

The Early Years of Ashcroft Manor

EDWARD PHILIP JOHNSON

Land was readily available in British Columbia in the gold rush period after 1858. Amongst those attracted by the gold rush were some who saw the opportunity to establish themselves as owners of rather large estates, an opportunity not open to them in societies like England where land was scarce and held by a relatively small group. Two such emigrants from England, the Cornwall brothers, established themselves in the Southern Cariboo during the years 1862 to 1867. Although their ranch was not one of the largest in the interior, these two Englishmen were in no way typical of Canadian pioneer settlers.

The two young adventurous Cornwall brothers, Clement Francis, twenty-six, and Henry Pennant, twenty-four, left their family home, Ashcroft House, in Gloucestershire, England, in 1862 "to seek their fortunes in British Columbia."¹ Their father, the Reverend Alan Gardiner Cornwall was the rector of Newington Bagpath-cum-Owlpen and Beverstone-cum-Kingscote and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria. The Cornwalls claimed descent directly from the Earl of Cornwall, a son of King John. Clement and Henry were more than blood brothers; they were deep, loyal friends and warm companions. Both received degrees from Cambridge, Clement graduating from Magdalene in 1858 and Henry from Trinity in 1861. Clement went on to article in law and was admitted at the Inner Temple in 1862.² Although by birth and education they were members of upper class English society, the call of adventure, the dream of gold, or perhaps the vision of becoming landowners in a

*Miss Frances Gundry at the Provincial Archives, Victoria, kindly undertook that checking which the late Mr. Johnson was unable to do himself.

¹ Robert Nigel Kingscote, M.P., to Chichester Fortescue, Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, April 10, 1862. Enclosed in Fortescue to Governor Douglas, April 11, 1862 "Miscellaneous Documents Relating to C. F. Cornwall," MS., PABC. Kingscote was the Cornwall's first cousin. See fn. 118 below.

² E. O. S. Scholefield and F. W. Howay, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Vancouver, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914, vol. II, p. 402; *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, ed. J. A. Venn, Part II, 1752-1900, Vol. II, Cambridge, University Press, 1944, p. 140.

way denied to them in England, were apparently too much. The brothers broke free from the conventions of their rectory home and set sail from Southampton on April 17, 1862, aboard the *La Plata*, bound for Victoria, British Columbia via the Panama and San Francisco.³

Clement enjoyed their break in San Francisco, commenting on the billiard parlours, the restaurants, and the fine stone and brick buildings. While there the two young men decided to buy a pack horse to carry their supplies up-country in British Columbia — a “good quiet useful looking beast” cost sixty dollars, plus the fifteen dollars to transport it to Victoria.⁴ They left for Victoria from San Francisco aboard a ship loaded with more than one hundred head of horses, cattle and mules besides numerous sheep. Their ship docked at Esquimalt on June 2, 1862.⁵

Victoria appeared very dull and slow to them after San Francisco. They stayed at the Hotel de France.⁶ As Victoria was so unimpressive, they only stopped over long enough to buy a horse for \$130.00⁷ and to load him with provisions from the Hudson’s Bay Company as they heard prices were very high in British Columbia. Their inquiries about the Cariboo gold fields were answered with some of the many rumours circulating in Victoria. Clement wrote in his diary

Very contradictory reports about the diggings & impossible to obtain any information as to the best route to take; every one offering different advice on the subject. At length decided on the Lilloet [sic] or lake route. . . .⁸

In spite of the lack of accurate information the brothers left Victoria on June 10, 1862 for New Westminster,⁹ joining the hopeful throngs who planned to seek their fortunes in the gold fields.

When they arrived in New Westminster during the evening of June 10, Clement and Henry found the capital to consist of “about 100 houses” and Clement described it as “any thing [sic] but prepossessing, a mere small clearing amongst interminable forest.”¹⁰ They left letters of introduction for Colonel Moody and Captain Parsons of the Royal Engineers who were away at the time. On June 12 they left for Port

³ Clement F. Cornwall, “Diary,” May 1862 to July 1864, MS., PABC, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Douglas at the head of Harrison Lake.¹¹ Arriving the next morning, Clement and Henry travelled four miles and then set up camp. With their two pack horses loaded with supplies, they headed up the road, joining four others who were taking the Harrison-Lillooet route into the Cariboo. They averaged about thirteen miles a day and found the travelling easy and pleasant all the way except for missing the steamer on one of the lakes. Arriving in Lillooet on June 20, they discovered that it was "a pretty & apparently a busy thriving place."¹²

The Cornwalls were now at what was to become "Mile One" on the Cariboo Road, but seem to have decided not to go to Cariboo from which hundreds of disappointed gold seekers were already returning,¹³ but instead to explore the surrounding countryside. They swam their horses across the Fraser River, stayed at a constable's house and then followed the rugged trail along the muddy Fraser to Pavilion. Instead of taking the route over Pavilion Mountain to Clinton and then north to the Cariboo gold fields, they headed south from Pavilion through Marble Canyon, coming out at Hat Creek. They then travelled east, following Hat Creek to its junction with the Bonaparte River. There they set up camp on June 25¹⁴ and presented a letter of introduction from the constable at Lillooet to Donald McLean, the first settler in the area. McLean had been chief trader for the Hudson's Bay Company in Kamloops but left in 1860 to become a farmer, squatting on this location.¹⁵ By then the Cornwalls seem to have been looking in earnest for land on which to settle.

On June 27 they set out from their camp site and rode about fifteen miles north-east to Loon Lake.¹⁶ On the way they met two camels, an encounter which frightened their horses tremendously.¹⁷ These camels

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9, June 20, 1862.

¹³ See John Emmerson, *British Columbia and Vancouver Island: Voyages, Travels, and Adventures*, Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1864, p. 52: "We kept plodding on from day to day, but heard most woeful and discouraging accounts from disappointed men, and we could not avoid the conviction that ere long, in all human probability, we likewise would be compelled to join the returning wretched throng. We met hundreds upon hundreds coming down in a most pitiable plight: numbers had nothing to eat, and had no prospect of anything; many who had worn out their shoes had their bleeding feet bound in clouts to protect them from the sharp cutting stones and gravel, so frequently met with. Altogether, it was a most direful and heartrending scene."

¹⁴ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 11, June 25, 1862.

¹⁵ F. W. Laing, "Colonial Farm Settlers on the Mainland of B.C., 1858-1871," MS., PABC, 1939, pp. 351-352.

¹⁶ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 11, June 27, 1862.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

were part of a herd used for packing purposes. They were later turned loose when it was found that their smell frightened other animals and their hoofs were not suitable for the rugged, rocky terrain.

The Loon Lake vicinity they found to be "a nice looking spot . . . but so enclosed by rocks & mountains as to be undesirable."¹⁸ The brothers then back-tracked and made "a long & dusty drive of 20 miles" south along the western ridge of the Thompson River to Gavins Creek.¹⁹ On the way they passed "a desirable looking flat watered by 2 streams with a fine surrounding range for cattle."²⁰ Here they decided to stay and pre-empted two adjoining pieces of land, each of 160 acres.²¹ According to the pre-emption records, the location of these two land claims was "about 26 miles from the ferry on the Thompson River on the road leading northwards. . . ." ²² Clement duly recorded their land claims at Lytton on July 7, 1862.²³

At this time in British Columbia land was relatively easy to obtain. A settler could purchase a quarter section for about the same price as a good horse. By the Proclamations of January 4, 1860 and January 19, 1861, unsurveyed land claims in British Columbia, 160 acres in size and rectangular in shape, could be pre-empted by British subjects or by anyone else who took an oath of allegiance to the Queen. The settler had to live on and improve the land, register his pre-emption claim with the district magistrate, and pay a two dollar registration fee. He could obtain clear title to the land by getting a certificate of improvements from the magistrate and paying one dollar an acre for the land. In addition the settler could buy unoccupied land adjoining his 160 acre claim for the same price per acre.²⁴ By the end of 1862 the Cornwalls had begun to acquire surrounding acreage both by pre-emption and by purchase, eventually acquiring an estate of 6,452 acres.²⁵

The first building on the site was apparently a hut at which the Cornwalls camped before putting up a "sort of shed" on July 12 to provide protection from the blazing sun.²⁶ The hut was later rented to a packer

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1862.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ F. W. Laing, *op. cit.*, p. 348; C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 12. When surveyed, the two lots proved to consist of 167 acres and 168 acres. See Laing, p. 348.

²² F. W. Laing, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

²³ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 13, July 7, 1862.

²⁴ Laing, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁵ F. W. Laing, "Geographical naming record," MS., PABC, p. 4.

²⁶ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 14, July 12, 1862.

called Reilly for the winter for fifteen dollars. Although Reilly was reluctant to pay the rent and complained about the place, he stayed on until the spring of 1863.²⁷

After building their shelter, the Cornwalls cleared a part of the brush through which a ditch must pass, dug up some land, planted a garden close to their shanty and built a fence around it. Next, they built a corral in which to keep their two horses and a cow and calf they had bought from Jeffray, a cattle drover, for \$125.00.²⁸ In order to break the monotony of fencing and gardening, the brothers went trout fishing in the Thompson River. They must have been excellent fishermen or the trout must have been plentiful, because they caught forty large ones during one evening, a welcome change of diet after bacon for a month.²⁹

The Cornwalls had enough capital to establish themselves and to weather any temporary set-back. On November 23 they received from home a letter of credit for \$3,840.00³⁰ which enabled them to purchase land, buy some stock and to live over the winter. They were good for the economy of the area because they could offer employment and pay cash for their supplies. The first man they hired, at forty dollars a month and food, was a cook and general helper named Duck who later became a successful rancher in the area.³¹ During this first summer and fall they began to stock their property with horses, mules and oxen. On November 6, they bought two yoke of oxen for \$425.00 from some cattlemen who were travelling through³² and later in the month they bought eight horses and a mule for \$800.00.³³ They found the cattle too expensive to buy in quantity because any drover who brought cattle this far from Oregon, which was the closest place where cattle could be bought at a fair price, wanted the very high prices he could get by taking his herd to the Cariboo gold centres.³⁴ The Cornwalls therefore had to start as farmers rather than cattle ranchers.³⁵

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24, November 3, 1862, and p. 36, December 18, 1862.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16, July 21, 1862.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15, July 18, 1862.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28, November 23, 1862.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15, July 19, 1862. This was Jacob Duck who later pre-empted land in the Monte Creek area, where he operated a stopping place in partnership with Alexander Pringle who had also worked with the Cornwalls. The post office established there in 1870 was called Duck and Pringle's. (Now Monte Creek).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 25, November 6, 1862.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 29, November 27, 1862.

³⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 25, November 5, 1862: "Cattle came up but I did not make a deal, prices being high."

³⁵ See p. 14 below.

In October they harvested wild hay to provide winter feed for the stock.³⁶ The hay was cut with scythes and hauled to the stacks on sloops which were drawn by oxen or teams of horses. These sloops were made from two logs, cut like sleigh runners, with a rack on top made from poles. They stacked the hay by hand, using pitch forks. Consequently these stacks were not very high. The following year they devised a system of pulleys and cables attached to two long poles crossed at the top to stack the hay.³⁷ In addition they bought mowing machines and large hay rakes, pulled by oxen or horses, to harvest the important hay crops. They employed local Indians to do this work and paid them in supplies of food, usually sacks of flour.³⁸

During the autumn, two hired men were busy building a house for the Cornwalls. This house contained a living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms.³⁹ On October 29, they moved in and put up the cook stove. It was probably a one-storey log house because the men hauled dirt for plastering and the roof. The "plastering" meant plugging the air spaces between the logs with mud. The pioneer log homes of this period in the area which had dirt roofs were single storey and quite small.⁴⁰ The log houses which had an attic or second floor needed a greater pitch on the roofs which had to be made from lumber and were usually covered with cedar shakes. The roof of the Cornwall house therefore probably consisted of a row of poles on log beams, a thick layer of wild hay on top of the poles and then about a foot of clay soil on top of the hay. The hay and soil acted as insulation and any moisture which seeped through the soil was absorbed by the hay which was dried out by the warmth from inside. This type of house construction was very convenient for the pioneer because few tools were required, the materials were readily available, not much skill was needed and it was fast.

The Cornwall house differed from other pioneer houses in the area at this time because it was lined, had a fire place and the living room was separate from the kitchen. We know about the separate living room because a "sitting" room is noted in entries for December 22 and 23:

22nd [Dec., 1862] . . . I & Duck set to work lining the sitting room wh. we completed in the evening on the whole very tidily.

³⁶ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 21, October 18, 1862.

³⁷ Interview with Mr. Alan Parker, Ashcroft Manor, October 19, 1968.

³⁸ C. F. Cornwall, "Diary and farm record," November 17, 1866 - June 7, 1869, MS., PABC, p. 171, November 21, 1868.

³⁹ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 19, August 11, 1862.

⁴⁰ Personal inspection of pioneer homes in the area, October 26, 1968.

23rd. I & Duck hung up the guns &c. made a bookcase & a mantelpiece wh. we put up & altogether made the room look uncommonly smart & comfortable.⁴¹

By the end of November, 1862, these two Englishmen, in spite of their inexperience, were well on the way to having an established farm. Within five months they had acquired a substantial acreage of land, put up fences, harvested a good crop of hay, built a comfortable home, bought farm animals and built a barn. In contrast to many other Canadian pioneer farmers who had to work and struggle for many years just to survive, the Cornwalls were able to buy land and to hire men to help them with the work, so they established their place much faster. The brothers were so proud of their new home that they later invited friends, some among the nobility, to visit them.

Henry usually remained on the farm while Clement was the traveller, visiting in the first months the neighbouring towns of Lillooet and Lytton and going down to Victoria,⁴² just as later he was to be frequently away from home in the public service. At Lillooet on August 3, he heard a "miserable" church sermon.⁴³ In Lytton during October to order the winter food supplies he "Went to Ball's; found there Begbie, Walker & Marten & dined all together. Very pleasant being among some decent people in such a hole." The next day he "dined with the same party with the addition of O'Reilly the Cariboo magistrate who had just come down. Great acct from the mines. Whist in evening; self & Begbie & Moberly & Ball; won something. Engaged to winter 8 horses for Begbie & 3 for Ball."⁴⁴ This first meeting with Judge Begbie was the beginning of a life-long friendship.

The first remunerative business transacted by the Cornwalls on the farm was to care for miners' and packers' animals during the winter of 1862-63. Many miners coming south for the winter preferred to leave their animals rather than take them all the way to the coast. In the spring they expected to return, claim their horses and mules and strike out again for the gold fields.

The traffic to and from the mines was undoubtedly a major reason for the Cornwalls locating where they did. A new wagon-road from Yale through the Fraser Canyon and the Thompson Valley had been planned

⁴¹ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, pp. 38-39.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 19, August 15, 1862.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 18, August 3, 1862.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22, October 24 and 25, 1862.

in 1861.⁴⁵ It was intended to eliminate many of the disadvantages of the older Harrison-Lillooet route, up which the Cornwalls had journeyed. The only wagon road connecting with the lower Fraser through Lillooet was a land-water route which involved steamers on three lakes and, when the water was low, a trail from the foot of Harrison lake to the Fraser. During 1862, the new road was being completed to Cook's Ferry (now Spences Bridge) about twenty miles south of the ranch.⁴⁶ It was being built along the line of earlier pack trails which extended from Cook's Ferry up the Thompson and Bonaparte Rivers to join the Lillooet-Alexandria route. The Yale-Alexandria road was most welcome because it offered a direct route and eliminated the many transshipments previously necessary.

The Cornwall property was strategically located on this road. As soon as the brothers had pre-empted they found that the road would in fact "pass right thro' our place."⁴⁷ In his diary entry for October 18, 1862, Clement gives this picture of their situation:

About 20 horses had been left for wintering at \$1 ½ per head per month. . . . *That Jew!* Oppenheimer had bolted & the road work was stopped. Good acts from the mines & all, packers & miners, coming down. Many cattle & mules about the place, owners intending to winter them.⁴⁸

Because so many miners and travellers stopped off at their ranch during this first fall, the brothers had decided to build a roadhouse during the winter and have it open the following spring. As the reference to Oppenheimer indicates, the brothers were very perturbed when completion of the road was delayed. To build the roadhouse, they needed lumber. There was no sawmill in the area — even timber had to be hauled to the site.⁴⁹ Lumber had to be whipsawed for the roadhouse and for a water wheel to run the sawmill they had on order from San Francisco. Two sawyers, Pringle and Nicoll, cut 11,147 feet of lumber in the five months from January to June of 1863 for four cents per foot plus their food.⁵⁰ Like all the hired hands on the farm at this time, they had to provide their own shelter, a crude shack usually serving the purpose. The roadhouse was to be "40 x 20 ft. with 2 rooms & kitchen below & good

⁴⁵ R. C. Moody to H. M. Ball, November 12, 1861. [B.C. Lands and Works Dept., Correspondence outward, 1861-1865, pp. 22-23.]

⁴⁶ Howay and Scholefield, Vol. II, p. 101.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14, July 9, 1862.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41, December 29, 1862, and p. 79, June 9, 1862.

attic.”⁵¹ The walls were to be built from logs — these were covered with boards when the original roadhouse was expanded. On February 26, 1863, Clement wrote: “Engaged to pay Cutter & Holes \$175.00 to put up the road house. It seems a large sum but many say they can’t do it for the price. I don’t think it will take them more than 6 or 7 weeks at the outside.”⁵²

The first winter must have been lonely for Clement — Henry was in Victoria from early December until March.⁵³ The miners had passed through and he had only his three neighbours and the workmen for company, but he kept busy with the horses being wintered, cutting fence posts and rails, hunting, playing cards, and reading. Deer, rabbits, and prairie chickens were plentiful. Venables and Gavin, two of the neighbours, came over for Christmas Day. Clement and his guests spent a quiet sociable evening. The two sawyers spent the day deer hunting, but they didn’t have any luck.⁵⁴

The isolation — the nearest doctor was at Lytton, 45 miles away — meant that Clement was not only constantly doctoring sick horses, but also had to give medicine — a dose of opium — to a packer who was wintering on the property.⁵⁵ Not all the sick had even this much care. One man, after having a severe tooth ache for three days, drank a bottle and a half of brandy and died from its effects.⁵⁶

As spring came, the Cornwalls turned their attention to sowing crops. During April, using seed Henry brought up from Victoria,⁵⁷ they planted ten acres of barley besides timothy grass, clover and oats.⁵⁸ By the following spring they included alfalfa in their forage crops even though the seed cost forty cents a pound in Victoria.⁵⁹ Later in the spring of 1863 the men planted a very large garden under Henry’s supervision. Special attention was given to root vegetables — potatoes, turnips, and carrots — which would store over the winter. Around this cultivated land fences were erected.

As soon as the crops were planted, they directed their attention towards the roadhouse as many people were now returning north. After

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32, December 6, 1862.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 31, December 4, 1862; p. 63, March 14, 1863.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39, December 27, 1862.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56, February 22, 1863.

⁵⁶ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary 1866-1869*, p. 14, January 5, 1867.

⁵⁷ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 59, February 27, 1863.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68, April 8, 1863; p. 71, April 25, 1863.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131, April 1, 1864.

getting a liquor licence from Magistrate Ball in Lytton, the Cornwalls opened the roadhouse or the "Public" on April 30, 1863,⁶⁰ about five months before the road contractor, William Hood, and the Royal Engineers completed the Cariboo Road in this area on September 24, 1863.⁶¹ The bar room in the roadhouse was painted, had a large mirror, a good display of bottles and pictures and was made as pleasant as possible for the weary traveller to relax and spend his money. The guests slept in the attic, ate in the kitchen, and relaxed in the bar room or the parlour. When the roadhouse became crowded, guests slept on the floor, or, in good weather, in the stable. According to advertisements, customers could always expect to find the best liquor at the roadhouse,⁶² but this service was not always appreciated as Clement noted shortly after the place was opened — "A man above complained that he was nearly poisoned by liquor at the Roadhouse. Very odd considering that it was the best I could get in Victoria for our own consumption!"⁶³ In a very short time the roadhouse became known as the "Cornwalls," a favourite stopping place along the Cariboo Road. Judge Begbie and his party stopped here when going to or returning from the Cariboo. Clement referred to the men who travelled with Begbie as the "hangings-on."⁶⁴ His party spent many enjoyable evenings with the Cornwalls when they were passing through. Very often while playing cards, Begbie discussed his court cases with Clement, who was a lawyer.

Judges, prostitutes, dance-hall girls, professional gamblers, miners, English nobility, politicians, clergy, Indians, just to name a few, stayed one time or another at "Ashcroft House," as the roadhouse was officially called.⁶⁵ The prostitutes and gamblers followed the miners into the gold fields and most often returned with more gold than the miners. Prostitution and gambling, as well as the sale of opium, were legal at this time in British Columbia.

Ashcroft House did most of its business during March and April when the miners were returning to the gold fields and in October and Novem-

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶² See the advertisement in the *British Columbia Tribune*, April 30, 1866, p. 2, which stated that travellers staying at the roadhouse could expect to find "good accommodation, the best of living, of LIQUORS and of WINES."

⁶³ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary*, 1862-1864, p. 73, May 7, 1863.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109, October 22, 1863. Clement was somewhat unfair to members of Begbie's party who were likely travelling with the judge on circuit. At one time or other, they included C. E. Pooley, court registrar, and barristers H. P. Walker and G. A. Walkem.

⁶⁵ It was advertised as such in the *Cariboo Sentinel* of May 7, 1866, p. 4.

ber when they were heading south for the winter. Typical of entries giving first-hand accounts of the situation at the roadhouse and conditions in the Cariboo was one in which Clement wrote:

An awful specimen of a woman at the road house. Good accounts from Cariboo where they have struck some good hill diggings in gulches opening on to Williams Creek. A good many travellers on the road but all pedestrians.⁶⁶

It is significant that no form of extreme violence, such as murder, was recorded at Ashcroft House. At times some character like the cattle drover "Scotty" got drunk and made a nuisance of himself, but that was all. One of the most common methods of handling a troublemaker at this time was to "hog-tie" him with a rope, and toss him either into a room or into the barn, depending on the weather, and leave him there without food or water until he agreed to behave.

During the summer of 1863, after finishing the roadhouse, the Cornwalls built a water wheel to drive the sawmill which they had ordered from San Francisco in the winter.⁶⁷ This wheel developed five horsepower,⁶⁸ was sixteen feet in diameter, and three feet wide.⁶⁹ It was an overshot wheel,⁷⁰ water being led to it by a ditch 960 feet long, 90 feet of which were wooden flume.⁷¹ It took 3,725 feet of lumber to construct the wheel.⁷² They could not, however, operate the mill until the spring of 1864, as some pulleys and a belt were found to be missing.⁷³ After the need for lumber had been met the plant was used to run a grist mill⁷⁴ and by 1865 the colonial government had issued a permit to the Cornwall brothers which gave them the right to use 200 inches of water "for mill and irrigation purposes on Ashcroft Creek."⁷⁵

In the first year of farming, the Cornwall brothers' crops grew only where they irrigated. Because they were unfamiliar with the growing conditions in the Dry Belt, they assumed that crops would grow without

⁶⁶ C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1862-1864, p. 129, March 18, 1864.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49, February 4, 1863.

⁶⁸ F. W. Laing, "Early flour mills in British Columbia: part II—the upper country," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, vol. 5, July 1941, p. 194.

⁶⁹ E. Davis, "History of the early water power development in British Columbia," MS. by former comptroller of water rights for B.C., PABC, p. 2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ F. W. Laing, "Early flour mills . . .," p. 194.

⁷² C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1862-1864, p. 79, June 9, 1863.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 110, October 30, 1863.

⁷⁴ Davis, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁵ F. W. Laing, "Early flour mills . . .," p. 194.

irrigation, as in England, which was expecting a miracle. The garden and the barley which were watered turned out well. The large crop of vegetables was harvested by local Indian women. Dr. Cheadle stopped overnight at the roadhouse on November 20, 1863 on his trans-Canada trip. He describes conditions on the Cornwall farm in his journal:

They have 2 houses, one wayside kept by an employee & their own farm some ½ mile distant.

The Chinaman cook had got to bed & turned out very sulky to provide us with beefsteaks — our fellow passenger Captain Harrison would have toast which added to his ill-temper. The younger Cornwall (the elder being down at Victoria for supplies) sent word down that he would be glad to see us at the other house, & Milton & I walked up there after supper. Found a tall regular First-Trinity man who received us very hospitably. Had evidently been much disappointed with the country & agriculture. He said some barley had turned out very well; the rest badly; irrigation required. Has got post holes dug for some 3 miles; land open, bunch grass country, either sand or gravel, & I feel certain will never pay for cultivation. They are now going in for Stock farming which will do well if bunch grass lasts.⁷⁶

Although this first year was given over to growing field crops, the two English gentlemen pioneers still dreamed of establishing a cattle ranch. They were in a good financial position at this time as they had recently received a letter of credit for \$4,800.00 from their father in England.⁷⁷ Their assets were growing and the roadhouse was doing a good business. Although drovers were still driving some cattle north, prices were still exorbitant and the Cornwalls only bought a few head of cattle to butcher and to experiment with.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ W. B. Cheadle, *Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863*, with introduction and notes by A. G. Doughty and Gustave Lanctot, Ottawa, Graphic Publishers Ltd., 1931, p. 263.

⁷⁷ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 86, July 1, 1863.

⁷⁸ In December, 1862, the Cornwalls made an agreement with a drover to buy from him in the spring 20 cows and 20 two-year-old heifers or steers. Clement wrote "Price for the former, *double what he gives* but no more than \$60 per head: for the latter not more than \$40 per do. /*Diary, 1862-1864*, p. 31, December 5, 1862/ However, the drover never delivered the cattle. /*Ibid.*, p. 68, April 7, 1863/ According to the list of "stock and farming implements tools &c &c" bought to the end of December, 1863, the Cornwalls bought 4 cows, 3 heifers, a bull, a bull calf, and 6 calves in 1863, at a total cost of \$685. /*Ibid.*, pp. 158-159/ In February, 1864, Clement tried to buy cattle from a man called Bates but "did not make a deal as prices were too high." /*Ibid.*, p. 121, February 11, 1864/ On June 4, 1864, the Cornwalls bought 33 head of cattle for \$1213. /*Ibid.*, p. 139/ By November, 1867, they were reported to have 380 head of cattle. /*Legh Harnett, Two Lectures on British Columbia*, Victoria, Higgins and Long, p. 42; *Diary, 1866-1869*, p. 90, November 7, 1867/ Probably the bulk of the herd was acquired in a single purchase in May 1865 in Umatilla, from where they were driven to the ranch. /H. P. Cornwall, *Diary, December 10, 1864 - June 13, 1865*, p. 48, May 21, 1865, p. 61, expenditures for July 12, 1865/

When spring came, they dug irrigation ditches, planted crops, fenced, operated the sawmill and built a dam on the creek above the mill. As their roadhouse was directly affected by the high freight rate, 3½ cents per pound, they later added a grist mill to their establishment, with the water wheel providing the power.⁷⁹ It is believed that the mill stones had come around Cape Horn from France for the projected H.B.C. mill on the Millstream near Victoria in 1848, although there is no evidence to support this claim.⁸⁰ Also it is thought that the grist mill operated until about 1890.⁸¹ This little grist mill was successful and turned out excellent flour. Customers paid from nine to fourteen cents per pound for the flour.⁸² Newspaper accounts of the day, such as one in the *British Columbia Tribune*, October 1, 1866, stated that "the flour mill of Messrs. Cornwall is working exceedingly well this season. It is running night and day, and is making excellent flour." The *Cariboo Sentinel*, on May 9, 1867, stated that "The Grist Mill owned by these gentlemen [the Cornwalls] has been turning out an excellent quality of flour lately, and although its grinding capacity is only equal to 200 lbs. per hour, we are informed that there is sufficient grain in the neighbourhood to keep it in constant employment for the next three or four months." By the fall of 1867, they had a threshing machine in operation and threshed for their neighbours.⁸³ The Cornwalls were quickly establishing a diversified number of business enterprises on their farm.

As the price of cattle came down during the second spring, the brothers began to stock their ranch. They purchased thirty-three head of young

⁷⁹ This grist mill would seem to have been built in 1865 rather than in 1864, the year given by F. W. Laing in "Early flour mills . . .," p. 194. Clement Cornwall's diary ends on July 10, 1864 and does not start up again until November 17, 1866. The gap is partly filled by the diary of Henry Cornwall, which covers the period from December 10, 1864 to June 13, 1865. There is no mention of the grist mill in Clement's diary up to July 10, 1864 nor does the list of stock and farming implements purchased during 1864 /C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1862-1864, p. 160/ include anything connected with a grist mill. Two references to the grist mill in Henry's diary suggest that it was not running before June 13, 1865. In the entry for May 14, 1865 /H. P. Cornwall, Diary, December 10, 1864 - June 13, 1865, p. 45/, he says "Horton came with wagon at last . . . reporting that one of the wheels of the grist mill is smashed at M. /sic for N.?/W—"; and on June 13 /*Ibid.*, p. 50/ he wrote "Hn. /Haughton who teamed supplies regularly for the Cornwalls/ starts for the grist mill tomorrow." A list of receipts in Henry's diary, undated but obviously for the autumn months of 1865, includes three payments for grinding wheat. /*Ibid.*, p. 64/

⁸⁰ Davis, *loc. cit.*

⁸¹ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Alan Parker, Ashcroft Manor, October 19, 1968. However, Davis, *loc. cit.*, says that it was "out of use in 1887."

⁸² Ashcroft Manor, Accounting book, 1866-1872, MS., Ashcroft Manor.

⁸³ C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1866-1869, p. 82, October 7, 1867.

cattle on June 4, 1864, from a drover for \$1,213.00.⁸⁴ They soon discovered that cattle ranching could be profitable because cattle thrived on the bunch grass and could be sold a year later for double what they cost. They were careful not to overstock the ranges as then they would have to provide winter feed which would cut down the profits. By experience the brothers learned to be cattle men.⁸⁵

When in 1865 they drove in about 300 head purchased in Oregon,⁸⁶ they required more range land. Henry wrote to Governor Seymour on May 22

to apply for a lease of Fifteen Thousand (15000) acres which shall be stocked by us within the appointed time with cattle and horses.

It is a bunch grass country, and therefore doubtless your Excellency will see the expediency of its being very lightly stocked.

.

It is now occupied by some 400 head of cattle, belonging to a Drover, who of course pays nothing for the right of pasturage & we think that if your Excellency entertains our application, you will see that it is but right that from this date (the time of application) until the final granting of the lease, the land should be unoccupied, and notice given to the drover now on the land to move at once, which notice we will serve, should your Excellency see fit to give us the power to do so.

The land for which they were applying was in Hat Creek Valley and Henry gave the following description of its location:

That portion of the valley for which we apply is situated about 1 mile or so from the Marble Gap, and about 16 or 17 miles from McLean's station, extending in a Southernly [sic] direction towards Lytton and being situated about 10 miles in a direct line, & westernly [sic] direction from our pre-emption claims at Ashcroft. . . .⁸⁷

A mention of this application appeared in the *Cariboo Sentinel* on August 12, 1865. The packers and cattle drovers who had been using this land became very upset because, among other things, a section of this notice stated that "Persons are warned not to turn the animals on this land or otherwise to interfere with the grass." The article described the proposed granting of the lease as "a good example of attempted favoritism," and

⁸⁴ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1862-1864*, pp. 139-140, June 4, 1864.

⁸⁵ See, for example, the marginal notes in C. F. Cornwall's *Diary and farm record*, November 17, 1866 - June 7, 1869, for March, 1867: "N.B. Don't let cattle hang about your feeding yards!!" /p. 34, March 7/, and "N.B. Build good sheds!! Don't let the cows get too poor," /p. 37, March 13/

⁸⁶ See note 71 above.

⁸⁷ H. P. Cornwall correspondence, PABC.

presumably because of these objections this lease was not granted. Charles Good, acting for the Colonial Secretary, wrote to Philip Nind, the magistrate at Lytton, on August 31, 1865

If the Messrs. Cornwall desire to lease a small portion of Hat Creek for cutting hay, or for other purposes H.Ex. has no objection, but the same privilege should be granted to Mr. Barnard, & others who may desire it.⁸⁸

The Cornwalls were later granted a lease of 6,000 acres of grazing land in Hat Creek Valley, where they were already running their cattle.⁸⁹

By 1867 the brothers had established themselves as two of the leading ranchers in their part of the interior. Leigh Harnett, a lecturer from California, visited them in 1867 while collecting material. In subsequent lectures he stated:

The best and largest farms I have seen in the whole country are Dunlevy's and Galbraith's, at Soda Creek; Boston's and Perry's, on Cache Creek, and the Cornwall ranch, on the Thompson. . . . Cornwall brothers, have 90 acres under cultivation, with 50 more preparing for this year; last season's crop yielded 48 bushels to the acre, with barley and oats in the same proportion. . . . These gentlemen, in addition, have 380 head of cattle, 60 horses, hogs, &c., &c., in quantity, and will soon become wealthy.

.

. . . Mr. Cornwall told me they had killed *two-year* old animals that weighed at high as 820 pounds each, fed simply on grass.⁹⁰

The Cornwalls could be justifiably proud of their ranch as they galloped across the fields and over the rolling hills, counting their fat cattle.

After the Cornwalls' ranch was firmly established, the brothers could devote more time to sports, relaxation, entertainment, and public service. In 1865 they built a race track near the roadhouse and introduced horse racing. The *British Colonist* reported on November 13, 1865: "Mr. Cornwall, one of the largest landed proprietors in the country, proposes establishing spring and fall races in British Columbia to encourage the breeding of horses." The following year the same paper reported on October 29 that the fall races at the Cornwalls included the Ashcroft Derby, Lytton Steeple Chase and the Yale Steeple Chase. Judge Begbie acted as steward at these meets. Besides the local residents, these races were attended by people from all over the colony. The Cornwalls im-

⁸⁸ Colonial Secretary, Letters outward, September 1864 - December 1866, pp. 233-234.

⁸⁹ Lands and works, Correspondence outward, June 1865 - July 1871, pp. 202-203.

⁹⁰ Legh Harnett, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 and 44.

ported thoroughbred mares and studs to breed good saddle and race horses. The meets were always held on the manor because they brought good business to the roadhouse. As much as \$1500.00 in two days was spent by the racing fans,⁹¹ a large amount considering that the average wage was forty dollars a month. For many years these race meets were the biggest social event in the area.

Outside affairs, such as politics and judicial matters, occupied much of Clement's time from 1864 to 1907. He became a prominent public figure and this fact certainly helped to advertise the ranch, race meets and roadhouse. Although he served as the first Indian Agent for the area, Henry was content to stay at home to manage the ranch business. Clement began his public career in October, 1864. In that month he was appointed a Justice of the Peace⁹² and "elected" to the Legislative Council of the Colony of British Columbia as the member for Hope, Yale and Lytton district.⁹³ He attended the sessions of 1864-65 and 1866 in New Westminster but did not stand for re-election in September 1866.⁹⁴ Although he was appointed to the Legislative Council of the united Colony in December 1866 as the magisterial member for Thompson River district, Clement declined the honour, "it not being in my power," he wrote in his diary, "to leave this [the ranch] now."⁹⁵ He did not stand for election again until December 1870, attending the session of 1871 as the member for Hope, Yale and Lytton.⁹⁶ On December 13, 1871, after B.C. had entered Confederation, he was appointed to the Senate of Canada⁹⁷ and remained a Senator until 1881 when he became Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. He held that post from July 20, 1881 to March 29, 1887, when he was succeeded by Hugh Nelson.⁹⁸ Clement's last public

⁹¹ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary and farm record*, June 20, 1869 - December 9, 1871, p. 350, October 18 and 19, 1870.

⁹² His commission was dated October 26, 1864. See Colonial Secretary, *Correspondence outward*, September 1864 - December 1866, p. 72.

⁹³ *Victoria Colonist*, October 20, 1864, p. 3. Popular members of the Council were in strict fact appointed after being chosen by the people of their district.

⁹⁴ *Yale British Columbia Tribune*, September 24, 1866, p. 3.

⁹⁵ British Columbia, *The Government Gazette*, January 5, 1867, p. 1; C. F. Cornwall, *Diary*, 1866-1869, p. 13, January 1, 1867. The Council, besides popular members included permanent officials and magistrates appointed for the districts in which they served.

⁹⁶ *Victoria Colonist*, December 23, 1870, p. 3; British Columbia Legislative Council, *Minute Book*, December 17, 1868 - March 28, 1871. In this session the majority of members were for the first time directly elected.

⁹⁷ *Canada Gazette*, December 16, 1871, p. 1.

⁹⁸ *Canada Gazette*, June 25, 1881, p. 1819; *Ibid.*, March 12, 1887, p. 1659; *The Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967*, ed. J. K. Johnson, Ottawa, Public Archives of Canada, 1968, pp. 136 and 142.

appointment was as Judge of the County Court of Cariboo and Stipendiary Magistrate, positions he held from 1889 until his resignation at the end of 1906.⁹⁹

In these pioneer days, the manor and its owners provided many diversified services for the surrounding area. Clement recorded in his diary on March 27, 1867, the holding at the manor of the first magistrate's court in the district when he wrote: "I had a magesterial [sic] case in the morning about the disputed ownership of a horse wh. broke up the day."¹⁰⁰ Besides serving as the first court house in the district, the manor also served as the first post office, C. F. Cornwall being appointed local postmaster without salary on April 1, 1866.¹⁰¹

The Cornwalls introduced that gentlemanly sport of fox hunting in the area. Instead of the fox, the coyote was the victim. They discovered that the coyote was a better varmint to hunt than the English fox as it ran in a straight line, and often straight away.¹⁰² For a twenty-year period after the arrival in 1868 of hounds from England the sport occupied all of their spare time during the winter months and any other time in the year when they could find a coyote. When in 1876, they found that the quality of the pack was declining because of inbreeding, Clement wrote to the Duke of Beaufort who sent them two dogs — one of which, unfortunately, died on reaching Ashcroft.¹⁰³ Clement stressed the class significance of the hunt:

... however attractive other pursuits and sports may be in their way... *hunting* must be placed *first* and the rest *NoWhere!*

More especially has this been the state of affairs with us in B.C. a country in its paucity of population so to speak utterly devoid of the rational recreation and amusement indulged in elsewhere by the upper classes of society. Under such circumstances it is easy to conceive what the hounds were to us in the winter. They were the object of life — they were life itself!¹⁰⁴

Horsemen from all over the colony and as far away as England joined the Cornwalls in the chase. Lord Francis Cecil and Lord George Campbell spent a hunting holiday on the manor in 1868.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ *Canada Gazette*, September 28, 1889, p. 501; British Columbia, *Government Gazette*, November 1, 1889, p. 672; *Canadian Directory of Parliament*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁰ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary*, 1866-1869, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ A. S. Deaville, *The Colonial Postal Systems and Postage Stamps of Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, Victoria, King's Printer, 1928, p. 121.

¹⁰² C. F. Cornwall, *Journal*, 1868-1888, p. 25.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁵ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary*, 1866-1869, p. 151, September 9, 1868.

One of the cowboys, a young Indian named Harry, became a very good horseman and huntsman. He weighed less than 140 pounds but his keen senses of hearing and sight enabled him to follow the hounds well. The brothers trained him to ride properly and for many years they fondly spoke of him as their indispensable whip. After working for the Cornwalls for twenty-three years, Harry went on his own and became a successful rancher in the area.¹⁰⁶ Henry was the Indian Agent for the area so it can be safely assumed that Harry was well looked after.

Undoubtedly the brothers were mad about hunting with the hounds. If they heard a coyote howl at five o'clock in the morning, they would jump out of bed and go chasing after it. When they went on their regular hunts they usually left home about nine o'clock in the morning and often did not return until seven, eight or nine at night, much to the chagrin of the wives they acquired in the 1870s. Once Clement did not return until one in the morning. In his journal Clement clearly expressed his and Henry's feelings about hunting with the hounds when he wrote:

Oh! the thrill that went through one when that holloa or uplifted cap shewed that the varmint was at length found, and the ecstasy [sic] of the first few minutes which unmistakeably proved that there was a scent on which the hounds could race! After that, it was every one for himself. In this rough broken country it was absolutely necessary to keep close to the hounds, up hill and down dale, across deep ravines, through alkali swamps, over or through water courses fringed with belts of cottonwood, and alder and most treacherous as to their banks and bottoms — along steep side-hills, past or over rocky bluffs and fastnesses making the best way you could, it was invariably bellows to mend before long and a case where the best horse (so long as his rider knew what he was about) would shew the rest of the field the way. How I have always pitied poor devils whose want of sporting education or opportunity when young — they being Englishmen — has prevented them knowing the raptures of the chace [sic]. A week past [sic] thus. Monday would be spent in preparing for and anticipating the sport of Tuesday. On Tuesday the sport in all its glory — “the image of war without it's [sic] guilt and only twenty per cent of it's danger” — would be enjoyed. Wednesday was necessarily past in recovering from the effects of a hard day's work and rejoicing in its recollection. Thursday we looked forward to the sport of Friday and so, on and on.¹⁰⁷

The brothers also discovered that they could count their cattle quickly as they galloped over the range lands in pursuit of the coyote. “In a day's hunting,” Clement wrote, “one would get over as much ground as in three or four days of ordinary stock riding, and if one used one's eyes

¹⁰⁶ C. F. Cornwall, *Journal, 1868-1888*, pp. 53-58.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

all the time one easily ascertained the whereabouts of our cattle and horses running at large on the great ranges of pasture land."¹⁰⁸ In later years they disbanded the hunt, partly because an outbreak of mange resulted in a scarcity of coyotes and partly because new settlers, unsporting cads that they were, set out poison to kill the coyotes.¹⁰⁹

It might appear that the Cornwalls came out to the frontier with an unlimited supply of money. But this is not true — they invested all of their capital, about \$10,000.00 in their ranch and ready money was not plentiful — they even borrowed a small amount from their father¹¹⁰ and had to raise a new mortgage to pay off one owed to a cousin who died accidentally in New Zealand.¹¹¹ Whatever wealth they acquired above this initial amount was earned by their enterprises in British Columbia.

The Cornwall brothers became family men in the 1870s. One June 8, 1871, Clement married Charlotte Pemberton, the daughter of the rector of Kensal Green, London, in St. John's Church, Victoria. She had been staying in Victoria with her sister, Mrs. B. W. Pearse, the wife of the colonial Surveyor General.¹¹² Pemberton was a well known name in British Columbia. Charlotte's uncle, Augustus F. Pemberton, arrived in Victoria in 1855 and in 1858 was appointed the first Commissioner of Police for Victoria. Her cousin, Joseph Despard Pemberton, had come to Vancouver Island in 1851 as Colonial Surveyor and Engineer for the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1860 had been made Surveyor General of Vancouver Island.¹¹³ Henry was married in November, 1874, to Mary Josephine Eyre, the stepdaughter of a neighbour of the Cornwalls, Captain John Martley.¹¹⁴ Martley, who is mentioned frequently in the Corn-

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 50.

¹¹⁰ C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1869-1871, p. 329, April 18, 1870. This entry records the payment of "the debt so long owing."

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273, October 28, 1869; pp. 294-296, started on December 11, 1869; Henry Kingscote to H.P.P. Crease, November 5, 1869 /Crease collection, PABC/ Algernon Kingscote had come to British Columbia in 1865 /A. Kingscote correspondence, PABC/ and had spent some time at the Cornwall's ranch /Victoria *Colonist*, November 20, 1865, p. 3/ He left British Columbia in October 1866 with Mr. E. Cornwall, to return to England /Yale *British Columbia Tribune*, October 1, 1866, p. 3/ Clement reported hearing of his death on October 28, 1869.

¹¹² C. F. Cornwall, Diary, 1869-1871, p. 350; *Victoria Colonist*, June 9, 1871, p. 3.

¹¹³ See biographical notes on Pearse, A. F. Pemberton and J. D. Pemberton in the Biographical Appendix to "The journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859," ed. D. Blakey Smith, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, vol. 21, January-October 1957-1958, pp. 187-190.

¹¹⁴ *Victoria Colonist*, December 11, 1874, p. 3; *Vancouver Province*, July 28, 1926, p. 4.

wall diaries, had come to British Columbia in 1861 and had settled with his family at "The Grange" in Marble Canyon.¹¹⁵ The descendants of the brothers are now so numerous that one of Clement's sons, Hugh, interviewed in 1966, was unable to list them all but settled for the round figure of one hundred and fifty.¹¹⁶

The careers of the Cornwall brothers are a good example of social mobility in this period of B.C. history. In spite of their education, they were, as younger sons of a clergyman, not able to become well-established in the English society to which they belonged. In B.C. land was cheap and there was no hereditary class distinction. Here they could set themselves up as "lords of the manor" and think of themselves as the "upper class." In the colony, they were members of the elite social circle: they dined with the governor when they visited the capital and they attended the gay balls and garden parties.¹¹⁷ Their friendship with Judge Begbie certainly enhanced their social standing but actually they did not need much help as they were well educated and they became the biggest land-owners in the area. They could use the names of their English connections as very effective social references.¹¹⁸ Throughout his writings, Clement gives the general impression that he and Henry are the elite and the colony is lucky to have them. One almost gets the impression that they were doing the governor a favour by dining with him. Their pretentiousness at times amused other pioneers: their haughtiness and arrogance caused them to be hated by some and helped give their type of Englishman a bad name in pioneer society. They were not, however, afraid of work—they cut fence posts and worked on the farm alongside their hired man. Later, of course, they could afford to have the hired men do the labour while they rode around supervising. The evidence indicates that they treated their workmen fairly, that they were honest in

¹¹⁵ Laing, "Colonial farm settlers . . .," p. 260.

¹¹⁶ Paul St. Pierre column, *Vancouver Sun*, June 27, 1966, p. 29.

¹¹⁷ C. F. Cornwall, *Diary, 1866-1869*, p. 43, March 29, 1867.

¹¹⁸ Through their mother, the Cornwall brothers were connected with the Duke of Beaufort. Their mother's brother, Thomas Henry Kingscote, married a daughter of the sixth Duke of Beaufort /Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, rev. ed., London, Harrison, 1868, p. 815/ His son, their cousin, Robert Nigel (later Colonel Sir Robert Nigel) Kingscote, was the M.P. for West Gloucestershire from 1852 to 1885 and was a groom in waiting to the Queen in 1862 /*Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed & Official Classes for 1901*, London, Kelly's directories, 1901/ He wrote to Chichester Fortescue, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies asking him to provide the brothers with a letter of introduction to the governor and Fortescue's letter referred to "the enclosed note from Colonel Kingscote who is in the Queen's Household." "/Miscellaneous documents referring to C. F. Cornwall, MS., PABC/"

their business dealings with the public, and that they were willing to take their share of community leadership.

The manor served as an unofficial agricultural experimental station during these early days. Interests like thoroughbred cattle and horse breeding was created by the Cornwalls. They warned of the dangers of over-grazing. Because their advice was not heeded by subsequent cattlemen, this area of the province which was once covered with thick, knee-high bunch grass is now barren and a desert. The early race meets developed into large stampedes which are now major events in the Cariboo centres. Suitable employment for some of the Indians was created by the ranch: they became excellent cowboys. Many settlers learned the ranching business by working on the manor.

Circumstances over which the Cornwalls had no control contributed to their success. The strategic location of their property on the new Cariboo Road certainly assured the success of their roadhouse and also created a ready market for their flour, lumber, cattle, and farm produce. A later contributing factor to their success was the close proximity of their ranch to the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways. With the building of the railways, the value of their land sky-rocketed and they also benefitted by being able to ship cattle to market with a minimum of loss and overhead.

In his famous essay Frederick Jackson Turner says:

The wilderness masters the colonist. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man.¹¹⁹

The evidence relating to the early days of Ashcroft contradicts Turner and indicates that these two Englishmen mastered the frontier, and the wilderness did not strip off their garments of civilization nor overpower them. In fact, their success, hospitality, optimism, confidence, and faith in the country became legendary, playing its part in fostering that indefinable spirit which still prevails in the fascinating part of British Columbia called the Cariboo.

¹¹⁹ F. J. Turner, *The Frontier Thesis*, ed. R. A. Billington, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967, pp. 110-111.



Captain John T. Walbran, 1848-1913. The uniform is that of the Canadian Marine and Fisheries Service. (BC ARCHIVES)