

Shuswap History well preserved

A *Shuswap Passion* column for the Shuswap Market News

By Jim Cooperman

When I began to study local history in the mid-1980s, there were still a few descendants of the original settlers living here to interview. Because B.C. is a relatively young province, its settlement history can be studied more readily than in the east, where settlement began 400 years ago. Here in the Shuswap, we are fortunate to have many groups working hard to preserve our history through museums, books, journals, heritage events and the preservation of original buildings.

There are local history museums located in every large Shuswap community that also serve as centres for local heritage groups. In Cherryville are some of the oldest log structures in our region, a few of which are still lived in. A new log museum is a popular stop for tourists who also enjoy hiking along the gold rush trails. And recently, the Cherryville and Area Historical Society produced a new and expanded history of the area entitled, "A Century of Life in Cherryville, 1860-1960."

In Enderby where there are many fine heritage homes and buildings, the museum which is adjacent to the City Hall includes a number of displays about this region's forest industry legacy. And thanks to Bob and Joan Cowan, Enderby has a comprehensive and concise illustrated history book.

An original one room school houses the Sicamous museum, which celebrates its railway history including displays about both of the fine old CPR hotels that were situated on the lake. There are also two illustrated histories of the Eagle Valley and Sicamous with collections of stories and old photos, however both volumes are long out of print and copies are difficult to find.

The North Shuswap has a small museum, T & L Reflections, located in an old double log cabin that was moved to the yard in front of the home of Loretta Greenough, president of the North Shuswap Historical Society. Heritage is also preserved in the North Shuswap through the Society's journal, *Shuswap Chronicles*, published since 1988. All eight volumes, which include essays, family histories, diary excerpts and old photos, are available in many local book stores.

The Lumby Museum includes a large outdoor display building for both agricultural and forestry machinery. In the Falkland museum, many of the displays focus on the town's gypsum mine that is still in operation directly above the community.

Thanks to the pioneer Haney family, community donations and many volunteers, Salmon Arm not only has a museum but also has an entire heritage village. This park includes many old buildings that have been moved to the farm along with antique farm equipment, picnic sites and nature trails. Microfilms of the 101-year old Salmon Arm Observer newspaper are available to view at the museum's archives and make interesting reading.

Copies of Ernest Doe's history of Salmon Arm are hard to find outside of the library and museum and this narrative is limited in scope. While a comprehensive history of the community has yet to be written, the Salmon Arm Branch of the Okanagan Historical Society has published three collections of essays and photos, including the most recent one, *Photographic Memory*. This enthralling publication includes portions of the George Mercer Dawson diaries written during two of his explorations here in 1877 and 1894 and many family histories that provide insight into what life was like for these Shuswap pioneers.

One hundred years ago, Adams River Lumber Company built the Chase townsite adjacent to its sawmill built on land purchased from Whitfield Chase's son Marcus. The community and the local museum have many events planned to celebrate its centennial this year, beginning with a special historical edition of the *Chase Foundation* magazine that hits the stands on May 5th and a Canadian Legion parade on May 10th. An entire ten days of festivities begins on August 1st, and will include art walks, historical tours, beer gardens and entertainment. There will also be a fishing derby, a quilt show, a celebrity golf game, and another parade (see www.chasecentennial.com).

Chase also has a fascinating history written by Joyce Dunn that is full of details about Whitfield Chase, a former Yankee who was related to the founders of the Chase Manhattan Bank. One of my favourite quotes from the book is from a Whitfield's diary passage written in 1857 during a return to the U.S. that was prompted by his dislike of English snobbery. Whitfield decided to return to Canada in part because too many Americans frequented the "rum mill," gambled and indulged in "dissipation and rioting." Given more recent cases of American dissidents moving to Canada, this is but another example of history repeating itself.