RESHAPING THE LAND

AN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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Abstract

Perceptions often dictate the understanding, definition and interaction that people have with the real world. Northern British Columbia was and still is, perceived by Canadians as a frontier region that offered limitless opportunity to those willing to come north. These opportunities were more often than not found within the natural environment. Using Prince George, British Columbia as a case study, this thesis seeks to understand how people interacted with the natural environment up to 1915. Evidence suggests that during the early settlement period of Prince George, the dominant perception was that the natural environment was a storehouse of natural resources available for human use. What resulted from this human perception were changes in the land.

I began with an examination of how Native people viewed and interacted with the environment and furthermore how their experiences differed from that of European settlers. Second, was an investigation of what early non-Native explorers wrote about when travelling to Prince George. Third, an examination of town boosters was undertaken to expose what aspects of nature they promoted in attempts to lure people to the central interior. Furthermore, boosters' success or lack thereof was measured. Modes of transportation in Prince George during the study period were also considered as it was apparent that people needed to access the resources before extraction could occur. In this sense, transportation became a means to an end. Finally, this thesis includes an exploration of the forest industry. Settlers initially viewed forests as a hindrance to settlement, but soon realized that forest harvesting could lead to profits, resulting in massive cutting. In sum, up to 1915 the human-environment relationship was based on resource extraction, which resulted in unprecedented changes in the land.

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Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1

Environmental History

The environmental history of Prince George, British Columbia is based on a record of natural resource exploitation that has evolved over the past two centuries. As with other northern resource communities, the landscape of the Prince George area has gone through massive changes. Environmental history reconsiders economies, politics, values and social events to understand why such changes in the land occurred. This thesis examines Prince George up to the outbreak of World War I, suggesting that the dominant society's perceptions of the environment often dictated how that society interacted with the environment.

Various scholars describe the human-environment relationship. In his book The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1980, Arthur McEvoy observed that human interaction with the environment was driven by "the idea that human life had no ecological nature at all. The earth was a store of resources to be used for the satisfaction of human wants."[1] That is, even though the California fisheries economy was witnessing the depletion fish stocks, it continued to operate. It seemed that economic progress and stability determined actions, and the extraction of fish by humans continued. William Cronon's Changes in the Land, described how settlers and natives interacted with New England's environment. He concluded that humans often defined the environment in terms of extractable commodities for human use.[2] In "Wilderness and Culture" John Wadland claimed that Canadians appreciated nature, but only insofar as it enhanced human wants. He stated that they"pick off bits and pieces of the whole, reconstructing them as artifacts to serve...[them]."[3] Wadland asserted that

Canadians cherished their wilderness areas, particularly those areas that were deemed to be useful for camping, skiing and hiking, essentially, any activity that enhanced the human experience.

George Altmeyer's article "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914" also presented the notion that Canadians appreciated their environment. He felt that the growth of Canadian cities in the early twentieth century led to crowded conditions, crime, pollution and monotonous lifestyles for citizens. Many city residents consequently looked to nature as a "Benevolent Mother capable of soothing city worn nerves and restoring health."[4] This led to a "back to nature" movement throughout the country. Canada's back to nature movement was similar to that of America's in that it sought to calm the soul from the hardships of city life. As a result, in Canada, provincial parks were created, cottages were frequented by city dwellers on weekends, and summer camping and nature walks became common activities.[5]

However, during the early twentieth century, residents of Prince George did not experience this back to nature movement that was sweeping throughout the rest of North America. Rather, residents of Prince George looked to nature solely in economic terms. The resources available in British Columbia's interior were viewed to be limitless, therefore people who lived there were concerned with making a living from nature, not with escaping the ills of city life. Hence, in Prince George, appreciation of nature existed on the basis that it could be controlled and dominated by humans to acquire resource commodities.

The purpose of this thesis is to test the ideas presented above in a local setting, and to examine how humans perceived the natural environment. The focus of this thesis is Prince George, British Columbia up to and including the settlement period (circa.1915). Evidence suggests that during the specified study period, human perceptions defined the natural environment

as natural resources, resources that should be controlled and extracted by humans. These human centred attitudes guided actions, leading to a reshaping of the land.

At the macro level this study accomplishes a number of tasks. First, it challenges the traditional notion that history is concerned only with politics, economies, or individuals, and it considers the role of the natural environment into historical thought. Second, by introducing nature to the historical record, environmental history joins class, race and gender history, all of which were traditionally placed on the periphery of study by historians. Since it strives to illustrate the history of land change, familiar events and words like "railroads", "The Hudson's Bay Company", "nature", "wilderness", "trees" and "resources" are approached with new lenses, provoking analysis of why nature has changed over time.

There is utility in this study. Information recorded here could be referenced in future conservation and/or resource management practices. Prior to the formation of regulations and decisions involving natural resources, decision makers should have a firm understanding of what has occurred in the past, why new regulations are being made, and for whom. This exercise will reveal the connection between perceptions of nature and how human actions consciously and inadvertently affected the environment.

This study is also useful at the micro level. Prince George represents a northern town that emerged due to its geographic location near the rivers and its resource rich surrounding. Consequently, the environmental history of Prince George can serve as a model for similar environmental histories of other northern resource centres.

At this point it is important to define some terms that will be used frequently in this thesis. An understanding of "perceptions" is crucial to this study. Schiff's article "Hazard Adjustment, Locus of Control, and Sensation Seeking Some Null Findings" suggests that a social definition

of perceptions must be utilized when considering nature. Accordingly, "perceptions" are the impression one has of a social stimulus or set of stimuli. Schiff claims that "impression is modified by the perceiver's past experiences, his previous experiences with the same or similar stimuli and the individual's state at the moment he is viewing the stimulus of interest."[6] This definitions raise two issues. First, human perceptions are different for various cultures, and within particular groups or organizations in community. In Prince George, the perceptions of Native women, Asians, children, non-Native women, Mennonites or any other minority group undoubtably are varied. The second problem is that perceptions do not always dictate corresponding behaviour.

Within this study the perceptions that will be considered are those of the dominant society. A vast majority of the evidence presented here originated in newspapers, novels, real estate advertisements, and government policies. Therefore, the literate society's perceptions of the natural environment drive this thesis. Geographer Bruce Mitchell points out that multiple perceptions simultaneously occur in a society, and that a hierarchy of views should be acknowledged. But he concludes that a dominant perception overrides other existing perceptions. In fact, the presence of a hierarchy results in the more dominant one directing actions, only if "it is not dominated by a more pervasive" perception.[7] Therefore, it is the more predominant attitudes that are dealt with in this study. Yet perceptions do not always lead to behaviour. Hence, each chapter describes human perceptions and then concludes by outlining related land changes that actually occurred. It is certain that the land has changed or been reshaped by humans in Prince George. Working backwards then, this thesis identifies change, then associates key variables or attitudes that contributed to such changes. That is, this thesis concentrates on human perceptions

and actions. This approach addresses uncertainties of whether or not perceptions directed behaviour.

Ecofeminist Carol Merchant claims that the "environment" is an "aggregate of external conditions." Nature is the physical universe, all its features, processes and organisms, excluding humans and their cultural and social institutions.[8] Therefore, the "natural environment" is all non human elements, this includes flora, fauna, water, soils, landforms, sounds and smells.

The perception that the natural environment can be defined chiefly in terms of natural resources, raises the important question of what constitutes resources. Erich Zimmermann's often cited work Introduction to World Resources provides a concise explanation of what resources are. He asserts that the natural environment is not made up only of resources. In fact, components of the natural environment become resources to serve human wants and needs. Resources are therefore cultural constructs, and only with the presence of humans are they defined as such. Prior to such presence, nature remains a combination of 'neutral stuff.'[9] Finally, "changes in the land" is described as "land shaping", "remoulding", "new landscapes" and "altering". In this case, these words indicate that the natural environment has been modified from its pre-human state, creating new "landscapes", "smellscapes", and "soundscapes."

Four aspects of Prince George's past help to reconstruct human interactions with the environment. The following chapter describes the natural environment of Prince George and region, including a chronological history of the region's geomorphology and an assessment of the local flora and fauna. This illustrates that the natural environment under went natural changes and recognizes that nature is not static and in fact has its own processes. Moreover, the description of the natural setting exposes those elements in the natural environment that humans encountered and subsequently defined as resources.

Chapter three examines Prince George during three distinct phases of human occupation, beginning with the Native group that resided in and around Prince George, exposing their perception of and interaction with the natural environment. Next comes a consideration of early explorers attitudes as they passed through the study area. The final phase of Chapter Three deals with perceptions of head traders at Forts. It examines the way in which the establishment of Fort George Fur Trading Post, (the first European settlement) led to new landscapes.

Chapter Four, "Boosterism and the Environment: Perceptions of a Northern Town", deals with the way in which Prince George was promoted at both the local and national level, specifically, the degree in which the natural environment was described in terms of natural resources available to potential investors and settlers. Chapter Four concludes with an account of the unparalleled change that the land went through during the settlement period.

Chapter Five, "Landscape in Motion", further supports the notion that the environment was made up of resources available for human use. This chapter describes the important role of modes of transportation in acquiring natural resources. Chief among these were wagons, sternwheelers, and trains, three innovations that reshaped, redefined and moved the land.

Human perceptions also defined the forests as resources, and this is the topic of Chapter Six. Evidence suggests that government policies promoted forest extraction and this led to similar attitudes at the local level, resulting in further changes in the land. The concluding chapter of this thesis draws upon all of the evidence provided, reaffirming that in Prince George, during the early settlement period, perceptions of the natural environment altered it substantially.

To complete this study, an array of literature written before and after 1915 was consulted. These sources provided an understanding of what people were concerned with. The utility of this approach was the fact that the natural environment was referenced many times within each

document, providing an idea of social perceptions and attitudes with respect to nature. These documents also described Prince George geographically and visually, producing an image of how the land changed over time. Among these sources were town and regional promotional literature, travel books, government policies, The Fort George Tribune, Fort George Herald, Prince George Post, real estate advertisements, brochures, diaries, journals and taped interviews on record at the Prince George Public Library. Archaeological and anthropological data helped piece together the attitudes and practices of Native groups. Of equal importance was the contribution of surveyors and photographers who left an excellent visual record of the study area. All of these sources assisted in describing new landscapes that were formed by humans in Prince George.

Chapter 1-Endnotes

1.Arthur McEvoy, The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 252.

2.William Cronon, Changes in the Land (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 21.

3.John Wadland, "Wilderness and Culture"in Consuming Canada: Readings in Environmental History Gaffield and Gaffield ed. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 13.

4.George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914" in Consuming Canada: Readings in Environmental History Gaffield and Gaffield ed. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 98.

5.Ibid.; See also Jasen, Patricia Wild Things Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario 1790-1914 for more information of appreciation of nature. Her study deals particularly with tourism, romantic notion of nature and the establishment of parks.

6. Bruce Mitchell, Geography and Resource Analysis (Essex, England: Longman Scientific and Technical, 1979), 102.

7. Ibid., 103.

8. Carol Merchant, The Death of Nature (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), appendix viii.

9.Erich Zimmermann, Introduction to World Resources, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), 21.

Chapter 2

The Natural Setting

"Resources are not, they become"[1]

Prince George is located in the geographical centre of British Columbia, specifically, in the central interior plateau of the province, representing an area of approximately 341,880 square km. The plateau itself is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Rocky Mountains to the east, the Central Interior and Columbia Mountains to the north and south[2] (Figure 1). The study area lay on a horse-shoe shaped section of land, carved out by the Nechako and Fraser Rivers (Figure 2). The glacial formation of two rivers which chiselled this distinctive triangular piece of land illustrates that the natural environment underwent changes and processes autonomously of humans. A description of these natural processes that created the habitats for the various types of flora and fauna to exist is provided. The aim of this chapter is to describe the environmental components in the area that humans would later define as resources.

Glacial History

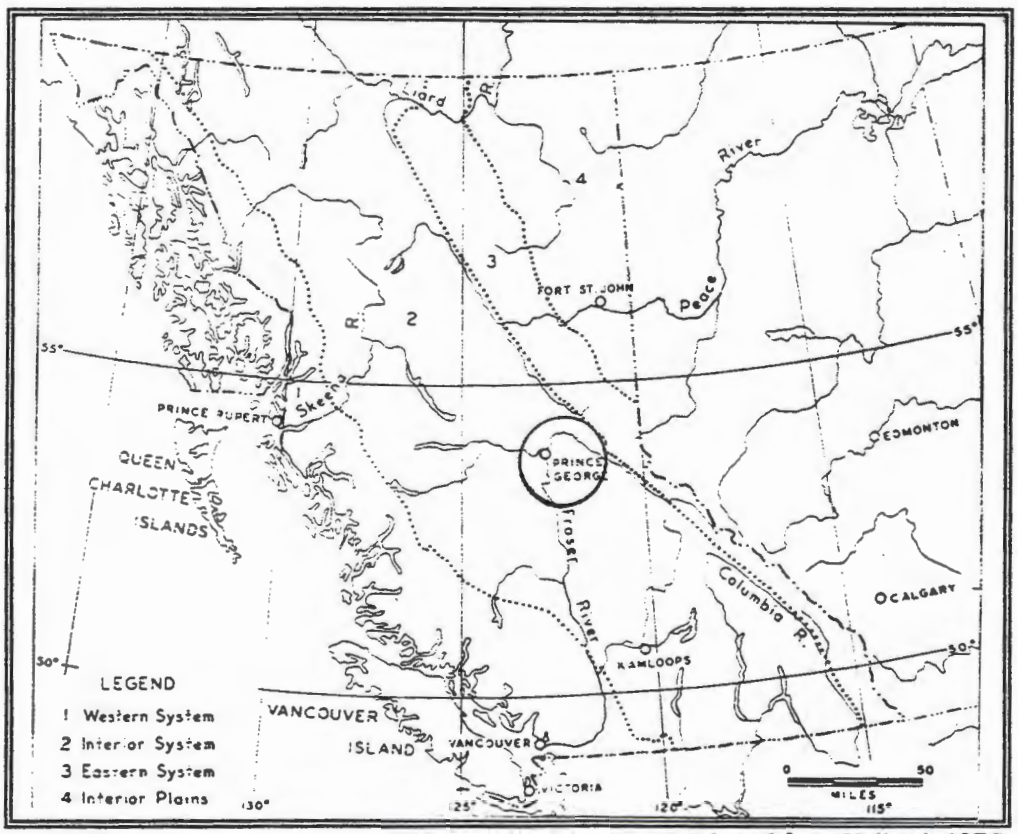
The glacial history of the plateau richly illustrates that the natural environment changed prior to human presence. In the Pleistocene period, the central interior of British Columbia bore a sheet of ice roughly 1700 metres thick. This glacial blanket began to slowly melt about 11,500 years ago, resulting in the readvancement of the lower portions of the glacier.

Deglaciation continued until the temperature was suitable for modern vegetation, close to 10,000 years ago. It was during the readvancement stage that massive sections of ice approximately 10,000 metres thick drifted down the Coast and Cariboo Mountains onto the central interior plateau.[3] Donahue's study claims that the entire Fraser River Valley, from Prince George

to Mission was buried under ice at this time. During the deglaciation process the plateau's landscape acted as a basin holding three glacial lakes. Of these lakes, the two largest were in the Prince George and Vanderhoof basins. Proglacial lake Prince George, which covered the area of this study, drained northward. Estimations describe the Lake as being no more that 72 metres deep, until further melting occurred in the Fraser River Valley, allowing complete drainage to take place.[4] The period of time that these proglacial lakes existed is unknown.

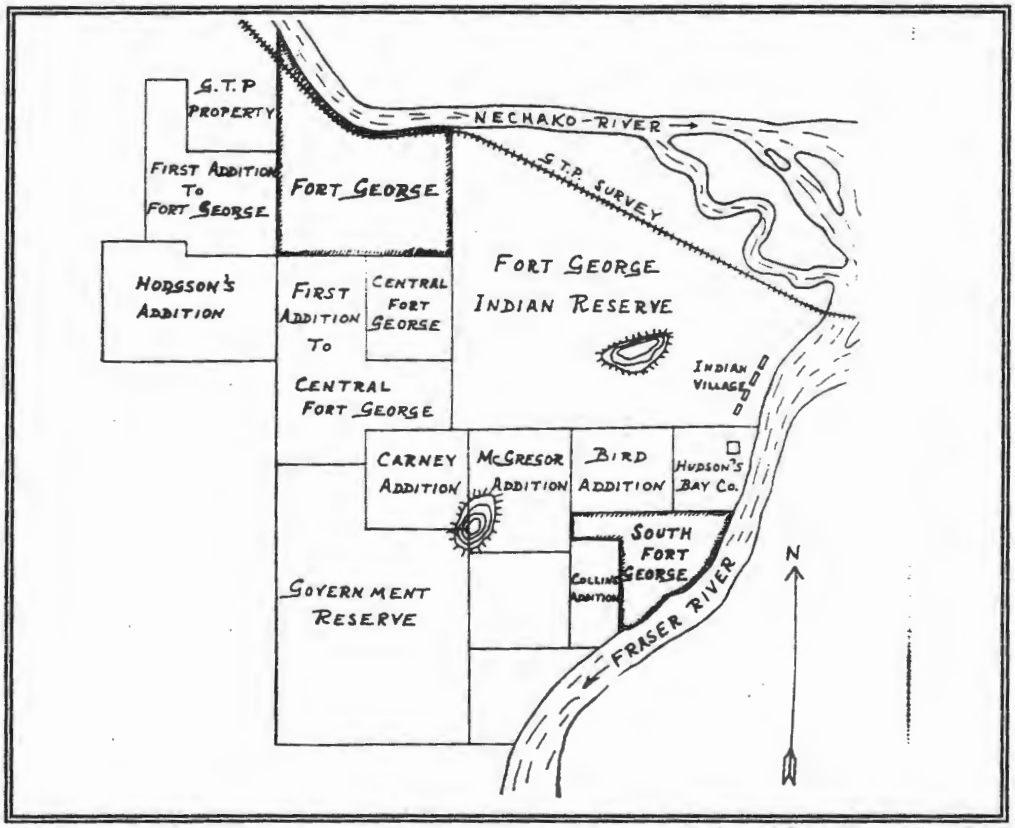
The Nechako Plateau constitutes the most northern subsection of the central interior plateau.[5] It is both moderately undissected, and deeply cut along the Fraser River and its tributaries. The Nechako Plateau is bordered on the north by the Skeena and Omineca Mountains, the south by West Road River, the east by the Fraser Basin, and on the west by the Hazelton Mountains.[6] "The Plateau was occupied by ice, which, in moving across it, marked the surface with thousands of grooves and drumlin like ridges which are parallel to the ice flow." Moreover, after the ice withdrawal the land surface was marked with many kettles which would later form lakes and ponds.[7]

The geomorphology of the Plateau is made up of bedrock that originates from Mesozoic and Palaeozoic sedimentary and volcanic rock. Over time, the erosional process formed the landscape by reducing the original amount of bedrock. This process led to the appearance of gently rounded surfaces and the Quanchus, Fawnie and Nechako mountain ranges. At this point volcanic disruptions released further materials which covered the region.



(adapted from Holland, 1976)

Figure 1: The City of Prince George B.C. located at the juncture of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers.



(adapted from Runnalls, 1946)

Figure 2: The focus of this study is the horseshoe shaped piece of land that extends south west from the river juncture. As this map illustrates humans heavily occupied the area as early as 1909.

Soils

The soils of the study area were created by Late Pleistocene glacial deposits. Within Prince George the soils were grey wooded and grey black belonging to the Northern Woodland soils region. Provincial land surveys determined that most of the soil between Prince George and Smithers is suitable for crop production, an important resource for arriving settlers.[9]

Climate

By 7000 B.C. the region was ice free. A majority of the glacial lakes had reduced in size, establishing current drainage patterns.[10] Donahue's study indicates that previous research concentrating on Holocene fossil pollen in south central British Columbia can be employed as a guide to climatic change in the northern regions. Accordingly, during this ice-free period there existed pine and spruce forests. The existence of these types of flora suggest that the conditions were moist. By 6500 B.C. grass and sporadic sagebrush dominated the terrain. This type of flora thrives in arid climates. In 4700 B.C. the climate was somewhat cooler and moister, which resulted in a high growth of birch, alder and hazel.[11]

Land features also influenced the climatic conditions in the study area. These features included the elevation, latitude, and geographic positioning in relation to mountain systems. During the time period of this study the winters were long and cold, and summers were cool and short. The precipitation in the area was minor, except during the winter months when snow appeared between October and April.[12] There also existed high elevation flat lands prompting the creation and maintenance of cool air.[13] Consequently, the climate of Prince George was characteristic of the central interior, with low rainfall, and extreme seasonal temperatures.[14]

Fraser River

Below the surface of the Nechako Plateau is the Fraser Basin. This basin covers the area from Williams Lake north to McLeod Lake, and from Sinclair Mills west to Fraser Lake. Most of the surface of the Fraser Basin is below 3,000 feet and in some areas portions of bedrock are revealed.[15] The Fraser River merges with the Nechako River at Prince George. The most evident feature of the Fraser is that it dissects the interior plateau from north to south. Lord states that "it is incised in a deep valley of numerous rock canyons and a series of well-developed terraces."[16] "Rising in the Rocky Mountains, it drains an area of 238,000 square kilometres, running first northwest through the wide valleys of the Rocky Mountains Trench to Prince George. Here it turns south, gathering in the waters of the Nechako, the Chilcotin, Quesnel and the Thompson and a host of smaller tributaries as it drives through the bedrock of the Interior Plateau on its way to the Pacific."[17] All of these tributaries are characterized by steep sided canyons, particularly at their mouths. Yet these tributaries are accompanied by relatively low valleys in their northern portions.

Tipper addresses the hypothesis that the Fraser River did not always flow southward. He suggests that the Fraser flowed north releasing its flow into the McGregor-Parsnip river valleys, draining into the Peace River. Moreover, the sedimentary formations that exists in Miocene river gravel, hints that a northward flow may have occurred. The northward flowing Fraser River was interfered with by the ancient Chilcotin River or one of its tributaries.[18] Tipper states that the Fraser River between Soda Creek and the Chilcotin River is relatively young in character, possessing steep valley walls. These valley walls of the Fraser do widen north of Soda Creek. From that point the valley continues to widen up to Prince George, characteristic of a northward flowing body of water. "The Chilcotin River or a tributary thereof apparently worked headward

from the present mouth of Chilcotin River and intersected the northward drainage of the ancestral Fraser River. This capture probably occurred in the late Pliocene and was older than the Miocene-Pliocene plateau lavas and the last major glacial deposits."[19]

Flora

The study area belongs to the Sub-Alpine Forest Zone. The macroclimate of sub-alpine forest zones promoted particular soils, vegetation and nutrient patterns. When humans started to frequent the area they noticed that the plant life was composed primarily of Englemann spruce, white spruce, lodgepole pine, Douglas fir paper birch and aspen. Donahue's study reveals that the swampy or wet regions in the interior were often accompanied by willows, alder, and white spruce.[20] The shrub layers that were present in the dry open areas included western thimbleberry, Rocky Mountain maple, prickly rose, willows and blueberry. Herbs such as wild sarsaparilla, Canadian bunch berry and asters also grew in abundance.[21]

Fauna

There were also numerous animals that would be defined by humans as resources, in and around Prince George. Among these animals were the moose, grizzly bear, elk, beaver, mule deer, hoary marmot, and ground-hog are commonly seen. According to Cowan and Guiguet, mountain caribou were also quite numerous. Preferring the deciduous tree landscape, moose fed upon willows, aspens, red osier and horsetails. It is interesting to note that studies completed by Cowan, Guiguet, and Lamb suggest that during this study period, moose were not as plentiful as they are today. Their migration to Prince George is often attributed to railway tracks, which provided snow trails for moose during the winter. The Beaver living in the region preferred forested areas that were not exposed to flash floods. They consumed aspen and willow that were found within travelling distance of their lodges, two types of flora that were readily available in

Prince George.

Hare resided in somewhat open forested areas, where deciduous vegetation occurred. The Prince George area also possessed a variety of bird species including geese, duck, grouse and grebes. Grizzly bears were usually located in the higher elevated regions near slopes or clearings where a varieties of berries grew. The bears fed on vegetation in the southern regions during the spring months and then moved to berry patches in the summer. Towards the end of the summer bears spent most waking hours trying to catch the numerous salmon that were weaving their way through the rivers and streams.[22]

Salmon in the area included coho, sockeye and kokanee. Other fish present were the trout, sturgeon, whitefish, and sucker. Coho salmon (average weight 8 pounds) spawned in August-September. It is characteristic of coho to remain in fresh water until their second year at which time they migrated to the sea, only to return to their birthplace three years later where they spawned and eventually die. The sockeye began their spawning run in late summer and travelled up to 650 miles north along the Fraser River. The Chinook (average weight 10 to 50 pounds) as the coho, spawned a short distance from the sea. Yet, unlike the coho, chinook spawned in large rivers and tributaries. The chinook matured in their 3rd to 7th year and their run took place in late summer.[23]

At this stage a general descriptive overview of the Prince George indicates certain key elements. Geographically, it possessed the characteristics of various glacial processes. The most distinctive aspect of the study area is the presence of the Fraser River system and its tributaries, particularly the Nechako River. Of equal importance are the landforms, mountains, and flatlands, all of which relate to the climate, flora and fauna environments. The significance of this chapter is that nature in fact lives, and continued to evolve during human presence. Moreover, this chapter

describes the evolution of the natural setting which provided the agricultural land and flora and fauna that humans valued as commodities and defined as resources for extraction.

1.Erich Zimmermann, Introduction to World Resources (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), 21.

2.Paul Donahue, "4500 Years of Cultural Continuity on the Central Interior Plateau of B.C."(Ph.D. thesis., University of Wisconsin, 1977), 33.

3.H.W. Tipper, Glacial Geomorphology and Pleistocene History of British Columbia (Ottawa: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 1971), 47.

4.Ibid.

5.Donahue, "4500 Years of Cultural Continuity on the Central Interior Plateau of B.C.", 46.

6.Stuart Holland, Landforms of British Columbia: A Physiographic Outline (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Petroleum, 1976), 51.

7.Ibid., 68.

8.Tipper, Glacial Geomorphology and Pleistocene History of British Columbia, 50.

9.Perry Anderson, A Study of Land Settlement in Prince George, Smithers Area of B.C. (Victoria: Department of Lands, 1947), 60.

10.Ibid.

11.Donahue, "4500 Years of Cultural Continuity on the Central Interior Plateau of B.C.", 71.

12.Ibid.

13.T.M. Lord, Soils of the Quesnel Area B.C. (Vancouver: Land and Resource Research Institute, 1961), 6)

14.Anderson, A Study of Land Settlement in Prince George, Smithers Area of B.C., 62.

15.Holland, Landforms of British Columbia: A Physiographic Outline, 75.

16.Lord, Soils of the Quesnel Area B.C., 9.

17.Geoff, Meggs, Salmon: The Decline of the B.C. Fishery (Vancouver: Douglas McIntyre, 1991), 7.

18.Lord, Soils of the Quesnel Area B.C., 11.

19.Tipper, Glacial Geomorphology and Pleistocene History of British Columbia, 5.

20.Donahue, "4500 Years of Cultural Continuity on the Central Interior Plateau of B.C.",143.

21.Department of Lands, The Forests of B.C. (Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, 1937), 9-22.

22.Ian Cowan and Charles Guiguet, The Mammals of B.C. (Victoria: B.C. Provincial Museum, 1975), 2-46.

23.Carl Clemmons and C.Lindsey, The Freshwater Fish of B.C. (Victoria: B.C. Provincial Museum, 1967), 74-83

Chapter Three

From the Land

Recognizing that the natural environment has its own processes and changes, an important question to ask is, how did human occupation further these changes? This chapter discusses the manner in which Natives, early explorers and European fur traders perceived and interacted with the environment. Current anthropological and archaeological studies reveal that Carrier people resided around Prince George for thousands of years. The post-contact history of these people can be reconstructed from the journals of explorers, surveyors, and traders. Much of the data here has been borrowed from studies of Natives who lived in similar ways, yet who resided in areas slightly outside of this study area. Chief among the early explorers who passed through Prince George were Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser and George M. Dawson. These explorations were made possible by the backing of larger institutions which were interested in the region for monetary reasons. Therefore, one should keep in mind that Mackenzie, Fraser, and Dawson had the specific job of assessing the economic potential of the land.

The relevance of explorers journals is that they expressed early perceptions of the natural environment. Moreover, these journals described the land during the pre-European settlement stage, descriptions that help measure the environmental changes that were to come. The journals of various traders who lived in trading posts at Fort George and Fort St. James will also be examined. These latter journals assist in understanding the trader's perceptions of the environment. This chapter shows that with the arrival of non-natives, the land was perceived for the first time as a commodity available for human wants.

First Nations

The Carrier lived part of the year at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. It is difficult to trace the Carrier's perception of and impact on an environment, for they did not maintain a written record of their views or actions. It is clear that the Carrier braided aspects of the natural environment into their spiritual and political belief systems.

The residents of the village of Leit'li (where Prince George would later develop), practised a non-sedentary lifestyle, regulated by clan membership. Each clan had a leader who controlled hunting and fishing sites.[1] The importance of hunting and fishing sites indicate that these resources were important to the Carrier. The fact that authority over these resources was considered to be a privilege or indicated a position of stature within the society also illustrates the importance of these resources within their society. Daniel Harmon, a trader at Fort St. James from 1800 to 1816, described clan leaders' "owning" resource-rich territories. He wrote that "the people of every village have a certain extent of country which they consider their own in which they may hunt and fish; but may not transcend these bounds without purchasing the privilege of those [leaders] who claim the land."[2] Salmon fishing weirs serve as an excellent example of clan leaders' controlling resources. To catch fish, the Carrier built fishing weirs across rivers and streams. Each weir was controlled by certain individuals or head clan member, whose authority was increased and maintained with the number of weirs controlled. Hudson's study provides an example of clan leaders' power hinging upon the ownership and use of a fishing location. In 1911 the Federal Department of Marine and Fisheries outlawed Native fishing weirs on the Fraser River System. In many instances the elimination of these resource locations resulted in the clan leader losing stature or influence within his tribe.[3]

Elements of the natural environment also appeared in the Carrier spiritual belief system, demonstrating the importance that this Native group assigned to the environment. When George Dawson surveyed the central interior of British Columbia he observed the taboos associated with the beaver. He reported that the Carrier were careful not to let dogs eat the head of the beaver. The beaver's bones were burnt to ensure that this did not happen. This custom of burning bones exhibited respect for the beaver, hence ensuring a good hunt in the future. Similar spiritual practices reveal the values associated with bears. Natives respected bears and never spoke badly of this animal in fear of being ripped to pieces by a bear when in the bush.[4] The honour and fear that Natives afforded these animals illustrates their importance to Native subsistence.

Crests were another aspect of Carrier culture that were intertwined with the natural environment. These crests were clan property, patterned on ceremonial blankets and totems. The crest of one particular clan could never be used by another unless it was on loan. Each individual clan member was supposed to have a certain amount of control over his or her crest. The underlying message of crest protocol was that clan members had a certain amount of control over the animal on their crest, in essence the environment. For example, a Laksamasyu man claimed that the sun was one of his crests. Displaying control over his crest he claimed he could "beseech the sun to stop continuous rain; or a Jitumten man could plead with the grizzly bear not to attack him."[5]

Chief Maxine George at Fort Fraser insisted that members of his clan did " not shoot the wolf because at one time his people were descended from the union of a wolf and a human."[6] Father Morice, who spent a considerable amount of time with the Carrier, observed that the Natives calender year reflected the importance that they placed on the natural environment. Morice's translation of the calender year is as follows: satco=big moon, ts9-sal=?small, ts9z-

tco=?big, c in-uza=month of the spring, t9k9s-uza=month of the carp, tanx-uza=month of the summer, kes9l-uza=month of the land locked salmon, thall-uza=month of the red salmon, pit-uza=month of the bull trout.[7] The above descriptions illustrate that the Carrier wove into their political and spiritual system aspects of the natural environment that they perceived to be of significance in their lives. Subsequently, these elements such as animal crests, or the season of red salmon would dictate how the Carrier interacted with the environment.

At this juncture, let us examine how the Carrier actually utilized their immediate natural environment and in turn, the changes in the land that occurred. James Hackler's examination of the Carrier revealed that they "moved their residences several times per year each [move] designed for a different type of living."[8] In this sense, the Natives perceived the environment to be the deciding factor, which directed their actions. Carrier winter villages were erected only where there was a dependable amount of fire wood to sustain the village population. These wooded areas also had to provide enough animals to be hunted to supplement the cache of dried fish.[9] The significance of erecting a village near forests and animals is supported by archaeological work conducted at Punchaw Lake (territory of Nadkutin, Southern Carrier, Southwest of Prince George). From the excavations at this particular site, it was revealed that during the winter, small groups would hunt and trap animals. The campsites or satellite villages during these activities were chosen for the shelter and firewood that was available.[10]

The environment also dictated the location of spring and summer settlements. During the warmer months, fish runs determined the location of villages, so that various fish species such as salmon, could be caught. Daniel Harmon wrote that the Carrier built and lived at Salmon villages part of the year, awaiting the huge salmon run. Harmon also observed the importance of fish to the Carrier, when "in mid April [they left] their villages and live[ed] upon fish that they

[took] out of the small lakes."[11] There is no disputing that the Carrier lifestyle during the spring and summer was determined by where the salmon were located. For example, the Chinlac village near Prince George was made up of settlement sites predominantly on riversides or lakes. These river settlements were located on major rivers where the Natives could build fish weirs. The settlements on smaller rivers supported fewer family units, but provided the right soil to dig cache pits. Carrier satellite settlements served only as cache pit locations, not living quarters.[12] From this information, one can surmise that since the Fraser and Nechako Rivers experienced large salmon runs, they too felt the touch of the Carrier.

The materials used to build Carrier dwellings reveal that these people reshaped nature by extracting pieces from it. They depended on the natural environment to shelter them, keep them warm, catch fish and make tools. Central interior Carrier lived in two types of structures, a summer and a winter house. These dwellings were supported by four large posts with connecting beams, and four additional posts made of spruce slabs which held up the walls. The roof consisted primarily of spruce bark, bound together by strips of yellow bark. The summer homes, occupied during salmon season were materially similar to the winter homes but of poorer construction.[13] Alexander Mackenzie described a Carrier home as being thirty feet square, having spruce timber walls five feet high, and three fireplaces or hearths. The size of these homes and the placement of three hearths indicate that wood was used for fuel and construction in each village.

The utilization of the forest for both fuel and building material affected the land. Trees of transportable size were felled to fuel the fires for both cooking and heat. It is not unreasonable to presume that many summer villages were abandoned during the winter months because the wood available for fuel had been exhausted. In the Prince George region the dense coniferous forest is indicative of a climax stage of arboreal succession. Coniferous trees will replace shrubs,

herbs and deciduous trees, after the former have been cleared. Therefore, by comparing the ratio of coniferous to deciduous trees and the age of this distribution, a gauge of past forest clearing can be obtained.[14] Surveying the Carrier village at Punchaw Lake, Fladmark inspected the percentage and age of deciduous and coniferous trees. He found that there were a number of smaller areas with low tree density and narrow avenues of reduced tree occurrence. Fladmark concluded that the level of Carrier "harvesting of forest for firewood and construction material" was such that it left an imprint on the land.[15] Additional tests involved replicating Carrier dwellings. These half size replications required the destruction of 80 young spruce trees that were felled or girdled for bark. [16] The construction of small replicas represented the felling of a substantial amount of trees. Moreover, because the Carrier moved settlements, these homes would be built or repaired every year. An additional Carrier practice was to strip trees of their bark for building material. Following the Fraser down from Prince George, Mackenzie noticed that "the bark had been stripped off many of the spruce trees and carried away, as [he] presumed by the natives for the purpose of covering their cabins."[17] Thus, it is safe to say that a large amount of timber was used to build structures.

In 1876, George M. Dawson observed the effects of Carrier burning forests close to Prince George. Dawson stated he saw "Douglas fir often over 2 feet, tall and straight, black spruce,...[and] for the latter half of the way the country [was] partly burnt and open."[18] Dawson described young coniferous trees and open burnt landscapes, two attributes that denote an area that had either been recently burnt or in the process of regrowth. Mackenzie's journal also sheds light on the Carrier use of fire at the Fraser-Nechako confluence. He wrote " when we passed the last river we observed smoke rising from it , as if produced by fires that had been fresh lighted, [he] therefore concluded that there were natives on its banks...[as] clouds of thick smoke rose from

the woods, that darkened the atmosphere accompanied with a strong odour of the gum of cypress and the spruce fir."[19] These descriptions of forest use imply that the altering of the land was done by the Carrier, the only inhabitants who were residing in the area at the time.

The Carrier used the local flora and fauna for consumptive purposes, and some trade. These "resource options included salmon, lake fish, berries, small game and to a limited extent large game."[20] Foremost amongst the many animals that the Carrier consumed was salmon. The importance of salmon to the Carrier is described by Daniel Harmon, who wrote that the first Native who sees a salmon coming up river yells "Ta loe nas lay", meaning "the salmon have arrived", and soon the entire village would be overjoyed, with everyone yelling the same few words.[21] The Hudson's Bay Company on Lake Babine recorded similar evidence. Hudson Bay Company journals stated that "the Indians do not only catch and cure salmon for their own use, but herd it up every year for sale and barter, it is sort of a legal tender among them."[22] To catch salmon the Carrier constructed barricades or weirs across the river. "The barricades were constructed of immense quantity of material and on scientific principles...there were posts driven into the bed of the river which is 200 feet wide, and from two to four feet deep...this made a magnificent fence which not a single fish could get through."[23] This description demonstrates the considerable amount of physical and mental energy that was spent creating and implementing this fishing apparatus. Alexander Mackenzie encountered similar Native fishing technologies. When Mackenzie navigated the Blackwater River he found a Native house that contained a machine that was "cylindrical [in] form, 15 feet long and 4 feet and an half in diameter, one end was square...[he felt] this machine was certainly contrived to set in the river to catch large fish."[24]

Many European traders noticed that "were it not for the salmon that come up these rivers every year, more or less the natives would truly be miserable, as they have little else that they can

depend on for a subsistence."[25] Daniel Harmon's journal added that "the natives at the village took eleven salmon, they are in need of them for they have been subsisting upon berries"[26] For example, in 1849 the salmon run was plentiful, yet the Natives were still in want because the water level was too high to erect a fish barrier. Two years later the salmon run was low, Fort St. James was confronted with Carrier from Fort George who were suffering because during the winter for they are destitute of a salmon.[27] These accounts provide a window into the lifestyle of the Carrier, and specifically the importance of a fish resource.

The Carrier utilized many other types of flora and fauna. The Chinlac village (pre-contact) did not contain many ungulate bones, and when such bones were unearthed, antlers were fewer than bones. This archaeological evidence suggests that larger game such as moose and deer either were not common or were not hunted intensely. Both Daniel Harmon and John Mclean noticed that moose were not plentiful in the area and were hunted by Natives irregularly.[28] Additional findings reveal that awls made of beaver ulnae were plentiful and were used more than any other bone. Other animals consumed by the Carrier were bear, swan, dog, porcupine, squirrel and muskrat.[29] Dawson claimed that the Natives "[did] not trap many mink but rather a large amount of beaver and fish which are the staple of their diet." [30] It was especially "during the winter months, as well as after the opening of the spring that beaver hunting [was] practised on the most extensive scale."[31] The natural environment provided materials such as beaver, badger, and muskrat skin for clothing. Tools were constructed from grained basalt, chert, obsidian and river cobbles. Canoes were generally made from cedar trees, and black spruce. Black spruce bark was also utilized to make various containers, and cooking pots.

These observations illustrate that the environment played a very large role in the Carrier lifestyle. First, aspects of the natural environment were woven into spiritual and political systems,

indicating the importance placed on nature. Moreover, nature dictated settlement patterns, depending on the availability of fuel, food and construction material. Plants and animals provided these peoples with food, clothing and tools. Unlike the non-natives that were to arrive, the Carrier perception of and interaction with the environment was not one of dominance and exploitation. The holistic approach of these Natives allowed them to honour and utilize nature simultaneously. In this sense their seasonal patterns and lifestyle depended on the environmental processes. That is not to say that Carrier interaction with the environment did not result in changes in the land. The use of local flora and fauna had an impact on both animal populations and the forests. However, this impact was minor compared to the changes that were to come.

Europeans Arrive -Early Explorations

The presence of Europeans marked a major shift in the way that the study area was perceived. For the first time the natural environment was commodified. Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser were among the early explorers who passed through Prince George. Both explorers were funded by corporations that sought economic interests in the central interior of British Columbia. These particular Europeans perceived the natural environment as being bountiful in resources that could be exploited, dominated and extracted by humans.

In 1793 Alexander Mackenzie travelled across British Columbia and entered the territory of what was to be called New Caledonia (Fraser chose the name New Caledonia as this region reminded him of a region in Scotland). Representing the interests of the North West Company, he travelled over the Rocky Mountains from Fort Chipewyn on Lake Athabasca in search of furs and trade alliances.[32] On his voyage, Mackenzie described his surroundings. Passing territory east of British Columbia, he stated, " the land to the right is of a very high elevation...and of equally enlivened with the elk and the buffalo, who were feeding in great numbers and unmolested by the

hunter. In an island which we passed there was a large quantity of white birch whose bark might be employed in the construction of canoes."[33] On route to the juncture of the Fraser and Nechako Mackenzie wrote that the Pine River "would be an excellent spot for a fort or factory, as there is plenty of wood and every reason to believe that the country abounds in beaver...the country is so crowded with animals as to have the appearance in some places of a stall yard from the state of the ground and the quantity of dung which is scattered over it."[34] He also observed "beaver in the course of the afternoon...swans in great numbers, with geese and ducks..."[35] The enthusiasm of seeing fur bearing animals epitomized the concerns and attitudes of early explorers. Mackenzie noticed that " by the number of their [deer] tracks it appeared that they abounded in this country. They are not so large as the elk of the Peace River but are the real red deer which [he] never saw in the North though [he had] been told that they are to be found in great numbers..."[36] It is clear that Mackenzie valued the natural environment in terms of the fur potential of the animals, or how the forests could supply building material and fuel. He regarded nature for its individual parts, parts that could be utilized for human purposes.

In the preface to Mackenzie's journal he described his exploration as a personal battle by means of which he was breaking through the lines of a mighty foe (nature) for economic pursuits. He wrote "I was led, at an early period of life by commercial views to the country northwest of Lake Superior...and being familiar with the toilsome exertions in the prosecution of mercantile pursuits. I not only contemplated the practicability of penetrating across the continent of America, but was confident in the qualification, as I was animated by the desire, to undertake the perilous enterprise."[37] According to his journals, James Creek, east of Prince George, near the McGregor Range was scattered with felled logs and debris. These barriers, combined with the "violence of the current...and force of the water" prompted Mackenzie to name the river Bad River.[38] His

descriptions and naming of the river suggest that parts of the natural environment that did not comply with the human agenda would be deemed negative. Moreover, upon navigating the river, he had defeated it, leaving behind the negative place name to remind all followers that nature could be forced to comply with human designs.

The end of Mackenzie's journal provides a summary of the similar attitudes that he and his audience shared with respect to the environment. Their attitude was that the environment would remain incomplete and idle until humans arrived. These people felt it was their duty to reach north and grasp the resources and opportunity offered to them by nature. He wrote that the River (Fraser) would be "the line of communication from the Pacific Ocean, pointed by nature, as it is the only navigable river in the whole extent of Vancouver's minute survey of that coast, its banks also form the first level country in all the southern extent of the continental coast...the most northern situation fit for colonization and suitable for the residence of a civilized people...the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained...promising the most important advantage to the trade of the united kingdoms."[39]

Thirteen years later on behalf of the North West Company, Simon Fraser followed Mackenzie's lead by journeying through the central interior of British Columbia in search of fur trading prospects. Fraser's attitudes were consistent with those of Mackenzie, and he too appealed to an audience interested in the animal resources of the region. Fraser chose to write about "the country round [consisting] of plains, well stocked with animals...[and] plenty of deer."[40] After meeting with a Sekani tribe near McLeod Lake, with the help of a translator Fraser sought to find out if "the animals are very numerous" in this part of the country.[41] Fraser's journal also revealed his attitude towards the environment with regards to the fish in the McLeod Lake region. According to Fraser the resources (fish) were plentiful, and there was no question as to the

amount of resources readily available for human consumption. In fact, they "lived upon fish without touching [their] dried provisions all the time[they] were [there]...[they] saw 30 men, who had beaver cat and badger robes for covering...there were plenty of fish and fowl and some meat and they told me that beaver were plentiful..."[42]

In some instances Fraser viewed the natural environment in negative terms. However, he saw the opportunity available if the environment was dominated and reshaped. For example, when resting at camp east of Prince George, he commented that he "scarcely ever saw anything so dreary and seldom so dangerous in any country, and at present while [he wrote] what ever way [he] turned mountains upon mountains whose summits are covered with extensive snow close the gloomy scene."[43] A few days later, Fraser again reflected upon the environment saying that "the country through which [they] had passed [that] day was the most savage that can be imagined, yet [they] were always on a beaten path and always in sight of the river...its iron bound banks having a very forbidding appearance."[44] Travelling on a beaten path would suggest that the river was unnavigable. There were many instances when the rivers that made this exploration possible were "impossible to pass, not only thro the badness of the channel but also thro the badness of the surrounding country...[he] remarked that [their] determination of going on was fixed.[45] Fraser's accounts stress that the natural environment was a "dangerous place" if it did not meet his and other human plans. However, Fraser stated that regardless of the difficulties and the unpleasantness of the land, their determination was fixed. His statements suggests that the human will to overcome the land was overpowering and this determination could bend the land to meet human needs and wants.

In essence, these men viewed the environment as a supply house of resources for human consumption. This attitude was powerful, so powerful that it overruled any conflicting perceptions

of the environment. For example, Fraser ignored his "negative" perceptions of the environment when writing to John Stuart. He decided to carry through with his plan to bring all goods they needed, from Stuart Lake overland to "the confluence of this river...[to be] left en cache."[46] This storage point, at the Fraser and Nechako confluence would serve as a supply and trading base to aid preparations for his journey down the river that would soon hold his name, in search of more resources.

Establishing Trading Forts

The perception that the environment could provide fur resources for people led to the establishment of fur trading posts. These forts were created so that the animal resources could be more efficiently exploited. Fort George was first established by Simon Fraser in 1807, and then operations were taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821. The purpose of this Fort was to maintain a fur trade monopoly in the central interior. The writings of Daniel Harmon and John McLean, both HBC traders, were consulted. Although neither man spent a great amount of time at Fort George, their journals do offer general ideas of how traders perceived and interacted with the natural environment. The similarity in their attitudes also illustrates that a common perception was placed on the natural environment by people who migrated to the central interior of the province. Both men had jobs that involved harvesting furs and fish, a job for which the prerequisite was that the environment be valued for its economic utility. Yet they could not help but despise the country that surrounded them. Concerned with the consequences of living in the wilderness, Harmon wrote about the need to place his son in an environment other than that of New Caledonia. He worried about "who will have it more in their power to bring him up [son] in the paths of virtue in the civilized part of the world, than it could be possible for [him] to do in this savage country."[47] McLean held similar sentiments about Fort George. When visiting,

he looked at his surroundings and saw "a high hill that shades the sun until late in the morning and in the midst of woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom is saddening enough."[48] Each trader perceived the natural environment as either savage or wild, offering no virtues of civility or happiness. Yet, regardless of these feelings, their jobs dictated that they view the environment in terms of furs, meaning that the environment had to be subdued to provide resources, hence they remained at the forts.

Harmon travelled to and from Fort St. James assessing the condition of the various posts. During these travels he commented on the importance of the salmon to the fur trading posts. In October, 1812, according to his journal, they purchased 25,000 salmon that [would] be stored to feed the men until next Autumn. With 25,000 fish in storage, Harmon still felt that more fish could and should be caught. Consequently, he sent men out to catch more white fish and they returned with 7000.[49] There were also instances when traders defined fish in terms of human consumption, being either "good" or "bad." It was a common sight to see salmon "in such great numbers that they cause for a considerable distance around a terrible stench but the Natives often even in that condition gather them up to eat and even appear to like them better than good salmon."[50] Here too, is an example of viewing the environment in terms of usefulness to humans. A fish was only good if humans deemed them to be eatable or tradable.

The idea that the natural resources were a "gift" from God was quite evident. In early August 1813, the salmon run was slow in reaching the interior. Thus traders feared starvation. Fortunately, a few weeks later the salmon arrived and Harmon wrote that it was "providence that [watched] over and supplied [them] with every necessary of life. Surely in so benevolent a God [they] ought willing to put [their] trust and accept with greatful hearts the innumerable favours which He is constantly bestowing upon [them]."[51] Harmon, like many of the chief traders, was

a religious man, who was following a divine plan of subduing the earth. This belief implied that man should unquestionably accept the supplies (natural resources) given, because they had been earned. For example, the trader's possessed furs and salmon because God had granted these resources to men for doing God's work.

McLean spent a great deal of time describing the importance and location of "fur bearing animals especially beavers and marten, which are likely to continue numerous for many years to come."[52] Knowing that the beaver is being hunted at a rapid pace he ensures his readers that "this is still the great beaver nursery which continues to replace the numbers destroyed."[53] Harmon, too, showed contradictory feelings with respect to the animals in the region. The last pages of his journal listed the various types of animals to be found in New Caledonia. His descriptions contained the name, appearance, habitat, taste, and patterns of the many animals mentioned. This list appeared to be a unbiased presentation with no agenda at mind. But following this list of animals is a catalogue that "exhibits the comparative values of the furs which are annually purchased and exported to the civilized parts of the world by the North West Company."[54] One then realizes that the descriptions of the animals included the quality of the fur. For example, Harmon characterized the bears as grey, chocolate or perfectly black, "two kinds of wolves...light grey, but some of them are nearly white...foxes...yellowish red ...some are of a beautiful silver grey and some ....are almost black."[55]

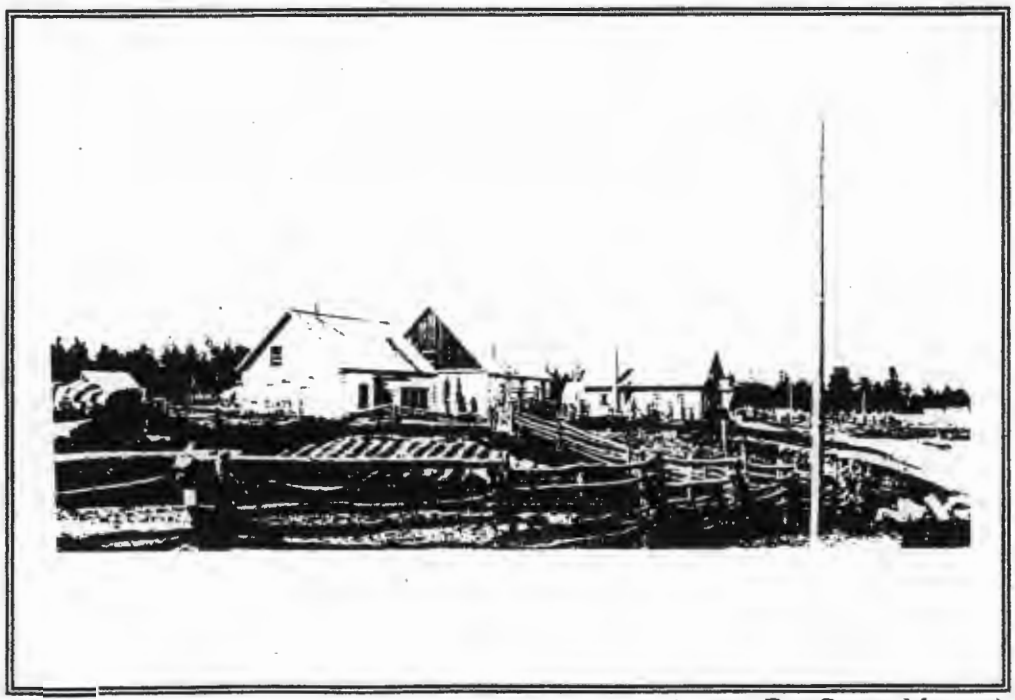
Europeans also manipulated the environment by planting crops. These men felt that the "soil at many places in New Caledonia [was] tolerably good."[56] Soon, the Forts introduced and grew crops, and by 1878 seeds were a regular part of the trade. For example, in Fort St. James a garden was planted with palisades around it. In this particular garden potatoes, onion, carrot, beet, parsnip barely, and corn were grown and harvested. Harmon boasted that potatoes, barley

and turnip were planted on soils west of the mountain for the first time. Consequently, "all hands were busy at Fort St. James clearing the ground for a garden."[57] Mr. Ogden, the HBC manager at Fort George routinely began working the ground at the post by April 20 of each year.[58] Planting of gardens was a new practice in the central interior, and for the first time land was plowed and seeded. Introduction of seeds, weeds and crops that had hitherto been absent from the region were now apparent. Crosby illustrated the potency of introducing flora to a region. He claimed that "seeds arrived in folds of textiles in clods of mud, in dung and in a thousand other ways..."[59] Hence, humans were not just manipulating the environment that they encountered, but rather introduced new elements to the land.

These Forts with their gardens also meant that fences were built (Figures 3 & 4). Fences served to keep animals out of the crops and to mark property boundaries. Building of fences illustrated that animals were no longer free to roam the land and now there were lines drawn placing humans on one side of the land and animals on the other. Moreover, the appearance of fences began the process of outlining property and ownership. They, not rivers and mountains demarcated territories. Construction of fences brought a new sight and meaning to the landscape of the forks, a meaning that was promoted and welcomed by the European settlers in search of a piece of land and prosperity that lay amongst nature's environment.

(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 3: Fort George Hudson's Bay Company (c.a. 1911), completely fenced in, 2 chimneys per building indicating the amount of fuel used.



(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 4: Fort George HBC. 1912. Note the presence of fences and a garden.

The potential of resource extraction, agricultural opportunities and settlement in the central interior, prompted further explorations in the late 1870's. Between 1875-1876 George M. Dawson began surveying the land west of the Fraser River. This resource assessment was conducted on behalf of the Geological Survey of Canada and the Canadian Pacific Railway. He represented another example of a European entering the area to assess the natural resources available for human consumption. In this case, Dawson was responsible for recording the landscape, marking the feasibility of railway routes and the agricultural potential of the region.[60] In the late summer of 1875, Dawson, on a steamer plying up the Fraser, noticed that "the area does not contain much farming land. The prairie portions are liable to flood and therefore unsuitable for raising grain, and the clearing of the wooded portions, covered with such heavy pine can hardly yet be attempted."[61] In this example Dawson described the land in terms of poor agricultural potential and also timber extraction. Waiting for the stagecoach in Quesnel that same summer, Dawson wrote that "there has been very little or remarkable sceneries. The general surface of the country is a more or less irregular plateau with hills and ranges...some of the river valleys are very large...occasional meadows, swamps and hillsides with good grass and in some places open woods of large Douglas pines."[62] His statement exposed the values placed on nature. The only aspects that were attached to the word "good" are grass and open woods, two areas that could accommodate farms and ranching. At the Blackwater Depot en route to Prince George, Dawson wrote a letter to a woman in which he observed that " the country much resembles a gigantic game of spillicans and [he] believed if one was to go to Fort George and begin shaking the pile; sticks would be seen moving down at New Westminster on the Fraser."[63] This may imply the forestry potential in the area was limitless. Spillicans is a game that involves removing one stick at a time without tumbling the entire pile. By shaking the pile(forests) at Fort George the

sticks(wood) could be floated down the Fraser to the lower mainland.

Arriving at Fort George on October 14, 1876, Dawson's journal illustrates his perception of the natural environment. Upon arrival he rested on the river bank and washed through the sand and gravel to trace any signs of the yellow colour that seemed to abound in the Quesnel area. He then recorded that "the upper level is gravelly and clayey but the lower seems to be fine fertile soil and though mostly covered with small trees shows a fine meadow."[64] Dawson did not discover gold in Prince George, but he did envision the possibilities that the land offered. Prince George could serve as a gateway, with its navigable waterways, and a rail built, a town could develop and its inhabitants could make a living off of the commodities in the land.

This period of human occupation witnessed natives and non-Natives interacting with the environment in similar ways. The Carrier did not commodify the environment per se, but they did treat nature as resources that could be used for human purposes. In turn, these people that resided seasonally at the forks altered the landscape to meet their needs and lifestyle. With the appearance of non-Natives, the environment was also perceived as resources to serve humans. However, non-Natives began the process of commodifying nature into extractable parts, a process that would be accepted, maintained and encouraged by the non-Natives to come.

Chapter 3-Endnotes

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Chapter Four

Boosterism and the Environment: Perceptions of a Northern Town

"Settler's perception of resources was diluted with a concept of commodity to satisfy not only local communities but faraway markets."[1]

Prince George experienced a flood of settlers between 1900 and 1915. Along with their personal possessions, settlers carried attitudes, hopes and perceptions of Prince George. In many instances settlers hopes and perceptions were created by boosters. Boosterism appeared in newspaper articles, novels, government reports and real estate advertisements. The spreading of these ideas laid the foundation that elicited a phase of land changes. This chapter discusses two issues. First, promoters lured people to Prince George by preaching that the natural environment could and should be manipulated to acquire natural resources. Second, upon the arrival of settlers the landscape experienced unprecedented change.

Studies of town building processes and boosterism, have not focused on social perceptions of the natural environment, but rather on government policies, government and business co-operation and core-periphery relationships.[2] Despite the shortcomings of such studies, they provide definitions of boosterism. Knight observed that boosting was an "exaggerated proclamation of worth of a particular place over all others."[3] For example in Lower and Upper Canada, Ottawa was described as a town with "convenience, sobriety and elegance,"[4] when it was in fact a squatted lumber town full of drunkenness and disorder. Likewise, promoters described Prince George as a place like no other, as it provided humans with a limitless supply of natural resources. Voisey's article "Boosting the Small Prairie Town 1909-1931" discusses the techniques that boosters used and why. He claims that town promotion attempts to stimulate population and economic growth. This is done through various means such as lobbying,

advertising or offering incentives to potential settlers.[5] Moreover, a society's promotion of a locale often indicates the "attitudes and aspirations" of settlers.[6] Although this description derives from a case study of Southern Alberta, it can be applied to the attitudes towards the natural environment in and around Prince George.

Prince George, was a young hamlet consisting of people from all over north America and Europe, all in search of opportunity that was to be found in nature. The potency of boosterism provided an identity or bonding between people in a newly established community. It gave early settlers with no common background a united goal to work towards. Hence, the common aim of these people was to promote the land's potential.[7] Artibise adds that "there are references to groups in which demonstrations of the booster ethic were taken as a sign of being part of a team and showing community spirit."[8] This implies that those who did not boost were displaying signs of individualism and alienation from the larger community, a risky act during the hardships of a settlement period. This form of social pressure led to the formation of various competing businesses and organizations. Although these groups competed for business and memberships, they were united in their effort to populate Prince George. Foran's study examines the personalities of boosters, concluding that boosterism as an institution often dominates over individuals. This tells us that when boosterism takes place, it may not be supported by all individuals within a society, however, as an institutional phenomenon it imposes itself upon members of a community.[9]

Background

Three Prince George land holding companies, all vying for settlers, were in the forefront of promotion during the settlement period. In 1909 the Northern Development Company established South Fort George on the banks of the Fraser, one mile south of the Fraser-Nechako

confluence. To the west, on the banks of the Nechako, two miles from the Fraser-Nechako junction, the Natural Resources Security Company formed Fort George and Central Fort George. Finally, the Grand Trunk Development Corporation, began operations on the southern banks of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. The names of the first two corporations foreshadowed the land changes that would occur. In both cases the land is defined in human terms. For example, the one company stressed northern development while the other emphasized natural resources (Figure 6).

Each corporation had its own tract of land, but they shared similar development agendas. In all three cases, the development of a town depended largely on the exploitation of the natural environment. George Hammond, a real estate dealer from Minneapolis and president of the Natural Resources Company, purchased lots west of the HBC in 1908. He later added to his original claim at Central Fort George additional lands at Fort George, on the right bank of the Nechako. Beginning in 1909 Hammond's boosting appeared in provincial, national, and foreign papers. In 1909 similar promotional activities occurred in South Fort George. Under the direction of A.G. Hamilton, N. Clarke, W. Cooke, C.M. Wiggins, G.E. McLaughilin and B. Laselle, the Fort George Townsite Northern Development Company began promoting available land in that area.[10] One year later, J.A Adamson and Dr. J. McClennan from Winnipeg took over ownership, and continued the process of promoting South Fort George. Another townsite was created in 1911 at the juncture of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. Under the direction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Development Company, the land had been purchased from the Natives for $125,000 (Fort George Indian Reserve No.1). By September 1913 lots in Prince George went on auction. As Holmes observed, all three townsites wished "to be the core of the future city" and promoted themselves accordingly.[11]

Additional individuals and groups contributed to the boosting of the three companies. Chief among them were the Federal and Provincial governments, Board of Trade, Fort George Commercial Club, Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Association, Industrial Association, and Citizens Association. By utilizing vehicles such as "exhibitions, illustrated pamphlets and the reports of journalists, knowledge of the resources" were extended to the public.[12] These events set the stage of the various interests groups all concerned with promoting Prince George by enticing settlers with the "limitless" supply of resources available to them.

Boosterism and the Environment

Brochures

As mentioned, the Natural Resources Security Company Ltd. spent time and money advertising the resources of Prince George. Implicit in the company's descriptions of the environment was that the land could and should be manipulated to acquire natural resources because "...the new section of this continent, [is] beyond a question one of the richest and most varied in its natural resources."[13] Applauding the progress in Fort George, Hammond, the author of the pamphlet, wrote that "two years ago this stretch of country was virgin forest...today it is a flourishing town fairly athrill with faith with courage and with optimism."[14] This optimism was justified as being part of the frontier process. Using the words "manifest destiny", these boosters likened the development of Prince George and region to the American expansion onto the frontier, an occurrence that illustrated the inherent dominance that humans had over the land.[15]

Boosting Prince George magnified the possibilities found within the land itself. After the land was plowed the "very best farming land and crops of either hay roots, or grain" were available.[16] Additional resources obtainable to settlers were "rich and cheap agricultural land...a land where wheat -the finest wheat grown-averages from 25 to 45 bushels to the acre.."[17]

Accompanying the successful possibilities of growing wheat were the returns from planting potatoes that usually total 300 bushels per acre, or the 4,000 pounds of turnips that were cultivated on a quarter acre.

Hammond's boosterism boasted that resource extraction did not always demand cultivation. These natural riches came in the form of mineral resources. Hence, mineral extraction would "be one of the permanent and profitable aids in upbuilding the future city."[18] Unnamed mineral authorities seemed to agree with Hammond that gold bearing quartz and coal were among the mineral formations which were "remarkable and very rich."[19] The forests were also considered a natural resource available for commercial exchange. "On the Willow river there [were] large areas of fir and spruce while cedar, a rare wood in the district grows in great abundance. The Upper Fraser [was] also well timbered while on the Nechako west of Fort George [were] large bodies of splendid fir."[20]

In 1911 the "British Columbia Bulletin of Information" circulated periodic brochures that boasted of the ease with which resources could be obtained in Prince George. The Bulletin contained information on timber, fisheries, mining, farming and fruit culture in "the richest province of Canada."[21] Headlines read "B.C. Natural Resources are Inexhaustible." This particular article stated that British Columbia was the "orchard" of the Empire containing farms, fertile valleys, fisheries and timber that went beyond any other place in the world.[22] The significance of this statement is that the entire province was perceived to be an orchard, or a garden that supplied humans with natural fruits. The British Columbia Bulletin also responded to public enquiries. For example, a reader wrote questioning the potential for apple growing in Prince George. The editor responded that there were no apple trees growing in Fort George simply because no one had planted them, but that the ground was so fertile that wild fruits grew

in abundance second to none.[23] The mere fact that readers were inquiring about the growing potential of the region indicates that the boosters' work was succeeding, and that interest in manipulating the natural environment was increasing. Moreover, the growing of apples in Prince George was highly unlikely considering that cold temperatures dominated a large part of the year. Hence, boosters provided information that they felt potential settlers wanted to hear, that the region supplied every kind of natural resource to every kind of person. These special bulletins also promoted Prince George's extractable resources by comparing them with other resource cities and towns. The article stated that, like Saskatoon, Prince George was a "fine agricultural dairying and stock raising country, at its very door millions of acres will support large populations engaged in the most profitable of all agricultural pursuits-mixed farming."[24]

Keeping apace with its competition, the Grand Trunk Pacific's promotional techniques presented to the public a natural environment in terms of a cache of resources available for human use. The completion of the railway would aid the settler or the businessman's quest for natures riches. The GTP promotional brochure, published four years before trains reached Prince George, announced that the "exploitation of the resources of the country will make a considerable market in itself."[25] Reflecting on the large number of land seekers and prospectors that came to Prince George, the GTP praised "the marvellous possibilities of the country through the development of its agricultural and other natural and diversified economic resources."[26] Resources in the region would provide a profitable living, in fact "the fisheries alone are sufficient to support at least one million people: the mining industry, timber, and general manufactures are in their infancy with unlimited possibilities in the future."[27]

The climate was also a topic of promotional literature. Numerous advertisements, described Prince George as a place where temperatures rarely fell below zero degrees Fahrenheit.

The blatant exaggeration or deception of these climate related stories were a ploy, as many readers were interested farmers, dairymen and fruit growers who needed the proper climatic conditions to be successful.

The federal government's literature and policies regarding the natural resources available in Prince George reveal that, it too, viewed the natural environment in a utilitarian manner. Deputy Minister Scott's inventory of resource potential in British Columbia was advertised extensively in Britain in hopes of attracting more Europeans. Moreover, the federal government's policy on pre-empting land stated that anyone who was a head of a family, widow, single man (over 18) or "alien" intending to become a British subject could pre empt land if they were seeking agricultural pursuits. After surveying a tract of land, the applicant had to make "permanent improvements on the land to the value of two dollars and fifty cents per acre."[28] The government's classification of first and second class lands was also a point of significance. Lands that had agricultural potential and were manipulatable for cultivation were considered first class. These laws are significant because they reveal the importance that the government placed on manipulating the land to extract resources. Land could now become property if it was improved, that is, cultivated for agriculture, and the lands which did qualify as resource rich, were labelled as "first class"! Not surprisingly, the government utilized the development of land to populate the country. However, the important point is that the government used the land as an object that could be exchanged and controlled, and in return received development, increased population and additional revenue in the form of taxes.

Travel books also boosted Prince George, by defining the natural environment as natural resources. In 1911, F.A. Talbot wrote The New Garden of Canada. He reinforced the concept of human dominance over the land by listing the resources available to settlers in "undeveloped

New British Columbia."[29] His tales of Prince George followed the chapter heading "A Metropolis in the Making." The title of his book and the chapter heading are prime examples of boosterism. British Columbia was described as Canada's new garden, suggesting that the land was available and waiting to be sown, and cultivated. Talbot's subheadings drew the readers' attention to "its position of commercial strategy...an inland port that is to be...a splendid country for mixed farming...[and] fruit culture..."[30] The New Garden of Canada described the possibilities of manipulating the land to accommodate humans. Talbot optimistically "looked down upon the pulsating little town rapidly pushing out its tentacles of streets and avenues north and west, forcing the wall of dense forest back farther and farther."[31] The land surrounding the Fraser and Nechako Rivers were described as being close to 300,000 acres in valleys and plains providing fertile soils for the farmer. The progress of settlers was astounding, and Talbot commends the undaunted motivation of these land shapers when he penned that the "possibilities of the new land of promise, [and soon] a wave of prosperity would burst upon it."[32]

Henry Boam's British Columbia: Its History, People Commerce, Industries and Resources advertised and encouraged the manipulation of the natural environment. Interestingly enough, Boam's book was written with the patronage of the provincial government of British Columbia, which suggests that the province supported Boam's ideas and attitudes. Providing the reader with the geographic location of the town, was a description of "the land and what may be won therefrom..."[33] Citing "experts", Boam defined Prince George in terms of the grade of silver, gold and copper available that could be located and "then be profitably exploited."[34] As for the process of settling the area, Boam dismissed the hard work that may be required when clearing the land. He stated that land could be purchased and timber easily cleared.

British Columbia: Its History, People Commerce, Industries and Resources illustrated the use or purpose of animals in the region via conservation principles. This chapter on fauna was written with the aid of Bryan Williams, a provincial game warden. Commenting on the sporting possibilities, Williams proclaimed that among the game roaming the province were moose, sheep, mountain goat, bears, deer, cougar, and salmon. Yet, because of over hunting, "one of the province's greatest attractions was doomed."[35] Presuming that animals existed for human use, he applauded the government's 1905 Protection of Game Act. Not only did this act allow 'game' to increase in numbers, it also permitted the continuance of the "excellent sport of such a variety that the most ardent sportsman here finds his Mecca." If a hunter were to come to Prince George he would find prosperity if he is "blessed with the necessary qualification, [he adds that] there are few sports to be compared with sheep hunting."[36] Moreover, the Mule deer was described as "a fine sporting animal", and the bear hunt described as "long and arduous, but those who have enjoyed the sport speak in glowing terms of the pleasures obtained."[37]

Newspapers articles of the time also support the concept of valuing animals in terms of human wants. In 1909 the Tribune wrote that the government should pay a bounty on wolverines as they are very destructive on deer and moose."[38] By defining certain animals as a predator, the newspapers promoted hunting in the area and defined one animal as game and the other as predator. The immediate question that arises is predator to whom or to what? In this case the game animal is the prey which must be protected so that it could be hunted at a later date. The Herald noted that "Theodore Burnby an English big game hunter left here...to hunt caribou, returned from the Upper Fraser early in the week...[he brought] back several fine trophies...including the antler of three caribou and a set of moose horns besides a splendid grizzly skin...he is favourably impressed with the country and the prospects..."[39] Again, hunters were

congratulated for their kill and their actions were encouraged. The concept of sport hunting helps explain why animals were valued for the utility that they brought to humans. Accordingly, hunting for sport was perceived to be a test of character. When individuals hunted, they maintained pioneer virtues through a "fair chase." Dunlap observed that "the hunter killed only game species by fair methods. He acted in the field according to the sportsman's code. This made animals, at least game animals, a resource. They would be killed, but the stock had to be preserved and renewed", if the hunt was to continue.[40]

Exhibits

The Fall Fair was a prime example of how community gatherings promoted the resources in the land. Attracting visitors and newspaper articles, the fair was a form of boosterism that tangibly displayed the regions agricultural potential. Organized by the Fort George Agricultural and Industrial Association, the first fair took place in 1912 and offered a venue where local farmers displayed their crops, which in effect exhibited the progress that individuals and families had made in converting the forested lands to fertile fields. Encouraging and promoting crop production, the first Fall Fair poster exclaimed "Liberal Cash Prizes Given for Agricultural Exhibits."[41] In a front page article the Tribune declared that "the Fort George Agricultural and Industrial Association is working hard now on an energetic campaign to make the second annual exhibition...The exhibition is primarily intended to encourage agricultural and stock raising in the Fort George District. Its success is of vital importance to everybody interested in the progress and development of this country...There is better weather for growing this year and more land is under cultivation."[42] One year later the Prince George Post wrote that the aim of the fair was to "judge the merits of a section of the country...by viewing [its] products..."[43] Support would also come from Victoria, when the provincial government acknowledged the purpose of the Fair by

donating $500.00 in prize money as well as the Ross Cup, named after Donald Ross, Provincial Minister of Lands, for best product display. The significance of this fair was that it united people within the society who had similar attitudes about their garden. The fact that the Fair was both popular and successful indicates that the majority of people in and around Prince George agreed with what it represented and accomplished.

Newspapers

Newspapers were a very powerful, far-reaching illustration of the booster's perceptions of the natural environment. The goal of a newspaper was to inform, encourage settlement and make a profit. This being the case, editors would presumably print what the population agreed with or were interested in. As well, because Provincial law dictated that any proposed purchase of Crown land had to be advertised, a substantial number of the Prince George population during the settlement period must have familiarized themselves with at least one of the newspapers. Because Prince George was relatively isolated, the newspapers were items that people looked forward to reading, as they were the one connection with the events taking place in the outside world. The success or failure of newspapers also indicates the readership, so if a paper survived the entire boom period, one can surmise that it was widely read by locals and populations in other towns and countries.

The Fort George Herald, Prince George Post and the Tribune featured articles, editorials, and advertisements that promoted the ease with which people could come to Prince George and make a living from the land. After visiting Prince George in 1910, Premier McBride praised the human manipulation of the environment by commenting on the potential of the land when developed. He stated that Fort George has "upon its [land] productiveness in its wild state."[44] The editor of the Fort George Herald subsequently wrote that McBride had predicted an era about

to start in which there would be a "universal belief in the ultimate destiny of this place to be the site not of a city but of a metropolis."[45] Simultaneously, the Herald boosted Prince George as a place that held resources only available on a last frontier. Prince George was the "Land of Opportunity ...[that possessed] the raw material awaiting the right hand of man. It is the haven of the youngster with pluck in his baskets and in his craw, and brains in his head. It is an empire in the nude calling out to the world for a covering of man's enterprise. It is a region of liberty and freedom, tempered with charming chinooks and invigorating frosts...:Lastly, it is the last great west...Come young men, for this is the young man's country and grow up with the last west."[46] This contradiction of boosting a metropolis and a frontier may have been because boosters wanted "civilized" images, but did not wish to transplant entire metropolitan communities. That is, they wanted the conveniences of larger cities but did not want the social ills that were often found in cities. In fact, it is only within an "empire in the nude" that the resource potential could be boosted while, keeping the negative elements of the metropolis at bay.[47] Thoreau's opinion of civilized developments stressed that man needed "to secure all the advantage without suffering any of the disadvantages."[48]

Realtor advertisements found in newspapers also nourished the attitude that only the lands that served humans were of value. Roberts, Jones and Wilson, real estate and insurance agents in Fort George, publicized 160 acres of land suitable for subdivision all containing "five acres garden tracts ...open land with good soil and good water."[49] Acreage within a mile of Prince George Business Centre, proclaimed one advertisement, in fact "all the land lays level and the river front will make sure of the choicest...sites..."[50] The Union Realty Company and I.E. Haight called their lots Georgia Park. This subdivision was identified as being " a good piece of level, productive and admirably situated ground, [having] over a mile of waterfront, no hills, no

ravines.[51] These examples illustrate that land containing hills and ravines were not deemed to be valuable. Moreover, land that was close to water, and large enough to be subdivided was worthy of attention. Defining land as good or bad was directly related to the resource extraction potential. If the natural environment was defined as natural resources, then the land had to be manipulatable. Therefore, farmers desired level land that could be irrigated. In this sense the land could be cleared, seeds planted and crops grown.

As early as 1912, examples of a "back to the land ethic" were evident in Prince George newspapers, aimed at recapturing the pioneering frontier traits of earlier days. Undeveloped lands were crucial to pioneering and progress, for "without wild country the concept of frontier and pioneer were meaningless."[52] Development and resource extraction were signs of an advancing civilization. Consequently, to achieve this end, the land had to be moulded. A visitor to Prince George in that year disclosed that "he did not know of a place where the genuine pre empter could do better. As an indication of the financial returns, hay is selling at $100.00 a ton and when it is remembered that an acre yields 3 tons it can not be disputed that the country holds an attractiveness worth the attention...and to the call..back to the land."[53] A.H. Macgowan, a member of the Vancouver legislature, insisted that the land should be cleared by the unemployed. Adopting a combination of both make work projects and back to the land, he claimed that "the plan would work out for the general benefit of all. It would place idle land in use, would supply the necessities of life and give work to a great number who need it."[54] Soon the call for back to the land would be directly related to the war effort in Canada. Natural resources were the country's backbone. With this in mind all able bodied farmers were encouraged to produce their maximum yield. In Canada the "strength [lay] in her great natural resources...Farmers throughout the country [were] being urged to increase their acreage under crops and number of stock upon

their farms."[55] The Edmonton Hay and Grain Company Ltd., which had an office in Prince George, stressed that "the true patriot in 1915 will be the citizen who causes two blades of grass to grow where there was only one before."[56]

This rally call of back to the land was echoed in Prince George at a public meeting held in 1915. At this meeting a group of 250 farmers, businessmen and land owners sought to form a Lands Improvement Association. Their next step was to petition the provincial government for funds to assist settlers who wanted to "quickly develop their lands and produce results." The Association employed the infectious power of boosterism by declaring that their idea "should appeal to everyone for without the development and settlement of [their] lands there [could] be no real prosperity in the province."[57] These incidents prove that back to the land was defined in terms of increased manipulation and development of the natural environment. For when humans were in contact with an undeveloped environment, they were presented with a blank slate. In turn this slate provided the opportunity to affirm human dominance and superiority over all else. Dominance and the a successful struggle against nature increased pride, and assured "man's highest potency, the ability to endure..." at the expense of nature.[58]

Prince George was also promoted for its natural beauty. This form of promotion suggests that the settlers held perceptions of nature that were contrary to the notions of exploitation and development. However, upon closer examination, the appreciation of Prince George's natural beauty was directly related real estate and the human alteration of the environment from its natural state to one of controlled beauty. A newspaper article from 1913 asked citizens "To Promote the City Beautiful." The author wrote that "one of the most beautiful spots in the country is undoubtably the lake created by the high water on the Hudson Bay property...[and] if a dam were put in across the mouth of the creek at the Fraser, this beautiful little lake could become a

permanent feature...that would wonderfully enhance the value of the property along its shores."[59] Similar sentiments of beautifying Prince George occurred when the editor of the Fort George Herald commented on Mrs. McLaughlin's well-kept garden. Her home at 4th and Clark Street was so attractive to the eye that "it was worth going miles to see."[60] Additional representations of Prince George as an attractive place to live were displayed in Miller Addition advertisements. Utilizing language such as "natural beauty", the advertisements stated "justice cannot be done to a description of the natural beauty of the Prince George townsite without alluding in words of praise to the beautiful Miller Addition...the streets have been graded and marked by corner posts and a sidewalk runs through the property...the Miller Addition is beautifully situated...on the choicest residential property in Prince George."[61]

There are various reasons that explain the contradiction of promoting human domination over the environment whilst admiring its beauty. First, as mentioned, in most cases the beauty of the natural environment was achieved by altering it from its natural state. For example, if a dam were built, a beautiful lake would be created. Similarly, if gardens were built or streets graded, an area was deemed to be beautiful. Therefore, locales in Prince George that combined the conveniences of a city with human-controlled aesthetics of nature were deemed to be significant. However, in all instances the areas being described as beautiful were in relation to the economic property value. All samples illustrate that nature was appreciated if altered, and only if it contributed to the human experience of increasing the economic worth of the land.

The City Beautiful Movement also helps explain why the land was altered to please the human eye. This planning concept was popularized in North America during the first half of the twentieth century. Hired by the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Boston planning firm of Brett Hall and Co. designed Prince George. Like their Canadian counterparts, this American firm was "active

in campaigning against the squalor and the ugly environment that were developing in Canadian communities...prior to World War I"[62] This design was "rooted in powerful aesthetic principles [of] symmetry, coherence perspective and [as Hodge puts it] monumentality."[63] In essence, the natural environment provided the means that promoted settlement in Prince George. The City Beautiful Movement placed an aesthetically pleasing urban environment upon this natural setting. This was but a continuation of human dominance over the land, creating a desirable vista. This made Prince George not only a place where people wanted to live, but, where they could also make a living from the natural environment.

Transforming the Land

It is evident that boosters used certain aspects of the environment to entice settlement to Prince George. In 1920 at a Railway Commission meeting, George Hammond stated that "[they] acquired this property and endeavoured to make some money out of it. We subdivided it, we graded the streets laid sidewalks, put up water works and built certain buildings and so on, and people began to come." This influx of people remained steady until World War I erupted and young men throughout the country left for France. In 1915 alone, one hundred men left Prince George bound for Europe.[64] The ramifications of settlers prior to this exodus is the concern of this section. Who came to Prince George, what did they do once they were there and how did the landscape change with their presence? The land at Prince George proper did not support many of the elements that the boosters promoted, such as farming and mining. This was primarily because the owners of the land sought greater economic return by establishing a town to service the farmers. A majority of farmers settled on the other side of the rivers opposite the town sites, and towards Mud River (west). Instead, Prince George developed as a gateway for these resources, a place that could ship goods south, east or west. It also served as a supplier of tools,

transportation, social gatherings and the like. This gateway turned into a settlement, which brought with it businesses, surveys, maps, fences, land laws, people, private property and roadways, all elements that transformed the landscape.

In 1910, when provincial land surveyor Frederic Burden arrived in Fort George, the only buildings in Fort George were a store, and the old Hudson Bay Fort on the Fraser River.[65] As for South Fort George, it was a scattering of two or three buildings. In 1910 Reserve No. 1, where Prince George would develop, consisted of "about 200 Indians and a few garden patches, but the rest was just a wilderness."[66] These early accounts of Prince George suggest that since 1820, when the Hudson Bay Post was established, human impact had remained consistent and minimal. There existed the HBC and the Reserve, but the land changes accompanying settlement had not yet occurred.

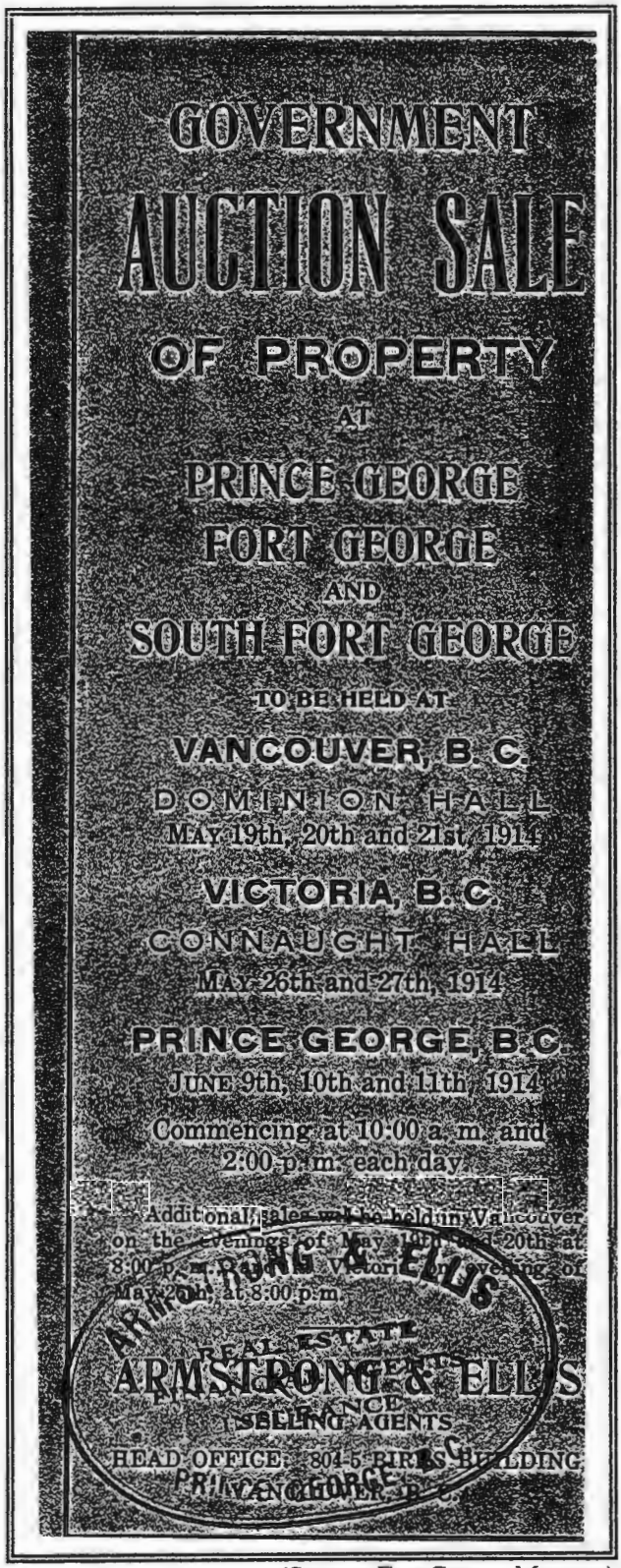
Surveying the land was the beginning of the changes that were to come. For the first time the land was mapped and divided. Subdividing the land placed the landscape into rectangular sections. Aside from the HBC post and Reserve No 1, Prince George's landscape now possessed lots that could be owned by various individuals. The surveying of the land opened the opportunities that boosters proclaimed in their literature. When the surveyors arrived in 1910, their government contract dictated that the land be divided into sections and 1/4 sections so that "settlers could take up land as pre emption."[67] When surveying the banks of the Nechako, the surveyor felt that it was not worthy of development. However, at a rapid pace land pre emption occurred and on the banks of the Nechako settlers "began flocking in."[68] Burden watched as new arrivals kept "coming in and taking up land. They built a great many shacks of one kind or another in Fort George and worked out on their places from there."[69] Between 1881 and 1911 the population of British Columbia increased by 700 percent, largely because of the extractable

resources available. In 1909 the population of Fort George was estimated to be 100 non-Native men, women and children and by 1911 this figure was up to 600. Settlers kept arriving and by 1914 the permanent population was estimated by local historian Reverend Runnalls to be 1500 people, in South Fort George and Fort George combined.

Manipulating the landscape into sections and quarter sections for sale attracted interest from many places. The tax roll from 1915 indicates that landowners original residences were places as far apart as Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Spokane, Quebec, Minnesota, Alaska, Ontario, Seattle, New Orleans, Winnipeg, San Francisco, California, Iowa, Idaho, Colorado and Detroit.[70] This suggests both the distance the boosters sent their message and the array of attitudes that new and foreign landowners had accumulated through past experiences. All of the locales mentioned were already settled areas that had previously experienced the process of development and resource exploitation. For example, in both the United States and Canada the first stages of European settlement occurred in the 1600's. Therefore some of the settlers coming to Prince George were perhaps exposed to two centuries of settlement experience. The rate of settlement is illustrated by the increased number of land purchase certificates in the Caribou and Fort George Districts between 1900 and 1913. For example, from 1900 to 1909 land purchases in the Caribou District went from 23 to 451. Meanwhile, in the Fort George District land purchases peaked in 1910 with 2097 and then slowly bottomed out to 434 in 1913.[71]

Ownership and Surveying

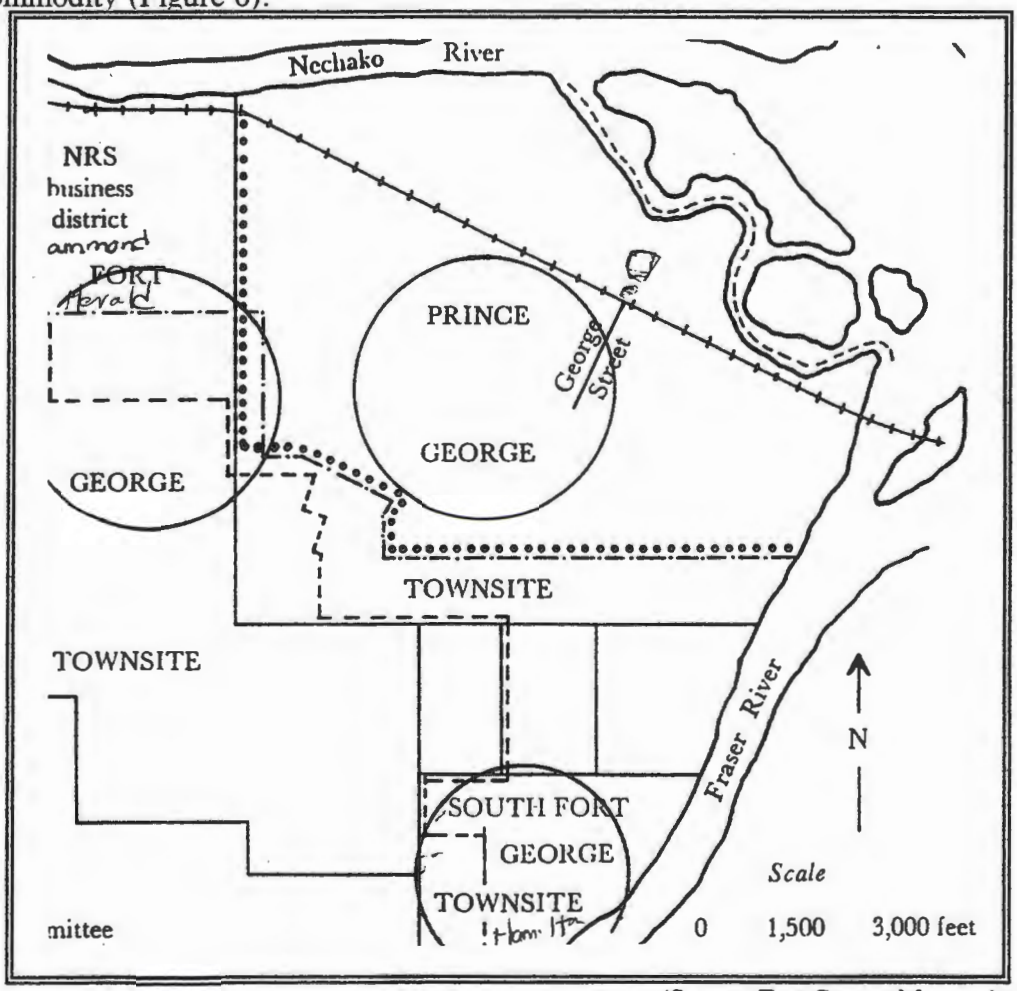
The area was slowly becoming defined by those who owned it. No longer was it the environment but rather property. No longer was it a whole, but rather like a pieces of a puzzle, each tract holding a different value (Figures 5). For example by 1911, the reserve that was located at the merging of the Fraser and Nechako was now in the hands of the Grand Trunk Pacific.



(Source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 5: A brochure, circulated in Vancouver to promote land in the Georges, 1914.

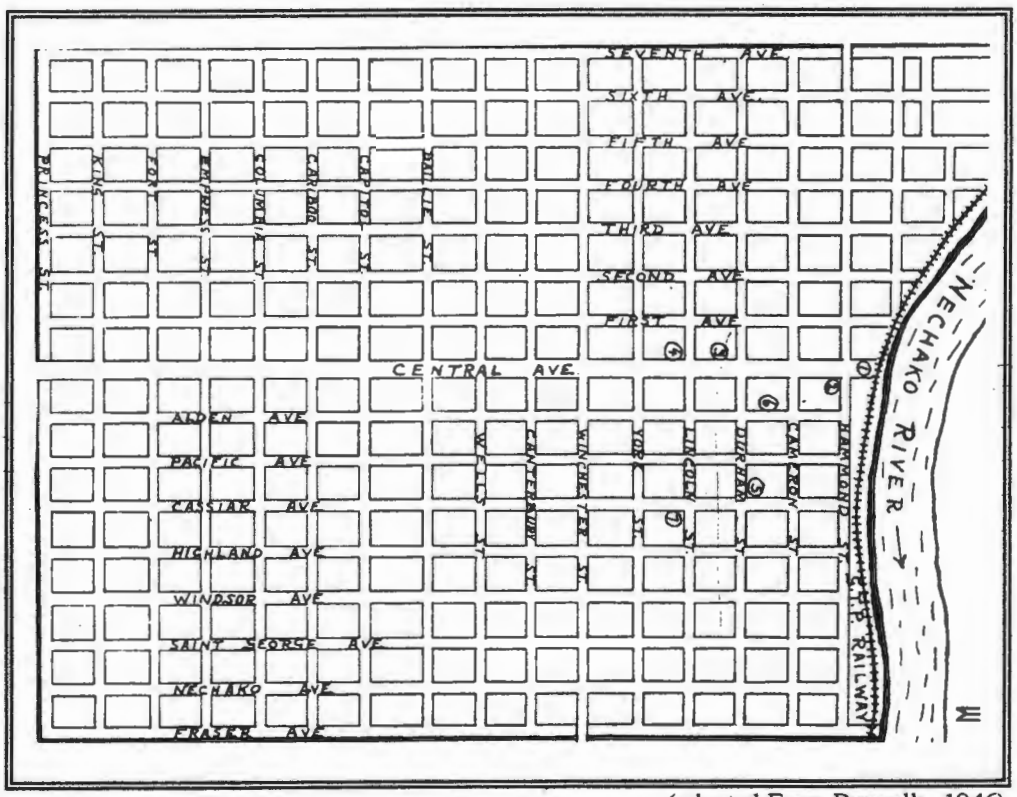
Similarly, to the west of the GTP property were lots 937 and 938, 412.8 acres owned by the Natural Resources Security Company (later to be Fort George). South of lots 937 and 938 was lot 1429 also owned by the Natural Resources Security Company (136.2 acres, later to be Central Fort George). South of the GTP property was lot 777, 601 acres owned by the NRSC. To the west and south of the Hudson Bay Company was land comprising South Fort George, and the Bird Addition, both owned by the Northern Development Company. Following the surveying of lands into various sections, all owned by a variety of individuals and corporations, came change. Essentially, the landscape was now tracts of land in the hands of private owners who established legal boundaries. In turn these legal boundaries had assigned to the land a price, thus treating it as a commodity (Figure 6).



(Source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 6: 1914 - Three distinct towns formed where the rivers meet.

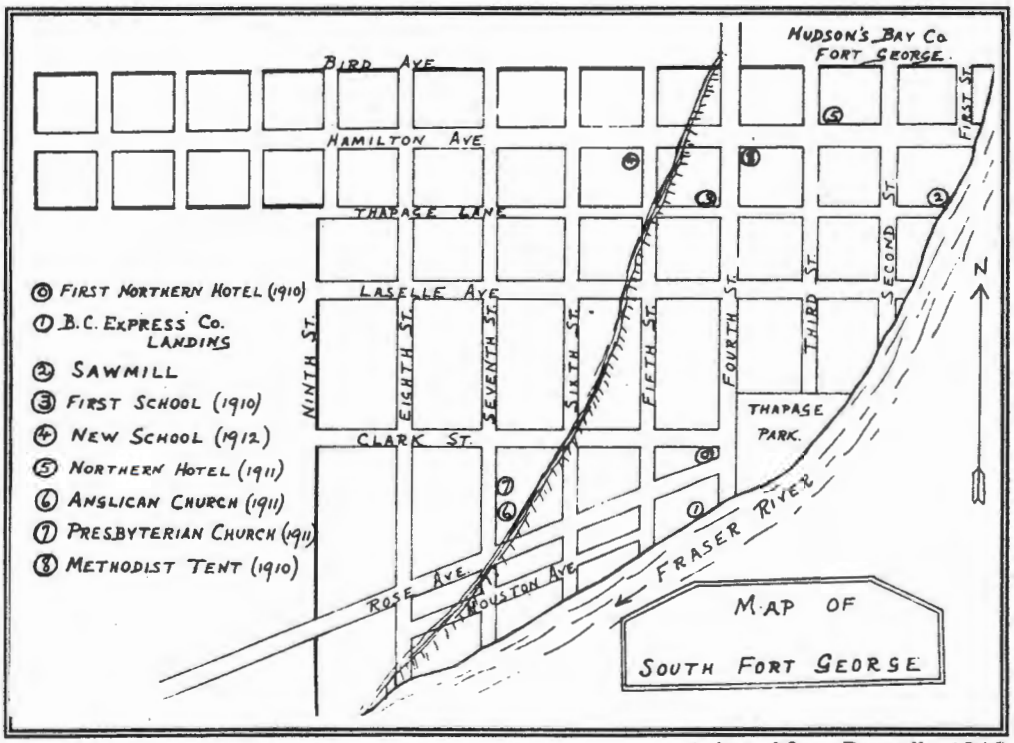
Fort George, comprising lots 937, 938 and 1429, totalled 549 acres. After Hammond and his company NRSC had it surveyed, they began a transformation that continued for many years. A survey was conducted in 1910 creating 51 blocks from the Nechako to 5th Avenue and as far east as Central Avenue (Figure 7). Each block was then subdivided into separate lots of up to 36 purchaseable slivers of land. Then by "early 1910 a crew of men was sent to clear the new townsite and by midsummer it was a small city of tents."[72] The land bordering the Nechako river was cleared of all growth that was deemed to be a barrier against development of a townsite. It is true that a majority of the trees felled were utilized for building material, but this deforestation affected the soils and animal habitat (See Chapter Six). J.A. Shearer was the first non Native to build a home on the land in Fort George, and this marked the beginning of the of wooden structures upon the landscape. All sites belonged to different individuals who claimed authority over the land.[73] Many other men and women claimed parcels of land in Fort George and began the process of forging out a new existence in the central interior. They too, set to work clearing the land and using the wood from it to build homes. Among the buildings that were planted on Fort George's landscape by the close of 1910 were a Presbyterian Church that like similar churches spread the Lord's gospel of subduing the land, a town hall to orchestrate development and the Fort George Hotel, to temporarily house pre emptors and labourers.[74] This progression of subduing the land was unstoppable and by the end of that year Fort George had three blocks of business buildings.



(adapted From Runnalls, 1946)

Figure 7: The land in Fort George was divided into grids with streets running N-S, E-W. Streets defined locations and land became property.

In 1906 parcels of land along the Fraser were staked and divided. Three years later, beside the old HBC post, A.G. Hamilton managed to clear ten of his sixty acres, preparing it for settlers to come.[75] He then preceded to build one of the first structures in South Fort George, a store that could supply settlers with the tools they needed to convert the land into a town. The Provincial Land Surveyor's map of 1909 furthers the notion of the land being parcelled. The South Fort George Addition was divided into 25 different blocks, each block containing up to 16 lots (Figure 8). South along the Fraser River Joseph Thapage and Pierre Rois pre-empted land, while to the west James Bird set to work on his land.



(adapted from Runnalls, 1946)

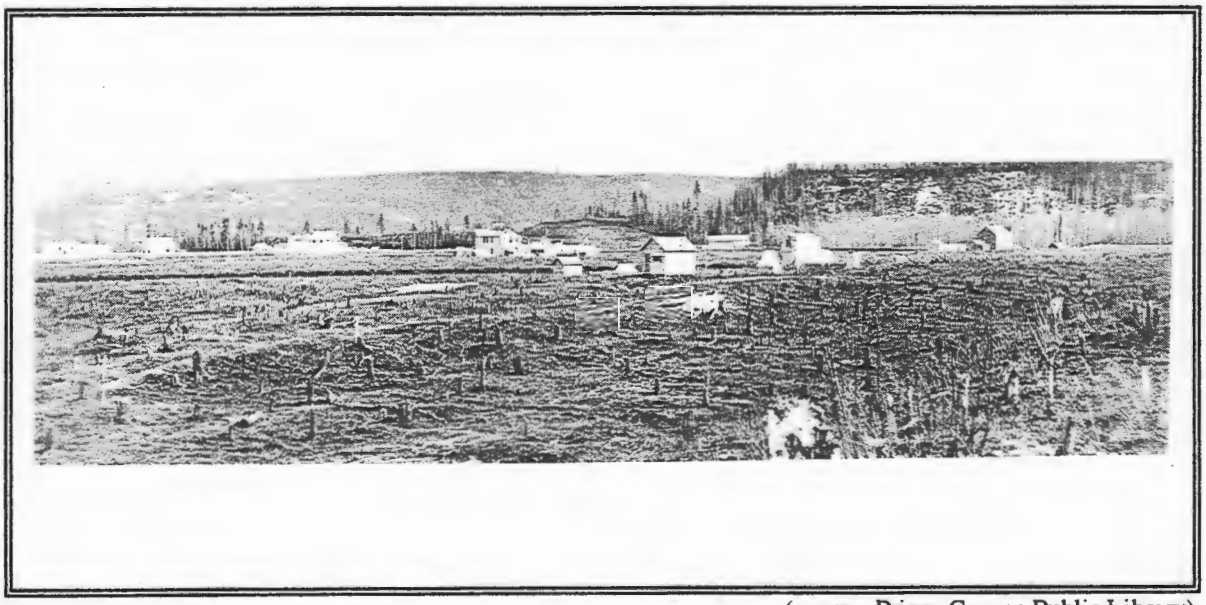
Figure 8: The land at South Fort George was also divided up and defined by human names that enclosed property lots.

Here too, the timber that was cleared was then used to construct the townsite[76] (Figures 9 & 10). The creation of a fire committee in 1911 indicates the amount of forest resources used to build structures. Upon the committee's recommendation four main fire brigades were hired and an alarm system was placed in three different locations in town because "South Fort George had no viable means of fire protection which left the community in a great state of danger."[77] The structures built in South Fort George provided settlers with similar services found in Fort George. They included the First Northern Hotel on the corner of Clark and Fourth, the first school on Thapage Lane, the Northern Hotel on Hamilton Avenue, and an Anglican Church on Seventh Street.[78]

By 1913 the Grand Trunk Pacific rail construction crews had begun the process of clearing the land for settlement. Reserve No. 1 was burnt to the ground, creating yet another blank slate to work on, and the entire Native village was relocated up the Fraser River where new buildings were constructed, hence repeating the same process of land change.[79] The GTP newly acquired land was "then subdivided and laid out."[80] An examination of the town plan for Prince George in 1915 is revealing. The Reserve land was transformed into 349 blocks from the Nechako and Fraser, south and west until it met the other two Georges. Again each block contained numerous lots that became the property of individuals (Figure 11). An auction that was held in Vancouver sold 1175 out of 4259 lots, mostly along the soon to be George Street (Figure 12).

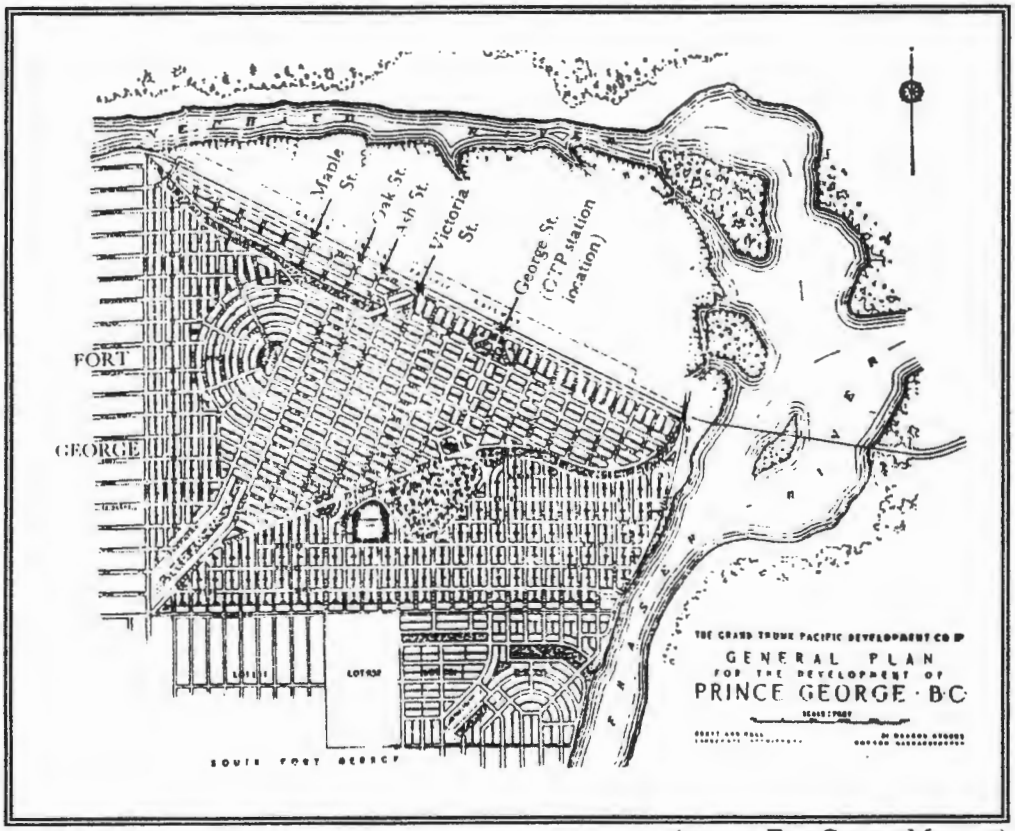
(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 9: Common sight of clearing the land of trees, temporarily living in tents until a home could be built with local materials.



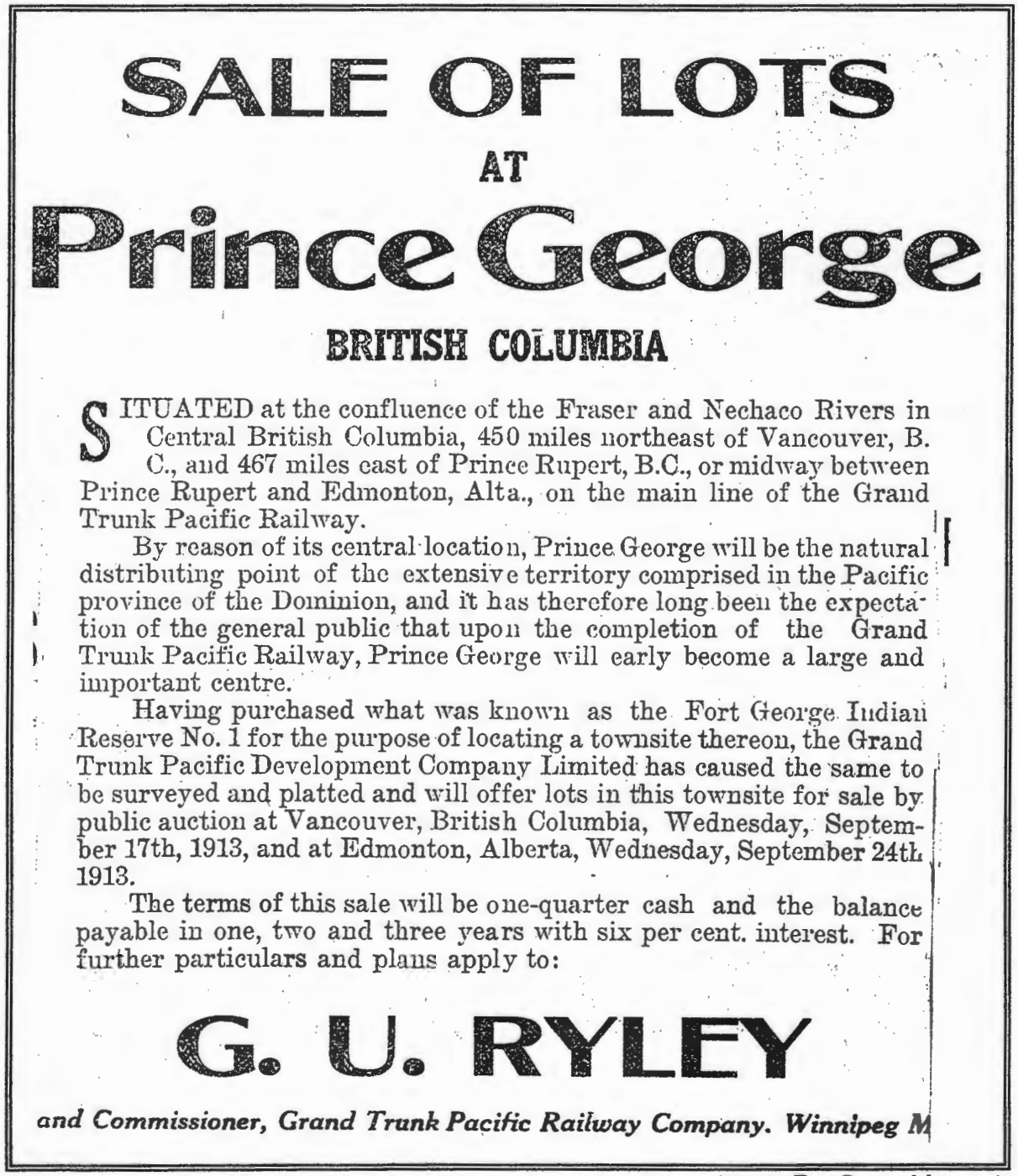
(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 10: Land of stumps, (c.a. 1910-11).



(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 11: Prince George Town Plan.
Planned by the Boston firm of Brett, Hall & co. 1915.



SALE OF LOTS

AT

Prince George

BRITISH COLUMBIA

SITUATED at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechaco Rivers in Central British Columbia, 450 miles northeast of Vancouver, B. C., and 467 miles east of Prince Rupert, B.C., or midway between Prince Rupert and Edmonton, Alta., on the main line of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

By reason of its central location, Prince George will be the natural distributing point of the extensive territory comprised in the Pacific province of the Dominion, and it has therefore long been the expectation of the general public that upon the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, Prince George will early become a large and important centre.

Having purchased what was known as the Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1 for the purpose of locating a townsite thereon, the Grand Trunk Pacific Development Company Limited has caused the same to be surveyed and platted and will offer lots in this townsite for sale by public auction at Vancouver, British Columbia, Wednesday, September 17th, 1913, and at Edmonton, Alberta, Wednesday, September 24th 1913.

The terms of this sale will be one-quarter cash and the balance payable in one, two and three years with six per cent. interest. For further particulars and plans apply to:

G. U. RYLEY

and Commissioner, Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company. Winnipeg M

(source: Fort George Museum,)

Figure 12: Scaled down version of a poster that circulated throughout Vancouver, Britain and Ontario selling Prince George.

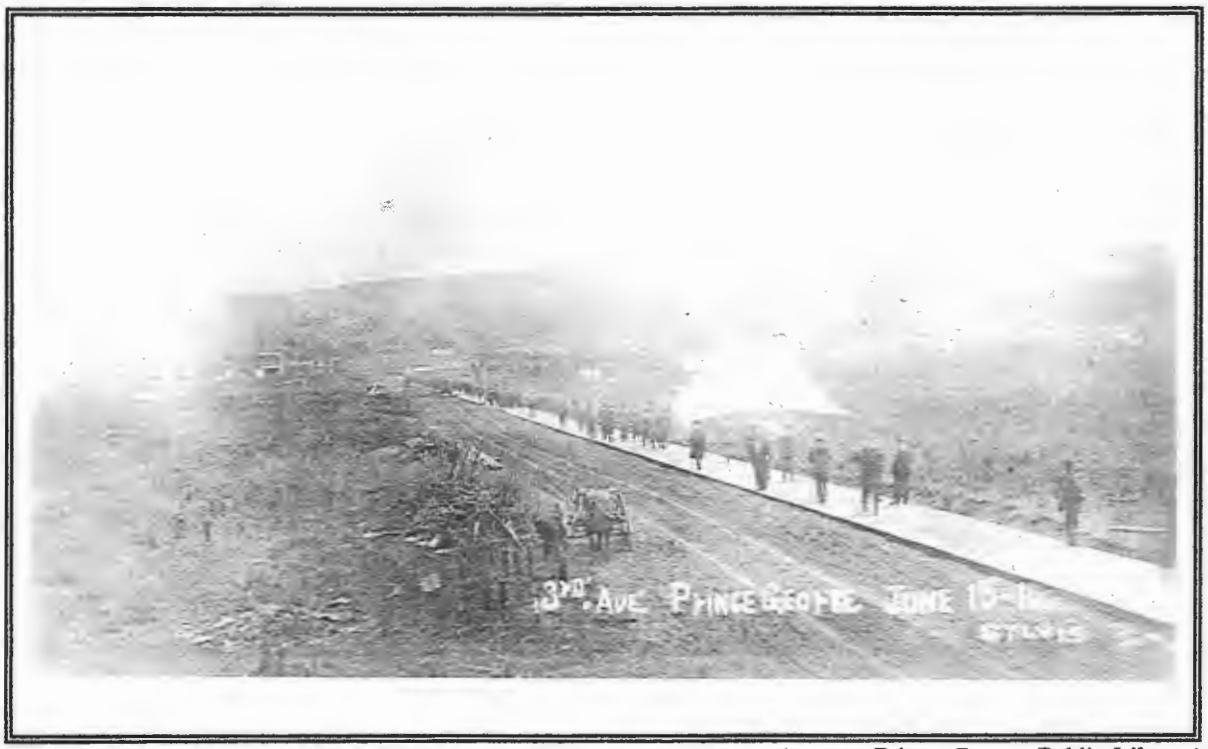
Services

Accompanying the buildings scattered across the new community was the development of services to accommodate the growing population. George Hammond wasted no time providing the settlers in Fort George with conveniences of "civilization." For example, he initiated the building of a water system to meet the increased demands of the local population. This rudimentary structure included a gas pump that drained water from the Nechako River into a large wooden tank on Central Avenue.[81] One year later a Citizens Water Company was chartered to manage this liquid resource. The first act of the Company was to fulfill the desires of the growing population by enlarging the tank on Central Avenue. Hence, the landscape facilitated water running up hill from the river into a man made reservoir servicing its creator. Increased settlement also meant that the dirt roads were raised and graded so that water mains could be laid under the streets of Fort George.[82] As for the water needs of the residents of South Fort George, a majority of them dug wells and used outdoor earth enclosures for sanitation purposes. In this case the landscape was marked with punctures that accommodated human intake and output.

The construction of streets were another instance of humans altering the land. In 1911, Fort George District alone was granted $109,000 by the provincial government for road construction.[83] Shortly thereafter, Fort George Townsite developed streets. By 1914, Hammond's property afforded its settlers graded streets and sidewalks. The grading of streets not only widened the throughways for human travel but also deeply scarred the land, a process that had a drastically different effect than that of the foot and wagon trails that once connected different locales. The creation of streets in a town, encouraged further development in the form of shops and stores. Moreover, when streets were laid they provided the foundation for future road improvements and connecting roads. Interestingly enough the placement of streets also demanded

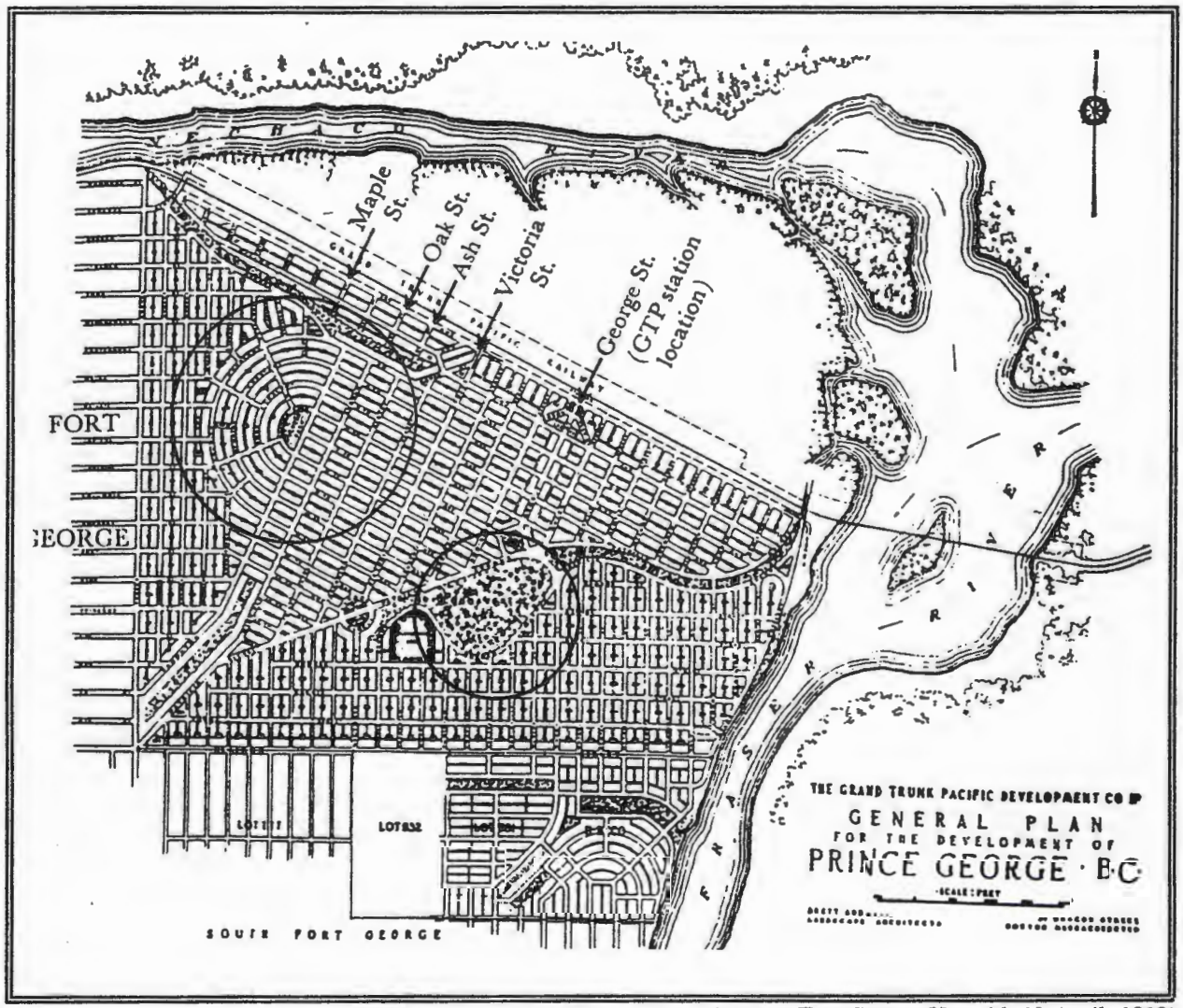
the resource of felled trees. The sidewalks that bordered streets were built with wooden planks. The demand for such conveniences is illustrated by the fact that Don McPhee and Roy Spur made considerable profits by supplying the planks for these sidewalks. Similarly, in 1911, South Fort George petitioned the Department of Lands for street improvements. A short time later under the guidance of the Northern Development Company, the terrain was graded and paths were widened to create streets in South Fort George. For example, 8th Avenue had been transformed into a 80 foot wide thoroughfare.[84] New permanent sidewalks also adorned the streets. Made of cement they circled the centre of the townsite.

Prince George's incorporation came in 1915. The main reason for this move was to acquire Federal and Provincial funds for improvements such as water systems and road works. For example, in 1914, following the City Beautiful city plan, the GTP spent approximately $500,000 on building construction in Prince George to accommodate the onslaught of settlers.[85] By 1915 there was a concern over the need for sidewalks, and it was declared that if lumber were acquired sidewalks could be built along 3rd Avenue[86] (Figure 13). Three years later the city of town of Prince George would set aside $3,000 for plowing and clearing roads in the winter season, to prevent flooding in the spring during melt down. The development of Prince George proper saw the Boston planning firm establish crescents, streets and avenues throughout the town. Of significance is the fact that the crescent streets in north west Prince George served as human made barriers on the land (Figure 14). The nature of crescents (horseshoe shaped roads) prohibited throughways. Crescents replaced straight road access and introduced curved roads that were time consuming when travelled.



(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 13: 3rd Avenue Prince George.
Note the wooden sidewalks. Also, the road seems to be used extensively by horse and wagon.



(source: Fort George Hearald, 13 April, 1913)

Figure 14: A closer examination of P.G. reveals the concepts of "City Beautiful Planning": 1) curved crescents; 2) open park space; 3) residential areas; and 4) note the crescents prohibit flow to Fort George.

In fact, Hammond would later comment to the Railway Commission that the Prince George town plan purposefully excluded access to Fort George in hopes of halting settlement in a competing town.

The GTP also established Connaught Hill, the irony of this park was that it's aim was to provide residents with the elements of the natural environment, such as trees and grass. Located just behind Princess Square, this park epitomised the fact that the land was changing. As a consequence of laying streets and erecting buildings, the natural environment was disappearing. The town that developed with the aid of the forest industry lacked trees. A park fulfilled this desire by providing trees and grass. Parks represent a human-made and controlled natural environment. Connaught Hill also kept the ills of metropolitan areas at bay and maintained the frontier image by providing a combination of both civilization and the natural environment. Located in a residential area, the park also became a real estate attraction to pre-empters. In essence, Connaught Hill was part of the City Beautiful Movement, which sought to incorporate natural space in developing towns.

Defining the Land

Accompanying the laying of streets were street names which illustrated the order and dominance of human agents. A majority of street names in Prince George reminded residents of the early residents who had successfully manipulated nature. For example, moving south from the Nechako, Fort George defined the land by Barby Street, Holden Street, Cameron Street and Hammond Street. Moreover, the creation of a Central Avenue meant that a once open space of land now had a centre piece where development and activities should take place within a town. Street names lined the land of South Fort George as well. A map of South Fort George in 1910 helps to explain this process (Figure 8). Just south of Reserve No.1, from west to east was Bird

Avenue, followed by Hamilton Avenue in honour of A.G. Hamilton, Thapage Lane after an original owner of Northern Development property, Laselle Avenue after an American who bought part of South Fort George, Clark Street also a landowner in South Fort George. Running from the north down to the Fraser were First to Ninth Streets. Prince George streets also redefined the landscape. The centre of the Georges now had names such as Gillet Street in honour of W.G. Gillet a builder who became the first mayor of Prince George, and Cain Drive after Martin Cain, a prominent lumberman, Patricia Boulevard named after Princess Patricia, the daughter of the Duke of Connaught, Aitkens Street in honour of John Aitkens who came to Prince George in 1912 and purchased two lots and built a house, and George Street named after King George V.[87] In all cases the landscape had changed from paths or wooded areas into roads. In turn these roads and streets identified the land in terms of humans not nature. Moreover, street names such as Oak, Maple and Ash represented parts of nature that had either been cut down or did not grow in the region. Hence, this provided parts of nature without nature itself.

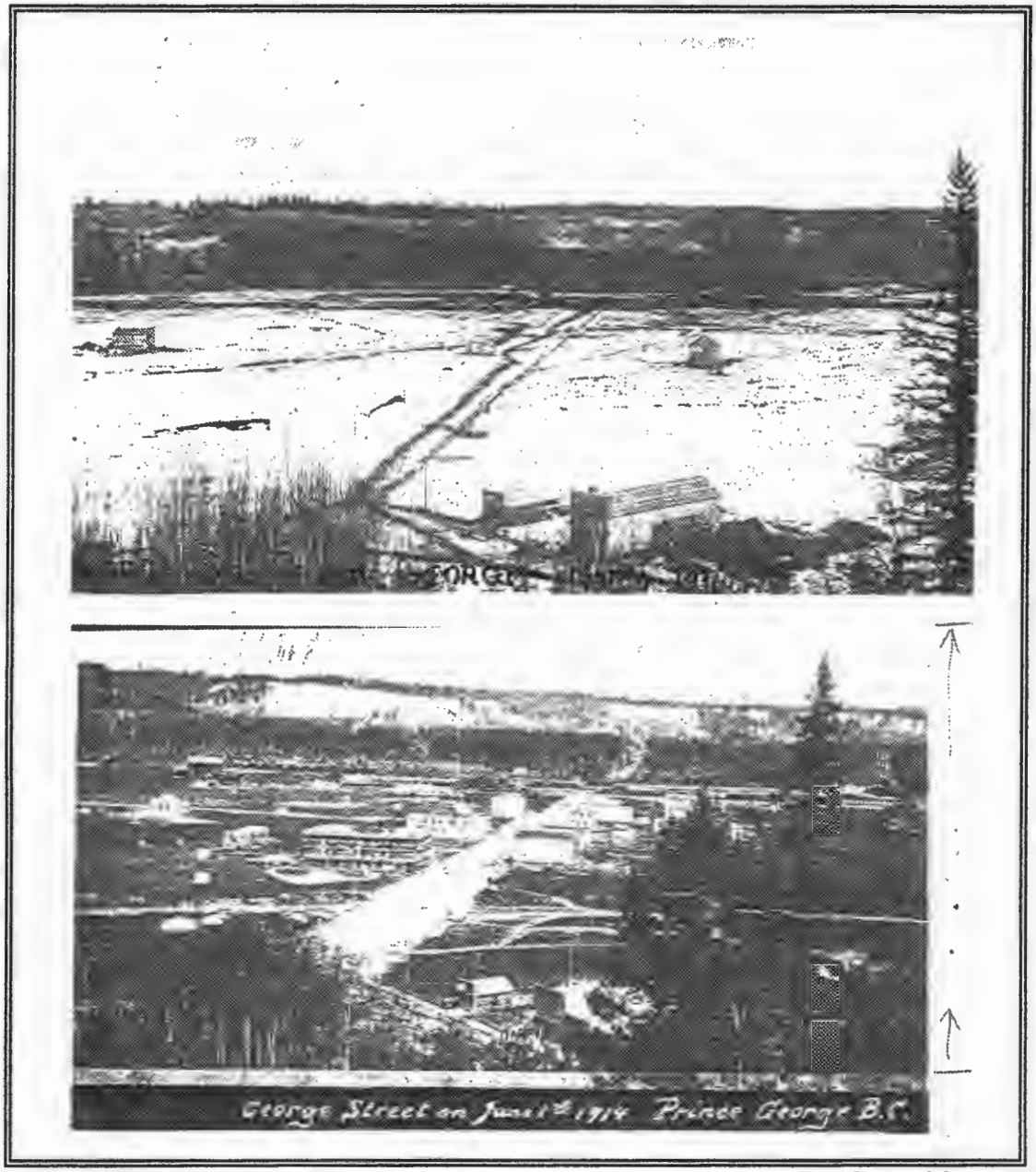
Structures on the Land

By transplanting a familiar scene of buildings, water supplies and roads, Fort George and South Fort George attracted even more settlers. What resulted was an increase in the amount of water that left the Nechako and wells dug, hence repeating the land moulding process. The directory for both townships from 1914 illustrates the activities that were taking place on the various streets. These activities came in the form of large buildings on the land. No longer were log structures scattered throughout the central interior. In Fort George many buildings rose, such as the Bank of Vancouver, Bookhuts Hardware, Buchanan Real Estate, Fort George Hotel, Hospital and Meat Market, Northern Lumber Company and McElroys Lumber. In South Fort George various buildings that accommodated human wants marked the landscape. These buildings

included the Bank of British North America, Empress Hotel, Fort George Hardware, Robarts Hotel, Fort George Trading and Lumber, a Forestry Office, and the Northern Lumber and Navigation Company.

The major structures that dotted the landscape in Prince George after 1914 included a City Hall at the south end of George Street, a high school at 5th and Winnipeg, the hospital on Fort and Lethbridge, the court house at 3rd and Brunswick, as well as King George Hotel, St. Regis Hotel, York House, Fort George Drug Company, J.B. Lamberts Store, North Coast Land Company and the Princess Theatre. Moreover, the tax rolls from 1915 to 1930 outline the money spent on city improvements that came in the form of fuel stations, ice houses, tool houses, stock yards, the Fraser River Bridge, and a road house. Additional structures migrated from Fort George and South Fort George. With the growing investment in Prince George, many businesses and buildings were transplanted in the new town. In 1920 Mayor Harry Perry stated that "over the past four years the business community has developed along George Street and 3rd Avenue"[88] (Figure 15).

The establishment of a land tax also encouraged land change. For example, the monies collected in land tax were redirected back into community development that led to further changes in the land. The importance of this is that land taxes constantly reinforced the notion that the land had a intrinsic economic value. By 1921 the total land tax was $80,604, while four years later it was $95,674 and by 1928 it was $99,259. The increase in taxes collected illustrates that settlers treated the land as private capital, improving it increased its value and therefore increased the holdings of the owner. The concept of improving the land to create an asset furthered the notion of individual private property via land change.[89]



(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 15: Same location. George Street, Prince George.
Top photo: March, 1914
Bottom Photo: June 1914
Notice: 1) widening of road; 2) appearance of buildings; 3) less trees on the cutbanks.

The settlement period of Prince George was based a common perception of the environment. Boosters went to work promoting the region as a place that afforded humans with a infinite supply of natural resources. Accompanying the limitless resources was the attitude that manipulating the natural environment was an acceptable consequence. The evidence provided describes the impetus that facilitated settlement in Prince George. Upon their arrival these settlers began to change the landscape. Farming, mining and commercial fishing did not occur on a large scale in Prince George and therefore are part of the changes that occurred. Instead, changes in the land came with the creation of roads, maps, structures and property systems, all components that promoted further changes. This chapter deliberately avoids a discussion about perceptions of forests and the impact that this industry had on the land, as these issues are dealt with in chapter six.

1William Cronon, Changes in the Land (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 166.

2.For further definitions of boosterism and different boosting studies see:
Alan Artibise, "City Building in the Canadian West, From Boosterism to Corporatism" in Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol 17, No.3. (1982).; Max Foran, The Booster in Boosterism, Some Calgary Examples (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1979).; T.C. Meredith, "The Upper Columbia Valley 1900-20: An Assessment of Boosterism and the Biography of Landscape" in The Canadian Geographer Vol. 29, No 1. (1985).

3.David Knight, "Boosterism and Locational Analysis: One Man's Swan is Another Man's Goose" in Urban Historical Review No.3, (1974), 10.

4.Ibid., 11.

5.Paul Voisey, "Boosting the Small Prairie Town 1909-1931: An Example from Southern Alberta" in Town and City (1981), 147.

6.Ibid., 147.

7.Ibid.

8.T.C. Meredith, "The Upper Columbia Valley 1900-20: An Assessment of Boosterism and the Biography of Landscape" in The Canadian Geographer Vol. 29, No 1. (1985), 45.

9.Max Foran, The Booster in Boosterism, Some Calgary Examples (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1979), 77-82.

10.Neil Holmes, "The Promotion and Early Growth in the City of Western Canada: A Case Study of Prince George, 1905-15" (B.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1974),17.

11.Ibid., 29.

12.Ibid., 51.

13.Natural Resources Security Company, Fort George (Vancouver:1912), 3.

14.Ibid., 11.

15.Ibid.

16.Ibid., 29.

17.Ibid., 4.

18.Ibid., 39.

19.Ibid.

20.Ibid., 29.

21.Natural Resources Security Company, B.C. Bulletin of Information No. 6 (Vancouver, B.C.: 1911), 8.

22.Ibid., 6.

23.Ibid., 8.

24.Ibid., 19.

25.Grand Trunk Pacific Development Corporation, The Central Interior and Coast District in British Columbia Along the GTP (Winnipeg: Grand Trunk Pacific Development Co. 1910), 6.

26.Ibid., 2.

27.Ibid., 1.

28.Ibid., 19.

29.F.A. Talbot, The New Garden of Canada, (Toronto: Cassell Co. Ltd., 1911), cover.

30.Ibid., 160.

31.Ibid.

32.Ibid., 171.

33.Henry Boam, B.C. Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources (London: Sells Ltd., 1912), 385.

34.Ibid.

35.Ibid., 152.

36.Ibid.

37.Ibid., 155.

38.Fort George Tribune, (Fort George), 24 December 1909.

39.Fort George Herald, (Fort George), 28 October 1911.

40.Thomas Dunlap, Saving America's Wildlife (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 9.

41.Fort George Tribune, (Fort George), 19 August 1912.

42.Ibid., 2 August 1913.

43.Prince George Post,(Prince George), 15 August 1914.

44.Fort George Herald, (Fort George), 27 August 1910.

45.Ibid.

46.Ibid., 8 October 1910.

47.Voisey, "Boosting the Small Prairie Town 1909-1931: An Example from Southern Alberta", 164.

48.Brooks Atkinson, ed., Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau, (New York: Random House, 1937), 258.

49.Fort George Herald, (Fort George), 20 October 1913.

50.Ibid., 15 November 1913.

51.Ibid., 26 December 1913.

52.Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1967), 145.

53.Fort George Herald, (Fort George), 14 September 1912.

54.Ibid., 31 October 1914.

55.Ibid., 9 January 1915.

56.Fort George Tribune, (Fort George), 21 November 1914.

57.Prince George Post, (Prince George), 2 January 1915.

58.Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 154.

59.Fort George Herald, (Fort George), 28 June 1913.

60.Ibid., 18 August 1914.

61.Prince George Post, (Prince George), 21 November 1914.

62.Gerald Hodge, Planning Canadian Communities (Toronto: Methuen, 1986), 58.

63.Ibid.

64.Fort George/Prince George Board of Trade Minutes Prince George, B.C. 7 June 1915.

65.Frederick Burden "Interview with Frederick Burden, Provincial Land Surveyor" interviewed by C.D. Orchard (October 1959) in Prince George, B.C.

66.Ibid.

67.Ibid.

68.Ibid.

69.Ibid.

70.Prince George Tax Assessment, Prince George, B.C. 1915.

71.Hudson, "Traplines, and Timber: Social and Economic Change Among Carrier Indians of Northern British Columbia", 97.

72.Prince George Branch of Canadian Federation of University Women, Prince George Street Names A-Z, (Prince George, B.C.:1970), 102.

73.Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners, Considerations of the Petitions of the Residents of Fort George (Prince George, B.C. 1920), 7679.

74.Holmes, "The Promotion and Early Growth in the City of Western Canada: A Case Study of Prince George, 1905-15", 31.

75.Ibid.

76.Ibid.

77.Ibid., 41.

78.F.E. Runnalls, The History of Prince George (Vancouver: Wrigley Printing Co. Ltd., 1947).

79.Holmes, "The Promotion and Early Growth in the City of Western Canada: A Case Study of Prince George, 1905-15", 46.

80.Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners, Considerations of the Petitions of the Residents of Fort George (Prince George, B.C. 1920), 7667.

81.Burden "Interview with Frederick Burden, Provincial Land Surveyor".

82.Holmes, "The Promotion and Early Growth in the City of Western Canada: A Case Study of Prince George, 1905-15", 36.

83.Ibid.

84.Ibid.

85.Ibid.

86.Fort George/Prince George Board of Trade Minutes Prince George, B.C. 4 May 1915.

87.Prince George Branch of Canadian Federation of University Women, Prince George Street Names A-Z, 7.

88.Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners, Considerations of the Petitions of the Residents of Fort George, 7691.

89.Tax rolls begin in 1915, therefore it is difficult to assess money spent on improvements prior to this.

Chapter Five

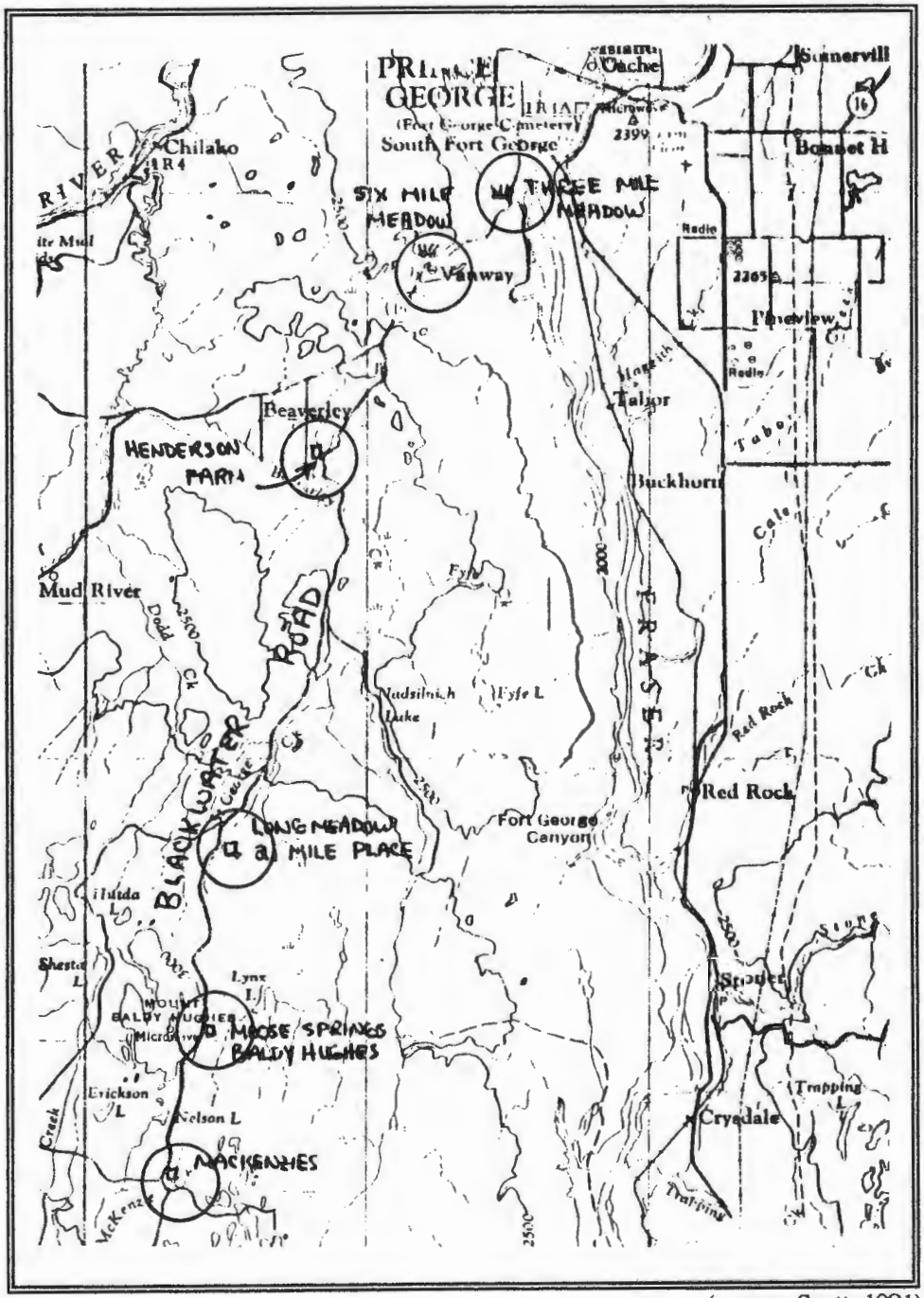
Landscape in Motion

The powerful perception that defined the natural environment as limitless natural resources, could only be realized through access to them. To accommodate the need to access resources, the government and private businesses provided various modes of transportation to British Columbia's central interior. Transportation was the means by which people could travel to Prince George to fulfill their hopes and dreams of making a living from the land. The development of wagon roads brought passengers from Quesnel to Prince George. Sternwheelers floated settlers, entrepreneurs and labourers up the Fraser and the Grand Trunk Pacific brought people overland to British Columbia's gateway to the north. To reach this resource rich region the landscape had to be reshaped, a small price to pay for what would be waiting.

Wagon Roads

Environmental historian Wayland Drew claims that the "tentacles of the progressive, ordered metropolitan culture reach everywhere, grasp everything."[1] Prince George experienced a similar grasp in the early 1900's when wagon roads aided the onslaught of new arrivals who were hoping to strike it rich, bring in a massive harvest or pre-empt choice land.

These roads were initially developed because the terrain prohibited the use of any other mode of transportation. The Blackwater Road joined Prince George with Quesnel and was the "descendant of the original Indian footpath" that crept its way through the interior[2] (Figure 16).



(source: Scott, 1981)

Figure 16: The Blackwater Road heading to Prince George.
Circled are the stop houses where one could rest.

During the early real estate boom, between 1900 and 1914, this meagre footpath was transformed into an increasingly busy wagon road. The use of this road was initiated by the various attitudes towards the natural environment which prompted the use and maintenance of these particular roads. The Northern Development Company of South Fort George submitted a half-page advertisement in the Fort George Herald claiming that there was four thousand feet of river front land available to anyone willing to become rich. This advertisement also declared that Fort George was the natural centre of the great Fort George district, and that "five months ago [it was] brush and today it is where 95% of the business of the entire district is." But if this progress was to continue, improved access to Prince George was needed. Newspapers urged men to come to Fort George and "clear the remaining uncleared portion of South Fort George and the cutting down of the ridge intersecting the town sight...to the Blackwater Road...to make the ascent for vehicles and pedestrians an easy matter..."[3]

The attitudes of early town boosters conveyed a strong message to the general public. The aim of boosters was to encourage people to travel north, and find an opportunity among the commodities found in nature. The Blackwater Road brought supplies as well as people to Prince George, performing the duty of funnelling settlers, freight, miners, railway supplies and workers to the town. The growing population also intensified the manipulation of the local environment by increasing the use of the road. Scott described the years 1909 to 1913. He stated the "rush of settlers to the Nechako Valley and Fort George peaked...[leading] to the first major use and development of the northern half of the Blackwater Road."[4] In 1909, A.G. Hamilton recognized the demand of people to access the unclaimed resources. He set to work by arranging a bi-monthly stage between Fort George and Quesnel which travelled along the Blackwater Road. Similarly, the rush of settlers seeking opportunity in the local environment prompted the B.C. Express

Company to start a regular stage over the Blackwater Road.

The increased use of the Blackwater Road led to direct changes in the landscape. First were the physical characteristics of this bush trial. It changed from a footpath, to a wide road that accommodated horses teams and stagecoaches. In 1909, "J.P. Cameron, provincial road superintendent, was in Fort George...coming from the Blackwater Road camp, to help younger men break a trail...He [had] built over 75 miles of new road and repaired 50 miles of old road [that] year."[5] The environment was reshaped one year later, when a government construction crew indicated that the trail had been broken and "the Blackwater Crossing to Fort George [was] adequate for stage trail."[6]

The stage coach also constituted a new mobile landscape, introducing for the first time, bright red coaches drawn by horses and carrying many people with their supplies.[7] (Figure 17) This linear cut through the land also exposed the forest to new sound scapes, the unheard noise of horses stomping and carriages rattling on the land. Moreover, many incidental landscape elements appeared on the Blackwater Road. For example, road houses began to appear along the Blackwater Road. W.R. Scott claimed that "the pattern of stopping houses and remount stations on the Blackwater changed continually throughout the boom period as entrepreneurs came and went and the maintenance standard of the road improved...Most settlers, [who operated road houses] while primarily engaged in farming or ranching would offer travellers a bed and a meal."[8]

Road houses illustrate changes in the land in that homes and barns replaced forests and grass. Second, the comfort of being able to have a home cooked meal and bed on a trail amongst the dense forests of the Central Interior of British Columbia was not only an experience that had only been dreamt of by folk who had left metropolitan areas, but such amenities were landscape elements that became positive reinforcements for further use of the road. The fact that there was

a need to build road stops is further testimony that new arrivals were arriving non stop to seek opportunities in the north at an unprecedented pace.

(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 17: Typical mobile landscape entering Fort George, a team of horses pulling a stage coach from Quesnel.

Again, the building of homes along the Blackwater Road meant that the local forest was used to both construct and heat the dwellings. Local fauna was also used to feed the numerous guests that stopped for the night. The use of the Blackwater Road continued, especially during the winter months when stages could be pulled on sleds. However, this mode of transportation experienced fierce competition from another mode of transportation. Sternwheelers plying north, up the navigable waterways were viewed to be more efficient, able to transport more people and supplies to the central interior.

Sternwheelers

Sternwheelers were the second major mode of transportation that opened resource opportunities to the public. New arrivals coming north to Prince George often opted to travel on wagon roads to Soda Creek, then board a comfortable sternwheeler bound for destinations in the central interior.[9] For example, between 1863 and 1921 approximately 12 paddle wheelers frequented the Upper Fraser. Of these 12, six attracted the largest amount of people. They were the Chilco (latter called the Nechacco), the Charlotte, the BX, Fort Fraser, Chilcotin and the Quesnel. The BX was owned and operated by the BC Express Company and the Fort Fraser and Chilcotin by the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company.[10]

At this point it is crucial to understand why people were taking sternwheelers to Prince George. Art Down's book Paddlewheels on the Frontier aptly describes the sternwheelers as a "link to the outside world for those settling on the frontier."[11] Down's book title is indicative of a society's perception of the environment. This region was viewed as a frontier, the last vestige of opportunity to carve out an existence on the land. Sternwheelers were a medium that connected civilization with the frontier. More importantly, the potential use of resources were realized via sternwheelers.

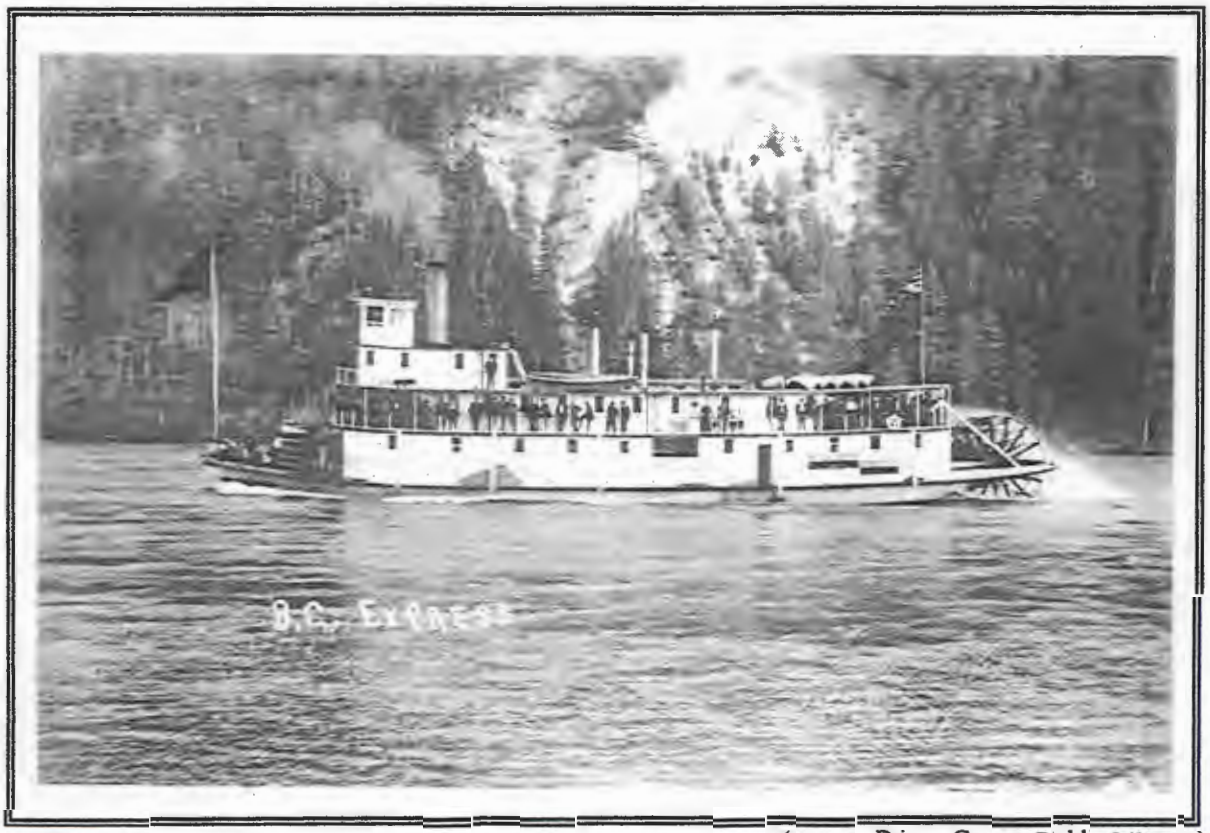
Sternwheelers brought people whose lives revolved around progress and development. In an article written about the B.C. Express, it was suggested that the company be commended "for its enterprises and progressive policy towards the development of the new north."[12] In Down's earlier works he writes that men "lived north by the yellow metal...[and] he too learned that the river resented intruders...[they were] crafty and persistent opponent and bent the rivers to his ways."[13] Down's statements with respect to sternwheelers illustrated that humans were successfully defeating nature, at the time thought to be the enemy. Once defeated, resource extraction and manipulation could begin. Similarly, in 1910 the Fort George Herald newspaper contained an article titled "Inland Waterways" claiming that "the advantages of inland waterways of the north are becoming recognized...from Victoria to South Fort George...we will take up the advantages of the many waterways from South Fort George which will come into use during the next few years."[14] Endorsing the manipulation of the river ways, this article embodied the idea that the natural environment should be harnessed in the pursuit of progress.

Sternwheelers encouraged additional resource use. Accordingly, floating up the Fraser River became"a veritable sportsman paradise. It is the home of thousands of moose and caribou and bear are numerous. We see the animals every time we go up or down the river."[15] This quote exemplifies the tales of wild animals in abundance and defines them as game to be used by humans who were passing by. Consistent with this theme is an article in a Toronto based magazine the Canadian Magazine. Written in 1911 it claimed that "for a thousand miles the waters, the first natural highways of commerce stretched out and brought the rich furs upon the trading in which Canada is said to have been founded."[16] This is additional evidence suggesting that animals were defined as game for humans. By hunting these animals one would be partaking in a patriotic endeavour, upon which Canada was founded.

The B.C. Magazine of 1910 contained another article consistent with the ideas of using sternwheelers to access the resources of the north. It asserted that workers came from Vancouver via sternwheelers to "lustily [attack] the woods with their axes and soon Fort George had streets...became long avenues in the woods."[17] Paddlewheels on the Frontier cites stories from passengers about their journey to Prince George. Dr. Cheadle (1863) wrote that the steamer docked at around two o'clock bringing in a large crew of miners (presumably gold seekers).[18] In both examples, from B.C. Magazine and Dr. Cheadle, passengers on these vessels represented an army of manpower whose main purpose was to chop down and dig up the land, acts which encouraged resource extraction for monetary gains.

New landscapes that the sternwheelers created were numerous and diverse. First, the obvious new landscape element was the vessel itself that became a new addition on the river system (Figure 18). The average sternwheeler had three decks and was 125 x 30 feet, had a rather blunt bow, flat bottom and iron braces to strengthen the hull.[19] Essentially, the river experienced a floating hotel that housed people and their supplies. In 1910, a Prince George real estate promoter Billy Davis built a sternwheeler named Fort George. This mobile landscape was described by old timer Wiggs O'Neill, who wrote that "she [Fort George] was built like a scow, with a shovel nose. Her stern was square as if she were made by the yard then sawn off...she had a big stationary gas engine and a paddlewheel run by chains."[20] Additional descriptions of this new soundscape were of "a sternwheeler bucking the current [that] could be heard for miles since the steam exhausted into the stack with a roar...producing the characteristic puff-puff-puff."[21] With ironic foreshadowing, Wiggs O'Neill wrote that "in sight and sound a sternwheeler chugging up river has been likened to a steam locomotive."[22] With undertones of humour, Art Downs book wrote that "when the vessels arrived...and blew her whistle the natives were

considerably astonished...they were frightened and scampered away into the woods."[23]



(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 18: Sternwheeler BX. Express resulted in a new soundscape, landscape, smellscape (smoke) on the river.

Bev Christensen's history of Prince George echoes Art Down's narrative. The new landscape now included sight, sound and smell, all changes that had never been experienced before. She wrote that these shallow ships created a unique slapping noise when approaching a community, which must have alarmed the Native residents who heard these noises for the first time.[24] What can be deduced from the above descriptions and reactions to sternwheelers is that their presence on the upper Fraser created a new and very different environment.

Sternwheelers cargo and passengers also constituted land changes in Prince George. Perceptual expectations of settlers and promoters became reality. In 1912, the Fort George Herald contained an article entitled "Steam boating is Active on the Fraser." It stated that the BX "brought about 60 tons of freight and a passenger list of about 25."[25] This commentary is accurate because according to Downs, these sternwheelers were built to carry over 100 tons of freight plus 130 passengers. Supplies arriving included railway equipment, animals, camp supplies, settlers and their cargo. The land now supported horses, pigs, farm equipment, and baled hay.[26] Crosby goes into detail about the importation of foreign plants and animals into a region. He concluded that foreign weeds and plants often destroyed native fauna, altering the ecosystem. These vessels plying up the Fraser and Nechako Rivers often altered the rivers. For example, a new landscape was created when 30 tons of dynamite was used to clear obstructions on the river. Tampering with the natural lay of the land and the waterways was "very welcomed information in the district ...blowing out the many rapids on the Nechako river which will be cleared to permit their navigation by large steamboats..."[27] Another article applauded "the work done last fall by the Dominion Government in straightening the channel and removing dangerous boulders, [which] made the swift passage much easier for navigation."[28] Concern with navigating the rivers dictated the drastic alteration of nature and shaping of the land. In turn, this changed

the flow of the water and the composition of its shoreline. The need to access the north justified these land changes. The consequences of blowing rock into the river can be related to a similar occurrence that took place at Hells Gate, on the Fraser River in 1912. In this case, the dynamiting of rock by the Canadian National Railway clogged the natural flow of the water, making the river impassable for most salmon. The CNR was so preoccupied with "driving in the last spike" that it neglected to assess the ramifications of blowing tonnes of rock into the waterway. Meggs suggests that this destroyed the interior salmon economy for three generations.[29]

Railways

In Prince George during the early twentieth century, the dominant attitude was that the railway was immediately needed to access the resources of the north. Laurier and the Liberals sponsored the building of a second transcontinental railway in hopes of repeating the success of the Conservatives and their Canadian Pacific Railway in accessing resources and settling the land. The Liberals urged the Government of British Columbia to encourage railway development. Hence, Premier Gawler Prior in 1902 offered "a large land grant to any company that [would] build through to the coast....[stressing that there] was not very much money, but...lots of land and will readily help any company that will help develop it."[30] This government statement supports the hypothesis that people viewed the environment as a commodity, which could be dominated, traded and manipulated according to human desires.

The excitement that surrounded the possibilities of a railway opening up the north spread throughout the country. Consequently, promotion and justification for railway development appeared in all forms of literature. In 1911, Wilfrid Playfair wrote that "there are mountains in the way and fierce rivers, but these are only barriers to the weak. Our strong men reach out and put the mountains aside. They harness the turbulent rivers. Their steel thoroughfares creep into

valleys...and make easy the trails for the cultivators who are to be."[31] These men believed that humans had authority over the environment, especially considering the strength and will of "our men", Canadian men! The manipulation of the land permitted the steel to weave into and out of valleys. In all, this was done so that more people could come north to grow crops and use the land for what they thought it was worth.

Describing Prince George, S. Washburn's article "The Greatest Little Town in America" communicated similar sentiments about the necessity of a rail. He believed that the coming "of the steel, those magic words, had suddenly laid the foundation of a metropolis in the very heart of a wilderness."[32] In 1911, Canadian Magazine proclaimed that the development of the agricultural, and mineral potential of the land depended solely on transporting the resources to the market, "the railroad must be brought in."[33] The Fort George Herald claimed that the province needed a railroad "in order that the stupendous mineral, agricultural and timber resources...be brought within reach, [of] the farmer, the miner, and the lumber[man]..."[34] The Grand Trunk Pacific Corporation circulated various pamphlets describing the role that the rail would play in harvesting the natural resources in Prince George, professing that the mineral, timber and coal resources along the rail line would ensure constant traffic. Moreover, the "railway would lead to the rapid development of large deposits of coal and stands of timber."[35] The Grand Trunk would put "a pulse beat in a land long dormant."[36] A similar statement that justified the building of the railroad was found in a Fort George Herald article entitled "Railway will Open a New Empire in the District." It read: "it has possibilities of lumbering, farming, mining, and fishing on an immense scale. First of all it is not mountainous and is composed mostly of clay not rock...The soil lacks the redundant natural fertility of the prairies and of course must be cleared of woods before it can be cultivated, but where cultivation has been tried it has been reasonably

successful...to put the matter in a few words the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific is creating a new Empire."[37] Settlers, miners, government and industry possessed similar feelings. They worried that the land was idly wasting away, and awaiting human hands. For example, timber resources, minerals and agriculture were bountiful and available for selection. Yet, to enjoy the rewards of these resources, humans had to have a link with markets. The markets were to the south and the east along the rail line. There was also a need to transport human power north to harvest these resources. Both dilemmas were solved with the building of a railway, a mode of transportation that could be utilized all year round.

Many changes accompanied locomotives. The appearance of a massive metal machine that chugged its way over mountains, across waters and along flatlands was the primary landscapes that entered the vista in Prince George. These mechanical horses bellowed a rhythmic hum as they spewed smoke from their tubular smokestacks. By 1914, Prince George fenced rail yard on George Street felt the vibrating noise of trains coming and going. The railway also meant that the land had to be shaped so that ties and tracks could be laid upon the soil. For example, George Hardie was contracted to clear a hundred miles of right of way for the rail. In many cases "almost entire hillsides [were] put in motion by the construction of the road, filling up ditches and cuts and moving embankments."[38] Railway engineers were concerned with elements of the land, such as grading of the land, cutting of rocks that obstructed the steel, the proper location of tunnels, and bridges[39] (Figure 19). Each concern was dealt with how the land would be altered to permit rail passage. Along the rail route town sites arose and inspired to become district capitals. "The coming of the railway immediately stimulated the forest industries along the rout, at first for construction requirements of the railway then for wider markets..."[40] Furthermore, along the route "...settlers and farms competed directly for fur bearing animals...because of economic

necessity and the attractiveness of high fur prices in the early 1900's."[41]

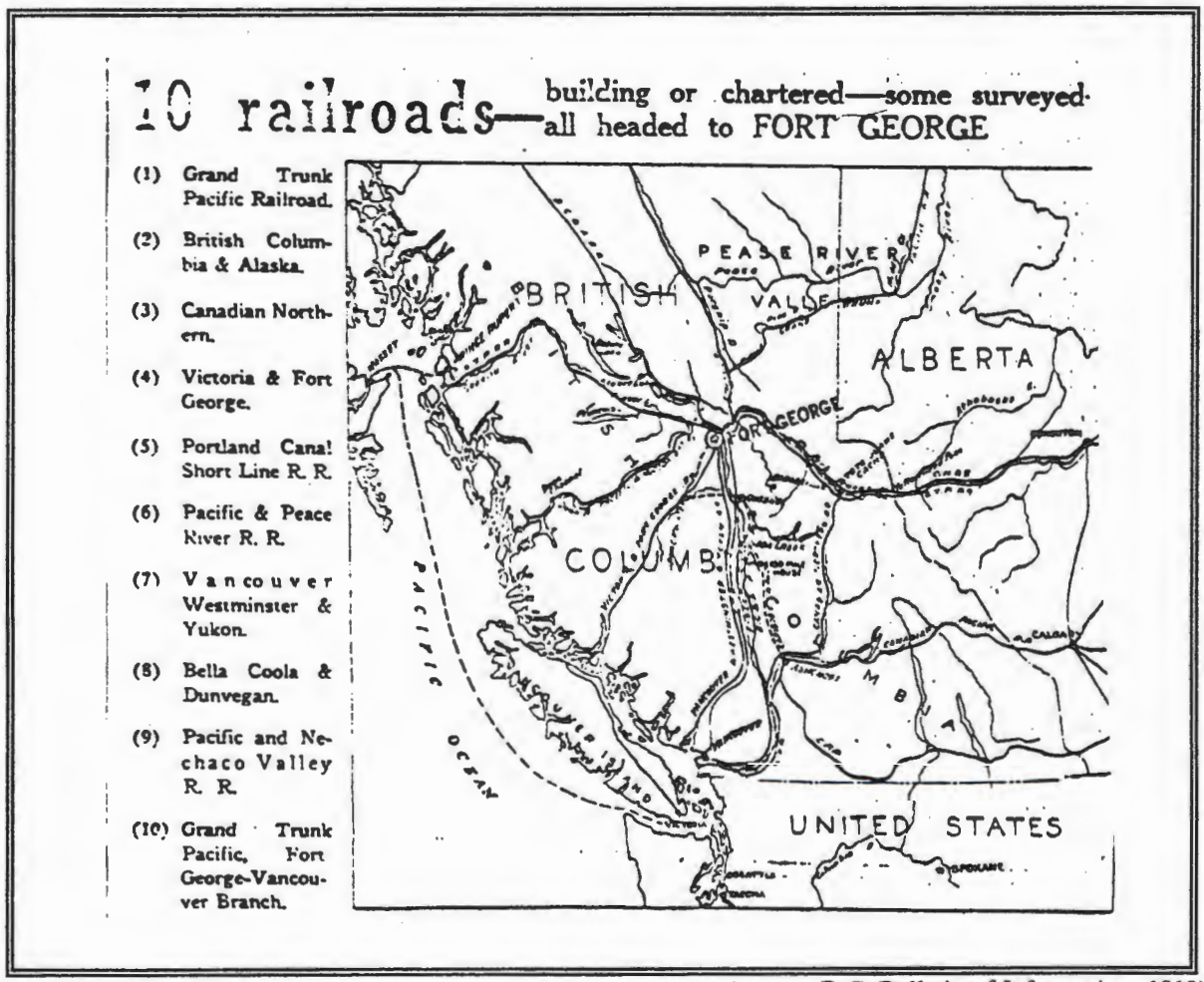
(source: Prince George Public Library)

Figure 19: New addition to the river was the Fraser River Bridge (ca. 1915) Encouraging further human impact across the river.

Imaginary landscapes also emerged in Prince George due to the rail. In 1911 promotional brochures were circulated by George Hammond's Natural Resources Security Company. Hammond's propaganda was entitled "Even if they Should Try To, They Cannot Skip Fort George." This pamphlet stated that 10 railroads were being built or chartered towards Fort George (Figure 20). Among these railways was the Grand Trunk Pacific, the British Columbia and Alaska, the Victoria and Fort George, Portland Canal Short Line, Pacific and Peace River. Moreover, this railroad document claimed that "we are doing something to help nature. We are calling attention to the natural resources and ourselves trying to take advantage of these..."[42] Imaginary landscapes of rails, vividly illustrated the hopes and desires of linking modes of transportation to the resource wealth of the land. The dominant society deemed the rail to be essential in realizing resource potential. Consequently, Hammond gave the people what they wanted. Although the picture of 10 railways coming to Prince George was false, it became real in the minds of those who were in far off places. Ten railroads meant ten different markets to sell resource commodities.

What does this tell us about the nature of changing landscapes in Prince George, during the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries? To begin with the concept of the power of a particular groups perceptions is exposed. The dominant society's attitude or perception of the natural environment was the key to this theory. Whether they be new settlers, businessmen, construction workers, industry or government bodies, a unified idea of nature existed. All these people looked north for economic opportunity. To them, opportunity came in the form of frontier land that contained infinite amounts of natural resources. Resources were defined in terms of timber, minerals, big game, choice agricultural land and real estate. Modes of transportation were however, needed to acquire these commodities. What resulted were new landscapes, soundscapes

and smellscapes, unnoticed changes during a time of progress.



(source: B.C. Bulletin of Information, 1912)

Figure 20: The dreams of ten railways leading to Prince George.

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34.Fort George Herald (Fort George) 17 September 1910.

35.Frank, "A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company and Northern B.C. 1902-19", 22.

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Chapter Six

Choice Timber

"All the resources of the forests .... are for use"[1]

From the Carrier who resided in Prince George to the early non native settlers, one aspect of the natural environment that went through drastic changes was the forests. In Prince George, settlers harvested trees for many reasons. Whether forests supplied material for fishing weirs, fuel wood or shelter, trees became a resource that was crucial to human existence and eventually their economy. Unlike, furs, fish, minerals and agriculture, the blanket of forests were easily accessible and seemed to be there for the taking. This idea of taking the forests, was a very powerful attitude in Prince George, if not the entire province. By defining forests as lumber, trees as timber and mills as money, the government, newspapers and mill owners fostered a perception of the environment that outlasted all other resource extraction activities in the area. To encourage the extraction of the region's forests was the Grand Trunk Pacific, which could transport logs to larger markets as fast as they could be cut. This chapter describes the manner by which the provincial government and local residents of Prince George encouraged forest extraction, and how these attitudes altered the landscape.

Background

In newly settled regions humans deliberately shaped the forests. After the depletion of forest resources in America, the southern regions of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, people began to look to northern Canada's untapped forests. When Prince George was exposed to this settlement process in 1906 it too felt the touch of capitalism. Initially, trees were felled for local

use or outside markets. For example, accompanying the local demand for building material, we the growing Canadian prairie settlements (1909-1913) which increased the demand for lumber. By far one of the greatest demands for lumber came from the construction of the GTP. A person could make quite a profit by erecting a mill along the route of the rail. These small-scale mills supplied the rail company with ties, cedar, poles and other construction material.[2] Accompanying the cash that these mill operators received was the assurance that when the rail was completed forested areas further north would become accessible for extraction. This exact process occurred when the Grand Trunk Pacific initiated logging activities in the Nechako Plateau. The excitement surrounding forests was illustrated in the years between 1890 and 1910 when the government boasted that "almost every available area in the province was cruised."[3]

As settlers flowed into Prince George the forest began to recede. To begin, land pre-emption dictated that the land itself had to be improved. With fixed properties, settlers spent a great deal of time getting rid of the trees so that seeds could be planted, minerals found or frontier homes built. Hence, as Cronon observed, to improve the land "one had to simply cut down timber."[4] To early settlers, these forests supplied an abundance of building material and fuel wood, to warm homes throughout Prince George's nine-month winters. "The B.C. government also attached little or no value to the standing timber it owned; timber was given away to every purchaser of Crown land, thrown into the bargain as it were..."[5] It did not take long for enterprising men to realize that trees were a resource commodity that people needed in the remote central interior. Therefore, in the early 1900's a shift in attitudes occurred, forests were no longer a hindrance to progress and town development, but rather a source of wealth that would promote town development. Recognizing the profits that could be made from this wooden resource, mills began to scatter the landscape, felling and cutting up trees at an unprecedented pace.

Provincial government's role

Prior to and during settlement, the provincial government maintained various policies regarding the forests and forest use, inherent in these policies was the idea that the forests existed for human use. An understanding of the provincial government's attitude and policies is important because these attitudes were funnelled out to the private loggers and mill operators in Prince George. The earliest alienation of timber harvesting rights were void of any regulations or terms directing activities. Those settlers or industrialists had to merely obtain parcels of land, after which they could engage the forests in any manner they deemed appropriate. Between 1865 and 1907 Crown harvest rights were available under five different harvesting rights. Of the five, two were leases, two licences and one a berth. Accordingly, the 1865 Land Ordinance Act permitted forest harvesting on Crown land without the alienation of either the land or the resources, hence deforestation was not a government concern, progress was.[6] These timber leases stipulated that only those actually engaged in harvesting could hold such leases. By 1888 the Land Act limited these timber leases to 30 years. Thirteen years later the leases were renewable for a 21 years period. Leases were imposed to encourage manufacturing in the province. Before 1888, the royalty on harvested timber was fixed at 50 cents pr Mfbm. Of this royalty, one half was refundable to the harvester if he exported spars, piles shingles and manufactured lumber from the province. Moreover, milling was encouraged because the government stated that the leasee had to have a sawmill that had a 12 hour capacity of at least 1Mfbm for each 400 acres under lease.[7] The second type of harvesting right that promoted forest exploitation were licences, introduced in the 1884 Timber Act. Initially, these licences were limited to 1000 acres and each individual was limited to one licence, for a one year period.[8] If logging did not take place the government had the right to cancel the existing contract, making the resource available for someone who

would log the land.[9] This act treated the timber as a resource by alienating forests, hence the government practised the selling of timber not the land.[10] Between 1901 and 1903 Premier McBride continued to encourage forest production when he modified timber licences. By 1905, one year timber licences were exchangeable for 16 year licences (then 21 years) and were renewable annually. In return, the government received fixed rental and royalty money. Furthermore, government objectives for forest production were achieved through the removal of limitations on the number of licences an individual could hold. In the long run the modified 21-year renewable timber licence provided individuals and lumber companies with the security needed to invest money in logging and milling operations, ensuring the future of the industry.[11] One year later the Forest Act (1906) stipulated that all timber felled west of the Cascades had to be processed in the province. In turn, this policy increased the forest related revenue that the government collected, as well as promoted the erection of more mills to process the freshly cut trees.[12] The final timber rights imposed were timber berths. This form of tree harvesting dictated that railway companies had access to a 20-mile belt of land on each side of the main line. This not only encouraged the development of the rail itself, but also placed the forests in a position of hindrance to rail progress. Therefore the forests were classified as an expendable and cheap resource for rail construction.[13]

The extraordinary pace with which humans felled the forests prompted the government to change policies, to ensure the future of this industry. In 1907 the "insatiable nature of the continental demand for standing timber aroused a certain uneasiness, and the government at the end of 1907 decided to impose a reserve upon all remaining Crown timber."[14] The significance of this reserve is that the government feared that the revenue generated from forests would hit a maximum and then fall. Therefore, a halt on all Crown timber would slow down the process

of new timber licenses, although existing licences continued. Between 1909 and 1912 timber licence holders were granted permanent and adjustable tenures. These tenures assured the continuation of forest harvesting that was actually taking place.

In 1910, "with so much timber already alienated, to meet future needs the Fulton Commission recommended that the forests reserve be kept in-tact..."[15] This concern for future forest use was based on the notion that there would be a timber famine. McBride created the forestry department and W.R. Ross was put in charge. Two years later the province appointed H.R. MacMillan as chief forester of British Columbia's forests. This department sought the protection crown timber interests through efficient harvesting. W.R. Ross "like American counterparts was pushing conservation, he stated that reckless extraction of forests...must stop or be doomed, [and that] a Forest Bill [would] ensure forest conservation." Two years later the Forestry Branch began administering and managing the timber resources of British Columbia.

To protect the forest industry this branch began an extensive forest fire prevention and conservation policies.[16] The aim was the "prevention of timber destruction and for the conservation of the timber resources of the province in the every possible manner."[17] Likewise, trees along rail lines were now patrolled throughout the province, watching for fire sparks, "guaranteeing safety of forests."[18] These conservation policies illustrated the important role forests played in British Columbia resource extraction economy. The Fort George Herald stated that "the supreme importance of the forest and the industries dependent upon them has made the prevention of forest fires an important matter of public interest."[19] The government repeatedly reminded the public that the forests were currently being harvested for human use, therefore future use was equally important. In promotional literature the provincial government recorded that more than half of the wage earners in the province were in the lumber industry. As for the money generated

by lumber, close to $400,000 per day was paid to these wage earners, therefore it was crucial that this industry be protected.[20]

The implementation of these forest related policies reveal the government attitudes which were imposed upon the people of British Columbia. Prior to conservation regulations the felling of trees illustrated raw forest exploitation, with lands being cut completely over. But to have a continuous supply of timber for the future, protection was needed, and a new approach was taken. Avenues such as licences, leases, reserves, and fire protection serve as examples of the long term profit that could be guaranteed if the forests were harvested wisely. To H.R. MacMillan, "British Columbia contained one of the few great bodies of commercial timber left in the world which are not yet reduced by destructive lumbering...the timber wealth of British Columbia is unparallel in any other country."[21] MacMillan's First Annual Report summed up the attitude that the provincial government would take toward nature's forests for the next six decades. He wrote that the land held one hundred million acres of forest land and three hundred billion commercial timber feet. At present rate of one billion and a quarter feet cut a year the industry could go strong for another 250 years (using only the mature standing timber). He strongly felt that "the growth of our timber industry until it equals the production of our forests, it is our clear duty to do so, in order that timber which otherwise will soon rot on the ground may furnish the basis for industry, for reasonable profits to operate and Government, for home building and in the last analysis for the growth of British Columbia."[22]

Local forest users

The events and policies taking place at the provincial government level fostered similar sentiments about resource exploitation in Prince George. To many residents "the timber was of the most magnificent description. Within an area comprehended by [their] eyes lay an easy fortune

for any man of most moderate means."[23] Accordingly, the lumber available in and around Prince George, was boasted as being the most compact and largest in the world. The faster that producers arrived in Prince George, the faster the industry could increase and money generated. The hopes and desires of settlers were encouraged in 1909 when the Fort George Tribune stated that by next spring the local mill will have close to one million feet of logs ready to sell.[24] The forests existed for humans to utilize, and Fort George lands alone could supply up to 400,000 feet of lumber to anyone wanting to build.[25] The appetite of settlers was never ending and this attitude was consistently reinforced within the society.

Forests supplied material, employment and profits, three elements that Prince George locals wanted. With "great satisfaction to a large number of people who will build...in the spring" news spread of the three mills that would be opening in Fort George by the end of 1911.[26] Furthering the development of Prince George's forests was the assurance that "there [was] no lack of material in the district and a plant could be placed in any location in the district and a good supply of logs would be available."[27] The central interior's forest resources were so plentiful that they became one of the main attraction to potential investors. Promotional literature from 1910 claimed that the British Columbia's forest industry and forest-related industries contributed over 12 million dollars annually into the economy, and the good news was that the untapped forests could provide "millions of acres of paper making material."[28] With the growing interest in milling timber, the community hoped that lumber manufacturing would become the biggest industry in Fort George, after all the "supply of raw material [was] equal to the demands of all time."[29] To advertise the "360 billion feet of finest mature timber ...awaiting manufacture" the provincial government Department of Trade campaigned existing and potential markets.[30] The building of mills meant that employment would follow. This was welcome news, and newspapers

applauded the new sources of employment that would arrive, especially "in the winter for people to cut logs to be sent down river."[31]

The speed and capacity of forest industry activities in Prince George was regarded by locals with pride. With every tree cut, humans reinforced their view of managing and utilizing the forests. In 1911, Talbot assured his Prince George readers of the progress taking place. He observed that near the water the sawmill employed many men as it "was screeching from morning to night ripping up logs and the 30,000 feet of lumber it turned out in the day disappeared like magic."[32] But this manipulation could not have occurred without the determination of the human will. It was saw-mill operators who brought to Prince George steam engines and circular saws "by superhuman efforts...[turning] tree trunks into planks [allowing] the settlers to change from canvas to wooden dwellings."[33] This entire process of moulding the land was encouraged, mills became the symbol of progress and human power over the environment. Timber factories were upgraded to ensure that they operated "every working hour."[34]

The continual whine of the saw came to signify the true growth of the town. In 1914 a series of articles ran in local newspapers assessing the "development of the town [being] evident by growth of the lumber companies.[35] Within these articles Prince George's development was attributed and acknowledged because of the prosperous mills operating. Likewise, the role of lumber mills in Prince George were deemed to be so significant that individuals wanted the town's time standard, like a noon whistle, implemented "in some systematic arrangement, hence the mills were looked to as the point of time reference.[36]

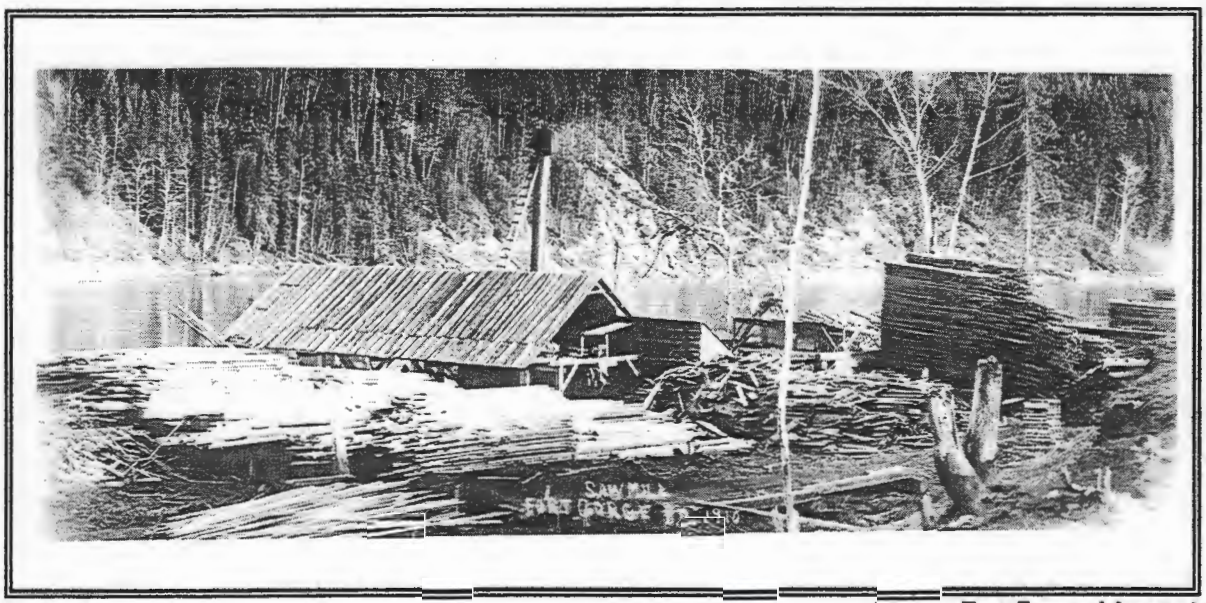
The tree cutting process itself led to further land changes. Trees were initially cut into useable dimensions by axes and hand saws. However, the economic potential of this resource

introduced circular saws that could cut as much as 20 to 30,000 feet of lumber daily.[37] Usually exploiting one to two quarter sections of forests, the first saw-mills were small scale and provided rough building lumber for local use.[38] Utilizing steam or water power, mills cut timber into dimensions which could be easily manipulated. A majority of mills were built near rivers, and man-made dams were constructed to store the cut trees, hence the Fraser and Nechako Rivers were used for their power and storage. In fact, the ideal mill site was accessible to a large timber supply, provided a river to float or store timber, and a railway to distribute the resource, all three elements that Prince George possessed by 1914.[39]

Prince George mills

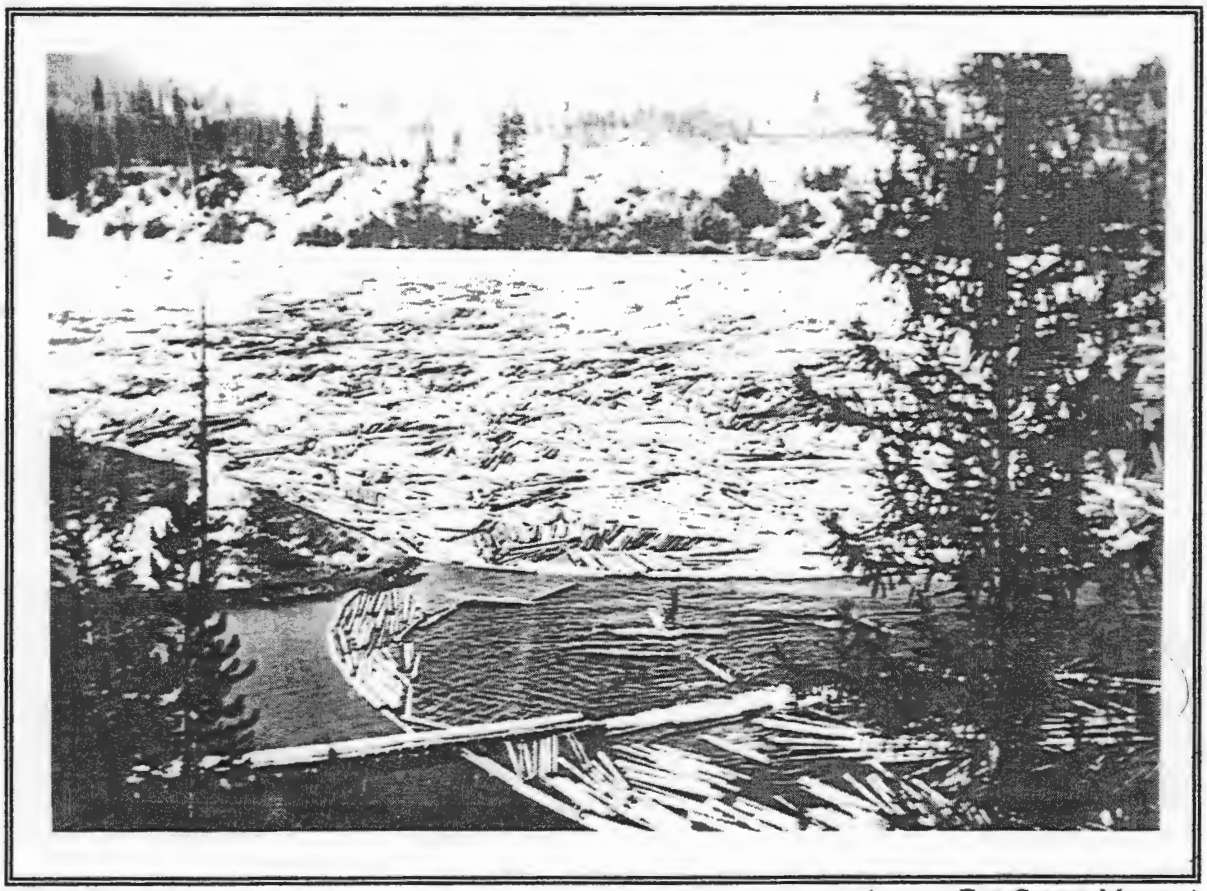
With the dominant perception that forests were resource commodities, the area's trees were exploited by mills in and around Prince George. The settlement building process building created the first demand for large-scale lumber production. In 1909, under the directorship of Nick Clarke, the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company erected the first saw mill on the Fraser River in South Fort George[40] (Figure 21). This company was formed in Vancouver by lumber industry entrepreneurs who eyed the opportunities available in the forested regions of the central interior. Throughout the entire winter of 1909 Clarke's company "took out logs...on the townsite running the mill all winter" with the lumber being purchased by residents who quickly erected homes.[41] The business potential in Prince George overwhelmed initial wood forecasts, and one year later the local demand for lumber prompted the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company to expand its operations. Overextending its finances, the company met with financial trouble and was taken over by Winnipeg capitalists who knew too well the opportunities available of supplying prairie settlers with lumber. Led by men such as FA Thompson, Allan Adamson, Dr. J. McLennan and R.L. Hay, the mill continued to grow.[42] The newly expanded mill was

moved to lot 2160 (just below the Hudson Bay Fort) banking on the Fraser River, and increased the cutting pace threefold, getting lumber from as far away as Shelley. Keeping the 100 employees busy the mill was fed with "logs brought right from the woods to the saw" and using a 25 foot boom raft the logs were floated down the Fraser processing 300 to 1000 logs into the mill yard daily.[43] (Figure 22)



(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 21: Fort George 1910. Standard sawmill banking on the Nechako River.



(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 22: Storing logs near Aleza Lake. ca. 1913.

By 1910 the demand for lumber continued, and a second mill was built inland to the west, just south of South Fort George near present day Peden Hill. Financed by William Cooke, Clarke and George Hamilton, this mill was managed by Russel Pedan.[44] Luring more men to Prince George to fell trees, operations began in the fall of 1910, and ran throughout the winter.[45] By 1912, Peden's mill was the largest cutting between 5000 and 10000 logs per day. The mill itself met the never ending demands of its consumers (predominantly building material) by operating 10 hour days six days per week[46]. Using the figures supplied by Strimbold who resided in South Fort George at the time, Peden's mill cut 30,000 to 60,000 logs per week. This mill also contracted people to cut and clear cordwood for human use. The town's third mill, known as Bogue and Browns, was erected in Fort George on the Nechako River and was built by the Natural Resources Company. This company increased the pace of logging to meet the "extensive building taking place...taking out one and a half million logs for the mill in the district tributary to the Nechako [River]" and storing the logs beneath the saw in the mill pond.[47] All three mills illustrate the increasing demand for forest resources in Prince George during the settlement period.

Additional mill activity

The thriving forest industry in Prince George also depended on the untapped resources in areas adjacent to the area. The existence of mills in the region underscores the perception that the forests were an unlimited commodity that was available to anyone. One such mill was the Cariboo Timber Company that in 1913, staked operations on the Fraser River close to Prince George. Under the directorship of Barney Keegan, this company possessed forested lands in the district, cutting an estimated 25,000 feet of lumber daily.[48] A large portion of this cut came from the company's 32,000 acres of land just five miles out of town, which had the potential to produce

in the excess of 5,000,000 feet of lumber.[49] The Willow River Mill also operated just outside of Prince George. Located north east of Prince George this mill cut until it exhausted available resources. Accepted procedures were that the mill be relocated to Giscome on Eaglet Lake were felling continued on unexploited land. Mr. Seaman, mill manager claimed that the new mill would fell it's"enormous timber limits" by cutting 20,000,000 feet per year, keeping the mill running for many years.[50]

The erection of mills outside of Prince George illustrates that the entire region was part of the forest economy. Prior to the completion of the GTP in 1914, the smaller mills located in hamlets and river tributaries all had to bring their products to Prince George. This meant that at times the transient population in Prince George was fairly high. A Prince George Post newspaper article in 1916 stated that mill workers would benefit Prince George because of the "amount of money [that would] be spent,... for supplies, and especially after the completion of the road to Vancouver."[51] This fluctuating population also frequented Prince George for recreational purposes, in terms of drinking establishments and female companionship. Hence, mills in the region impacted Prince George, as they stimulated local economies that encouraged development and progress in a growing town. Stephen Gray's study on Forest Policy assists in describing the impact of these various mills. He observed that the amount of timber scaled in board feet in the central interior represented the growing use of forests. Accordingly, in 1912 it was 325,371,873 feet and one year later this number increased by 368,496,677.

New landscapes appear

The attitude of exploiting the forests, led to a variety of land changes that resulted from deforestation and mill operations. The process of felling trees was similar across North America during this time period. During the fall season, men would arrive at the logging depot and begin

work. First, a chopper notched the trees, then the men with saws actually felled the tree. The tree was then marked into desired sections. After this tattooing, the forest was cut open to form a trail, or an existing one was used to skid the log out of the bush to the river by horse power (Figure 23). When steam donkeys were used to transport logs, "the ground necessitated that the land be as free of obstacles as possible this meant that both commercial and non commercial land was torn up" reducing natural seeding and prohibiting young growth.[52] These "trees often hit adjacent trees breaking off limbs and bark and knocking smaller trees to the ground. Logging then added to the waste by cutting off branches and great lengths of wood ...leaving it as slash."[53] In addition, after cutting trees down, their stumps were left to rot. However, on the town sites, these worthless stumps were removed. This removal involved the burning of leaves and wood "rubbish" at the base of the stump. Therefore, the unwanted timber was eliminated and the stump dried out so that it could be easily pulled from the ground. This technique was observed in Prince George by Talbot. He noticed that one "avenue was in flames and there was a piles up mass of levelled tree trunks smouldering and smoking."[54]

Lumbering had a large impact upon the area, significantly altering the composition of the forest. It is difficult to quantify changes with accuracy, but a degree of soil erosion likely occurred. Cronon noted that the "soils caused forests as much as forests caused soil."[55] When trees are removed from the land, the soil changes. Roots systems disappear, the sunlight heats up the ground, rainwater is not filtered," most soil in a forest was there because the forests kept it there."[56] With the reduction of forest cover, rain water ran off of the soil, rather than sinking in and being absorbed by the fauna. Therefore, with no tree or plant roots to hold back the water, river levels rose as happened in Prince George in 1917.[57] The loss of moisture also occurred because there were no longer leaves to catch rain, which evaporated prior to hitting the ground.

(source: Fort George Museum)

Figure 23: East of Prince George 1914.
Logs brought through a bush clearing to be horse-drawn to the mill.

In turn, this added to the amount of water that directly landed on the ground, increasing land water flow.[58] The clearing of land also meant that during the winter the land received more sunlight and the snow melted at a quicker pace. When snow rests on the ground it acts like a blanket that maintains the soil's temperature. Therefore, the rapid snow melt induced the ground to reach colder temperatures than it would have normally with the presence of the forest. This ground freeze did not absorbed the water from the melting snow, resulting in yet another process that permitted the flow of water on the land.

The land experienced a different type of change during the milling process. Inland and river front mills created mill dams. These man-made barriers altered the natural flow of the water, creating stagnant ponds that stored both cut logs and timber waste. When logs were stored in the water, many floated to the river bottom and lost their bark which did the same. This led to timber rubbish littering the waterways and impacting the aquatic fauna. Sawdust accompanied logs and bark. With mills cutting 10 to 12 hour days, often six days per week, sawdust became a menacing by-product. Sawdust was either cast into the river or burnt. Both practices resulted in a form of pollution that was new to the area. When entering the river system this dust floated until the water forced it to the river bottom, a process that directly impacted the fish habitat.[59]

More than any other resource, the forests of British Columbia provided the province with revenue and employment. Hence, the forests in and around Prince George were continually exploited by human agents. The Carrier felled trees to build and heat shelters as well as construct fishing weirs. This led to a reshaping and burning of the forests, as observed by Alexander Mackenzie and George Dawson. With the onslaught of settlers forest reshaping continued. Initially arriving and clearing the land of tree obstructions, settlers toiled to create a civilization out of the woods. Again, utilizing and defining the trees as lumber, settlers built structures upon the

landscape. Three years after the settlement process began, the first mill operators set to work in hopes of turning a profit from the limitless supply of standing lumber. As the lumber industry grew so did the provincial government's policies regarding forests. Forest policies were initially void of regulations and concerns for the forests. But as the pace of cutting increased, a concern grew that the province's main resource industry would run out, therefore conservation policies were instituted. At a glance such policies seemed to represent a harnessing of the unbridled assault on the forests. Although, these policies did establish rules concerned with protecting the forests, they did so with the aim of maintaining the tree cutting industry for years to come. In this sense forest conservation arose from the fear of losing an economic force that fuelled the provincial economy. Hence, forests were not protected for their own sake or out of concern for eroding soils and flooding, but rather to ensure longevity of the forest economy. These events illustrate that during the time period of this study forests were perceived as a economically lucrative resource that prompted extraction and exploitation, leading to a reshaping of the land.

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3.Doreen Mullins, "Changes in the Location and Structure of the Forest Industry of North Central BC " (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1967), 39.

4.William Cronon, Changes in the Land (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 45.

5.Geoff Taylor, The Railway Contractors (Victoria: Morriss Publishing, 1988), 88.

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8.Ken Bernsohn, Cutting Up the North (Vancouver: Hanock House Publishers Ltd., 1943), 21.

9.British Columbia Forest Service, Crown Charges for Early Timber Rights, 56.

10.Bernsohn, Cutting Up the North, 11.

11.Stephen Gray, "Forest Policy and Administration in British Columbia, 1912-1928" (M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1982), 19.

12.Bernsohn, Cutting Up the North, 25.

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14.Ibid.,58.

15.Ibid., 61.

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24.Fort George Tribune (Fort George) 20 November 1909.

25.Ibid., 27 November 1909.

26.Ibid., 24 December 1910.

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28.Natural Resources Security Company Facts: What British Columbia Offers You (Fort George, 1912).

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30.Fort George Herald (Fort George) 17 October 1914.

31.Fort George Tribune (Fort George) 24 December 1909.

32.F.A. Talbot, The New Garden of Canada (Toronto: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1911), 166.

33.Ibid., 163.

34.Fort George Herald (Fort George) 1 February 1913.

35.Ibid., 21 January 1914.

36.Ibid., 7 January 1911.

37.Mullins, "Changes in the Location and Structure of the Forest Industry of North Central BC" (M.A. thesis, 1967), 44.

38.Vance, "The Impact of the Forest Industry on Economic Development in the Central Interior of British Columbia", 9.

39.Ibid., 86.

40.Burnsohn, Cutting Up the North; F.E. Runnalls, The History of Prince George (Vancouver: Wrigley Printing Co. Ltd., 1946).

41.Fort George Tribune (Fort George) 25 July 1914.

42.Ibid.

43.Fort George Herald (Fort George) 21 January 1914.

44.Burnsohn, Cutting Up the North; Eric Strimbold, "Interview with Eric Stimbold" interview By C.D. Orchard (Prince George, 1959).

45.Fort George Tribune (Fort George) 25 July 1914.

46.Strimbold, "Interview with Eric Stimbold".

47.Fort George Tribune (Fort George) 23 November 1912.

48.Fort George Herald (Fort George) 1 February 1913.

49.Ibid.

50.Prince George Post (Prince George) 6 October 1916.

51.Ibid.,

52.Robert Bunting " Forest Economy" in Environmental History Review (Winter 1994), 50.

53.Ibid.

54.Talbot, The New Garden of Canada, 165.

55.Cronon, Changes in the Land, 116.

56.Ibid., 115.

57.Michael Williams, "Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography"(M.A. thesis, Cambridge, 1978).

58.Ibid.; Cronon, Changes in the Land.

59.P.R. Gillis, "Rivers of Sawdust: The Battle Over Industrial Pollution in Canada 1865-1903" in Journal of Canadian Studies Vol.21, No.1 (1986); Gilbert Allardyce, "The Vexed Question of Sawdust: River Pollution in Nineteenth Century New Brunswick" in Consuming Canada:Readings in Environmental History.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the environmental history of Prince George, focusing on the manner in which humans have interacted with the natural environment before 1915. Fuelled by their perceptions of nature, people reshaped the landscape to suit their needs. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to understand how human perceptions furthered changes in an ever evolving natural environment.

The environment played a large role in Carrier decision making processes, politics and spiritual belief systems, illustrating that these people adapted their activities to the environment. Evidence suggests that the Carrier lifestyle and technology impacted the land. These societies harvested certain local flora and fauna and therefore altered these natural systems. Yet, Native land reshaping was not as severe or permanent as what was to come with non-Native occupation.

When non-Natives arrived in Prince George, another stage of land change occurred. Encouraged by their hopes and ambitions, early explorers trail blazed through Prince George to note geographical areas of economic importance. They inventoried the natural environment as resources that could and should be managed and extracted. With these explorers came new ideas, attitudes, technologies and economic markets. For the first time, the land was valued for its profits and limitless resource opportunity.

Rivers, railways and timber were crucial to the development of Prince George. These three components represent the location of a settlement, modes of transportation and a resource. During the settlement period, the natural environment was extensively promoted by boosters as being an 'orchard empire' or 'last frontier', to anyone willing to come north and acquire nature's profits.

Without transportation the extraction of and domination over nature could not be realized. Trains, stage coaches and sternwheelers constituted new landscapes, smellscapes and soundscapes that brought people and cargo to Prince George and left with resources. Finally, the history of Prince George cannot be mentioned without describing the role of local forests.

Initially, the forests were not valued as a resource. They were deemed to be a hindrance to progress and were cleared, being replaced by wooden structures on the land, a material bonus of land pre-emption. But soon, entrepreneurs realized that profits could be made from the forests. Again, another component of the natural environment was singled out as a resource to be used by humans. This land reshaping was justified because in Prince George, the dominant perception dictated that nature existed for people to dominate and exploit. These early settlers belonged to a generation that sought opportunity in the land during a period of national growth. Canada offered its citizens hopes and dreams that accompanied freedom which was expressed through human creativity seeking opportunity by reshaping nature. These perceptions were overpowering during the study period, and because people were so engulfed in this system of progress, it was difficult for them to realize that new landscapes, smellscapes, and soundscapes were replacing nature's environment.

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