

Report on Mt. Edziza, Tatlatui, Spatsizi

by Bob Henderson

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Introduction

Through time the cultural history of an area is usually confined by the geographic limitations of its major watersheds, and at first glance this would be true of the history of the three parks under discussion. Not only are there three different landscape represented, but also the influence of four major watersheds, and a number of different linguistic and cultural groups who have a cultural heritage found within their boundaries.

Heretofore no attempt has been made to study the area in question as a unit; but after what is admittedly a rather cursory examination of the wealth of documents available on the more recent human activity in the region it has become abundantly clear that not only is the system as a whole a viable unit culturally, but a much larger land base must be examined to both understand and hopefully protect the evidence of what is an extremely rich, diverse, and colourful cultural past.

This Region has a recent history which is probably as exciting and colourful as anywhere in North America, including the 'wild west' of the United States and the Yukon Gold Rush. Yet most of it has been alternately ignored, forgotten, or gone completely undocumented. No systematic attempt has been made to document the past of either the Native Peoples of the area or the Europeans that followed even though this is one of oldest areas of European involvement on the west coast of this continent.

If it is our belief that present political planning and policy is going to influence the future of the region, then surely we must have an understanding of the past to find out how such activity has brought us to the present. Contrary to popular belief the current planning process is not dealing with pristine wilderness but rather areas that have a record of human activity dating back to the beginning of time.

The present boundaries of the three parks were made to accommodate the political realities of the time. Past history was not a factor in their development and so it is going to become necessary to discuss the history of a much larger geographic area to come to an understanding of why things are the way they are today. This is especially critical in light of the surprising

mobility within and without of past generations.

Pre Contact

As was the case elsewhere on the West Coast, the coastal indians, in this case, the Tlingits appeared to dominate the neighbouring interior tribes. For centuries, under the command of Chief Shakes, the dominant leader of his generation within ^{THE} Tlingit nation, they staged raiding and trading missions up for the Stikine for furs, fish, Obsidian, and slaves. They also traded with the Haida to the south for cedar dugout canoes.

The Nahannies and the Tahltans were the next tribes to the east. Both lived a nomadic life during the summer, hunting and gathering foodstuffs for the winter and then returned to a village setting, mainly to fish. The Tahltan also spent time every year on Edziza quarrying Obsidian for tools and weapons. This Obsidian was traded with the Nishga to the south, the Nahannie to the north, the Tlingit to the west, and the Thloadennie to the east. The Nahannies controlled most of the area north of the Stikine and the Dease drainage. They were more warlike than either the Tahltan or the Thloadennie and appeared to pretty much dominate them.

The Thloadennie had definite ties with the Carrier Nations to the south. They were also a nomadic race but were much more dependant on their hunting skills than the others, as they didn't have access to Salmon. Traces of stone corrals and traps still exist on Cullivan Creek, as do winter campsites in the Ecological Area. Arrowheads have been found on the Spatsizi Plateau. A spearhead was found on the Bear Lake Trail at Thudade.

Early Contact

The first recorded European came as a result of the Samuel Black expedition to the headwaters of the Finlay River for the Hudson Bay Company in 1824. The purpose of the expedition was to explore for new areas of trade, Beaver being the principal commodity sought. By the first week in July, Black, with an entourage consisting of several native paddlers, a native interpreter, Le Prise and his wife, and a Mr. Manson who was second in command, met with a group of Thecannie Indians at Thudade Lake. The party had already had discussions with the Thecannie Chief,

Methodities, earlier during their ascent of the Finlay. He had told them of the village at Lake Thucatade (now called Metsantan). The people he found here he described as a small group of Thloadennie who subsisted mainly on the Caribou which ranged in substantial numbers throughout the adjacent area. His general impression of the North American Natives was less than complimentary as they didn't have the same abiding dedication to the business of the 'company' that he and the other Europeans in his party^{had} and were more than shrewd in the negotiations with him over trade and labour.

The route that Black took from Thudade to Metsantan went over Tomias peak to the confluence of the Sturdee and the Firesteel Rivers, thus missing, by about five miles, some of the most prime beaver habitat in Northern B.C. He then went up the Sturdee, camped at Black Lake, and then passed through the pass where the Dupont and Cheni Mines are now located and on to Metsantan. From there he travelled north, via the Stikine or Shadzue as it was then called, to the Turnagain River. Here he was unsure where this river would lead him and he reluctantly retraced his route to his cached canoe at Thudade.

In the course of his travels, Black made a number of interesting entries in his diary. For example he refers to the 'Fire Steel' River and Bears (sic) Lake. He also mentions that the natives already had firearms which they had obtained from other Indians who had in turn obtain them from whites in a fort with cannons and big looking glasses. Raymond Paterson in 'Dangerous River', speculates that this refers to Fort St. Dionysius on Wrangell Island at the mouth of the Stikine but this fort was not established until 1834, some ten years later. It is far more likely to refer either to Bear Lake or Fort Connolly which was established by James Douglas, later Sir, or Fort St. James, both likely trading destinations of the Thloadennie.

Black also mentions the presence of a Mcleod Lake Indian at Thudade when he returned from the Turnagain. He expressed no real surprise at his being there which would indicate that there was a network of passable trails throughout the area and inter-tribal travel was not uncommon.

Finally, Black documents the tribal war between the Nehannies of the west and the Thloadennie. While he was

at Metsantan word came of the murder of a Thloadennie woman and an attack of several others by the Nehannie. He also mentions, however, that there was limited trade between the two.

Ten years passed before there was documentation of further intrusion into the upper reaches of the Stikine by Europeans. Of course there was trade between the Tlingits and the Russian throughout this period and some of those goods were reaching the Nehannie through trade with Tlingit at the traditional summer meeting place on the Tahltan River. There is also evidence that the Tlingits were trading with the Hudson Bay Company on the Nass.

In 1834 John Mcleod travelled southwest from Fort Simpson in search of new trading areas for the Hudson Bay Company. He arrived in the Upper Stikine by way of the Dease River and followed the Stikine (which he thought was the Pelly River), to the Tuya. Here he and his men found a bridge of sorts which they named 'terror' bridge. Two of them managed to gain the other shore through its use and tried to make contact with the natives who were camped on the other side to no avail. They did, however, enter one of the tents and found firearms and blankets similiar to those being sold by the Hudson Bay Company at that time which lends credence to the theory that the Tlingits did not restrict their trade to the Russian American Company.

While Mcleod was tempting fate with the vagaries of 'terror' bridge 150 miles downstream another Hudson Bay Officer, Peter Skene Ogden, was, unknown to Mcleod, sailing into the harbour on Wrangell Island and challenging the Russian monopoly on direct trade with the Tlingits and the other tribes up the river. His chief interest was sea otter pelts, but he was also very interested in the beaver trade upstream. Earlier that year Count von Wrangell had ordered a fort built at the mouth of the Stikine to thwart any disturbance of trade with his Company by the Hudson Bay. Fort Saint Dionysius was being constructed as a result. Ogden's demands for trading rights were refused by the Russians and had not Chief Shakes of the Tlingits fallen in with the Russians, war could well have broken out on the spot. The reverberations would have likely caused war between Great Britain and Russia in Europe as well. As it was the incident created an international furore which wasn't settled until 1840 when the Hudson Bay Company took control of the Fort on a ten year lease in

exchange for 2000 sea otter pelts annually. Ogden returned south to Fort Vancouver and McLeod north to Fort Simpson both unaware of each other's presence.

Four years later Robert Campbell retraced Mcleods steps with the intention of constructing a fort on Dease Lake. When he reached the lake he left a crew to start the construction and he went on to the Stikine to try and make contact with the natives. This time after he crossed 'terror' bridge he moved on to an encampment where he describes finding thousands of Indians. This was their summer camp on the Tahltan. The most dominant tribe represented was the Tlingit under Chief Shakes. This tribe had traditionally dominated the native population of the area and were very jealously guarded their position as middlemen between the Russians and the tribes of the interior. From Campbell's notes it appears, however, that the Nahannies were also strong in both numbers and fighting ability. They were led by a woman who according to those same notes was extremely powerful in her own ranks and commanded the respect of Shakes and his people. It appears that she must have either had a romantic interest in Campbell or saw a possibility of breaking the Tlingit stranglehold on trade for she went to great lengths to save Campbell from her own braves and those of Chief Shakes.

Campbell withdrew to the fort that his men had built on what is now called Sawmill Point on Dease Lake. Here he and his men spent a harrowing winter alternating between fighting off unpredictable attacks from the Nahannie braves (who thought that the bad smell of the whites had driven off the game), to undertaking countless fruitless hunting trips. The party eventually left Dease Lake in the spring of 1839 after eating the parchment from their windows and the babiche filler from their snowshoes as a last meal.

Gold Is Discovered

In 1861 Buck Choquette discovered gold on a bar in the lower Stikine, adjacent to the mouth of the Anuk River. Not long afterward he established a trading post there. His prime market were the Tahltan who had a village on the Iskut River, probably in the vicinity of Eskey Creek. On one of their trips to trade with Choquette they brought a nugget the size of a baseball. Choquette

persuaded them to show him where they got it, however an argument broke out on the way back to their village between them and Choquette and they refused to co-operate. They returned to his store and torched it.

Choquette re-established the post for the Hudson Bay Company and managed it for them until 1875 when he left for the gold fields at Thibert Creek on Dease Lake.

The Hudson Bay Company had by this time gained control of the trade on the river by virtue of their position at Fort Stikine on Wrangell Island. The colony was considered separate to any other in the west and was administered from the Fort until it received the attention of Sir James Douglas as boat loads of stamperders left Victoria in the summer of 1862 to take part in Choquette's rush. Douglas had previous experience of the area as he had been stationed in Fort Saint James as a young man and had also established Fort Connolly in the 1820s. He now unilaterally secured the territory to 62nd parallel to British Columbia.

With the industrialization of the eastern seaboard of the continent there was a need for faster communication between Europe and North America. By the mid 1860s two ambitious projects were underway to achieve telegraph service between the two continents. One was to lay a cable under the Atlantic; considered impractical, if not impossible by many, and the other to run a line up the west coast of North America, thence under the Bering Strait, and finally across the Russian Steppes to Europe. This route was to travel up the Skeena to Groundhog Mountain, across the headwaters of the Nass, through the Ningansaw and Raspberry Pass areas to Telegraph Creek and then on to Atlin. The plan called for the line construction to work from the future site of Hazelton on the Skeena north and from the Telegraph Creek area on the Stikine south. To accomplish the S.S. Mumford delivered wire and insulators to Fort Staeger at the confluence of the Kispiox and Skeena Rivers and to Telegraph Creek, called Fort Mumford briefly at that time, on the Stikine. Part of the line was in fact constructed north of Fort Staeger in the Kispiox before the word came that the Atlantic Cable had been successfully laid.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1865, two surveyors Pope & Blenkinsop for the Collins Overland left Buckley House at the head of Takla Lake and explored the upper Skeena and Stikine for a suitable route for the line. A third

member of the party, a botanist, explored the upper Finlay area, and could well have been the first white man to visit the area since Black's visit forty years before.

In 1872, Thibert discovered gold at the outlet on Dease Lake. This was the first such strike on the Arctic watershed. This precipitated a significant rush to the area. Estimates of as many as 1800 people were living at Porters Landing, adjacent to Thibert's strike. Other communities grew at Laketown at the mouth of Dease Creek and Macdame on the Dease River. The Hudson Bay Company had also moved aggressively into the area, establishing posts at Telegraph Creek and the south end of Dease Lake. This population increase was significant in that, unlike most of the other strikes in British Columbia, it was maintained until the Second World War and had a major influence both economically and culturally to the overall settlement and transportation system in the area.

Trail Construction

By the 1870s the Commissioner of Lands & Works for the Province had assumed the responsibility of trail construction and maintenance and in 1874 W.H. Humpheries submitted a report to him based on his work on the Upper Skeena - Klappan trail that summer. His report indicated that there was a well worn trail from the Indian village at Kispiox to Kuldoe, another similiar village further up the Skeena. From there to the Klappan he worked on improving the trail; even constructing bridges over some of the creeks. His guide, a native from Kispiox apparently knew the trail well as far as the height of land on the Skeena but had never ventured into the Klappan drainage because of the presence of 'crazy man'. This fear corresponds with the folklore of the Thloadennie and probably dates back to ancient inter-tribal rivalry with the Iskoot faction of the Tahltan.

In the course of his report Humphery refers to being over-taken by several cattle drives bound for Dease Lake; one of which consisted of close to three hundred head and which had originated in the Fraser Valley. He found that the trail was suitable for cattle but that the horses were having trouble due to the mud in the lower Skeena. Both drives made it to their destination at Dease Lake.

At the same time the stampeders were demanding reasonable access and cheaper goods at Dease Lake, so the Telegraph Creek - Dease Lake corridor was ~~also~~ being upgraded by William Moore, who had also been one of the chief beneficiaries of the gold discovery at Thibert Creek.

This road was the scene of a daring 'Hollywood' style ambush that summer too. Two Desparados tried to hijack a shipment of gold dust enroute to Telegraph Creek. Their attempt was fortunately thwarted.

Mapping and Documenting Resources

In 1887 George Dawson, the eminent Dominion Government geologist travelled the Stikine and over into the Liard watershed. He was the first federal representative to attempt any kind of resource inventory or mapping. Later, in his book "The Wilderness of the Upper Yukon", Charles Sheldon describes Dawson's maps as extremely accurate, considering the constraints that he operated under. Final mapping to any degree of accuracy was not completed until after the end of the Second World War by the Army.

Warburton Pike, known by his friends in that bastion of the 'Empire', the Union Club in Victoria, as 'dirty Pike' made a similiar journey in 1892. He wintered on the Dease River and like Raymond Paterson a generation later, wrote a popular book on his travels entitled "Travels Through the Sub Arctic Forests".

Tourism

The area was starting to get a reputation, internationally, as a mecca for hunters. It was during this period that Mr. Stone of Missoula, Montana took several thin horn sheep which he identified as a separate sub species and were to later bear his name. Others soon followed and quickly built an industry that has been very important to the economy to this day.

The Gold Rush

1898 brought big changes, not only to the Stikine and Telegraph Creek but also to the entire region. The river came alive with stampeders headed for the

Klondike. In the winter they used all manner of transportation including carts pulled by goats. Steamboat traffic increased dramatically and now speed was a factor in the competition for fares. The population of Glenora, a town situated a few miles downstream from Telegraph Creek swelled to over 10,000 people.

The Collins Overland Project was resurrected with its terminus in Dawson City. The line, once built, not only provided much improved communication but also another access route to the gold fields. Not generally known is that all trails previously used for access to the head of the Finlay and Stikine were also used as routes to Dawson. The Skeena - Klappan trail was again the scene of a cattle drive. This time Norman Lee drove 300 head from the Chilcotin to Teslin where he butchered them and then shipped them on to the Dawson by boat. The account of this trip describes the Skeena trail as being somewhat of a nightmare with horses stuck in the mud and abandoned, and ill prepared 'pilgrims' scattered from one end of the trail to the other. The drive itself lost most of their horses in this portion of the trail, although the cattle seemed to be unaffected and came through fine.

A railway was now under construction from Glenora to Teslin and a scow with an engine and track started up the Stikine in the fall '98. Low water caused the cargo to be off-loaded on a bar at the mouth of the Scud River where they remain today, buried under tons of Stikine silt.

It should be noted that all the activity surrounding the Klondike fever didn't lessen the activity in the gold fields of the Dease and the prospecting that was taking place throughout the region. If anything it added to it as stampeders gave up their quest to reach the Klondike and tried their luck locally. The Northwest Mountain Police were now making regular patrols along all the major routes within the region.

There was only one murder in the region during the 'rush'. One of a party of three killed the other two and stuffed them under the ice in the river. Unfortunately for him they showed up in open water downstream and he was arrested several weeks later on the Teslin Trail. The arresting officer was a Const. Bullock Webster whose daughter Marion Walker was to become somewhat of a legend at Cold Fish Lake half a

century later.

Another pair of accused murderers, Peter Haimadam and Simon Gunanoot, two Kispiox natives, arrived in the area in 1906 after allegedly murdering two white men in New Hazelton. A posse was organized to effect their capture but many of the locals did not believe that Gunanoot was responsible for the murders so their efforts were not too effective. Besides this was a period of recession and the pay for being part of the posse was welcome. The posses were discontinued after a few years and the two remained at large for thirteen years. During that time they were known to have travelled as far east as Fort Ware, south to Fort Connolly and Swan Lake at the head of the Kispiox, as well as Telegraph Creek. Peter Haimadam spent most of his time in the Spatsizi.

Gunanoot was eventually persuaded to give himself up by George Biernes, the major packer on the Hazelton - Telegraph portion of the telegraph line who had regular contact with Gunanoot during his flight and was convinced of his innocence. Gunanoot was tried in New Westminster and eventually acquitted. Peter Haimadam died on the trail at the head of the Sustut River.

Packers

Professional packers were now becoming an important part of the local economy. The telegraph line had crews stationed every twenty miles who needed to be supplied on a regular basis. Inventories of natural resources were also being undertaken by both the federal and provincial governments, and they needed support from such colourful packers as Cataline, the spaniard who never wore socks and applied his alcohol to his head before taking a drink - saying 'what's good for the inside is good for the outside'; George Biernes, Gunanoot's friend who also guided hunters, and 'Skook' Davidson, the first Canadian over the top of the trenches in the First World War, and who later settled at the foot of Terminus Mountain and became one of the most famous guides of his time. All of them spent most of their summers in the Upper Stikine - Finlay Corridor.

As mentioned, government surveys were an important source of employment for these packers. One such survey was conducted by Fleet Robertson in 1907 for the

federal government when he ascended the Finlay and travelled up the Firesteel River. While camped on the banks of the Firesteel he did some fly fishing, thus probably becoming the first sport fisherman in the region. One evening the party was surprised by the presence of two 'swedes' complete with horses on the opposite river bank. One swede, accompanied by his horse, swam the river and came into their camp soaking wet, to borrow a horse shoe. After the shoe was fitted the pair returned to their partners on the other side of the river and rode off into the sunset. One of Robertson's discoveries in the course of the survey was the presence of gold on Kemes Creek, now the site of a very ambitious mining project which calls for the water level of Thudade Lake to be raised by 20 feet.

Miners

The mining industry was still an important ^{PART} of the economy as well. After the turn of the century there was still significant number of prospectors looking for the elusive 'motherlode' throughout the entire region. The Chinese had taken over the tailings of previous mining efforts and had managed to extract another million dollar's worth of gold. There were several minor rushes, one at the mouth of Funny Creek on the Stikine and a more substantial one in 1911 at McConnell Creek, eighteen kilometers east of Thudade. The cabins from this strike are still visible.

There is also evidence of other prospecting activity dating back to this period throughout the Finlay, Stikine, Spatsizi, and Skeena watersheds. There was great interest in the anthracite coal available on the Groundhog Field. To such an extent in fact that construction of a railway from Stewart was started in 1908. The tracks were only laid for a few miles, to an operating mine, and then the project was abandoned because of the invention of the diesel engine. The work that was carried out around the project led to more trail construction in an east-west grid, especially in the Tatlatui - Upper Stikine areas.

The number of claims in the coal field meant that there was a need for accurate surveys and in 1911 Trygvie Rognas, a Norwegian, made the first of two trips that he was to make to the area. He surveyed the Upper Skeena - Klappan area. On his second trip in 1914 he surveyed the upper Finlay which explains why there are

so many Creeks named after luminaries involved in the Allied war effort. Rognas later returned to Norway where he was responsible for the location of the Trans Norwegian Railway, Norway's equivalent to the CPR.

In 1912, Charles McClaire left Hazelton for the first of several prospecting trips in the upper Stikine - Finlay River area. His wife, Nellie, accompanied him on several of these trips. They eventually discovered gold on McClaire Creek, a tributary of the Toodogone River, not far from the Indian village of Caribou Hide. On their return to Hazelton at the end of the season their raft overturned and they lost \$35,000.00 worth of gold. McClaire returned the next season with his nephew Saunders. This trip was to be even more disastrous than the last for when they headed out to Fort Graham at the end of the season they got as far as the canyon on the Firesteel and disappeared. No further trace was ever found of the pair and rumours of their fate abounded. Years later Peter Haimadam's daughter claimed that they were murdered by local Indians who didn't want any gold to be taken from the country. The most common belief, however, was that the two had manufactured their disappearance to escape 'life with Nellie'. As they were known to be headed for Fort Graham at the time the latter theory is probably the most likely, although Haimadam's daughter's version is interesting.

Aircraft Use

Shortly after McClaire's death, Simon Gunanoot and George Biernes took an interest in McClaire's claims and in 1923 they used a Junkers JL - 6, owned by the Railway Employees Investment and Industrial Association to fly them from Hazelton to the area. This would have undoubtedly been the first aircraft to land in the area. Later Gunanoot was to return with his lawyer, Stewart Henderson to try and locate the claims; hence the name Lawyer's Pass.

The first planes to land on the west side of the region were in 1920 when Sidney Barrington persuaded a group of Indians to help him prepare a landing strip on George Ball's pasture opposite Glenora for the three aircraft taking part in the Nome - New York flight. They landed, albeit roughly, on this strip on both legs of their journey.

Administration

Telegraph Creek was now the administrative centre for the region. There was a police station, Indian agency, and several religious missions. Most government services could be provided there. It was also becoming very well known, internationally, as a premier destination for big game hunting. To properly administer trap lines and mining claims more accurate mapping was needed. To this end a series of survey crews were outfitted out of Telegraph Creek destined for the Spatsizi and Tatltui areas. Nash, Moncton, and Swannell, all made trips into the area between 1929-35. In the case of Phil Moncton three trips were made in that time period. Their reports provide ~~the~~ some excellent insights into what was going in the area at this time.

In one such report to F.C. Green the Surveyor General, dated November 18 1930, Fred Nash makes the first request for Park Status for the Spatsizi in the following paragraph:

"At the present time Caribou are so numerous and hunters so few that a game reserve is not required but I would strongly recommend that, as soon as the projected highway to the Yukon is built, a game reserve be created embracing the whole of Caribou Mountain....."

The Spatsizi basin had now become the center of attention. There appears to have been a trade war going on at Hyland Post on the Spatsizi River. By 1929 Robert Hyland had established his post on the Spatsizi on Cassiar District lot # 5974 to complete the family business at Telegraph Creek. There was also a second post down stream which never received a crown grant by Pat McNamus. As this was somewhat of a closed economy with some pretty stiff competition the Hyland Brothers used their own coins to buy furs so they could be sure that the proceeds would be used to purchase their consumer goods.

At this time the major wintering grounds for horses was between Morchuea Flats on the bench above the entrance to the Stikine Canyon to the flats at the mouth of the Spatsizi. Fred Nash estimated that over 250 horses were being wintered there in 1929. Most were let loose in the fall to be rounded up in the spring if they survived. However Scotty Dennis ran a ranch where he wintered the Hudson Bay's horses among others just

below Cache Creek on the Spatsizi. His cabin and part of his clearings still stand, although ~~is~~ somewhat ~~in~~ disrepair.

Trade appears to have vanished by the middle thirties as both stores had been abandoned. Probably the Depression with its low gold prices and general scarcity of money lead to this decline. Survey did continue and in 1934 a public company 'Two Brothers Mining' picked up McClaire's claims and tried to mine the claims for a season. They flew in a caterpillar tractor which still remains there, a full camp, and built the first operating radio station in the area. The results were, ~~however~~, disappointing and the project was abandoned. Of note, however, was the use of aircraft and the pilots who flew them. Grant McConachie, founder of what eventually became CP Air led the way. Sheldon Luck, a well known bush pilot in the north flew a Ford Tri Motor on floats on the job. However as the project fizzled no mining projects took its place until the late 1960s.

Phil Moncton made a trip to survey the Two Brothers Claims in the area in 1934. One of his linemen was Jack Lee. At the end of the season they were flown back to Takla Lake by the aeroplane. All except Jack that is. He was not in the least impressed by his flight in so he elected to walk to town - in this case Hazelton. It took him twelve days. While enroute he saw a pack train approaching him in South Pass, just off the head of Thudade. He found a convenient place to get off the trail so that the horses could get by him without spooking. To his surprise the animals turned out to be not horse, but grizzly bears. Nine passed him in single file without paying him any attention until the last one who paused for a moment, stood up on his hind legs, and then turned and ran to catch up with the others. Jack's next trip to the area was 1941 when he and Phil Moncton travelled the Skeena route in January to Teslin to survey a route for the Alaska Highway.

Edziza

It is ironic that the least history is known about the area that was probably the most important to the survival of the early native people, who depended on the Obsidian for their tools and weapons. As previously mentioned, the Tahltans used the area, especially to the southwest extensively in the pre-contact period;

fishing the Iskut in the Fall and hunting and tool making during the summer.

After the establishment of Telegraph Creek and the availability of steel and gunpowder, the area lost much of its importance, except for hunting. Reports as early as the 1890s indicate that sportsmen from the United States and Europe were being guided there. This, of course, continues to be the case today.

During the late forties through until the sixties the uniqueness of the geology came under the scrutiny of such well known geologists as Fred Roots and Jack Suthers, both of whom worked for the Geological Survey of Canada. Gold discoveries were made to the west of the present Park in the same time period. A world class copper deposit was also discovered on Mess Creek.

In November of 1950 two Tahltan trappers, Charley Etzerza and Barrington Williams, became lost in a snow storm and were buried by an avalanche. A memorial, in the form of a large cross, still stands on the spot. In 1952 a member of the Canadian Army survey crew was killed while sliding down a glacier west of Eddontenajon.

The Park was one of the eight northern parks legislated in 1973.

Route to Alaska

As early as the late nineteen twenties there was considerable interest in building an inland road to the Yukon. The reason for this is not clear, especially considering the state of the economy and the conditions of roads in the rest of the province. However by 1930 Colonel Rolston, a highway reconnaissance engineer was investigating proposed routes through the region.

The first mention of a proposed route appear's in Fred Nash's 1930 report when he very accurately predicts the route of what is now Highway 37. Later both Frank Swannell and Phil Moncton recommended routes. Swannell's favourite would have been from Fort Saint James through Bear Lake, Bird Flat Creek, Kitchener Lake, and over to the head of the Skeena by Tzahney Lake. The final choice was made by the Americans in 1941 when they chose a route out of range of Japanese aircraft.

The Telegraph - Dease Road was also receiving attention in this period. The Hudson Bay Company needed a reasonable overland access to its post on Dease Lake. By the turn of the century it had been upgraded to wagon road status and by the early twenties it was in good enough condition for Jack Macdonald to get a truck over it. In 1924 Clarence Wigglesworth was able to make the journey with a Model T Ford in three days. The next year the Hudson Bay Company started to use Holt crawler tractor trains to haul people and freight. The fare was five dollars a head. This mode of transport continued into the war years.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbour, Telegraph Creek was again in a strategic location. The US had now entered the war and felt that they were vulnerable to attack from the Japanese along the Aleutians and Alaskan Coast. They needed an inland route to Alaska for logistic support. There was also a need for airports in the north to aid in the delivery of aircraft to the Russians. Men and equipment had to be moved quickly into the Yukon. Vast quantities of fuel and equipment were delivered up the Stikine to Telegraph Creek, over the road to Dease Lake by truck and tractor train, and down Dease Lake and the Dease River to the Liard by paddle wheel and scow. Many of the local inhabitants were employed in this armada.

Demographics

By the 1930s there was a shift in population dynamics. People, both native and white, no longer resided in communities such as McConnell Creek, Porters Landing, or Mcdame, but were spread throughout the region. This was probably due more to the nature of their employment, such as prospecting, trapping, guiding and packing, than a conscious choice of lifestyle. The only community of any size on the east side of the Region was Caribou Hide which had been moved from the banks of the Stikine to Metsantan Lake by 1930. In the west Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek remained the only centers of consequence. The rest of the region was sparsely settled by both native and white who lived in apparent peaceful co-existence. The territory seemed to be divided in a loose form of 'house territory' which coincided with ancestral traplines. This continued to be the accepted form of lifestyle until 1948 when the bottom fell out of the fur market and there was a major policy shift in the manner in which Guide licences would be issued.

Guide Outfitters

Up until 1948, Guides licences were issued without any restrictions where the guide could hunt. Thus for instance, George Biernes, John Creyke, and the Hudson Bay Company, all made use of the Spatsizi at various times with no one outfit having any particular right to the area. Now Victoria was contemplating a change in policy to large exclusive areas in the north. A minor change in the economic infrastructure of the province which passed largely unnoticed by most of people but one that was to have a major, and arguably a disastrous effect on the life styles of those natives living in the Spatsizi and at Metsantan.

Since their move from the Stikine to Metsantan in 1930 the villagers had done fairly well. Several of the families, such as the Abestas, had their own pack strings which they hired out to mining companies and the fur market had remained relatively stable throughout the period. Game was plentiful although there were signs the wolf and coyote populations were reaching the top of their cycle. Then came the war, and

unlike the Tahltan and Nahannie, work opportunities were now non-existent. A few families moved south to Prince Rupert but the majority were left to survive and the proceeds of trapping and their more traditional life style. Unfortunately the predator prey cycle had now crashed and hunting became a much bigger problem. Life was not easy for the better part of the next decade. Then in 1948 a new Guide arrived in the region and offered the possibility of summer employment. This was a new development in that all guiding had heretofore had originated out of Telegraph Creek employing the local natives. The Thloadennie had never had an opportunity before to get involved in the tourist industry because of their geographic location.

Tommy Walker

Tommy Walker and his wife Marion had run a lodge at Stuiie for over a decade when with the construction of the Alcan Project it became obvious that their future in the guiding industry was going to be somewhat restricted unless they moved north to a more remote location. On the advice of their client, H. R. McMillan they decided to relocate their operation to Cold Fish Lake and in the spring of 1948 they headed out with their string of horses and two native wranglers to set their operation up there. As they passed through Lawyers Pass they stopped at Metsantan and talked with Chief Alex Jack for the first time. By his own admission, Tommy raised the hopes of a permanent employment base for the village on this first encounter.

During their first summer, John Creyke rode through the Cold Fish Lake camp with one of his hunters, by Tommy's description probably one of the Mellons, a scion of the wealthy Pittsburgh family. John was always a gentleman however his patience must have been stretched to the limit. He had hunted this area for most of his life and now he was being told, for the first time that he was no longer going to be able to hunt the area anymore. No one in Telegraph Creek had been notified about the change in policy so John had never made any representation on his own behalf and there must have been a question in his own mind if this was even necessary since this was part of his ancestral hunting territory. The concept of exclusive use was new to the region. He was now relegated to the less desirable area to the west while the Walker's were licenced to the

area bounded by the Stikine and Klappan watersheds.

The next spring the Walkers returned to Cold Fish Lake to find a large group had moved there from Metsantan. This was hardly surprising since there was hope of employment and it had always been standard practise for the men's families to travel with them from one seasonal camp to the other. However to the European mind it was not possible to have a native village in such close proximity to a hunting camp. The natives must go. Walker contacted the Indian Agent in Telegraph Creek for help, He in turn now had the leverage he wanted to move the village to Telegraph Creek to ease administrative responsibilities. No thought was given to the fact that the people were being removed from the land that they had had a relationship with for generations. No thought was given to the cultural or tribal difference that they would encounter with the other natives at Telegraph Creek. No thought was given to the ethics involved. That was just the way it was.

The Metsantan Indians had no chance to assimilate into the Telegraph Creek Society. They were outcasts, with a different ethnic and religious background. They even had to establish their village on the opposite side of the river from the main townsite.

Alex and Madelaine Jack and two other families remained behind to work for the Walkers at Cold Fish in the summer and look after their horses at Hyland Post which had now reverted to Crown Land as the taxes had not been paid.

The Ball Drive

There was another drive of note in 1948 from Hazelton over the old telegraph trail, which had been abandoned since the advent of reliable wireless communications in 1936. George Ball, a well known Outfitter from Telegraph sent 48 head of horses up the trail with a crew consisting of his daughter, Raymond Paterson's daughter, and the local M.L.A. The trip was arduous. Many horses succumbed to the mud and lack of feed in the Skeena portion of the trail and by the time the party reached the lower Klappan, they were long overdue and their food supplies were becoming dangerously low. Only two of the horses survived into the next spring.

Predator Control

In 1954 the Fish & Wildlife Branch carried out a major predator control program throughout the north. Baits were dropped from the air, wrapped in large chunks of meat on the middle of the large lakes. The results were a very definite reduction in the wolf population. All reports of game populations in the thirties indicated there was also a significant Coyote population. This also crashed with the only significant numbers left in the Hyland Post area.

Demographic Shifts after 1945

After the war the need for a Hudson Bay Post at Dease Lake was so diminished that it closed. The focus of mining exploration shifted to the south and mainly in the Iskut drainage. Helicopters had now come into their own and had taken the place of the packer and his horses for transporting mining and surveying crews. The fur market crashed after reaching an all time peak in 1948. People were moving off the land and into Telegraph Creek. It was a time when bigger was better and governments were actively seeking mega projects to turn the province into an industrial giant.

Werner Gren

One such project, which got serious consideration from Cabinet, was proposed by a Swedish industrialist Werner Gren. He had been an arms manufacturer who had played fast and loose with both sides during the war and had become exceedingly wealthy. He was now offering to build a monorail through the north of British Columbia in exchange for certain land and mineral concessions. In anticipation of future negotiations the government put a freeze on any crown land alienation in the north. This action ended up having an ironic twist for instead of saving the land for industrial expansion, it saved it from ad hoc development and thus was more aesthetically attractive to recreationalists and park lobby groups later on as the project fizzled into oblivion.

Roads to Resources

In 1958 John Diefenbaker formed a government after

having campaigned on a platform of "Roads to Resources". The Cassiar Asbestos mine had open^{ed} several years previously but were finding that they were having to stock-pile large volumes of lower grade fibre due to the shipping costs of getting it to the coast via Whitehorse and Skagway. They petitioned the government to provide them access to Stewart, 600 Kilometers to the south. Since funds were now available under this program the province, through its Ministry of Lands & Forests, let the first contract to Wade & Wells to build the section from Cassiar to Dease Lake. The irregularities that resulted were part of the scandal that ultimately lead to the disgrace and eventually incarceration of the Minister of Lands & Forest, Mr. Bob Somers. This was to be the only time that a Minister of the Crown had been jailed in the British Commonwealth. Meanwhile the road, after many false starts, was finally finished in 1974 and was connected to logging roads which had been built up the Nass Valley from Highway 16 to the south by a bridge over the Nass River. This was the route that Fred Nash had recommended in his report to the Surveyor General forty five years previously.

The road brought with it many changes. Telegraph Creek was no longer the gateway to the region for it was now cheaper to truck freight up the Alaska Highway and down the Stewart Cassiar. The last run of the Hazel B from Wrangell to Telegraph was in the fall of 1964. On the positive side there was now road access to some of the traditional camping spots of the Metsantans who were getting more and more desperate at Telegraph Creek. In 1962, after the road had been constructed on the south side of the Stikine, they decided, with the help of the Roman Catholic priest to move to an old site at Kluachon Lake. By 1965, through some lobbying by Lieutenant Governor George Pearkes, who had met with Chief Alex Jack at Cold Fish Lake, they were granted Reserve status. Tommy Walker had also bought Hyland Post from the Crown, although there is some disagreement whether this should have been a Reserve considering the length of time that it had been occupied by the natives. The remaining families moved to what had become known as Iskut.

Land Alienation affect Parks

This wasn't the first time that Tommy had made a fortuitous land investment. In the early fifties he had

been warned of a impending change in policy regarding the ownership of lakefront property and quickly purchased 200 acres at Cold Fish Lake. Steel Hyland, influenced by similiar information, bought his property on the south end of Kiniskan ~~LAKE~~.

Outfitters

Jack Lee returned in 1948, this time to guide hunters. He arrived at Metsantan shortly after the Walkers had left and found no one there as the entire village had left to hunt caribou on Blueberry Mountain. Jack, his wife Francis, and brother-in-law Wally Love, had ridden from Hazelton over the same trail that Jack had hiked out on some fifteen years before. He found things much different. The trail in the southern end had deteriorated badly, his horses got sick, and to make matters worse, where he expected to find lots of game he found virtually none. In the three months that they were gone they only saw five moose, two caribou, and a goat. Obviously intensive hunting around Metsantan was not the cause for the poor populations in the Upper Finlay, as Tommy Walker suggested in his memoirs. Others too documented the same situation. In private correspondence to Wally Love, Emil Bronlund, a mining engineer who worked a small hydraulic claim at Thudade through the thirties and forties confirmed Jack's observations of both the situation of populations in the thirties and forties. After his return to Hazelton Jack abandoned his plans to hunt the upper Finlay and he and his brothers-in-law spent the next fifteen years building a reputation as first class guides in the Kispiox Valley area.

Others tried to make a go of hunting the Finlay watershed. John Gough brought a string of horses in in 1954 and abandoned them at Tatlatui when he was through in the fall. They were in such poor shape by mid winter the RCMP came in and shot them all and Gough returned to other pursuits. Cyril Hall of Fort Saint James and later the Fowley Brothers also operated in the Kitchener Tatlatui area for a short time in the late fifties and early sixties.

To the north of the Stikine George Delmonico was originally awarded the largest area. He lost it in the late sixties due to a number of irregularities. His area was split in order to trade part of it with the Fowley Brothers, who now had a new partner; John Holmes. The

resulting split left the Fort Ware Band with the north east part of the Fowley Area, John Holmes with the area that Gerry Geraci now has, and the Iskut Band with the western portion. The rest of the Fowley area was sold to Jack Savage, who in turn sold to Keith Connors.

By the early sixties, Love Bros. & Lee had re-established in the Kitchener-Tatlatui area and continued to operate there until the partnership was gradually taken over by Henderson & Fleming. They ultimately split with Henderson taking the fishing licence and Fleming the hunting.

John Creyke died in the early seventies and his area was taken over by his oldest son Bruce.

In the early sixties, the Walkers expanded their operation. They had bought Hyland Post, which was renamed TW Ranch and were trying to establish a working horse ranch on that land. They had also applied for leases on thirty campsites, as far south as Tatlatui Lake. By acquiring these lease they hoped to freeze out any competition from both other operators and non-guided recreationalists. The Werner Gren Reserve prevented the leases from being issued.

Fishing and trail riding was now an important part of their business. Revenues from hunting was increased by expanding their capability of outfitting parties from two to five at one time. They had also established a store at Tatogga on the Stewart Cassiar Highway. However it soon became apparent that bigger is not necessarily better in the outfitting industry and so, tired of facing constant crew problems, lack of working capital, and somewhat bitter that control was slipping away, they decided to sell the business in the fall of 1968.

It seemed as if there was now a hoodoo in effect for immediately upon the sale one catastrophe after another befell the new owners. The original purchase was to be to Merrill Rose of Wenatchee, Washington. The Licencee was to be Tom Fraser, a Conservation Officer, with the BC Fish & Wildlife Branch. He backed out before the purchase was completed and Bob Henderson, Walker's foreman was to be a one half partner and the Licencee. Tragically before the final papers were signed, Rose, and a business associate, were killed in an aircraft accident at Cold Fish Lake. What followed had to be one of the most bizarre set of circumstances in the annals

of Canadian Search and Rescue. The end result was the total loss of one Labrador helicopter, which now resides at the bottom of Cold Fish Lake along with the plane it had come to rescue, and substantial damage to another Labrador helicopter and an Albatross amphibian aircraft. All this to pick up the two bodies which had floated ashore after the initial accident. Henderson was unable to finance the whole purchase price and the area was ultimately sold to a syndicate in Smithers.

The next spring ⁽¹⁹⁶⁹⁾ grass was being burnt for improved horse feed at Hyland Post when the fire got away. The staff that was there at the time thought that they had got it out but a month later it flared up again and despite the fact that the Forest Service had deployed 70 men to fight the fire 5000 acres were burnt before rain finally brought it under control.

Management problems convinced the syndicate, headed by Smithers lawyer Lawrence Perry, that this was not a good investment so the area was sold to Howard Paisoh, a former Executive Director of the BC Wildlife Federation. He too had a number of management problems which resulted in a number of administrative and other infractions of the Wildlife Act resulting in an eventual suspension of his licence. His relationship with members of the Fish & Wildlife Branch during this period also became of public concern and resulted in the commissioning of the 'McCarthy Inquiry' in 1978 which made a number of recommendations concerning the Paisoh case in particular and the administration of the Guiding Industry in general. Paisoh sold the licence to Ray Collingwood who is the present licensee.

Research

By 1960 Tommy Walker had come to the same conclusion as that of Fred Nash. The Spatsizi needed some sort of protection; especially in light of the extension of the Stewart-Cassiar Highway south of the Stikine River. He approached Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan to promote the Spatsizi as an area for wildlife research. The result was that a joint project was undertaken between the Walkers and U.B.C. and a cabin was built at Gladys Lake to be used as a base for Stone Sheep research. Valerius Geist spent two years there and was the first and only researcher to use the area.

Funds for inventories were now also available through

the ARDA, a joint federal provincial agreement and by the early seventies inventories had been carried out by ~~Al Luckhurst~~ Al Luckhurst and Fred Harper throughout the region.

The lack of knowlege of northern wildlife, its habitat, and population dynamics, especially in the Spatsizi region, continued to be of concern to many academics and in 1978 the Spatsizi Association for Biological Research (SABR) was formed to obtain base-line data through long term research from which management assumptions could be derived. Caribou studies were undertaken at the outset and have since been expanded to moose, wolves, and grizzly bears.

Park Status

The next formal proposal for a Wilderness Area in Spatsizi was made in 1963-4. By now the Werner Gren Reserve had been lifted and to protect the area Parks Branch replaced it in Spatsizi with a Park Reserve. Tommy Walker and others continued to press for Park status even after he had sold his interests.

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