

“OUR PERFORMANCE CARELESS OF PRAISE”:

Loss, Recollection, and the Production of Space in Walhachin, British Columbia

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THE SETTLEMENT OF WALHACHIN was established in 1907 when Charles E. Barnes, an American land surveyor working out of Ashcroft, secured the backing of the London-based British Columbia Development Association for an investment scheme that proposed the cultivation of fruit trees in what was known as the BC Dry Belt. All across Canada people were talking about orchards; the feeling was that fruit growing was not only more lucrative than mining the Klondike for gold, but that it was also more refined, more gentlemanly, more civilized. In 1908 the British Columbia Development Association (BCDA), whose mandate was not only to “carry on ... the business of farmers, graziers, meat and fruit preservers, brewers ... and any other businesses which may seem calculated to develop the company’s property or to benefit its interests,” but also to “promote, organize and conduct the colonisation of British Columbia by the introduction of suitable emigrants from Great Britain,” approved the scheme, and over 5,000 acres were purchased along the Thompson River.¹ The

¹ Essentially a joint-stock enterprise comprised of European aristocrats, diplomats, and businessmen, the BCDA had an interest in foreign investment but also in what it considered to be “missionary or pioneer work in relation to British Columbia” (Advertisement for the BCDA in J.S. Redmayne, *Fruit Farming in the Dry Belt of British Columbia, the Why and Whereof* [London: Times Book Club for the British Columbia Development Association, 1909], iv). BCDA shareholders included the duke of Teck; Mr. J.S.K. de Knevett, of Brussels; the agent-general of British Columbia for Northern Europe; and H.C. Beeton, agent-general for British Columbia for England. In January 1908 the company purchased Pennie’s ranch – the property that had inspired Barnes’s vision – as well as the adjacent J.B. Greaves estate. Two subsidiary companies were formed to manage the project: the British Columbia Horticultural Estates Ltd., which would conduct agricultural development, and the Dry Belt Settlement Utilities Ltd., which would oversee the development of the town. Barnes was appointed the manager of the BCHE and, in that capacity, he quickly bought up an additional 3,265 acres of land. Barnes’s connection to the BCDA was through William Bass (of ale fame) who was a director of the BCDA. Barnes managed to persuade Bass to take a

construction of a townsite began immediately, as did the layout of the orchards and the irrigation flumes. By 1911 there were 180 settlers at Walhachin – most of whom were young, public school-educated Englishmen. These pioneer-gardeners did indeed make the desert bloom briefly, though profit was never realized. The valley benchlands proved to be resistant to horticulture; the soil was less arable than first thought; the irrigation system was inefficient and prone to breakdown; trade regulations favoured American imports; and, finally, the know-how and resourcefulness of the high-born settlers was limited. The First World War provided a dramatic conclusion to an otherwise predictable story as the majority of the residents were quick to enlist. Those who returned to Walhachin after the war stayed only long enough to secure more lucrative circumstances elsewhere in the province. By 1920 the orchards were all but abandoned.

Lest we forget Walhachin, the BC Department of Recreation and Conservation has provided a memorial “point of interest” just off the highway between Savona and Cache Creek.

Ghost of Walhachin

Here bloomed a “Garden of Eden”! The sagebrush desert changed to orchards through the imagination and industry of English settlers during 1907-1914. Then the men left to fight – and die – for king and country. A storm ripped out the vital irrigation flume. Now only ghosts of flume, trees and homes remain to mock this once thriving settlement. (See Figure 1)

look at the property in 1907 and then to promote the idea back in London. The initial investment was made by C.H. Wilkinson, the managing director of the BCDA, and by E.E. Billinghamurst, who was the provincial manager. Sir Talbot Chetwynd, who was the cattle manager for the BCDA's 111-Mile House project, was transferred to Walhachin to oversee its development. For detail on the early development of Walhachin, see Mark Zuehlke, *Scoundrels, Dreamers and Second Sons: British Remittance Men in the Canadian West* (Vancouver: Whitecap, 1994), 113-18; Joan Weir, *Walhachin: Catastrophe or Camelot* (Surrey, BC: Hancock House, 1984), 8-11; Nelson Riis, “Settlement Abandonment: A Case Study of Walhachin – Myth and Reality,” MA thesis (University of British Columbia, Department of Geography, 1970), 35-44; and Riis, “The Walhachin Myth: A Study in Settlement Abandonment,” *BC Studies* 17 (1973): 5-6. It should be noted that the BCDA's mandate was not extraordinary in any sense. Patrick Dunae has argued that few countries attracted as many gentlemen emigrants as did Canada, and it was “the gentleman emigrant, more than anyone else, who made the Canadian West different from the American West, just as it was he who was responsible for the ambience and the attitudes that prevail in many parts of central Canada to this day” (*Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* [Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981], 1-2). Dunae also notes that English gentlemen constituted the largest occupational category after general labourers and that, by the late 1890s, these migrants constituted almost 27 per cent of the total number of adult male emigrants (7).

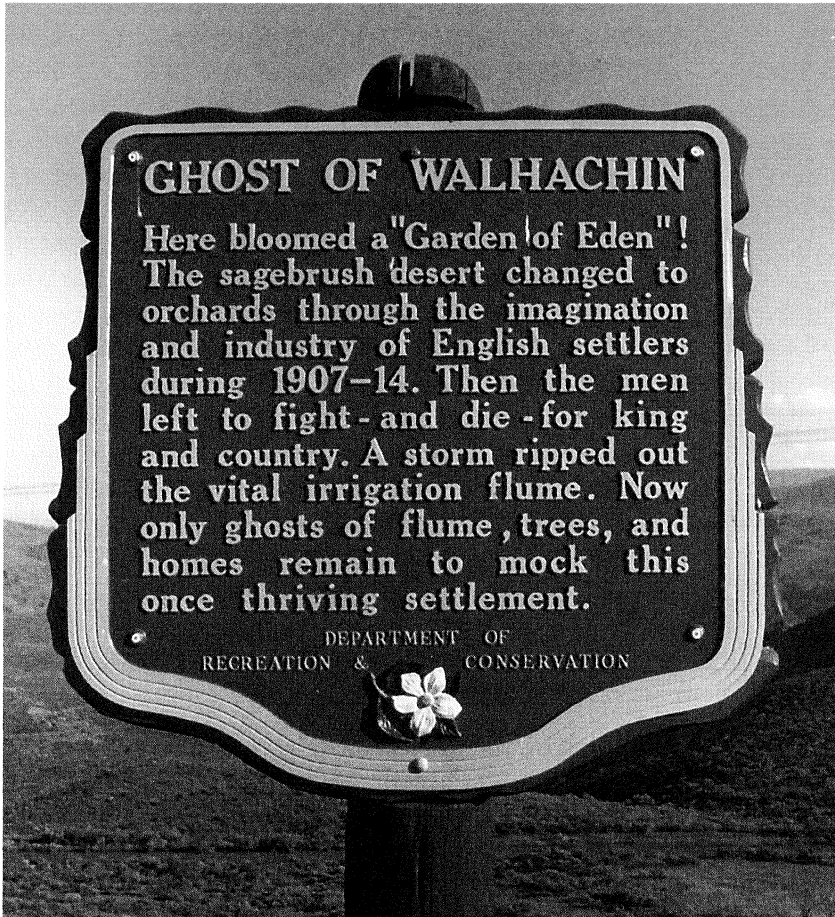


Figure 1: Memorial “point of interest” provided by the BC Department of Recreation and Conservation. BC Archives, #1-22410.

The epic tropes of this memorial recur with regularity in the annals of Walhachin history. Joan Weir remarks that the town, “like King Arthur’s Camelot, had its ‘moment.’ ‘Brief,’ certainly, but none the less ‘shining.’” Glen Millar depicts Charles Barnes envisaging “a shimmering green Eden, with row upon row of young trees heavy with fruit, and a bustling little town populated by the sons and daughters of English lords.” There are other accounts that also recapitulate the tale in similarly resplendent terms.²

² Weir, *Walhachin*, 101. Glen Millar, “The Ghost of Walhachin,” *Westworld* 8, 2 (1982): 42. Elsie Turnbull prefers to dwell on the drama of demise rather than on the passion of promise: “for years the rows of abandoned trees criss-crossed the benchlands, withering

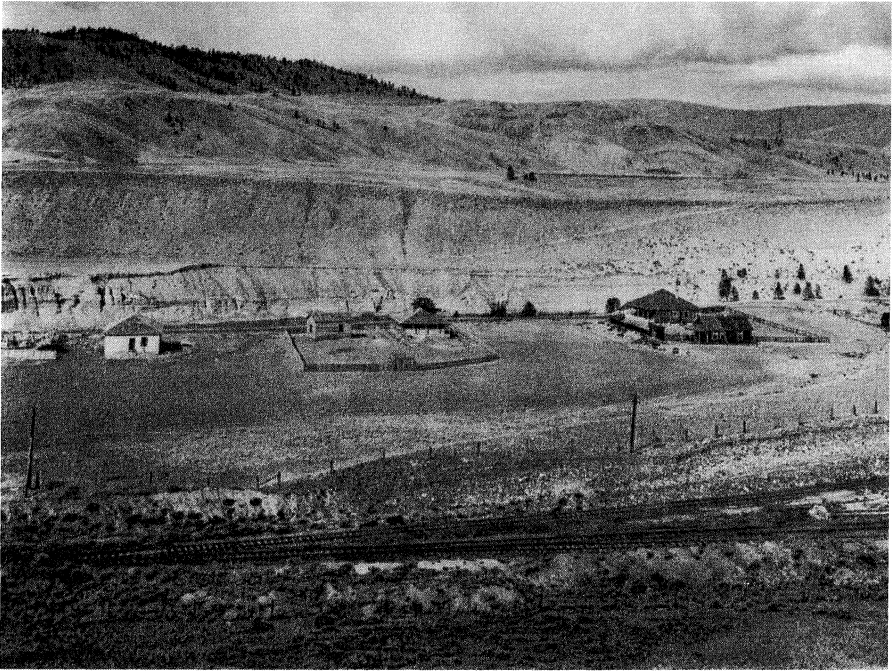
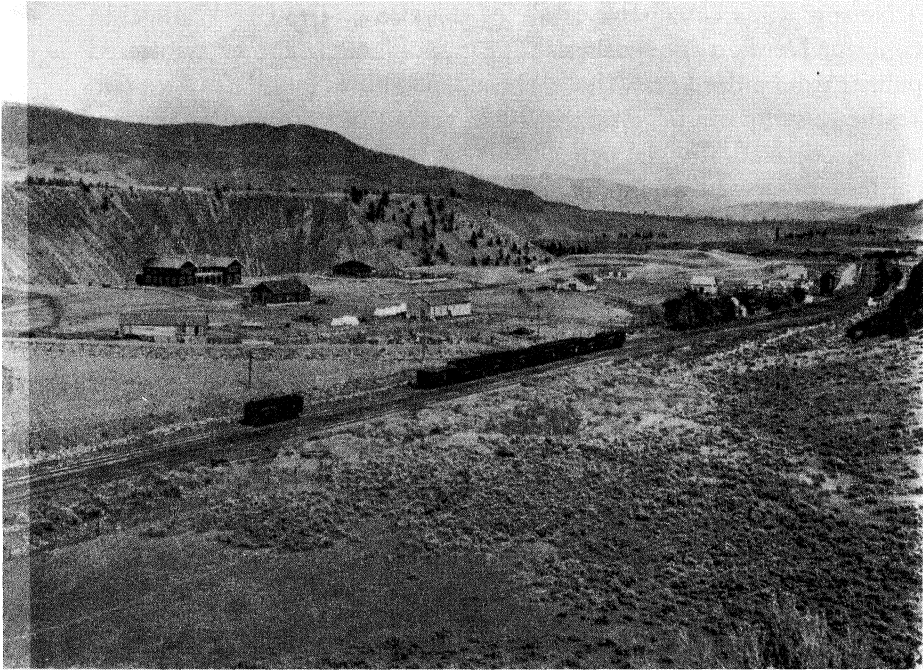


Figure 2: Thompson Valley. BC Archives, #1-61000.

These chronicles are, in themselves, inadequate descriptions of the barren vista that unfolds in the Thompson Valley (see Figure 2). The arid plateaux, the proliferation of sage and sand, the time-worn flumes ludicrously lodged on the inhospitable hillside do not reconcile themselves with resplendent allusions to Eden. The simple cottages clustered at the edge of the parched benchlands are puzzling monuments to so illustrious a past. A partial explanation of how it is that this rugged landscape comes to be memorialized in such shimmering terms is provided by David Demeritt in his thoughtful study of “arcadinianism” in BC agricultural imagery.

monuments to so much hard work and shattered dreams. Now the trees are gone and the remnants of decayed lumber mark where the Snohoosh flume snaked along the hillside” (Turnbull, “The Ghost of Walhachin,” in *Pioneer Days in British Columbia: A Selection of Historical Articles from BC Outdoors Magazine*, Art Downs, ed. [Surrey: Foremost Publishing, 1972], 39, reprinted from *BC Outdoors* 28, 5 [1972]: 24-29). Likewise, Kathleen Munro eulogizes a noble dream “turned to a tortured nightmare, in which the broken flume lay strewn on the hillsides and the parched trees singly, and then by hundreds, withered and died” (Munro, “The Tragedy of Walhachin,” *Canadian Cattlemen* 18, 4 [May, 1955]: 31). See also Alan Jessep, who writes, “sagebrush now covers the slopes, with only an occasional twisted apple tree to remind the traveler of the dream of Walhachin, of the men who worked so hard and fought so well. It is the kind of story most of us can feel and understand” (“The Brave Dream of Walhachin,” *Province* [Vancouver], 17 February 1956, 6).



Demeritt isolates the ethnocentric aesthetic preoccupations that not only attracted settlers to the arid BC Interior, but that also mythologized their endeavours for future generations. The years between the completion of the transcontinental railroad and the Second World War saw the refiguring of the agricultural industry as an Arcadian enterprise that drew the interest of English gentry seeking to enact their social distinction from common merchants and farmers. Significantly, the appeal of the orchard had little to do with the nature or feasibility of the work involved but, rather, rested “almost exclusively on the authenticity of country life and the possibilities for personal and spiritual growth provided by proximity to nature.” Demeritt’s essay concludes with the observation that, while “the arcadian vision of British Columbia proved, ultimately, to be unsustainable, arcadian statements about the moral virtues of country life in British Columbia were, for a short period around the turn of the century, matters of fact.”³

³ David Demeritt, “Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 108 (Winter 1995-96): 34-35, 39-40.

Nelson Riis's exhaustive study of the rise and fall of Walhachin confirms Demeritt's hypothesis. The BCDA mandate and all associated publicity did indeed draw those whose sensibilities found the Arcadian aesthetic sympathetic. And, for some years, the community appears to have thrived. On the other hand, as Riis points out, these same settlers "possessed no skills applicable to the endeavour with which they had become involved and over the years as a group they did little to improve themselves." Riis also makes it clear that "neither the climate nor the soils were conducive to sustaining the community agriculturally."⁴

The pastoral ideal, as the roadside monument testifies, has nevertheless endured. Jean Barman's work on British upper- and middle-class emigration to British Columbia in the early years of the century suggests that it is precisely the remains of the Arcadian dream that constitute the rhetorical imperative present in latter-day accounts of the Walhachin story, rendering it captivating to subsequent generations. "To this day," Barman argues, "British Columbia retains a distinctive identity within Canada" that is only partially attributable to its climate, geography, and economy. The other factor "is the existence of a separate ethos, one component of which has long been a peculiarly British orientation."⁵

It may be that Walhachin's Arcadian vision lingers, in a foundational way, in historical conceptualizations of the BC landscape; but there seems to be another, supplementary, reason why Walhachin, in particular, haunts those who gaze upon its remains – why its inauspicious topography stands as an eerie oracle that denies oblivion. This uncanny aspect of the settlement's past is captured in one place alone – Florence McNeil's poetic account of the community, 500 copies of which were issued in chapbook form by Fiddlehead Books in 1972. McNeil's accomplishment lies in her perception of an element in the Walhachin past that exceeds the Edenic, colonial legacy that presently constitutes its place in historical accounts.

⁴ Riis, "Walhachin Myth," 23.

⁵ Jean Barman, "Ethnicity in the Pursuit of Status: British Middle- and Upper-Class Emigration to British Columbia in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 18, 1 (1986): 45.

If you think
 water is not important
 consider the flumes
 whose thin
 bodies
 support
 our lives
 we have raised
 them up as oracles
 on the hills
 they rumble
 messages
 that say
 we can live
 as long as the trees⁶

McNeil's exploration of the community is important because it understands the efforts of the Walhachin settlers in memorial, or commemorative, terms. "Walhachin" suggests that the community is remembered and celebrated because it had always been, from its inception, about the entwined dramas of loss and recollection.

This essay follows McNeil's lead in that it attempts to understand the curious story of Walhachin by returning to the archive with a view to reading it as a monument built against the backdrop of the Thompson Valley. I want to read this archive neither as a postcolonial historian would read it (with an eye to the vestigial remains of economies, geographies, and societies) nor as the popular mythographer would read it (with an eye to fortifying a nationalist agenda). Rather, I want to read it as a literary critic interested in the conceptual abstractions that committed Walhachin to memory in performative and commemorative terms. The first archive that I propose to investigate consists of promotional material produced by the institutions that conceived of and advertised the orchard community: the BCDA and its subsidiaries, the British Columbia Horticultural Estates Ltd. (BCHE) and the Dry Belt Utilities Ltd. (DBU). The second collection is made up of the Walhachin society pages that appeared in the *Ashcroft Journal* between 1907 and 1919. In accordance with existing scholarship on BC orchard communities, this assembled archive reveals that the colony was first promoted and then settled

⁶ Florence McNeil, *Walhachin* (Fredericton, NB: Fiddlehead Books, 1972), 5.

through recourse to many of the same colonial models – Eden, Camelot, and Arcadia – present in latter-day popular accounts. Fundamental to the design of Walhachin is a geography of “Home” that overlooks the austerity of the desert in order to constitute, in purely abstract and imaginary terms, a paradise lost. What is most notable about this archive, and what has eluded the interrogations of its historians, is the subtle note of irony that underpins the promotion and subsequent presentation of this Eden and its inhabitants. A reader is given the distinct impression that agricultural results were of limited import. Always attendant upon the rhetoric of Empire are glosses that suggest a certain lack of expectation in collusion with an awareness of the dramatic potential of the imaginary landscape the settlement was commemorating. It was a memory, not apples, that these people were cultivating. Walhachin is thus unique among orchard communities not only because the original vision was never realized, but also, ironically, because the project’s memorial imperative was more perfectly achieved by virtue of the community’s ephemerality.

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The Walhachin promotional material provided by the BCDA envisioned an idyllic place of well-being, rooted in an enduring sense of English cultural superiority and ordered according to abstract conceptualizations of Eden and Arcadia. Walhachin was first and foremost an imaginative endeavour that was rhetorically conceived and only later imposed upon an unknown and unstudied terrain. It was a scripting of the illusory bounty of the Thompson Valley that distinguished itself (and the subjects circumscribed by it) in its very abstraction and by its complete disregard of geographic or economic sustainability.

The glossy BCDA brochure, entitled “Walhachin British Columbia in the Heart of the Dry Belt for Commercial Fruit Growing,” imagined a distinctly English settlement in purely pastoral terms. The cover art depicts a misty green landscape with contrasting blue mountains and pink sky. A gentle river winds through the centre of the image, and the borders are decorated with lush, improbably large apples (see Figure 3). This image, which likely embedded itself in the mind’s eye of future settlers, serves as a kind of scenic backdrop for an undertaking that would prove to be as much about aesthetics as it was

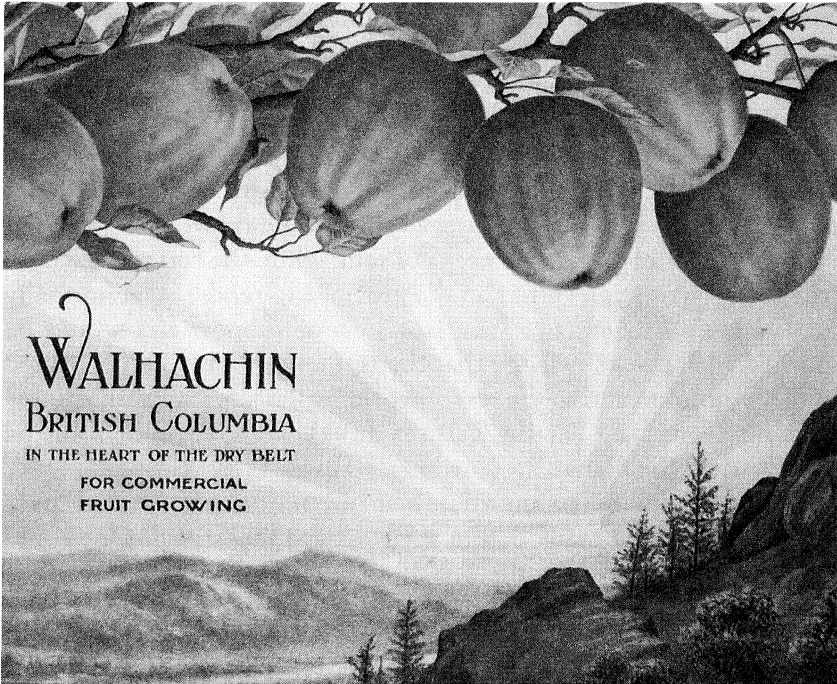


Figure 3: BCDA brochure, entitled “Walhachin British Columbia in the Heart of the Dry Belt for Commercial Fruit Growing.” BC Archives, #BA.

about agriculture. As if to confirm an unapologetic adherence to the value of taste and discrimination, Earl Grey’s oft-cited epigraph, “Fruit-growing has acquired the distinction of being a beautiful art as well as a most profitable industry,” is reprinted on the opening page of the brochure.<sup>7</sup> In accordance with cover and epigraph, the subsequent pages of the pamphlet ask its readers to visualize a contemplative garden peopled with philosophical folk of like mind, moderate ambition, and refined taste.

Work, according to the brochure, is not a issue. Financial success, without the inconvenience of labour, was hyperbolically guaranteed as Walhachin was proclaimed “the best paying investment in the world.” An initial commitment on the ten acres of fruit land (including residence, complete farming outfit, fencing, etc.) of between £900 and £1,000 would yield, quite effortlessly, a profit of £300 per

<sup>7</sup> British Columbia Horticultural Estates Ltd., *Walhachin British Columbia in the Heart of the Dry Belt for Commercial Fruit Farming* (London: c. 1909). Redmayne (*Fruit Farming*, 10) notes that Earl Grey’s comments were a part of a speech given upon the opening of the New Westminster Exhibition, where BC fruit was prominently exhibited.

annum based upon interim crops, augmented to £600 or £700 per annum as the fruit trees came into bearing. The scheme is literally imagined as blissfully unworldly: “where in the world,” asked the promoters, “can you find to-day a business opening that will give you the same certain return for your money?”<sup>8</sup> The landscape would naturally be amenable: there is no mention of desert or of the extremes of climate known to the BC Interior. Pleasant days would be assured by fewer than ten to twelve weeks of rain, while the soil needed only “the finest” irrigation system in the province to render it “abnormally productive.” Anxiety over the isolation of pioneer life would be soothed with the knowledge that the settlement was well connected to the Dominion and to the rest of world by the already astonishingly efficient Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), which would soon be enhanced by the Canadian Northern Railway (CNR).<sup>9</sup>

The homes of Walhachin would also be comfortable. Houses could be built and made ready before their occupants arrived. One could also import one’s favourite effects – china, linen, furniture, and cherished objets d’art – duty free. The homes themselves would boast the modern conveniences of running water and carbide lighting, which was as yet unavailable in neighbouring communities. The town would be landscaped with twenty-five acres of grass, and English gardens would be planted before and behind picturesque houses.<sup>10</sup> Infrastructure, significantly, would be accompanied by a fashionable lifestyle of leisure and amusement. There would be sporting events, “splendid” game and fishing, a tennis court and a golf course, as well as a stylish and commodious hotel, which, “under the management of an English lady,” would offer the company of its distinguished patrons. The settlement was promoted not only as promising secure revenue, but also as providing a community of socially compatible people who valued the unhurried domesticity attendant upon pastoral life, as well as leisurely pastimes and sport, at least as much as, if not more than, industry and profit.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Promotional material notes that five- and ten-acre plots were available, although most purchased the larger properties. Planted land went for \$350/acre and up, and unplanted land went for \$300/acre (BCHE, *Walhachin British Columbia*, 23; Redmayne, *Fruit Farming*, 79). The BCHE’s promotional brochure also provides impressive investment tables on pages 31–36.

<sup>9</sup> BCHE, *Walhachin British Columbia*, I, II, 12–13. Climate, geology, and infrastructure are also discussed in detail by Redmayne, who presents them all in glowing, romantic terms.

<sup>10</sup> A four-room house cost \$1,100, and one could add on rooms for an extra \$125 per room (Ibid., 20, 23).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 20, 23.

The availability of what Pierre Bourdieu calls “sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous pleasures forever closed to the profane” assures the potential reader of the BCDA promotional material that the inhabitants of this designer community would be distinct from others in their environs. The Walhachin project, as it is represented by its sponsors, would offer the aesthetic and material effects that fulfilled the social function of “legitimizing social differences.”<sup>12</sup> The BCDA pamphlet peoples its landscape with moderately ambitious, adventure-seeking private school graduates and second sons of aristocrats whose families could provide start-up capital – remittance men who could produce a minimum of £500, though £700 was expedient and £1,000 desirable.<sup>13</sup> The ideal audience for the scenario is a demographic of middle- to upper-class fathers no longer able to secure positions for their second sons in either the church or the military and unable to guarantee success for the same in the increasingly competitive fields of law or medicine. The BCDA material thus draws into its folds a class system that taught an open disdain for profiteering but, in the face of a rising cost of living, needed alternative sources of income for its upper middle class.<sup>14</sup> Consistent with the notion that this endeavour was as much refinement as it was labour, young settlers are envisaged as apprentice-gardeners in “the art of ‘Dry Belt’ fruit culture” taught by expert teachers, salaried for the express purpose. Junior horticulturists are identified as learning on the very land that would afterwards become their own, “thus ensuring [their] interest.” The public school tradition would, in fact, be reconstituted as the teachers would ideally be retired naval officers who could “act in the capacity of guide, philosopher and friend.”<sup>15</sup> This New World Camelot would be an extension of the “old boys” playing field, where the winning factors of class and gender assured certain victory.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Redmayne, *Fruit Farming*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> Zuelhke, *Scoundrels*, 6–9.

<sup>15</sup> Advertisement for the BCDA in Redmayne, *Fruit Farming*, v. Redmayne’s brochure also includes an advertisement for such an educational program (ix).

<sup>16</sup> Jason Patrick Bennett has made a similar observation of English developments in the Okanagan, which, he argues, are marked not only by “a dramatic reconfiguration of the immediate environment,” but that also showcased an imperial and Eden-inspired “natural social order, sustained by and articulated through an exclusionary configuration of ethnicity, class and gender” (“Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in Turn-of-the-Century British Columbia,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* [new series] 9 [1998]: 65).

Take, for instance, the case of a number of young fellows, between the ages of 18-19, of the middle class, just leaving one of our English public schools. Often the parent's problem is what to do with them, especially where no suitable opening presents itself in England, beyond the office desk, without expectations. Why not fruit-farming on the British Columbia "Dry Belt," in adjacent holdings, where school friendships can be continued unbroken, with joint sporting expeditions as happy interludes to lucrative fruit-farming operations?<sup>17</sup>

The feminine images of rural domesticity conjured by images of tidy cottages with verdant gardens and hot and cold running water would have, on their own, provided insufficient plot to the drama of adventure played out in the pages of "Walhachin British Columbia." The Walhachin imagined and promoted by the BCDA needed to be a place where the recognizable elements of English gentility could be mapped on to what Richard Phillips has called a "geography of adventure." As is the case of the young hero in *Track and Trail: A Journey through Canada* (London: W.H. Allen, 1891), the cast of characters that completed the BCDA production would distinguish themselves from their dandified contemporaries by their determination not to go back to England and by their refusal "to be a drudge in an office, in a bank, or something of that sort." Unlike those who stayed at home, spending "one half their lives at a desk" and "the other half fadding about their dress or their appearance," these vigorous young men would fashion themselves as stalwart cultivators of English distinction in the fields and forests of Canada.<sup>18</sup>

The wives and brides-to-be who could assure the stylish comfort of their menfolk, the itinerant "hoboes" and Chinese labourers who would build the houses, nurture the orchards, and maintain the irrigation flumes – these go unacknowledged in favour of a rigorously English and masculine dramatization. As the BCDA brochure suggests, the Walhachin project was clearly, on the one hand, a last-ditch attempt to reconfirm the integrity of a decadent colonialism in the face of the rapidly encroaching challenges of modernity; but it was

<sup>17</sup> Redmayne, *Fruit Farming*, 81.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1997), 55, 60, 62. All of the security and comfort offered by the BCDA and its subsidiaries is premised upon the existence of what Jason Bennett has astutely identified as a "gentrified vision of rural bliss" that denies "the paradox that the privileged society they longed to establish rested on the backs of those non-Europeans and laboring classes they so desperately wanted to banish from paradise" (Bennett, "Apple of the Empire," 65).



also very much about the inherent value of aesthetic sublimation. Even the claim made on the title page of the Walhachin brochure – “Walhachin Amongst the Richest Fruit Land in the Province” – is suggestive of the degree of denial implicit in the project’s mandate. “Walhachin,” it was asserted, was an Indian word for “an abundance of food products of the earth.” The word can, in fact, be traced to the Thompson band and means “close to the edge,” a precarious place-name that reminds one not only of the settlement’s geographic liminality, but also of the inevitability of a precipitous fall.<sup>19</sup> In other words, there is an element in the decadent heroism promoted by the BCDA that anticipates the eventual loss of felicity.

Between the lines of its resplendent prose, the BCDA brochure corroborates T.E. Lawrence’s assertion that “to the clear-sighted, failure was the only goal [of colonialism].”<sup>20</sup> This odd idea is brought further into relief in J.S. Redmayne’s *Fruit Farming in the British Columbia Dry Belt*, a BCDA-funded companion guide for potential gentlemen emigrants. Redmayne’s text anticipates the outcome implicit in, but not acknowledged by, the BCDA material – the ultimate failure of self-mastery, or what Christopher Lane has identified as “the relationship between imperialism and the death drive.”<sup>21</sup> Redmayne’s inherently flawed protagonist is “the modern Englishman” who “has an unfortunate habit of being able to measure things only by what he is accustomed to see around him at home.” His parents are those who refuse to abandon “the venerable mud-pupil idea which serves as a refuge on this side in the case of the gentlemanly lads we don’t quite know what to do with.” The Orchard of the Empire, Redmayne fears, could all too easily be populated with players the likes of which, when faced with the challenges of a new world, argue “from the known and familiar conditions at home, instead of saying to [themselves] ‘this is a new country, let me see what they do out here.’”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> BCHE, *Walhachin British Columbia*, II. G.V. Akrigg and Helen Akrigg, *BC Place Names*, 3rd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 289–90. Other sources claim – without supporting evidence – that the word means “round stones.”

<sup>20</sup> T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (1926, Penguin, 1963), cited in Christopher Lane, *The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Lane, *The Ruling Passion*, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Redmayne’s disappointment in his countrymen is not, in fact, uncommon. Harvey J. Philpot’s *Guide Book to the Canadian Dominion Containing Full Information for the Emigrant, the Tourist, the Sportsman, and the Small Capitalist* (London: Edward Stanford, 1871), 95–97, also warns of the foibles of the second sons of the empire:

Let me warn the disappointed parent against sending to Canada the son, who through his dissipation and extravagant habits has brought discredit upon his

The Englishman's problem is precisely that he thinks nostalgically. He recalls an idealized, sublimated version of "Home" rather than creating a new space based upon the present geographic and social circumstances. This version of the colonial narrative is, in Redmayne's eyes, outmoded and destined to fail.

The alternative hero is the rugged and entrepreneurial "United States fruit-grower" who can reveal to the English gentleman farmer "the miracle to be performed by the systematic irrigation of our own 'Dry Belt' lands." To Redmayne, the American is the "keenest inquirer" whose winning combination of imagination and work ethic might, "if John Bull at home does not quickly wake up to the commercial value of this portion of his heritage," reap all the opportunity that the BC Dry Belt has to offer.

The quick adaptability and enterprise of the Yankee, ever ready to seize any new opportunity of industrial advancement, and ever ready to learn *new* things. Against this, we have the intense conservatism of the Britisher, from which even the man of British Columbia is not wholly exempt.<sup>23</sup>

Redmayne also appears to understand that no Englishman of gentle status would be able to cultivate distinction on his own. He argues, very much against the tenor of his day, that Chinese labour is an efficient substitute for White domestic servants. "If his wages amount to £6-£8 a month," then the Chinese worker "does the work of three ordinary British domestics, and does not stick on the order of his going, as he will cook wash, mind the baby, and assist on the fruit farm in turn besides being clean, honest and trustworthy." Women also enter the landscape in Redmayne's brochure. Of the business of fruit farming Redmayne concludes, "*This is just one of these cases where*

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family ... hoping thereby to give him a chance of "sowing his wild oats," and eventually becoming respectable. Never was a more cruel mistake made, nor one attended in most cases with more disastrous consequences. The poor youth[']s] ... hands, more accustomed to dealing cards and handling champagne glasses, are totally unfit to handle a plough, or cradle a field of wheat; his ideas do not harmonize in the least with the ruder ones of his practical neighbours; he soon becomes discouraged, and finally, thoroughly disgusted with the life he has been compelled to enter upon, his natural pride forsakes him; he sinks lower and lower in the human scale. We find him at last an outcast from society, living with a few more of his own stamp in some remote settlement, long ago lamented as dead by his friends in the old country, and where known at all, known as a "loafer" among his more fortunate neighbours.

<sup>23</sup> Redmayne, *Fruit Farming*, 9, 22, 25, 32, 33, 67, 81, 82. Redmayne's pamphlet is replete with examples of successful fruit-growing operations (see 27).

*the size of the settler's family becomes an important factor, the help of children and womenfolk being no mean asset in enabling him to extend the culture of these side crops.*"<sup>24</sup> Clearly Redmayne had an altogether different production in mind.

And yet, what is curious is that Redmayne's reticence does not undermine his enthusiasm for English horticultural schemes. "Fruit Farming in the Dry Belt of British Columbia" at once mobilizes the pastoral rhetoric of promise and fertility and at the same time acknowledges the archaic quality of that rhetoric, positing in its place a model of American industry. The result is, therefore, not a New World Order but a nostalgic retreat into the sublimated tropes of Arcadia and the simultaneous prediction of failure should that nostalgia interfere with enterprise. Rhetoric that placed a price on Camelot did not meet with overwhelming support from settlers whose sensibilities were akin to those of Redmayne's ill-fated Englishman. While some of Redmayne's advice – particularly his thoughts on the importance of women – appears to have been heeded, his attempts to corral the orchardists into seeking horticultural advice were never very successful. Redmayne left the community on less than agreeable terms in 1912. The society column reporting his departure asks "whether he was only an enthusiast or [whether] some other name [would] be more appropriate." Redmayne responded to the insinuation by affirming his "greatest belief in the future commercial possibilities of Walhachin as a leading fruit farming centre as soon as the trees there come into bearing." He further remarked that he did not mind being called an "Enthusiast," for "it is well to be an Enthusiast about a good thing – and the world would be better for a few more Enthusiasts in it. British Columbia has no use for pessimists!"<sup>25</sup> Redmayne's defensive optimism, in the light of Walhachin's imminent demise, is a poignant reminder that many orchard settlements in the BC Interior actually did succeed despite circumstances at least as adverse as those encountered in the Thompson Valley. Moreover, Redmayne's remarks locate the failure of Walhachin as a function of a decadent aesthetic that was engaged in the reconstitution of a fanciful past and oblivious to the momentum of modernity.

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²⁴ *Ibid.*, 61, emphasis Redmayne's.

²⁵ *Ashcroft Journal*, 16 March 1912, 2; 12 January 1912, 1.

Much has been said about the cultural elitism of the Walhachin settlers and of their inability to adjust to their new world. Nelson Riis, for example writes:

Its unofficial name of Little England reflects its somewhat ethnocentric nature and with regard to attitudes, dress, and recreation, Walhachin was closer to London and Victoria than to any of the neighbouring communities. The settlement was extremely self-centred and stood aloof from the frontier mentality which prevailed in the majority of other communities in British Columbia ... The settlers themselves were extremely self-centred and wished little contact with the neighbouring communities other than to participate in sporting events ... This isolation of the settlement hindered development in many indirect ways and directly by creating a situation so that useful suggestions by neighbours were seldom offered ... Just as most ethnic communities are viewed as being an alien element on the landscape, the neighbouring people saw Walhachin as being different and unnatural and failed to understand it.

Riis concludes that the “quality” of the average settler left much to be desired. He had no willingness to work, no useful skills, and little motivation to succeed.²⁶ These conclusions are consistent with those of Patrick Dunae, who similarly argues that such model communities “developed into bastions, socially, culturally, and economically removed from their environments”; and, though they mapped out a space of class distinction, they could not sustain the Camelot-inspired definitions of community. Dunae argues the settlers’ elitism increased the discomforts of pioneer life by isolating them from the creature comforts offered in the larger surrounding communities: “the colonies encouraged members to retain their social prejudices and passion for sport while discouraging them from joining the mainstream of Canadian society.”²⁷

Riis and Dunae are undoubtedly correct to assume that the settlers’ lack of preparedness, fatally mixed with an inbred sense of cultural superiority, assured the project’s demise. These two accounts, however, fail to register the more complex and indeterminate postures that appear to have been at play in the production of Walhachin, particularly the degree to which the settlers’ self-representation seems to

²⁶ Riis, “Settlement Abandonment,” 110-11, 115; Riis, “Walhachin Myth,” 23-25.

²⁷ Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants*, 169-70.

accept their presence upon this unlikely landscape as incongruous and anachronistic. As Riis and Dunae imply, Walhachin tells the story of “the failure of self-mastery”: this is evident. But the real story (“our most fatal production,” as McNeil describes it) is the degree to which the inhabitants of this latter-day colonial fantasy seem to have reconstituted the adventure as the production of a monument to the idealized memory of “Home” – a monument that could serve as a satisfying measure against which one could posit newly emerging understandings of regional identity. In this sense, their entrepreneurial “failure” was, in fact, their greatest triumph.²⁸

McNeil describes the inhabitants of Walhachin as “scenic pieces / self-preserved almost out-dated / yet together creating the drama outside.”²⁹ The observation is noteworthy not as an assessment of historical evidence left behind by the settlers but, rather, as a reflection upon how that evidence constitutes the memory of those individuals today. The society columns, initially entitled “Walhachin Locals” and, later, “Walhachin Chronicle,” that appeared in the *Ashcroft Journal* beginning in 1910 record Walhachin’s gay commitment to nostalgia and to memory. The authorship of the column is anonymous, though the reporters were certainly residents and their contributions were regarded as “from our own correspondent.” Optimism is established early on as the editorial tone of choice as the paper anticipates “a rush of people to secure acreage and building sites on this beautifully situated townsite.”³⁰ As abstract reveries of administrative rhetoric are converted into plots, buildings, and social infrastructure, progress continues to be relayed in confident terms: the front page of the 26 August 1911 edition of the *Ashcroft Journal* reports proudly that “people are coming into pretty Walhachin.” The inaugural editorial of the “Walhachin Chronicle” describes the town as comprised of 150 people – “an ideal spot in which to live and have one’s being.”³¹ The same paper recounts the “true story” of an order for BC “Widow Smiths” (Grimes Golden) apples from none other than the king who, upon the recommendation of the duke of Argyll, ordered them to be delivered to his palace.³² In 1911 the papers report that the settlers were attending lectures on “Fruit Growing and Pruning” and “The Business Side of

²⁸ McNeil, *Walhachin*, 10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ashcroft Journal*, 30 October 1909, 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 26 August 1911, 1; special “Walhachin Chronicle” supplement, 16 September, 1911, 1.

See also 10 July 1909, 4; 14 August 1909, 1; 14 May 1910, 8; 9 July 1910, 1; 16 December 1911, 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 22 January 1910, 2.

Fruit Growing”; that an irrigation pipe, connecting the south side of the Thompson River to the north, was nearly installed; that the construction of the bridge across the river was approaching completion; and that the CNR would soon run through Walhachin. The columns also note visits paid to the infant orchards by a number of impressed and enthusiastic government officials who submit reports glowing with confidence. In 1910 Walhachin orchards are rated as “the cleanest” ever encountered by local inspector Mr. Thomas Cunningham. Mr. W.H. Bunting of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, who is recorded as having been “much impressed with the extent of the orchards at this point,” concluded that “the orchards at Walhachin have a great future before them.” In the spring of 1911, one learns of 500 newly planted tress and of irrigation plans for the north side of the Thompson. According to the editor, so promising a start is evidence “that a large and prosperous town will spring up.”³³ While Riis’s research concludes that only a small amount of produce was shipped from Walhachin prior to 1917, the *Ashcroft Journal* leads one to believe that each and every apple was evidence of this community’s fine character and auspicious future.³⁴ A report dated 16 December

³³ From Riis’s work we know that by 1910 something like 3,000 seedlings had been planted covering the available arable land. Over the course of the next three years a further 1,000 acres of land were cleared and seeded (Riis, “Settlement Abandonment,” 54-59); *Ashcroft Journal*, 6 August 1910, 1; 29 April 1911, 1; 22 July 1911, 1; 12 August 1911, 1; 19 August 1911, 2-3. A fruit growers association was eventually formed in 1915 (see *Ashcroft Journal*, 31 July 1915, 1; 4 November 1911, 4).

³⁴ See, for example, *Ashcroft Journal*, 12 January 1907, 2; 16 March 1907, 1; 23 March 1907, 1; 8 June 1907, 1; 13 June 1908, 2. The paper also printed, on a regular basis, advice to prospective or novice fruit growers. See, for example, 6 June 1908, 2; 11 April 1908, 3; 19 December 1908, 3; 16 January 1909, 1; 26 March 1910, 2. Reports of the sale of BC fruit at international and nation exhibitions are also quite common. See, for example, *Ashcroft Journal*, 21 December 1907, 1; 15 October 1910, 2; 10 December 1910, 1. Premier McBride is cited as lauding BC fruit: “It is an absolutely wonderful thing, it must be confessed, that specimens of fruit have gone from this province which in this particular was practically unknown but a few years ago, to the great exhibitions of the Empire, and carried off unquestioningly the noblest premiums and the highest awards” (*Ashcroft Journal*, 13 June 1908, 1). The fruit-inspired enthusiasm of the first decade of the century is perhaps best reflected in the following poem, which appeared in the *Ashcroft Journal* on 24 April 1909, page 2:

Poor gold at last has lost its lure.
 To grow the Fruit is more secure.
 It spreads its wealth in wider fields;
 It won’t exhaust for every yields
 Rich treasures far exceeding gold:
 With every year its powers unfold.
 Homes full of Peace spring up amain.
 Men strive the Joys of Life to gain;
 The hearth once made, sweet love prevails
 Men find content that never fails;

1911 announces, in a self-congratulatory fashion, that the town now has a population of 180, with “a large number of settlers” expected from England in the spring.³⁵ The paper’s notion of the quality citizen is as plain as is its notion of the quality apple: to be counted amongst the providential inhabitants of this most fortuitous colony, one must be of English origin. Of the 180, approximately 107 were English born and raised; the 50 to 200 casual labourers and 60 Chinese workers and their families were not to be counted among the “locals.”³⁶

The “Walhachin Chronicle” confirms that Walhachin’s leading man was Charles Barnes, whose sustained effort to assure the success of the community places him at its very centre (see Figure 4).³⁷ Early on, his experience as a surveyor was considered by editors to be a “particularly bright” star over the BC sky; his presence ensured, it was believed, that “the practical part” of the enterprise would “be properly attended to.” Barnes is later described as efficient with the sale of lands at Walhachin and rigorous in his management of purchasers. Readers are assured that he takes great personal care in selecting the orchard fruit and that he personally conducts orchard tours for visiting dignitaries (including Premier Wilfrid Laurier). Barnes’s competent supervision of the irrigation system is a frequent focus of attention, as is his dedicated attendance at meetings and

And fertile vales and valleys bloom.
 Turn in good friend for you there’s room.
 For you there’s room – come in and see
 The Fruit Lands of Great B.C.
 – “Westward Ho”

³⁵ *Ashcroft Journal*, 16 December 1911, 1.

³⁶ The account of the Walhachin population recorded in the photo album presented to Lord Strathcona notes, following the names of all the English settlers: “Outside the above, there are during 8 to 9 months of the year from 50 to 200 employees, besides Chinese Gangs consisting of about 60 Chinamen” (British Columbia Archives, 1910, accession no. 198510-04).

³⁷ The Walhachin promotional brochure opens with a photograph of Barnes and styles him “the manager” and the “engineer in charge.” His surveyor credentials are further confirmed by the entry in the beautifully bound photo album presented to Lord Strathcona. There is no mention of him in records of the Crown Land Registry, thus he was not a licensed BC land surveyor, a Royal Engineer, or a Dominion land surveyor. None of this information is surprising, however, if he was an American. His presence in social notices through the war years confirms that he did not go to war like most married men. BCDA records also note that he ceased to head up the BCHE after the purchase of the majority of the Walhachin shares from the development association by the marquis of Anglesey, who appointed his own kinsman, Ralph Chetwynd, to take Barnes’s place in 1919. It is presumed that sometime after this date Barnes and his wife left the area for Victoria, where Barnes took up a position as the head of the BC Fruit Growers Association. Barnes died in Kelowna in February of 1932. His obituary in the Kamloops paper notes that “he had more to do than any other man with the development of Walhachin and the surrounding district” (*Kamloops Sentinel*,



Figure 4: Charles Barnes, BC Archives, #G-08023.

seminars on fruit growing across the province.³⁸ According to the paper, apart from his commitment to the orchards, Barnes judged contests, chaired committees, and, along with his wife, hosted many social and sporting events. Readers are informed of his holidays, both local and abroad (London was the favourite destination), and he was allegedly the owner of one of the first motorcars in the area.³⁹ Barnes's principle distinction, however, is that he was an American. The *Ashcroft Journal's* acknowledgment of this fact is confirmed by the regular coverage of the "at home" the Barneses held on the fourth of July in honour of Independence Day.⁴⁰ Barnes

29 February 1932, 3). For discussion of Chetwynd's succession as manager of the community, see Riis, "Settlement Abandonment," 113. Chetwynd was related to the marquis by marriage. Anglesey's cousin, the fifth marquis, had married the eldest daughter of Sir George Chetwynd, baronet (Riis, "Settlement Abandonment," 113).

³⁸ *Ashcroft Journal*, 25 August 1907, 1; 18 January 1908, 1; 8 February 1908, 3; 14 August 1909, 1; 6 August 1910, 8; 3 September 1910, 6. When the Barneses were entertained by the BCDA in high style at the Piccadilly Hotel in London, the *Ashcroft Journal* (25 February 1911, 1) reported:

The Corporation and the Director took this opportunity of showing their appreciation of Mr. Barnes' work which has been carried out without a mishap or a set-back of any description, and the Estate has now some 3,000 acres of the finest fruitland in British Columbia under a first-class irrigation system which guarantees to every settler and owner of an orchard plot ample water for all purposes.

The following notices of Barnes's business activities also appear in the *Ashcroft Journal*: Barnes "has most ably devised and completed the irrigation system (30 October 1909, 1); Barnes hosts reception to celebrate completions of irrigation system (also present were the duke of Argyll, Lord Strathcona, Mr. L. O'Bonnor, A. St. G. Hammersley, Mr. Seaton Kerr, Mr Kinloch Cook, the marquis of Anglesea, Sir Berkley Paget, Sir W.H. Bass, Admiral Freemantle, Admiral Wyndham, and 300 others) (25 February 1911, 1); Barnes goes to Vancouver for business (5 November 1910, 1) (12 November 1910, 1); Barnes goes to Vancouver on business (1 April 1911, 1; Barnes is doing business in Victoria (15 July 1911, 1; Barnes chairs

is, therefore, the exception that proves Redmayne's rule. He was the industrious American with the know-how to turn dreams into reality, but he also, reportedly, had the taste and refinement of an Englishman, thereby assuring his place in this New World Eden.

There was, however, only one industrious American in Walhachin. The reports from the community rarely provide the details of the individual contributions, successes, or failures of the chosen 107 – unless, that is, the feats are of a sporting nature. Rarely a week passes without the paper reporting the heroic exploits of Chetwynd, Loyd, or Flowerdew; stories of noble victories at football, cricket, hockey, curling, and track and field take up much of the town's single column.⁴¹ There is also heralding of the hunting and fishing, golf, skating, bobsledding, and tennis at Walhachin. Bennett has observed, with regard to similar orchard settlements in the Okanagan, that the activities of leisure and work were, for this class of Englishmen, woven together – “to perform one was to affirm the other.”⁴² Certainly, the frequent berating of idleness – particularly the kinds of idleness

meeting with Ben Hoy, assistant horticulturist to the provincial government, and then goes back to the Coast for business (12 August 1911, 1); Barnes is the principle speaker at the Surveyors Association meeting in Victoria (13 January 1912, 1); Barnes attends a Fruit Growers Convention in Victoria (11 March 1916, 1); Barnes at a convention of BC Fruit Growers (24 February 1917, 1); Barnes to Ashcroft on business (28 April 1917, 4); Barnes in Victoria at BC Fruit Growers Association meeting (26 June 1918, 1).

³⁹ *Ashcroft Journal* reports that Barnes is the first to drive to Snohoosh by motorcar (17 September 1910, 1); that the Barneses are travelling through the Okanagan in their car (11 September 1915, 1), (21 July 1917, 1), (8 September 1917, 1); that the Barneses are staying at the Empress Hotel in Victoria (30 December 1916, 1); that Mr. and Mrs. Barnes are spending winter in Rome and London (26 November 1910, 1); that Mr. and Mrs. Barnes are travelling to England (18 July 1914, 1), (1 April 1916, 1). The following notices of Barnes's social activities also appear in the *Ashcroft Journal*: Barnes hosts dances (11 July 1908, 1), (8 January 1910, 1), (22 April 1911, 1), (16 October 1915, 1); Barnes celebrating American Independence Day (8 July 1911, 1); Barnes celebrating Christmas (2 January 1915, 1); Good Friday and Easter Sunday services are held in the Barneses' house (22 April 1911, 1); Barnes chairs program coordination committee for Coronation Day and hosts the picnic (17 June 1911, 1); Barnes is voted president of the football club (11 March 1911, 1); Barnes challenges the football club to a tug-of-war, and the football club wins (1 July 1911, 1); Barnes elected president of the tennis club (22 July 1911, 1); Barnes hosts dinner party in honour of Ralph Chetwynd's coming of age (5 August 1911, 1); Barnes directs a committee to promote skating, curling, lawn tennis, and other games (25 November 1911, 1); Mr. and Mrs. Barnes throw party in honour of the Askews (11 May 1912, 1); Barnes is to chair the gymkana club (20 July 1912, 1); Barnes gives away Ivy Twinning on her wedding day (12 October 1912, 1); the Barneses attended the curling ball (27 February 1915, 1); Barnes is the judge for the Empire Day sports events (22 May 1915, 1).

⁴⁰ *Ashcroft Journal*, 8 July 1911. There is no mention of this event in subsequent years.

⁴¹ The tone of these reports is often admonishing, as the reporters were generally Ashcroft fans. See, for example, *Ashcroft Journal* (3 September 1910, 1, 6), (15 October 1910, 1), (5 November 1910, 1), (15 April 1911, 1), (22 April 1911, 1); Walhachin wins the Billingham Cup (13 May 1911, 1), (29 June 1912, 1), (23 May 1914, 1).

⁴² Bennett, “Apple of the Empire,” 80.

associated with bookishness or foppery – in the local papers suggests that Redmayne’s articulation of a masculinity rooted in rugged, hands-on self-reliance found favour in the BC Interior.⁴³ And yet, while there can be no question that the young men of Walhachin were perpetuating a typically English and colonial understanding of the value of sport – which included a sense of the connection between a sound body and a sound mind as well as a sense of degree to which community (and national) spirit could be fostered through team effort – the “Walhachin Chronicle” represents sport as superseding and ultimately replacing work with a convivial commitment to leisure.⁴⁴ It may be that the town columnist chose to represent the town’s entrepreneurial success by publicly registering its ability to promote and partake in leisure activities. Or it may be that the preoccupation with sport is an obfuscation of the work of disenfranchised groups (Chinese and itinerant labourers) upon whose backs the actual success of the settlement depended. And yet, as Riis’s research suggests, the inhabitants’ interest in sport does not appear to have been linked to any interest in the financial success of their investment. The settlers did not, for example, follow Redmayne’s advice and take advantage of educational opportunities offered by American horticulturists, nor do they appear to have participated in any way in the debates over soil quality or irrigation methods.⁴⁵ So long as remittance cheques continued to

⁴³ The *Ashcroft Journal* (19 October 1912, 4) takes it upon itself to define “English Dandy” as one whose wardrobe “is a thing for the ordinary man to marvel at” in its costliness and variety. The feature then itemizes the essential elements in the dandy’s trousseau: “shirts of pink daintily patterned with white flowers,” tie pins that “dazzle the eye with their pearls of pink and purple and black,” along with corsets, wigs, toupees, eyebrows, and eyelashes “which preserve to sixty or seventy the facial comeliness of the twenties ... he probably needs all the help he can get from it in order to keep his place in the ranks of masculine beauty.”

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the relationship between colonialism and sport, see J.A. Mangan, ed., *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914* (Totowa, NJ: Frank Cass, 1988), particularly David W. Brown’s essay, “Social Darwinism, Private Schooling and Sport in Victorian and Edwardian Canada,” 215-30. See also Morris Mott, “The British Protestant Pioneers and the Establishment of Manly Sports in Manitoba, 1870-1886,” *Journal of Sport History* 7, 3 (1980): 25-36; J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Peter J. Beck, *Scoring for Britain: International Football and International Politics, 1900-1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

⁴⁵ Riis (“Settlement Abandonment,” 108-09) concludes that few of the settlers had any knowledge of horticulture: “Their unwillingness to learn is exemplified in that only two men ever attended the winter courses in horticulture offered at the Pullman Technical College in Pullman, Washington ... There were large numbers of single men, most had more than adequate finances, and virtually none had any commitments at Walhachin during the winter. Therefore, all had the opportunity to attend the College if they desired. The fact that only two men attended leaves one to suspect that for most, the social life available at Walhachin was more appealing than studying horticulture.”



Figure 5: The “exquisitely cultivated” man of Walhachin. BC Archives, #D-08201.

arrive from home, there was little need to fret about industry and plenty of time simply to play. While there is no evidence suggesting that *Ashcroft Journal* editorials chiding those “so exquisitely cultivated as to be good for nothing but to [be] kept in a showcase as specimens of what the most approved systems of education can do” were directed at the men of Walhachin, there is some evidence to suggest that this particular group of “old boys” might well have unabashedly served such a function (Figure 5).⁴⁶ The representation of sport in Walhachin

⁴⁶ *Ashcroft Journal*, 23 May 1908, 1. The article continues to claim that these “showcase men” emerge “annually from our colleges utterly unfit to take even the most obscure place, totally unequipped for the battle of life into which they must enter, and this simply because all their time has been given to the dry ‘isms’ and ‘ologies,’ and ‘osophies’ of the schools the

is, therefore, less an assessment of labour, or of the leisure afforded by the labour of others, than it is an abstract, and apparently unapologetic, performance of cultural sophistication and colonial heritage.

From the accounts provided in the weekly chronicles, the settlement could just as well have been located in Kent as in the Thompson Valley. Apart from the occasional mention of a hot summer, a particularly ravaging storm, or the odd fire, the only references to the wild landscape upon which these settlers found themselves are couched in abstract pastoral terms. Of greater importance than the geological specifics of the rugged benchlands are the details of residential development of the townscape. "Walhachin Chronicle" readers are kept abreast of those currently residing in the hotel or in "the Bungalow," a temporary dwelling for those newly arrived. The careful construction of the first houses, under the auspices of Mr. Chipley and, later, B.C. Footner, is presented in loving detail as one learns of each and every addition to the townscape as settlers put down roots and commission homes of their own. Once the houses are built, renovations and improvements, such as those made to the Barneses' "Liberty House," become newsworthy events. Despite the fact that, in accordance with the initial promotional material, the vast majority of the Walhachin settlers were young, unmarried men fresh out of public school, the inhabitants of Walhachin are represented "by their own correspondent" as a domesticated bunch – as a community in which the household labours of the few "Marrieds" far outweigh those of the many "Unhappy Ones."⁴⁷ The bachelors are not mentioned except when they win at football or when they take a bride. If one relied on the papers alone for evidence of town life, one would think Walhachin entirely populated by couples and families.

The advertising in the "Walhachin Chronicle" gives its reader a sense of increasing domestication: the general store, a butcher shop,

head altogether trained at the expense of the hand." The opposite of the "showcase man" is the "valuable man" who "knows one thing and can do it, and do it well. This is the man of the hour, this is the man who is in demand, this is the man who gets to the front when the man whose head is almost bursting with all kinds of book knowledge is left far behind in the race." A later issue of the paper (30 May 1908, 2) describes the "valuable man" as one who exhibits "strict industry, honesty, integrity and faithfulness" as well as intelligence. This assessment of masculine value is consistent with the doctrine of self-reliance proposed by "Samuel Smiles": "Whatever is done for men or classes to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves, and where men are subjected to overguidance and overgovernment the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless" (*Ashcroft Journal*, 3 February 1917, 3).

⁴⁷ *Ashcroft Journal*, 22 May 1915, 1.

three laundries, a bakery, a restaurant, a tea room, a dairy, a livery stable, a wood and coal yard, two insurance offices, and a post office are all mentioned at various stages of their development. The Walhachin Hotel was opened to the public in 1909 and was described as “a structure that would credit any city” and as “fitted up with all up-to-date comforts.” By July of the next year it made the front page of the Ashcroft paper, described there as “delightfully laid out and exquisitely furnished.”⁴⁸ Subsequent mention of the hotel suggests that it was thought of as an exclusive family gathering place for the purposes of divine service and communion, community meetings, and the occasional Christmas dinner. The town hall, completed in 1912, is recognised as serving a similar social function. The hall was seventy-five feet in length. It is noted for its ice rink for skating and curling; a grassed area for lawn bowling and tennis; and, most important, a main ballroom with a “floating” spruce floor large enough to accommodate several hundred dancers, a large proscenium stage for plays, a kitchen, a cloakroom, and lavatories. To the reader familiar with the landscape of the Thompson Valley, tumbleweeds and sage brush recede into the distant background in favour of a quaint, almost painted, image of English town life. The stage is set and irrevocably installed in memory’s theatre.

The women of Walhachin feature prominently upon this landscape in the roles of hostess, housekeeper, shopkeeper, teacher, and musician.⁴⁹ Along with Mrs. C.E. Barnes, who is represented as single-handedly convening the social life of the community, there was Miss Flowerdew of the hotel and Mrs. Bertram, who was put in charge of the restaurant as soon as it opened. Miss Netta Ricketts arrived alone from England in 1911 and ran a ladies haberdashery when she was not acting as the Walhachin school teacher.⁵⁰ At each and every instance of a community gathering (functions, meetings, socials, dances, card parties, musical and theatrical events, literary evenings) at either the hotel or the hall, credit is attributed to the talents of the women of Walhachin.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14 August 1909, 1; 14 May 1910, 8; 9 July 1910, 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 26 August 1911, 1; 16 December 1911, 1; 20 January 1912, 1.

⁵⁰ Miss Ricketts’s commercial venture was lauded as “a great boon to the ladies of the town,” and, by the Fall of 1911, she could also boast a “rush on the men’s ties and socks, which she imported from the Old Country.” Miss Ricketts’s second venture, a millinery and drapery store, opened in January 1912. “This enterprising young lady,” reports the *Chronicle*, “deserves all the success and prosperity that has crossed her line of life since she migrated to Walhachin. A bird whispers that the men’s department is to be a piece de resistance.” *Ashcroft Journal*, 11 March 1911, 1; 1 July 1911, 1; 8 July 1911, 1; 26 August 1911, 1; 23 September 1911, 3; 30 September 1911, 3; 20 January 1912, 1; 27 January 1912, 1.

These public-spirited gentlewomen become, to the latter day “Chronicle” reader, the indomitable heroines who refine the rough, smooth down the rugged, and hold “up the higher ideals of life in this new land.” Just like the ideal migrant-heroine fashioned by Emily Poyton Weaver in 1914, the women of Walhachin fill their town “with pleasant, beautiful homes,” making “its solitary places blossom like the rose.”⁵²

The domestic hue of the Walhachin project as enacted in the pages of the “Chronicle” marks an interesting shift away from the unapologetically male “geography of adventure” proposed by the BCDA. It would be tempting to argue that the shift from the sublime to the beautiful amounts to a recognition of the contributions of the gentlewoman emigrant in the establishment of frontier communities in the Canadian West – to suggest that the Walhachin settlers took Redmayne’s advice on the subject seriously. And yet, the disproportionate representation of the efforts of women is unsettling. Keeping in mind the fact that Walhachin contributed over ninety men to the British Columbia Horse Regiment, it seems probable that there were less than twenty women in residence in the community at any given time. And yet Walhachin’s self-presentation (as it is constituted in the pages of the “Chronicle”) is explicitly feminized.

⁵¹ *Ashcroft Journal*, 19 November 1910, 1; 17 December 1910, 1; 31 December 1910, 1; 14 January 1911, 1; 28 January 1911, 1; 11 March 1911, 1; 2 August 1911, 1; 26 August 1911, 1; 11 November 1911, 4; 25 November 1911, 1; 11 May 1912, 1; 15 June 1911, 1; 20 July 1912, 1; 25 April 1914, 1; 2 January 1914, 1; 6 February 1915, 1; 22 May 1915, 1; 15 June 1915, 1; 3 May 1916, 1. For information on the town hall, see *Ashcroft Journal*, 11 November 1911, 4; 9 December 1911, 1; 16 December 1911, 1; 30 December 1911, 4; 20 January 1912, 1; 27 January 1912, 1; 24 February 1912, 1. References to entertainments in the hotel and, later, in the Town Hall appear in virtually every Walhachin column and are thus too frequent to note.

⁵² Emily Poyton Weaver, *Canada and the British Immigrant* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1914). Cited in Susan Jackel, *A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1982), 228. Jackel, recognizing the degree to which men vastly outnumbered women in the Canadian West, has recuperated the voices of English gentlewomen emigrants in her collection of early prose writing. She cites Marion Dudley Cran (*A Woman in Canada* [London and Toronto: 1910], 131-32) as making the following observation:

The bachelors are a great majority, and the women are not in the country [Canada]. Any woman who ventures here will receive more than her share of attention, and, most likely, be promptly appropriated by some bachelor anxious for a happier state. The crying need of Western Canada is women; it is like that heathen cry which comes to the missionary – “Come over and help us.” Though Canada is not altogether “heathen,” it needs the missionary spirit of women to make it a crowning success, and no doubt many of the teeming multitude of British women would profit by this golden opportunity. The life, though strenuous, is not altogether monotonous, for one can have one’s hours of leisure in which to cultivate the mind as well as the land, if the mind so desires.

The Walhachin columns tend to present its locals as engaged in a parochial social whirl sustained by an explicitly feminine social know-how. Walhachin is constituted as a space of retreat, a home away from home, where one might seek out the leisured pastimes and social niceties of days gone by and, in so doing, recall the civilized routines of a pastoral childhood.⁵³

While the society columns suggest that Walhachin locals considered access to their private space a privilege, the presence of so many visitors from the immediate environs suggests that the community had a stake in being perceived not only as a comfortable place to come from, but also as a comfortable, and comforting, place to go. The most revealing documents, in this respect, are the newspaper's descriptions of the festivities associated with "Coronation Day," "Empire Day," and the fancy-dress balls, for it is in these accounts that the settlement's performative character is most self-consciously displayed. Coronation Day was celebrated "in fine style" at Walhachin.

The 22nd day of June, 1911, presented a gay sight in the rapidly developing town. Bunting, flags and Chinese lanterns were hanging and waving in the light breeze from most of the houses of the settlers in the place and on the summit of this highest hill, close by the townsite, a huge pile of logs from the centre of which floated the national flag, was placed ready for the bonfire which was to be lighted at midnight.

Rejoicings were universal in every part of the province and throughout the dominion at this epoch in the history of our great empire, the coronation of its sailor king and emperor, George V and in Walhachin the sincerity of his people's devotion was shown with marked enthusiasm.

The locals took part in pony races, a derby, a sack race, an obstacle race, a tug-of-war, and a hurdle race. The women competed in an egg-and-spoon race (won by Miss Nancy Fort), and those less athletically inclined could participate in needle threading, whistling, or hat-trimming races. The festivities closed with a dance at the hotel

⁵³ *Ashcroft Journal*, 30 October 1909, 1; 18 February 1911, 1; 18 March 1911, 1; 22 April 1911, 1; 13 May 1911, 1; 17 June 1911, 1; 24 June 1911, 1; 7 October 1911, 3; 30 December 1911, 4; 3 February 1912, 1; 16 March 1912, 2; 21 March 1914, 1; 18 April 1914, 1; 2 March 1914, 123; 10 February 1917, 1. The town hall was also a popular venue for similar gatherings (see *Ashcroft Journal*, 9 July 1910, 1). There are too many references to visitors to the hotel to cite. Afternoon tea at the hotel was apparently as elegant as it was at any establishment in Mayfair, and to appear for dinner in the dining room in anything but full evening dress was thought to be a serious social gaffe (Weir, *Walhachin*, 44).

and the lighting of the bonfire at the top of the hill. "It was an impressive scene," concludes the column, "and the coronation of King George V will not easily be forgotten by those present in Walhachin on that eventful day in the history of the empire and this western town." The specific connection between grandiose recollections of Imperial pomp and the gloriously reconfigured topography of Walhachin is the substance of the coverage that begs the reader to consider how great it is that this land of "prickly pear and sage brush" can now stage so triumphant a spectacle. The rosters of costumes acquired for the town's fancy-dress balls are also very telling in this respect: Mr. Hunt was once the Mad Hatter, Mrs. Bertram was a fortune teller and, upon another occasion, a squaw. Miss Forte was a jungle girl and Mrs. Askew a Geisha girl; Mr. Styer was a "chink," Mr. Melhuish a "nigger minstrel." Mr. Ross was a cavalier; Mrs. Faucault, Mary Queen of Scotts; Mrs. Venables, a puritan; Mr. Christie, a monk; and Mr. Lloyd, a boy scout. Mr. Kennedy was a brigand; Mr. Higgs was "the Dry Belt"; and Gordon Flowerdew was "Old Dutch Cleanser." If the denizens of Walhachin made any efforts to plant trees or build flumes, the paper did not report them; however, when they staged these extraordinary parades of colonial ghosts, the results were acclaimed as nothing less than "a great credit to the enterprise of the people of that place."⁵⁴

The quaint and curious production of Walhachin as neither here (Canada) nor there (England) is intensified by the layout of the "Walhachin Chronicle," which isolates the town's affairs from the news of the day. While Walhachin was clearly a recognisable site on the Thompson benchlands, a place people visited and a place from which people came, it is not represented as engaged with contemporary issues and events. The settlement is only occasionally mentioned in the editorials of either the *Ashcroft Journal* or the *Kamloops Sentinel*, while newsworthy developments on the debates over women's suffrage, on the "perils" of Asian labour, or violence in First Nations communities receive only occasional and passing reference in the "Walhachin Chronicle."⁵⁵ These settlers are represented "by their own" as moving

⁵⁴ *Ashcroft Journal*, 17 June 1911, 1; 24 June 1911, 1; 1 July 1911, 1 and 3; 18 February 1911, 1; 24 February 1912, 1; 1 February 1913, 1 and 3. For reference to the celebration of Empire Day, see *Ashcroft Journal*, 22 May 1915, 1.

⁵⁵ It is known that there were at least as many Asian labourers and domestic servants in Walhachin as there were settlers, but these individuals receive very little commentary. The *Ashcroft Journal* (1 July 1911, 1) does mention the development of a "Chinatown" in the Walhachin column, stating "Walhachin is fortunate in not having this Chinatown at either end of the town as is so often the case, as it will be situated on the land to the south of the

about oblivious to the trajectories of those who made their world possible. If the BCDA promotional brochure hides the labour behind the leisure, then the columns of the "Walhachin Locals" render the violence implicit in the production of genteel domestic space absolutely invisible. The final impression is one of a community of individuals living in a kind of refined, fashionable space that was open to visitation and yet wholly detached from the physical circumstances of the present moment.

If it is possible to think of the Walhachin columns as public self-promotion of community distinction, then contemporary local interest in the Walhachin project appears to have been based in the settlement's performance of a comforting history and context for those of English origin living in the Thompson Valley. Regardless, or perhaps because of, its artificial, anachronistic, and oddly detached representation, the town served as a historiographic enactment of a colonial moment now past but that many seem to have cherished with heart-felt nostalgia. Walhachin was to be both the memory and the ideal of pastoral England; as much as possible, it would offer a recreation of the "home" of "yesteryear" on foreign land.⁵⁶ It has been observed that such reconstructions based upon idealized memories create ambiguous spaces "in which elements of normal life are inverted

railroad." On the other hand, the Ashcroft pages of the paper are full of reports detailing the "Asian Labour Crisis" (see, for example, "On the Labour Question," [13 April 1907, 1]; "The Asiatic Question," [14 September 1907, 1]; "The Asiatic Question," [28 September 1907, 8]; "Asiatic Exclusion," [19 October 1907, 1]; "A Sensible View," [23 November 1907, 1]; "Impossible Situation" [25 January 1908, 4]; "A Yellow Peril in Ashcroft," [14 March 1908, 1]; "Better Class of Emigrants," [26 September 1908, 2]; "Addicted to Opium Vice," [23 January 1909, 3]; "The Oriental Question," [19 February 1919, 2]; "Mr. Burrell & Orientals," [9 March 1912, 1]; "Orientals Not Wanted," [6 April 1912, 1]). And there were First Nations issues (see, for example, "An Indian Murdered Near Barkerville," [29 July 1907, 1]; "Another Murder," [28 September 1907, 1]; "Troublesome Indians," [29 August 1908, 1]; "Brutal Treatment to Indian Woman Results in Death," [2 August 1909, 1]; "Editorial" (on alcohol and violence) [3 September 1910, 2]; "Indian Highwayman Killed," [22 October 1910, 1]; "Local Indians form Part of Australian Exhibit," [25 February 1911, 1]; "Indian Stabs Constable," [11 March 1911, 1]; "Liquor Claims another Victim, Indian Killed," [25 March 1911, 1]; "Brutal Murder Near Clinton," [15 July 1911, 1]; "Constable Kindness Shot by Indian Outlaws Yest'y," [4 May 1912, 1]; "Indians Are Pagans Still," [11 May 1912, 2]; "Indian Outlaws Captured," [4 January 1913, 1]; "Trial of Indians," [31 May 1913, 1]; "Indians Refuse Medals," [16 August 1913, 1]; "Control of Native Races," [29 May 1915, 3]). And there were debates over women's suffrage (see, for example, "In support of the Ladies," [26 October 1912, 1]; "Equal Suffrage," [5 April 1913, 2]; "Exception Taken," [19 April 1913, 2]; "Women and the Franchise," [8 November 1913, 2]; "Men Unfair to Women," [29 May 1915, 3]).

⁵⁶ Raymond Williams has observed of such colonial enterprises that "home," pastoral England, was reconstructed as both memory and ideal. See *The Country and the City* (New York: London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), 281-82.

and contradictions displayed.” Like a theme park, this kind of “liminal geography of adventure” promises what Phillips understands as a “topsy-turvy reflection of home, in which constructions of home and away are temporarily disrupted, before being reinscribed or reordered, in either case reconstituted.”⁵⁷ If the soil was poor, if the flumes were faulty, if the Americans were doing a better job, if the BCDA was reneging upon its commitments, then the papers were silent on those subjects. So long as Walhachin served as a living reminder of the pastoral peace of an abstract yesterday, its balls, sporting matches, and frequent visitors would continue to be reported on with unflinching regularity and enthusiasm.

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The Walhachin discovered in the pages of the BCDA promotional material and in the *Ashcroft Journal* was, more than anything else, an idea. The idea was cultivated through superior athletic ability and an inbred sense of genteel domesticity. And the idea, for some time, appears to have taken root and thrived. The idea was, of course, home – and not just any home but, specifically, an Old World home to which one could not return and which, therefore, was available only as a lingering memory. Walhachin was thus, even at its zenith, a monumental pageant to something already perceived to be irretrievably lost. Because its archive makes this point so evident, it is possible today to understand why it is that Walhachin lends itself to a particular kind of historical recollection that posits longing for a prelapsarian past as the foundation upon which to build new regional identities. There is still, however, a missing link that explains why the spectre of Walhachin continues to haunt us today. The final portion of this article looks at the representation of community in the *Ashcroft Journal* between 1912 and 1917 in order to examine how the First World War completes and concludes the narrative of home already in play at Walhachin. What becomes apparent is that the legend of Walhachin’s heroic demise on the fields of France supersedes the accounts of the social, economic, and geographic conditions that ultimately resulted in the town’s evacuation. Gardeners must become soldiers in order for Walhachin itself to become an object of loss and a subject of commemoration and thus, finally, contribute to the consolidation of a New World home.

<sup>57</sup> Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, 13.

By 1912, the footballers were in proud possession of the coveted Billingham Cup, the orchards were producing apples a-plenty, and cows even delivered three-month-old calves: "The gaieties at Walhachin show no lull" writes "our own correspondent." And yet, as Riis's research has carefully illustrated, Eden was already in serious jeopardy. The land was not proving to be as rich as had been anticipated; the irrigation system, rickety at best, was prone to instability and chronic leaking; transportation, despite the cooperation of the CPR and the CNR, was unreliable. Moreover, Walhachin fruit, despite its resplendent qualities, increasingly found itself in competition with American produce, with no trade protection from Ottawa in sight. Finally, on 7 June 1912, the BCDA announced that it was withdrawing its investment in Walhachin.<sup>58</sup>

The BCDA's catastrophic decision does not, however, make the pages of the paper. Only the ignominious departure of J.S. Redmayne was recorded as newsworthy.<sup>59</sup> In the Spring of 1912, the "Walhachin Chronicle" ceases to be a regular feature in the *Ashcroft Journal*. While there are weekly columns from August of 1910 through 1911, coverage becomes spotty after February. The paucity of Walhachin news in the Ashcroft paper may well be due to the brief triumph of the other paper, the *Walhachin Times*, published three times in 1912. It may also be because times were not good enough to report upon. After May of 1912, references to sporting events and social gatherings are much less frequent, and the columns cover little more than the travel itineraries of the townspeople.<sup>60</sup> The sixth marquis of Anglesey, Charles Henry Alexander Paget, who, over a six-year period, bought out most of the BCDA shares, is also strangely absent from the Walhachin news, despite the column's otherwise reliable attention to the itineraries of its titled aristocrats. It seems likely that he was rarely in residence in the community before the war. In 1913, after substantial investment in the community, he is still being described as "of England." Only his take-over of the management of the Walhachin

<sup>58</sup> As early as 1910, the BCHE was in court answering to its failure to provide adequate water supply to the orchards. See the *Ashcroft Journal*, 2 July 1910, 1; 3 February 1912, 1. Both Riis and Weir write extensively on the limitations of the land, the shortcomings of the irrigation system, and competition problems (see Weir, *Walhachin*, 83-85; Riis, "Settlement Abandonment," 60-98). The BCDA divestment is detailed in Riis, "Settlement Abandonment," 104. The records of the divestment themselves are located in the Public Record Office, London. *British Columbia Development Association Records*, no. 81-013, 1931, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 27 January 1912, 1.

<sup>60</sup> By this time there are only one to two Walhachin columns per month in the *Ashcroft Journal*, and there is no coverage between 22 March and 16 August 1913.

Hotel receives coverage as the subsequent renovations resulted in “the most comfortable hotel in the interior.”<sup>61</sup>

Hope, nevertheless, springs eternal in the bits and pieces of Walhachin news published after 1912. The 1913 plans for the hotel are “largely responsible for a general feeling of optimism ... slowly but surely creeping around” in the community. More fruit was shipped off to England with an eye to “kindling a market for B.C. fruit abroad,” and a report prepared for Anglesey in early 1914 claims “our little town is getting to be well known in investment and emigration circles now, and ... a big rush will be on before long.” The orchards are still reported on in optimistic terms: “only twenty trees dead out of the 3,000 that were planted,” notes the *Ashcroft Journal* in April 1914, and the “Walhachin Locals” column for October reports that “the quality of the apples this year is very high, and we are glad to hear flattering comments all round.” Similar hope pervades the report from the Kamloops Fair in 1915, where Walhachin fruit carried away an

<sup>61</sup> “It’s a great thing,” comments the reporter, “to have a manager who knows what comfort is.” References to Anglesey in the *Ashcroft Journal* begin around 1911. He was present at the London BCDA reception for Barnes in 1911 (25 February 1911) and three cottages were built on his Walhachin estate that Spring (22 April 1911). Between 1908 and 1918 there are fewer than twenty references to the marquis in the pages of the local papers. Anglesey leased his property in Walhachin from 1911 (*Ashcroft Journal*, 17 June 1911; 1 July 1911; 28 March 1914, 1). A.H.T. Chetwynd inspected the estates of the marquis in 1914 and is recorded as having been “satisfied with the progress made and will be pleased to make a glowing report to Lord Anglesey concerning the prospects for a rosy future.” The same article reports that the marquis had not travelled to Walhachin because of the troubles in Europe (*Ashcroft Journal*, 2 June 1914, 1). Weir (*Walhachin*, 36) also suggests that Lady Anglesey was not fond of British Columbia. Anglesey “of England” established a fruit cannery on his estate in 1913 (*Ashcroft Journal*, 16 August 1913, 1; 1 February 1913, 1; 10 February 1912, 1). Legend has it that Anglesey was of egalitarian bent – an impression largely created by his alleged decision to combine the previously segregated workers’ and residents’ lounges in the hotel (Weir, *Walhachin*, 35). Mark Zuehlke (*Scoundrels*, 130) represents Anglesey as a man of rank and distinction, shy to some and overbearing to others, a man who worked in the fields and yet entertained the most elegant of visitors at tennis, by poolside, or in the parlour of his hotel to the sounds of his much lauded piano (see also Weir, *Walhachin*, 34–36). This portrait, however, remains unsubstantiated by the extant evidence. The marquis did go to war with the rest of his countrymen and was sent home after being injured at Ypres in 1914 (*Ashcroft Journal*, 26 December 1914, 1). Riis states that Anglesey continued to expand his holdings in the settlement from 1913 and that by 1919 and after the departure of most of the original settlers, the marquis pretty much had control of the settlement (Riis, “Settlement Abandonment,” 113). The marquis had only recently risen to his title when he bought into Walhachin, and, according to Riis’s forays into the Anglesey papers, he inherited his predecessor’s debt as well as his title. The fifth marquis’ debts were reported to be in excess of £544,000. Riis (“Settlement Abandonment,” 105) also notes that the Paget family “had a long history of scandals and financial blunders.” In order to rectify his financial situation, the sixth marquis invested unwisely in the Turner Valley Oilfield swindle in Alberta, which brought him to the brink of ruin. Apart from a passing remark on the perils of oilfield investment, none of this scandal makes the pages of the *Ashcroft Journal*.

impressive number of prizes. "This is a very fair showing for our sister town," writes the Ashcroft reporter, "and should be a valuable asset in securing markets for the future."<sup>62</sup> By 1915, however, fewer than half of the original settlers remained in residence.

The First World War, rather than changing everything, restores vigour to the waning narrative already in play. Between 1914 and 1915 Walhachin news becomes weekly again as the once-routine coverage of dances is replaced with spirited notices for Red Cross fundraisers and for gatherings of the Patriotic Card Fund. The accounts of football victories are superseded by the cheerful exposition of the accomplishments of the 31st British Columbia Horse, and the splendid regiment is reported as on parade before the town hall, under the fine command of W.G. Tennant. The public school paradigm – already very much in use in Walhachin – is energized in greater service to king and country. E.B.K. Lloyd, for example, is described as "an old Marlborough boy" whose distinction in the armed forces would be "no surprise to anyone who knew him in the school fifteen."<sup>63</sup> When war was finally declared, the paper reported that, of the Walhachin contingent, "every man [was] willing and anxious to serve." Of their preparations one learns:

It is quite likely that the Regiment will form part of the expeditionary force, as they are a fine body of men, and the district should be proud of its representatives. Those of us who are left behind will envy them their chance of active service, but at the same time we know that the wearisome duty of guarding important points will be willingly met by "our boys," when duty calls them. Parades and inspections and shooting on the rifle range are going on all the time now. We might almost think we were in Europe.<sup>64</sup>

The *Ashcroft Journal* accounts suggest that the race to the front was conceived of in Walhachin, as elsewhere, in familiar sporting terms – terms that recall Paul Fussell's observation that "what was happening was not too far distant from playing games, running races, and competing in a thoroughly decent way."<sup>65</sup> In a sense the soldier's role was more

<sup>62</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 16 August 1913, 1; 27 September 1913, 1; 11 April 1914, 1; 20 June 1914, 1; 4 October 1913, 1; 31 October 1914, 1; 2 October 1915, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Military recruitment had begun as early as 1912, and Walhachin men were apparently quick to enlist.

<sup>64</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 15 August 1914, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 9. When the British Columbia Horse Regiment returned from Camp Vernon in the summer of 1912, the paper reports that they had a "most enjoyable" time. "Numerous events at the

befitting the sportsmen of Walhachin, whose success as gardener-philosophers seems to have been largely a function of the capable management of the few women present in the settlement. The outbreak of war abroad allowed the community to overlook its agricultural failures and to reconstitute its place on the frontier of the Dominion by re-enacting the fronts of Europe. By 1914 Walhachin could boast forty men in active military service, a number the papers trumpeted as “more men than any other town in B.C. in proportion to its population.” The drama, however, was not to remain in the BC Interior. In January of 1915, the boys from Walhachin left for France. By some reports nearly 100 of the settlers were enlisted by this time.<sup>66</sup>

There is one significant difference between the production of distinction in Walhachin before the Great War and the way in which it is represented once the news of the trenches filters back.<sup>67</sup> Mark Girouard suggests that, after the Great War, “chivalry, along with patriotism, playing the game, and similar concepts, became not so much devalued as simply irrelevant.” These codes, Girouard continues, “belong to another world, which seemed infinitely remote from the real world of mud, blood, boredom, fear, endurance, carnage and mutilation” that was the reality of war.<sup>68</sup> After 1917 there could be no

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annual sports stand to their credit, amongst others the officers' race (Lieut. Tennant); mile steeplechase (R. Chetwynd); Victoria Cross race (R. Chetwynd and G. Flowerdew) and the regimental tug of war. R. Chetwynd also took the prize for the best shot in the regiment.” In 1913 the sport continues as the regiment makes the papers for its parades, its track and field competitions, and for its “smoking concert” at the restaurant. See *Ashcroft Journal*, 15 August 1914, 1; 2 January 1915, 1; 22 May 1915, 1; 12 June 1915, 1; 8 September 1915, 1; 3 March 1917, 1; 16 June 1917, 1; 7 July 1917, 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 19 September 1914, 1.

<sup>67</sup> One learns from the “Walhachin Chronicle” that Major Paget lost both his legs after they were shattered by a shell. A.C. Prior, Lieutenant Melhuish, Sergeant Shaw, Private Parkin, Major J.C. Clark, and George Redford were also wounded. Lieutenant Tennant was the first to be killed in action. He is remembered “as the bartender in the Walhachin Hotel ... and most popular.” George Christie, who worked in Walhachin “and was extremely popular” also made “the supreme sacrifice.” W.A. Fortescue was killed in action in 1916: “his cheery personality endeared him to us all and he will be very much missed.” Next it was Eric Wilkinson who died of wounds in Greece: “Eric had a fine orchard adjoining Mr. Ivatt’s at Anglesey on which he built a very nice house but the war interrupted the plans of the family.” And finally Captain Gordon Flowerdew, well known to any latter-day reader of the *Ashcroft Journal* as the athletic storekeeper from Walhachin, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross: “We are full of pride” writes the columnist, “in the honour he has gained.” The paper also records the dedication of a plaque, to be hung in the hotel, recording the names of all those men who served for Walhachin. See *Ashcroft Journal*, 16 January 1915, 1; 12 June 1915, 1; 4 November 1916, 1; 11 November 1916, 1; 25 November 1916, 1; 17 November 1917, 1; 12 January 1918, 1; 11 May 1918, 1; 6 April 1918, 1; 1 July 1916, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 210–30, 290.

return to Camelot, no paradise regained. And yet, the ideal of Walhachin – its purposeful cultivation of distinction, its ready provision of an Edenic prequel to the trenches – would be absolutely sympathetic with the narrative of war as it would unfold in modern memory. “If the opposite of war is peace,” Fussell hypothesizes, then “the opposite of experiencing moments of war is proposing moments of pastoral,” and there is no engaging or contemplating war “without implicitly or explicitly bringing to bear the contrasting ‘model world’ by which its demonism is measured.”<sup>69</sup> Walhachin, for those who left the fields of the Thompson for those of Ypres, was war’s Edenic antidote. Memories of pastoral England, so fundamental to the initial establishment of the Walhachin colony, seem to be replaced with like memories of England’s lost past reconstructed on the banks of the Thompson in the Interior of British Columbia. Though never published in the local papers, Gordon Flowerdew’s front line letter to Ida Bennie of Walhachin makes this point very clearly: “Basil Loyd and I are going to order a box of Walhachin apples to be sent out ... We often talk of Walhachin, and the many pleasant happenings there.”<sup>70</sup> When the reports of the Walhachin contribution to the British war effort begin to be published in the local papers, home is no longer England; home is now Walhachin. It is, for example, by virtue of the gallant efforts of local boys abroad that Walhachin “should hope to rise again, like ... the Phoenix, greater and grander than ever.”<sup>71</sup> So much was Walhachin’s valour its own that one editor proclaims his outrage at the prospect of the government readily accepting local men for active service while at the same time refusing to reopen the Walhachin public school. “What more is expected,” laments the columnist, “from men than the offer of their very lives – are not they giving the utmost that men can give – and in return they are told ‘No school for your town as you are one child short.’”<sup>72</sup> It is also with great self-satisfaction that the paper reports Corporals A.R. Willan and Green (of the Lord Strathcona’s Horse) as representing Walhachin at the Lord Mayor’s Show in London.

These are the terms by which Walhachin is recalled today. As the roadside marker on the Thompson Highway emphatically proclaims, Walhachin died “for king and country.” The enduring currency of

<sup>69</sup> Fussell, *The Great War*, 231.

<sup>70</sup> Gordon Flowerdew, personal letter to Ida Bennie, cited in Weir, *Walhachin*, 92-93.

<sup>71</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 11 November 1916, 1.

<sup>72</sup> *Ashcroft Journal*, 11 May 1912, 1; 18 May 1911, 1; 25 May 1912, 1; 15 June 1912, 1; 20 July 1912, 1; 13 February 1913, 1; 16 May 1914, 1; 8 August 1914, 1; 15 August 1914, 1; 19 September 1914, 1.

this version of history is confirmed by a special Memorial Day editorial for the *Vancouver Sun* published in 1998. Here John Munro describes Walhachin as “a metaphor for war.”

From British Columbia alone – with a population of hardly more than five per cent the national total – 55,570 volunteers served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (the highest per capita enlistment in Canada.) Of those 6,225 were killed and 13,607 wounded. But what, in terms of human hope and promise, do these statistics mean? In a word, Walhachin ... Well might we mark our hope for times less cataclysmic in the new millennium by bringing their remembrance home in some dramatic fashion.

The ghost of Walhachin, for Munro, recalls “all Canadian knights errant,” “the British Columbia that was,” and, significantly, “our country’s long lost innocence.”<sup>73</sup> Walhachin itself, rather than the distant Eden that it originally recalled, emerges from its archive as a lost but unforgettable tableaux vivant executed by a cast of spirited soldier-gardeners poised in uniform against a backdrop of tidy trees teaming with the apples of Empire. Walhachin is a monument, in Munro’s terms, to “anything innocently but irrecoverably lost.”

The postwar, postcolonial shifting of the location of imaginary concepts of “home” is not at all unique to Walhachin. The relationship between the First World War and the development of the abstract idealizations of Canadian space attendant upon an emerging national identity is also widely understood and well documented.<sup>74</sup> The particular purchase of these narratives in Walhachin, however, is the role that they played, and continue to play, in the provision of an apt conclusion to a captivating story. As Riis has observed, the explanation

<sup>73</sup> John Munro, “War Also Killed a BC Community,” special to the *Vancouver Sun*, editorial forum, 7 November 1998, A21. See also Alan Jessep (“Brave Dream,” 6) and, particularly, Campbell Carrol who writes: “In 1914 the First World War began and the call went out for volunteers. It was then that Walhachin witnessed the exodus that spelled its doom. It set a record for enlistment that was not surpassed by any village, town or community in the world” (*Vancouver Sun*, 26 March 1955, magazine section, 6). Joan Weir dedicates an entire chapter to war. Particularly notable is her transcription of a personal letter from Lieutenant Gordon Flowerdew to Miss Ida Bennie, recounting the trials of the trenches (Weir, *Walhachin*, 86–99).

<sup>74</sup> For example, Margaret Ormsby’s chronicle of British Columbia, which observes the decline in the proportion of English university graduates, remittance men, and younger sons of noble families in the Canadian West. British Columbia had lost many of its British traditions, there remained “few who had the leisure or the means to indulge a taste for fox-hunting and polo,” and yet Ormsby concludes that, through the vicissitudes of the trenches, the province gained its “Canadian identity.” See Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1958), 402.



that the settlement's failure resulted from casualties suffered by Walhachin volunteers during the First World War "is not only inaccurate but also inadequate in that it ignores the most crucial factors": culture and environment.<sup>75</sup> Many of Walhachin's soldiers did, in fact, return to the settlement where they tried to piece together the vestiges of investments devastated by neglect and inclement weather. Most veterans, however, quickly moved on to bigger and better things. While the town was never completely abandoned, by 1919 it had lost the integrity of the original settlement. Evidence from the *Ashcroft Journal* supports this hypothesis; by 1916, the paper was, once again, covering very little Walhachin news, and by 1918 it becomes evident that there was very little remaining of which to write. Eventually, investors tallied their losses and packed it in. One never learns the destinations of those who left; they simply recede from the record and then disappear.

However, the Walhachin archive also reveals that proclamations that Walhachin died "for king and country" are not so much inaccurate or inadequate as they are projections of a particular kind of longing. They, like the mundane comings and goings serialized in the "Walhachin Chronicle," reflect the desire to project a mythology of loss and the recollection of home upon an incommensurate space. In the same way that BCDA and the *Ashcroft Journal* projected earnest fantasies of English fecundity onto a barren BC desert, latter-day accounts of Walhachin that conclude with the tragedy of the trenches predicate an emerging regional authenticity upon a pastoral phantasm. Walhachin, today as yesterday, appeals to the desire to know "home" and yet, at the same time, points to the very immateriality of the notion of "home" itself.

Florence McNeil's tribute to Walhachin assumes the voice of one who settled there. The voice reaches into the future and anticipates the day when travellers would picnic aside "the amputated trees" of the benchlands. The speaker recognises that, to these visitors, "this landscape is incomprehensible" and sends out messages that cannot be followed. To inexplicability, therefore, the speaker lends purpose, conceiving of him- or herself as part of a dramatic process "enshrining the stumps of a lost idea" – a "performance careless of praise" that has "reserved for us a larger prosperity."<sup>76</sup> The haunting quality of the pageant, as McNeil stages it, arises not simply from despair at

<sup>75</sup> Riis, "Walhachin Myth," 3.

<sup>76</sup> McNeil, *Walhachin*, 21.

the loss of felicity or even from the spectre of war that lurks about the “amputated trees” but, rather, from the distinct note of longing present in the speaker’s voice and observable in the barren landscape itself. The uncanniness of this place is a result of the realization that “home” is no more than the memory of the place we long to get back to. When the speaker asks, “is desire permissible among naked trees,” the implicit and yet unspoken answer is that desire is not only permissible, it is fundamental to any attempt to reconcile landscape and identity.