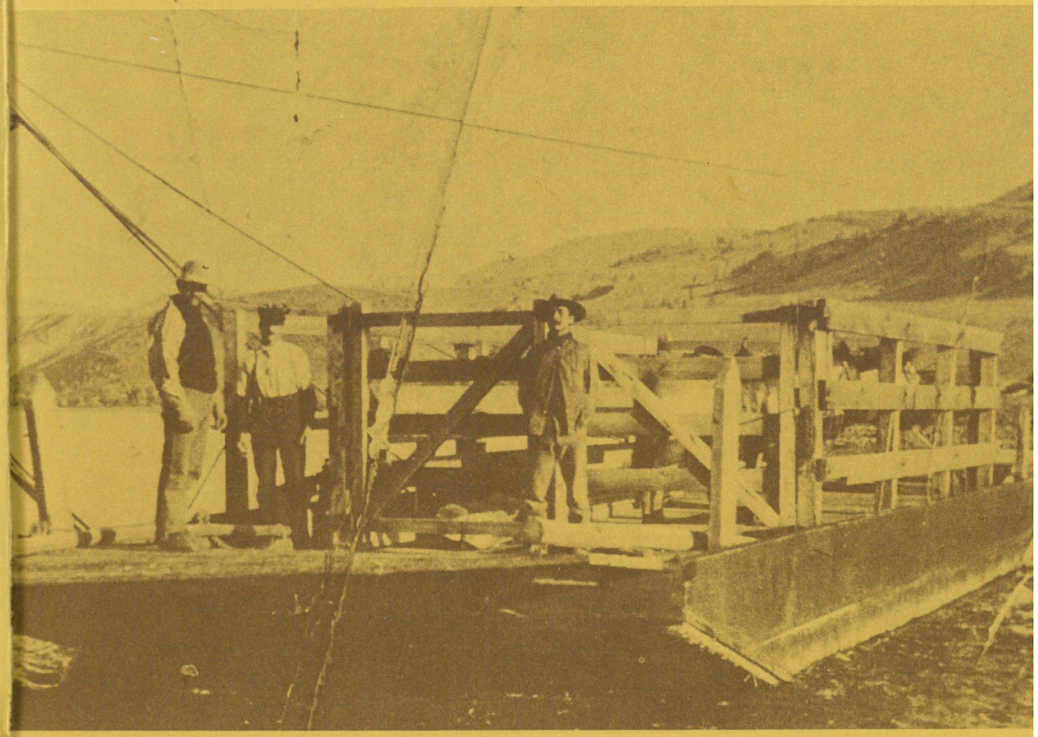
# SAVONA'S FERRY



SAVONA'S FERRY 1898

Mary Balf, Kamloops Museum, 1980

## BOUTE DU LAC

The lower end of Kamloops Lake was the home of quite a large Indian band, who settled in pit houses on both shores during the worst of the winter. During the rest of the year they ranged far and wide for fishing, hunting and root and berry picking. Like the rest of the Shuswap tribe, their basic food was the sockeye salmon, caught here and on trips to the Fraser River near Lillooet and to the Adams River.

Hunting was excellent in the hills to the south, on the Tranquille plateau and up Deadman's Creek. Hihium Lake provided an important spring fishery for trout, open to all bands, and indeed most creeks were useful during spawning season. Copper Creek was also a favorite haunt, as the reputed source of quite large pieces of native copper, highly prized as ornaments. Cottonwood dug-out canoes provided easy water transport.

Since the Indians themselves had no written language early records are very scanty indeed. In 1826 Archibald McDonald found Pacamoose, named Tranquille by the fur-traders, was paramount Chief of the Lower Shuswap, continuing until his death in 1841. In the 1850s they were headed by Le Gros, whose Indian name is unknown. H.B.C. account books designate Nowelsghut as "Boute du Lac" chief by the early 1860s; he was succeeded by Ceciasket. Other notables at this period included Kaakowtan, Antoine, Toomalique, Sheoutka, Tklakan (Logan, for whom the lake is named) and his daughter Anne, also a famous trapper. Pierre St. Paul, son of Jean Baptiste Lolo of Kamloops, also settled here for some years. In the present century Edward Eneas was a noted chief, as was the late Charley Draney much more recently.

During the French-speaking fur trading era there was little disturbance of the Indian pattern of life here, since their brigade trails did not involve this route. The Thompson crossing was always effected at Kamloops, despite the various sites for the Post at different periods. Similarly annual trips for salmon at the Fountain travelled north of Kamloops Lake and the Thompson River, crossed the Bonaparte, and followed Hat Creek Valley and the Marble Canyon to Pavilion.

But the gold rush was a very different matter. This site became the standard crossing for American miners swarming up the Okanagan Valley, through Kamloops and so to the Fraser or Cariboo. It also served the cattle drovers. In 1862 William Cox established the first Indian Reserves for the new colonial government, including the ancestral homes of the Boute du Lac Indians. In 1868 Peter O'Reilly, commissioned to cut back various reserves, found this was already done by the white influx

here. He wrote:-

"While on my way to Nicola Lake I was met at Deadman's Creek by the Savona Ferry Indians, and requested by them to define the boundaries of their land. I thought it advisable to comply with their demands, though the reserve for this tribe was not included in your instructions.

"Ceciasket, the chief of the Indians who inhabit the country here, informed me that this tribe consists of 62 families, numbering in all 122; their stock consists of 10 head of cattle and 28 horses, and that formerly they claimed, under a promise from Mr. Cox, about 9 miles on both sides of the Thompson River, commencing at the foot of Kamloops Lake, but, a portion of this having been taken possession of by white settlers, they moved to Deadman's Creek, where they have built a small church and a few houses, and have there been in the habit of cultivating their potatoes. I marked off for their use the whole width of the valley, which averages about half a mile, for a distance of two miles."

This, of course, was a gross reduction of the original allocation, and was a sad measure of the way newcomers rode rough-shod over the Indians, grabbing what they wanted, while the government took no action. The Indians lost half their population to the fearful small-pox epidemic of 1862, and now lost their chosen land.

## SAVONA'S FERRY

By 1856 the H.B.C. was aware of gold in the Thompson River system, notably on Nicomen and Tranquille Creeks. At the end of 1857 the news leaked out with a small shipment of gold to San Francisco, then the centre of miners from all over the world. They were by now somewhat disillusioned with the Californian gold rush, and eager to try new fields.

What followed amounted to a human stampede. Ships to Victoria were dangerously overladen with passengers and supplies, and some few sailors jumped ship. But most lacked the fare for this route, and hiked or rode the old brigade trail through the Okanagan to Kamloops, where they were joined by New Caledonian H.B.C. men who left the Company to become prospectors. All of these converged on Boute du Lac, where they wanted to cross the river.

Very few miners "struck it rich"; packers and drovers usually did much better. One man, however, offered a different but profitable service by putting in a ferry at this crossing place.



Nothing is known of his earlier career; even his name, remembered as Savona, has been the subject of argument. One story claimed him as an Italian from Genoa who wished to name his ferry in honour of a beauty spot in his own country. However all early references make it his own name, although the spelling varies with the whim of the reporter or H.B.C. clerk!

He is repeatedly mentioned as a Frenchman, and in his obituary the British Colonist called him Francois Saveneux, a very plausible version. In general usage the place name became anglicized to Savona, and as late as 1880 the Marquis of Lorne, on an official tour as Governor-General, was warned to accent the first syllable and to pronounce it Sav-a-na rather than Sa-vone-ah.

H.B.C. Journals for 1858 do not survive, and there were no newspapers in the colony, so that there is no record of the date of Savona's arrival, nor of the difficulties he must have encountered in rigging up his cable ferry. The fast water funnelling out of Kamloops Lake was a formidable challenge, even with the help of Indian canoes. The boat itself was probably a fenced raft; it could carry two men and their packed horses, but cattle had to swim, which they usually managed without loss. Teams and wagons did not exist here, since the road from Cache Creek was not built until 1866.

The ferry seems to have prospererd, but there were set-backs. In January 1859 H.B.C. Clerk William Manson reported a sad loss; two French miners from Tranquille Creek borrowed two horses from "Savannah" to travel to the Forks (Lytton). One was killed on the way, and Adolph Franquilan sold the other, pocketing the cash and escaping.

Soon after his arrival Savona married the daughter of Joseph Bourke, who worked intermittently for the H.B.C., and his Indian wife. The daughter already had an infant son, who grew up as Francis Savona. She was an able girl, helping actively with the ferry. Her parents apparently settled nearby.

With such help Savona did not limit himself to the ferry. On July 31, 1861, Manson noted, "Mr. Savanah arrived from Boute du Lac, and asked the time promised him by Mr. McKay. Mr. McKay's note was not to that effect and besides Savanah says that the agreement was half shares in salmon and in furnishing men to work the seine - this is not what I understand from McKay's note - and in consequence refused. Besides McIver was promised the use of it at half shares in salmon and he to do all the working. Salmon is reported to be very numerous at Boute du

Lac." This fishing contract stressed the importance of salmon to the white population as well as the Indians.

In the fall Savona employed an assistant, possibly because his health was already failing. Jean Baptiste Dupuis was hired; he had till then worked for the H.B.C., and was now quite elderly. He seems to have stayed here for some years, and then went to French Creek in the Big Bend, with some success.

The British Colonist of Christmas Day, 1862, sadly noted the "recent" death of Francois Saveneux; no cause was given, nor were there any details of his earlier life. A later issue stated that he was buried on the hill south of the ferry. His home had been on the foreshore on the south bank, and his widow continued ferry operation.

According to local tradition Donald McLean, the oldest son of the Chief Trader of the same name, moved to Savona at this time and ran the ferry at times, but "Madame Savonah" remained in charge. The H.B.C. honoured her with an extensive entry in their ledger, listing considerable purchases of tools, beads, cloth and groceries - particularly sugar; she apparently had an inordinately sweet tooth, or perhaps regaled travellers with jam from wild berries. She paid with cash, or in ferry services rendered to H.B.C. personnel.

Pierre St. Paul came to the district in the early 1860s, perhaps to join his brother-in-law McLean and to help with the ferry. One story states he married Savona's widow, and they moved away. Young Francis Savona, however, remained to become a herder for early ranchers and an active participant in all race meets. He achieved a kind of prominence in 1880 when he was tried for horse theft at the Kamloops Assizes, and was acquitted. Ten years later he was searching for mica at Tete Jaune Cache, but returned to Savona.

Donald McLean attained similar notoriety in 1884, when he borrowed William Livingstone's horse for a trip to Kamloops. It seems Livingstone disliked such casual behaviour and laid charges, but the horse was returned before the police caught him. He seems to have been a popular character until his death aged 83 in 1920; he was a talented fiddler in great demand at all social occasions.

By 1866, the time of the Big Bend gold rush, Ned Roberts was running the ferry, and built a house on the north shore. Later he assisted in running the Uren hotel, and developed a small cattle ranch until his death in 1894. Like most of the early settlers he too was a participant in



the Cornwall race meets at Ashcroft.

Probably by this time the colonial government had taken over ferry operation from private enterprise; certainly they had done so by 1870, when James Uren was appointed ferryman. Details of this very competent gentleman's varied career will be given later. This section deals with the chequered fortunes of the ferry itself.

In the flood waters of June 1875 the rope broke and, despite repeated pleas, the government did not supply the steel cable needed for proper repairs until the end of the following year. The delay was probably partly political, since the interior had made the mistake of electing an opposition member to the Provincial Parliament. But it was a period of depression, and the government was poverty-stricken. During 1876 demands for a bridge were first voiced; they were repeated vociferously two years later when the scow broke away in high water, and still more fiercely in June 1879, when tragedy struck.

Once again the cable broke; James Uren was saved by a strong Indian swimmer, while an Indian boy and a C.P.R. survey supply man somehow struggled ashore, but Charles E. Fortier was drowned. He was a well-liked retired H.B.C. man who became the first settler near the mouth of the Clearwater. The editor of the Colonist took the opportunity to blame the government for his death; a bridge was needed.

This had no effect, however, not even in ensuring prompt repair of the ferry. Tenders were called for five year maintenance of the ferry in July 1880, but in November of that year the Grand Jury at Kamloops Assizes complained that it was still not in operation, creating a serious hardship for settlers and travellers alike. When C.P.R. construction of that section started in 1883, however, provincial prosperity had greatly improved, and a road bridge was built at a cost of $15,250. It was completed next year.

The burgeoning new population probably assumed that the ferry was now outmoded - but this was not to be. In 1888 the bridge was virtually awash at high water, and in 1894 extreme flood conditions swept it away, together with the bridges at Ashcroft, Spences Bridge and Lytton. The ferry now came into its own again, with a new cable and scow; the contract for operation and maintenance was awarded to J.B. Leighton, who seems to have handled it competently despite his many other activities. There was at this time little agitation for a new bridge, since the village was at a low ebb and most travellers now used the railway.

During Klondike excitement, however, demands were revived. In 1898 an analysis of ferry traffic for the period April 14 to May 14 showed 44 foot passengers, 18 teams, 30 pack animals, 176 saddle horses, 22 cattle and 336 horses - a very valid argument for a bridge.

Such pleas fell on deaf ears; it was not until 1902 that it was included in the government appropriations. Even this had no effect, since successive governments deemed other projects more urgent, and there were repeated deferments. At last, in 1905, plans were announced by Road Superintendent Arthur Stevenson. The bridge was to be built 500 yards east of the 1884 site, with three large spans each of 164 feet, flanked by three smaller ones. Construction was painfully slow, with a crew of only five men whose work habits aroused considerable local criticism, including the ire of an anonymous poet in the Inland Sentinel. He started his verse:-

"Five men (three are from Lytton),
They are worthy a little lay,
Doing nearly a half day's work
For only a whole day's pay."

The bridge was finally opened late in 1906, but its design or construction must have been faulty, since two years later part of the bridge was once again swept away. This time, however, it was possible to use the 1905 foundations for the new bridge, which was completed fairly quickly. In 1929 the fourth bridge, a steel one costing $180,000, was erected a quarter of a mile downstream, so that it was possible to use the old one until it was ready. This was again feasible in 1956 when the present bridge was built a little upstream, close to the site of the first bridge.

After nearly a half century of service it is not surprising that the name Savona's Ferry continued to be used by old-timers as the name of the settlement until the 1920s. Now the ferry is long gone, but the name of its originator is happily retained.

## FIRST RANCHERS

The first independent farms were started around Cache Creek and Kamloops in 1860, initially by men who had retired from the H.B.C., and then by packers who wanted land to winter their horses and mules. Huge numbers of cattle had come from the States through the country to feed the hungry miners, and before long some of them realized that interior bunch grass would support ranches here, and so obviate the need for such lengthy drives.



ASCHAL SUMNER BATES was the first to take up land locally, in 1862, just west of Deadman's Creek on what became known for fifty years as Bates Flats. He was an American who had mined the Fraser in 1858, and then turned to the more lucrative cattle drives. He seems never to have lived on the property, and a few years later moved to ranch in the Cariboo, where he was very successful. He sold out to Gavin Hamilton in 1878, and retired to California, where he died soon afterwards.

MATT STEWART took up adjacent land to the east for his cattle, also in 1862, and he too stayed only briefly. He was soon followed by CHARLES McCALLUM on the south bank opposite Bates. He was a noted packer on the Cariboo road, wanting winter pasture for horses.

The next arrival, however, stayed a lifetime - a man of great influence in this district and indeed throughout the interior. JOHN WILSON was born in Yorkshire about 1832, reputedly of gypsy parentage, and emigrated to the States on his own seventeen years later - the traditional poor boy without a penny to his name. He took various odd jobs, and soon reached Indiana, where he stayed to work on Lewis Campbell's father's farm.

In 1851 the California gold rush lured him west; in 1858 he moved north to the Fraser River, and was packing from Lillooet by 1861. Next year he was a partner in the Tinker claim on Williams Creek, where he at last struck it moderately rich - and apparently augmented this with his prowess at the poker table! In 1864 he met Lewis Campbell again, and they pooled their resources to buy up huge numbers of cattle in Oregon. They drove them up through the Okanagan, wintering them at the mouth of Campbell Creek, and so to a tidy profit from the butchers of Barkerville next spring. Such a partnership between two rugged individualists could not last; in 1865 Campbell settled on their winter pasture, while Wilson chose the north shore of the Thompson just below the present Walhachin bridge, building a home near that subsequently erected by the Marquis of Anglesey.

This was the modest beginning to what became a huge cattle empire. Next year Wilson added land at Eight Mile Creek, where he was later to build a large home on the Cache Creek-Savona road. In 1868 he obtained further territory at Grande Prairie (Westwold); this eventually grew to 1200 acres. During subsequent years he added 1000 acres at Cache Creek, the Perrault pre-emption at Savona, a large ranch at Copper Creek, Indian Gardens and the Point in Savona, where in 1891 he built his last home. Many ranchers gave up the struggle during the depression of the

latter 1870s, but the "Cattle King" was already well enough established to survive, and indeed to increase his holdings as property became available cheaply. Consequently he became really wealthy as C.P.R. construction proceeded and the country became prosperous again. At his death in 1904 his fortune was estimated at nearly half a million dollars, a huge sum for that era.

In 1864 Wilson had married Mary Ann, a Lillooet Indian girl who had been deserted by Tom Cavanagh, leaving a daughter who later married J.B. Greaves. Mary Ann died in 1870 and was buried at Rocky Point, but her brother later removed the bones to lie with her ancestors at Lillooet. She left Elizabeth (later Johnson, then Willard), John and William. Wilson apparently soon remarried, but there is no information about this girl, the mother of Anne (Cooney), Catherine (McAbee) and Effie (Gannon, then Ward). Finally, probably about 1885, he married Nancy of Indian Gardens, and she too had three children - Edward, Wilma Bernice and Clarence.

Wilson died in 1904 following a sad accident when his buggy overturned along Marble Canyon; he had always preferred to travel thus, unlike the usual cattle man on horseback. By his will the mighty estate was fragmented, since he had been an indulgent husband and father. Elizabeth, William and Effie inherited the Grande Prairie land, John ran Copper Creek, Annie and Catherine shared the Eight Mile and Cache Creek, while his widow Nancy and her youngsters took over the various Savona holdings.

John Wilson was a rough and ready man of the people, with no pretensions to grandeur at any stage, and very little formal education. But he was strictly honest, reliable and fair with men of all kinds, and a superb judge of cattle. His relationship with the Indians was excellent, as witness his happy family and his ease with drovers and farm help.

White men too were glad to work for him; JACK DEMPSEY arrived in 1871 as a skilled harness-maker aged 50, and continued almost until his death in 1895, living with the family and serving in every capacity from farm manager to nurserymaid, much loved by all. Similarly the young ALBERT FEHR came as book-keeper in 1889, and was proud to learn ranching management from the Cattle King. He later married the widow Nancy, raising the three young Wilsons with his own children. He survived until 1954.

JOSEPH BLACKBURN GREAVES was born in Yorkshire in 1835, and emigrated with his parents to St. Louis. As a very young man he went to



the Californian gold fields, and on to the Cariboo in 1862. A little later he went to Oregon to fetch a huge herd of sheep for 150 Mile House, and then took to driving cattle. In 1867, like Wilson, he decided to ranch in B.C., and pre-empted land on the present site of Walhachin village. The two men became great friends, and apparently ran their drives to market as an unofficial partnership. In about 1872 Greaves married Wilson's step-daughter Mary Ann Cavanagh, and their families grew up in close association.

Elizabeth Wilson remembered as a girl often swimming the fierce Thompson, accompanied by a pet deer, to visit her half-sister Mrs. Greaves and help with her babies. It was a wild and delightful time, owing much to their Indian heritage, but with the addition of some few luxuries from the white man's world. But it did not last; Greaves was very ambitious and perhaps much less kindly than Wilson; his wife left him for a younger man. He was attracted by the Nicola Valley, and had settled at Douglas Lake by 1878. He became the motive force in the formation of the Douglas Lake Cattle Company, and its first manager.

FRANK PERRAULT settled four miles from the ferry by 1867, after Fraser River mining and packing since 1858, based on the Fountain, where he had married an Indian girl and started a large and long-lived family. In 1873 he received water rights for a dam on an un-named lake, to be carried by ditch to the ranch, but some time later sold out to Wilson. He was running the ferry for James Uren in 1882, and continued active in the district until just before his death in the Provincial Home in 1907, aged 81. His son Frank was a busy prospector in the Lardeau and Cariboo, Alex spent his long life around Ashcroft, while Nelson farmed, guided hunters, worked as a blacksmith, raised sixteen children - and enjoyed Savona's fine fly-fishing!

CHARLES PENNIE was born in the Shetland Islands in 1838, and emigrated to Ontario in 1860. Two years later he came west, not to mine but as a packer to the Cariboo and Peace River. He presumably wanted good pasture to winter his horses, since in 1868 he took up land on the south bank above the present Walhachin bridge. He continued packing until 1885, but also ran cattle and planted an excellent orchard; irrigation claims from Jamies (later Pennies) and other small creeks provided good hay crops on Ladner Flats and Brassay gulch. Such names are an indication that earlier packers had used the land as winter squatters without acquiring ownership.

Pennie was highly respected throughout the interior. He was very active as steward for race meets at Ashcroft and Yale, and was a prime

mover in establishing the Inland Agricultural Association. In 1887 he had visited his homeland, and returned with a Shetland bride; there was no family. He died in 1900; she continued for a few years, and then sold to C.E. Barnes, so that the ranch became the nucleus of the Walhachin enterprise.

PIERRE and PHILIP GAUTIN (often spelled Gotah by the ignorant English!) were mining the Fraser near Lytton by 1860, and eight or nine years later Pierre had established a ranch at Savona. He ran cattle and horses, and had thirty acres under cultivation. He died in 1895 and the ranch was sold, but his brother continued to live near the village until shot years later in an attempted robbery for his imagined wealth.

In 1869 HUGH MORTON settled at Copper Creek, at first with Patrick Duffy, who soon moved to Cherry Creek. He seems to have run an excellent cattle ranch, but died in 1885. CHRIS PUMPMAKER arrived in the same year, and chose land above the Indian Reserve on Deadman's Creek; the mis-spelled Criss Creek honours him. He died in 1877, and the land was taken by Stephen Tingley of stage coach fame.

ALEX HARDIE was a Scott born in 1831, emigrating to California in 1854, and trying his luck on the Fraser four years later. He had fair success later with his brothers in the Caledonian claim at Camerontown, and in 1864 he opened a hotel here, and then one in Barkerville. This was destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1868, and he decided to try a more peaceful life ranching. Next year he took up Indian Gardens, but sold two years later in favour of Copper Creek, where his cattle flourished - and self-sown apricots from his orchard still abound! By 1890 his mining experience was revived with the discovery of mercury ore on his land. He established Savona Cinnabar Mining Company, with Oliver Redpath as manager. They shipped some ore during the next decade, and optimism ran high. But there was not enough capital - or, perhaps, ore - to develop a large enterprise. In his old age Hardie sold his holdings to John Wilson junior, and moved into the village of Savona.

By 1870 most of the good low-lying land of the district had been pre-empted, with extensive grazing leases for summer pasture. Newcomers after that either took up land in more remote valleys, or purchased claims previously held by the real pioneers.

## THE UREN FAMILY

The first white settler, Saveneux, was concerned with transport; so was the man who was the heart and soul of the little village that grew up the north shore. James Uren was appointed ferry-man by the government



in 1870.

He was born in Cornwall in about 1825; there is no information about his family and early life. He was possibly a miner, since this was the hey-day of the Cornish tin mines. He emigrated to the States in the early 1850s, and found work as a copper miner in Wisconsin. But the lure of gold brought him to the Fraser River, and in 1859 he arrived in Hope, his base for the next few years.

Meantime some other Cornish people, Peter and Jane Toy and their wee daughter Minnie, came to B.C. Peter joined the Peace River and Omineca gold rush of 1859 - and stayed in the north. By 1861 his name was on the map in Pete Toy's Bar, Canyon and Creek near the Finlay River junction. In addition to prospecting he seems to have turned to trapping, and ran an independent store trading with the Indians, much to the annoyance of the H.B.C. There are scattered references to his prospecting expedition in 1870, a trip to take fine martens to the H.B.C. Post at Quesnel in 1872, his Indian "wife" - and his death in 1874.

Jane and her daughter were thus abandoned in 1859 at Hope, in the very primitive conditions that then prevailed in the lower mainland. There were very few white women, and absolutely no opportunity to earn an honest living. In 1860, then, she "married" James Uren; possibly they had known each other in Cornwall. She retained the name of Toy for all official purposes for the rest of her life, but was universally known and respected as Mrs. Uren. Her second venture was certainly a very happy and enduring marriage. Minnie's childhood too was very happy; she later married Overlander George Baillie, who ran the Lytton Hotel, and after his death became Mrs. James McKnight, and a resident of Kamloops.

The first Uren child was Elizabeth Jane, universally known and beloved as Jennie, born at Hope in 1861. She claimed the distinction of being the first white child born in the "upper country," as the whole area above New Westminster was then called.

Possibly the Urens were operating a hotel at Hope, but certainly in 1863 they moved to Clinton to run a hotel there very effectively. Jane soon established an impressive reputation as cook and housekeeper; many road houses at this period offered little but stewed beans and bacon, but she made every effort to obtain fresh beef, vegetables and even fruit to provide a wide variety of culinary delights. The hotel was primarily her responsibility, despite several pregnancies, since James was busy as a Cariboo packer much of the time.

But in the latter 1860s the Cariboo gold rush was flagging, so that traffic through Clinton became scanty. Therefore the government appointment to Savona was probably a welcome relief to the Urens. He promptly built a large scow to take a four-horse rig, and a steel cable replaced the rope. But the waters flow fast at the narrow funnel outlet of Kamloops Lake, and there was a long story of difficulty and disaster, as outlined earlier. The bridge of 1883 finally brought an end to Uren's career as a civil servant.

Even when in commission, however, the ferry and its pay had never been a full-time job; there was plenty of other work to keep the Urens busy. In 1870 there was already some kind of stopping house on the north shore, apparently built by one W.H. Kay, and this was bought and refurbished by James. He later made an extensive addition, probably in 1879, when he bought 800 feet of flooring from the Shuswap Mill run by James McIntosh in Kamloops.

Here Jane shone in all her culinary glory. In 1872 the C.P.R.'s official trans-Canada party, headed by Sandford Fleming, left Kamloops on September 30 by rowboat, in a hurry to meet provincial dignitaries at Cornwall's (Ashcroft). Strong winds delayed them, so that they only had time for a quick meal at Savona, but their Secretary, the Rev. G.M. Grant, recorded their pleasure:-

"A jolly looking Boniface and Mrs. Boniface hurried up a capital supper of Kamloops beef and vegetables, coffee and cake; and promised one that would make the hair curl to any who could remain overnight." Twelve years later Sandford Fleming repeated his trip; he was saddened to learn of the recent death of "Mrs. Whorn," remembering what a wonderful hostess and cook she had proved on his earlier visit.

In 1881, too, excitement ran high. Sir Charles Tupper came to B.C. in September, and included a trip to the interior. After lunch at George Baillie's Lytton Hotel the party moved on to spend the night at Uren's. Next day they went by steamer to Kamloops, where loyal speeches abounded over lunch, and returned to Savona for a "Grand Social" at the Uren Hotel, where people had gathered from the whole district. "Prof. McLean furnished the music for the merry dance"; this was Donald, eldest son of the Chief Trader, a very talented fiddler.

Similarly in 1882 Governor-General the Marquis of Lorne inspected his western territory, and he too enjoyed an overnight stay. A little later Michael Hagan, owner-editor of the Inland Sentinel then in Yale, explored the interior, and praised "Mr. Uren's commodious and well-furnished



hotel, where the best of accommodation can be had." At about this time, perhaps to celebrate their enviable reputation, the Urens adopted the grander title of Savona House.

The H.B.C. owned a warehouse at Savona for goods awaiting shipment to Kamloops, and charge of this was in 1873 added to Uren's other duties. Their previous resident agent, James Sabiston, had apparently proved incompetent and intemperate. The warehouse, however, became progressively less important as direct road transport improved. In 1878 the H.B.C.'s John Tait discovered the windows had been removed, and irately took the keys from Uren. Whether the latter had purloined the windows himself is very dubious; the building was falling apart from age and because it had been rammed by the steamer "Marten."

It is difficult to assess to what extent James Uren was engaged in ranching. Registration of cattle brands was instituted in B.C. in 1873, and the very first so listed was a capital T for J. Uren and J.M. Toy of Savona on May 2 that year. And in 1880 Jane Toy was granted water rights on Three Mile (now Durand) Creek, presumably for the irrigation of hay land. Nevertheless there are no records of cattle sales such as are noted for the major ranches at that period, so that it seems probable they ran a small operation designed to supply plenty of beef, milk and butter for the hotel. Specialized breeds had not yet been introduced here, so that probably the same animals were capable of performing both functions.

During the period at Clinton and perhaps after arrival at Savona several more children were born to James and Jane. Ellen (Nellie) was born in 1864 and Emma two years later, with sons James and William to follow. They seem to have been a very close and happy family. There were no schools in the interior until Cache Creek Boarding School opened in 1874, but they were all well-educated. It is possible that they went to a residential school at the coast, but there is absolutely no record of this, and indeed it is doubtful if the family could have afforded it. In all probability their teaching was another of Jane's duties, although we know that William at least later attended Cache Creek School.

The girls became extremely popular; there were then very few in the country, among many single males - and these damsels seem to have been real charmers. Certainly Jennie received, and kept, many letters protesting undying affection from most of the young men of the district, and some few from those not nearly so young or eligible! She seems to have been well aware of her power, especially on visits to her half-sister in Lytton or to her friends in Barkerville, where the whole community vied for her

attention. If one dare criticize such a belle, it is to suggest that she could have helped her mother a little more and flirted a little less! From her surviving letters we know that she was engaged three times, to one unnamed, to "Judge" G.C. Tunstall, and to teamster Norman McDonald. She finally settled for the best of the bunch by marrying J.B. Leighton in 1882. By then she had her own career as Savona's first telegraph operator and post-mistress, and continued this work after marriage.

In 1884 tragedy struck the hotel; Mrs. Uren died. Her husband soon followed; in 1886 he visited his childhood home, and died there. William had accompanied him to England, and remained there.

Ellen married William Livingstone, a local rancher, about 1884, and died in 1886 after childbirth; Jennie raised the child with her own brood. In 1885 Emma married Dr. M.S. Wade, soon to settle in Kamloops as medical officer and newspaper editor. James established a good ranch up Deadman's Creek, but died in 1898 on a visit to England, leaving his family to continue on their land. James and Jane Uren, then, left their mark on the young settlement not only by their own strenuous activities, but through their many descendants.

## THE TRAINS ARE COMING??

In July 1871 British Columbia became part of Canada, largely as a result of Ottawa's promise to build a railroad to connect the Pacific slopes with the east. There was then, of course, no Alberta, no Saskatchewan and only a very tiny Manitoban nucleus, so that there were the vast unsettled prairies to cross as well as the formidable Rocky Mountains.

As soon as the documents were signed the first exploration party set forth from Victoria, headed by Dominion Geologist A.C. Selwyn, and including several skilled engineers capable of assessing the relative merits of potential routes. They came through Savona early in August, and then split into separate parties in Kamloops. The immediate practical effect of confederation was to provide jobs for those who wanted to augment their ranch income by packing for the surveyors, and a ready market for beef. The ferry was busier than it had been since the initial gold excitement, and Kamloops became the central depot for the different routes investigated. The C.P.R. even built a small steamer, the first named Kamloops, in 1872, to carry supplies from Savona. In addition the much larger paddlewheeler Marten, built in 1866 for the brief Big Bend gold rush, was bought in 1875 from the H.B.C. by Mara and Wilson, Kamloops merchants. They restored her to good order and civilized comfort found pleasing by Lord and Lady Dufferin on their visit next



year. She even managed to negotiate 120 miles of fierce water up the North Thompson, but was wrecked in 1877.

The H.B.C. had built a large warehouse at Savona, holding goods brought in on the wagon road from Cache Creek and awaiting shipment to Kamloops, and in 1872 JAMES SABISTON was placed in charge. He came from the Orkney Islands with his brothers in 1858; they worked on coastal steamers, but he joined the H.B.C. in Kamloops. He apparently gave satisfaction in running their garden, in trading expeditions, and in charge of the Seymour City subsidiary post during the Big Bend rush. In Savona, however, he blotted his copy-book by indulging very freely in the liquid wares traded by the Company, and John Tait fired him next year for drunkenness. Worse was to come! At the Kamloops Assizes in May 1873 Judge Matthew Begbie fined him $125 for assaulting a Chinaman and cutting off his pig-tail. There was a further fine in October that year when he was again involved in violence, together with Hector and Allan McLean.

After that he seems to have reformed, or perhaps was broke; he settled to small-scale ranching, and is still remembered in Sabiston Lake on his summer range. He had married an Indian widow named Fordyce, who already had two children. This lady was reported to be "worth two of him," and her daughter Wilhelmina (Minnie) distinguished herself in 1877 by a very well argued letter in the Colonist, describing how the troubles then prevalent in Cache Creek Boarding School stemmed from the prejudice of the principal and the Provincial Superintendent against half-breed children like herself. She later married Louis Brousseau, and became respected and loved throughout the district.

In 1876, following a change of government in Ottawa and its severe economy measures, all railway planning ground to a halt, and a period of real depression ensued. The surveyors and packers dispersed to their homes, and the market for beef plummetted. Nevertheless, there were a few newcomers to the district, perhaps men of foresight who expected the railway to materialize eventually, or just men who could buy land cheaply to raise a cow and a vegetable patch to feed them through these tough years.

WILLIAM DODD took land on the south shore in 1878; it was later taken by the C.P.R., and became the site of their village. He probably intended it as an investment; he can only have lived there very briefly. He had earlier mined in the Cariboo and then become Barnard's Express agent at Yale, and in 1886 he became Government Agent in Kamloops, transferring to Lytton two years later.

NEWMAN SQUIRES arrived at about the same time, and settled at

Cooper Creek. He was an American who had achieved a legendary reputation as horseman, cowboy and shot, working for the Harper brothers as manager of their Kamloops and then Clinton ranches until 1875. He then turned to prospecting, searching for copper around his new home, and later had a galena-silver claim at Scotch Creek. His wife was reputed to be the same lady who had earlier married J.B. Greaves. Squires died in 1898, aged 59; his daughter Christine married Tom Hardie, and son Charles served in both the Boer War and W.W.I, with a stint in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show between. He later prospected at Tete Jaune Cache.

ABRAHAM THOMAS ranched up Deadman's Creek at this time, after mining in the Cariboo. In the early 1880s, presumably with an eye on impending railway construction, he opened a saloon on the north shore near the ferry landing. This became known as Central Hotel, being located between the Uren place and Ferguson's newer establishment. It lasted until the village on the south shore became dominant, but Thomas himself survived until 1910.

In 1879 B.C. threatened to secede from Canada because of delay and inaction in implementing confederation promises. This, and another change in the Ottawa government gave the necessary stimulus for construction to start next year at Yale. At last it was possible to believe the railway would become a reality, and Savona consequently became a place of potential importance - although there was alarm and despondency here and in Kamloops in 1882 when a Nicola Valley route was advocated as preferable!

LOUIS BROUSSEAU had started service with the H.B.C. in 1863, and later took a variety of jobs; in 1876 he was working as a groom in Cache Creek. By 1880, when he married Minnie Fordyce Sabiston, he had established a good ranch up Deadman's Creek, and soon afterwards built a home on the north shore at Savona, just above the Uren Hotel and west of the ferry landing. Here they raised several children, including Clifford, who became well-known as the district's Forest Ranger.

In 1881 Savona acquired an excellent store, the property of JOHN JANE. He had been born in 1833 in Cornwall, and later enlisted in the Royal Engineers, being of the party sent out to the infant colony of B.C. in 1858. He was a corporal trained in surveying, and worked on the Boundary Survey and on various sections of the lower Fraser Valley roads. In 1863 the force was recalled to Britain, but the majority exercised their option to be discharged here and receive a land grant. Jane decided to stay, and took land in the New Westminster district. He presumably sold this, and reverted to surveying.



He worked under Walter Moberly in the Selkirks, and then returned to Rock Creek and the Boundary country, laying out roads and mineral properties. In 1874, under Ed Stevens, he took part in the first survey of the Nicola Valley, and three years later was in charge of Government surveys of Savona and district. These visits gave him an enduring love for the scenery and climate of the interior.

In 1881, now aged 48, he apparently tired of his itinerant life, and built a general store at Savona on the north shore, upstream from the Uren Hotel; it was soon to be flanked by Thomas' saloon and Ferguson's hotel. The store was a large one for that period, and stocked an unusually wide variety of goods, including furniture and some of the elegancies of life. These were brought by steamer to the head of navigation at Yale, and thence by freight wagon. According to an old-timer, he carried "new-fangled ice-boxes, ladies' writing desks, glass goblets, rifles, shotguns, etc." Food and tools, however, formed the bulk of his trade with miners, who paid in gold-dust, and with Indians, who brought in furs from as far afield as the Nicola Valley and Okanagan.

With C.P.R. construction came competition, but Jane was already established and greatly respected, and survived unscathed. But he deplored their freight rates when the line was completed; in a letter to the editor of the Inland Sentinel in 1886 he protested that they were quite exorbitant, and a real hardship for himself and his customers - a view shared by the whole population of the interior.

In 1891 Jane joined the migration to the new village on the south shore, closing the old store and starting a new one near the station. This also flourished, with regular ads in the Sentinel. In 1905 he even imported a massive cash register - a great innovation. After some struggles with its mechanism it was a proud feature of the store. Sam McCartney served for some years as book-keeper, to be followed by Tom Wilson, grandson of old John, who finally took it over.

In September 1889 Jane had married Harriet, daughter of Captain McNeill of the H.B.C. coastal steamers. She apparently enjoyed the quiet rural life of the interior, and helped in the store. In 1893 Jane was appointed J.P., a measure of the respect he had earned, but his only venture into public life. Early in 1907 he became sick, and spent some months in the Royal Inland Hospital, but to no avail. He finally returned to his beloved Savona, and died that July, mourned by the whole district. His widow moved away, and remarried.

In 1882 a new house was built on the north shore, up the hill above the ferry landing and the Thomas saloon. This belonged to JAMES BUIE LEIGHTON, who had in January married Jennie Uren at a grand

ceremony in Clinton. Leighton had been born in Scotland in 1851, but his parents and large family emigrated to the Californian mines in 1854. When his father died the mother brought her young brood to her brother Thomas Buie, merchant in Victoria; most of them soon returned to San Francisco, but William eventually settled in Nanaimo and Margaret married Overlander R.B. McMicking, who became Telegraph Superintendent. James, too, although only 13, elected to stay with his uncle, and attended Victoria Collegiate School. Two years later he was trusted to run Buie's branch store in Barkerville, and seems to have done it very well. Buie himself soon moved to a new store at Lytton, where he died in 1873; his property was sold to support his young wife and children.

Leighton was by now a capable businessman, and got work as telegraph operator at Lytton, perhaps through the influence of his brother-in-law. He soon also became agent for Barnard's Express, which was still a busy organization despite the decline in gold mining. Later he transferred to handle both these jobs in Cache Creek, where he trained Jennie to take charge of Savona's telegraph. The family later relished the story of his proposing to the young career woman in Morse code - and her acceptance in the same language. In 1881 he won the contract to carry weekly mail from Cache Creek through Kamloops and the Spallumcheen to Okanagan, and this gave them, with Jennie's earnings, a good start for their married life. At first the office was in their home; later a small Express Office was built immediately above the ferry landing. Later still they moved to the south shore; the site of their original home was taken by the C.N.R. water tank.

"The mail must go through!" was evidently Leighton's watchword, and it nearly finished him. In the spring of 1882 the ice on Kamloops Lake was softening, and he and his companion Stephen Tingley broke through on their sleds. Mercifully they were nearing Tranquille, and Charles T. Cooney was able to haul them out, and then to thaw them in his home - and Leighton was able to proceed with the undamaged mail bags! The roads of those days offered plenty of challenge in summer too.

Leighton also started ranching on the south side of the river, at first on a small scale as a side-line, but eventually taking most of his energy. He finally amassed 1800 acres, with another 2400 leased. His brother was briefly in partnership from 1889, and later his sons were a tremendous asset. Their biggest project, in 1909, was to harness the headwaters of Guichon Creek by putting a ditch into Tunkwa Lake and another through to Leighton Lake, with dams on both, and so feed Durand Creek as needed, and provide a huge irrigation and domestic water supply.

When the bridge was washed out in 1894 Leighton added to his other



duties responsibility for the ferry until the eventual new bridge. In 1897 he was elected district Cattle Overseer and also appointed Fisheries Officer and superintendent of the B.C. Express. He was indeed a good organizer of unbounded energy, and highly respected. He claimed he had seen enough in his youth to deter him from drinking and smoking, but continued to play a very good poker hand. In their old age he and Jennie enjoyed cards by themselves and with friends.

His relationship with local Indians was good, and he was one of the first in the interior to hire Japanese. From 1900 he had a Japanese ranch cook and several gardeners and labourers, and also hired some Chinese. In 1921, however, Leighton sold out to Harry Vasey, then of Medicine Hat, but a decade earlier a stockman and an alderman of Kamloops, with many business interests. The proceeds were shared with the family, much of it in the form of interest from Vasey's property in Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw and Winnipeg, exchanged for the ranch.

Leighton was now able to enjoy a life of leisure, and spent some of it in historical reminiscence, published in the Sentinel in Kamloops. In 1938 Jennie died, aged 77, and James followed in 1945, aged 94. The family included Raymond, who ran unsuccessfully for the federal Liberals in 1912 and again in 1917, after being invalided from the army. He and Leslie had distinguished themselves in 1905, when the first Canadian rodeo was held in New Westminster. John became district road foreman, and one daughter married Leslie Cameron. Another was, very sadly, defective, and had to be kept under restraint after attacking her mother; she mercifully died young.

One further enterprise was started on the north shore - an excellent hotel opened in the fall of 1883. One of the partners was JAMES A. NEWLAND. He had joined the gold rush, but soon turned to packing, at first for Deitz and Nelson on the Dauglas-Lillooet route, and then for the BX Company on the Fraser Valley Cariboo road.

In 1875 he married Mary Pringle at Monte Creek, a double wedding with her brother John and Jane Kirkpatrick. The roving Methodist minister Rev. James Turner officiated at this social event of the season. They soon established a good hotel at Clinton, but business flagged as gold enthusiasm waned, and at the end of 1882 they built a new home at Savona up the hill, west of the road from the ferry to Cache Creek, opposite the Leighton home. Next year, with A.B. Ferguson, he built and helped run the fine Lakeview House. When railway construction was completed, however, there was not enough work for two, so Newland withdrew to Ashcroft, where he ran the Cariboo Exchange until his death in 1898.

ADAM BELL FERGUSON was born in Belfast in 1839, and well-educated, but emigrated to B.C. at the age of 19 in response to the gold fever. By 1862 he was cured of this, and was working as a driver for Barnard's Express. He then became their agent at Clinton, and had the mail contract thence to Lillooet. In 1874 he undertook a tough assignment for Barnard, driving a large band of horses from the BX Ranch in the Okanagan through Kamloops, up the North Thompson, and so through the Yellowhead Pass to Edmonton. It was a horrible trip; only about half survived this unprofitable venture.

His next achievement, however, was an unqualified success; in June 1878 he married Sarah, daughter of Archibald McKinlay of Lac La Hache and grand-daughter of the legendary Peter Skene Ogden. He left the BX, and they took over operation of the Dominion Hotel in Clinton; despite the fact that they were competitors Newland became a great friend and then a partner. News of C.P.R. construction was exciting, so in 1883 they moved to Savona. Sarah and baby Harry went to her parents for a few months, until the new hotel opened in the fall. It was next to Jane's store, the building farthest upstream in the tiny settlement.

Lakeview House was a great success during construction, but in October 1884 Archibald McKinlay wrote prophetically, "Several traders and hotel keepers have left Barkerville who intend locating at Kamloops and Savona's Ferry, the former place I think is destined to become a place of some importance - it is certainly a prettier site than Savona's and I consider it in a better position for commanding trade. Savona will be nothing as soon as Railroad construction is over." Morley Roberts came through at this period, and recorded his impressions in "The Western Avernus." He had little comment for Savona, but stressed that Ferguson was one of "the handsomest men I ever saw."

In 1885 Ferguson and Newland had grand plans for moving the hotel to Eagle Pass, but apparently decided it was too large for such a trip. Next year a Lakeview House did indeed appear at Sicamous, but it seems to have been a quite independent enterprise by Colonel Forester. For a few more years there was enough business for Ferguson to continue at the old stand, but in January 1891 the Inland Sentinel announced: "Mr. Ferguson has closed his old hotel at old Savona, and has moved into the hotel at the railway station, lately occupied by Mr. Finlay." There is a tradition in the family that the old place was hauled across the lake on the ice; this was probably used as an extension or as the family home. The household was certainly a big one, with seven children and the McKinlay grandparents, now retired from farming.

Following the move there was a great revival of business. This was partly from travellers by road or rail, partly as a local saloon, and partly



a totally new venture - the tourist holiday trade. Ferguson advertized this comfortable and scenic haven for hunters and fishermen, and the latter at least responded with frequent patronage. It became common practice for the successful businessman or lawyer to spend a long weekend at Savona - and then to supply the Sentinel with highly competitive fishing stories!

In the early 1890s the McKinlays died, followed by Sarah in 1898, but Adam continued the hotel until selling to the Christian brothers in 1909. He died two years later, but there are still descendants in the district. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1924.

In the fall of 1882 Michael Hagan, owner-editor of the Inland Sentinel in Yale, made a trip through the interior which was soon to become his home. He described the north shore settlement in its heyday:- "Arriving at Savona's Ferry shortly after noon, we put up at the hotel of Mr. James Uren, where the Marquis of Lorne and party recently remained overnight . . . . . This is where the present railway contract ends. The natural layout is such that a pleasant town could be built up. Nothing as yet upon the south side of the Ferry, but along the bank on the north side is Mr. Uren's commodious and well-furnished hotel, Mr. James Newland's new residence, the pleasant home of Mr. J.B. Leighton, who keeps the stage and telegraph office, and, also, Hudson's Bay warehouses. Mr. Jno. Jane's general store is at the north end, and he seems to keep in stock a variety of choice goods."

## PORT VAN HORNE

As railway construction proceeded inland towards Savona there were busy times on the north shore, but on the south activity was quite chaotic, with mushroom growth of an instant "town," soon to be named in honour of Cornelius Van Horne of railway fame. The first building seems to have been H.F. Keefer's general store, on the point by the ferry landing, adjacent to Francois Saveneux's original cabin. In 1884 it was joined by many more, stretching up the lakeshore on the bay. Some were genuine settlers who planned to stay; others seem to have been "camp followers" who hoped to cash in on business during construction and then move to greener pastures.

During 1884 and early 1885 W.R. Megaw, also of Kamloops, opened a general store under manager A.E. Lyne; Coursier and Johnson offered books as well as general merchandise; O'Hara and Simpson ran a drugstore; Matthew Finlay built a railway hotel; A.F. Hautier had a butcher shop; A.E. Angel opened another general store, as did Bourse, and J. Woodland, butcher, soon moved to Kamloops. None of these store-keepers stayed long enough to leave much record of their activities.

A lock-up was built at the east end of the settlement, and John

Kirkup appointed first jailer and constable, after previous experience in Victoria and Yale. He seems to have been a real "tough guy" with a tendency to be fired for exceeding his authority, but in these construction camps there were many tough workmen, so there was perhaps some excuse. He later served in Revelstoke and the Kootenays, and then Nanaimo, where he died in 1916. The need for a jail was obvious for a "cooling off and drying out" period at least. A Sentinel report in the fall of 1884 describes foot races and wrestling for very large sums of money as purses, and more in casual bets, and commented how very well-behaved everyone was - with the implication that pay-day celebrations were not always so gentlemanly!

Thirst was slaked by the first brewery in the Thompson Valley, erected by Angelo Pendola and Giovanni Velatti. Pendola was a merchant from Genoa who left Italy in 1860 to run a restaurant in Victoria for a few years, when he opened a Barkerville store, perhaps with Velatti. This was destroyed in the 1868 fire, and he then built a brewery there. Velatti meantime opened a store in Yale, and visited his native Italy. In 1884, however, they jointly erected the Savona brewery, and were very well received by the construction gangs. Next year Velatti died, aged only about 45, and was accorded an impressive funeral. His monument survives on the hill above the point, in the graveyard he shares with Saveneux, Dominic Avosti, Pierre Gautin and a construction man named Morrow. Pendola continued the brewery until it burnt in 1889, and soon afterwards died in New Westminster.

There were more durable settlers too. SAM McCARTNEY, who had earlier worked for the H.B.C. and then as a clerk in Yale and Clinton, arrived as agent for merchant and cattleman Uriah Nelson. He later worked for John Wilson, and was then active in a cinnabar claim at Copper Creek; he was appointed J.P. in 1900.

GEORGE RUXTON was another worthy old-timer, originally from Scotland, who had worked his way through the Californian gold rush and tried the Fraser River in 1858, and then turned to packing. He then helped on the Greaves, Pennie and Uren ranches in succession, and in 1883 "retired" to start a market garden on the north shore of Kamloops Lake. He provided the community with fresh vegetables for the next decade, and indulged in his hobby of voracious reading and intelligent discussion. He died in 1893, aged 70.

DOMINIC AVOSTI had settled to ranching up Three Mile (Durand) Creek by this period, perhaps much earlier; Dominic Lake marks his summer range. In 1893 he claimed water from a dam he built here for irrigation of hayland; he died in 1905.



Dr. MARK S. WADE had come to Canada from England to work for the C.P.R. in 1881, and two years later was appointed medical officer for construction camps on the Savona section. He married Emma Uren in 1885, and then moved to Clinton and on to Victoria. But he loved the interior, and in 1895 arrived in Kamloops, where he remained as doctor, Sentinel owner and editor, and renowned historian until his death in 1929.

MARCUS L. McABEE was an American who helped bring cattle north in the 1870s, and stayed as a cowboy. A few years later he started his own small ranch on the north shore of the Thompson, west of Walhachin; in 1890 he married Kitty Wilson, and, after the death of her father, took charge of the Eight Mile ranch. Apart from a trip to the Yukon gold rush he remained in the district until dying in 1936, aged 81.

GEORGE CAVANAGH came into B.C. with the gold rush, but soon settled to his trade as carpenter in Lytton, or wherever work was to be found. This naturally included Savona in its period of rapid growth, and he stayed a few years. Later he lived in the Nicola Valley, and died in the Provincial Home, aged 73, in 1896.

WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE was born in Ontario in 1851, and came west in 1878 to work for the B.C. Express, and was then appointed sheriff at Lillooet. In 1885 he tried his luck at Granite Creek, and then took up land on Deadman's Creek. He ran unsuccessfully for the Provincial Parliament in 1886, and then settled to ranching, serving also as J.P. until his early death in 1899.

TOM COONEY, son of the renowned Tranquille rancher, married Annie Wilson in 1894, and thus he too fell heir to part of the massive property. He continued ranching with success until his death in 1949, aged 79.

The first station agent in 1886 was J. HARVEY MacNAB from Nova Scotia. Tragedy struck when his young wife died soon after their son Harry was born. The baby was raised in Kamloops by his uncle Allan MacNab; Harvey later moved away.

At about this period SMITH CURTIS acquired the land much earlier used for grazing by Bates and Stewart, but he seems never to have started ranching. He had been born in Ontario, coming west as a prospector. In 1900 he was elected Liberal M.L.A. for West Kootenay, but was defeated as a "Lib-Lab" in the 1908 Federal election. His many mining interests continued, and in 1910 he sold his land to Savona Orchard Lands. Curtis himself had a houseboat built, but soon retired to a cabin in the old north shore village. Sadly, he went deaf in the 1930s, and was taken to the Provincial Home following injury by a passing train; he died soon

afterwards.

In 1885 Port Van Horne Townsite was offically - and very optimistically! - surveyed by Paul Manette for the C.P.R. Long-forgotten street names appear: from the lakeshore south onto the hillside are Ada, Tingley, Ernest, Buie, Church, Frank, Kenneth and Walter. And from the west the intersecting Savona, Percy and Harvey form long narrow blocks. In practice, however, the area north of Buie was the only developed village. The grandiose vision of a town burgeoning with settlers and industries miraculously imported by the railway soon faded into the realistic view of a small but very pleasant hamlet. There was disappointment, too, for Cornelius Van Horne. This mighty man came through on his railway, and was not at all pleased that he was "honoured" by such an insignificant place receiving his name. And so it continued as Savona's Ferry, officially shortened to Savona in 1910. It is much happer for us to remember the first settler rather than a distant railway magnate!

## NEW CENTURY - NEW ENTERPRISES

Some few C.P.R. construction camps disappeared without trace shortly after the work was completed. Savona was not in danger of this oblivion; it had existed beforehand in a small way because of its strategic geographic position, and was to continue afterwards for this same reason and for two new ones - lumber and fruit-growing.

Savona Land and Lumber Company was formed in 1906, with J.C. Shields of Kamloops and later Ashcroft as president and Leslie Cameron manager. Its Monarch Mill, just east of the village, was in operation before the end of the year, and was soon employing 75 men - a terrific boost to the sagging economy. Next year there was a great deal of squabbling with Kamloops lumber interests, since the main source of logs for all was the North Thompson, where booms obstructed traffic. In December Monarch was awarded considerable damages from the Lamb-Watson Company. Meantime a fine electric system had been installed throughout the mill. A boom was constructed at the outlet of the lake; the pillars that held it still survive, and are sometimes mistaken for the much earlier ferry posts. By 1911 the tug Hilda had been built, with fireman Bill Uren; she greatly facilitated transport of logs.

In 1912 the mill was destroyed by fire, but was rebuilt within three months, although apparently to a lesser capacity. It was sold two years later to the Annis Mill Company, but winter lay-offs got longer and the pay-roll shorter; it finally closed in 1918. Demand had fallen sharply when flume construction for orchards was completed. Later mills, however, provided some employment, continuing as a dominant feature of the economy.



The first school opened about 1890 in Pendola's recently vacated home at the east end of the village. By 1900 there was a new school with an enrolment of over twenty, including four Fergusons and three each of Leightons, Perraults and Camerons; early families still formed the permanent population, with a few additions.

There was always a good general store; before Tom Wilson finally closed Jane's pioneer venture H.J. Baker opened a new one, with assistant Acton Kilby, who later moved to his own Harrison Mills store, now a Provincial site. Despite the small population there was a pleasant social life, enhanced by steamer excursions from Kamloops on holidays, with a baseball match thrown in for good measure. Somewhat less high-class, but overwhelmingly popular, were race meets on Victoria Day, when huge amounts of money changed hands and fabulous quantities of liquid refreshment were consumed. These celebrations reached their peak during C.N.R. construction, with its temporary population surge. These railway men had another less happy distinction - that of the first strike in the interior. Working conditions in the camps were quite atrocious, with many deaths from typhoid or accidents. Protests and minor disturbances culminated in April 1912 in cessation of work. The authorities reacted with a full show of power; 48 "trouble-makers" were arrested next day, many receiving heavy jail sentences. The strike was thus brought to an end - and there was no amelioration of conditions.

There were several orchards planned, intending to rival the Okanagan development; Charles E. Browne attempted his Lakeside Vineyard as early as 1901. By far the most important was Walhachin; it was a grandiose scheme, heavily promoted in England as providing a suitable investment and lifestyle for young gentlemen and retired army officers. Fruit farming was fashionable and socially acceptable in "the best circles," whereas ranching was regarded as a rough and tough occupation more suited to the working classes. Walhachin's history has been clarified by Nelson Riis' research, and the sad and sentimental story of a thriving enterprise becoming a World War One casualty has yielded to cold facts of inefficiency and climate.

At the instigation of C.E. Barnes the London-based B.C. Development Association, who already held considerable property in the province, bought Pennie's ranch at the beginning of 1908. This, with its established orchard, formed the nucleus of their B.C. Horticultural Estates, who gradually added the surrounding ranch land. Under manager Barnes an irrigation scheme was built, using Bull Lake and other small sources on the hills to the south, a village site was surveyed, orchard lots of ten acres laid out on the periphery - and massive propaganda commenced in England. In 1909 the C.P.R. changed the station name

from Pennie's to Walhassen, and soon Walhachin became the accepted spelling. This is an Indian word for "round rocks" - an apt description of the boulders on the beach and incorporated in the sand of the benches. The Estates, however, preferred to invent their own translation of "land of plenty" - a pious hope with water, but a joke to Indians who pre-dated irrigation.

Settlers swallowed the bait and came in, although at a very slow trickle until 1910. The majority were young single men "of good family," but with no training or experience in farming of any kind, let alone the specialized art of fruit-growing. Most were "remittance men" whose regular cheques from home obviated the need for manual labour; many Chinese, Indian and other workers were hired to build the flumes, plant the orchards, and cultivate the filler vegetable crops between the saplings. At no stage did the number of English residents approach that of the workmen. They lived in bunkhouses, but a hotel was built for the use of polite society.

1910 saw plans laid for the north shore area known as the Barnes estate, with the construction of a dam on Snohoosh Lake and of a long flume from Deadman's Creek to carry the water down to the new orchard lands. This provided direct work for 135 labourers and also kept the Monarch Mill producing at full capacity. But the flume was badly designed, being a broad shallow trough with an extremely high evaporation rate from the desert sun of July and August. It used varying lengths of lumber, rather than being built in sections, so that damage at one point dragged a long portion on either side down the hill. However, a considerable part still survives, although it was further damaged in the grass fire of 1979.

More apple trees were planted, and potatoes and tobacco were grown in small quantity. Other fruits were tried, but the cherries and plums and pears mostly died in their first winter. A poultry ranch was started for turkeys as well as hens. More notable was the development of social life; a debating club, football, skating and curling were added to shooting and fishing. Each fall visitors from England sampled the delights of fly-fishing in the Thompson and grouse shooting on the hills, and were lavishly entertained by their hosts.

In 1911 the ferry was replaced with a bridge and a school was opened, surviving until 1921. On the social side a community hall was built to house dances and whist drives, a golf course was laid out, and tennis, hockey and coyote hunting clubs were formed - and a Conservative Club inaugurated. Next year polo, gymkhana and cricket clubs were added, and a troop of B.C. Horse formed. In March the first issue of the tiny Walhachin Times appeared; it was limited to social notes



plus a few syndicated articles of no local relevance.

At this period Alphonse Foucault was a well-liked resident; he was a teamster of huge size and strength and unbounded good nature. His wife Fanny was also an asset as pianist at dances. A more aristocratic 1912 arrival was the Marquis of Anglesey, who bought the original Wilson pre-emption, and had a townsite surveyed. His beautiful home, long since gone, was complete with a summer house by the river, swept away in the 1972 flood, and the district's first swimming pool, which still survives.

Local ranchers more or less ignored the newcomers, with whom they had little in common. Harry Ferguson later expressed the general view; "They gave you three spoons and a whole lot of knives and forks when you ate at the Walhachin Hotel - napkin rings and the works. It was too high class for me." However, Anglesey bought some cattle, and was himself no snob. Harry remembered him warmly, as "a man we took out on the trail with us." He was a wealthy peer who believed in the future of Walhachin, investing a great deal of money in its development. In 1918 he acquired a controlling interest in the enterprise, appointing Ralph Chetwynd manager, probably an unfortunate choice, as he seems to have had little of Barnes' ability. And in 1921 the Marquis had to admit defeat and return to Britain a poor man.

In 1913 a cannery and packing house were built, but hardly used. A few potatoes had been sold to the C.P.R. since 1910, and now pumpkins and tomatoes were added as filler crops. An irrigation pipe was slung across the river in an effort to boost the inadequate water supply on the south, but it never worked properly; the southern piling still stands on the high-water island below the village. A monorail system to link orchards with the packing house was planned in the glossy promotional brochures, but was never even begun. The first small shipment of Jonathan apples, however, went forth that fall.

Next year the population peak was reached, with 150 British residents, living in 32 homes and the hotel in the village, with six more homes at Anglesey. Construction of the C.N.R. gave them another station on the north, and another packing house was built. More apples and pears were planted. When war was declared 40 single men enlisted at once, with more, including older married men, to follow in the next two years. Enough remained to continue most of the operations, but enthusiasm faded and slowly died.

Contrary to popular mythology, most of the settlers returned hale and hearty after the war, but they were older and wiser, and most promptly departed for greener pastures. In 1920 a summer cloudburst brought disaster; a large section of flume was washed out, and nobody

had money or energy enough to restore it. The settlement was abandoned; it had never really been a viable enterprise, and this was now painfully obvious to all.

A few people remained, including some Chinese gardeners who eked a living from a small part of the fields on the south bank. Some houses were moved to Kamloops, and the packing house dismantled and rebuilt in North Kamloops. The grand piano used by Paderewski on his 1910 American tour, and then acquired as befitting the community hall, finally found a home at U.B.C. There was brief intense activity, of a totally different nature, in 1931, when the C.P.R. made it a work camp for its re-routing. In 1940 the orchard lands on the south were taken over by Harry Ferguson, Three Mile Creek rancher, and they happily reverted to cattle country. On the north, near the highway, the vestiges of orchards may still be seen as an occasional pink plume in spring, and, in damp years, a few wizened apples in fall.

Savona Orchard Lands, on Smith Curtis' Bates Flats property, shared the Snohoosh Water, Light and Power Company's facilities, but it was a separate enterprise - although no more successful! It was taken over by General J.W. Stewart of Vancouver in 1926. There was a prolonged hassle with Water Rights and other branches of government over the security of the dam on the lake, since possible collapse threatened the lives and livelihood of the Indian reserve downstream; eventually this was dismantled, although the remains may still be seen.

The final fruit-farming effort was charmingly named - the Elysium Orchard Homes, brain-child of David William Rowlands. He was born in Cardiff in 1873, coming to B.C. in 1890 to work for the C.P.R. at Donald and then Kamloops. In 1897 he became B.C. Express agent at Ashcroft, and then owner-editor of the Ashcroft Journal, and Cariboo sheriff for a decade. In 1910 he bought the old Uren property at Savona, near the mouth of Three Mile (Durand) Creek. Here he proposed his heaven-on-earth, building a gracious family home and garden, and even planted apples on a few of his 360 acres. His brochure is slightly more modest than that for Walhachin, and was not directed specifically to the English gentry - but the response was also modest to the point of non-existence! He gave up after five years to become an estate agent in Kamloops, where he became an eminent citizen. The land again became fine ranching terrain.

This, indeed, is the essence of modern Savona - a hinterland of good ranching country, a waterfront acceptable to lumber and tourists alike, and an enduring small community which serves these varying demands and offers a pleasant life style.