

The Reincarnation of Golden Cariboo

By Charles Harrison Gibbons

Not since 1897 and the mad days of the Klondike rush has such a portentous border drama been in enactment on the vast stage of Western Canada as that which today is focusing the world's attention once again upon the golden heart of British Columbia—magical Cariboo.

Cariboo! Golden Cariboo! The very name is in itself synonymous with romance—compellingly reminiscent of bold, brave deeds; of men cast in heroic mold; of the gleam of the luring red treasure; of fierce and determined battling against such odds as reluctant Nature trusts to defend her treasures, in mighty

the placer prospector's quest for auriferous gravels and the exact applied science of modern quartz mining methods. Percentages of chance have been reduced to a minimum. Business and colonization insight and investigation dictate the processes of extraction for the new millions that Cariboo is destined in the now near future to pour into the treasury of the world.

It certainly is curious that Fort George, a name until very recently all unfamiliar to the hurrying world, should be the focal point of the present colonization and industrial rush, and yet, though curious, singularly fitting. This same Fort George is geographically the

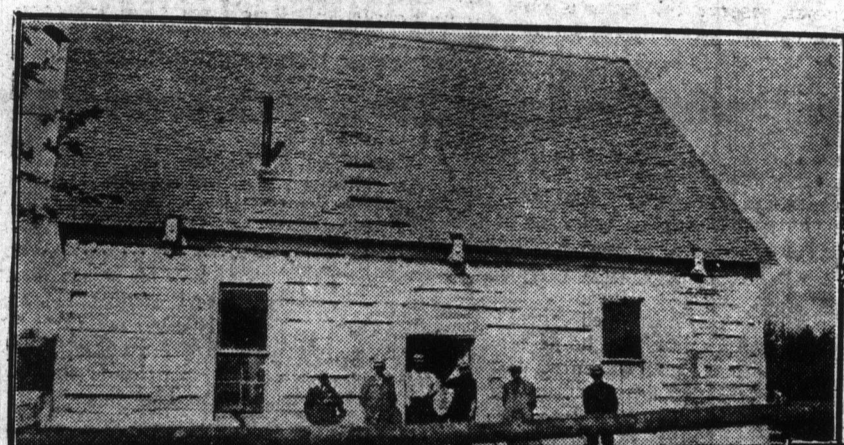
"Two things very greatly impressed me on my trip. One was that the climatic conditions and the nature of the soil are quite the opposite of what one would expect in that geographical zone. Lying in the belt in which irrigation must to some extent be depended upon, it is pleasantly disappointing to note the provision which Nature has made to obviate these conditions. Much of the area in the northern part of the valleys is relieved of the necessity for irrigation, as the grasses and natural verdure testify. In the southern part there are hundreds of lakes which are unmarked on any maps and the existence of which is entirely unsuspected by those who have not been over the ground. The water supply, if conserved and

from Hazelton—until the company's surveys were completed. In conversation with a representative of the Colonist recently, Mr. Cooke, who has naturally gained from his long experience over so extensive a district, much valuable knowledge of the nature and the resources of the Northern Interior, supplied the following details, which are repeated here for the sake of completeness:

"From Fort George to Giscombe Portage, a distance of 41 miles, following the river upstream, the valley on both sides of the river is very wide and covered with timber, mostly spruce, poplar and birch. All the tributary streams, such as the Little Salmon and Willow

"How do you find the winters?" Mr. Cooke was asked.

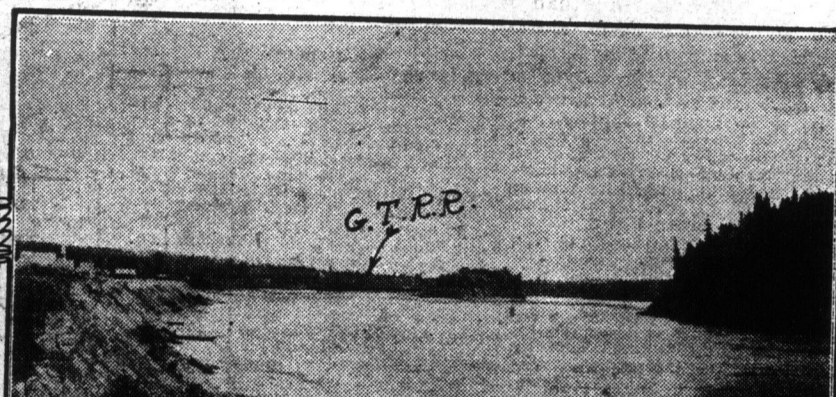
"The longest period of really cold weather I have known in my experience there was about three weeks. The cold at that time was about the same temperature as is the case in winter in the prairie provinces; but the timber protects one from the wind, and the cold being dry, very little inconvenience is experienced. There is any amount of good water everywhere. I consider that the valley of the upper Fraser is fully equal in climatic advantages and agricultural possibilities to the valley of the Ottawa River, in Ontario, where I was born, while in the matter of minerals, both



HUDSON BAY STORE, FORT GEORGE



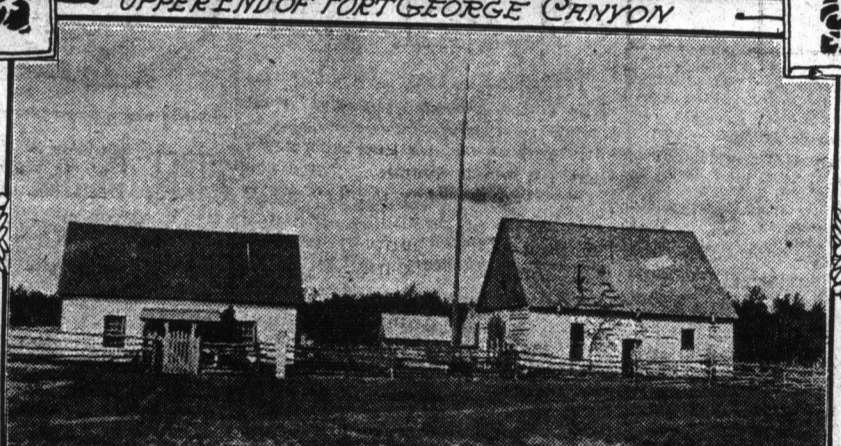
UPPER END OF FORT GEORGE CANYON



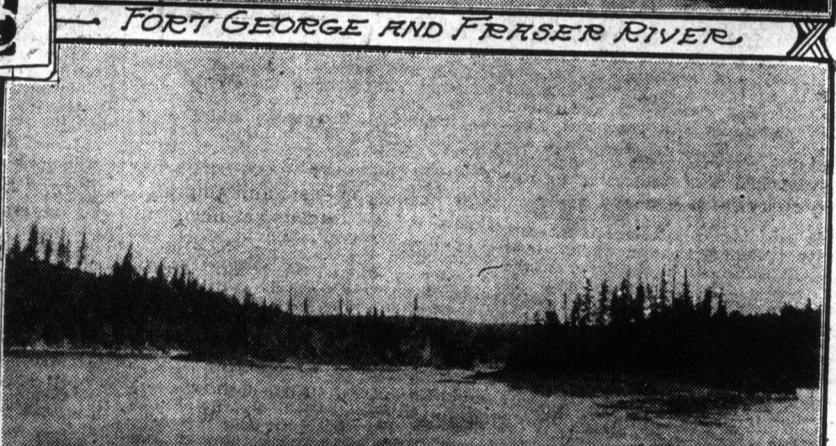
FORT GEORGE AND FRASER RIVER



FORT GEORGE RESERVATION



HUDSON BAY STORE AND RESIDENCE, FORT GEORGE



MOUTH OF FORT GEORGE CANYON

mountain, abyssal canyon, and foaming flood, long travel over hitherto untrodden and pathless wilderness, vistas of desert country, the farthest-flung outposts of civilization long since left behind!

And yet those giants in accomplishments of the "good old Cariboo days" of the early 'sixties accepted eagerly the odds that Nature arrayed against them, beat down all handicaps with the indomitable courage of Western pioneering, and scored triumphantly in the great game in which the multiplied millions of Grouse and Antler, Lightning and Williams creeks (the richest placer streams the world has ever known) were the stake.

To the world at large the history of British Columbia dates from the Cariboo rush. Following so closely upon the heels of the California gold discoveries, these had brought civilization somewhat into touch with the life and hopes and romance of the newer and more northerly El Dorado; and even today mention of Cariboo conjures up mining camp scenes in which the fearless, mainly Bret Hartean frontiersmen are the virile actors.

Most of the Cariboo pioneers have long since gone their ways. Some few are left to enjoy the fortunes that with sluice and rocker they won from its golden streams, and to dream in their twilight of the history-making days in which each had his place. With the gradual exhaustion of the placer diggings, the army of the Argonauts evacuated the conquered and looted land, and for almost half a century Cariboo has rested—while Nature has hugged her secret of a vaster and more wondrous treasure in mountainside and valley than in their maddest dreams the conquerors of the 'sixties had dared to imagine. Great men they were, and brave adventurers, but their horizon was restricted—their perspective limited. They knew for Cariboo treasure only the coarse grains of metal that gleamed dully for their delighted eyes at the bottom of the shallow goldpan or back of the rifles of the rocker or the sluicelock. The second-sight of imagination was denied them by which they might have glimpsed the inexhaustible treasure that the country of their hopes was yet to yield—the gold of ripening wheat fields, of vast fruit orchards, and of many mines developed by modern, scientific methods, the toll of commerce and vast industrial enterprises.

Today sees Cariboo awakened and preparing for the second reaping of its treasure in contrast with which the transitory, ephemeral years that gave the land its adjectival "golden" will seem but a fantastic period of children's play. As in the eventful 'sixties, the cry today is "On to Cariboo!" and from Eastern Canada, the neighbor States, the Motherland and the congested countries of continental Europe, the exodus of the ambitious in answer to the last great call of Western Opportunity has begun. It is not a stampede such as the Klondike knew—and Cariboo once before—yet it is somewhat like it; it is not the typical land rush of Oklahoma days—nor yet again altogether dissimilar. It shows such a kindred difference as might be said to exist between

hub of British Columbia. Its history is older than the Province. Its position strategical in the highest degree. This latter condition was instinctively recognized more than two centuries ago, when rival native nations battled lustily for right of residence and of dominance "where the great rivers meet"—the Fraser and Nechaco. The white man first affirmed it in 1806, when, on the 11th July, those intrepid explorers John Stuart and Simon Fraser, "reached the mouth of the Nechaco river just at sunset and camped where Fort George now stands," the indomitable Fraser very quickly deciding that here must be the great trading centre of a nation to be born, and thereupon building (and naming for the then reigning monarch) a post of which Hugh Faries was placed in charge and which he made his own headquarters and the base from which in the following year he started down the mighty river to which he gave his own name, west-bound toward the sea.

In those primitive days, the gold of the country was extracted through the media of its furs; placer mining placed its stamp upon the second Cariboo era; quartz mining and agricultural and horticultural industry are to mark the epoch now in its dawn. And these are made possible and their opportunities brought prominently forward chiefly because, since it became patent to all observers that somewhere about Fort George was marked by destiny as a great railway divisional point, the secondary and amazing discovery was made that here was also the focal point of one of the most marvellous and extensive systems in all America of navigable inland waterways by which economical access to the world's markets is assured for all time to come.

"There is room for a million people in this country with Fort George as its centre, with a chance for them all to prosper and help build that journalistic trail-blazer John Houston, to a friend, after his first investigation of the land. "It looks to me as though one of the great cities of America is to grow right here, and so here I stay to help in the gardening."

Poor Houston! He was not spared to glimpse more than the merest beginning of his dream come true; and yet in the chequered and romantic story of Fort George his name must ever have a place of honor.

Of the country tributary to Fort George, which must be looked upon as a focal point of rail and river communication, it is established by the reports of Government surveyors that it contains hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of acres well adapted to the purposes of mixed farming, of fruit-raising in a limited degree, of cattle and horse-raising and sheep-grazing, with insatiable markets for the products of these related industries either east or west, and an assurance of early and economical transportation facilities to bring these markets in touch. An interesting general description of the characteristic countryside is given by Mr. J. F. Bledsoe, M.P., who during recent weeks has completed a third far-reaching reconnaissance. Says this indomitable frontiersman and explorer:

where irrigation is necessary, will be abundant. "The scattered settlers who were wise enough to go in there and brave the pioneer days, have planted fruit trees, and both from these and vegetable production have demonstrated the suitability of the climate for horticulture as well as agriculture, and I look forward to the time when the Coast cities will be supplied from that district with every variety of fruit that is grown.

"The other thing that impressed me was that the location of mineral lodges, bearing gold and copper, has demonstrated the truth of what has often been affirmed—that the country is rich in varied minerals. The lack of transportation facilities has hitherto prohibited the proper prospecting of the hillsides, but the assurance that the whole region will be tapped by a transcontinental line has given impetus to the old spirit of the prospector, and many valuable finds have recently been made, both in alluvial and lode minerals, while the Grand Trunk Pacific has shown its wisdom in seeking an individual line to Vancouver, instead of paralleling the other proposed roads.

"As a faint prophecy of what is to be realized in the near future, never was the old Cariboo road, since the first bloom of the excitement of its historic days, busier than today. One can scarcely travel along it even for a short distance without overtaking a pack-train, a stage or a lonely individual carrying his camping outfit, or seeing someone resting by the wayside on the hurried journey. Settlers, prospectors and perhaps speculators are among them.

"Already there are five steamers plying in the northern waters of the Fraser river, with three more to be added to the fleet this summer. Eight automobiles are ordered to be placed on the route to carry transportation and freight, and still, before the season has opened, there is insufficient transportation for the number who are already going that way. Several important property sales have recently taken place which establish the fact of the rising tide of confidence in the Northern Interior."

Mr. Bledsoe adds that everyone going into the district now should go prepared to fully provide for himself, as the settlers have not the stock of food supplies on hand sufficient to feed the travellers, and in many instances their ability to act as hosts to accommodate is distinctly limited.

As range country, Mr. Bledsoe thinks the districts of Bonaparte Valley and the Clearwater are unrivalled, the horses and cattle there having wintered well and many of the herds not having had to be fed at all. Hundreds of thousands of acres are here available for the settler, the range man, and the prospector.

Another interesting first hand report as to the Fort George country is made by Mr. William F. Cooke, who for three years was in charge of the transportation and supply department of the Grand Trunk Pacific survey for the district lying between Tete Jaune Cache and Bulkley Summit—some 120 miles

river, have open places on their banks, and indeed, the country as a whole, although, as I have said, well timbered, is largely of a park-like description, with much open space. It is, in the main, much easier land to clear than was the case in Ontario, of which province I am a native.

"From Giscombe Portage to Burnt River, a distance of about 200 miles, the river is almost completely smooth, with the exception of Grand Canyon and Goat River Rapids. The country on both sides of the river for the whole length of this distance is very rich soil, although more heavily timbered than the previous section. By this I do not mean that it is a matter of very difficult clearing, but the size of the timber makes it of commercial value, as it is larger and heavier in this section. The valley is also narrower here.

"From Burnt River to Tete Jaune Cache the country becomes very much more open and more easily cleared.

"As for minerals, from Goat River to Tete Jaune Cache, the mountains which border the valley through which the river takes its course already have been found to contain much mineral. Some rich free-milling gold quartz has been found in the watershed of the Beaver River, a tributary of the Fraser about fifty miles below Tete Jaune Cache; while at Tete Jaune Cache itself, as is well known, there are valuable and extensive mica deposits.

"Of course, as far as settlement or pre-emption of land, from Tete Jaune Cache to the mouth of Big Salmon River, a distance of about 23 miles, this is under reserve (except for actual settlers) by the Provincial Government for a width of three miles on either side of the river.

"Going westward from Fort George up to the mouth of the Stuart river, a distance of sixty miles, this entire valley is excellently adapted for agriculture. For instance, a man on the Nechaco River, about five miles above Fort George—a fair specimen of the general nature of the land—has been raising 'garden stuff' of all descriptions for the past three years without any failure at all either through frost or drought, and has made a good living the whole time, off a cultivated area of about three acres.

"From the mouth of the Stuart River to Stuart Lake, a distance of about 100 miles, the country again becomes more open, with clumps of willow and poplar; but the land is slightly higher than at the confluence of the two rivers. Stuart Lake is about 40 miles long. The land around it is very fine.

"Between Fort George and Quesnel, going down stream, the distance is about 90 miles, and the river going is first-class. There are a couple of canyons, but nothing to interfere with steam navigation. The country on both sides is also open, having been nearly all burned off, which makes it very easy to clear. All this land is well adapted for agricultural settlement."

metallic and coal, the Fraser river country is of course far in advance.

"Another thing that strikes a person is the number of places one can reach easily and cheaply by water—not merely by steamboat, but by canoe and other small craft. It is an ideal country to get about in—you can go to almost any place by boat from Fort George. It is not too hot in the summer; and, personally, I have never suffered from the cold.

"There is good coal reported on Bear River, about 40 miles from Fort George, which is being developed. There will without doubt be an ample supply for all needs as soon as development operations are further advanced.

"Taking the country as a whole, I would sooner make my home there than in any other place I have ever been. It seems to me that, with mineral in every mountain, with a most fertile soil, and with abundance of wood and water and a fine climate, the biggest things can be confidently expected of this country as soon as it begins to get settled up and the means of transportation are secured.

"I should like to say a word, too, about the game with which the country abounds. For moose, cariboo and bear, especially the former, Fort George offers a better point of departure than any other place I know of in the Dominion of Canada. I myself have seen, above Clearwater river, about 150 miles east of Fort George, a dozen moose in the river in a single day. There are both black and grizzly bear in the mountains that border the upper Fraser, and on nearly all of the mountains cariboo are to be found. Grouse are also plentiful, and wild fowl of all descriptions are abundant. Clohon Lake, six miles east of Fort George, teems with trout, and the Fraser and its tributaries are all richly stocked with fish of various sorts."

As to the unequalled system of waterways centering at Fort George, an interesting and valuable reference is found in a recent issue of the "Fort George Tribune"—quite probably one of the very last contributions to the columns of his last newspaper by John Houston himself.

A new country, to be attractive to settlers, says the article in question, must have two qualifications—land suitable for agricultural purposes, and transportation facilities. Both essentials are here to be found. It is out of the question to transport farm produce long distances by wagon, even were not the making of wagon roads expensive. But when a country is provided with natural transportation routes, the improvement of which would be inexpensive, that country has an advantage, and it is this advantage Central British Columbia has, with its millions of acres of farming lands. No interior part of the Pacific Coast is so advantageously situated. Central British Columbia has more miles of navigable waterways than Washington, Oregon, and California. The Columbia and Willamette river made possible the settlement of these states before railroads were built. Steamboats on the Willam-

ette gave the farmers of a means of landing their that were profitable. In mento and the San Joa only means the pioneers transporting goods to the interior of the state. of all these rivers, which portant a part in the sett states, is not as great as of rivers and lakes that Fort George. Take the river with less volume the greater length. Empty Georgia a short distance l ster, it is navigable for s distance of one hundred north to Lillooet it is not rapids. But from Lilloo Cache, a distance of ove more difficult of navigati umbia and the Snake fro Lewiston, Idaho, for near would be short portages could be hauled by rail or on; but from Soda Creek Fort George, to Goat Riv east of Fort George, a ste autumn without difficulty ser claimed that he could through to Tete Jaune Ca miles east of Goat River ed a week earlier. His was drawing over twenty Captain Bomser will dem feasibility of navigating t The Nechaco and Stuart together, as the latter jo point 57 miles west of F are rapids in both rivers, B ated last year by the Nec years by a steamboat built district was attracting a s that is today beached on S point seventeen miles abo Nechaco, Stuart river for is a fine steamboat strea little current, and there a Stuart lake, from which th of the finest lakes of the chaco is difficult of navig rocks and rapids. These lakes from which they flo ately three hundred miles which steamboats have b northwest of Fort George, may be very considerably

New Pro

The honest, earnest man work.

The woman also; otherwise At once below the dignity of Accepting serfdom. Get let 'Tis better far than what y

Let it be distinctly unde no doubt Mrs. Browning re work of the home, the dut mother are a profession; she prefers these is doing most labor; and that for a grea other way of earning a livin attractive, or so suitable in the work of home-making. But this work is not availa

By the cruel sufferings of erations of women, left in deaths of relatives without earning profession for their been brought home to us th in our social conditions has know that now it is not saf girls of a family to be allowe trained in any business in th riage will provide them with maintenance. This work is for many, owing to the pre bers of women in the country do not become wives are no domestic employment in a numbers that they were in c so much of what once was now produced in the factori mothers, and girls themselves this, and so there is a cons open new professions and girls.

Science in Househ

Fortunately, the time-h tasks of women are not omit opment. There was room here; for although the capab valuable housewives were th amongst the old-fashioned h men (and I think it is gross men, nearly all of whom mus sensible and industrious mot would not have survived inf now, to gird as they do at w still it remains true that the "rule of thumb," reasons wer looked, and the practical side was developed to the neglect side. A new profession has r out of this fact. Teachers of including that most import household lore, the choice cookery) are more in deman county councils now employ ers, who must, of course, be th and trained in the first place, ing schools or colleges for th tion of the housewife likewi ing for paid work as profess of educated and clever wom opening in this direction has university behind it. King's has just started a full course