



F.P.O.

## Themes & Variations

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“If some countries have too much history, we have too much geography.”

—William Lyon Mackenzie King<sup>1</sup>

British Columbians define themselves regionally, perhaps more so than other Canadians, largely due to the tremendous diversity of geographic zones and the relative isolation they create. While today the political and economic traffic, like spokes on a bicycle’s wheel, converges at the province’s southwestern corner, people still identify themselves strongly with the Kootenays, or the Cariboo, or the Peace. Within each of the regions relatively distinct cultures and types of buildings emerged.

Like the early electoral districts, the province’s original land districts (see map facing the contents page) evolved with reference to this complex geography and coincide roughly with our modern conception of the province’s regions: the sections into which the balance of this book is divided.

1. Southwestern Mainland comprises the populated part of the New Westminster Land District.
2. Hope-Princeton & Tulameen is essentially the Nicola Division of the Yale Land District.
3. The Okanagan is the parts of the Nicola and Osoyoos divisions of the Yale Land District adjoining Okanagan Lake.

*The Elton home is a forlorn relic from 1910 on the east side of Highway 3 south of the little community of Carleton. Ralph Elton was born in India where his father was a colonel in the British army. He moved to England as a child, and subsequently immigrated to Canada. On his little farm he had apple trees, chickens and horses, but his main source of income was work on the roads. His daughter married into the McCurdy family, settlers in the valley since 1878, whose 1895 house still stands across the road, its squared-log sides hidden behind modern cladding.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Speech on Canada as an international power, June 18, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Don McCurdy.

4. Boundary Country is essentially the Osoyoos Division of the Yale Land District.
5. The Kootenays correspond with the Kootenay Land District.
6. Fraser-Thompson-Shuswap is the Yale and Kamloops divisions of the Yale Land District.
7. Vancouver Island combines the old Esquimalt, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Alberni and Comox land districts, and includes the Gulf Islands.
8. The Cariboo & the Chilcotin is the Lillooet and Cariboo land districts, all to the west of the continental divide.
9. The North is essentially the Cassiar Land District, the old Cariboo Land District corridor through which the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway ran, plus the Peace River Block and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The former prime minister's quip about history and geography seems apropos for modern Canada, although it does not jibe with my understanding of Aboriginal tradition where history is tied to specific places and the "geography" is encoded with both sacred and utilitarian sites. The recently published *Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, for example, describes a myriad of historic places in Stó:lō traditional territory throughout the Lower Mainland and Fraser Canyon.

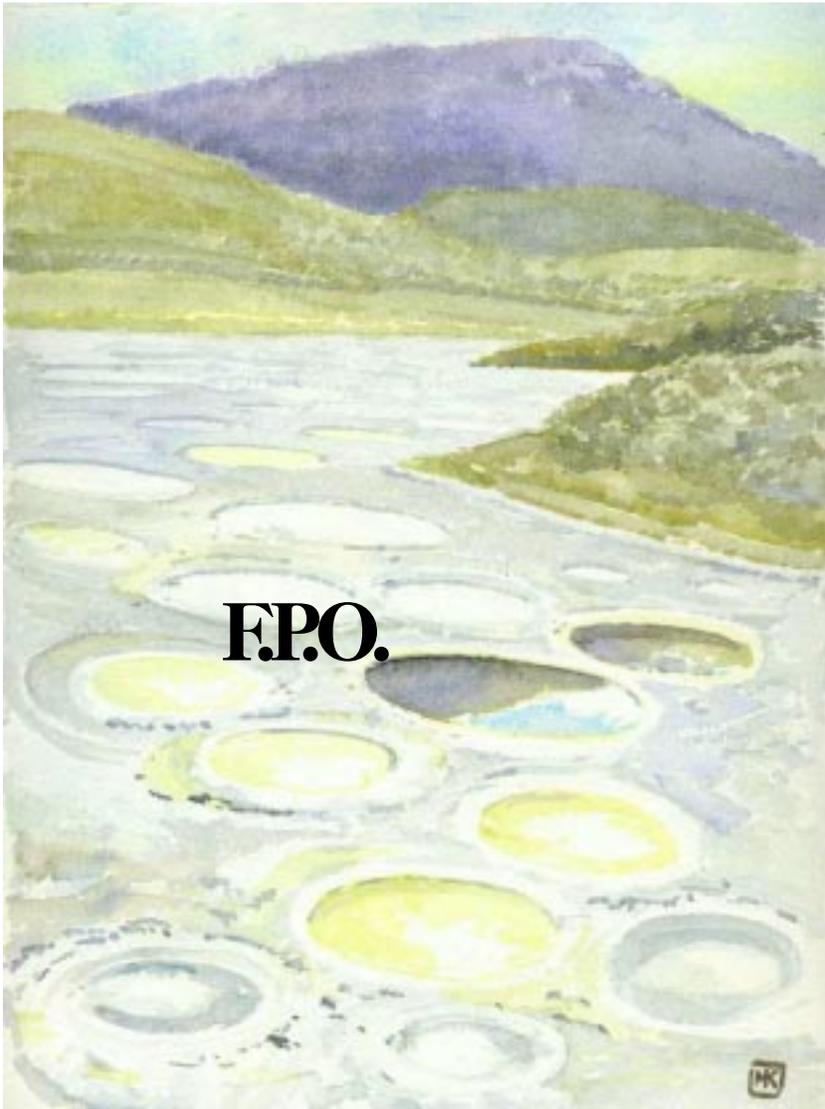
The saga of X̱á:ytem – aka the Hatzic Rock on the Lougheed Highway a few miles east of Mission – illustrated the contrast between Aboriginal values and those of the white culture which had overwhelmed them. X̱á:ytem, like Siwash Rock in Vancouver's Stanley Park, was created by the X̱ex̱á:ls, the transformers<sup>2</sup>; the developer who bought the land was going to break the rock apart and remove it in preparation for building a housing subdivision. Stó:lō anthropologist Gordon Mohs discovered archaeological remains in the soil

*History has been preserved in situ in the set of publicly owned heritage sites in the province, most notably Barkerville in the Cariboo. The upsurge in interest in the province's past, resulting from the 1958 centennial celebrations of the crown colony of British Columbia prompted the provincial government to begin the town's restoration. This Traveltime postcard from the late 1950s, by an unknown photographer, shows Barkerville's main street and St. Saviour's Anglican Church, built "almost singlehandedly" by the Reverend Reynard in 1870.<sup>1</sup>*



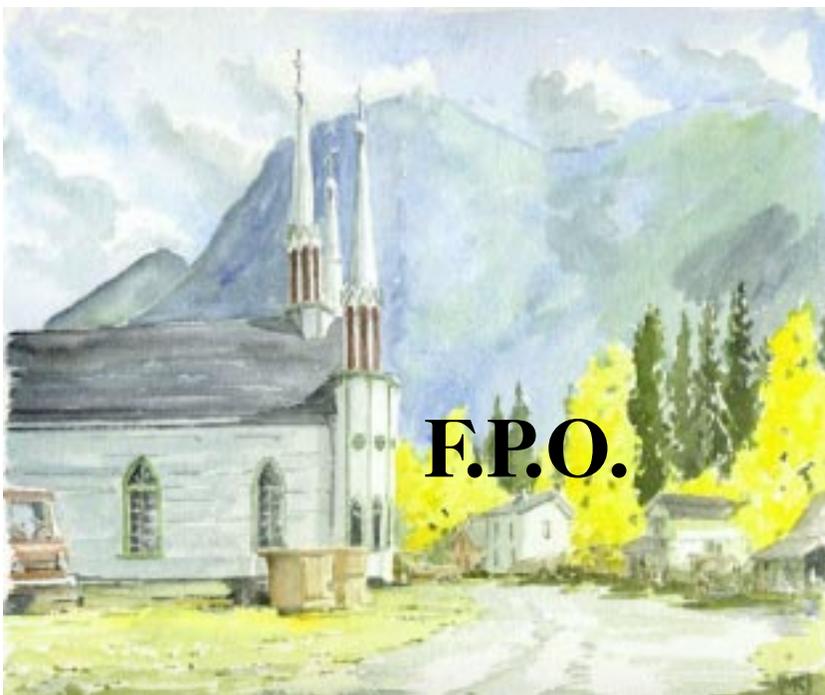
<sup>1</sup> Downs, *Sacred Places*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 6.



**F.P.O.**

*Two significant Native places:*  
**TOP** Spotted Lake is a natural site with cultural meaning. Easily visible from Highway 3 about nine kilometres west of Osoyoos in the desert country of southern BC, it is a rare phenomenon covering about 15 hectares and containing extremely high concentrations of minerals, so much so that as the summer progresses and the lake dries out its mud forms into white, pale yellow, green and blue circles. Although a sacred site to the local Natives, it lay on privately held ranchland. During perhaps the 1940s and 1950s a small resort developed: on the lakeshore today, surrounded by sagebrush and wild roses, there is a ruined wooden building on which a painted sign advertises "Information - Gifts - Souvenirs." Salt-encrusted pilings extend into the lake from several points. Beginning in 1979, despite opposition from Native leaders, the owners tried to develop a spa, then stripmine the lake's mineral-rich mud for shipping to the USA. Finally, after a protracted controversy, the federal government and the Okanagan Nation Alliance purchased the lake in October 2001.



**F.P.O.**

**BOTTOM** On the Lillooet River north of Harrison Lake, the Holy Cross Catholic Church dominates Skookumchuck Village, which occupies a narrow strip of land below the road along the river. An equally fascinating cemetery covers the bench between the road and the church. In the fall the air has the sharp crispness of the BC Interior; needing only a little moisture added to the hard air to produce snow. Built in 1905, the church has been described as "a masterpiece of hand-crafted folk art," and "the culmination of a well-tutored folk art tradition in the area."<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Sharon Syrette: "A group of mostly First Nations people, descendants of the original builders of the church, have formed a not-for-profit society called Ama Liisaos Heritage Trust Society. The primary purpose is restoration and maintenance of the Church of the Holy Cross, along with preserving the history, memories, photos, traditions, etc."

<sup>1</sup> Downs, p. 96. See also Veillette and White, *Early Indian Village Churches*, and *Lillooet-Fraser Heritage Resource Study*, vol. 1, Heritage Conservation Branch, Province of BC, 1980, p. 65.

removed by the bulldozers from near the rock. In 1991, Mohs excavated the site for the Stó:lō Nation, with the financial assistance of the provincial government. It gained a level of meaning to many non-Aboriginals when archaeologists uncovered the adjoining c. 4,000-year-old pit house.<sup>1</sup>

In post-contact culture in the countryside, where human additions to the landscape are so spread out and abandoned places quickly return to the soil, historians have had difficulty creating such a cultural geography. For example, the site of Fort St. John near the modern town is unrecognizable, with only Old Fort Road, which leads to the riverbank, offering a clue. Indeed, much non-Aboriginal historical writing is decidedly vague about the specific locations of homesteads and properties.<sup>2</sup>

Even the federal agency for historical commemoration, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, can miss the boat, as witnessed by its monument to anthropologist James Teit at Spences Bridge. Teit's publications were well-documented, but no connection was made either in the research publications or in the placement of the cairn with his long-time home in the area – a historic building in its own right, a property on which the family cemetery still exists – or the home of his aunt, “Widow Smith,” which still stands in the centre of Spences Bridge near the Chief Whistemnitsa Community Complex (page 130). The cairn ended up on the Five Nations Campground a few kilometres away – a lost opportunity to tie a historical figure together with a specific site.

### **SHELTER FROM THE STORM**

Wherever possible, I have drawn floor plans of houses to provide some clues about social habits, as well as the available technology (and budget) of the occupants. Some of the more interesting plans show evidence of communal dining, such as the Lawless ranch house (page 76), or especially efficient use of space (Highline Houses, page 126).

**ABORIGINAL** For most of the pre-contact era, Natives lived in pit houses such as the aforementioned Xá:ytem; later, along the coast in the immediate pre-contact period, they built sophisticated plank-sided houses and longhouses with post-and-beam frames.<sup>3</sup> In the Interior for more than 5,000 years, most lived in pit houses, although on the Interior plateaus some built mat houses – pole lodges covered with mats made of rushes or bark – while the Kutenai in the southeastern corner of the province used tipis like the Plains Indians.<sup>4</sup> Post-contact reserve houses are referred to below.

**LOG CABINS** The classic western log cabin is a single-room structure, perhaps partitioned inside, made of round horizontal logs saddle-notched at the corners, with a chimney at one end; this was the style introduced into North America by Swedes who settled along the Delaware River in 1638.<sup>5</sup> Although until the beginning of the eighteenth century only central and northern Europeans built the log cabin, over the next hundred years it became the standard frontier dwelling in North America. Modified only to the extent of metal chimneys and stoves replacing the earlier mud-and-stick chimneys and stone fireplaces, the log cabin was the typical British Columbia prospector's or trapper's abode.<sup>6</sup> Although usually in ruins, it is still relatively common in the province, especially in areas where dry climate slows its rot-rate. Camp Defi-

<sup>1</sup> www.xaytem.museum.bc.ca, and Carlson, pp. 40-1.

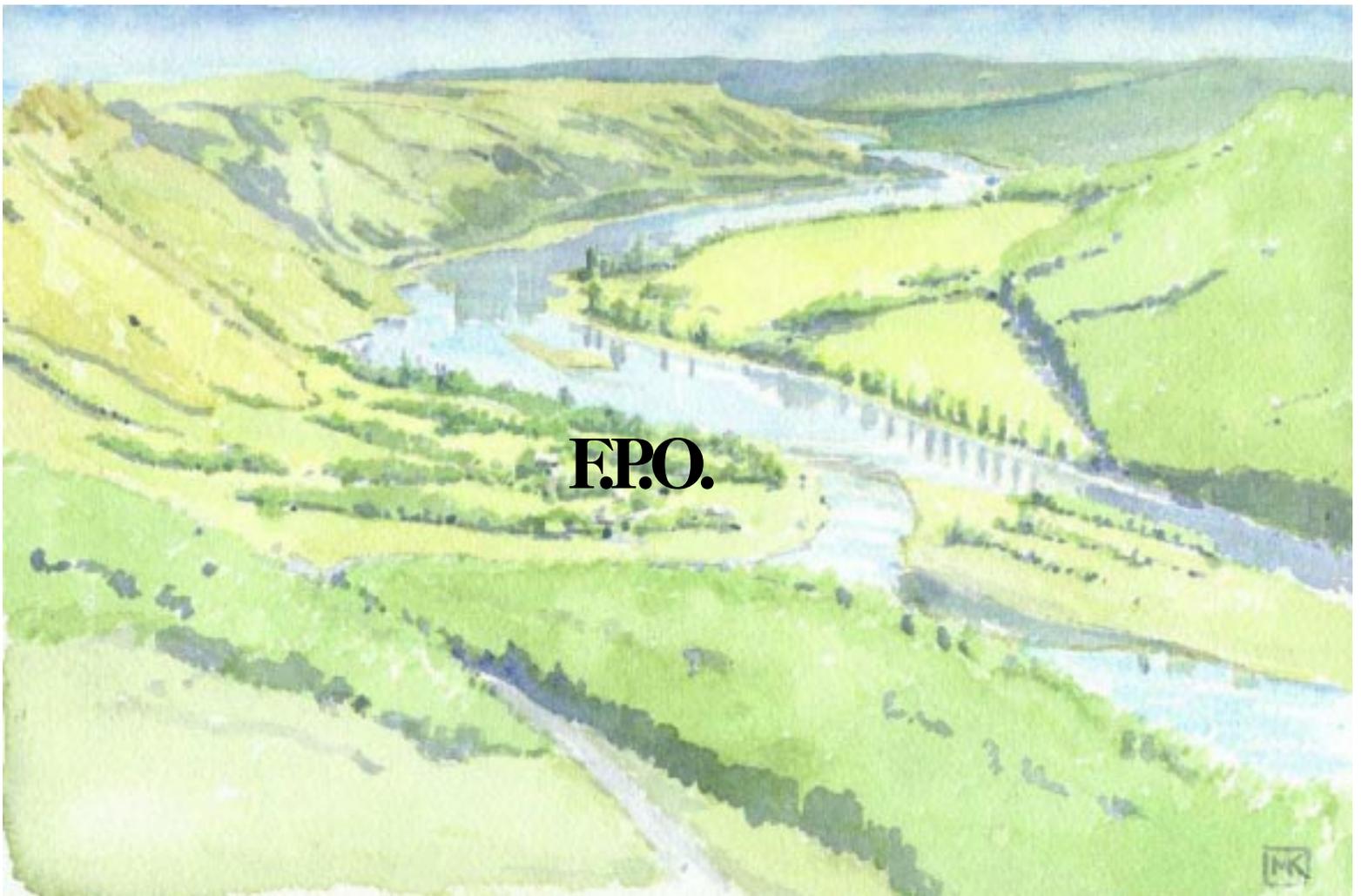
<sup>2</sup> For example, Margaret Ormsby's *A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia* gave little information about the actual locations of Susan Allison's homes in Hope, Princeton and Westbank.

<sup>3</sup> Carlson, p. 42, and Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 365-70.

<sup>4</sup> Kalman, vol. 1, pp. 371-2.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, *American Shelter*, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Kalman, vol. 1, p. 406.



ance on the Hope-Princeton Highway (page 55) and Dudley Shaw's cabin at Hudson's Hope (page 202) are two classic examples.

Squared-log cabins with dovetailed corners are most common in the Cariboo, such as 137 Mile House (page 179). According to a former owner, the Lawless house on Anarchist Mountain (pages 31 and 76) is squared tamarack beneath its board siding.

In more recent years, some of the most beautiful architect-designed houses in BC have been built of logs. The McMaster house on Savary Island (page 52) is one such; Eaglecrest at Qualicum Beach has burned down, although its servants' compound survives (page 156). One of the bright spots on BC's current rural building scene is the renaissance in log building, with many elaborate and beautiful homes now dotting the countryside; they differ from the pioneer cabins in their scale, of course, but also because they are generally prefabricated in construction yards and trucked to the site. One such enterprise, Eagle's Nest Log Industries near Merritt, is a joint venture of the Coldwater, Cook's Ferry, Nooaitch and Siska Indian bands.

**FRAME HOUSES** The earliest frame buildings in British Columbia (including the oldest surviving building, the 1840 storehouse at Fort Langley) were fur-trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company which were predominantly constructed of Red River frame, a technique also called *poteaux en coulisse* (grooved posts). It came west with the Québécois carpenters and axemen employed by the company.<sup>1</sup>

*The vista along the Peace River, seen from the cliff at the south end of Fort St. John's 100th Street, is almost unchanged from fur-trading days when, about 1860, the Hudson's Bay Company re-established its fort on the flat on the far bank of the river. The original Rocky Mountain Fort, founded just upstream in 1793, probably by Alexander Mackenzie, was the first permanent non-Native settlement on the BC mainland. Factor Frank Beaton moved the fort to the flat on the near side of the river in 1872, where it remained until 1925.<sup>2</sup> A very large neo-Greek Revival house sits on the fort site itself, and wrecked cars, pushed off the cliff over previous decades, dot the hillside.*

<sup>1</sup> Kalman, vol. 1, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> Fort St. John museum records.



*A classic frame house: 308 Sixth Street, Revelstoke. The elaborate, stick-built starburst in the gable was not unusual in houses built about 1900, but the closed-in front porch and boot room are adaptations to the cold and snow missing from otherwise identical houses of that era in, say, the Strathcona area in Vancouver.*

Frame houses of sawn lumber pinned together with wire nails (the mass-produced and incredibly cheap successors to the hand-forged nails of the fur-trade era) came north into BC rather than west. Balloon framing, developed about 1845, involved the use of what is now called dimensional lumber – usually 2 x 4s – to create a skeleton of continuous light wooden timbers. (Balloon-framed houses have their vertical studs running all the way to the roofline, with the floors attached to them, whereas the preferred twentieth-century method, called platform framing, involves building walls in units, tilting them up, then laying a floor or rafters atop them.) Cottages, in styles called Carpenter Gothic, Steamboat Gothic, Swiss Chalet, Queen Anne and a myriad others, popped up on gridiron townsites throughout the American west<sup>1</sup> and, subsequently, in British Columbia. Nelson and Grand Forks, for example, have excellent collections of these houses, as do such Vancouver Island communities as Victoria and Ladysmith. Boomtown or false-fronted buildings were usually commercial, as in the stores at Dewdney (page 40) and on Denman Island (page 163).

Most of the ranch houses and cabins illustrated in this book are a true vernacular architecture, impossible to classify as belonging to any style and representing a quick response to a harsh climate and a limited budget. Of the very modest buildings, the Aho cottage near Sointula (page 162) shows some cultural decoration – just enough woodwork and paint to be reminiscent of Finland. Somewhat more elaborate, St. Andrew’s Lodge at Qualicum Beach (page 155) is a “remembered” English building created by an engineer with a talent for house design.

Unique to British Columbia in all of North America and reflecting the arrival here of English expatriates, many of them remittance men, are the Anglo-Indian bungalows built in the few places where such individuals congregated. Walkachin (page 132), mainly built by Bert Footner, is one; other surviving buildings in that style are Lord and Lady Aberdeen’s Guisachan (page 68), now a restaurant in Kelowna, and J.C. Dun Waters’s manorhouse at Fintry. Houses with pyramid roofs were a part of Spanish/Portuguese tradition,<sup>2</sup> but the antecedents of the BC examples are clearly the Bengali *Chauyari* (literally “four sides”) and *banggolo*.<sup>3</sup> This style of house became quite popular in England and South Africa and is ubiquitous in rural Australia but never caught on in British Columbia – at least, it could never compete with the more vertical, multi-storeyed ranchers with gables and carved fretwork that were popular across the western United States.

Due to costs and fashions, few builders used stone for houses; there were, regardless, few good quarries. Similarly, there were few brickmakers, the Doukhobors (page 82) being a notable exception. British Columbia, however, had excellent sources of limestone for making Portland cement (leading to fortunes including the Butcherts’ in Saanich, where the old quarries became the famous garden) and concrete was commonly used for foundations. Before the First World War, its use in houses spread upwards, as concrete-block houses were built in many communities. In East Vancouver, contractors Cotton and Parker built several homes using a hand-operated block machine;<sup>4</sup> the Chilliwack Heritage Inventory<sup>5</sup> lists four concrete-block houses; there are surviving examples in Revelstoke, one on the western outskirts of Keremeos,

<sup>1</sup> Walker, pp. 122-37.

<sup>2</sup> Walker, pp. 40-1.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*, p. 24 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Houses by them in the Vancouver heritage inventory include 2035 East Second, 2630 Turner and 2168 Parker Street.

<sup>5</sup> Foundation Group Designs, 1991.

and at least two houses built of “Ideal” concrete blocks by E.A. Walkley in Kamloops (page 23). Two examples of commercially available concrete-block machines were the “Jarvis,” developed in Toronto around 1900 and equipped with several different “rusticated” face moulds, and the Huennekes System for manufacturing “sand-bricks.”<sup>1</sup>

**GOVERNMENT-BUILT HOUSES** There are a few examples of colonization or returned servicemen’s cottages designed by provincial government architects or sponsored by provincial departments from the period just after the First World War. The venerable style can be traced back to provincial Supervising Architect Henry Whittaker’s Dutch Colonial design for the provincial Department of Lands to use in a Soldiers’ Housing Scheme in then-rural South Vancouver;<sup>2</sup> he apparently adapted the design for use by the Provincial Police and other government departments. Gambrel-roofed buildings are still the most common design for forest service and ambulance outposts in the BC Interior. The Yahk lock-up (page 111) is another provincial government design from those years.

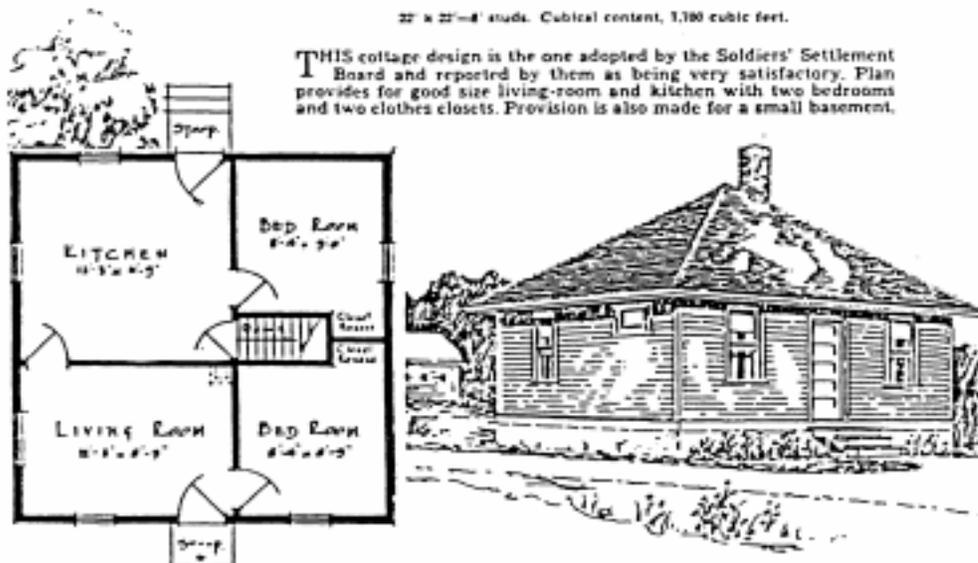
With the passage of the Dominion Housing Act in 1935, a response to the decline in living conditions during the Great Depression, followed by the National Housing Act of 1938, the federal government entered the housing business. Both acts empowered the minister of finance to loan a portion of mortgages to prospective homeowners. The Second World War prompted the federal government to become directly involved in building through Wartime Housing Ltd., a crown corporation. The typical Victory House measured 25 x 32 feet, with four to six rooms on a single floor, a tiny front stoop and a simple side-gabled roof. Some government planners considered them to be harbingers of truly manufactured, or factory prefabricated, housing that would become the norm in post-war Canada.<sup>3</sup> Due to the proximity of the North Vancouver shipyards, the federal government in 1941 hired the architectural firm McCarter & Nairne to build 752 of them, 2 of which survive more or less unaltered at 240 St. Patricks and 402 East Third.<sup>4</sup> Better known is the

*Provincial government housing styles after the First World War included this hipped-roof cottage plan for returned soldiers’ orchard lots in Oliver and Osoyoos, adopted by the Southern Okanagan Lands Project in 1919.<sup>5</sup> With the addition of a full-width front porch, with carved brackets on the porch posts, the little cottage would have looked like the colonial bungalows in English expatriate communities like Wallachin.*

## Colonization Cottage

22' x 22'-8" studs. Cubical content, 1,180 cubic feet.

THIS cottage design is the one adopted by the Soldiers' Settlement Board and reported by them as being very satisfactory. Plan provides for good size living-room and kitchen with two bedrooms and two clothes closets. Provision is also made for a small basement.



1 John R. Stuart, “Observations on the Retaining Wall attendant to the Hotel North Vancouver (1902),” research paper, 1987.

2 Kalman et al., *Exploring Vancouver 3*, p. 203; Donald Luxton, ed., *Building the West*, pp. 428-30.

3 Denhez, *The Canadian Home*, pp. 75-81.

4 Foundation Group Designs, *City of North Vancouver Heritage Inventory*, p. 170; *Vancouver News-Herald*, November 5, 1941.

5 Robert Hobson and Associates, *Okanagan-Similkameen Heritage Resources Inventory*, 1986.



*More provincial government buildings:*

ABOVE LEFT 6288 Windsor Street, Vancouver; a bungalow designed by provincial architect Henry Whittaker in 1919 for a returned soldiers' settlement, shortly before its renovation in the spring of 2003.<sup>1</sup>

ABOVE RIGHT The "DOT site" next to Ashcroft Manor on the Trans Canada Highway: the gambrel-roofed bungalows probably date from a provincial government forestry camp; other buildings were part of a radio-range facility for the Department of Transport, built about 1944, later phased out and converted into a weather station in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> The site is now abandoned.

BELOW LEFT The building at 23 Third Avenue, Burns Lake, now the offices of the Lakes District News, reveals its parentage as a provincial government building by its gambrel roof and off-centre front stoop. Originally called the Burns Lake lock-up, it was built for the Provincial Police in 1926.<sup>3</sup> The rear two of the small windows visible on the side wall probably illuminated cells. Pete Anderson took the photograph about 1952.<sup>4</sup>

community of Burkeville on Sea Island near Vancouver International Airport, built for the workers at the nearby Boeing airplane plant.<sup>5</sup> Although it bears a strong resemblance, internment camp housing (page 102) was even more modest, and a provincial responsibility.

As part of post-war reconstruction, the federal government on January 1, 1946, created Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to administer mortgages and to endorse simple house designs that would work anywhere in the country. For a time, CMHC eradicated regional housing styles for popular housing.<sup>6</sup> The modernist post-and-beam "west-coast" custom homes of 1950s Greater Vancouver, perhaps inspiring the ubiquitous Vancouver Special, are a notable exception.

The Victory House's simple, modular design is also similar to Indian reserve housing of the interwar period. Similarly, the National House Builders Association "Mark" houses of the 1950s and 1960s reflect the evolution of housing styles on reserves. The surveyor Samuel Bray designed and built Indian reserve houses in the 1880s, but by around 1900-10 an Indian Affairs standard plan emerged, probably by architect Denis Chené.<sup>7</sup> Over the succeeding decades it remained unaltered in any significant way, with only minor decorative changes from time to time. Typically, it had about four rooms on the main floor with the addition of a bathroom depending on the availability

<sup>1</sup> Kalman et al., p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence from Vashti Fisk, whose grandmother, a Cornwall, was raised at Ashcroft Manor, 2003.

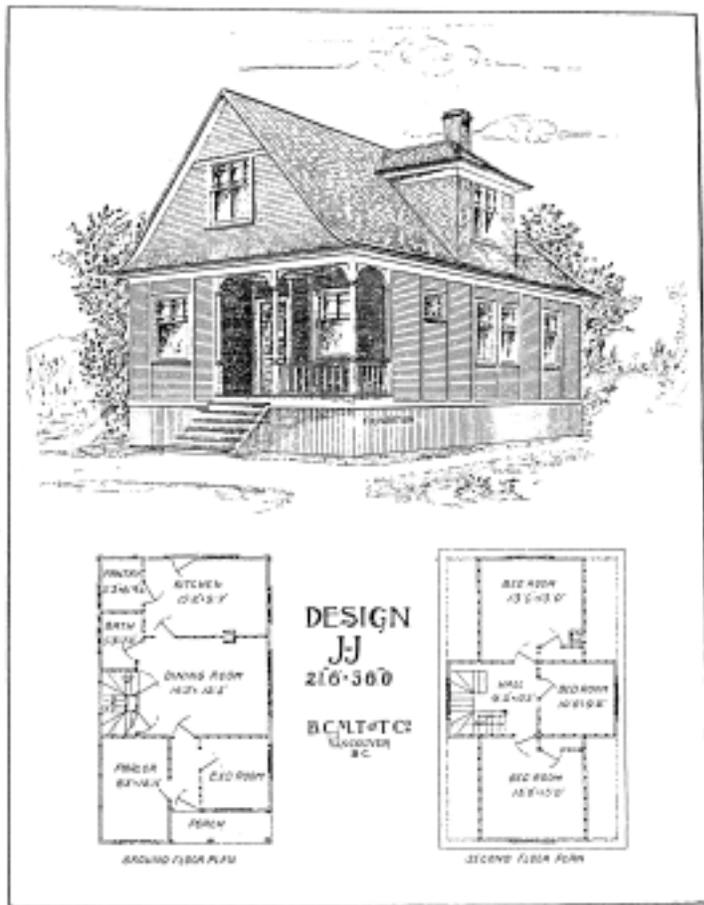
<sup>3</sup> BC Archives, Department of Public Works Records GR-0071, box 6, file 103.

<sup>4</sup> Photograph courtesy Laura Blackwell, publisher.

<sup>5</sup> Kluckner, *Vanishing Vancouver*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>6</sup> Denhez, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Dana H. Johnson correspondence.



For price, etc., see over.



LEFT From the 1904 BC Mills, Timber & Trading Company catalogue, the Model “J-J,” one of the range of prefabricated house styles created by the New Westminster company. They featured modular, insulated wall panels with battens covering the joins – the easiest way to spot an unrenovated one. Two “J-J”s stand side-by-side on the Union Bay waterfront – greatly modified, they are known locally as the “Aladdin houses,” a mistaken reference to an American prefabricated-house company that competed with Montgomery-Ward and Sears, Roebuck (“Honor-Bilt” brand) in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

RIGHT ABOVE A “General” model mobile home, manufactured in Hensall, Ontario, with a shed built onto it, in Hudson’s Hope. RIGHT BELOW A travel trailer converted into a coffee shop on the Yellowhead Highway at Avola.

of a septic or sewer system. After 1950, Indian Affairs tended to utilize new standard plans produced by other agencies of the federal government, notably CMHC.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the houses dictated that Natives would live in nuclear families rather than communally.

Arguably there was an additional assimilative message in the typical reserve house: the lack of open-planned spaces to support traditional family and community gathering and interaction. As well, the small dwellings “sent a message of diminished social status to the broader population.”<sup>2</sup> There is the counter-argument that the government had only limited resources, and when they built anything for the broader population they built modest houses, too.

**PREFABRICATED OR MANUFACTURED HOMES** Travel trailers can trace their ancestry back at least to the gypsies, with the current designs of “fifth wheels” being evolutions of the tent trailers of the 1920s. What is now the familiar form of trailer (as in the buildings in a trailer park), also known as mobile home or Singlewide, had emerged by the late 1950s in models such as the Prairie Schooner and the Arrow in the USA. The Doublewide, touted as “a new concept in space” and being effectively two units designed to be butted together and finished on site, was introduced to the North American market in 1968. With the increasing popularity of mobile homes, governments began to intervene in the 1970s to ensure quality standards and in 1980 the US Congress endorsed the name switch to “manufactured home” – the industry’s preferred appellation. A large part of their appeal is that they are “typically half the price compared with custom building,” according to the on-line Atlas Mobile Home Directory.<sup>3</sup>

1 Dana H. Johnson correspondence.

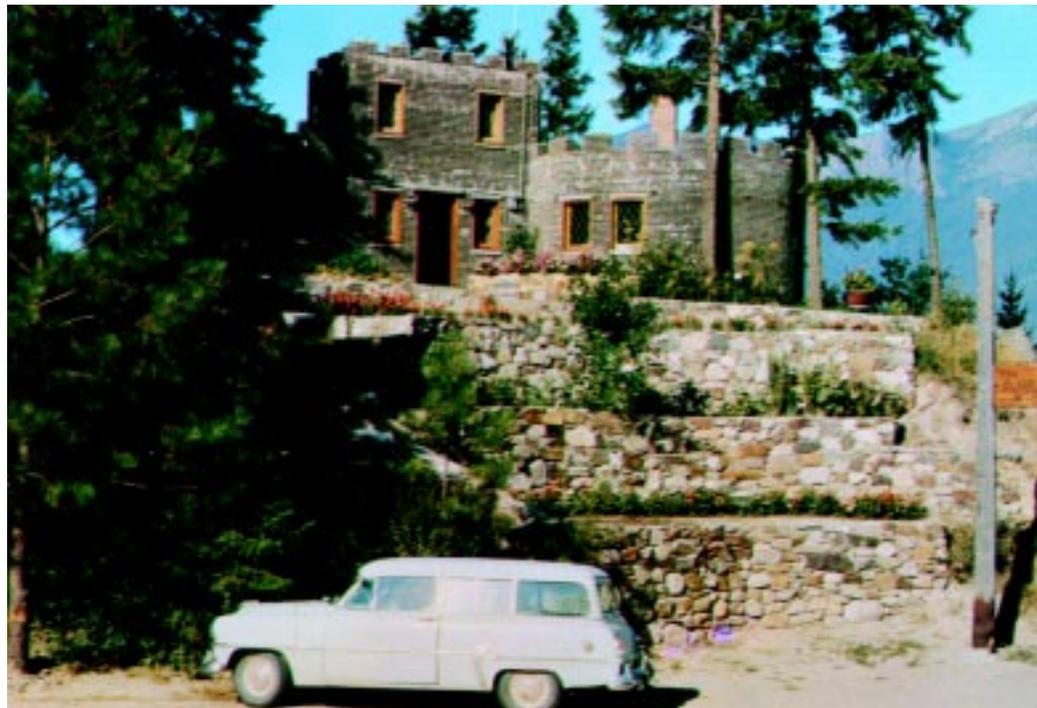
2 Carlson, p. 44.

3 www.allmanufacturedhomes.com.

4 BCMT&T and Aladdin Homes catalogues in the Heritage Branch library, Victoria; Kluckner, *Vanishing*, p. 19; Luxton, p. 166.

*Probably the rarest houses are those built of bottles. There is one across the Island Highway from Wippletree Junction near Duncan, and this one at Sanca, a “six room fully modern residence, constructed entirely of sixty-one thousand 16 ounce glass bottles (30 tons) situated on #3 highway, midway between Creston, B.C. and the Kootenay Bay Ferry enroute to Nelson, B.C.” Mortician Dave Brozen built it in 1952, using the large supply of formaldehyde bottles he had used in his trade. The caption above is from a postcard published about 1960 by Donaldson’s Studio of Cranbrook. Photographer Robert Donaldson bought the Nelson Studio in Cranbrook about 1947 and operated a studio there until 1964. Subsequently, he retailed camera products. This image is one of about 40 of his Ektachromes that were published as postcards.<sup>1</sup>*

British Columbians have bought many prefabricated houses, notably the BC Mills, Timber & Trading Company Ltd. models of the first decade of the twentieth century. Today’s manufactured housing market is worth more than \$110 million per year. There were about 75,000 manufactured or mobile homes registered in British Columbia in 2002, of which about three-quarters were Singlewides, the balance Doublewides. A typical Singlewide is 14 x 66 feet, fitting more or less into a highway lane. It is often found in trailer parks, aka mobile home parks, of which there are almost 600 in BC, about 5 percent of them located on First Nations reserve land. Seventy percent of mobile home owners are 55 or older.<sup>2</sup>



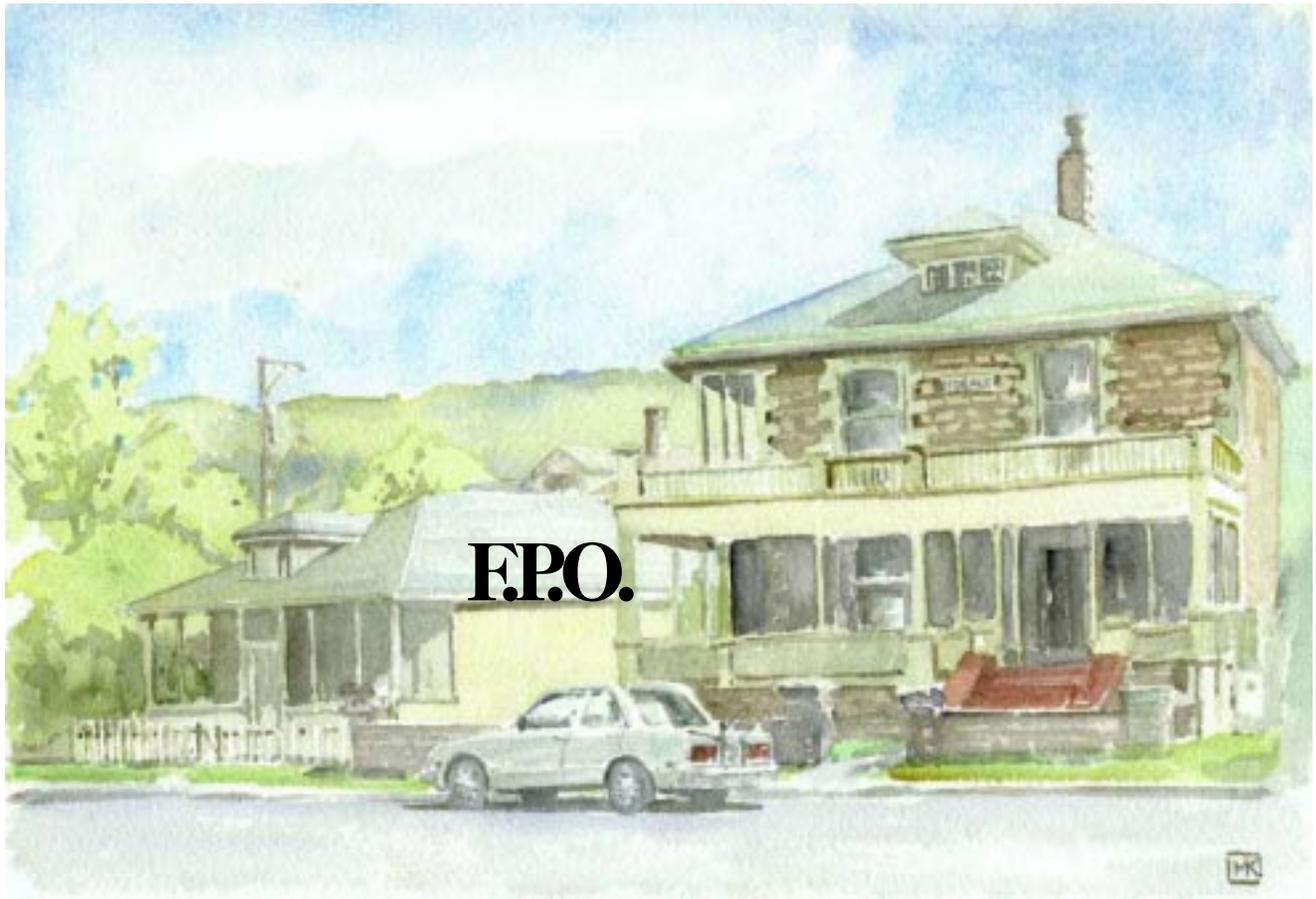
**HIGH-STYLE BUILDINGS** Of the buildings illustrated in this book, only a handful are “pure” enough to be classified as belonging to any style. The earliest is the house in the Second Empire style built by Caspar Phair in Lillooet and now known as the Miyazaki house (page 170). Mansard roofs became popular during France’s Second Empire (1852-70), and Parisian expositions in 1855 and 1867 spread the style to England and abroad.<sup>3</sup> By the time it arrived in Lillooet in the early 1890s, it was out-of-date in urban Canada. Other surviving examples, possibly the only ones in the province, are the Jones house at 1124 Fort Street, built in 1886, and the Jacobson house at 507 Head Street, built in 1893, in Victoria; and, surprisingly, the Hillcrest Motel in Pouce Coupe, built in the 1920s (page 33).

By comparison, Balcomo Lodge in Summerland (page 64), influenced by the Arts and Crafts style, was still fashionable when it was built in 1906. Blylock, near Nelson on Kootenay Lake (page 93), is a lavishly built rural estate in the Tudor style. The three ranch houses built by Malcolm Gordon of Penticton, near Bridesville (page 75), are an example of an urban style, the Craftsman, making it into the countryside.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with son George Donaldson.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Hanam Canada Corporation, a market reports and sales research company, at [www.hanamcanada.com](http://www.hanamcanada.com).

<sup>3</sup> McAlester and McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, p. 242.



*In the neighbourhood southeast of downtown Kamloops, 673 Battle Street is distinctive, being made of concrete blocks with a small plaque, visible on the wall between the two upper-floor windows, reading IDEAL. E.A. Walkley manufactured "Ideal" concrete blocks in a long shed located at the back of the next door lot. In 1911, the year before he built this house, he had purchased the Small and Dobson Cement Plant in BC Fruitlands. The second all-block home he built is 467 St. Paul Street, a bungalow now used as a Women's Shelter. He sold the Battle Street properties in 1923 to William and Aida Snowden of*

*North Bend, who allowed him to continue making his blocks in his shed; following Aida Snowden's death in 1982, the Ideal was sold and became a rooming house. However, the Snowdens' grandchildren, the Nickels, bought it back in 2002 and are restoring it.<sup>1</sup> It likely will be one of the handful of survivors from that era, as the neighbourhood has been recently rezoned, with many nearby properties for sale behind billboards breathlessly touting their development potential.*

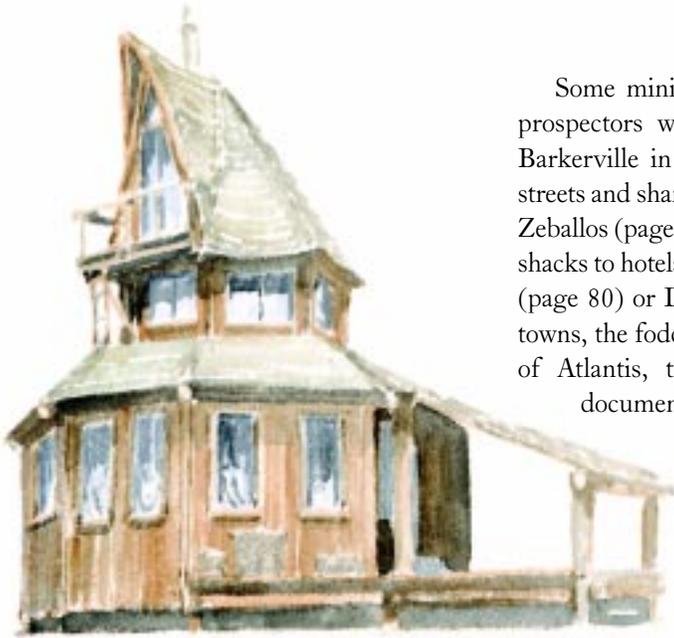
### PLACES OF EXILE AND UTOPIA

There is a fine line between exile and utopia, unless you happen to have been a Japanese Canadian in the early 1940s and were ordered away from the coast. From its earliest days, British Columbia's complex geography attracted misfits, who could have been exiles, utopians, or both. The remittance men of upper-class England, such as the nephew of Cecil Rhodes sent to Walhachin to manage his family's investments after an attempt to start a revolution in Costa Rica, often fled or were pushed to distant colonies to escape their past indiscretions.<sup>2</sup>

When the province made it into literature, it was often as a place where people could go and start again, where nobody knew them and their past was left behind. (In D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Constance Chatterley implores the gamekeeper to escape with her from their impending disgrace. "Why should we not just disappear, separately, to British Columbia, and have no scandal?") Dudley Shaw's cabin at Hudson's Hope (page 202) became a dreamscape, as it were, due to the writings of Bradford and Vena Angier.

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Arlana Nickel, quoting information from the Kamloops City Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Riis, "The Walhachin Myth: A Study in Settlement Abandonment," *BC Studies*, 17, p. 18.



*A prime destination during its mining and internment-camp eras, New Denver also attracted hippies, war resisters aka draft dodgers and other potential communalists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Evidence of that third wave survives today in the strong environmentalism of the societies devoted to the nearby Valhalla wilderness, the hair and clothes in the town, and some whimsical architecture, like this house on Bellevue Street built by Glenn Jordan.<sup>1</sup> “Hobbit-house” buildings like this are seen elsewhere in the province on a few of the Gulf Islands, on Denman and (especially) Hornby islands, and at Tlell on the Queen Charlottes.*

Some mining communities merit a utopian definition. A utopia to the prospectors was a place with lots of money and few rules. There was Barkerville in the 1860s with its boomtown wooden architecture, narrow streets and shanties; Sandon, destroyed twice by fire and flood (page 105); and Zeballos (page 166), seemingly made up as it went along, evolving from beach shacks to hotels in a few years. Many mine sites, like Phoenix near Greenwood (page 80) or Discovery near Atlin (page 200), became the archetypal ghost towns, the fodder for numerous nostalgic forays by “history buffs.” Like that of Atlantis, their legends remain, but being modern tales they were documented photographically.

The misfits included religious exiles, also utopians, most notably the Doukhobors whose exodus from the Canadian prairies to the Boundary and Kootenay districts came after the federal government denied them an exemption from the individual-ownership provisions of the Homesteading Act (page 82). Among the cultural misfits, Finns sought enough of an exile to ensure them the opportunity to develop their own utopia – “Kaleva” at Sointula on Malcolm Island (page 161). Ironically, another surviving Finnish community, the aptly named Finn Slough on the south arm of the Fraser River near Steveston (page 37), has become a sort of utopia a century later. And then there were the racial “misfits,” primarily the Chinese, who lived apart from whites from the earliest days of the gold rush and railway construction; almost all the historic Chinatowns except the two big ones, in Victoria and Vancouver, survive only in photographs. A generation of Chinese Canadians ran grocery stores such as Wong’s Market (page 38). *Vanishing British Columbia* documents the 1942 exile of Japanese Canadians from the coast, following them from Vancouver and Mayne Island (pages 38 and 150) to the Kootenays, the Shuswap and Lillooet (pages 99, 135 and 170), as well as, post-war, to Spuzzum (page 116).

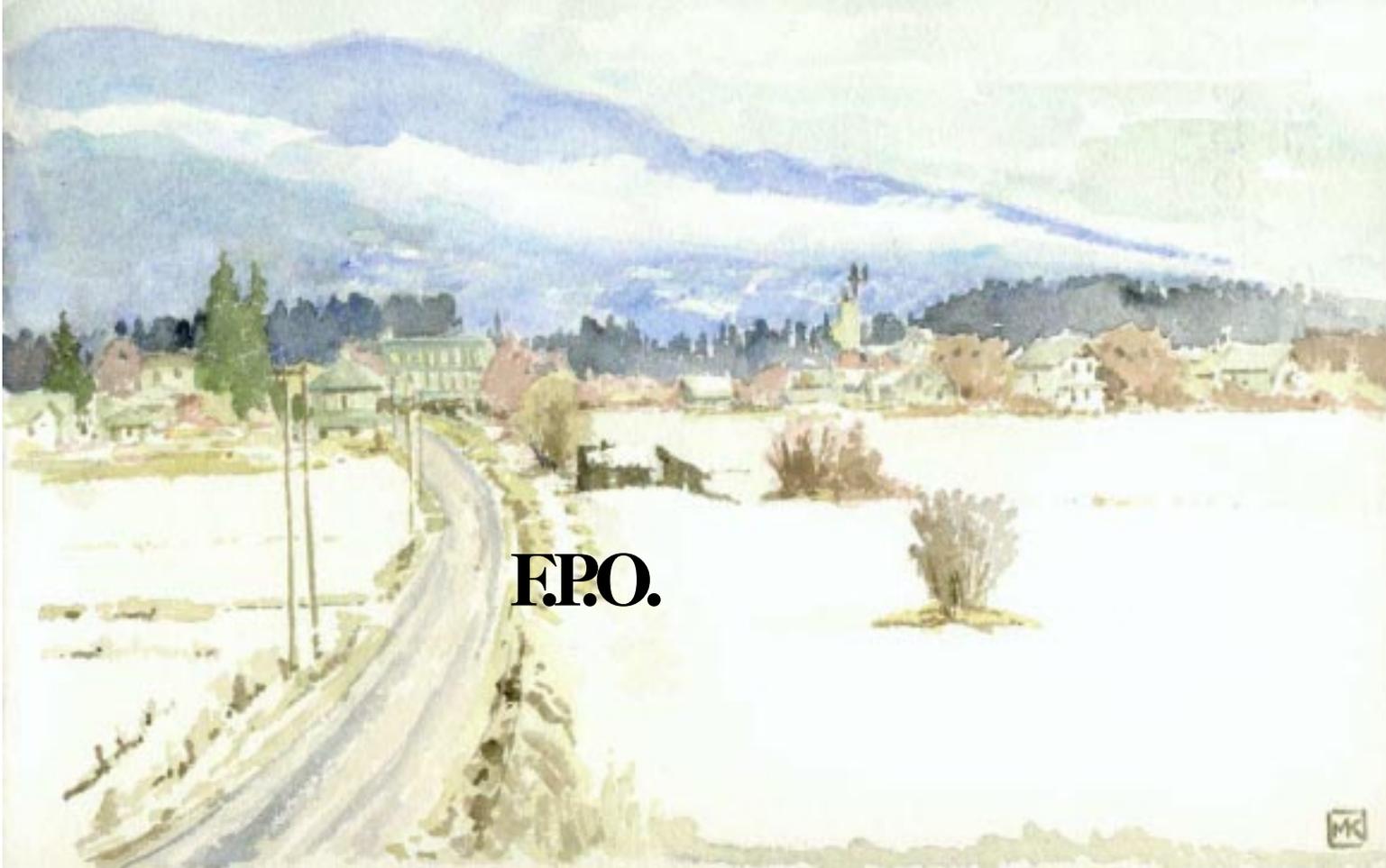
A recent group of exiles and utopians were the “back to the landers” who fled the cities for the Kootenays and the Gulf Islands in the 1960s and early 1970s, creating some interesting communities with architecture as diverse as vans, geodesic domes and Arts-and-Crafts quality “hobbit houses.” Dr. Donald Branigan’s holistic healing centre in Atlin (page 199) sprang from the same fertile ground. For more conventional cottagers, the Gulf Islands (pages 145 ff) and the “Gulf Coast,” once served by the Union Steamships Company (page 50), remain a utopia to this day.

## CORRIDORS

Some of the most successful heritage efforts of the past generation have been toward trail preservation, including the “rails to trails” movement for abandoned railway lines, much of which has come together into the Trans Canada Trail network. When Alexander Mackenzie became the first white man to traverse North America, arriving at tidewater near Bella Coola in 1793, he used Aboriginal trading trails and guides to get to his destination. Other historic corridors were rivers, none more famous than the Fraser, to the mouth of which its namesake canoed in 1808.

The most significant corridor of the post-contact era is the Cariboo Road,

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Gary Wright, mayor of New Denver.



## E.P.O.

*The remains of one of BC's historic Chinatowns:*

ABOVE Because of a dispute between the Shuswap & Okanagan Railway and a landowner a mile to the north, Armstrong became established on the "Island," the sandbank in the middle distance with swamps and sloughs on both sides. The railway line and the town's main buildings were established on this high ground along today's Pleasant Valley Road. Once the swamps in the foreground and on the far side of the "Island" were drained, Chinese farmers took them over, turning "the flats" into neatly cultivated vegetable fields and earning Armstrong its nickname Celery City. The dark brown wooden cabins along the road (Okanagan Street) midway across the flats, painted in January 2004, are the last survivors of a group that provided accommodation during the growing season for the field workers.

BELOW In the wintertime, the workers lived in a bunkhouse arrangement on the upper floor of the Lee Bak Bong Building which stands, together with another similar but altered one, on Okanagan Street on the edge of the flats on the far side of the "Island." The main floor was a grocery store and vegetable distribution centre. Built by Mah Yick

using the last of the output from the Armstrong brickyard, the building was erected in 1922 following a fire that destroyed much of the original Chinatown. The painted sign of the Kwong Wing On & Co., which rented the building from Mah Yick for a few years until the Lee family bought it, is still faintly visible on the brick facade. After living in Victoria for a few years, Lee Bak Bong returned to China in 1910 to marry, then moved to Armstrong; 10 years later, he was able to pay the \$500 head tax to get his wife into Canada, and because of the passage of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1923 Mrs. Lee was for decades the only Chinese woman in Armstrong. Their vegetable wholesale operation was called Wing Quong & Co., after the two eldest sons of the Lee family. The survivors of the Lees' seven sons and four daughters, including Ben Lee of Kelowna, now own the building which has been vacant for nearly 30 years. The flats have grown up in sedge and weeds.

(See Johnny Serra, "Armstrong Packing Houses," Okanagan Historical Society, 28th report, 1964; Peter Critchley, The Chinese in Armstrong, OHS, 63rd report, 1999; Armstrong Heritage Inventory, 2001. Thanks to Lisa Mori, curator, Armstrong-Spallumcheen Museum-Archives.)





ABOVE LEFT “Early BC Stage at 100 Mile House, British Columbia,” a promotional card by an unknown photographer published by the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (BC Rail). The coach now occupies a shed in front of a modern hotel.

ABOVE RIGHT A PGE self-propelled Budd car – a 1950s promotional card by an unknown photographer. The “Cariboo Dayliner” service ended in the fall of 2002, cancelled by the provincial government, but may be revised as a tourist route under the railway’s new CN owners.

RIGHT The SS Sicamous paddlewheeler approaching the Kelowna wharf about 1925. Like the Moyie at Kaslo, the Hazelton at Hazelton and the Tarahne at Atlin, the Sicamous is beached (at Penticton), relic of an era of picturesque, gracious transportation on the province’s lakes and rivers. The postcard, a hand-coloured photograph, was published by the Camera Products Company owned by photographer Joseph Spalding, a former partner in the prolific Gowen-Sutton firm of Vancouver.<sup>1</sup>



connecting the head of navigation at Yale with the Cariboo goldfields in the 1860s; it and restored Barkerville are the legacy of the events that led to the creation of the colony of British Columbia. As the Cariboo *Highway*, opened in 1926 as a section of the Trans Canada Highway and what is now called Highway 97, it ushered in an era of truck transport and automobile travel (page 114). In the Cariboo, the old mileposts – the names of communities like 70 Mile House and roadhouses like 137 Mile House (page 179) – keep the memories alive.

An earlier corridor now all but forgotten is the Harrison Lake-Lillooet route used by miners heading to the Cariboo. It provided the initial access to the goldfields and was the most highly developed path to the Interior from 1858 to 1863.<sup>2</sup> The Indian village of Skookumchuck, with its splendid 1905 church (page 15), is a significant stop along the way.

Along the 49th parallel, defined as the international boundary in 1846, the Dewdney Trail was constructed to forestall American incursion into southern British Columbia (page 54). It still survives, in the broad sense, as the route of the Southern Transprovincial Highway.

The railways brought profound change to the province, beginning with the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s, whose Fraser Canyon section effectively wiped out the 20-year-old Cariboo Road; North Bend (page 123) is the

<sup>1</sup> Thirkell and Scullion, *Frank Gowen’s Vancouver, 1914-1931*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Lillooet-Fraser Heritage Resource Study*.

surviving hamlet from that era. The other transcontinental lines from a century ago – the Canadian Northern Pacific and the Grand Trunk Pacific – continue their role for freight and the handful of remaining Canadian train passengers, their stations still landmarks across the province’s midriff (pages 186 ff). On Vancouver Island, the beleaguered Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway – a federal government bauble to spur BC’s embrace of Confederation in 1871 – continues to operate a passenger service in a haphazard way (page 142). The mainland equivalent is the old Pacific Great Eastern, in recent decades called BC Rail, a lifeline for freight between the north and the Lower Mainland but a money-loser on the passenger side (operated by CN since 2004). Another line, still-born due to economic woes and war, was the Canadian Northeastern, with Stewart as its terminus (page 195).

The most railway-interlaced part of BC in the 1890s, the Kootenay/ Boundary country, has lost most of its tracks, although much of the Kettle Valley Railway right-of-way is now part of the Trans Canada Trail (the majority of the Myra Canyon trestles were destroyed in the forest fires of the summer of 2003). Some railway hamlets like Coalmont (page 58) all but disappeared but may be reborn due to “trail tourism.” The right-of-way of the famous Kaslo & Sandon narrow-gauge line to Payne Bluffs is now maintained as a path (page 107).

*Two long-vanished CPR hotels:*  
 LEFT *The Sicamous Hotel, designed by Edward Maxwell and opened in May 1900, had 60 guest rooms (5 with private bath). It closed in 1956 and was demolished in 1965.<sup>1</sup> Postcard by the Gowen-Sutton Co. Ltd., photograph c. 1925. On the back of the card, tourist Jessie Acorn wrote: “This is where Jean and I spent the night waiting for the train to Kelowna. There are plenty of mosquitoes.”*  
 RIGHT *On the E&NR, the Strathcona Hotel served day trippers and travellers. Postcard by Valentine & Sons, c. 1915.*



It is quite difficult to trace some old routes, especially those that were linked with the main lines by paddlewheelers. The flooding of the Arrow Lakes in the late 1960s drowned many communities and eliminated pathways and landmarks. Some corridors ended up being reused, like the Great Northern Railway line between the Cawston area and Princeton which became the roadbed for the Southern Transprovincial Highway – one railway bridge survives across the Similkameen River (page 56). However, sections of the GN line which looped into the USA, such as the one near Bridesville (page 77), are very hard to locate today.

All the railways built beautiful stations, whether for whistlestops or divisional points. Uniting their designs, regardless of the line, are their spreading, “bellcast” rooflines and the oversized brackets between the eaves and the walls. A handful of them remain on their original sites, the oldest being the Columbia & Western (CPR) station in Grand Forks, now converted into a pub/restaurant. The station at Salmo recalls the Nelson & Fort Sheppard

<sup>1</sup> Jo-Anne Colby, CPR Archives, Montreal.

ABOVE *Third Avenue, Prince George, in the 1950s. An up-to-the-minute Royal Bank building shares the street with prewar woodframed commercial architecture. Photographer unknown.*

BELOW *Built in Lower Town, quite a distance from the commercial downtown, and now sitting in the middle of a grassy sward surrounded by modest houses, the Revelstoke courthouse is a curious landmark from a time when governments and landowners were feuding over where the town centre ought to be. Designed by Thomas Hooper and built in 1912 by the local construction firm of Foote and Pradolini,<sup>1</sup> it is one of the surviving set of grand provincial public buildings from the time of the Richard McBride administration, when Thomas Taylor, the MLA from Revelstoke, was the minister of public works. Like Fernie and Grand Forks before it, Revelstoke purchased its courthouse from the provincial government on June 1, 2003, for a reported \$350,000. Although it was one of 16 courthouses sold by the government following a consolidation of court services, it will continue to host a circuit court.*

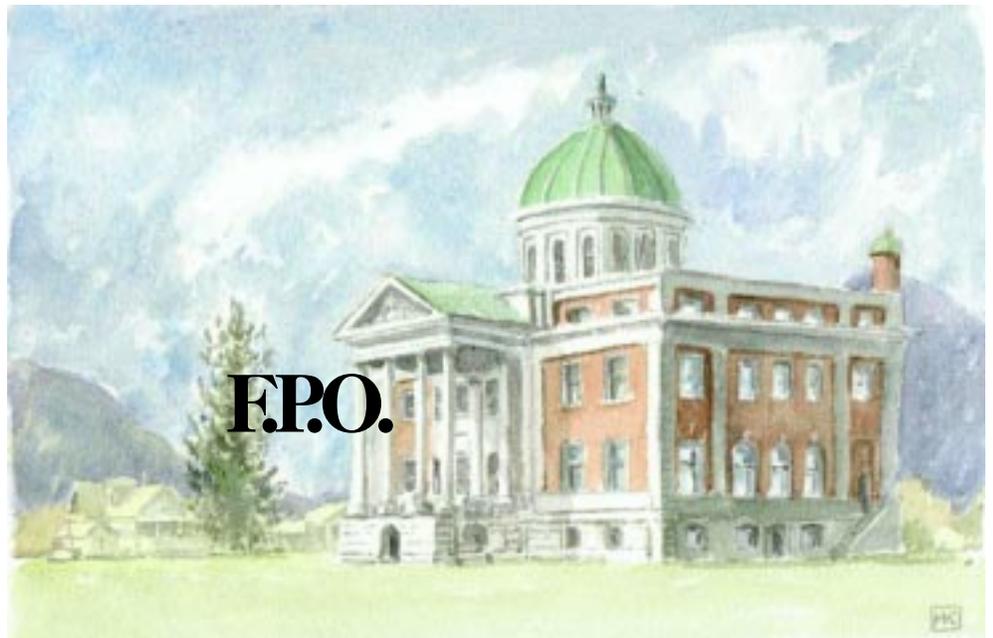


Railway (page 92). Fort Langley and Boston Bar have their Canadian Northern Pacific stations, both moved from their original locations. Brookmere has the last surviving water tower from the CPR's Kettle Valley Railway (page 59), and Midway's station is now the town museum. Unfortunately, the beautiful CPR resort hotels in the mountain sections of the province and on Vancouver Island have all been demolished.

## GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The federal government once had a splendid record of building high-quality public architecture that was lauded as helping to “form the public taste” and becoming “an influence for good.”<sup>2</sup> In recent years, government agencies such as Canada Post have usually tended to build small, rather mean outlets, abandoning their earlier edifices. Greenwood's turreted post office (page 81) is a notable exception.

The province, especially during the prosperous first decade of the twentieth century when Sir Richard McBride led a stable Conservative government, also anchored many BC communities with magnificent public buildings, such as the courthouses in Rossland, Greenwood (page 80), Fernie and Revelstoke. In Atlin (page 198), a more modest courthouse from that era continues to be



<sup>1</sup> Ruby Nobbs, Revelstoke Architectural Heritage Walking Tour brochure.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. 2, p. 546.



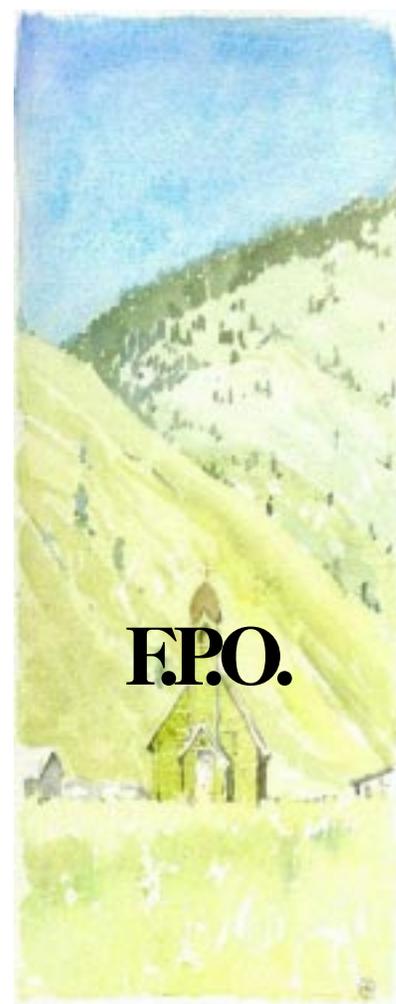
**F.P.O.**

used for circuit court. Even the small Provincial Police buildings in villages like Yahk (page 111) and Burns Lake show design and construction merit that still command attention, although some are in ruins. It is hard to imagine, given the anti-public-sector rhetoric of recent years, what an object of civic pride government buildings once were. School buildings have fared better: cities like Kelowna and Vernon still have their magnificent public schools from the early years of the twentieth century.

As with reserve housing, the Department of Indian Affairs reinforced the government policy of assimilating Native peoples into Canadian culture with their residential schools (pages 112 and 159), most of which in the nineteenth century were designed by private architects. After 1900, most plans were the work of department architect Robert M. Ogilvie and used his standard format (indeed, like the standard-plan schools erected for the broader population). His successors, Denis Chené and R.G. Orr, continued the practice through the 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

Canada's banks erected dour, substantial edifices along many a main street, then abandoned them in the 1960s and 1970s seeking a more up-to-date, modern look. In small communities in the early years, banks often looked to the BC Mills, Timber & Trading Company for prefabricated designs, two of which (in Steveston and Mission) survive as museums. A design exclusive to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce was erected on Seventh Avenue in Keremeos; it is now used by an insurance company; another BCMT&T prefabricated bank building at 2420 Douglas Street in Victoria is now used by an insurance agency.

As elsewhere in the country, churches are threatened as fewer Christian Canadians attend religious services. The Indian reserve churches are a special case: in spite of their association with residential schools, many Anglican and Roman Catholic ones are treasured by their parishioners. Small churches, some in Indian villages such as at Gitsegukla near New Hazelton (page 192) or at Skookumchuck north of Harrison Lake (page 15), dot the roadsides of the province. None is more dramatically sited than St. Aidan's at Pokhaist Village on the Thompson River (page 128).

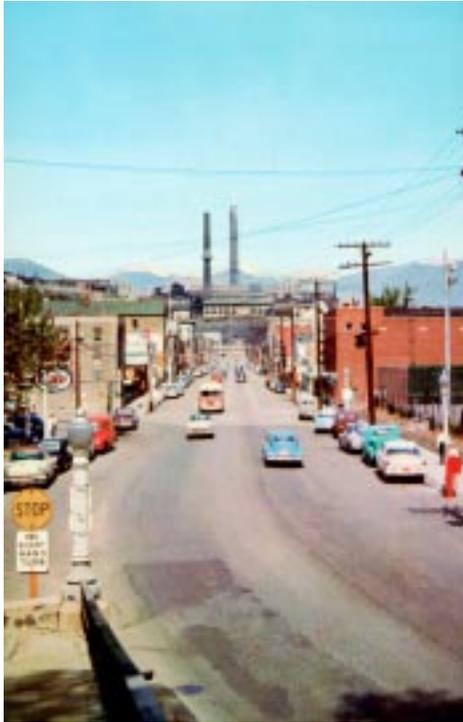
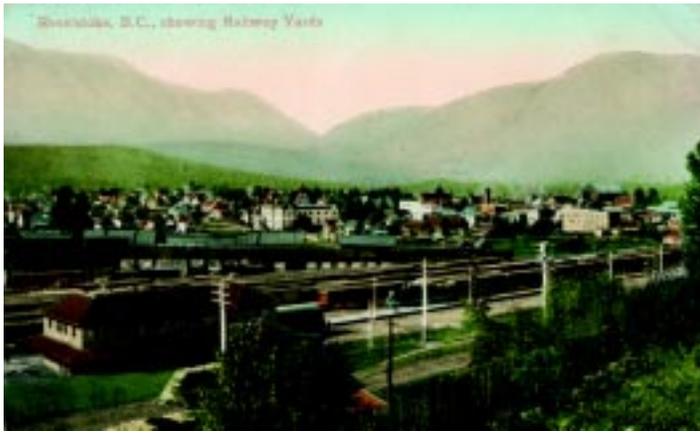


**F.P.O.**

*Two Indian village churches: LEFT St. Ann's Catholic at Chuchurwayha near Hedley, erected in 1910-1, is a sparkling white dot on the golden fields. RIGHT The Anglican St. Michael and All Angels – for travellers heading east on the Trans Canada Highway, it has always signalled their arrival at Spences Bridge – sits on the edge of the Cook's Ferry Indian Band village. With its brown dome and slumped shoulders it has a demoralized look. Apparently it was built around 1905, replacing an earlier church destroyed in the horrific landslide that also wiped out the Indian village on the other side of the river.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Dana H. Johnson, "Indian Affairs 1887-1962," in Luxton, ed., *Building the West*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The best overview is Veillette and White, *Early Indian Village Churches*.



*Three company towns:*  
 LEFT ABOVE *Revelstoke c. 1910, a Valentine & Sons postcard.*  
 RIGHT *Part of the residential area of Ocean Falls showing Apartments 4 and 5, with the tennis court structures built into the hillside visible in the middle; a Gowen-Sutton Company photograph.*  
 BELOW *Trail in the 1950s, looking toward the Cominco smelter; photographer unknown, postcard distributed by Hammitt Company, Kelowna.*

## COMPANY TOWNS

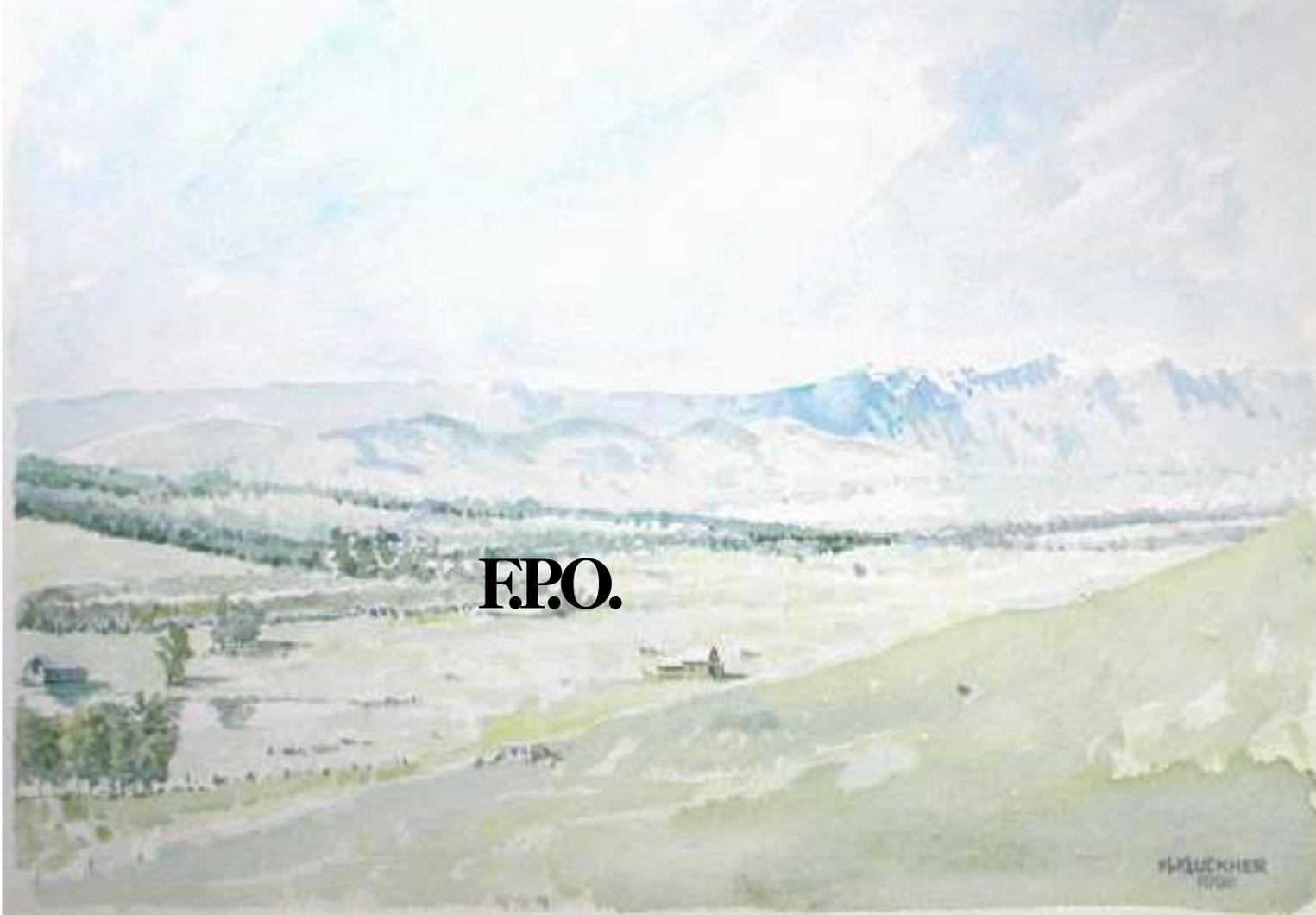
BC's two biggest industries, forestry and mining, created many of the company or resource towns dotting the province. The fishing industry also created a myriad of outposts, many of which have completely disappeared, with the fish-packing heritage of the coast now preserved in cannery museums at Port Edward and Steveston. The BC Packers complex at Alert Bay (frontispiece) was demolished in 2003.

I found the former coal-mining communities on Vancouver Island the hardest to “read.” The pitheads and works have largely disappeared, and the rows of identical miners’ houses that made for dramatic historic photographs have been altered or infilled. Cumberland is most reminiscent of the years when its employer, James Dunsmuir (like the Crich family in D.H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*), controlled every aspect of life. Nanaimo’s Southend at the pithead of the Number 1 Esplanade Mine still looks like a workers’ town, its rows of small houses interspersed by inexpensive hotels with taverns, with the interesting Evergreen Auto Court still standing on the edge of the railyards (page 153). South Wellington, another Dunsmuir coal community, is a hodgepodge of little buildings around Scotchtown Road at the point where it crosses the E&N Railway line, but I could not find a scene to paint that was either well-restored or pleasingly deteriorated. Union Bay has assembled some of its historic buildings along the waterfront, where the ruins of the wharves testify to the scale of industry once there. This mining history is probably best appreciated now in museum displays and rollicking history books such as *Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Vancouver Island*.<sup>1</sup>

Trail, child of the Cominco smelter, is dominated by its enormous smelter (page 93; only Powell River, page 46, compares). Bralorne (page 172), the company town for a gold mine developed in the 1930s by a syndicate of Vancouver capitalists, is attempting to reinvent itself as a recreational area while the mine awaits higher gold prices. Britannia Beach is another former company town standing in the shadow of its copper smelter (page 48). These towns, once controlled by a single company, make an interesting comparison with Wells (page 182), whose owners made a sincere attempt to create a town that could survive its mine closing, and with freewheeling Zeballos (page 166). With the aid of old photographs, stories and the few surviving buildings, North Bend (page 123) comes alive in the imagination as a railway company town. Revelstoke, much bigger and with a more diversified economy, is still dominated by railyards.

The first big post-war company town, Alcan’s Kitimat, relied on American

<sup>1</sup> T.W. Paterson and Garnett Basque (Sunfire, 1989).



planners and reflects Garden City or Greenbelt City concepts popular around the time it began construction in 1952. According to Harold Kalman, it is “the most successful example of a comprehensively planned resource town” in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

### FOLKLORIC LANDSCAPES

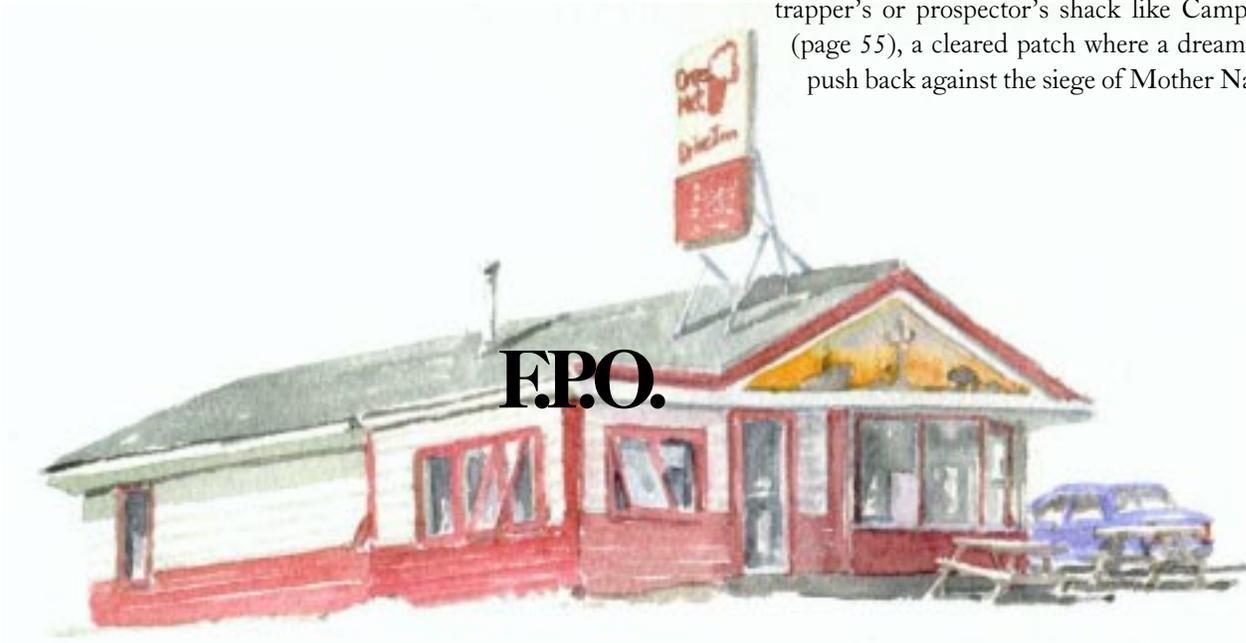
In the province’s folklore, individuals survived the rugged environment while following their dreams – perhaps mining, but more often some aspect of food production like ranching or fishing. Such rugged individualists were probably always in the minority, and much of the development of the province, even in its earliest days, was due to well-organized and administered foreign capital. Whether one refers to the British colonial administration constructing the Cariboo Road, eastern Canadian and federal government capital building the CPR, or the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company consolidating small canneries and developing its own fishing fleets, British Columbia quickly became a society of the employers and the employed, with only scattered instances where a yeomanry developed. Later, the capital was locally amassed: the Woodward department-store family established Douglas Lake Ranch east of Merritt, for example, or Vancouver industrialist Austin Taylor developed Bralorne.

Nevertheless, folkloric BC *images* easily come to mind: cattle ranches in the Cariboo or the dry Boundary Country, where the golden bunchgrass hills, dotted with Ponderosa pines, sweep up to skies of astonishing translucent

*The Lawless ranch from Anarchist Summit, looking west to the Cathedral Mountains on a spring day in 1995 – the sort of “folkloric” scene of wide-open spaces and boundless opportunities synonymous with the idea of “the West” promoted in magazines like Westward Ho!, Man to Man and British Columbia in the first decade of the twentieth century.*

<sup>1</sup> Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. 2, pp. 672-3.

azure (pages 74 ff); coastal fishing villages such as Sointula (page 161), some accessible only by sea, with a jumble of pilings and wharves, grey, unpainted boathouses and netlofts with rusting metal roofs and a cluster of brightly painted wooden seiners, the sky leaden and threatening rain, a few shingled cottages clustered near the shore with a backdrop of moody cedars; the trapper's or prospector's shack like Camp Defiance (page 55), a cleared patch where a dreamer tried to push back against the siege of Mother Nature.



*The Cree-Met Drive-In in Pouce Coupe is a rare survivor from the era before burger chains roamed the land, gobbling up everything in their path, an era when a man with a grill, a deepfryer, a soft ice cream machine and a jukebox could erect a sign saying, perhaps, “Tastee-Freez,” and the townsfolk would beat a path to his door. “It was run by a man named Pete, who had a top secret soft icecream recipe that brought people from miles around. It could be purchased in cardboard pint containers as well as cones. We always stopped there each year after our big Saskatoon berry picking excursions.”*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Brenda Anderson, with recollections from Jill Wonnacott (former mayor).

<sup>2</sup> An expression apparently coined by essayist Reyner Banham, “the historian of our immediate future.”

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF MOBILITY<sup>2</sup>

Gas stations, motels and drive-ins are the ultimate roadside memory. The quirkiness of early gas stations was captured by movie-set designers in the Gas for Less station on page 34, and survives in the service station at Union Bay (page 153). Just as gas is now pumped at national chains with a corporate image, burgers and shakes are now consumed at the McDonald's and Wendy's that dot the province like cloves on the fat of a Christmas ham. “Highway-commercial” architecture – Canadian Tire, Petrocan, Wal-Mart – the same modular design anywhere throughout the corporate empire, dominates the outskirts of modern BC towns, whether in Langley or Cranbrook, Prince George or Kelowna.

The holiday “experience” has in effect come full circle in the past century. From the railway-developed destination hotels of a century ago in the mountains and on the lakeshores, to the motels and auto courts that began to spring up in the 1920s (Evergreen Auto Court, page 153; Alexandra Lodge, page 117; Siska Lodge, page 122), to modern resorts such as the Lake City Casino at Penticton or the Naramata Hotel (page 66), leisure accommodation has gone from the exclusive to the democratic and back to the exclusive, or from “destination” to “wanderer” and back again. Any time spent in motels – so fashionable in the 1950s and 1960s – now has a downmarket cast to it, and many small-town hotels, like Coalmont's (page 58) or Beaverdell's (page 72), survive on the proceeds of their beer parlours. A handful of others, like the Windsor Hotel (page 96) and Springwater Lodge on Mayne Island (page



*The evolution of vacation accommodation, a contrast with resorts from the railway era of a lifetime ago (such as the hotels on page 27) and the modern destination resorts like the Naramata Hotel (page 66).*

LEFT ABOVE *The Hotel Oasis in Cache Creek, c. 1965: "A modern, completely air-conditioned 32-room Hotel and Coffee Shop, at the Sportsman's Crossways – Junction of the Trans-Canada and Cariboo Highways." A Traveltime card, photographer unknown.*

LEFT BELOW *The Crown Motel: "21 De Luxe Units – including a new and just completed 'Double-Decker.' On beautiful Okanagan Lake, Lakeshore Drive, Penticton."*

PHOTOGRAPH © HUGO REDIVO

RIGHT ABOVE *The Hillcrest Motel, with "Kitchenettes & Plug-Ins," in Pouce Coupe. It is a classic auto court: one side of the property occupied by four duplex bungalows set in a semicircle, the other side occupied by the owner's house (surprisingly mansard-roofed – a very retro style) and garage. The house was an RCMP-Provincial Police outpost in the 1920s and 1930s, when Pouce Coupe was the government service centre for the newly opened Peace District, and is actually a log structure covered now by siding. The walls are nearly two feet thick, creating a window seat. The upstairs floor of the house was the barracks and the main floor was the police station.<sup>1</sup>*

RIGHT BELOW *A Garbage Gobbler; icon of the 1958 BC centennial, in front of Ashcroft Manor.*



<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Brenda Anderson quoting Everett Beaulne, who lived there from 1959 to 1968 and still runs the Hillcrest General Store.



*Gas for Less on the outskirts of Lytton looked so much like the independent service stations from a generation ago that I pulled into a shady spot on a blazingly hot day in August 2001 and spent a pleasant hour putting it into the sketchbook, then moved on without investigating further. Perhaps the heat made me careless. Some months later, I saw it in an American movie, The Pledge, and commented on my website how pleased I was that filmmakers were seeking old buildings. Soon, I learned from a bemused reader, Catherine Schulmann in Lillooet, that my subject was “Hollywood magic” – a movie set built from scratch a few years earlier!*

149), still provide good accommodation without any modern “spa” frills. St. Eugene’s Mission (page 112), a former residential school now the centrepiece for a golfing resort, completes the circle.

Along the highways roadside attractions sprang up, usually at a scale that could be appreciated by a motorist passing at high speed. Drive-in theatres once dotted the sagebrush fringes of dusty Interior towns and former orchards on city edges, while fantasy attractions like the ersatz historic towns of Wippletree Junction near Duncan and Three Valley Gap east of Sicamous, and Dusty’s Dinotown at Popkum near Rosedale, competed for the dollars of tourists who usually had a backseatful of bored, hostile children. These sorts of places in the USA are documented and interpreted by the Society for Commercial Archaeology. Established in 1977, the SCA is the oldest national organization devoted to the buildings, artifacts, structures, signs and symbols of the twentieth-century commercial landscape. Regrettably, there is no parallel organization in Canada.