

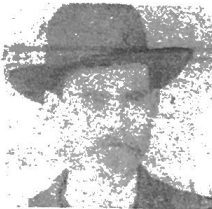
OUT OF THE SAGEBRUSH



ASHCROFT'S FOUR(Fore) FATHERS



John Christopher Barnes of Frankfort, Kentucky



William Brink



Oliver Hixon Evans



Bill Bose (1853-1935) was the best-known driver of ox teams in the area.

A LOOK BACK AT THE COLOURFUL YEARS OF THE 80's AND 90's WHEN ASHCROFT WAS A MAJOR SUPPLY CENTRE FOR THE NORTH

The long promised Canadian Pacific Railway across Canada had become a reality, tapping the Province into the pulse of the nation and beyond, and creating a new wave of excitement in accelerating settlement, and harvesting of the abundant resources of the Interior. Tons of supplies of every possible type had to be transported and the busy sawmill and mining industries needed machinery. Though the wild fever of the gold rush days of two decades ago was over there was still much wealth to come from the Golden Cariboo.

By Rae Eckford

ASHCROFT: Gateway to the Cariboo

Ashcroft was given the breath-of-life when the Canadian Pacific Railway was finally pushed through to the far limits of 'the west' in 1885.

The town was 'born in a hurry' amid what seemed providential circumstances, for its setting was in the right place at the right time -- at the most northerly point of the railway before it swung east, and close to the lifeline to the Interior, the Cariboo Wagon Road. In the midst of a quiet grainfield, in a bend in the Thompson River, Ashcroft burgeoned quickly into the 'Gateway to the Cariboo', supplanting the town of Yale, which had claimed this distinction over 20 prosperous years.

The site for the town was part of a ranch originally owned by John Christopher Barnes and his partner William Brink (who died unexpectedly in 1879). The addition of Oliver Evans, who married Brink's daughter, and Bill Bose, who married Barnes' daughter, completed the list of founding fathers, all of them Americans who had worked variously as cowboys, prospectors, muleskinners and packers.

Open For Business

In 1883 before 'opportunity had even lifted a hand to knock' Barnes and his new partner Evans had the door open in the form of their brand new Thompson River Hotel, near the ferry, every inch of it trundled slowly up 'The Road' in Bill Bose's ox-drawn freight wagons.

Though they had gambled, fortune smiled on this 'family firm', and railway crews arrived in 1884. Evans and his wife executed a quick and rather

simple survey for a townsite, he dragging a chain for marking, and Mrs. Evans and the children placing the stakes.

When the C.P.R. built a station inland from the Thompson River, Evans and Barnes simply had their hotel picked up and moved directly opposite and renamed it the Ashcroft Hotel. From then on the town began to flourish. With the building of a bridge across the Thompson, a wagon road connecting it with the Cariboo Road, and the all important move of the B.C. Express headquarters to Ashcroft in 1886, the 'Portal to the North' was wide open.

Growing

The pleasant shrill of steam whistles down the canyon signalled the arrival of trainloads of supplies, and people from across the nation and across the ocean, bound for the northern settlements. Those early years from 1886 to the turn of the century were filled with excitement, high expectations and the wonderful feeling of hope for the future, characteristic of a new frontier in the throes of building.

The main street was busy with a steady stream of northbound freight wagons, loaded with everything from mining machinery to milady's silk petticoats. Stagecoaches came and went bearing mail and express, gold on the down trips, and passengers from every walk of life heading for the Golden Cariboo -- adventurers, businessmen, ne'er-do-wells, miners, gamblers, aristocrats, land-hungry settlers and ladies of dubious repute. Camped just

outside town there might be a couple of packtrains waiting for special cargoes.

Accommodations and services increased rapidly with the influx of people, some of whom stayed to settle. By 1887 the little town boasted a second hotel, three general merchants, two blacksmith shops, two forwarding businesses (similar to wholesalers), B.C. Express Office, incorporating connections with the railway telegraph office, a post office, a beginning Chinatown and a school of sorts.

Large ranches had built up from Lytton to the Cariboo in response to the miners' need for beef, and grain and hay for their mules and oxen. Several established in the immediate area produced beef, wheat for the grist mills, oats, barley, hay, vegetables and some fruit. Ashcroft became an important trans-shipment point for cattle, handling between four and five thousand per year. Accordingly, large holding corrals were built at the north end of town for fall drives.

End of an Era

Ashcroft continued to grow through the 90's, subject to ups and downs at the whims of the economy, but the hardest blow fell in the early teens of the new century with the building of the P.G.E. Railway and the take over by mechanized transport. The loss of the town's strategic position as the supply centre for the north spelled the end of an era and a way of life, the most colourful and romantic of its history.

Sam McDonald's Freight Wagon

Standing like an old warrior at the entrance to the bridge into Ashcroft, this heavy freight wagon is a fitting symbol of the town's earliest history, and that of the vast area of the Cariboo to the north.

Sam McDonald's outfit was one of the earliest on the Cariboo Wagon Road to Barkerville in the early 1860's, and carried its last freight in the fall of 1885. From that time on the wagon was parked behind a blacksmith shop. While exposure to the weather took its toll and some of its parts disappeared, it was not beyond repair, and in the 1920's a new lease on life was in sight as the Ashcroft Journal spearheaded a drive to raise both an interest in our history and money to build a protective shed over the old wagon. This was finally accomplished by people who cared and eventually wagon and shed were settled onto the present location. In 1979 an application of T.L.C. by blacksmith Don Bundus brought Sam McDonald's veteran freighter to its present state of respectability -- very reasonable for its 120 odd years.

R.D. Cumming, Editor of the Ashcroft Journal, was to a large extent responsible for the preservation of this tangible reminder of a past era, as he was for so much of the town's earliest records and artifacts.

R.D. was a many-sided man who, besides being an editor (among other things), wrote and had published both fiction and poetry. It is also not too surprising to find his name in a long list of teamsters after 1885. His feelings are well and simply expresses in these short lines:

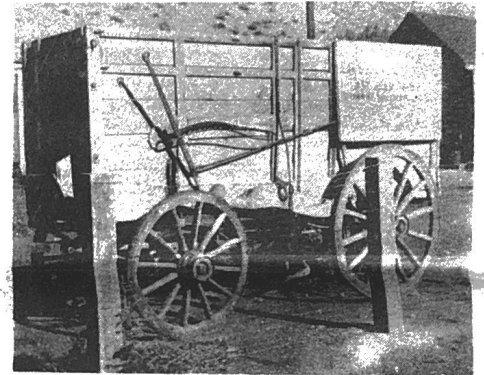
*"This is the road to the Cariboo...
A mine of tradition and story,
Voicing the fame of freighting days
The pioneers and their glory."*



One of the earliest photos of Ashcroft about 1893 - Hotel in right centre, C.P.R. Station and Foster's Store to its right, and school in foreground.



Ashcroft Hotel in 1894 after renovations and a large addition.



Ashcroft's Chinatown which began when the town did, once had a population of 600. The Wing Chong Tai store [on the left] established in 1892 operated for almost 90 years.

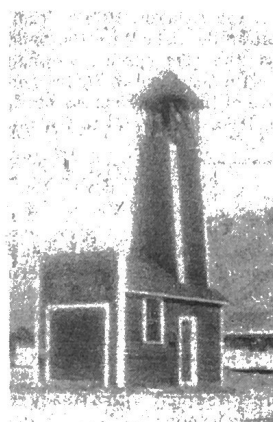
MOMENTOS OF THE PAST: Ashcroft's Old Firebell

The old firebell, which now hangs safely in a specially built tower above Ashcroft's modern shopping centre, had a few 'miles to go' before it finally found a resting spot.

James Haddock, early pioneer businessman, travelled to Victoria in 1895 and returned with what he considered a suitable firebell, one loud enough to warn the entire town. It was at first suspended by two high posts with a pull-rope attached and later, by the same arrangement, placed above the first firehall built in 1899.

When the disastrous fire of 1916 levelled most of the town's businesses, the firehall numbered among the casualties -- but the bell survived. Found among the rubble by Mr. Haddock and his son, it was again mounted temporarily on two poles further down Railway Avenue until a new firehall (still standing) was built in 1919 on the same site as the 1899 building.

Finally obsolescence caught up with the old bell. It was replaced by a siren in 1942, after which it seems to have lost its way for a while in a town other than its own. Reclaimed after some controversy by the ever vigilant R.D. Cumming, it was returned and placed with the freight wagon at the entrance to Ashcroft, where it remained for many years until it reached its present location.



Old Ashcroft Fire Hall.

Presented By:
THE VILLAGE OF ASHCROFT
Through
THE ASHCROFT MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
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JO PETTY
except Hat Creek House
sketch at top of page 9

NORTHWARD HO..

Freighting on the Road to the Golden North

The pathway to the north is engraved with countless hoof prints of mules, oxen and horses as these patient beasts carried and drew their precious freight cargoes. In fair weather and foul, through rain and dust and mud, in the cold and under boiling sun, up and down the rough terrain they travelled the Cariboo Wagon Road until mechanization ended their usefulness.

A great debt of history is owed to the men who brought their packtrains

and freight wagons to the hinterland of British Columbia from the Gold Rush Days of the early 60's past the turn of the century. The tons of supplies and machinery borne by their vehicles and animals were the life giving element in the opening up of a new frontier and the means of developing the resources it stored. The list of teamsters and packers is a long one; they were a strong breed of men and good at what they did - they had to be.

PACKTRAINS

Thousands of mules and cayuses trod the early north bound trails and later the Wagon Road. They moved in packtrains led by 'bell-mares', often white, each animal loaded with an astonishing array of goods from stoves to cases of whiskey to miner's boots, in packs weighing on the average about 360 lbs. but some up to 400 lbs.

The big outfits of between 40 and 50 animals were usually handled by one man for every 8 to 10 animals, a cargador in charge and a cook. Their day began at 7 A.M. and the train had covered about 16 miles by the time it was halted around 2 in the afternoon, with plenty of time for grazing.

There was good money in early packing at \$1.00 per lb., but later with the competition of freight wagons the price was lowered and many packtrain operators became teamsters. Some however continued with their mules even after Ashcroft replaced Yale as the jumping-off place for the Cariboo, among them the famous 'Cataline.'

THE FREIGHT WAGONS and the BLACKSMITH SHOPS

The first freight wagons were imported from California and assembled at Fort Langley. Often they had to be rebuilt to suit road conditions and modified to handle the heavy mining machinery. Later wagons were built by wheelwrights in Yale, New Westminster, Cache Creek and Ashcroft; and eventually Studebaker and Massey-Harris Bains came in by rail from the east, usually only the running gear, with boxes added to suit the load.

ISAAC LEHMAN

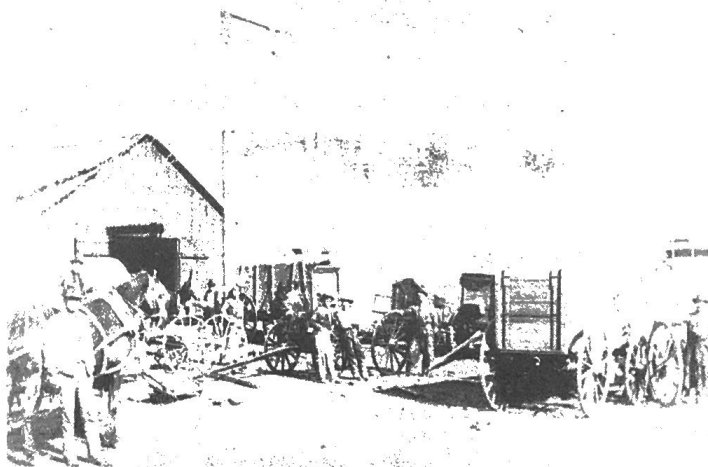
ISSAC LEHMAN was a trained wheelwright from Ontario who worked at his trade in Yale in partnership with a blacksmith and later bought the shop outright. While there he built a thoroughbrace stagecoach for the Barnard Express Company. When C.P.R. was completed in this area, Isaac dismantled his shake-roofed blacksmith shop, had it shipped by flat-car to Ashcroft and came north himself with his family. He worked as a wheelwright in Cache Creek until the bridge was built over the Thompson, and the road put in to connect with the Cariboo Wagon Road. He then rebuilt his Yale shop in Ashcroft, which served the town for many years with wagon building, blacksmithing and shoeing.

"THE JERK-LINE"

The earliest freight wagons were not designed for the teamster's ease, for they had no seats up-front and he was obliged to walk, ride a wheeler or at times hitch a ride on a spring board at the side of the wagon. Of necessity the teamsters invented a system for handling a long string of animals. One line ran along to each of the trained leaders which responded to the signals given - left, stop, etc. - by the number of jerks made on the line.



HEADING NORTH...Loaded freighters leaving Ashcroft. On the left the 'jerk-line' driver rides a wheeler.



MENDING THE WEAR AND TEAR...Repairing the big freighters at the Smith and Bryson Blacksmith shop in Ashcroft.



I. Lehman BLACKSMITH, WHEELWRIGHT AND WAGONBUILDER

General Repairing and Horseshoeing a specialty. Iron, steel and timber kept in stock. Investor and manufacturer of the Lehman Tire Setter. No blacksmith shop should be without one. A stock of Eastern Carriages, Buggies and Road Carts kept on hand

Motto: Good work and Low Prices

ASHCROFT

B.C.

Freighting on the Road to the Golden North Cont'd

THE OX TEAMS and the "BULL PUNCHERS"

Those who drove yokes of oxen handled these placid beasts in a different way. Walking all day beside and in close touch with them, the puncher started the span by calling out the names of several bulls and a few cracks of his bull whip. The whip and a long pole called a 'goad stick' for an occasional touch on the ribs were not used as punishment. Oxen as well as mules and horses were shod in steel, but their shoes were split to fit their hooves.

The last bull team on the Road was owned by Irving Strout, considered one of the best bull punchers in the Cariboo. The span of 12 teams pulling 3 wagons left Ashcroft in September, 1899.

FEED AND WATER

In the early days the freight teams were 'grazed' on bunchgrass along the way and watered at springs and creeks, but in occasional long stretches where there wasn't a natural supply, the teamsters had to dig wells. Later, as ranches and farms increased in number and more stopping places were built, hay and grain were a welcome addition as they gave the animals more endurance and spared the grazing time.

THE TEAMSTERS & SWAMPERS

The "swampers" hired on by teamsters for general help were usually young men wanting to apprentice in the teaming business. Their duties included grazing and watering the teams, rounding them up at 4 A.M., cooking breakfast, harnessing and unharnessing and any other odd jobs they were called upon to do. The successful ones would eventually take over as drivers and many might finally have a freight outfit of their own.

Teamsters had a style of dress all their own. They generally wore a dark coloured hat similar to a cowboy's but with a stiff narrower brim, high calf boots with a flat heel, and their pantlegs were worn outside their boots. Many followed a traditional code to indicate a man's skill with the "Ribbons". The pantleg was turned up one roll for each team of horses he would handle.

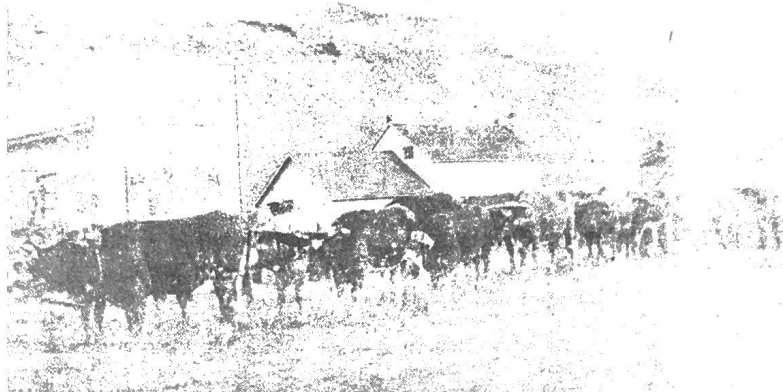
THE FREIGHT LOADS and the LONG HAUL

One of the earliest and largest freight outfits was owned by Uriah Nelson who had four 12-mule teams of three wagons each. They averaged about 14 miles per day. Ox teams were usually made up of ten yoke and though they were stronger, they made slower progress at about 12 miles per day. The big horse teams came later. Though the big freight wagons didn't go beyond Soda Creek, packtrains pushed on to Barkerville. Progress was slow for the big freighters, most of a month going north, shorter on the down trip.

With a ton of freight to each animal, it took three hours to get up the Ashcroft hill, and the long hill out of Clinton was a trial, sometimes climbed in relays. Travel in mid winter was impossible.

The freight carried could range from a boiler weighing thousands of pounds to window panes, and the freighters' brag that they could deliver anything from mining machinery to a dozen eggs safely was likely true.

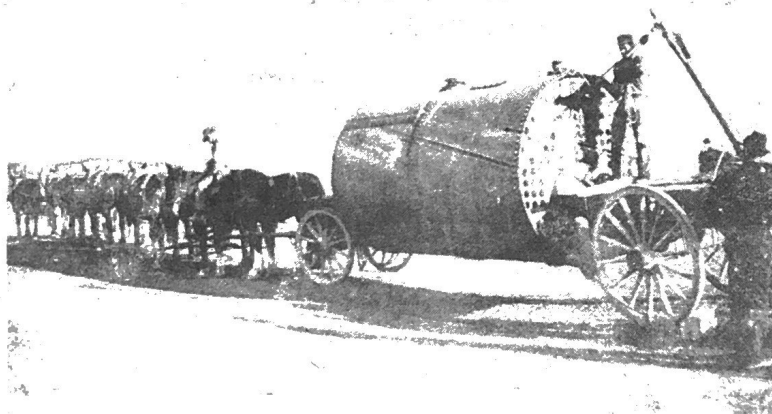
The tinkle of a lead-mares' bell, the crack of a bull whip, a teamster's shout, were sounds that echoed across more than 40 years of purposeful service by animal drawn freight. Heralding the arrival of these dusty travel-worn caravans, how these same sounds must have gladdened the hearts of those waiting for the supplies they needed for survival, and the tools necessary to shape a new lifestyle in a new land.



Bull team on Railway Avenue in Ashcroft.



George Michel's jerk-line outfit near Ashcroft.



BIG LOAD...Boiler weighing about 20 tons leaving Ashcroft for Golden Cache Mine. Driver Al Faucault - 1897.

Freighting on the Road to the Golden North Cont'd

FORWARDING BUSINESS

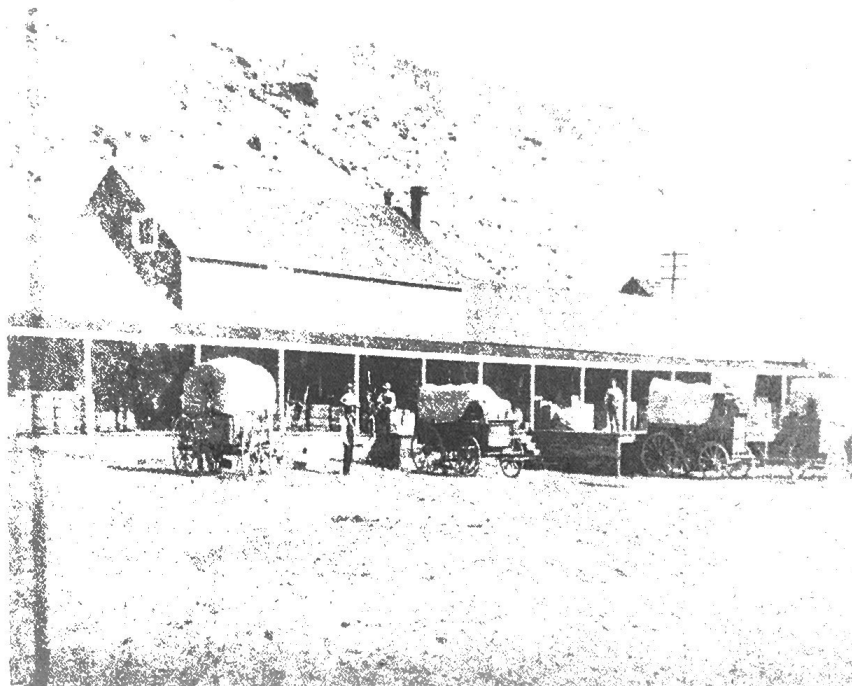
BIG BUSINESS IN THE 80's AND 90's

Those engaged in the Forwarding Business were the forerunners of present day wholesalers. They built large warehouses for receiving, storing and commissioning merchandise.

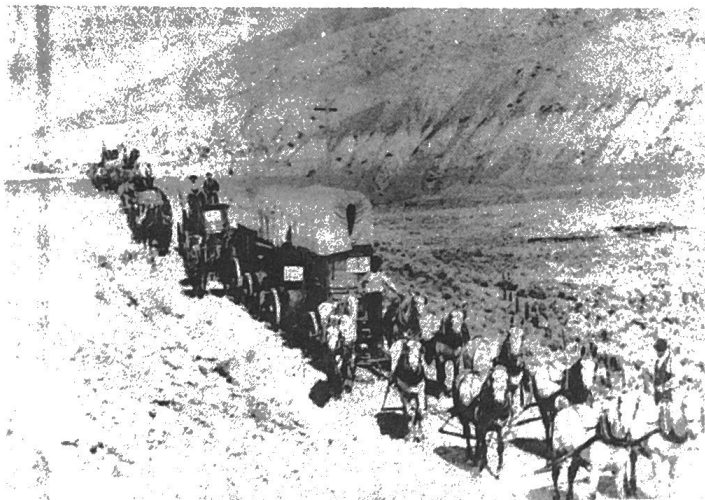
Walter B. Gladwin, who had been Forwarding for many years in Yale, moved his building to Ashcroft with the coming of the C.P.R. Though F.W. Foster had opened a large general store and warehouse in 1886, Gladwin handled the bulk of the town's business until his death in 1894, at which time the firm was bought by the Harvey Bailey Co. This partnership established in Ashcroft in 1887 had grown to large proportions, serving not only Ashcroft and vicinity but reaching far into the Cariboo.

Some idea of the volume of the additional forwarding business conducted by Harvey Bailey Co. may be gathered from the fact that they had, on an average, 75 freighting outfits of up to 12 horses constantly on the road, each carrying from 9000 to 18,000 pounds. In addition to the freights they also sent out large mule packtrains which carried up to 15,000 pounds. Some packtrains were sent as far as the Peace River, a distance of 500 miles.

Duties on foreign goods imported and shipped north, after being cleared at Ashcroft Custom House, amounted to \$1500 a year for many years past. [reported in 1909]



LOADING UP...Freight wagons backed up to the extending platform at the Harvey Bailey warehouse - 1890's. C.P.R. Station on right.



Harvey Bailey Contractors coming down the Ashcroft hill.



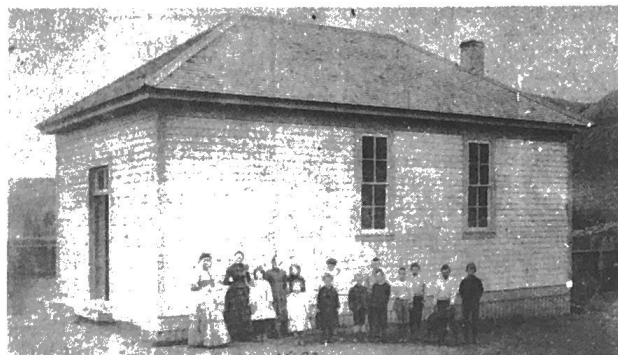
CATALINE...whose real name was Jean Caux, was one of the first packers on the road and the last to leave. Well liked and respected, he ran his business well for over 50 years - and he did it with flair!

HOUSE OF BLAZES

When the C.P.R. put up a log bunkhouse for their construction crews, at the north end of Railway Avenue, they little knew to what uses it would be later turned.

The town's first hotel located nearby found the windowless structure suitable as a jail, or drunk tank. It's possible that some of the morning-afters at first thought they had left this world for good, a factor that might have contributed to naming the building "The House of Blazes."

In the fall of 1886, James Haddock, manager of Fosters General Store, decided that, with a general facelift, the House of Blazes could become a seat of learning. He put in a new door and flooring and two large windows, one facing the river and the other downtown, then arranged the appointment of a Victoria teacher, Mr. J. Fingal Smith, whose salary he himself paid. James Haddock's son Arthur, one of the seven students of the town's first school, was quoted as saying, "Smith taught school until 1887. However one Monday morning we went to school and found no teacher - Mr. Smith wasn't there, having gone to Clinton where he had a sweetheart, and we did not see him again. My brother Charlie and I then went to Cache Creek Boarding School." The history of the House of Blazes becomes a little vague after this, but it is known that its fourth and last function was as a Chinese store and that it went the way of most of the town's businesses in the town's devastating fire of 1916.



By 1889 Ashcroft businesses were increasing rapidly and these entrepreneurs needed education facilities for their children. This small one room school was built in that year on a site well away from the main street, overlooking the river.

THE STAGE IS COMING!

'B.X.'

A TERM OF AFFECTION AND RESPECT,
"BX" WAS SHORT FOR BARNARD'S EXPRESS COMPANY.



This famous stagecoach line, later known as the B.C. Express Co. was said to be the first organized transportation in Western Canada. It carried mail and express, passengers, and gold between Yale, head of Navigation on the Fraser River, and Barkerville 400 miles to the north.

The company grew from a two-horse light wagon travelling between Lillooet and Soda Creek in 1863 to a stageline with rolling stock, horses and equipment valued at \$100,000. It became the second longest stage route in North America, eventually servicing more than a thousand miles of roads and river routes with coaches, its own two sternwheelers on the upper Fraser River, and finally a fleet of automobiles. In the early years and up to the completion of the C.P.R. in 1885, the B.X. lines extended to the coast where they connected with Wells Fargo Express Co. of San Francisco.

Francis Jones Barnard
A successful story spanning almost 50 years began in 1862 with the Company's founder Frances Barnard carrying letters and newspapers on foot from Yale to the goldfields, and miners pokes of dust and nuggets on the way back - 760 miles round trip! Those in the goldfields were so hungry for contact with the outside they gladly paid \$2.00 per letter and \$1.00 for a newspaper.

On these early trips Barnard built a reputation for reliability and honesty, which grew in stature to become a permanent standard for the stagecoach company. The B.X. had quality built-in from its inception, and managed to retain its traditions in spite of changes of ownership, throughout its existence. The cardinal rule was to simply aim for the best in everything.

The First Year
The first thing Barnard did was to hire four of the best drivers known on the road, among them Steve Tingley and James Hamilton who later became partners. His company put two stagecoaches on the Cariboo Wagon Road May 1st, 1864, with departures from Yale at 3 A.M. Mondays and Fridays to Soda Creek, connecting with the steamer Enterprise to Quesnel. Saddle trains, not Barnard's, completed the trip to Barkerville. The fare was \$125.

The following figures on Barnard's Express reported by "British Columbian" of New Westminster in December of 1864 are impressive:

Number of miles travelled during the year:
110,600.

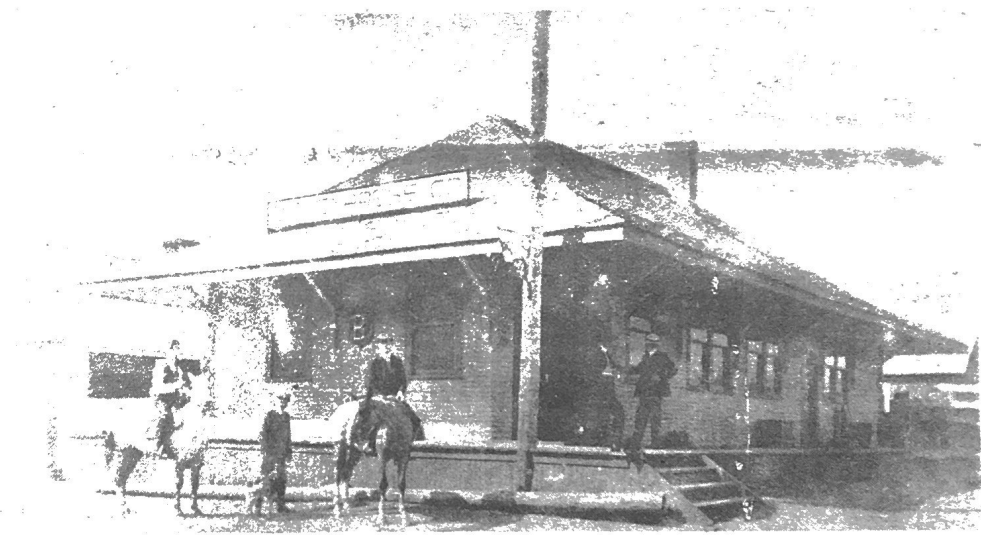
Number of men employed, not including agents:
38.

Number of horses employed in the express service:
160

Number of expresses dispatched from Head Office in New Westminster:
450.



Stagecoach ready to leave from the first B.C. Express office on Railway Avenue - 1890.



New B.C. Express office built in 1911 is reminiscent in style of a railway station. Stages were loaded at rear.

Total amount of treasure and valuables exclusive of merchandise passing through the express during the present year:
\$4,619,000.00

The Next Two Decades
During the next 20 years the company continued to flourish, though on two occasions competition forced a battle in rates which lowered the fare to Barkerville to as low as \$10 for a short period. The B.X. company managed to buy out or force out their competitors.

Barnard's Express, now known as the B.C. Express Co. was incorporated in 1878 with Barnard holding a half interest and Steve Tingley and James Hamilton each owning one quarter. Hamilton died a few years later, and by 1886 Steve Tingley owned the B.C. Express Co. outright.

B.C. Express Moves To Ashcroft
The move to Ashcroft in 1886 of B.C. Express headquarters brought about a great surge of activity in the commerce of the young town. The company bought a great deal of land to accommodate its many components. Steve Tingley's first offices, under the

management of J.J. McKay faced on Railway Avenue, with a livery stable and carriage house behind it while corrals, barns, etc. were built further away. There were several houses in the residential area for employees. Carpenters and blacksmiths were busy and many drivers, hostlers and other horse handlers were hired.

Service and Routes
Beginning with the main stagecoach route from Yale to Barkerville, the B.X. eventually established a network of service lines radiating to points in the Cariboo, Chilcotin, Lillooet, Okanagan and Kamloops via Nicola Valley, travelling over 2000 miles per week in regular schedules and sometimes handling extra runs.

The company might also lay claim to establishing the first rural mail delivery in the province, for mail was often taken on foot from a B.X. station to mining camps and small settlements not reached by stagecoach. This was done free of charge.

When B.C. Express Co. moved from Yale to Ashcroft the time was cut from 52 to 42 hours for the 167 mile run to Soda Creek, with an overnight

THE STAGE IS COMING! CONT'D

at 83 MILE HOUSE. The time to Barkerville was just over 3 days.

From May to October there were semi-weekly trips on the main line and weekly ones to outer areas. Throughout the winter the B.X. sleighs made a weekly run north regardless of often severe weather conditions, a service for which the people in the Interior were most grateful. After a heavy snowfall they waited for the company to break the road, which was no problem for the strong, well-fed B.X. horses.

"ON TIME"

The key to the success of the whole B.X. operation was its schedule. So punctual were stagecoach arrivals and departures, people at Stopping Houses and elsewhere could set their watches by them. The stagecoach driver was likened to the railroad engineer - he had a schedule to maintain.

THE STAGECOACHES

SOMETIMES CALLED B.X. SCHOONERS

For many years Barnard's Express Co. imported Concord Stagecoaches from San Francisco, which often had to be strengthened for rough road conditions. By the early 1890's the company had set up shops to build its own vehicles. Though the B.X. owned several types of conveyances for various uses, the four and six horse thoroughbred stagecoaches were probably in greater numbers. These showy coaches with bright red body and yellow running gear

trimmed with black bands, all had the standard equipment of a metal safe, fitted into the black leather boot. Above the main body was a framed canvas top, removable to suit the weather. Beneath rockers which ran the full length of the coach were leather springs of several layers in the form of half-moons face down. These prevented a spine-jolting ride, but the rolling motion rendered some passengers a little 'green around the gills'.

THE HORSES

ALL BORE THE B.X. BRAND OF THE COMPANY RANCH IN THE OKANAGAN

In the early 60's horses were brought in from Oregon, but in 1868 the company brought stock overland from California and Mexico for selective breeding at the B.X. Ranch in Vernon. Later they also bought from ranches in the Kamloops and Nicola areas and the Prairies.

B.X. horses were trained for stagecoach use only, much of it on the road. A green pair of animals, placed between wise and trained leaders and wheelers could soon be controlled by the skilled drivers. These healthy, spirited and well-groomed horses were a source of pride to drivers and handlers alike.

The hand-made harness of the best leather was cleaned each time it was removed, according to B.X. tradition. On the road a change of horses was made every 15 to 18 miles.

Tradition

The departures of the handsome coaches and teams were an event few people could resist pausing to watch. In true stagecoach tradition the horses reared into full gallop when their hostler stepped back and the driver released the brake and yelled "Hi Yuh! Hup!", settling into a brisk trot after about 100 yards, the arrivals with a flourish were also interesting and exciting for onlookers.

THE FINAL PHASE

In 1897, when the B.C. Express Co. lost the mail contract, Steve Tingley sold to Charles Vance Miller, a wealthy Toronto lawyer, and his associates, who continued to operate the company under the old name for many years. In 1913 they in turn lost the mail contract and the business was transferred to the Inland Express Company.

THE B.X. COMPLEX

When the Broad Tire Act was passed in 1910 and the Cariboo Wagon Road upgraded for motor vehicles, the B.C. Express Co. bought a fleet of automobiles (from among the best built) in an attempt to adapt to the approaching obsolescence of stagecoaches.

In 1911 they built a new office, which is still standing at Railway and Sixth as a designated heritage building, and a complex of other structures including a large garage for their autos. This office, however, was only used for three more years as Ashcroft's position as a shipping centre had declined and the staging business was no longer profitable.

The town of Ashcroft and the people throughout the Cariboo experienced a deep sense of loss with the passing of their own B.X.

When this venerable old stagecoach line ceased operations after a singular half-century record of service, the B.C. Express Co. took its rightful place in history as an important institution in the development of the Province of British Columbia.

End of a Saga



B.C. Express complex [left to right] front: stable, harness shop, blacksmith shop, and offices. Behind offices is garage for autos and B.X. dwelling.

STEVE TINGLEY - "A good man with the ribbons"

In the vernacular of the stagecoach drivers, this simple statement was a high compliment. A Victoria newspaper said of him... "Steve Tingley, once the cleverest driver that ever held ribbons behind a team of six. Tingley was a prominent figure on the Old Cariboo Road when New Westminster was its terminus at one end and Barkerville at the other." (There were also many other very skilled drivers on 'The Road' over the years.)

In addition to his driving skill, Francis Barnard must have recognized in the 22 year old Tingley, former saddler, some of the same qualities he himself possessed, among them a strong sense of responsibility and the cool courage to overcome great difficulties.

An Incident

Tingley was driving a team of six on his return run from Clinton to Yale in the year 1876 when he found that high water had backed the Fraser up and flooded the Wagon Road at a point 20 miles from Yale. Having had experience in driving over this area when it was covered with a foot of water he knew the road was solid enough not to allow any washouts. He drove ahead and straight into a freak accident when one of his lead horses stumbled and lunged heavily against its mate. In the struggle that followed, the two leaders slipped back off the gooseneck on the swingpole and suddenly free of the stage, went over the edge into the boiling waters of the Fraser. Tingley let go of the lead lines so they would slip through the bridle



Steve Tingley in his early years.

of the remaining horses. When he completed his run into Yale, on time, it was said that he arrived unexcited and not upset by the incident. In today's language, "That's class".

The Vice-Regal Coach

There are many other accounts which lend credence to Steve Tingley's superb driving skill. It is little wonder that he was chosen to drive the coach of the Marquis of Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, and the Marchioness on the occasion of an 1876 visit, and perhaps not too surprising that he inspired the confidence (with perhaps a bit of charm thrown in) of Lady Dufferin who sat on the box beside him on some of the return journey.

THE YEAR 1868

In twenty years of driving for the B.X., Tingley missed only two trips. In 1868 Barnard sent him to Mexico and California to buy horses for breeding stock. He drove 500 head overland to the Okanagan where the B.X. Ranch had been established at Vernon.

In that same year he visited his native New Brunswick and doubtless set many young female hearts aflutter with despair when he returned with a bride. In 1873 he was to experience the horror of seeing his wife go over a cliff to her death with the buggy in which they had been

THE STAGE IS COMING! CONT'D

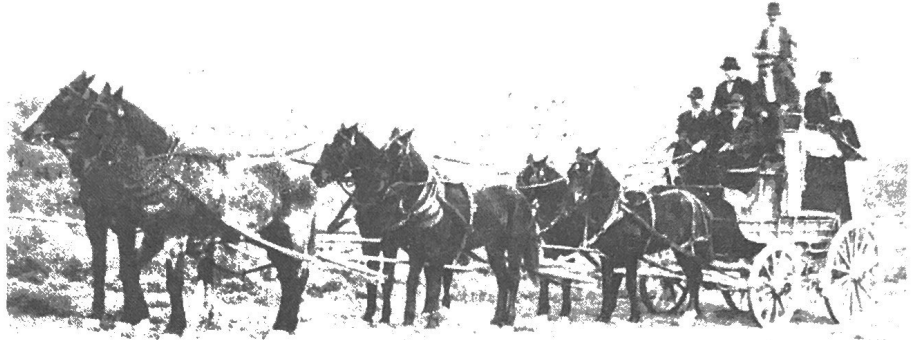
STEVE TINGLEY Cont'd

sightseeing, and the team which had shied, while he escaped unhurt. He later remarried and in all had four children. One of his two sons, Fred, became a "Three Star" stage driver.

THE LATER YEARS

With the B.X. under very able management in Ashcroft he was able to travel and involve himself in some business ventures, two of which were the purchase of the property of the famous Stopping House, the 83 MILE, and the establishment of the Tingley Ranch in North Ashcroft. The rich soil of the four to five hundred acre ranch produced high quality crops of fruit and vegetables.

In 1897, Steve Tingley sold the famous B.C. Express Co. he had been a part of for 33 eventful years.



Last stage to leave Ashcroft. Driver Bill Elliott.

At The Ashcroft Museum

A Visit

The warmth of wood in many hues and the boardwalk under one's feet seem to set the tone and open the doors to the past, in years between Ashcroft's beginnings in 1883 and the Great Fire of 1916.

The story of those times is well told by the large collection of photos, well-worn tools and other artifacts, and a simply written text complemented by many quotes from pioneers. It is easy to step back into another era for awhile.

Small Beginnings

The Ashcroft Museum is the result of one man's interest in the history of the South Cariboo. As a young man of 16 years when he emigrated from Scotland to Pavilion with his parents, Robert D. Cumming soon began his own small collection of arrowheads and other items.

His interest continued through the years with his family involved as he pursued a business career, and when he bought the Ashcroft Journal in 1912 he was able to inspire many others to contribute photos and artifacts. The now small museum housed for many years over the Journal offices was the core of what was to become an outstanding collection of local historical artifacts.

Almost Standing Still?

In the early 1950's the greatly expanded collection was moved to temporary quarters. When that building was demolished the Cumming family bequeathed their private museum to the Village of Ashcroft. There followed, unfortunately, several years in storage.

Finally public concern for the collection was transformed into action when a donation drive was launched to put up a building of concrete blocks, using volunteer labour that would house both a



The Ashcroft Museum and Archives opened in 1982 in the old Post Office building.

museum and fire hall. Saturday night donation dances were held regularly with 'bricking bees' on Sundays, and according to Lew Cumming Jr., grandson of R.D., its possible that some of that Sunday morning brick-work might have been a wee might crooked - but no matter - the work got done. The new museum, built in R.D. Cumming's name, was officially opened in the year of his death, 1958 and served the community for 22 years in the concrete building.

In 1978-79 a Canada Works Projects Grant assisted in cleaning, cataloguing and updating artifact displays, but the building left much to be desired in the areas of care and preservation, and space required for the now sizeable collection.

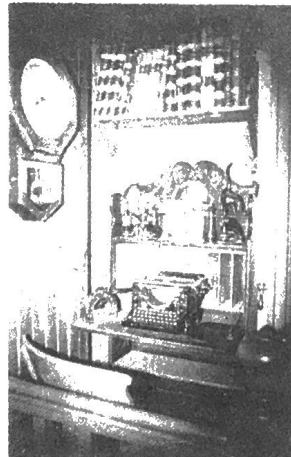
Finally in 1980 the old Federal Post Office Building constructed by the Government in 1917 became available for a new museum. Grants from all three levels of government and individual donations made possible many months of planning, re-modelling and designing under the direction of Robert Graham. In June 1982, the new Ashcroft Museum officially opened its doors.

First Floor

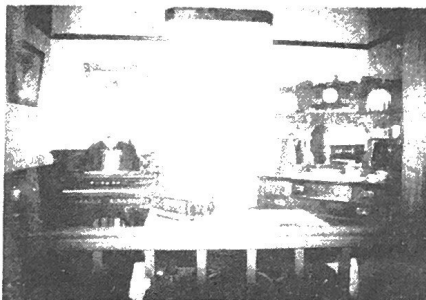
Main floor exhibits depict the history of the Southern Cariboo, the lives of early settlers, and Ashcroft's role as a supply centre for the Cariboo. Replicas of some of the early shops seem to bring the town to life and allow visitors to stroll down the main street, Railway Avenue, at the turn of the century.

Second Floor

On the second floor the history of the farming and ranching communities of Hat Creek Valley has been recreated by following the stories of several of the pioneer families in the area. Included as part of the display is a replica of a coal mine circa 1860, as well as slide presentations.



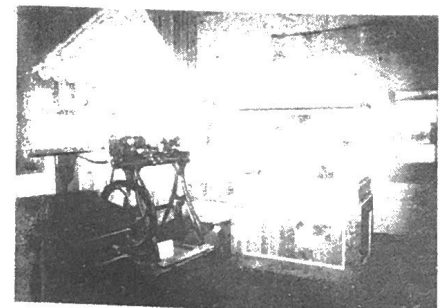
Old Ashcroft Journal Office.



The Parlour



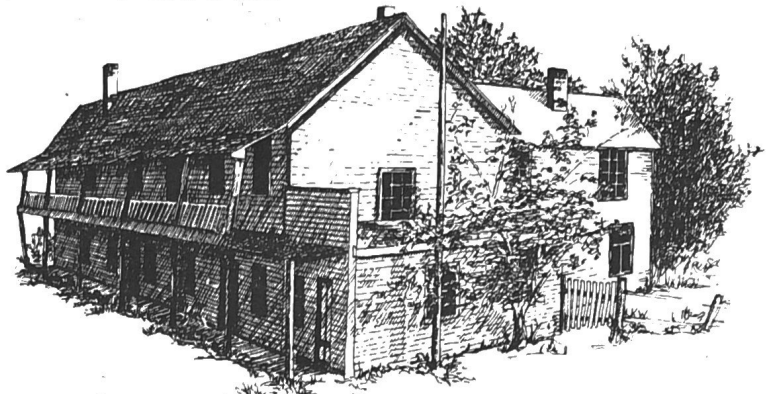
Front windows of Harvey Bailey Store.



Display of early carpentry work.



The Hat Creek B.X. Barn was one of many used by the stagecoach line along the Cariboo Wagon Road. Visitors will be able to watch its restoration in the summer of 1987.



Hat Creek House - A guide at the Hat Creek Ranch site will provide information for visitors about the history of the ranch and the roadhouse which was started in 1860.

THE PINES

Pines are among the oldest trees known to mankind. The Ponderosa or Western Yellow Pines with needles up to 9 inches long are characteristic of the dry benches and slopes of the Thompson River Valley may grow to 90 feet high with trunks more than 2 feet thick. Regulating their numbers by the amount of moisture in the ground, they assume a solitary dignity in spacing themselves often 60 feet apart.

*...Wind of the East, Wind of the West, wandering to and fro,
Chant your songs in our topmost boughs, that the sons of men
may know
The peerless pine was the first to come, and the pine will be
last to go!*

*We pillar the halls of perfumed gloom; we plume where the
eagles soar;
The North-wind swoops from the brooding Pole, and our ancients
crash and roar;
But where one falls from the crumbling walls shoots up a hardy
score.*

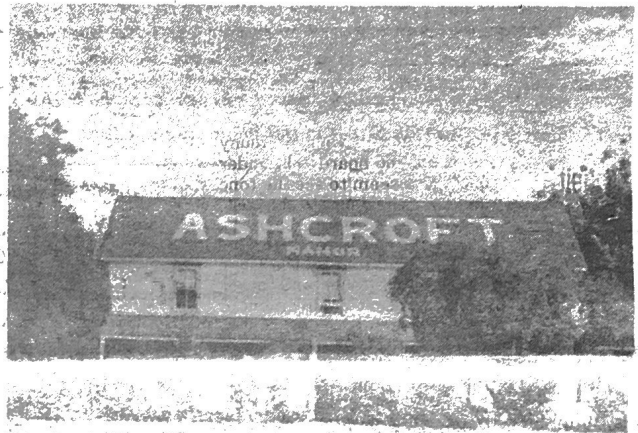
*...Gain to the verge of the hog-back ridge where the vision ranges
free:
Pines and pines and the shadow of pines as far as the eye can see;
A steadfast legion of stalwart knights in dominant empery.*

*Sun, moon and stars give answer; shall we not staunchly stand,
Even as now, forever, wards of the wilder strand,
Sentinels of the stillness, lords of the last, lone land!*

from "The Pines" by Robert Service



ASHCROFT MANOR



Though the Ashcroft Manor was established more than two decades before Ashcroft was born, its history and that of its namesake are interwoven.

When two young Englishmen, the Cornwall brothers, Clement Francis, 26 and Henry Pennant, 24, emigrated to British Columbia in June 1862, they had dreams of becoming large landowners and ranchers. In this they succeeded and more, eventually owning over six thousand acres of land and, through public and community service, extending their influence over a large part of the province.

The Cornwalls had the advantages of wealth, family connections and higher education - both Cambridge graduates, Clement going on into law - but as well they had as personal traits initiative, confidence and a willingness to work in any manner required to achieve their goal.

Their choice of land for pre-emption of adjoining 160 acre tracts was propitious for the Cariboo Wagon Road would pass right through it. Aided by money to hire help and buy supplies the accomplishments of the first few years of their venture were nothing short of prodigious. By the end of the first summer they had cleared land, planted a garden, built fences, bought some livestock for which they built a barn and a corral, and harvested and stacked wild hay for feed. The end of October saw the completion of a comfortable dwelling with separate living room and fireplace, considered very civilized by travellers who stopped by.

In spring, whip-sawn lumber was brought in to build a water wheel which would power a sawmill on order, and to build their roadhouse. 'Ashcroft House' opened its doors to the public and soon became one of the Interior's most popular stopping places. The original building was 20' x 40' with two rooms, a kitchen and an attic. A new room was added the next year and in subsequent years several more additions transformed the modest building into the graceful old structure it is today (as pictured on the last page).

By 1868 the Cornwalls had established themselves as two of the area's leading ranchers and the Manor had become a small flourishing community in itself. Their diversified services to the surrounding area included a post office and the first courthouse, established in 1866 and 1867 respectively, a grist mill, the second in the mainland, which eliminated the cost of freighting for customers and a threshing machine for the extensive crops being grown.

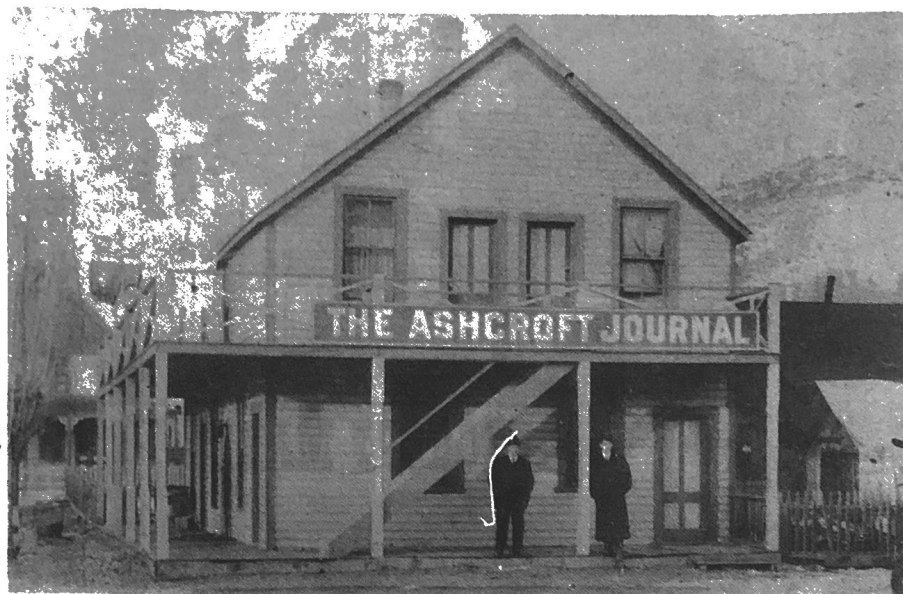
With the roadhouse and ranch established the brothers could turn their attention to the gentlemanly sports they loved. For many years they and their friends rode to the hounds, chasing a coyote instead of a fox. The spring and fall meets at their own racetrack attracted enthusiasts from all over the colony and fostered an interest in horse breeding. Ashcroft perpetuated the racing tradition, which gradually evolved into the present day stampee.

Clement Cornwall's public service career was a long and impressive one from his appointment as a Justice of Peace, in 1864, as a Senator from 1871 to 1881 when he became Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia for 6 years and a final appointment as Judge of the County Court of Cariboo in 1889 until his resignation in 1906.

Henry Cornwall managed the estate and served as the first Indian Agent in the area.

The Cornwall brothers who would be "Lords of the manor" left a distinguished mark on the early history of B.C.

The Ashcroft Journal



The Journal building faced Brink Street in this photo taken in 1912, the year it was bought by R.D. Cumming.

graduated to a Monoline typesetter run by a one-cylinder gas engine and later a linotype. By 1899 mining operations had slowed considerably and in that year the Mining Journal was renamed The Ashcroft Journal, now more people-oriented. This was one of a handful of the earliest weeklies in British Columbia.

The Cumming Family

When R.D. Cumming sold his general store and bought the Ashcroft Journal in 1912 he set a precedent by establishing the operation of a weekly newspaper run within one family through three generations. At the completion of 66 continuous years as such the paper was sold to Cariboo Press in 1978.

Over the years the Ashcroft Journal served a large district, including points in Yale, Lillooet, Nicola, Williams Lake and Cariboo. It printed the births, marriages, children born and deaths of three generations of families.

Back When...

Llew Sr., R.D.'s second son, reminisced about the family's early newspapering days when the staff was very small but the pace was slower and the times perhaps a bit gentler.

"In a weekly newspaper you had to be editor, complaint department and everything else. You got to be an all-around man. You have to know how to set type,....go out and get news, not to mention you have to search for advertising and if the phone rings you have to know exactly what to say.... We don't put any screeching headlines in, we don't put in anything that sounds scary or anything." And of personal write ups he says, "It's just so and so here and there, where the parties were and little things like that.... (Every man and woman in a town this size is a potential customer)... You have to be friends with everybody you know and it is the best way in many things."

...And Now

As times have changed, the Journal has kept pace, increasing in size many times, enlarging the staff and modifying its style and outlook to meet the needs of its readers in small surrounding communities, now of necessity looking outward toward a world community.

One thing that hasn't changed is where the paper comes from -- the weekly 'rag' is still publishing from the same building it did going on 90 years now, and likely will for awhile yet.

A tradition begun in 1895 with forwarding of Vol. 1, No. 1 to the B.C. Provincial Archives has resulted in a valuable historical record for the province. The papers having been microfilmed, the original bound copies of 80 years of the Ashcroft Journal are now carefully preserved in the Archives of the Ashcroft Museum -- a legacy for historians and all who care about our history.



Robert Dalziel Cumming - taken in 1947 at age 76.

Doc Reynolds Started It

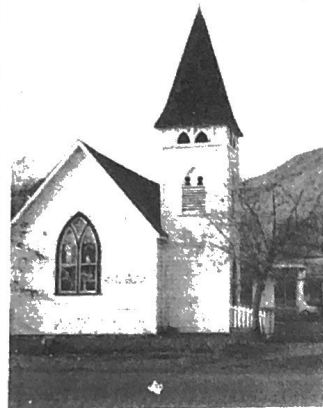
The British Columbia Mining Journal, which later became the Ashcroft Journal, was established in Ashcroft in 1895 by a many-talented and canny scribe, Dr. Frank Stewart Reynolds from Wisconsin. Throughout his extensive career he was a teacher, physician, mining manager and owner/editor of several weekly and daily newspapers -- and besides that he was no mean poker-player, famous for same from 'Alaska to the Mexican Panhandle'.

During the first few years of its publication under Dr. Reynolds, the B.C. Mining Journal was highly regarded as a reliable source of information on mining in the Cariboo and other B.C. districts. Along with that weighty subject a reader was apt to find articles on such diverse subjects as the death of General Gordon in Khartoum, the amount of gold arriving on the down-stage, the latest from San Francisco, a sharp-edged criticism on the province's road building, a look into the background of 'Jack the Ripper' or a description of the State Ball in Buckingham Palace -- and often bits of humor tucked in here and there.

The Early Years

Between 1895 and 1912 the paper had several editors, four of whom were also owners, and its offices had been moved from temporary quarters to its present site built in 1897. From its beginnings, using man-power and hand set type it

STILL SERVING



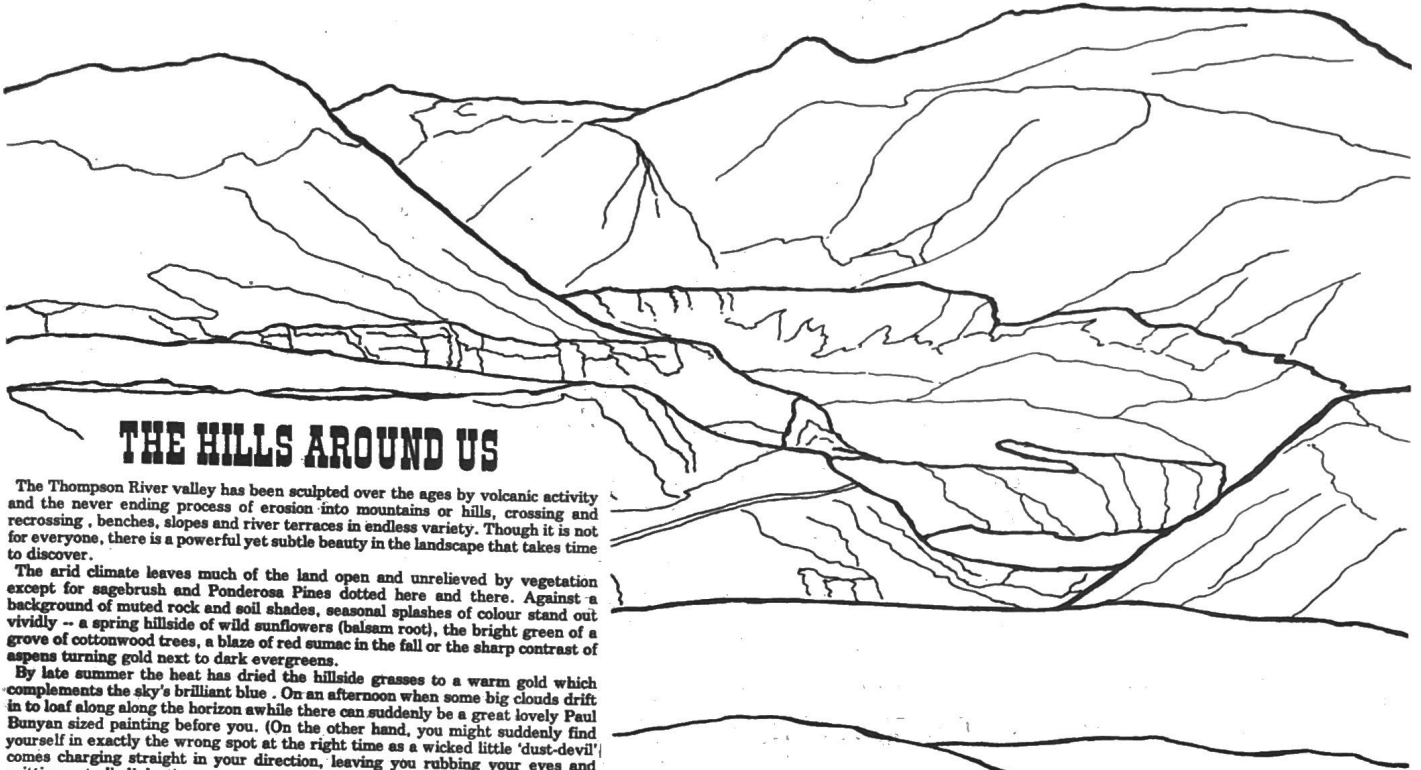
The Zion United Church built in 1892 was originally Presbyterian. When the Methodists united with the Presbyterians in 1925 they brought their own church with them and it became the Sunday School Hall, used for many years until replaced.

The Church is still in use and though the interior has been renovated the original oil lamps remain and are lit once a year for the traditional and beautiful candlelight ceremony.

St. Albans Anglican Church - built in 1891 and still in use. A large stained glass window installed in 1981 accentuates the beauty and dignity of this fine old church.



THE LAND



THE HILLS AROUND US

The Thompson River valley has been sculpted over the ages by volcanic activity and the never ending process of erosion into mountains or hills, crossing and recrossing, benches, slopes and river terraces in endless variety. Though it is not for everyone, there is a powerful yet subtle beauty in the landscape that takes time to discover.

The arid climate leaves much of the land open and unrelieved by vegetation except for sagebrush and Ponderosa Pines dotted here and there. Against a background of muted rock and soil shades, seasonal splashes of colour stand out vividly -- a spring hillside of wild sunflowers (balsam root), the bright green of a grove of cottonwood trees, a blaze of red sumac in the fall or the sharp contrast of aspens turning gold next to dark evergreens.

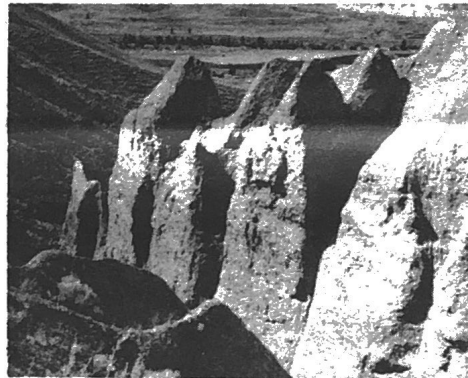
By late summer the heat has dried the hillside grasses to a warm gold which complements the sky's brilliant blue. On an afternoon when some big clouds drift in to loaf along the horizon awhile there can suddenly be a great lovely Paul Bunyan sized painting before you. (On the other hand, you might suddenly find yourself in exactly the wrong spot at the right time as a wicked little 'dust-devil' comes charging straight in your direction, leaving you rubbing your eyes and spitting out alkali dust).

Sunset on the hills is a leisurely thing to watch. As the shadows reach deeper into the gullies they are constantly changing into different no-name colours - too soft to be purple, too warm to be grey, perhaps a will-o-the-wisp blue - the choice is in the eye of the beholder.

After a rain, when a breeze comes scudding down from the freshly washed faces of the hills it carries the wild clean smell of blended pine, juniper and sagebrush - there is no other like it.

There is the vastness of the land - from many vantage points one can look for miles upon endless miles of carved and contoured hills, ending only in distance blue - and there is a sense of timelessness that can make one feel so very small, yet somehow at the same time glad to be a part of it all.

Most people believe that the terraces one sees on the steep grazing hills were made by cattle. Geologists agree, however, that the phenomenon is due to a natural process called 'clumping' or soil creep and grazing animals simply follow the resulting natural furrows and grooves of the land.



"Swept By The Winds of Time"

THE CATTLE

This is ranch country, but where are the herds of cattle? A summer visitor might not be as disappointed if he knows there's a good reason for their absence.

Calves are born for the most part in February and March, and in comparison to early days, the loss is much smaller because of the protective maternity area for the cows at the home base, and monitoring to spot birthing difficulties.

When most of the calves are about six weeks old, around mid-May, they must undergo the miseries of branding and other operations; but soon the warmth of early summer and the greening of the bunch grass signal the beginning of a whole new way of life -- probably the best few months of their lives.

Mothers and offspring and other selected animals are herded up to higher benches to graze for the summer. It's cool up there with trees dotted here and there, a spring, a stream or a lake for water and the richness of bunch grass covering the ridged slopes of the hills.

Of an afternoon, while the calves are still very young, one could spot a small herd close by a willow grove or a little stand of poplar, with two or three cows lying down and a dozen or more calves sleeping or playing games, which look suspiciously like 'tag' and 'follow the leader.' The rest of the cows can be seen grazing anywhere up to a half mile away, and every so often one drifts closer to replace a cow among the calves -- and so it goes through the afternoon. An observer might swear this is a 'babysitting' operation, but these are just 'dumb' animals, and anyway babysitting was invented by humankind -- wasn't it?

About sundown many animals gather and a noisy little roundup of sorts takes place. The air is filled

with anxious calls, little blats, and flying bodies as rightful ownership is re-established. Each cow knows her own calf, but 'little blat' isn't quite so discerning, and often when he comes charging over, filled with anticipation of a hot snack, he may be greeted instead with a swift punt that sends him flying. Eventually everything gets sorted out and quiet settles over the herd as the adults prepare to lie down and begin the serious work of the day -- rumination -- until a new day begins.

When summer's over and it's getting cold, the cattle are brought down to Crown permit grazing areas or maybe to finish off a hayfield from mid-October to mid-November into December until the snow gets too deep. At this time all the sorting and shipping, vaccinations and other cow-calf operations are performed, and for the calves the total tragedy of being weaned. The final move is to the winter feeding area.

For the ranchers, freed of the never-ending grind of irrigation, and having finished off the second or third haycrop (depending on the altitude) there's a short breather, until the everyday task of feeding begins -- through winter until spring when the cycle begins again. As to the cattle, it's a long stretch of inactivity -- but the grub's good and the service rates at least a 9 (except maybe on New Year's Day).

This is the time a traveller will see many cattle as he passes ranches -- but it's cold, there's snow, and somehow it's not like seeing them grazing on the hills.

Ranching -- a good way of life, albeit one of hard work -- lots of it. If you asked someone in the beef business if he'd trade it for another, he'd likely say not as long as he can make a go of it financially. There's the freedom of it -- and maybe that closeness with the land and the real things.



Brand New

A SPECIAL KIND OF GOLD: Not in the hills but on them

Like the rich prairie wool that fattened the buffalo, bunch grass once covered much of the southern interior plateau in great abundance up to 2000 feet above sea level. Early ranchers saw the potential of this highly nutritious grass for their cattle. Considered one of the most valuable of pasture grasses, bunch grass never stops growing and though the outside may look withered and dead, the heart is still green even in winter. The Cornwall brothers, whose ranch served as an unofficial agricultural experimental station in the early days, warned of the dangers of overgrazing, but were not heeded. When eaten too closely and not allowed to seed itself, the bunch grass dies and sagebrush takes its place. A large part of the area had been overgrazed by 1890.

ASHCROFT

ACCOMMODATION

ASHCROFT RIVER INN HOTEL
(Full accommodation, dining and licensed premises)
(604) 453-9124

SUNDANCE GUEST RANCH
Located 5 miles south of Ashcroft on Highland Valley Road (Reservations required.)
(604) 453-2554

SHOPS AND SERVICES

Ashcroft is the service centre for the area offering full daytime shopping facilities. They include food stores (Safety Mart, Lucky Dollar & One Easy Stop), a delicatessen (Lucky Dollar Store), men's and ladies wear shops (Jay Ray Men's Wear, Ashcroft Toggery and Fields), hardware stores (Murray Kane - Irly Bird, Home Hardware and Macleods), a drug store and the Ashcroft Bakery.

DINING

Places to relax and enjoy good food include Zee's Steak and Pizza House, the River Inn dining room, Copper Courts Racquet & Leisure Centre and the popular Ashcroft Manor Tea-house (located 3 miles south-west of town). There are also 2 coffee shops downtown: The Central Cafe and the Ashcroft Coffee House and Arcade.



Ashcroft Manor is as popular a stopping place as it was in the 1860's. It now houses arts, crafts and roadhouse collectables. Visitors may walk through and capture the atmosphere of earlier days.

Interesting Places to Visit

ASHCROFT MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

(4th and Brink Streets - (604) 453-9232)

Presents Ashcroft as it was at the turn of the century -- with a stroll down the main street. Open from 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. daily [summer months only]. Closed statutory holidays.

CARIBOO JADE SHOPPE

(1093 Todd Road, Cache Creek
(604) 457-9566)

"A unique gift shoppe famous throughout the world for its excellent variety of articles made with genuine semi-precious stones found all over the world." The Cariboo Jade Shoppe invites you to view the in-store stone cutting facilities where rough B.C. Jade is turned into finished quality stones and mounted on unique sterling silver, gold filled and karat findings. Open 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. throughout the summer season.

SAGEBRUSH GALLERY

Located on Trans Canada Hwy No. 1



in the
ASHCROFT MANOR
featuring local artists

Operated By:
Phyllis Linklater & Jo Petty

CACHE CREEK

Cache Creek is located a short 6 miles from Ashcroft at the junction of the Trans Canada Highway and Highway 97.

ACCOMMODATION

Robbie's Motel	(604) 457-6221
Castle Inn Motel	(604) 457-6547
Desert Motel	(604) 457-6226
Sandman Inn	(604) 457-6284
Slumber Lodge	(604) 457-6216
Nugget Road Motel	(604) 457-9123
Tumbleweed Motel	(604) 457-6522
Cache Creek Travelodge	(604) 457-6224
Sage Hills Motel	(604) 457-6451
Bonaparte Motel	(604) 457-9693

Oasis Hotel (604) 457-6232

CAMPGROUNDS

- Cache Creek Campgrounds (604) 457-6414
(2 miles north of Cache Creek on Highway 97)
- Brookside Campsite (604) 457-6633
(Just east of Cache Creek on Trans Canada Hwy)

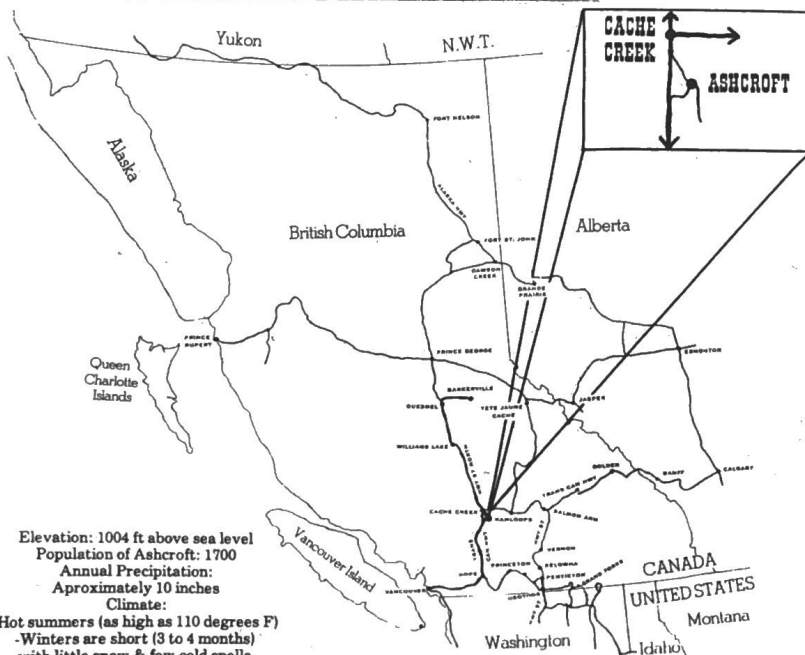
RESTAURANTS

- Voyageur Restaurant
- Wander Inn Restaurant
- North End Shell Restaurant
- Slumber Lodge Restaurant
- Husky House Restaurant
- Hungry Herbies
- Oasis Hotel
- Wayfare Restaurant
- Mr. Mikes
- Marj's Cafe

There is also Hofer's delicatessen in the Castle Inn Motel which has many fine European meats and cheeses. The Dairy Queen and Christie's Ice Cream Parlour have some interesting dessert treats as well as fast food.

RECREATION IN THE AREA

- Semlin Valley Golf Course [9 hole]. East of Cache Creek.
- Copper Courts Racquet & Leisure Centre [Ashcroft]
- Cache Creek Olympic size swimming pool
- Fishing in various local lakes
- River rafting [on the Thompson and Fraser Rivers]
- Nl'akapxm Eagle Motorplex west of Ashcroft on the Trans Canada Hwy. Drag racing, mud bogs, hill climbs and sandrags throughout the summer.
- Ashcroft & District Stampede [May 8, 9 & 10, 1987]
- B.X. Daze [held in August in Cache Creek]



Elevation: 1004 ft above sea level
Population of Ashcroft: 1700
Annual Precipitation:
Approximately 10 inches
Climate:

- Hot summers (as high as 110 degrees F)
- Winters are short (3 to 4 months) with little snow & few cold spells

For more information on the Ashcroft-Cache Creek areas, please send to:

The Village of Ashcroft
Box 129,
Ashcroft, British Columbia,
Canada
VOK 1A0

Please list specific information required on a separate sheet.

Return Address:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Prov. or State _____

Postal or Zip Code _____