

has a Canadian heart beating in his chest," she reveals after fifty happy years here. Her husband had a heart transplant in 1996. Judy Doyle offers a wide-eyed account of how she immigrated to Canada on the same plane as Prince Charles and got the twenty-one-gun salute and RCMP welcome as she sauntered down the same red carpet. There's a long-ago tale of Mah Bon Quan, who left his

gruelling mining job in 1909 to set up the first Chinese-owned business in Prince Rupert and who fathered some of the first Chinese children born in Canada. We also meet Peter Wing, who became North America's first Chinese mayor when he was elected in Kamloops in 1966.

As a bonus, proceeds from *British Columbia Almanac* go to the BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

The Way We Were:
B.C.'s Amazing Journey to the Millennium
Staff of the *Province*

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2000. 148 pp. Illus. \$21.95 paper.

BY MARK FORSYTHE
CBC Almanac

Trying to determine what is going on in the world by reading newspapers is like trying to tell the time by watching the second hand of a clock.

Ben Hecht, American screenwriter, director, and novelist

WHAT IF YOU GLEANED a century's worth of memorable moments from those newspapers? Vancouver's *Province* newspaper staff did just that – minus the screaming headlines – for *The Way We Were: BC's Amazing Journey to the Millennium*. From first contact through the gold rush, boom and bust economic cycles, politics, cultural diversification: what a ride it's been.

The pictures here tell a powerful story. The Wah Chong family poses in front of its Chinese laundry; daughter Jennie becomes the first Asian to attend school in Vancouver

in 1884. Two years later grim-faced city fathers conduct municipal business from a tent with a city hall sign nailed to its peak after fire devoured 1,000 buildings in forty-five minutes, leaving twenty dead. A 1912 women's tug-of-war team on Vancouver Island, decked out in long skirts, hats, and broad grins, almost pulls an unseen opponent into the picture frame. Amused young men observing from the sidelines will soon travel to Europe for the "war that would end all wars." *The Way We Were* feels like a family photo album, the personal is never far removed from the larger events (in Canada and the world)

that shape our times; wrapped around these images are hundreds of BC facts and trivia:

- 1907: a meal in Prince Rupert costs 25 cents.
- 1910: a speeding ticket costs ten dollars (for travelling at the blinding speed of twelve miles per hour).
- 1911: British Columbia's population reaches 392,480.
- 1930: Charles Lindbergh gives the first Vancouver airport a failing grade. The city decides to spend \$600,000 to acquire land at Sea Island.
- 1921: males earn \$23.87 per week, females \$14.30.
- 1931: a syndicate buys British Properties from West Vancouver for forty-seven dollars per hectare.
- 1939: the Lions Gate bridge opens with a twenty-five-cent toll. Sixty years later, tolls on Lower Mainland crossings just might return.

The heart and soul of a community is often reflected in the editorial pages of its newspapers. *Province* letters to the editor were as pithy in 1905 as they are now, whether commenting on inadequate postal service, youth reform, missing sidewalks, or the number of brothels. A variation on the Sunday shopping debate erupted in 1905.

It is reported that the majority of our city council resolved to request the Provincial Government to so revise the city charter as to give them the power to make a city bylaw to punish paper boys for selling newspapers on Sunday. Why stop at the paper boys? Why not punish other desecrators of the Sabbath? Only last Sunday I saw and heard a dog barking at a crow, and a young fellow,

evidently its owner, whistled as boldly as any good well-thinking body would have done on a week day. Surely, if we are to enjoy our boasted religious liberty, these desecrations of the Sabbath must be stopped.

Signed: Puritan

The development of the camera paralleled British Columbia's evolution; the lens captured a spirit of adventure, discovery, and shenanigans. An 1896 photo of an enormous tree with loggers perched on it turns out to be a hoax crafted for the benefit of Seattle lumbermen. British Columbia grows bigger trees was the claim; it appears that size mattered at the turn of the nineteenth as much as it does at the turn of the twentieth century. A classic BC Archives photo of two freight wagons crawling along a hot, dusty Cariboo Road near Spences Bridge shows how the gold rush opened the door to the Interior. It's 1867, Royal Engineers have blasted through rock walls to get miners and supplies into the gold fields; the task of taming a formidable landscape has begun.

We can almost see ourselves in some of these photos: the family barn-raising in Cloverdale, student protesters in 1922 demanding UBC's Point Grey campus get built once and for all. A 1925 Stanley Cup win by the Victoria Cougars reminds us how a young province embraced sports; an Ogoogo sighting by a school principal in 1925 foreshadows a summer ritual. The sight of Terry Fox pushing himself across sun-baked pavement still inspires. "Everyday history" is what project editor Ros Guggi and her team were striving for: they achieved that. This book leaves one wanting more, including an index.