

Friends of the Railway and Forestry Museum

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NOTICE

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Volume 19 Issue 2

Whistle Blower Extraordinaire!



Mrs. Hermina Van Beek, 92 years young, is believed to be the most senior visitor to have blown the steam crane whistle. Steam crane operators, Casey Van Beek (son of Hermina) and Lloyd Comish, were witnesses to this milestone.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

By Trudy Swaan

Once again the summer staff has been hired, some of the artifacts have been refurbished while others have been dusted and cleaned . . . another busy summer season is underway at the Railway and Forestry Museum.

I welcome our new staff members, Heather Paul and Michael Schwanke. Look for them out in the Park or in the Gift Shop. They are enthusiastic and enjoy making our guests feel welcome on our site.

A thank you goes out to Alecia Greenfield, Funding Coordinator, for her continued efforts to find, apply for and get additional funding for us. Way to go Alecia!!

We have had four Katimavik volunteers here since October. With their help we have accomplished many tasks. So far they have worked on the restoration of two railcars, helped with the deck on the Telus building, assisted with erecting the Timber Game and lots of other odds and ends around the Park. Thank you for all their help! I would also like to thank HRDC for giving us a grant to hire Scott Armstrong as supervisor of these volunteers.

Be sure to come down to the Park and see the great job our volunteers have done during the winter months refurbishing the PGE caboose and the CN locomotive. These cars look great and will be brought over from the shops next week. Thank you to the all the dedicated volunteers for all your hard work!

Our plans to put the gardens at the front of the Visitors Centre are moving ahead . . .not as fast as we would like, but they are moving ahead! Look for changes there before the season is over!

The Site Committee has been busy. Thanks to Daryl and Don, the new Telus building is in its proper place as you enter the Museum site from the Gift Shop. The old Telus Building has been moved next to the Hixon Station, and the wooden box car has been moved to the back of the Park. We are currently building a deck for the entrance to the new Telus building. The pathway into the Park will be moved to pass by this new building. Plans to move the old gift shop (CN Police barracks) to a new location are also under way.

The Children's Festival was held at the Museum in May, and it was a great success—it brought all kinds of new people to our site. The Park received a real spit and polish before the event, and I don't know when it has ever looked better. Thanks to everyone who helped with the clean up!

Our new project "Adopt a Pot" started this summer. It is another step toward beautifying the site and so far one pot has been adopted. Thanks Ray Lougheed for adopting the log planter by the Penny Station—it looks great. Any other takers out there?

We are always looking for local crafts to sell in our Gift Shop. If either you or someone you know has a talent for making unique items and would be interested in having them in our Gift Shop on consignment, give us a call.

LOOKING FOR A WONDERFUL WAY TO SPEND A SUMMER DAY? COME VISIT US!

MODEL RAILWAY CLUB



By Roy Smith

For years, we have talked about starting a model railway club. With the upcoming acquisition of the CN work equipment shops, now seems to be the right time—these shops would give us the perfect location for a clubroom.

The Museum already has several N gauge dioramas,

and we now have an HO scale layout thanks to the bequest of the late George Hawthorne. On July 16 and 17, Garry Grant, Ron Jansen, Don Holzworth and Frank Parks dismantled the 230 square foot multi-level layout, packed up all the buildings and rolling stock, and moved it to the Museum.

We have Museum mem-

bers who model N, HO, and G scale. If there is enough interest, the club could be a multi-gauge operation.

If you are interested in participating, please telephone Kelly at the Museum at 563-7351 and give her your name, telephone number and gauge you model. If there is enough interest, a meeting could be held in late September. ✕

PRINCE GEORGE AND THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY

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Part of the ongoing debate regarding the placement of the railway station seems to have originated because Hammond had made an unwritten 'gentleman's' agreement with Charles Hays, president of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Unfortunately for Hammond, Hays was killed on April 12, 1912, as a passenger on the ill-fated

ocean liner, the Titanic. It appears that Hays successor, Edson Chamberlin, refused to honor the agreement to place the station near the boundary of Hammond's town site.⁸

1 Runnalls, A History of Prince George, 131-132.

2 Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 165.

3 Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners. Considerations of the Petitions of the

Residents of Fort George, 7665.

4 Runnalls, A History of Prince George, 85.

5 Ibid.

6 Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners. Considerations of the Petitions of the Residents of Fort George, 7669.

7 Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 186.

8 Christensen, Prince George, 41. ✕

PRINCE GEORGE AND THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY Continued

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of the new railway station began. Although there was a temporary station built at George Street in 1914, the station was not actually built until after 1920, when the Canadian National Railway took over operation of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.³ The population in the area began to grow as the railway approached. This growth was accompanied by a real estate war and a railway station debate between the three communities.

In the midst of the discussions between the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway directors and the various government bodies for the acquisition of the Indian reserve, an industrious businessman, George Hammond of the National Resources Security Company, was attempting to make a fortune off real estate speculation based on the placement of the Railway Station. R.E. Runnalls describes Hammond as a man with previous experience in financial ventures who had "discovered the possibilities of energetic advertising and high pressure salesmanship, and he was able to exploit both of these in Fort George."⁴

Runnalls further explains that Hammond became interested in Fort George in 1908, and had soon staked a large amount of land west of the Hudson's Bay property in hopes of starting a new townsite.⁵ Hammond started a world wide real estate campaign, centered on his speculation of the placement of the railway station, which eventually proved to be false.

However, Hammond's campaigns did bring many people to the area, and the area known as Fort George became populated. In fact, Runnalls explains that at the beginning of 1914 both South Fort George and Central Fort George were booming towns, each with about fifteen hundred permanent residents, as well as thousands of men who were temporary residents engaged in construction work. However, by the end of that year, Prince George had started to boom and had reached the same high population of the other two communities, while they began to shrink in size with fewer than a thousand residents each. "Since the location of the station at George Street . . . [Fort George] is practically abandoned as a business

centre. There are one or two stores . . . [and] a great many people have left there."⁶ It seems that the placement of the temporary railway station at George Street had the effect that the real estate promoters in these two areas had feared—the centre of business moved to the new Prince George townsite.

The decline of these communities as a result of the placement of the railway station may have been self-inflicted by Hammond:

During the period of negotiations for Fort George Indian Reserve, the site of the future GTP townsite, other individuals and organizations [namely Hammond] entered the district and purchased the land surrounding the reserve, often at inflated values. These parties intended to 'boom' their property, i.e., to sell lots at greatly increased prices as the railway approached the district. GTP officers were aware of this practice and attempted to combat it through the manipulation of the company's most important asset, the right to decide the location of the railway station that would serve the district.⁷

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PGRFM MEMBERSHIP DUES

March 1 - February 28

Family \$35

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Individual \$30

Senior (65+) \$15

Student (13-17 years) \$15

Lifetime \$350

ON TRACK NEWSLETTER

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Deadlines for submissions:

Fall 2003 newsletter submissions by October 30th, 2003.



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2003-04 MEMBERSHIPS

Remember, your Railway and Forestry Museum—Prince George and Region membership expired February 28, 2003. Please complete the application form, found in the centre of this publication, and return it with your payment to 850 River Road, Prince George, BC V2L 5S8. Continue to enjoy the benefits listed below—renew now!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Free access to the Museum during normal open hours
- Mr. Quick Lube & Oil offers \$4 off any oil and lube
- Members Annual BBQ
- Free speeder rides during operating days
- Free On Track Newsletter
- Invitation to PGRFM general meetings
- Opportunity to work as a volunteer of the Museum
- Save 10% at Gift Shop
- Free access to the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish; just show your PGRFM membership card.

HELICOPTER DRIP TORCH

By Ron Jansen

In the late 1960s, logging residue was an impediment to seedling survival as well as a fire hazard. This residue or slash as it was more commonly known was burnt in the fall when the risk of fire escaping into timber bordering these logged areas was minimized.

To light these fires, people were sent in to the logged over areas with whatever worked to kindle a blaze. Soon it was determined that not only the slash had to be cured enough and the winter conditions right, but the ignition had to be conducted swiftly and according to plan.

Having people wandering about the slash lighting fires without knowing where their co-workers were (this was before the days of hand-held radios) proved to be very risky. Every year there were fatalities as slash burners were caught. About this time, helicopters were being recognized as a tool for forestry work. This is when the fun began.

Northwood Pulp and Timber in conjunction with the Canadian Forest Service began to search for a way to

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Photos by Ron Jansen

PRINCE GEORGE AND THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY

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I had not done as well as I would have liked but it had been an acceptable performance. In looking back now, I feel very fortunate indeed to have been part of an era of railroading which is probably gone forever. Those men (and women) of that time were most remarkable and resilient in coping with conditions and challenges which were above and beyond the every day life style to which they were accustomed. The old 411 served faithfully right up until 1955 when she was retired and scrapped. It is fitting that her last assignment was in railroad construction, what she had been originally built for in 1910. The 411 was used in the building of the new 38.5 mile railway off of the CNR's north line, from Terrace to Kitimat, BC. That was the new CNR railroad, constructed under the supervision of Major J. L. Charles and built to service the new aluminum plant at Kitimat.

Written in Jasper, Alberta, on 17 May 2003

PART II

By Brenda Herbert

By the spring of 1914, all the Indians had left the reserve in Fort George, the village was abandoned, and "a short time later the old buildings were set afire and burned. So vanished a landmark that had been here for a very long time."¹ While the Indians were apparently compensated for the loss of their land and had quietly moved to their new homes, the fact remains that, all in the name of technology, the Indians lost their long-term homes to a railway, and a new community.

It was not only in Prince George that the Grand Trunk Pacific acquired Indian Lands. Frank Leonard explains that native lands were bought by the railway for

right-of-way throughout the Province: "Though the GTP provided sporadic employment for some Native people, the company's most significant interaction with Native communities along its line in British Columbia was its acquisition of Indian reserve land. . . . The surviving documents concerning that taking say little about GTP's attitude toward or relations with the Native people, however."² It seems that the Grand Trunk Pacific was interested less in human relations than with construction and eventual profit.

The old Indian reserve eventually became the railway yard for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and the debate between the three communities over the placement

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MY FIRST SHIFT AS AN ENGINE WATCHMAN ON THE C.N.R. Continued

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dent to the brickwork from my rather aggressive wood firing. During the night, I had gone several times to our bunk car to look after the fire in the potbelly heater, while the crew was sleeping. The warmth of that car was a welcome relief from the very harsh conditions outside. Also, the thoughts of my family and home in Kamloops were very much in my mind. There's no place like home!

However, my first night eventually came to an end after about 19 hours of heavy, hard work—I had met the difficulties straight on. When I finished my first shift I learned that the Fraser Canyon had received such heavy snow that no trains could operate until extensive snow removal took place. There were many tasks for our steam ditcher and spreader to help in clearing the line.

Each night after my first shift, things were better and continued to be very interesting. We left Boston Bar and worked at sidings like Boothroyd, Inkitsaph, Falls Creek, Cisco and Lytton. At night, the crew would spot the engine next to the fuel car so

that I could add fuel to the tender, and then the engine could be spotted next to the water car to keep it from freezing. Working as an engine watchman on a work train in the dead of winter can be a cold and lonely life but there was a lot of adventure in being a 16 year old out on the track, in charge of a locomotive and doing a man's work. Our ditcher crew was as follows: conductor, brakeman, flagman, engineer, fireman, engine watchman, ditcher engineer and watchman, two cable men, telegraph operator and cook. We were fortunate in having our own cook car with us, a wash car for showering and washing clothes, and our bunk cars were really quite remarkable. They were each lit by about eight coal oil lamps which had to be kept shiny clean and the wicks properly trimmed. We had two metal wash stands which I had to shine every day with a cleaner so that they could reflect your image when you looked into them. One of my chores was to pack hot water from the locomotive's inspirator injectors to the bunk car so that we had lots of hot wash water. The coal potbelly

heater had to be properly fired with briquettes. The bunks were equipped with flannellette blankets, linen pillowcases, and wool blankets. One night, I was chased out of the bunk car by an angry engineer after I was too attentive in firing the potbelly heater. He said to me, with some very colourful adjectives, "You've got the whole !@#\$\$%^ heater cherry red and its so *&^%\$# hot in here that the paint is starting to peel off the walls." Oh well, if you are going to make a mistake, you might as well make a good one, as my Dad always used to say. My intentions were honourable, at least.

It was not long until my ten days were up, and I was relieved by Bill Doolittle who had gone home to Kelowna to visit his family. I deadheaded home to Kamloops on the Extra 2764 East in conductor Alf Battison's caboose. Jimmy Raymond was the locomotive engineer. As I recall, I slept most of the way home! The Fraser Canyon was re-opened (thanks in no small part to the old 411 and her valiant crew). My first start in engine service was over, and

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HELICOPTER DRIP TORCH Continued

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light slash from the air. We tried all sorts of things from throwing lit cardboard strips out the back door—these would occasionally hang up on the helicopter skids) to seeding the area with pingpong balls full of chemicals that would ignite once on the ground—these on occasion would bounce off stumps into the adjoining timber and start a forest fire.

Finally the hand held drip torch was modified to work under a helicopter. Since then, technology and forest practices have taken over to make reforestation a little more civilized.

Northwood donated this original helicopter drip torch to the museum in 1991, and it was restored by the Central Interior Fire Protection Committee (now defunct.)

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Photos by Ron Jansen

TIMBER!

By Jocelyn Gallagher

July 2002

I entered the Railway and Forestry Museum for the first time—a green worker fresh out of university. As the Educational Programs Coordinator, I was expected to come up with brilliant ideas for the next 12 months. Piece of cake, I thought. I'll just whip up a few school kits related to the science of locomotion and the history of the rail and forest industry. But as I mused over this for the first month, management upstairs suggested a very different idea—a giant, life-size forestry board game! It would incorporate educational programming with the museum's first indoor exhibit. Opening date was scheduled for mid-November.

The game grew slowly. After all, I knew nothing about forestry. I had to learn basic forestry techniques and lingo—what is a bucksaw? or how does one cut down a tree? Some people laughed at me for my ignorance and rightly so—I thought a kiln only dried pottery! When I discovered the truth, I admitted that I had wanted to call the

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fire department the first time I saw all those smoking buildings on River Road. I realized with mild panic that I could not possibly get the exhibit done by November.

November 2002

After the major and fun disturbance of Halloween at Hogwartz in October, the forestry exhibit was now scheduled to open in March. I was

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Photo by Jocelyn Gallagher

MY FIRST SHIFT AS AN ENGINE WATCHMAN ON THE C.N.R. Continued

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gallons of water. We had a water tank car coupled up to the tender for supplying extra water to the tender. The 411 was used on a work train to move the steam ditcher to various locations on the Ashcroft Sub (125 miles of CNR track from Kamloops to Boston Bar), clearing snow, mud and rock slides which continually fell onto and near the track. The bulldozer and other off track work equipment were just starting to demonstrate their efficiency in 1949. The wedge snow plow, Jordan spreader, steam ditcher and the rotary snow plow were the weapons used for snow removal.

Soon enough engineer John Kurylo and fireman Tony Glanzer came into the bunk car and said that their day on the 411 was done and now it was time for me to start my duties. They both said that the 411 was very low on fuel oil and would need to be filled right away. We had a fuel car within our work train equipment but there was no way we could get at it, so I would have to get oil on the shop track.

The shop track at Boston Bar was full of engines and the staff was swamped with chores to do outside the roundhouse in the very cold, snowy weather. I went to see locomotive foreman Ray Martinson and told him that we needed fuel right away. His reply, "You are about the fifth engine in line, so you'll have to wait and can you help us look after some of our engines on the shop track. I said sure, but I'm having trouble keeping the fire going in the 411, since the oil is so low (it ran by gravity feed). Ray came out right away, sized up the situation and said, "Well, son, your first night as an engine watchman is going to be one you'll never forget!" How right he was. He handed me a big lining bar and said, "See the old bunk car in the next track to you? Well, there is your fuel for the 411. I'm sorry, but you are going to have to fire with wood until we get done fuelling these other engines." My task was daunting, to say the least. I would have to strip the wood siding from the upright wall of the car, break it up, try and remove the nails, and then pack the wood up into the cab

of the 411. Fortunately for me, I was tall enough to reach the wood up onto the deck of the engine without help. So, I spent the entire night stripping wood from this "destroyer" bunk car to feed the hungry maw of the 411's firebox. Every chance I got, I was over helping to look after the 2700's, 2400's and 2500's which were on the shop track. There was also water to put in tenders, lubricators to fill, crank pins to grease, and of course engines to fuel. The coal dock was still there but not in use and we had to hook up a fuel tank car to each engine, then heat the oil and then force it into the locomotive tender using air pressure provided by the locomotive. This was a very lengthy and time consuming process, compounded by the cold, snow, lack of room, frozen switches and a turntable that was almost inoperable at times due to the snowfall.

Towards morning, we did get the 411 fuelled up, and I was so relieved to put her back to being an oil burner. I was delighted to see an oil fire singing away in the 411's firebox with no damage evi-

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MY FIRST SHIFT AS AN ENGINE WATCHMAN ON THE C.N.R. Continued

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we reached Lytton, we were plowing lots of snow and hitting snow slides. Had I not known better, I could have sworn we were between Albreda and Blue River which often used to get about 250 inches of snow every winter. To my youthful mind, it was all very interesting and exciting, and I could hardly wait to get to Boston Bar, don my overalls and at last, become a full fledged employee in engine service on the Canadian National Railway.

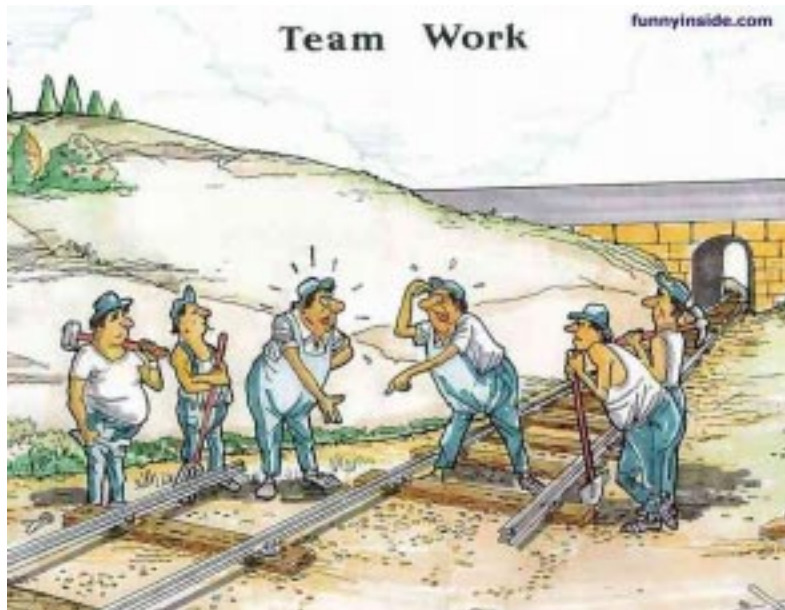
We finally arrived at Boston Bar, several hours behind schedule. I was glad to be no longer "dead-heading" and to be able to get to work. The evidence of the heavy snowfall was everywhere. I walked up to the engine to say thanks to Joe Taverna and his fireman, and I shall never forget the sight of the 6005. She was a moving mass of ice and snow. The shop staff were busy cleaning off her pilot so that engine 5117 could be coupled on to assist in handling the train through the heavy snowfall west of Boston Bar. As it turned out, this was the last passenger train to reach Vancouver, BC

for several days. I said thank you to Joe and his mate, and I was not long in finding my engine—the 411—resting on track No. 1, while the crew ate in the cook car. I knew where that would be and also where the bunk car was to store my gear and get ready for work. I was on my own as Bill Doolittle had all ready departed in an effort to take full advantage of his short Leave of Absence.

Perhaps, I should tell you a bit about the 411. She was built in 1910 by the Montreal Locomotive Works as one of J. D. McArthur's construction

engines. The 411 was referred to as a Mogul which meant that she had a 2-6-0 wheel arrangement: two little pony trucks at the front, six drivers and no idlers. Steam power was transferred to mechanical power by means of the Stephenson Valve Gear. She had 19" by 26" cylinders, 50" driving wheels, 180 lbs. per sq. in. boiler pressure and was rated at 28% which meant that she was capable of exerting 28,000 lbs. per sq. in. drawbar pull. The tender was small. It only held 2500 gallons of fuel oil and 5000

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TIMBER! Continued

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ready to get down to business. By now I had met one of my many saviors, Jamie Burak, a history major at

UNBC. She had signed on to get work-studies credits by helping with research for Timber!—the board game now had a name! While she raced around to the many libraries

and archives in town, I banged my head against the coffee tables of friends, coworkers, and anyone else who would listen to me. After all, I had to figure out how to make a game out of a museum display, with limited resources. Slowly but surely, a strategy took form—with the help of fundraiser and ideas person extraordinaire, Alecia Greenfield. As the plans took shape, artifacts crowded in the museum's back room. I had a floor plan, rules, and a list of things I needed. What I required, now, was someone to paint the squares on the floor, someone to tell me what all the artifacts were and someone to help me put up the display. Luckily, Katimavik was scheduled to start at the museum in January, the perfect candidates for painting the floor; Forest Expo provided me with the contacts who knew all about forestry artifacts (some even brought new artifacts to add to the display); and my fiancé volunteered to help with the set up on the condition that I would accompany him on holidays in February.

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Photo by Jocelyn Gallagher

TIMBER! Continued

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March 13, 2003 - Grand Opening of Timber!

The Timber Cruisers, Norm Wright's class of grade 4/5 students from Hart Highlands, had been through the game the week before opening. The students analyzed and critiqued as they traveled through the five displays, answering trivia questions, collecting cards, and rolling giant dice on the board. For the week after the grand opening, reporters, photographers, and Shaw Cable publicized the game. Teachers were quick to recognize this game as a fun tool to teach forestry and bookings flooded in from Central Fort George Traditional School, Robson Valley Junior Academy, and elementary schools: Hixon, Edgewood, Vanway, and College Heights to name but a few. All in all, Timber! was a great success.

Thank you to all the sponsors and individuals who helped with this project including Forest Expo; CILA; Money Concepts; Canfor; Katimavik students; Jim Nicholson, RFM-PG; Alecia Greenfield, RFM-PG; Jamie Burak, UNBC student; Pierie Elliot, RPF, CNC; Ramona



Photos by Jocelyn Gallagher

Rose, Head Archivist, UNBC; Mike Paget, fiancé; Trudy Swaan, RFM-PG; and Kelly Morris, RFM-PG.

Timber! the life-sized board game will be at the

museum through August 2003. Come and learn about the history of forestry in our region through an interactive game of trivia and adventure.



MY FIRST SHIFT AS AN ENGINE WATCHMAN ON THE C.N.R.

By Harry R. J. Home

For many of us, the topic of the first day at work on a new job often stimulates the telling of many entertaining and colourful stories.

My very first day as an employee of the Canadian National Railway began on 28 July 1949 at Boston Bar, BC. I was hired on as a signal maintainer working with the signal gang for 86 cents an hour. I was one of a gang of about 25 men and our job was the installation of the automatic block system on the CNR mainline between Boston Bar and Hope—a distance of 40 miles. I think that every railroad man should begin his career working on the track, since that is where the true essence of a railroad really begins.

That first day was really uneventful—if you discount my distressing introduction to the fine points of using a spoon shovel at the West Switch at Stout, BC in the Fraser Canyon and surrounded by some very persistent black flies, “no seeums” and mosquitoes. However, I had a good teacher and managed to do the job without too much dif-

ficulty. My first shift as an engine watchman was quite another affair. It was very eventful.

Mr. J. S. (Jack) McNeil was the locomotive foreman at Kamloops Junction, BC near my hometown of Kamloops. He was in charge of the running crews and shop staff of a very busy 18-stall steam roundhouse, complete with a boiler room, coal dock, fuel oil facilities, two water tanks (one of them used to be at Lucerne, BC), sand house, stores, turntable, office and booking-in facilities. Mr. McNeil was very kind to me in allowing my many visits to the roundhouse; it was a fascinating place where the steam locomotives were serviced. It was full of activity and was permeated with the many smells of active steam locomotive maintenance. The shop staff were competent, well trained and dedicated railroad men who were most patient in answering my many questions about steam servicing and repair. You had to be on your guard, though, as they were always planning some type of horseplay on unsuspecting souls who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Mr. McNeil was well aware of my burning desire to become a locomotive fireman and had promised me that I would be in line for work as an engine watchman until I could “go firing” when I turned 18. My first engine watchman's job came up just before Christmas of that year of 1949 when Bill Doolittle, the engine watchman on the Ashcroft Sub ditcher, asked for ten days relief. Mr. McNeil offered me the job, and I was delighted to accept. I noted that my Mom and Dad had some reservations about my being away over the festive season, out on my own in some lonely siding and having to cope with the cold winter weather. However, I had the advantage of having spent considerable time around locomotives since I was seven years old. I had been studying locomotive books since I was in Grade 3.

So it was that on 31 December 1949 I was riding passenger train No. 1 to Boston Bar to start my relief work. The engine on our train was the 6005 and our engineer was Joe Taverna. The forecast of heavy snow had become a reality and by the time

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