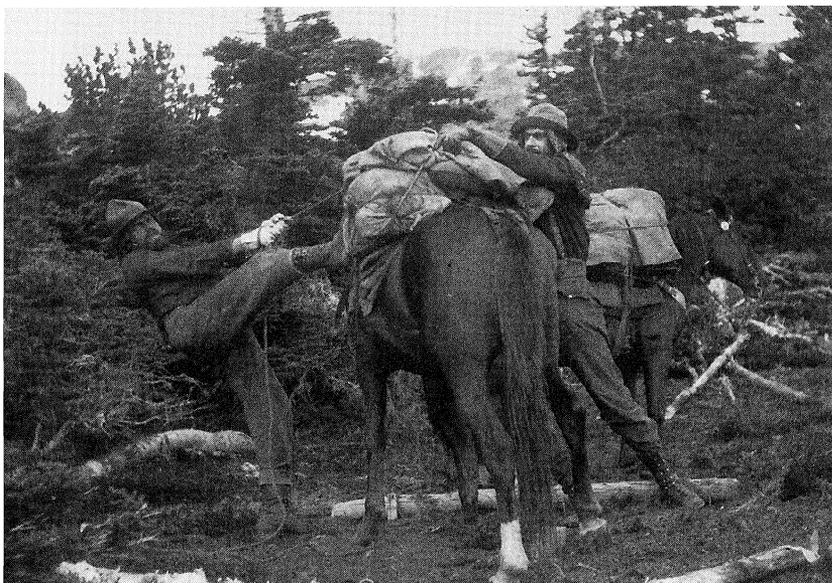


PHOTOGRAPHING DISTANCE

THE EDITORS

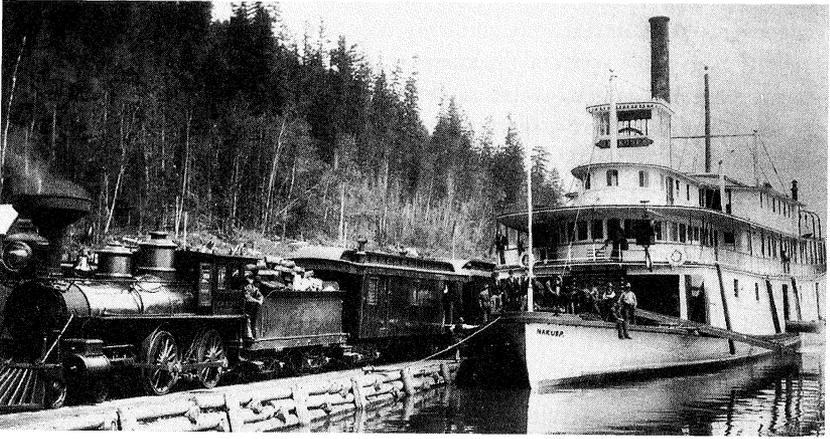
TRANSPORTATION WAS A PRINCIPAL SUBJECT of photography in early modern British Columbia because it dominated immigrant lives situated at the edges of both the world economy and a vast, inaccessible land. As distance was struggled with, and slowly overcome, British Columbia was resettled and incorporated within the modernizing world. Something of the ongoing British Columbian relationship with distance is suggested by the following six photographs, all taken from two intriguing recent collections of early photographs reviewed in this issue of *BC Studies*: Rosemary Neering and Joe Thompson, *Faces of British Columbia: Looking at the Past, 1860-1960*; and Henri Robideau, *Flapjacks and Photographs: The Life Story of the Famous Camp Cook and Photographer Mattie Gunterman*.



1. (*previous page*) Until the construction of the Cariboo Wagon Road in the early 1860s, no wheeled vehicle could travel anywhere in the interior of British Columbia. Even in 1900 the road network was rudimentary; an automobile road from the Coast to the Interior (via the Fraser Canyon) opened only in 1927. Most of the province's rivers were interrupted by rapids. In these circumstances, transportation reverted to other methods. Pack-horse trains dominated the fur trade in the Cordillera and have never been entirely replaced. This picture, taken in the 1920s near Hazelton by a Department of Mines photographer, shows the principal means of transportation across roadless terrain before the airplane. From Neering and Thompson, *Faces of British Columbia*, 112. BCARS D-08403



2. (*above*) This great photograph, probably taken by Frederick Dally in 1868, shows the start of the Cariboo Wagon Road in Yale, with Lady Franklin's Rock and the southern entrance to the Fraser Canyon in the background. The Royal Engineers laid out this road, though in the 1860s, well into the age of steam, a turnpike road would have been an anachronism in Britain. In British Columbia it provided an overland corridor to the Interior — one thin line in a vast land — that greatly reduced transportation costs along its length and marked the beginning of a modern inland transportation system. From Neering and Thompson, *Faces of British Columbia*, 23. BCARS A-03616



3. (above) Before there was much of a road system, railways and steamboats created the main corridors of transportation. The Canadian Pacific Railway, completed in 1885, provided a modern transcontinental connection:

(continued)

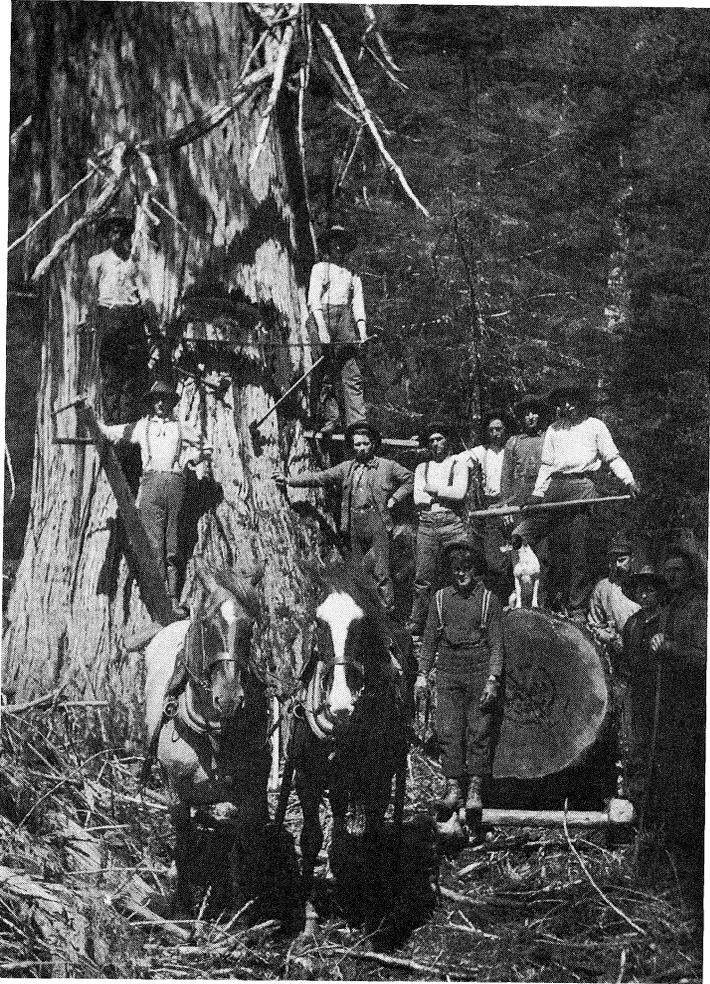


Vancouver and Montreal were suddenly only five-and-a-half days apart. But a railway was a line without thickness; many points only short distances from it remained as inaccessible as ever. This problem was partly solved by spur lines and steamboats, serving, in various combinations, the main north-south valleys of British Columbia. This photograph shows the intersection of the CPR-controlled Columbia and Kootenay Railway, built between Nelson and Robson in 1891, and steamboat service on the Arrow Lakes. Railways and steamboats provided something of the speed and cost-efficiency of modern transportation, but along only a few corridors. From Neering and Thompson, *Faces of British Columbia*, 56. BCARS A-00571

4. (*previous page, lower*) In the mountains, even these corridors of modern connectivity were vulnerable. This wonderful photograph, taken in 1949, shows the effects of a snow slide in the lower Fraser Canyon. The early fur traders had reluctantly conceded that the Fraser was not a feasible route to the Coast, but after the border settlement of 1846 (and with the construction of two railways and a highway) it became the province's principal inland transportation corridor, in a sense pinching most of the transcontinental momentum of Canada into a canyon a few hundred metres wide. From Neering and Thompson, *Faces of British Columbia*, 149. BCARS D-07549



5. (*above and next page*) Most resources, however, were not on the corridors of modern transportation, and many local strategies — some improvised on the spot, others well-established western North American practices — were devised to reach them. As these strategies were implemented, more and more land was effectively incorporated into the world economy.



Indigenous ways were being deterritorialized and immigrant ways reterritorialized — a pervasive, successful colonialism to which the blockade (see Blomley, this issue) was a common response. These photos, both taken by Mattie Gunterman at the beginning of this century near Beaton at the northeastern end of Upper Arrow Lake, show different versions of this process: a pack-train carrying cable for an overhead tramway to a mine in the mountains, a team of loggers beginning the huge task of felling and transporting a giant cedar. Eventually the wood from such a tree, or the ore from such a mine, would reach one of the main transportation corridors. As the years passed, both the number of transportation corridors and the means of reaching beyond them expanded, in the process remaking British Columbia and endlessly provoking its photographers. From Robideau, *Flapjacks and Photographs*, plates 110 and 81.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY 2253 AND 1803