buried at the toe of the Mountain, where he could be seen building up strength long before his

incredible attempt to cross Canada after losing a leg to cancer.

Near there a bit of gilt and glitter was brought to the town in depression days. For former movie stunt man Carl Jacobs and his movie star wife Clara 'Babe' Jacobs built cabins in the woods by the river, that attracted stars like Clark Gable and Errol Flynn. In later years to see her fishing for steelhead in the Coquitlam River, one would never have guessed her past in the Ziegfeld Follies hobnobbing with Harlow and Gaynor! Jacob's Hideout, as we called it, was later developed into Steelhead Ranch and then Ox-bow, when later years drew local youngsters rather than celebrities.

Not much remains today of the original Port Coquitlam that once belonged to the district. Perhaps the City Hall is one place that has come through the years without evident change, yet it too is being enlarged, but with the promise of not destroying the museum piece it is. The original homes of the twenties and thirties are often still there, but remodelled and tucked in among modern houses. The Red Bridge has been rebuilt and knocked down by a truck and replaced with a Baillie bridge. The downtown remodelled traffic bridge is still there but drivers bypass it and use the modern, four-lane bridge at the Lougheed Highway. Mayor's names of the past, A. Mars, J.R. MacKenzie, R.C. Galer, C.S. Davies, R. Hope and J.W. Oughton have been replaced by names like L.B. Scott, G. Laking, J. Campbell and the present Mayor L. Traboulay.

In the District, which now encompasses Fraser Mills, the Reeve's or Mayor's names have changed from J. Christmas, J. Ballard and J.Tonn to the present

Mayor L. Sekora. The last sign of most Mayors of the District and City, from the past is their names on some streets. Not a bad idea to continue, as it is much more colourful than a list of numbers. Maple Ridge made the mistake of throwing out old-timers names for numbers, and even the historic name Haney is gone, losing some character for the town.

The roundhouse on the CPR property has been torn down, but miles of tracks still take up a great part of north-side Port Coquitlam. The roundhouse, where trains were turned and where they were repaired, was of great curiosity to the children of the thirties. I can remember Dorothy Redline taking lunch to her father, who worked there, and telling me all the wonders of the place. Of course trains were still a romantic part of life at that time.

Because of a caring few, the last ranch along the west bank of Pitt River will be there in its natural state for generations to come. Colony Farm will probably succumb to progress, in the form of a racetrack or the future home of the Pacific National Exhibition. Mayfair, the great new industrial area will expand into the nineties. But the Minnekhada has a good chance of remaining as it is. Of course anything can happen, and often does. The people of the mountain will be vigilant!

The Coquitlam River has not shown its clean gravel bottom for many a year now. The fish that come to spawn, that wonderful sight my father led me to in 1930 fresh from the dust bowl, are no longer pushing each other out of the water in great spurts of energy. Some do still make it, but their eggs have a poor chance of survival in the silt that settles over them like cement. For no lasting control has been put on

the affluent gravel dealers. Law suits come and go, but the muddy water flows on forever.

Water diversions will no doubt take place in the future. They are not sought in vain, and a continued push for them will be seen. Then new problems in the Coquitlam River Valley will be blamed on 'an act of God', like the muddied river of today. The 570-hectare Plateau west of the Coquitlam River will bring thousands of new homes to the area. Will a new bridge across the river, often discussed in the past, then extend a road across the mountain?

The Pitt system has not been tampered with to the same extent, although booms have been lined along the shore so continuously that deer have been known to swim across and not be able to find land on the other side, so have perished in the water.

Deer can have a tough time in the Everglades of Widgeon Creek, also. We rescued one little fellow that had been harassed by a low flying plane, and after plunging into the water found he couldn't crawl out on the banks that were overhanging with trees. My husband coasted the boat quietly up to the exhausted deer, where my brother hung over the bow and lifted the deer around the belly, then shoved him upward. Although the young deer seemed 'done in', he surely did take off when he realized he was free!

The dikes and ditches along Pitt River have seen hunters, trappers and fishermen by the hundreds. Ernie Fawdry, a naturalist before his time, observed many changes in the wildlife along its shores such as the growing number of tumors in muskrats as pollution began to take its toll. Besides recreation the

lake and river have given a living to many, but it has also claimed quite a number of souls in its history. The steep mountainside, which is popular as a hiking area, has taken life as well. A few years ago a 14-year old lad fell over the high cliffs around Dennett Lake, the edges being so deceptive. His body had to be brought out with great difficulty and danger to others. Many young people have been lost in there overnight, too, as the mountain charms them into going farther than they should.

In the lake Goose Island pretends that it has never been used by man. The very prison that its rock built has now been reduced to dust and old memories. Further up the lake some steep cliffs of stone can tell the tale of the tow boat operator who fell asleep while he headed north for a boom of logs. Just above Allen Creek, where lake curves suddenly to the left, he crashed straight into the rock wall, caving in the prow of his tug and turning the stove and everything else upside down in the cabin. He was quite shaken up, but tough as these operators are, it didn't make him change his occupation.

In this area our family used to spend weekends water skiing, fishing and lying around on the beach. We usually were the last boaters to leave as Bill always waited until the afternoon squalls settled into an evening calm, before heading home. One Sunday evening as we were shoving off we spotted a white flag waving far up the shore from us. As we moved towards the flag we saw that it was a man waving his shirt on a stick, running along the rocks in our direction.

Fire, man's enemy! He gasped to us that his logging camp was on fire - big equipment was going up in

flames - he was left alone there - and would we go across the lake to get a crew at their camp.

We unloaded our family and relations and roared across the lake, to pick up the crew who were busy eating. (I remember them with large pieces of pie in their hands, gulping as we went.) We delivered them to the camp, picked up our gang and headed down the lake hoping to beat the darkness. As it happened we then had to tow another motorboat that had broken down, so arrived at Bennick's Wharf near the Pitt River Bridge, well after dark. All on a lazy Sunday afternoon!

Yes, Pitt Lake has its golden treasures, but so far they are not made of gold. Like Burke Mountain it will lure folks to it, but there is a price to pay if respect is not shown its rugged splendor.

And what of the mountain dwellers? Can anyone again feel as old Pete did, that intruders should keep to hell off his mountain? Can boys grow up as Bob McCowan did, with a real outlet for boyish surplus energy? Or will the dark side of modern urban life creep up the mountainside, until the ugly reality of perverts clips the wings of future kids?

The mountain looks peaceful as the moon peeks over the Golden Ears just as it has for thousands of years. My story tells of just a tiny fraction of this existence. But what of its future? I fear the hand of man will lay heavy on my mountain. But for now, sleep on Proud Giant, I hope you do know something that we don't know.

# Mountain Memories

## *A History of Burke*

Lying just east of Vancouver, British Columbia, Burke Mountain overlooks the confluence of the Pitt, Coquitlam and Fraser Rivers. In an easy conversational style, "Mountain Memories" traces the story of the mountain through early Indian relics and through historical records and old maps of the first explorations; it gives voice to the drama and humour of the hardy few originals who first made the mountain their home; it traces the beginning of industry and commerce, the founding of the city of Port Coquitlam and its struggle for recovery from flood devastation and from the near ruin of overly optimistic boom-time spending; it tells how it came about that the Municipality of Coquitlam encompasses its present far-flung area; it looks at the wave of development surging up the mountainside today – this book tells it all in a style which combines careful research with warmth and affection.


## Norma K. Campbell


N.K. Campbell grew up in Port Coquitlam and lived for many years in the District of Coquitlam. Her early schooling took place in the original James Park School, (now demolished and replaced), Central School, (demolished and rebuilt) and the first High School, the old Port Coquitlam High School, now gone the way of the Old James Park School which premises it shared. Campbell taught school in various areas of British Columbia until, returning home, she accepted the teaching. position at the little school on Victoria Drive known locally as "Dogpatch." With a sense of community interaction not always found in larger centers, contact and friendships still remain with some of those early pupils.

It was inevitable, given her interest in historical research, her fascination with stories told by early settlers, and a genuine affection for the area, that this book be written.