SHORT AND TALL TALES

Arthur Allen

August 2015

COLLECTED WRITINGS OF

ARTHUR ALLEN

ARCHITECT, CRAFTSMAN, WRITER

From the Landscape and Architecture

of Western Canada

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Arthur Allen

This article was first published in Places, Vol 3, No 1, Winter 1986, and is reprinted with consent of the publisher.

If perfection of landscape can only be found in a flat, square place, then Saskatchewan is perfect. There are several competitors for this honor. Wyoming and Colorado are closer to square, but they are disqualified by their extremely lumpy topography. Egypt, North and South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and some Australian states try hard but are not quite able to complete their shapes to perfection. In spite of one flaw - the surveyors laying out the southern half of Saskatchewan's eastern border had some trouble finding the 102nd meridian of longitude - Saskatchewan's enormous, very flat, and very regular shape is, for all practical purposes, a perfect shape. It is at least as perfect as our globe will permit.

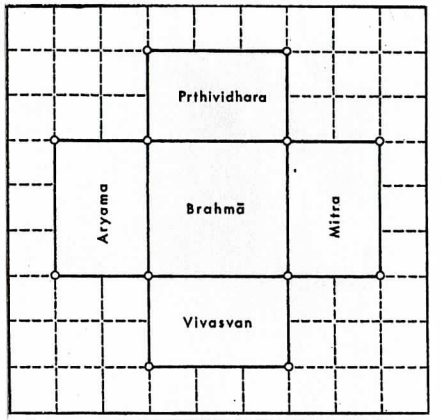
The Garden of Plenty

Saskatchewan Government Photo Services

Considering reports that architect-priests (sthapati) of pre-Dravidian India laid out cities and buildings in square shapes on flat plains, there is little wonder that a group of architects in Regina, Saskatchewan, in the 1950s should have spent much time arguing about the shape of things. The sthapati believed that Brahma and some lesser dieties would only live with men in cities, buildings, and temples of perfect shape, that is, in square, flat places, the designs of which were based on various mandalas. Thus it was that the Regina architects, particularly the young ones passing through, wondered and endlessly debated the possibility that the virtuous people of Saskatchewan were perfect simply because the place was square and flat

As I remember it, most of us worked at one time or another in the very interesting architectural office of Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama, and we were traveling in one of two directions. Canadians were often from farms, small villages, or the backwoods and were almost invariably on their way to Europe. Europeans, particularly Englishmen, were from densely populated cities and sometimes moved romantically in search of a remote and supposedly natural life in Western Canada.

I was headed from Vancouver to Europe, via Montreal, and stopped in Regina to work for a year. The day I arrived, a dust storm blew up, and twenty years later I left town during a similar storm. I had just finished architectural



Paramasayika Mandala

school in Vancouver, had very high hopes in a great profession, and had lived all my life to that date in the cool, green mountains of Alberta and British Columbia. The dust was a brown blizzard that choked and stung, and was so thick that the clock tower of old Victoria School at 13th Avenue and McIntyre Street was invisible from two blocks away. It loomed like a huge three-story barn owl as I approached in the wind.

My dismay deepened when on my first assignment I was put to work on an alteration project at the Saskatchewan Mental Hospital in Weyburn, a small city seventy miles southeast of Regina. What a trip

that is! For flatness it is utter perfection, and the highway changes course only once in the journey. The road runs twenty-five miles due south to the Corinne Corner, then tacks smartly forty-five degrees to the southeast, continuing to Weyburn with only minor loops to avoid grain elevators along the parallel railway. We worked, and talked, and drank beer instead of Regina's infamous water, and argued, and worked some more, and baked corn in clay pits under charcoal fires, and a few, very few, stayed to become prairie dwellers. In the middle of all this, during an intense discussion of architecture in the service of politics, I met Stella. She is one of those genuine flatlanders who has a number for a birthplace - Sec. 28, Tp3, Rge4, W2nd, Saskatchewan - simply because she was born in the family farmhouse, not in the town hospital. Some day those numbers will be of great social importance to her descendants, who will claim her as a Saskatchewan Blue-Blood, as would a New England family with an ancestor on the Mayflower or an Australian family with connections back to the criminal lists of Botany Bay.

I never did reach Europe, or Montreal for that matter, and my mind was never broadened. Instead, my backside was flattened by interminable travels with Stella all over the endless grid roads of Saskatchewan. One day early in our career, I asked Stella what we might do on a fine Sunday. She replied that she would love a ride in the country, and we spent four hours looking at the back of the next field of grain while she smiled or frowned

Harvest Celebration, Homestead and Sod House

Redvers, Saskatchewan, approx. 1905

at the crops and tested the soil for moisture. We traveled in straight lines and turned ninety-degree corners all afternoon. Sometime later, with our two children, we invented the Prairie Perfect Sunday Morning Square Drive.

From the intersection of Albert Street and 13th Avenue, we would travel due west through a quiet residential district, past the city limits, and westward onto the flat and open prairie. Miles out we would stop briefly at the Cathedral of Pinkie, a rust red Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Elevator. Standing in awe of the huge icon, Stella would recall her father's tales of early trading in

Saskatchewan wheat when the elevator was a place of greed and vicious competition for loading privileges rather than a symbol of plenty and cooperative grain marketing. Just past the elevator we would turn ninety degrees left and travel due south on a low dirt road, the wheat so high and close on each side that we couldn't see over it in bumper years. This passage seemed uneventful to me, but Stella, sometimes oblivious to distant views, would spend a delighted hour looking down at her feet in search of tiny wildflowers and relics of early farm life near an abandoned farmhouse now alone in the wind. I had not yet learned to enjoy those things, and once or twice I entertained the children with a new version of the creation story.

According to this tale, God wanted the whole world to be perfect, like Saskatchewan, and He started just east of Winnipeg with a huge bulldozer, leveling the Great Plains as He moved westward. Unfortunately the 'dozer broke down just west of Calgary, and He had to leave western Alberta and all of British Columbia in a terrible mess of rock and debris left over from the work of prairie leveling. The children's first trip to the Rocky Mountains was an interesting experience.

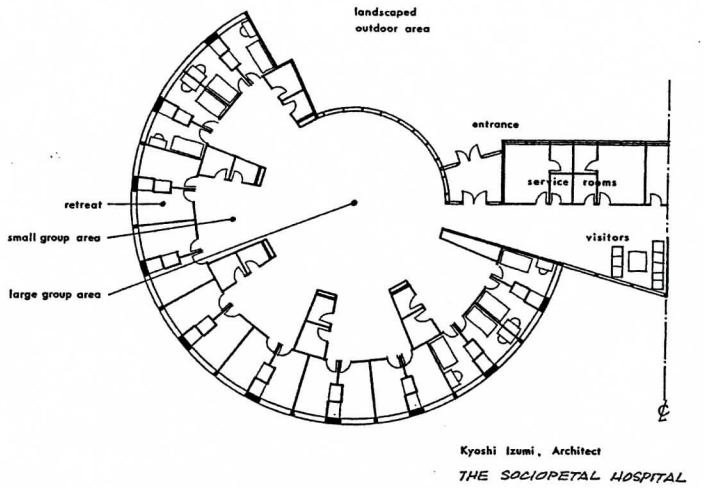
Two or three miles due south of Pinkie, we would make a second ninety-degree left turn onto the slick pavement of the Trans-Canada Highway and travel east with occasional slalom turns along the broken painted centerline of the deserted highway. Stella didn't like this maneuver. She worried that sinuous curving of the car might lead the children away from the straight and narrow and into heaven knows what manner of sensuous, twisted behavior in later years. The excitement mounted, however, because the last corner, at the intersection of the highway with Albert Street, was a cloverleaf. The children would nag and worry, shouting "Daddy, look out! Be careful! The road curves! Watch out! Then we would spin, or creep, around the two hundred-seventy-degree curve of the cloverleaf, heading sedately north into the city, back to the corner of Albert and 13th, on the east leg of an almost square and perfect drive.

Enough of these inventive pastimes; work and argument were the main diversions in Regina. When we weren't working, we visited and debated through the long winter evenings. Those of us in Izumi's office debated the emerging collaboration of social science and architecture. In 1966 we heard Paul Goodman's CBC lectures on the "Moral Ambiguity of America" and tried to connect Goodman's ideas with architecture. None of us succeeded at that time. During those years I met a large number of traveling architects and traded many arguments with varying degrees of interest.

The main source of architectural ideas in the office was Kyoshi Izumi's work on the design of a prototype mental hospital proposed for several

small cities throughout Saskatchewan. "The Saskatchewan Plan" called for the eventual closure of two huge mental hospitals, including Weyburn, after construction of six or eight small, community-oriented hospital facilities. In his prototype design Izumi drew a semicircular plan of one storey with a social lounge in the center. Small parlors ringed the lounge, and individual patient bedrooms occupied the periphery of the circle. It was believed that the shape of the thing would facilitate easy movement between private and public spaces, thus aiding mentally handicapped people who experience difficulty in making these transitions. Only one of the small regional hospitals was built, and it was done with rectangular cottages because the Department of Psychiatric Services did not wish to raise any eyebrows, at least not with unusually shaped buildings.

Many years later the Saskatchewan Association of Architects received a letter, from the Canary islands, I believe, asking about the shape of rooms in Saskatchewan mental hospitals. Apparently the book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* states that trapezoidal rooms in Saskatchewan hospitals were developed as part of the treatment of mental illness. To my knowledge there was no magic intended in Izumi's shapes and spaces, but



Prototype Design for a Mental Hospital

Kyoshi Izumi, Architect

who knows. There were some unusual and interesting people working in the Weyburn Hospital.

T. E. Weckowicz undertook perceptual experiments with patients in a long, narrow room that we built for him and established that schizophrenia does distort perception of distance, leaving a victim unsure about the space in which he moves. This work reminds me of some moments when the vast space and empty foreground of prairie scenes created a landscape of miniature architecture. In winter, when snow obliterates all traces of perspective in the foreground, it really is easy to believe that distant farms and elevators are

miniatures and that freight trucks are Dinky Toys sailing a dry ocean.

Leonard Ghan was in and about Weyburn in those days and continues to use rectangular diagrams in explaining the principles of Transactional Analysis. He seems to be less comfortable with recent spiral diagrams (like Stella, he grew up on straight prairie roads) and forcibly reminds me that his drawings are maps for people lost in their own minds. They are not intended to be used to develop plans for buildings or other devices that restrain people. Ghan's work reminds me of some fascinating medieval diagrams used in the explanation of religious ideas. Various arboreal diagrams, and some architectural ones, are beautifully illustrated in an article by Michael Evans, "The Geometry of the Mind." Published in the *Architectural Association Quarterly*. In the article, the biblical Tower of Wisdom and its seven pillars give a clearly architectural form to the structure of an idea. The Tree of Architecture, shown as a frontal plate in Banister Fletcher's *History of Architecture,* is a similar device used as a diagrammatic aid to thought and discussion.

Humphry Osmond was director of the Weyburn hospital in the 1950s and was a fountain of ideas. One of my favorites at the time concerned possible disturbance to disoriented people arising from the ambiguous patterns and images of traditional architectural ornament. In 1957 Osmond wrote (in *Mental Hospitals*, April, 1957);

> Gratuitous burdens are not uncommon. A famous British mental hospital welcomes its new arrivals in a richly painted and gilded hall. Among the intertwining leaves covering the walls, goblin-like creatures are concealed. Sometimes a whole head can be seen, sometimes only an eye gleams malevolently at the new arrival.

The unintentional ambiguity of decorative forms, and possible ill effects, poses a question that has not been tested so far as I know. It may be of interest to post-Modern designers who show a renewed interest in traditional architectural forms and ornament.

My memory is uncertain, but I think that my first meeting with Robert Sommer occurred while he and Jack Cleland, another psychologist, were attempting to estimate the number of crows that could be placed at regular intervals on the telephone wires between Weyburn and Regina. Sommer had located a book, *Studies of the Psychology and Behavior of Animals in Zoos and Circuses*, by Dr. H. Hediger, a noted Swiss zoologist, and was finding it very useful in his research. Some of Hediger's observations apply literally to the human species in and out of mental hospitals, and some zoological concepts are of course applicable to human behaviour and therefore to architecture.

Sommer became widely known for his work, establishing himself as a leader in the environmental design movement. His research and his books are close to direct architectural application. His books include *Personal Space, Tight Spaces, Design Awareness, the End of Imprisonment,* and *The Mind's Eye.* I know that the crows on the wire had something to do with *Personal Space*, but *Tight Spaces* was prompted, I suspect, by the story of the four seated ladies of Weyburn.

The events behind this story took place before I arrived in Weyburn but are recorded in an article by Robert Sommer published in *Designing for Human Behavior*, edited by Lang, Burnette, Moleski, and Vachon. Sommer reported that early in his work in Weyburn he noted that the hospital ward's chairs were often grouped in rectangular grids facing away from each other, in straight rows back to back, and occasionally on each side of a square column, facing the four points of the compass. These arrangements, pre-ordained by an architect-priest and rigidly maintained for easy cleaning and management by hospital staff, frustrated normal social interaction of sitters. Sommer regrouped the chairs and reported the following:

The arrangement we selected involved the chairs being placed around small tables in a good conversational arrangement. Although it is hardly surprising now to report this, we found that this more than doubled the amount of conversation between patients. Magazine reading went up twenty fold because the tables now provided places on which the magazines could be stored.

The Four Seated Ladies of Weyburn

Photo by Robert Sommer, 1956

A picture of the four seated ladies from *Designing for Human Behavior* (in this case they are seated back to back) is a terribly sad picture. In my opinion it provides additional proof that the shape of things does matter.

The draughting of floor plans for buildings sometimes produces drawings as intricate and delightfully geometric as the plan view of a snowflake. This is true of many historic styles of architecture where symmetry and repetition play major design roles. It is especially true of the strict axial and radial symmetries of prison and military structures. It is a social irony that asylums, invented in the optimism of nineteenth-century reform, ultimately became warehouses to some degree, degrading in part to the function of a waste container for usually harmless but eccentric and inconvenient people. It is an architectural irony that the drawing of floor plans for these structures can be such pleasant work in spite of some miserable purposes involved in the use of these buildings.

After meeting the four ladies I continued for two years working on the hospital renovations, meeting regularly with Kyoshi Izumi, Robert Sommer, and others on various issues of mental hospital function and design and for broader talks about architecture. My attitude was usually black. I was decidedly anti-geometric and looked upon the regular prairie roads and farmsteads, and upon all symmetrical buildings, including the Weyburn Hospital, as the work of devils who had nothing better to do than trap people in rigidly ordered patterns of space and time. My disillusionment was severe, and architectural debate with my friends in Regina developed a sharper tone when I asserted that architects were demiurges, Gnostic artificers of the world, and the originators of evil.

It was Stella and the Prairie Perfect Square Drive that first eased my mind to laughter, and I began to take a new interest in the geometry of large things. I asked about wrong angles but found no one willing to debate the morality of right angles. The possibility that rect-angles might have some un-rectified kin also interested me, as it still does.

Our two growing children completed my cautious return to order when we found that degrees of discipline and geometry were necessary in the shaping of their lives. There are still places in Saskatchewan where they could lead their lives with the relative freedom of great Cree hunters, but that will be their choice, not mine.

Professionally I still worry about the four seated ladies of Weyburn and plan to continue work on the geometry of institutional buildings. Prisons, for example, generally use geometric designs, with minute and increasingly electronic surveillance and control of the activities of inmates. In spite of apparent improvements over ancient practices, some prisoners and critics have grave reservations

about the totalitarian nature of modern prisons and the effect of these institutions on inmates and staff. I am therefore cautious about the extent to which architects and other caretakers are authorized to impose order on the lives of building occupants. In a wide sense every building is, or ought to be, an asylum, a safe place, and I am now ready to admit that there can be a measure of goodness in any building designed by an architect of good intentions. I am not at all sure just how and when that goodness might prevail, particularly since architects usually leave their works promptly after turning the keys at opening ceremonies. If the architect is followed by occupants and caretakers who care less, then good intentions will fail.

When these thoughts become dark, and serenity vanishes for a while, the satisfaction that I normally find in the contemplation of architecture remains, but it is not the same as it was when I was young. At these moments I remember that on many occasions Stella and I were successful in finding tranquility in a high place. Saskatchewan does have one lump, a blemish, on its otherwise flat and perfect face. From a high point in the Cypress Hills, in the southwest corner of the province, the plains can be best seen at sunrise. The farmlands and the grid roads lie flat to the horizons, laid out like a vast mandala to walk upon. On the hills, in the fresh and peaceful morning, it no longer disturbs me to wonder if the sthapati were correct. I can even chuckle, thanking Kyoshi Izumi for introducing me to social science and Robert Sommer and sharing with me his own unique view of this very round world.

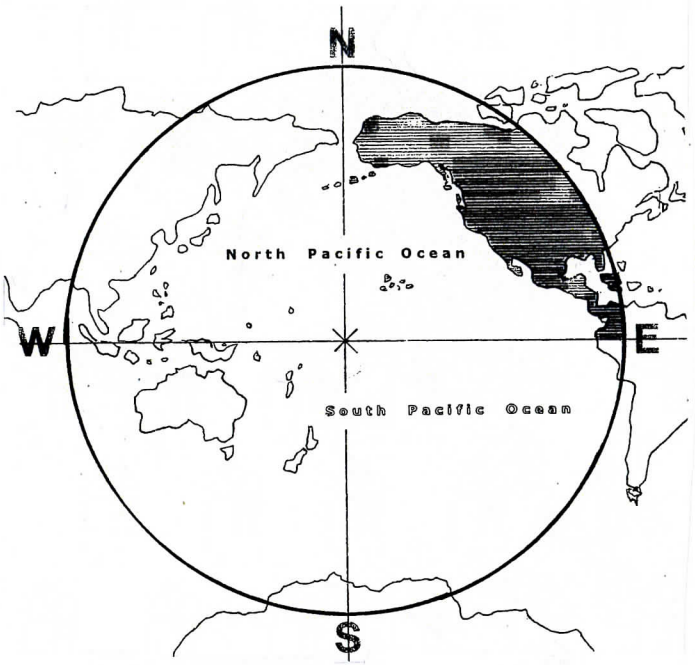
Arthur, Stella, and the Children at the Cathedral of Pinkie

SOUTH-WEST by NORTH-EAST

A Study in Geo-Semantic Differentials

Arthur Allen

1995



Because the people of southern British Columbia and Alberta live in the south-west corner of Canada, I have wondered for many years why they accept identification with a geographic and cultural area identified by the words "Pacific", "North", and "West." From an inaccurate continental viewpoint I can understand the origin of these terms, but from a geographical, historical, and political perspective, Canadians in this region should be known as South-Westerners.

Due to their much longer tenancy on the land and waters in question, aboriginal people of these areas are not interested in this issue. Their arts and culture were born and developed here. The political line scratched along the 49th parallel of latitude was a late, fictitious, and unwelcome event in their lives; any quarrel about the white man's name for their arts and their place on earth is of little consequence to them.

Some will say that geo-semantics is an exercise in futility, childish play with words. I feel that a study of language and of name calling should help to relieve tension, and hopefully resolve several problems that bother people on opposite sides of the American border.

For instance, the title "South-Westerner" will be jealously guarded by the residents of the boisterous American South-West. Any

Canadian presumption to share that designation would be seen as a juvenile attempt to emulate big brothers and sisters, and gentle and polite cow-folk alive and well in Canada would object to the sentimental and violent lifestyle carried on by American cowpokes and their girls.

Vancouver, with a new and vigorous film industry, has been dubbed "Hollywood North." At that sound patriotic shouts are heard from the south crying foul, trying to persuade American film producers to keep their work and their jobs at home. Canadian producers allege discriminatory tactics by the American film industry, and chafe at the meaning of the words "free," and "trade," when it comes to sharing in the power, glory, and the money of the art of film. Free Trade and its NAFTA arrangements give rise to a host of real and semantic difficulties these days. Commerce in electric power, oil and natural gas, fisheries products, agricultural produce, publications, and especially softwood lumber are constantly in dispute. The prospect of water export from Canada as a commercial commodity, (for southern swimming pools and lawns) immediately raises Canadian hackles and possessive feelings. In these disputes each side shouts foul, and uses nasty language to the point that only insults cross the border free of charge. One of the most difficult words is "subsidy." It is frequently shouted northward by lobbyists south of the border in spite of persistent American subsidy programs and numerous defeats on its meaning when issues have been referred to NAFTA dispute resolution panels.

Ardent Canadians feel strongly that from an American viewpoint the coast of British Columbia is seen as a gap, a missing tooth, in American dreams of manifest destiny. They also see excessive American ownership of Canadian industries as creeping continentalism, a point of view shared by Canadians from coast to coast. On the other hand, considering the gratuitous export of well-meant Canadian advice on the benefits of a public medical care system, it is surprising that there has not yet been any suggestion of countervailing tariffs on Canadian social conscience creeping south.

In these philosophical and commercial differences there is ambivalence in Canadian feelings; we really do want it both ways. Many of us are fond of American affluence and its extravagant pleasures, and are eager to take advantage of rock-bottom property prices when desperate Americans are forced to sell their homes. Even then we are not willing to sacrifice cultural, economic, and political independence in the process. In this

difficult arena what can be done to reinforce the good things that we share across the thin black line between us?

I do not yet have a clear solution, but hold high hopes that when we call a spade a spade we will get down to positive talk and action. I suggest that Mexico and Central America join Canada and the United States in a new venture. Negotiators from all nations would travel to a neutral, mid-Pacific island (not Hawaii,) and look around the horizon in a full circle. It will be evident that the western coasts of North and Central America constitute the North-East quadrant of the Pacific Rim, and that all residents of those coasts from the equator to Alaska can be best identified as Pacific North-Easterners. A formal declaration applying that title to all residents would instantly remove the imperial influence of the continental viewpoint, establish an egalitarian base for equal and genial treatment of all residents, and ease the fears of America's neighbors concerning loss of identity and self-determination. In exchange, all participants would abandon their traditional love-hate relations with the United States, and work to maintain uniquely national identities in an international family.

A simple change of name would establish an oceanic center for the region, one open to universal feelings and supportive of the shy and elusive concepts of the brotherhood of men, the sisterhood of women, and the familial ties of all living things. To that would be added the benefits of expanded awareness and attention to the needs of the region. Social, environmental, cultural, and economic issues would be discussed with tolerance showing concern for all forms of life in the air and the waters, and on the lands. Then we could relax and enjoy re-building this part of the world to a condition possibly equal to that in which it was found.

THE PAVILION AND THE ZOO

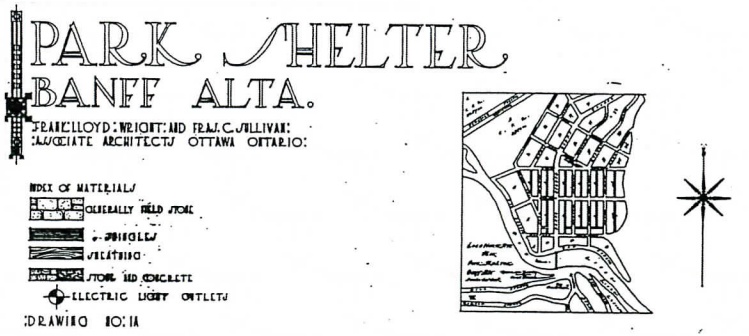
Arthur Allen

A WINTER OF DEMOLITION
1937-1938

The Banff Pavilion

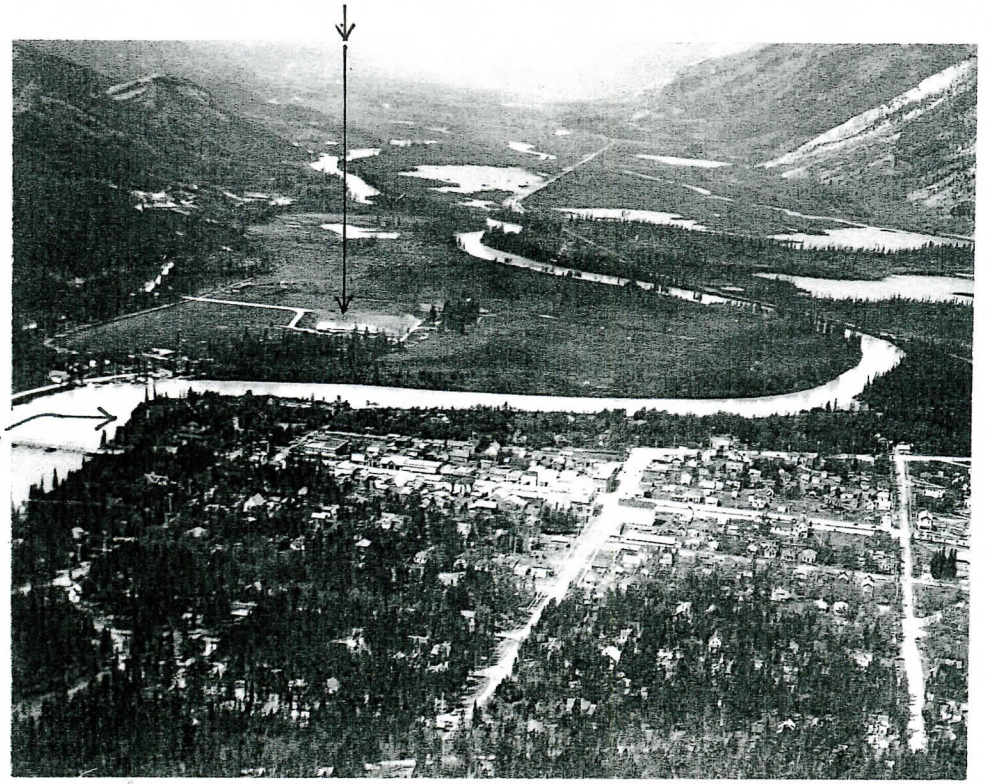
Buddy, the Sergeant, and the Major

1981 with later additions



Title Block, Wright and Sullivan Drawings, 1911

The Banff Pavilion and Recreation Grounds



Aerial View of Banff, 1913 **?, WMCR** Vol. 701/LC-245

SYNOPSIS

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, unemployed men were given winter work on numerous projects in Canada's National Parks. In Banff, they included the demolition of a Pavilion, (a picnic shelter) and a small zoo. Both disappeared in the winter of 1937-1938; costs of labour and equipment were charged to funds designated for winter relief work.

The Zoo had been in operation since 1904. Its star attraction was a polar bear named Buddy, who had become the focus of public protests about captivity of wild animals in a national wildlife sanctuary. Townspeople were divided; some favored abandoning the Zoo, others felt its presence kept tourists close to shopping and rental cabins in the town. Animal rights prevailed. Buddy was moved to Calgary, other animals and birds were sent to various Canadian zoos, and protests died quickly.

The Pavilion was a different story. It was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and executed by Francis Sullivan, a Canadian partner in Ottawa. Built in 1914 it became a popular place for summer excursions from Calgary and other Alberta communities that brought as many as 1000 people to the town-site and the Park. Banff citizens rejected the building in 1914 (they wanted a curling rink) but by 1938 they protested its demolition due to loss of excursion visitors and the trade that came with them. From 1938 to 1980, the story of the Banff Pavilion grew into an architectural mystery developed by writers questioning the reasons given for destruction of the building.

In 1937 Parks officials urged demolition rather than repair of the Pavilion based on frost heaving of foundations on boggy soil, and rotting of wood floor supports due to periodic flooding and high water table at the site. In the case of frost heaving, it seems that the building was unheated when not in use in winter months, thereby inviting foundation damage. The need for annual leveling of floors has been confirmed by visitors to the building, leaving no room for doubt on that issue.

Removal of a building is expensive work, especially (as in this case) when done carefully for salvage of parts. A possible answer to the riddle of the destruction of the Banff Pavilion revolves on a question. Many capable workers were available, and eager for employment. Winter work relief funds were found for demolition. Why was the same money not used for improvements to the foundation, and repair of the building structure ?

THE BANFF PAVILION

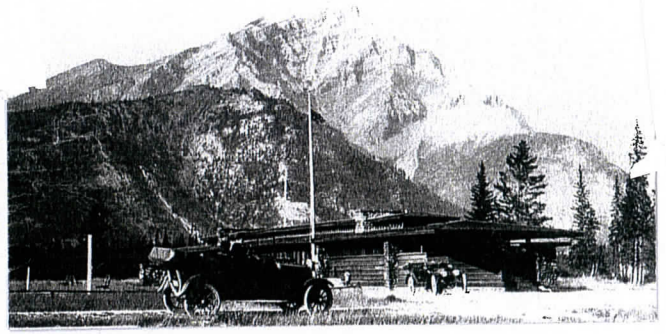
Arthur Allen

The first section of this story reproduces an article "Frank Lloyd Wright's Banff Pavilion," first published in Heritage West, *Fall 1982, p 21 - 22. The second section is newly written, and is based on further research into the origins of the building and the failure of proposed re-building in the 1980s. Destruction of Parks Canada files on the building's development and use has hampered research, and stimulated speculation concerning reasons for demolition. Additional research in the National Library, and conversations with old timers in Banff and Calgary, has produced the outlines and a possible conclusion to an architectural mystery.*

"Frank Lloyd Wright's Banff Pavilion"
From *Heritage West*, Fall 1982.
(Written in 1981-82)

In 1911, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Francis C. Sullivan , Architect, of Ottawa, were commissioned by the Department of Public Works to design a Pavilion Building for Banff National Park. Sullivan was a former student of Wright, and had worked at the Department of Public Works prior to obtaining the commission. The Pavilion was intended for use as a picnic and party shelter, a place for sociable good times for visitors and residents in Banff. Some of Wright's design sketches refer to "Park Shelter for the Canadian Pacific Railway", "Park Shelter", and "Ballroom". His sketches are still stored in the Wright Archives in Taliesin West, Arizona. In 1913, construction was completed in a large meadow, the Old Recreation Grounds, on Cave Avenue, near the Cave and Basin Swimming Pools.

During the First World War the Pavilion was used as a quartermaster store by the Canadian Army, and returned to its intended uses during the 1920's and 1930's. Throughout the 1920's the building enjoyed a short heyday. It was a popular place, well used for picnics and parties. Landscape work around the building included a large wading pool, and a shallow canal connected the Pavilion with the Bow River, allowing access for canoe and picnic parties from the river.



The Banff Pavilion ca. 1930 **WMCR** PA90-6

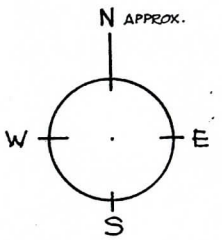
Abbreviations

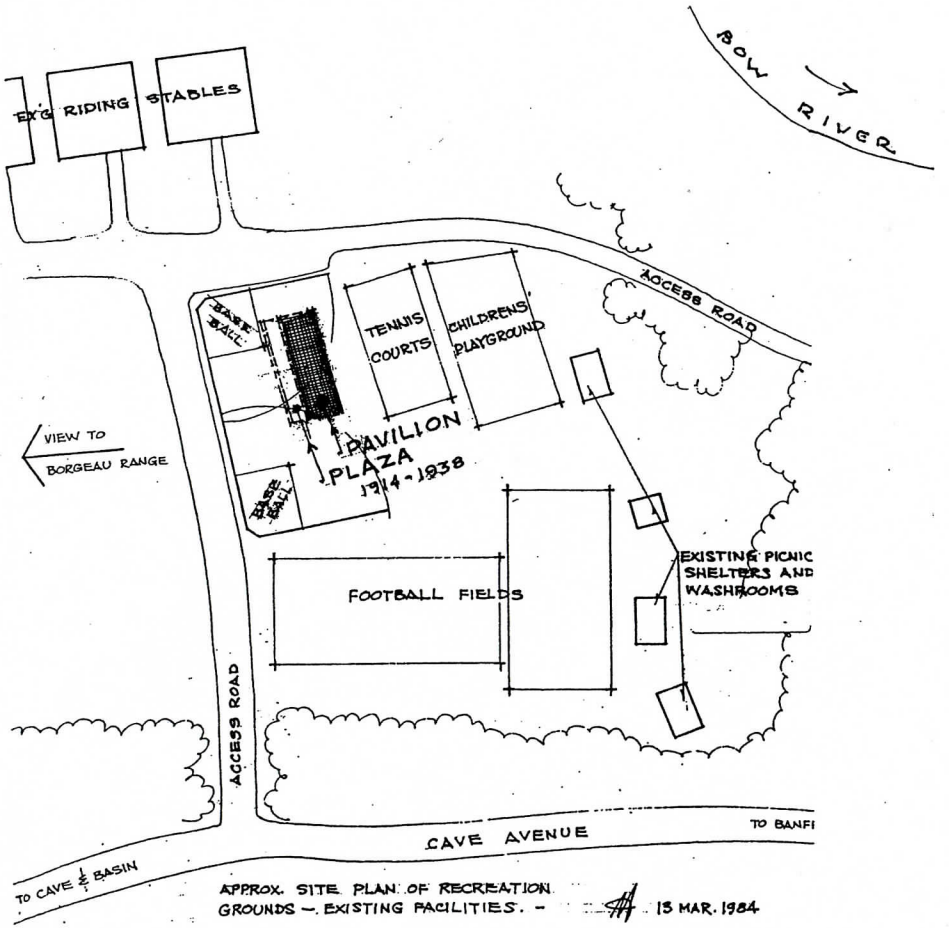
WMCR
Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

GMA
Glenbow Museum and Archives

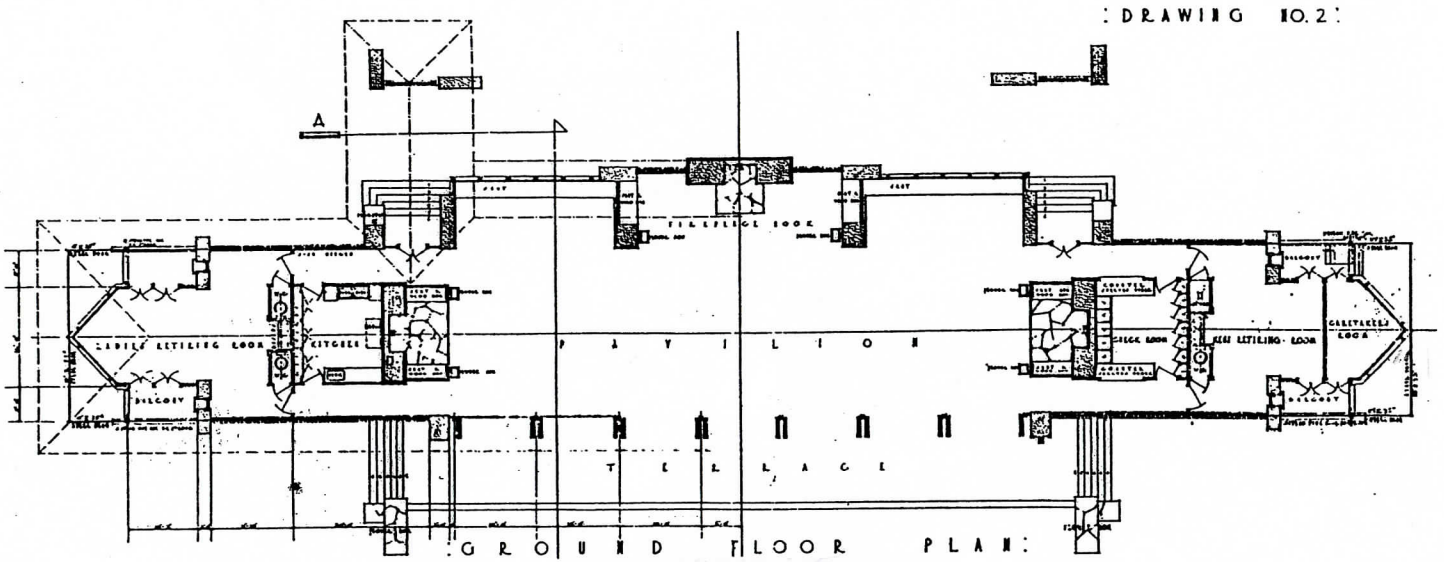
LAC
Library and Archives Canada

FLWF
Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation





Recreation Grounds, Banff



Frank Lloyd Wright's floor plan of the Banff Pavilion.

The original drawings have been rediscovered and the National Parks people are now being pressured to reconstruct the historic building.

The building was a large, low structure of rough wood and fieldstone, measuring 70m X 20m (200ft x 60ft). The main space, shown in the interior photograph, contained three huge fireplaces, room for three simultaneous picnics - and opened by a continuous wall of glazed doors to a westward patio with a full view of the wonderful Borgeau Range west of Banff. Ladies and Gentlemen's "Retiring Rooms" occupied opposite ends of the building, galley kitchens and lavatories were placed behind each fireplace, and a large canopy provided a covered entry for fitting reception of guests. The picture is not complete without picnic baskets, period costume, horses, carriages, and beautiful automobiles of the time.

The story becomes vague in the 1930's. It is generally agreed that building foundations were not adequate on the soft soil of the meadow, and the building suffered severe movement during spring thaws. River flooding also occurred in the area. Jock McCowan, an original Banff resident (born in Banff about

1901, and now [*1981*] a resident of Tsawwassen , B.C.) advises that the floor heaved drastically each spring, and needed yearly leveling and repair. Parks Canada advise that foundation deterioration and wood rot seriously affected the structure.

One correspondent remembers the building in the 1930's as a dark, ill kept and neglected place, possible used as a flop-house by railroad hitchhikers of the depression years. In any case the story ends with complete demolition of the building in 1938.

Parks Canada advise that demolition was necessary due to the extent of wood rot and foundation damage (this would seem to be a very valid argument in 1938, but one that would not satisfy heritage activists in 1982). Some colorful rumours persist in Banff and Calgary concerning accidental demolition of the Pavilion. Stories suggest that a mistaken demolition order was issued, or that a demolition crew mistook the object of their work one foggy morning in the meadow. One tale holds that a bulldozer accidentally hit a corner of the building, and the driver was ordered to finish the job. True or not these ideas add only minor colour accents to an otherwise absorbing story. Reconstruction of the building is the theme.

There are some faint memories of protest at the demolition of the building, and in time, some suggestion that it be reconstructed. Eric Arthur, well known architect, author, and teacher at the University of Toronto, wrote an editorial in the "Journal" of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, March 1962, in which he reiterated concern at the demolition of " .....the only significant Wright building in Canada....." and suggested its reconstruction under the Canadian Centennial programs of 1967.

In 1980, Arthur and Murray Allen, former Banff residents, and now practicing architecture and landscape architecture in Vancouver and Edmonton, wrote to The Honourable John Roberts, Minister of the Environment, urging that Parks Canada reconstruct the Banff Pavilion. By 1981, the Alberta and Saskatchewan Associations of Architects offered support, and Professor R.D.Gillmor, architect at the University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design, joined the Allen brothers in forming The Banff Pavilion - the committee for the reconstruction of Wright and Sullivan's Pavilion in Banff.

Support institutions now include; The Alberta Association of Architects; The Saskatchewan Association of Architects; The Ontario Association of Architects; The Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary; The School of Architecture, University of Waterloo; The School of Architecture, Technical University of Nova Scotia; The Banff Centre;

and The Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation, Taliesin West, Arizona.

The Committee is in contact with The Archives of the Canadian Rockies, Banff, and the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, concerning a mutual interest in preservation of early Banff Park buildings. The Archives particularly has been of great assistance in providing photographs of the Pavilion, and a photocopy of the original working drawings. The Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation has prepared a booklet of Mr. Wright's original working sketches of design and construction details.

Interior View of Hall, WMCR PA 139 - 441

The Banff Pavilion hopes for eventual support from Heritage Canada and from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.
The following notes briefly summarize the present state of this project; [*in 1982*]

The Banff Pavilion has restated the original request for reconstruction, asking that Parks Canada rebuild the Pavilion for use during the 1985 Centennial celebrations of Banff National Park. The request asks for re-use of the building as originally intended - and in addition asks for winter use as a warming shelter (three huge fireplaces !) on existing cross country ski trails in the Bow Valley west of Banff town-site.

The original ink on linen working drawings have been located in the National Archives in Ottawa.

The original contractor (Bennett and White of Calgary) are still in business, [1981] and will be contacted concerning old memories, or files about the pavilion. [*correction; the original firm was Bennett and Debenham, later Bennett and White*]

Parks Canada have been asked to undertake exact reconstruction, on the original site if at all possible. Protection of the site and careful *re-excavation* [sic] in search of hardware, glass, and other valuable relics are included in the request.

The Banff Pavilion seeks support from individuals and institutions interested in this project. Former students of Frank Lloyd Wright, heritage enthusiasts, and particularly former residents of Banff and Calgary who once knew and used the building are invited to write Parks Canada, The Honourable John Roberts, and/or The Banff Pavilion. Photographs and stories about the building will be greatly appreciated. Please write;

The Honourable John Roberts
Minister of the Environment [*1982*]
House of Commons, Ottawa

Mr. Tom Ross, Acting Superintendent [*1982*]
Banff National Park
Box 900, Banff, Alberta TOL OCO

The Banff Pavilion [*1982*]
6040 Marine Drive
West Vancouver, B.C., V7W 2S3

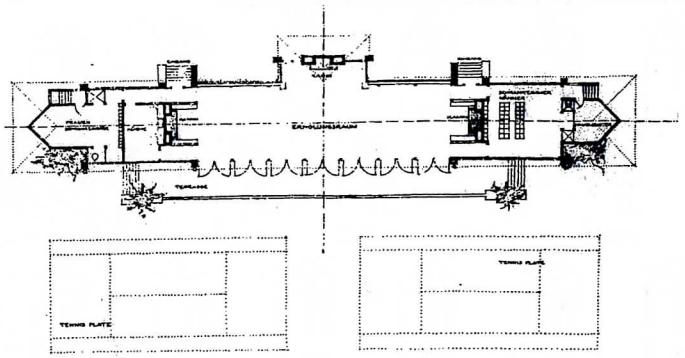
The Banff Pavilion believes that heritage enthusiasts throughout Western Canada will relish a large and lively *picnic* [sic], complete with period costume, horses, carriages and vintage automobiles, when the Pavilion is eventually reconstructed. The picnic area will be a warm and living tribute to Frank Lloyd Wright, Francis Sullivan, and most of all, to a generation of people who knew and loved Banff in the 1920's. *[end of 1982 article]*

PS To the Heritage West Article.

In 1982 The Hon. John Roberts gave permission to rebuild the Pavilion, promised co-operation of his Parks officials, and advised that no public funds would be available for the work. The request to undertake the project for the 1985 Park Centennial was denied, and efforts at raising funds failed. The recession of the 1980s did not help the cause. After 1985 efforts for reconstruction subsided, but research continued on the life and untimely destruction of the building.

PPS May 2014

In 2013, Mr. Michael Miner, (now resident in Florida), initiated new efforts to rebuild the Pavilion. Arthur Allen and Doug Gillmor are assisting with on-going talks with the Town of Banff.



Floor Plan, River Forest Tennis Club, Oak Park, Illinois, FLWF

Frank Lloyd Wright, 1906,

THE DECLINE AND DEMOLITION OF THE BANFF PAVILION

A Sequel

February 2011

In the late 1950s, Murray Allen was working as a landscape designer in the Ottawa offices of Parks Canada. While routinely tidying large sheets of drawings in a flat file drawer, he found a tightly rolled set of drawings at the back of the drawer. He wrote an excited note; the drawings were ink on linen, showing floor plans and construction details for a "Park Shelter" in Banff. Murray wrote that he remembered school picnics at the shelter, but he had no idea that it was the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The drawings have since been stored safely in the vaults of Library and Archives Canada. Files on the construction and operation of the building have not survived. They were destroyed in an office cleanup of the Parks offices in the mid-1960s.

In her book, *"Banff, Canada's First National Park"*, .Eleanor Luxton makes brief reference to public concern and political debate in the 1890s about Banff Park's inaccessibility for public use and enjoyment. The noise and smoke of railway travel had opened the Park in the first place, but automobiles were prohibited because their gas and noise would offend animals. Until 1916 the Park was seen to be a resort reserved for those who could afford the luxury travel of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I have not searched Hansard on this issue, but I speculate that the pavilion was constructed and intended for public use, offering an alternative to the high priced facilities of the railway lodges and hotels in the area. I also believe that it was intended to provide shelter for visitors to the Park, more than for Banff citizens who wanted a curling rink, not a picnic pavilion.

When Calgarians organized an automobile excursion to Banff in 1916, they forced their way into the Park, and it was open to their visits thereafter. After 1916, the Pavilion and Recreation Grounds became a popular destination for large groups of visitors from Calgary and other prairie points. They were often organized for day trips by church groups, schools, trade unions, and fraternal lodges. Banff and other Bow Valley schools and churches also used the building and its grounds.

Throughout its short life, the Pavilion attracted attention for various reasons. Newspaper accounts in Banff and Calgary, and occasional magazine articles from 1938 to 1980 featured questions about its origins, uses, and deliberate destruction. Since the failure of

proposed reconstruction in the 1980s, the story has lost public attention. A number of details shed some light on the demise of the building.

In 1913 citizens of Banff did not want a place for picnics, wading, and tennis matches. *The Crag and Canyon*, Banff's weekly paper frequently posted resistance to the project, and noted that citizens wanted a curling rink. An existing stable nearby was eventually converted to use as a rink, and remained active through the 1940s.

During World War 1, the Pavilion was used as a quartermaster store for the Calgary 103rd Rifles Regiment. It was in Banff not for military exercises, but on guard duty, in charge of internment camps holding Ukrainian speaking immigrants who had the temporary misfortune during that war of being alien citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One camp, for winter quarters, was at the Cave and Basin Pool. Internees were organized into work gangs which were engaged on works projects in and near the town-site. They were frequently seen walking under armed guard through the snow, on their way to various job sites.

Questions appeared concerning the design of the building. Skeptics doubted that it was the work of Wright himself. The plan and design of the Banff Pavilion is a slightly modified version of Wright's 1906 River Forest Tennis Club structure, in Oak Park, Illinois. In an interview with Frank Rasky, in *Liberty Magazine,* May, 1955, Wright commented that Canadian architecture was boring, with the exception of buildings in Montreal, and ....."a modest little pavilion I once built in Banff"....

Some questioned whether the building was commissioned to Wright or Sullivan. That issue was investigated by Martin Birkhans in his 1964 University of Toronto thesis on the short and tragic career of Francis Sullivan. Sullivan had been a student of Wright, at Taliesin, Wisconsin, and later had worked as a draughtsman for the Department of Public Works in Ottawa. When Sullivan established his own practice in Ottawa, according to Birkhans it was he who received the commission, probably in 1911.

The building was of a size that Sullivan could have managed alone; just why Wright entered the picture is unclear. At that time his Chicago office had collapsed in a state of national disgrace after his elopement with the wife of a client. Whether he had any reputation in Canada is doubtful. The mystery deepens concerning the re-use of his tennis club designs for a Canadian project along with an architect partner who was developing his own reputation for public buildings in Eastern Canada. Sullivan had his own difficulties; he was an abrasive, hard drinking man with a short lived practice from 1911 to 1917 in Canada. Following a complete professional and family breakdown in

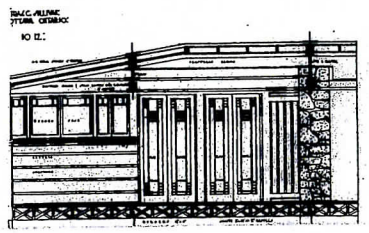
1927, he died in 1929 in Wright's care at Taliesin West, Arizona. Possibly the two men worked together on the Banff project for mutual support at a difficult time.

Although it was a popular summer facility, and well used in its time, the building itself tells a sad story. Its destruction did not happen suddenly, but came about through twenty five years of deterioration and inadequate maintenance. In the absence of records, my research relies on a good deal of circumstantial evidence and conjecture, but I did spend my childhood and school years in Banff, and I knew and worked with several of the participants in the story. What follows is based on conversations with acquaintances from Banff, and by a lucky strike in files now held by the Library and Archives Canada.

In 1983 I made contact with W. Fergus Lothian. He had been Assistant Chief of the National Parks Service. After retirement in 1968, he undertook the writing of an official history of Canada's National Parks. On November 8th, 1983, Lothian wrote in response to my questions.

> About 1967, a new retention-disposal scheme for national park records was designed.....and schedules were set for certain classes of files. Unfortunately, the two volumes of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed building were disposed of (for waste paper), and those who prized their existence were totally unaware of their destruction. .....The National Parks Branch file number, at the time of the building's destruction, was B-56-14. It is not in the Public Archives of Canada.

In 1985 I went through Banff on family travel and met with Jim Beattie, a long time resident in the town. We had both worked on public construction projects in and near Banff when we were young. When I told him of my interest in the Pavilion, he asked if I knew about the glazed doors on the building. To my surprise he told me that they had been removed, stored for many years in a warehouse building, and were eventually buried in the town dump. Their art-glass design was a detail signature of Wright's early work. 25 interior doors are indicated on the plan, but not detailed. 50 exterior doors are marked, and shown in elevation on Drawing #12 of the architectural set. Why were they removed and stored, only to be destroyed under garbage in a landfill ?



Detail Elevation of Glazed Doors, from Working Drawing No. 12, **LAC**

In 1997, approaching retirement, I returned to the National Library in search of anything related to the Pavilion. I read a list of files related to various projects in Banff Park. The number B56-14 was still listed, but referred mainly to a "Wading Pool, Old Recreation Ground" I obtained two micro-fiche reels, Nos. T-11009, and T-12942. The wading pool was the one at the Banff Pavilion, and the file referred to a Pavilion, a Park Shelter and a Wading Pool. Specifications for the building and the pool were included, and to my surprise the file contained a number of letters and other documents pertaining to the building itself. Were they there by accident, sloppy filing, or deliberately placed there when the main files were destroyed? The few letters on the reels leave many questions open, and they do not tell the whole story. The following details do throw considerable light on the thoughts of Parks officials regarding the state of the building and its decline in the 1930s. The story that ensues cannot be proven beyond doubt, but read with care it is probably the best that can be done.

In the Wading Pool file, letters pertaining to the building provide isolated bits of information on the construction and operation of the Pavilion. Along with comments by Banff residents and visitors, they provide the basis for my thesis on the destruction of the building.

On May 23, 1914, J. T. Child, resident engineer of the Park, wrote to Ottawa headquarters, explaining deflection of the principal trusses over the main hall of the building. They were sagging, and Child proposed to strengthen them using "hog belly" tie-rods, rather than columns in the centre of the hall (the interior photo of the building does not show columns, or tie-rods in the hall, but the original working drawings specified tie-rods at fireplaces and the alcoves. Child's proposal is interesting not so much from a structural engineering point of view, but because he was concerned that columns would interfere with dancers on the floor. That observation agrees with one of Wright's sketches, with its reference to a ballroom function. Parks officials obviously intended that the building would provide for dances among its social functions.

In October, 1982, I had met in Vancouver with John G. Bennett, a developer then active on British Columbia projects. His father had arrived in Calgary in 1910, and formed Bennett and Debenham, building contractors, later known as Bennett and White. The Pavilion was one of their first projects. John Bennett was surprised to hear that the cost of construction was $ 20,000.00 Mr. Bennett remembered

that his family visited the Recreation Grounds on summer trips to Banff. The visits were always painful to his father due to the growing evidence of inadequate maintenance and deteriorating condition of the building.

Letters in the reels confirm residents' observations that the interior floor heaved badly, and required leveling each spring. Letters and verbal accounts by residents refer to broken glass and vandalism during the winter when the building was unoccupied and unheated. In 1981, R. D. Gillmor had interviewed 3 long time Banff residents, Mary Allan, and Jock and Mary McCowan. Their memories confirm that water lines in the building were shut off and drained each fall. Mary Allan's records confirm comments from Charlie McAuley, supervisor of public construction in the Park and the Town. He confirmed the need for leveling of floors each spring, but felt that the building was worth repair, and that the fireplaces never moved. He resisted the ultimate demolition order, but conceded and took the building down.

Reel T-12942 contains a page titled; *Extract From Superintendent's Explanation of Estimates, Banff National Park, 1931-32.* The extract reports that;

> Many of the floor joists under the main portion of the building have rotted and many others have been broken by the frost action. The same applies to the Plaza, in front of the building.....

Costs of repairs to the floors (in 1932 dollars) were estimated to be $ 900.00 The extract also recommended another $ 200.00 for completing staining of the building, partially done the previous summer.

Several notes and letters in the reels, from 1923 onward, record official concern at the deterioration of the building, and allege a decline in its use during the 1930s. Whether repairs were made based on the 1931-32 estimates is not clarified. In 1937 the issue reached its climax with letters between Banff and Ottawa officials agreeing that further repairs were not warranted. On October 8th, 1937, a memorandum was issued by R.A.Gibson, Director of Lands, Parks, and Forests, suggesting that the building be demolished using funds designated for winter relief work in the Great Depression. The building was dismantled and vanished in the winter of 1937-38

On January 21st, 1938, the *Crag and Canyon* expressed the dismay of citizens at the destruction of the Zoo and Pavilion. The editor

accused the government of "willful waste", and regretted that the loss of the two attractions would ....."turn away many thousands of dollars from now on".....

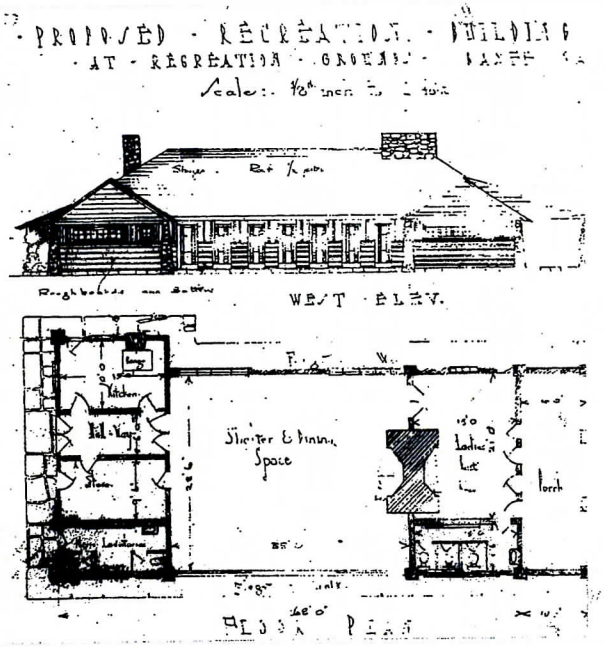
On January 31st, 1938, the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company wrote direct to Ottawa, asking that the Pavilion remain in use. That letter referred to many annual events of the Company, involving five or six hundred people each year. On February 8th, a reply confirmed that alternative facilities would be in place ..."for the coming season"....

According to Gillmor's record of the Mary Allan/McCowan meeting, public protests at the time of demolition included the following;

> On February 2nd 1938, L. G. Mather protested strongly against demolition. He feared loss to his boat rental business on the river near the Pavilion.
>
> The president of the Banff Advisory Council reported that several Calgary associations would have supported any action to retain the building.
>
> On June 1st, 1938, H. Bannerman, Town councilor, protested that elimination of the Zoo, the Pavilion, and low cost rental cabins discriminated against poorer visitors to the Park.

After Demolition

As early as September, 1937, and through the winter months of demolition, suggestions circulated among officials regarding alternative facilities for park visitors. On March 8th, 1938, Superintendent Jennings wrote to Ottawa, enclosing a drawing of a new building of his own design. It proposed a central shelter building with dining space for approximately 100 people, a fireplace, washroom kitchen and storage rooms, and a small porch at the entry.



Proposed Recreation Building,
by P.J.Jennings. **LAC** Reel T-12942

There was general agreement that the Recreation Grounds needed shelters, and Jennings' new building would supplement a number of open air canopy shelters, called "marquees". In July, 1938, F. H. H. Williamson, Parks Controller, recommended additional facilities as marquees and permanent buildings to accommodate groups as large as 1000 people.

The Jennings proposal was not built, and the future marquees and washroom buildings actually built were far below the standard of accommodation provided by the original Pavilion.

Incidental to the issue of demolition and replacement of the Pavilion, the Jennings design for a new service building proposed to re-cycle some materials from the demolished building. Jennings' letter of March 8th referred to rubble masonry and wood siding, and stated;

> You will note that we contemplate using a number of the old doors which were taken out of the original building.....

Major P. J. Jennings was respectfully known as "Iron Man". He was known for pride, a measure of pomp, independence, and he was a decorated war hero of World War 1. He was not overbearing, and held the difficult chair of Park Superintendent through the depression and war years from 1931 to 1947. His presumption, and indifference to artistic ethics, showed in his attempt to re-use the decorative glazed doors from the Pavilion. Those doors were a signature detail of Frank Lloyd Wright's early work, from his Chicago practice.

During the decades following demolition of the Pavilion, journalists and other writers often asked for reasons for the destruction of the building. Parks officials invariably defended the decision on the grounds that inadequate foundation design on water logged, boggy soil resulted in frost heaving and settlement. A high water table, and recurring floods of the nearby river, (initially without dykes) undoubtedly caused severe wood rot in floor structures. I have seen no explanation for the unheated and unused condition of the building in cold weather, a condition that aggravates freezing and heaving of subsoil. The building did have a summer caretaker, Bill Olsen, another acquaintance in Banff, but his efforts were not adequate to stop recurring vandalism. The usual reaction to explanations offered by Parks Canada was skeptical, and an anti-government feeling persisted, implying that officials in Banff and Ottawa were at fault, and decided to destroy the building rather than tend to its problems. Whatever the merits of that argument, the story goes deeper, involving the politics of a unique town in a National Park managed from headquarters in the political centre of the nation.

Conclusion

Persistent recorded concern of Parks officials concerning deterioration of the building, and the apparent refusal to spend money on floor repairs in the 1930s, leads me to suspect that the decision to remove the building was not made in a moment of annoyance. I argue that the building was doomed because Parks officials were denied adequate funds for winter heating, and for structural repairs. Superficial maintenance was possible in frequent repairs to broken glass, and the building was stained in 1924 and 1932. $ 900.00 for repair of floor joists in 1931-32 was not to be found.

The most convincing piece of evidence in support of my thesis is the memorandum of October 8th, 1937, from R. A. Gibson, authorizing use of Depression Relief funds for demolition of the building. Major projects in Banff and other National Parks, including large highway and bridge contracts, were financed as winter works for unemployed men. Why were those same funds not available to employ a crew of men on the continuing work of heating, maintaining, and underpinning foundations through the decade of the Depression?

Gibson was Director of Lands, Parks, and Forests, of the Department of Mines and Resources. The use of public funds to destroy rather than maintain a building seems to indicate that at the level of his office the fate of the building was deliberately left to the destructive forces of inadequate foundation design on unheated, water-logged soil.

The Banff Pavilion had political origins. It was publicly debated, then conceived and built to serve the people of Western Canada, particularly those in Calgary and rural Alberta. I suspect, ironically, that in spite of its success it met a political end because it was a public facility that threatened competition with privately operated buildings for large social gatherings in the Town of Banff and the Bow Valley. In its life it had invited large numbers of summer visitors to the Park, thus supporting many small business operations. The quiet of winter seasons before World War 2 was a different matter, and private halls for dancing, concerts and other gatherings would have faced unfair competition had it been operated for those purposes all year-round.

In 1888, Park authorities listed 6 hotels in operation in Banff; the Banff Springs, the Moulton, the National Park, and the British American. There were two small hotels in operation at the Upper Hot Springs. The 1887 Brett Sanatorium, later enlarged and named the Bretton Hall Hotel, was constructed at the south end of the Bow River Bridge. At the north end of the bridge the Moulton Park Hotel had been built in 1887. A pavilion for dancing and theatre was constructed behind that hotel in 1888-89. The hotel and pavilion were

demolished to make room for new police quarters, and the Park Museum and government offices, opened in 1903. After 1904 the Zoo occupied the pavilion space. The Alberta Hotel (1901), (later named the Cascade), the King Edward (1903), and the Mount Royal (1911), added to the stock of sleeping accommodation, with modest dining and dance facilities available.

The Cascade Dance Hall was built next door to the hotel of the same name, and continued to function for dances until at least the 1960s. It was owned and operated by "Hutch" Hutchinson, who played piano (often ragtime) in his own dance band.

In 1914, coincidental with construction of the Banff Pavilion, the Brewster Hall was moved to the centre of town. It is tempting to think that relocation of that large wooden building (on massive log rollers pulled by draught horses) may have been prompted by construction of the Banff Pavilion the previous year.

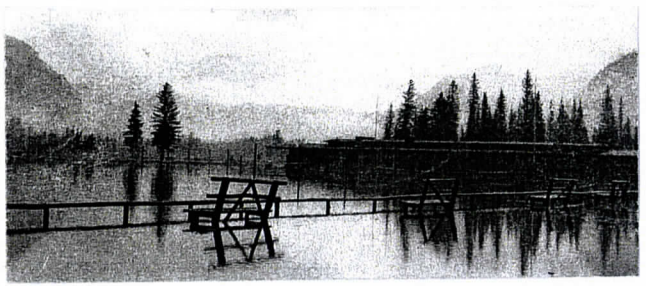
In 1904 Dr. R. G. Brett constructed an Opera House on his Sanatorium Grounds. It featured excellent acoustics designed for social, theatrical, and dance occasions. It also hosted concerts by the Calgary Symphony Orchestra. The Bretton Hall Hotel was gutted by fire in 1933. Its ruins and the Opera House were replaced by the Parks Administration Offices and Gardens, and the Post Office, in 1936.

The Bretton Hall Hotel, 1922, WMCR
NA 71-3375, photo by Byron Harmon

Dr. George Brett was a popular family doctor, territorial and provincial politician, business man and impresario. His career in the West began in Winnipeg, followed by service as a railway doctor during construction of the CPR, and medical practice in Banff, Canmore, and Bankhead. Practices were started with railway support in early years. Brett was elected to the Territorial Council of the North-West Territories and was its leader from 1889 to 1891, carrying on as Leader of the Opposition from 1892 to 1899. He was active in the medical profession and its educational programs, in military medical service, and in Alberta politics where he was president of the Alberta Conservative Association in 1909. He was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Alberta in 1915, retired in 1925, and died in 1929.

If correct, my theory will not be found on record in a file cabinet. I hold that officials of

the National Parks Branch, in Banff and Ottawa, were not negligent, nor were they ultimately responsible for destruction of the Banff Pavilion. I suspect that commercial interests of the entertainment operators in Banff exerted political influence in Ottawa that denied funds for care of the building. The result was predictable.



Flood, 1920, WMCR NA 66-342

EPILOGUE, THE PAVILION AND THE ZOO

The winter of demolition in 1937 and 1938 witnessed the conclusion of two sombre stories in the history of Banff and the National Park. When Buddy left town, the Zoo disappeared. That it will not return puts a little joy into the captive life of the charming white bear from Chesterfield Inlet.

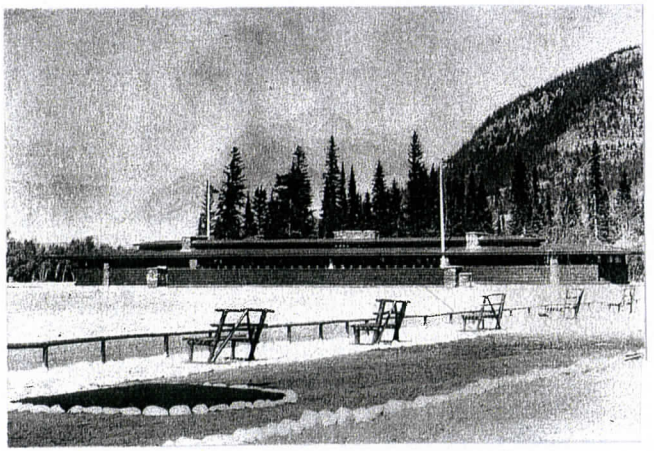
The Pavilion was another story. In its heyday it was a highly successful summer operation, attended by large and small groups of people. Prior to 1938, other than the Banff Springs Hotel, there was no place in the Park capable of hosting such large events. No protests have been found regarding competition for accommodation of large summer excursions. Initial opposition to the Pavilion calmed down, and in the 1920s and 30s small businesses and cabin operators came to appreciate the trade that came with visitors to the Pavilion site.

The Recreation Grounds provided a variety of activities. The building itself, its fireplaces, and its wide roof overhangs provided shelter for many people in rough weather. The wading pool entertained children in hot weather, and was connected to the river by a canal for shallow draught canoes and rowboats. Sports fields provided for soccer, baseball, and tennis. In 1923 a Wild West Show was attempted, but was rained out. From 1917 to the late 1930s, before radio displaced live entertainment in the West, Chautauqua Circuit events included Banff in their tours of Western Canada. Under their brown tents they provided high level performances of educational, cultural and entertainment value.

Efforts to rebuild the Banff Pavilion in the 1980s failed. I am not willing to tackle that work again, but I still believe that it is a feasible and worthwhile dream. Is it too late to suggest that a sensible public and private partnership can recover the use and enjoyment of a fine building in a wonderful place? Outdoor

facilities for sports and play are still in place.The exact site of the original building is still open, and would require only the relocation of two baseball diamonds. I firmly believe that the original design of the building will be adaptable without structural change to the original picnic functions, plus coffee shop, book and gift shop, library, and lecture space for Park Interpreters and speakers from the Town, the Banff Centre and universities in Alberta.

Three huge fireplaces will welcome cross country skiers in winter, and wetland walkers in summer. A new boat channel will support rentals and enjoyment of the Bow River and the Vermilion Lakes. The possibilities are numerous, and in the background the names of Wright and Sullivan will draw bus tours with visitors interested in the building and its story.



The Banff Pavilion, GMA

Times have changed; Banff is not the elite resort it was prior to World War 1, when access was costly, and crowds were not found in the mountains. Nor is it the expanding public space that welcomed and celebrated large excursions between the wars. Since 1950 it has become so widely known and admired that tourists have threatened to overwhelm the Park, their numbers damaging the very things they come to enjoy. In spite of these issues, I finish this little book with the hope that it will inform and encourage re-building of the Banff Pavilion.

The Wading Pool
WMCR NA66-28, PA133E-20

The recovery of a public mistake and the reconstruction of a notable building add to the appeal of this proposal, but the re-creation of a friendly public place in Banff is foremost. The Park is intended for all people; there is still room for the Banff Pavilion, and there are plenty of townspeople and visitors to use it. It can and should be returned to its place in the valley.

BUDDY, THE SERGEANT,

AND THE MAJOR

Arthur Allen

When the Sergeant rowed his boat onto the lake, Buddy went along. When the oars stopped, he would jump overboard, head or rump first, and go for a swim. When the boat headed for shore, he paddled alongside. Buddy was a polar bear born in the winter of 1921-22 in a snow-bank den on the north shore of Chesterfield Inlet, on Hudson Bay. He was taken from the den by hunters, or possibly the police. On April 1st, 1922, he was presented to Sergeant W. O. Douglas, at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police station at Chesterfield Inlet, NWT. Douglas had been sent to that region as an RNWMP officer in 1916, to work on the Street and Radford murder of 1912. In 1920 he investigated another killing. Ou-wang-wak (or Qu-ang-wak) had murdered two other Inuit men, taken the wife of one, was subjected to tribal justice, and was arrested by Douglas. The trial was to be in Baker Lake, but Ou-wang-wak escaped and disappeared in a blizzard. Douglas later found his remains.

The Sergeant's life in the summer of 1922 was eased by his friendship with Buddy. He was accepted as a foster parent, taught the cub tricks, took him for swims, and taught him to eat at table and sleep at the foot of his bed. Buddy howled at Douglas' departure,

Bear Cub, possibly Buddy

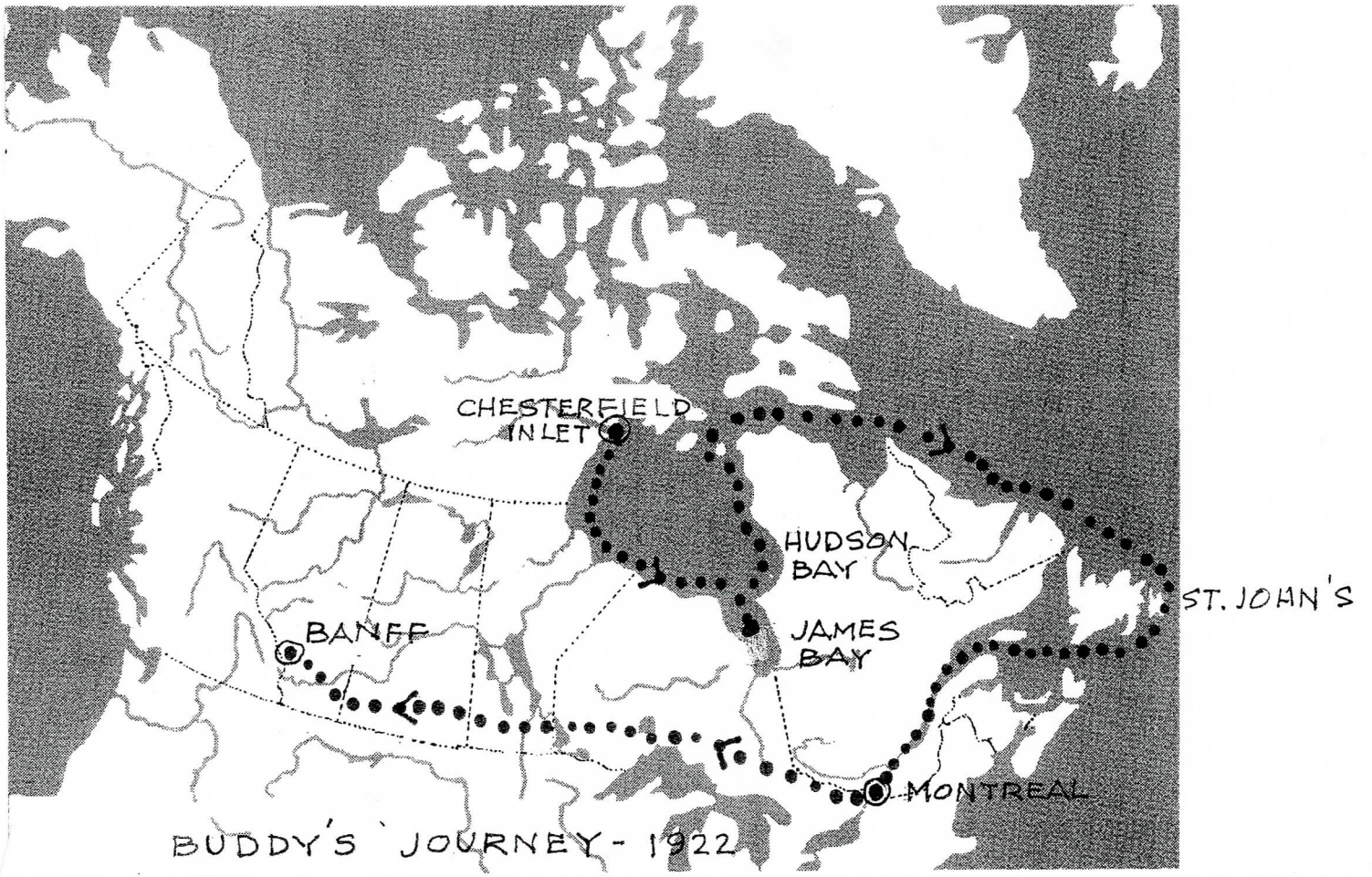
McM MP-0000.598.231

Buddy and the Sergeant

McM MP-0000.598.97

Above photos by Captain George Mack

Skipper of the Nascopie


CHESTERFIELD INLET
HUDSON BAY
ST. JOHN'S
BANFF
JAMES BAY
MONTREAL
BUDDY'S JOURNEY - 1922

and ran to him at the sound of his return. He raided the pantry, and when a plate of home-made candy was placed on a book-case to cool, he stretched and upset the dish. After that he sniffed the book-case on entering the room. Douglas wrote;

> At different time[s] I have had many kinds of pets, but have yet to see one that has a head to equal that of the baby bear.

In August, 1922, the "Nascopie", supply ship of the Hudson's Bay Company, stopped at Chesterfield Inlet on its annual trip to drop supplies and to retrieve the year's catch of furs. Buddy was taken aboard, and for several days ate nothing and roared continuously. For the remainder of the journey around the Bay, and back to Montreal, he and the ship's crew entertained each other. At Charlton Island in James Bay, he slid down the anchor chain, swam ashore, and was attacked by dogs. The noise awakened the crew, who launched a small boat. Buddy climbed an oar and was helped back onto the ship.

On its return passage the ship stopped at St. John's, Newfoundland, where Buddy was led around the town. An unverified comment states that he was also celebrated on his arrival in Montreal. He then took a ride by train to Banff, Alberta, headquarters at that time of Rocky Mountains Park. Canadian

The Nascopie, HBCA 1987/363-N-7/51

Pacific and Canadian National Railway Archives have no record of this special cargo. CPR assumes that Buddy was caged in the baggage car of a fast passenger train where the baggage handlers could attend to him. Presumably they enjoyed his company for the 82 hour journey. His travels totaled approximately 11,000 kilometres, 7200 by sea and 3800 on land.

The Annual Report of the RCMP, 1922-23, states that the bear was 10 months old when he left Chesterfield Inlet. At that time he might have weighed 80 kg, with a standing height over 1.5 metres. Polar bears are a tiny 1 kg at birth. Estimates of his weight in Banff vary from 275 to 450 kg. In the wild a mature boar with plenty of food can weigh 630 kg, stand 3 metres tall, and live to 25 years of age. In Banff, Buddy lived in a zoo in the centre of town where he entertained visitors.

Crowds of tourists gathered to see him in the summer season; towns people visited year-round. *The Beaver,* magazine of the Hudson's Bay Company, printed an article in March 1934, by J. C. C.. It stated;

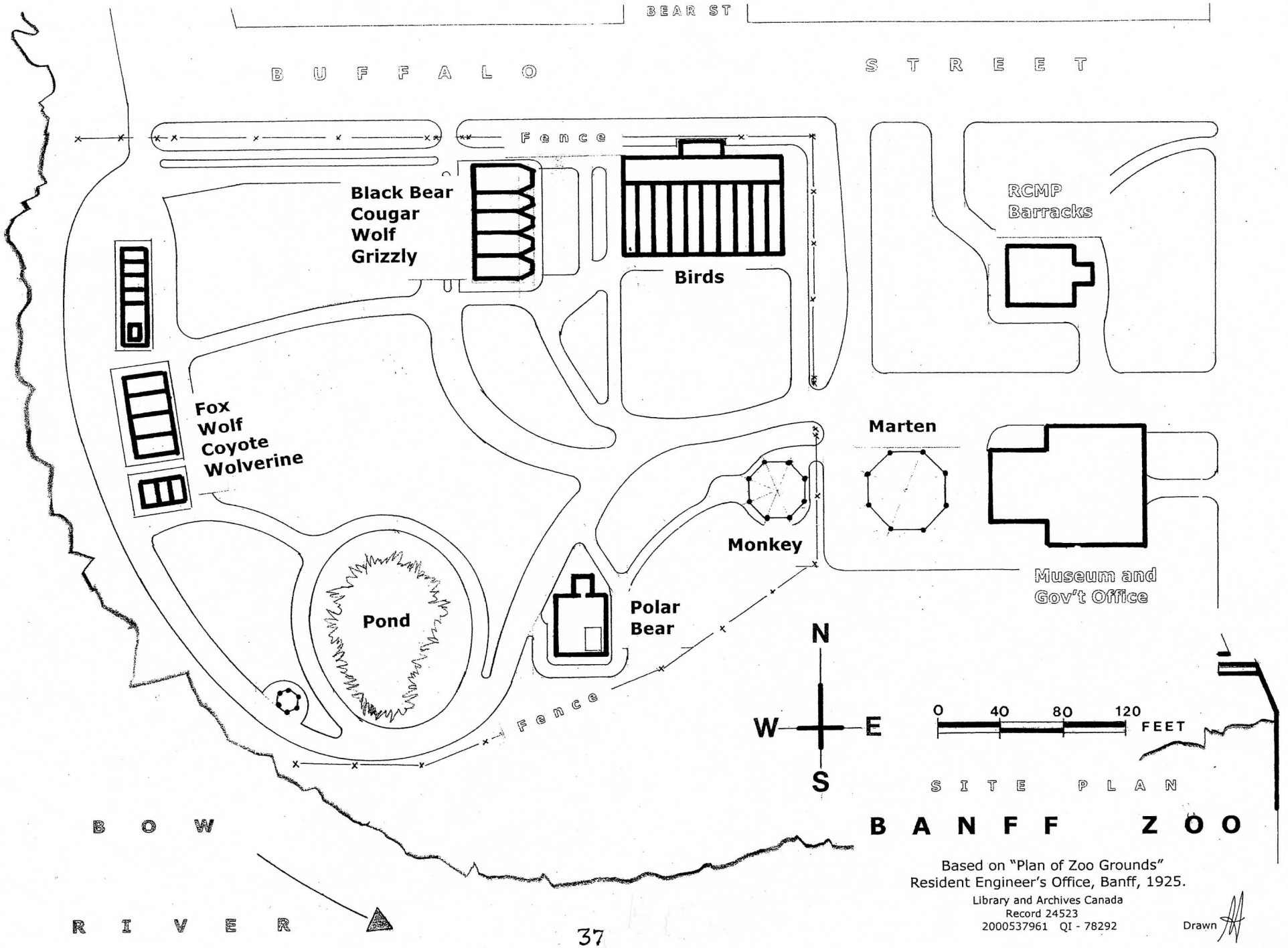
> From his first day in the Zoo Buddy proved himself the most popular member. Children and grown-ups alike enjoyed this amusing little fellow. All bears seem to have a sense of humour and Buddy has been endowed with an extra amount. It endears him to the hearts of everyone, children especially, and with his loveable personality and his happy faculty for making friends he will never be lonely.

The Zoo was operated by employees of the National Park; they taught tricks to the animals. J.C.C. states that the keeper became devoted to Buddy and ..."made a practice of going into the cage to play with him."..... In 1929 caretaker Jim Raby posed while hand-feeding a young wolf, and was featured in a national travel magazine. The wolf had been raised by the Zoo, and behaved; ...."almost like a dog".... Hand feeding and posing with animals was prohibited thereafter. Buddy needed little further training. In Banff he learned how to amuse visitors by playing with a small barrel floating in his pool. When the keeper appeared with a hose to clean the cage, Buddy hid under water rather than go to his den. The keeper hosed him in the face when he surfaced, and Buddy shielded himself with a floating wooden plank. He would go to the den when bribed with delicacies.

The Banff Zoo was initiated in 1904 when CPR Vice President William Whyte donated eight pheasants to the Park. As late as 1937 it was the only zoo operated in Canada by the federal government, holding approximately 60 animals at the peak of operations. It held a few exotic animals and birds and was intended for tourist entertainment as much as a display of species found in the Park. The Zoo was immediately upstream from the bridge on Banff Avenue, next door to the collection of stuffed animals in the Banff Museum. The site was level and low lying, with gentle banks on a quiet bend of the Bow River. Trees were native spruce and poplar; willows framed the water's edge. When spring rains and snow-melt raised the river, areas between the zoo enclosures were subject to shallow flooding.

Abbreviations.

WMCR	Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
GMA	Glenbow Museum and Archives
McM	McCord Museum
HBCA	Hudson's Bay Company Archives



BANFF ZOO

Based on "Plan of Zoo Grounds"
Resident Engineer's Office, Banff, 1925.

Library and Archives Canada
Record 24523
2000537961 QI - 78292

Drawn

V484/PA-1312

V715/
accn5551

V263/NA-2906

V715/accn5551

At the Zoo, enclosures for large mammals were small. For black and cinnamon bears, grizzly, cougar, and wolves, they were barred cages each measuring approximately 4m X 11m. Some cages were labeled for more than one animal. Buddy was given more space. He had a high, barred enclosure approximately 10m X 12m. It contained a small pool, large enough for a dip but not a swim. There was a stone-walled den in addition to the cage area noted. The Zoo did not include confinement of large herbivores. Bison, elk, sheep, goats, and a few yahk were kept in separate fenced enclosures at the Animal Paddocks, a grassy plain north of the town, near the present aircraft landing strip.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Park officials in Banff and Ottawa received protests about caging of animals in a wildlife sanctuary. Some complaints came from Eastern Canada and the United States. Townspeople in Banff were divided; tourist business interests favored the Zoo and Paddocks because they held visitors close to the stores, hotels, and rental cabins of the town. Others agreed with protesters, and urged demolition of the cages and fences. The Calgary Branch of the SPCA was active. On October 18th, 1936 their official inspection of the Zoo recommended legal action based on cruelty to animals.

All photos, **WMCR** Collections of Harmon & G. & W. Fear

On November 3rd, Major P. J. Jennings, Park Superintendent, wrote to J. B. Harkin, then Commissioner of Parks in Ottawa. He transmitted the SPCA Report, and recorded protests at the Zoo by Kathleen Jenkinson, SPCA representative in Banff. Jennings referred to innovative zoos of the time;

> I referred to the method employed at Whipsnade in England, Taronga Park, Sydney, Australia, and Grote Shuur in Capetown ....I may say, however, that I did visit Whipsnade and was greatly impressed with everything I saw and feel satisfied that such a system could very well be carried out in the Banff National Park.

Letters to the Parks Officials varied from praise to condemnation. An Edmonton couple wrote two letters, dated December 2nd, 1937. M.J.Birch stated that; ....."the animals in Banff have large cages with running water and have first class attention."... Mrs. Birch wrote;

> Shoot them in preference to sending them to such a place as the Calgary Zoo after being used to such a lovely home in Banff."

Complaints about the Zoo focused on four issues;

> A National Park dedicated to animal welfare is not the place for a zoo.

> All cage floors were concrete; daily flushing kept them clean, but cold and damp. The Zoo had little success in raising wolves due to problems with rickets. During spring floods, areas around cages were under shallow water, raising health worries.

> Wolves and coyotes howled at night, responding to steam whistles of passing trains, and to their kin in the valley.

> Cages were small and the Zoo; ...."was run on the cheap"...

No concerns have been found, in Parks letters or in public complaints, about health risks to polar bears in damp environments. Their home in the Arctic is extremely arid. Cold winter air in Banff is quite dry; Chinook weather, and spring and summer rains, are a different matter.

The Crag and Canyon, weekly newspaper in Banff, opposed demolition of the Zoo. The editor wrote;

> December 3rd 1937; .....this place was not nearly so bad as several fanatics have been trying to make out in the daily and weekly papers, which stampeded the Department at Ottawa.

> December 10th;..... How silly it is to say that visitors can see the same animals at large throughout the Park, as if they were in the Zoo.

It was rumoured that the Zoo was to be replaced by playground and picnic facilities. The editor hoped that in that case Buddy might remain in his old cage for the pleasure of children and a great many grown-ups using the new park.

The threat of legal action took effect. By the autumn of 1937, Parks authorities had offered animals from the Banff Zoo to six Canadian zoos. In 1937 W.O.Douglas was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg. He was contacted and suggested in September that Buddy be transferred there. The Winnipeg Zoological Society expressed interest, but declined because it was felt that Southern Manitoba was too warm for an arctic bear.

The Calgary Zoological Society was eager to take Buddy; discussions went on for several months. On September 14th, 1937, the Calgary Society wrote to Superintendent Jennings, offering to; ....."clean up your Zoo completely, if you can arrange to let us have the specimens." Continued pressure from the SPCA in Calgary and Banff produced a letter, dated 4th Oct 1937, from Jennings to Park Headquarters in Ottawa, requesting; ....." definite instructions regarding the transfer of these animals to Calgary, at the earliest possible moment." ..... The decision was delayed; on November 22nd, 1937, the Calgary Society wrote directly to Ottawa Parks Headquarters;

> Is there any possibility of our securing the Polar Bear ? We have a splendid location all ready for him, and anticipating that we would be the most likely to get him, we arranged for a godfather in the form of a fish market who agreed to furnish food for the bear for several years. .....Will you kindly let us know if there is anything we could do to get you to change your mind and let us have this specimen ?

Douglas was contacted again. He regretted the Winnipeg decision, and recommended Calgary as his next choice. On November 30, 1937, Buddy's fate was settled, at least on paper. Jennings was advised by F.H.H.Williamson, Controller of Parks, that the Winnipeg Zoo had declined to accept Buddy, and that his relocation to Calgary was approved. On December 13th, the Calgary Zoological Society wrote to Williamson, thanking him; ...."for the Polar Bear, the Yak, and the other specimens which you have donated to us."

Major Jennings had different plans for Buddy and the Zoo. As early as 1932, he had recorded his objections to the cruel confinement of animals in small cages. He

referred to Whipsnade, and urged that Banff Park follow its example. His letter of November, 1936 reinforced that position. In March, 1937 preliminary surveys of a large site north of the town were authorized. It was near the Animal Paddocks, at the base of Cascade and Stoney Squaw Mountains. In May, Jennings wrote to Williamson, arguing that a new zoo at the Paddocks would appeal to townspeople, and would relieve concerns of the SPCA.

LAC Microfilm RG 84-A-2-a Vol. 69

Jennings to Williamson, 25 May 1937

In October 1937 Jennings knew that Calgary was eager to take all animals from the Banff Zoo, especially the polar bear. His letter of Oct 4th requested instructions for their immediate transfer to Calgary. Yet on December 9th, 1937, just as Buddy was given to Calgary, Jennings wrote to Williamson stating that ....."none of the Zoological Societies approached seems to be willing to take the polar bear".... He suggested that Buddy stay in his den at the old Zoo in Banff , which he felt would not ...."seriously interfere with our proposed scheme for creating a recreational area".... Superintendents in Banff Park sit on hot seats; local and national politicians often raise the temperature. In this case I wonder if Jennings felt that Buddy's continued presence in town would encourage business-like citizens in Banff to support his dream of a new and up-to-date zoo?

The abandonment or rebuilding of the Zoo was considered in Ottawa by the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, and by senior Parks Officials. On 24th November, 1937 Williamson presented a review of the situation, with photographs and details of new zoos of the time. They included zoos in Washington, Scotland, St Louis, Sydney, and Hamburg. Carl Hagenbeck's Tierpark in Hamburg was opened in 1907. It was the first zoo without bars, and became a leader in changing the design of habitat for wild animals.

Traditional zoos were known as menageries. They featured cages of steel bars in fantasies of architectural style. Social animals were held in solitary confinement, in rows of cages arranged for taxonomic display that were the antithesis of natural habitat. Menageries lacked open space for grazing animals, and pools and plant growth for aquatic and climbing creatures. Although its site pleased humans, the old Zoo in Banff was a small menagerie. In the wake of the Hamburg design, rows of steel cages were replaced by unobtrusive barrier moats, artificial mountains, and jungle pools. Whipsnade, a country park established by the London Zoo in 1931, followed the Tierpark principles. Superintendent Jennings visited Whipsnade, and in 1932 and 1936 wrote with enthusiasm about its application to the situation in Banff. The site surveyed for a new zoo was promising; it included a grassy plain, a rushing stream, and real mountain terrain for alpine animals.

The discussion in Ottawa considered a number of possibilities;

1. Close the Banff Zoo and Animal Paddocks, abolish animal confinement in the Park. Move animals to other Canadian zoos, or release if possible.

2. Convert the old Zoo site to picnic, playground and washroom facilities. Buddy was to remain at the playground for the amusement of visitors.

3. Build a large and up-to-date zoo near the town of Banff.

4. Establish a National Zoo in Canada. The preferred site would be in Eastern Canada, close to major centres of population.

Jennings proposal for an improved zoo in Banff did not succeed. A site proposal, survey, and cost estimates were presented. Few records of that discussion have been found, but it seems that the continued captivity of wild animals in the National Park was not favored. Near the end of the Great Depression, Jennings' hopes failed for reasons of principle and economy. In this case, freedom of animals would cost nothing beyond normal Park operations budgets; construction and operation of a larger zoo would be expensive.

By December 1st, 1937 the Banff Zoo was closed. The *Evolution of the Calgary Zoo*, by Tyler Trafford, states that the animals were taken to Calgary, including ....."a female polar bear mistakenly named Carmichael"... According to the Calgary Herald, December 1st 1937, Buddy and a cinnamon bear were left in their cages in Banff. Most of the animals did

go to Calgary, some to other Canadian zoos. Cougars, wolves, and a few small animals and birds went to Winnipeg, Quebec, and Toronto. A grizzly and the cinnamon bear were destroyed, due to age and poor health. Most of the animals and birds were taken by a volunteer convoy from Calgary. To avoid protests, it reached Banff at midnight and left at three in the morning. A few large predators had been loaned to the Zoo by private owners. Their fates were not made clear. The animal pens were demolished in the winter months of 1937-38, using federal funds for relief of unemployed men in Banff. Elk were released and Wood Bison were sent to join other herds

in Central and Northern Alberta. Business interests in Banff protested, and a few Prairie Bison were imported for a one year stay for the benefit of bus tour operators. The Animal Paddocks remained in use for another 35 years. For freedom of movement of animals in the valley it was abandoned in the 1970s.

Buddy's last move was confusing. John Pitcher, a Parks Interpreter in Banff, has written that when Buddy was moved to Calgary, he was re-named "Carmichael." In 2004 the register of the Calgary Zoo had no record of a bear named Buddy; I was informed that the polar bear received from Banff was a female named Carmichael. Edith Beard, a friend in Calgary, tells me that she remembers two polar bears in that Zoo, Buddy and Carmichael.

The published diaries of Walter H. Peyto, Town Warden at the time, make numerous references to his work in tending and feeding Buddy in the Banff Zoo through the winter of 1937-1938. Peyto also records that on April 3rd, 1938, he was at the Zoo at 8:00 AM, ..."helping place crate and catch polar bear, loaded and saw outfit away for Calgary, ..." The Calgary Herald, April 4th, 1938, advised that Buddy had just arrived in Calgary, and that; ....." Feeding of the white Arctic bear is being undertaken by the Artic (sp ?) Oil Company, 809 Ninth Avenue East.".....

The Calgary Zoological Society had indicated that there was a place for Buddy in their zoo. That request was granted in November 1937, but he was held in solitary confinement in Banff for 3 months after all other animals had been removed. Why the delay? I speculate that Buddy was kept in place while Major Jennings and the officials in Ottawa struggled with the future of animal captivity in the National Park. It seems that Jennings wanted to please Banff citizens and businesses by keeping the amusing white bear in captivity, either in his old cage in the centre of town, or in a larger enclosure in a new zoo. When the debate concluded that a national park had no room for a zoo, volunteers from Calgary took

Buddy away in a cage on a wagon pulled by a Model A Ford car. He roared each time the wagon stopped; one volunteer stood guard with a rifle when the car stalled on the five mile Cochrane Hill west of Calgary.

On June 6th, 1939, at the age of 17, Buddy died in the Calgary Zoo. A veterinary report indicated the cause of death as pneumonia, due to recent wet weather. In Calgary and Banff, June is the rainy season, and both Zoos were subject to spring flooding of the Bow River. The tracks of Carmichael are hard to follow. She may have joined Buddy, or arrived later, and died during World War 2. No record of offspring has been found.

En route to Calgary

GMA From brochure of Calgary Zoo
Original photos not found.

Sergeant W. O. Douglas

HBCA

Postscript

The donation and/or sale of living polar bears was not unusual for the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1921 the Lady Kindersley, the HBC supply ship serving the Western Arctic from Vancouver, captured a bear near Point Barrow, Alaska. It was given the name "Barrow," and was donated by the Company to Vancouver's Zoological Garden. The McCord Museum in Montreal has a collection of photographs of young and mature bears, some of them on the decks of the Nascopie. Three young bears were captured by Inuit, and taken to the Quebec City Zoo by the Nascopie in 1936. On 28 March 1926, a District Manager of HBC replied to an enquiry from Messrs. Chapman, of London, dealers in live animals and birds for zoological and private collections;

> In the event of our being able to get any [polar bear cubs] we should be pleased to ship them to you at a cost of $ 75.00 each .... delivered to Ardossman. [Presumably Ardrossan , Scotland.]

The Company agreed to look for healthy animals, but declined to guarantee their survival. HBC Archives does not have a reply to the offer.

W.O.Douglas enlisted in the Royal North-West Mounted Police in 1914,and retired from the RCMP in November, 1922, shortly after Buddy's departure from Chesterfield Inlet. In 1924 he was Mr. Douglas, one of two men operating a Hudson's Bay Co. post in Repulse Bay, north of Chesterfield. In 1929 he wrote an account of the summer of 1922. It was used as the basis for the 1934 *Beaver* article by J.C.C. By then Douglas was Director of Fox Farms for HBC on Prince Edward Island, and mentioned a possible trip to Banff to visit Buddy. In 1937 he was employed by HBC in Winnipeg, where he maintained contact with Banff on Buddy's situation. He retired to Victoria, B.C., and died in 1978.

P. J. Jennings was Superintendent of Banff National Park from 1931 to 1947. He was Major Jennings, a decorated hero of WW 1, and was nicknamed "Iron Man" for his strong management of the Park through the Great Depression and World War 2. One of his last acts, in 1947, was to decree preservation of a white spruce tree threatened by highway widening 19 km west of Banff. The tree in the road was known as "Jennings' Folly," and stood in its island until a 1984 windstorm brought it down.

Walter H. Peyto served in the Warden Service in Banff from 1914 to 1948. He was Town Warden for many of those years, and responsible for managing wildlife intrusions into community space. Banff National Park frequently shipped animals to Canadian and international destinations. Some elk went to an estate in Poland, some to New Zealand. Peyto managed the shipment of animals to the Wembley Exposition. He once spent 11 days in a railway freight car, in the company of two bison bound for the zoo in Toronto.

The last time I saw Buddy was probably in the winter of 1937-1938. I was a child of five. We liked to visit him in clear, cool weather when he was lively, and there was no crowd at the Zoo. Our parents would say;.... "lets bundle up warmly, and see if Buddy is up to his old tricks."

LETTERS TO EDITORS

The Editor, *The Vancouver Sun*
Published 23 Feb 1990

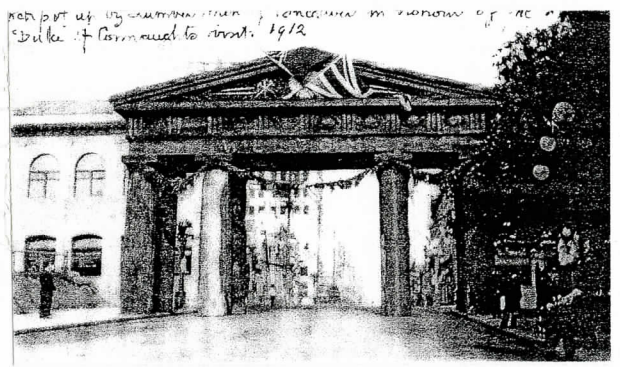
A PLAN TO IMPROVE VANCOUVER'S SKYLINE

The Prince of Wales is no lightweight commentator on architecture. The concluding words of his book, *A Vision of Britain*, present a moving plea for ".....design and layout which positively encourage neighborliness, intimacy and, where possible, a sense of shared belonging to a recognizable community".....

I also respect the Prince as a heritage conservationist, but with caution. Preservation of existing historic buildings is one thing, but I hope that Prince Charles enthusiasm for neo-classical work does not lead to a post-post-modern style, whereby architects try to please the banker by mounting classic revival temples on top of new towers of commerce.

On the other hand, this might be appropriate to the worship of money, and might possibly buy for Vancouver the sense of history that some say is lacking. Imagine a city skyline in the year 2200 with Greek temples, Gothic cathedrals, Renaissance palaces, and Chinese pagodas on top of 50 storey office towers. Against the timeless North Shore mountains it could be very uplifting. Vancouver could amuse her citizens, and maybe His Highness, by reconstructing the original Lumberman's Arch on top of the highest building.

The first arch was a wooden neo-classical temple, one of 10 or 12 erected for the 1912 visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. The columns were huge four-foot logs, their rough bark simulating the fluting of marble originals. The tympanum, of rough lumber decorated with pike poles, peaveys, and crossed falling axes, achieved a rich chiaroscuro.



Arch, at Pender and Hamilton Streets

The arch, originally over Pender Street, was relocated to Stanley Park, where it was enjoyed until 1947 and then dismantled.

Who knows? Scholars might even doubt ancient wisdom and create a new myth that the Greek temples were not conceived by Mycenaean carpenters, but by B.C. loggers inspired by the woodworking genius of the Indians of the West Coast.

Arthur Allen.

The Editor, *The Vancouver Sun*
Published 14 June 1990

THIS BANK CARES ABOUT ITS "KINGLY PLACE".

Last week the Royal Bank of Canada entertained Vancouver opera lovers at a dinner in the grand hall of its fine old building at Granville and Hastings.

I wonder if any of the guests, or bankers, realized they were dining in a basilica – originally an Etruscan "kingly place", once a hall of justice in ancient Rome and then a house of worship in Europe following the collapse of Roman power. It seems that victorious institutions occupy the places and throw out the symbols of power of vanquished rivals, giving rise to some suspicion about the meaning of the yellow plastic lion, the mascot of the bank, in the apse at the north end of this hall of finance.

I doubt anyone at the feast read the six gold leaf medallions on the ceiling, each one bearing a message for the instruction and encouragement of customers. They show;

-A sailing ship. Message: "Navigation and Trade"

-A new city. Message: "Colonies and Commerce".

-A plowman. Message: "Speed the Plough".

-A fisherman. Message: "Success to the Fisheries".

-Our Lady of Justice. Message: "Justitia Virtus".

-A reaper. "Message: "No Labour, No Bread".

The building opened for business on June 8th, 1931, raising doubts about the justice, and the virtue, of preaching gold leaf sermons to bankrupt businessmen and hunger stricken people in Vancouver.

However, in this case I think the bank can be forgiven for its presumption. At least the Royal Bank gives every indication of preserving the quaint symbols in its former western headquarters building.

I wish the same comfort could be given to the frightened beaver on the old temple of the Bank of Montreal, at Granville and Pender, just one block south.

Arthur Allen

The Editor, *The Vancouver Sun*
Published 11 Feb 1999

If the quiet beauty of Burns Bog is transformed into an artificial wonderland, filled with harsh colour, light and noise, architects will face an interesting dilemma.

There is a very strong movement in architecture, promoting eco-sensible "green building" design, presented by the Royal architectural Institute of Canada, and by an international conference, Green Building Challenge, in Vancouver, in October, 1998. David Suzuki, as keynote speaker, urged architects at the 1998 RAIC Convention, in Regina, to use their power for environmental benefit, not harm. Healthy indoor environments, with energy efficiency, low greenhouse gas emissions and responsible waste management, are imperative, and must succeed, in spite of costs involved.

At Burns Bog, what is the sense of creating a benign indoor environment where the word "indoors": should never be heard, where walls and doorways make no sense ? Can architects who lead in the destruction of essential places of natural value and beauty be satisfied with artificial substitutes? Will any architect decline the opportunity?

Arthur Allen.

The Editor, The Vancouver *Province*

Published Jan 1982

THE NICOMEN CONVENTION

Tony Eberts, writing in the *Vancouver Province*, 15th of January 1982, reports that British Columbia has agreed to accept flooding of the Skagit River Valley for an annual rental of thirty five thousand dollars. Power then available to Seattle City Light is said to be worth ten million dollars per annum.

In the same issue of the *Province,* Mr. Eberts also reports that Nicomen Slough at Deroche B,C,. (100 km east of Vancouver, and 60 km west of the Skagit Valley). Is currently hosting a dinner and convention for 481 bald (American?) eagles. There is no mention of a price per seat at the dinner – I presume it is a free lunch !

After due and serious consideration of other newspaper stories reporting many empty dinner tables in Canada, I conclude that the dammed Ross [Skagit] Project will be acceptable to me providing Seattle City Light agree to a room-and-board charge for their eagles that will equalize the rental-revenue discrepancy noted by Mr. Eberts. Thus, the cost per eagle at the Convention will be; $20,717.26

$$\frac{\$\ 10{,}000{,}000. - \$\ 35{,}000.}{481}$$

Seattle City Light will likely object to the above proposition, principally on the grounds that the United States has not cared for its own revered birds: surely the eagles at Nicomen Slough are Canadian. A conclusive and very fair counter attack can be mounted by Canada if we point out that 260 of the eagles at Nicomen are undeniably visitors from the lower (American) valley of the Skagit River. (A conference of eagle watchers at Bald Eagle Days, University of Wisconsin, in 1977 was advised by a delegation from the State of Washington that their eagle count in the Skagit River Bald Eagle Natural Area tallied 260 birds).

An International Joint Commission is expected to determine this issue within the year. Its deliberations are, of course, complicated by the fact that bald eagles do not understand the meaning of the 49th parallel, nor do they understand periodic variations in the salmon populations of Canadian and American rivers involved. A possible solution, I think, might be based on the following formula;

$$P = \frac{10{,}000{,}000 - \$35{,}000}{A - B} \times \frac{X}{Y}$$

P = price per eagle at the Nicomen Convention (American $)

A= total number of birds registered.

B= number of Canadian birds registered.

x= salmon count per annum in the Fraser River

y= salmon count per annum in the Skagit River

The formula will be applicable as long as the Fraser River and Nicomen Slough are open to salmon. Power dam construction on the Fraser, (ominously implied by Mr. Eberts), would reduce "x" to zero, increase "y" to infinity, and cruelly destroy the impartial, non-political, and internationalist balance of the formula.

Yours truly, Arthur Allen

ps. 1983 *The International Joint Commission has settled the problem under agreement whereby the proposed Ross Dam will not be built, the Skagit Valley will not be flooded, and Seattle City Light will buy power from B.C.Hydro.*

The Editor, *The Toronto Globe and Mail*

Published 18 Sept 1990

re; Mohawks resist golf course expansion and housing development proposed on their land at Oka, Quebec.

A gentle, dear old friend surprised me recently by saying that she would grant amnesty to the men and women of the Mohawk barricades, not only for the suffering of Indian people, but because the Indian's customary use of threat and violence in Canada is older than the white man's, and therefore should prevail. We agreed that the white man's law was established by force, so why not? Why should white men whimper as soon as the tables are turned?

A peaceful architect's response to these things usually suggests imprisonment, and hopefully the rehabilitation of offenders. The trouble is that Canada's prisons are racist, in practice if not in theory. They are home to a disproportionate number of Indians who are there in large numbers because they cannot afford the social or legal protection available to many white offenders. Possibly in desperation my imagination wandered. What if the Mohawks agreed to surrender to a white and native constabulary, and submit to trial, the entire process under the supervision of a United Nations team working to a universal bill of rights? What if the jury were racially mixed, with Donald Marshall as foreman, assisted by the attorney general of Nova Scotia? The judge, of course, would be the Secretary General of the United Nations, and the witnesses endless: Mulroney, Harper, Siddon, Erasmus, Cadieux, Doxtator, Bourassa, Norton, Parizeau, and, for the recent history of these things, Chretien and Trudeau.

If anyone, (or possibly everyone) could be convicted, a special prison would be needed. The style could be anything – classic, modern, or post-modern with decorative reference to early longhouse. The only important feature, in my opinion, would be the coat of arms over the front door. Under a pair of crossed gold clubs there must be a stone carved Mohawk pictograph, signifying "Political Prison"

Arthur Allen.

Ps. 2014; The crisis and the developments were stopped when the federal government purchased the land. It still remains as an unsettled land claim.

THE CADUCEUS AND THE TOTEM POLE

Arthur Allen

On April 6th, 1886, the City of Vancouver was incorporated. Its first coat of arms was designed by Alderman Lauchlan A. Hamilton, and remained in use until 1903. That design showed images of industry, shipping and docks, forestry, and railway transportation. There were no historical or mythological figures in the design.

A new coat of arms, retaining only the original motto; "By Sea and Land We Prosper", was drawn and formally adopted by the City in 1903. It was designed by a Vancouver artist, James Blomfield, and remained in use until 1969. It attempted an approach in terms of traditional heraldry, showing the following elements, from the top down;

A ships mast, pennant, and sail.

A "Mural Crown", (a stylized ring of masonry).

An armoured helmet.

A shield, showing seven wavy lines, (the ocean), and the Caduceus of Hermes.

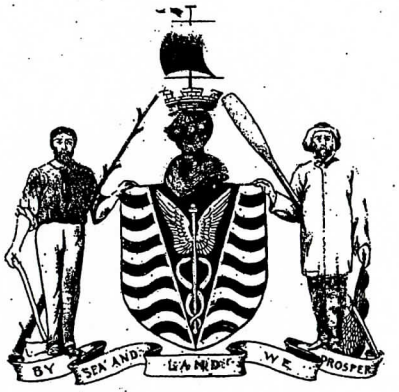
The city motto, on a ribbon band beneath the shield.

The shield is flanked by a logger, (with an axe and branch of a tree), and a fisherman, (with oar, net, and floats).

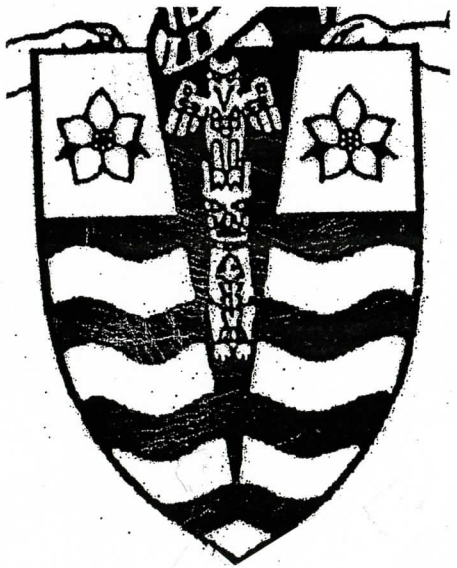
1886

Badge

1903



1969



Shield
1969

According to an article by Wallis and Adams, in *The Greater Vancouver Book*, the 1903 design was never registered with the College of Heralds in England, because ..."it broke several rules of heraldry". The design was frequently criticized, and several attempts were made to improve it prior to 1969.

On March 31st, 1969, a new coat of arms, approved by the College, was adopted by the City. The revised design retained the essential features of the 1903 version, with several changes in detail;

Floral elements were added flanking the helmet.

Dogwood blossoms, emblems of British Columbia, were added to the shield.

The motto was revised to read; "By Sea Land and Air we Prosper".

The branch and the oar were removed from the logger and the fisherman. The images of the logger and the fisherman were shown in updated work clothing, and they were now youthful and clean shaven.

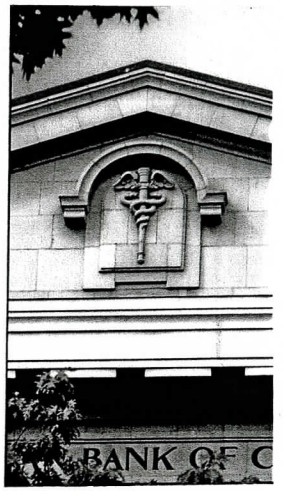
The Caduceus of Hermes was replaced by a totem pole.

A coat of arms is formally called the "Armorial Bearings" of the family or institution responsible.

In addition to the bearings granted approval in 1969, the citation from the College of Heralds granted a badge to the City of Vancouver. It shows the Mural Crown of the bearings, with crossed axe and oar, symbolic instruments of the labour on which the prosperity of the city depends. These images have legal significance. The City of Vancouver, since 1986, has decreed that only official documents of the City may show the bearings and the badge. That decision was made after the Non-Partisan Association used the coat of arms in its campaign for election that year, raising concerns that the City was supporting the Association.

It interests me that in the 1969 revision of the coat of arms, the two human figures are unchanged; they are still male, in spite of growing feminine influence in the workplace in the late 1960s. The most interesting change in the design, however, lies in the substitution of the totem pole for the caduceus.

It was presumptuous in 1903, when the City of Vancouver, then 17 years of age, chose the Caduceus of Hermes for its bearings, as if to claim lineage back to ancient Greece. However, the caduceus was a widely used symbol of commerce, based on Hermes' role as God of Commerce, Trade, and Navigation. The twin snakes coiling up a winged shaft can be found on many commercial structures in Vancouver, especially on buildings built and occupied by the Canadian Bank of Commerce. In 1867 that bank had adopted the caduceus as its emblem, issuing newsletters to its staff in a magazine titled *The Caduceus.*



CIBC Archives

In 1903, at a time when city aldermen, bankers, and other business leaders pointed with pride to the black smoke rising from a growing number of industrial smokestacks on the horizon, and from coal burning ships and trains, a symbol of commercial prosperity was the inevitable choice for the new and optimistic city. Considering our enduring quest for material prosperity throughout the 20th century, I wonder why the caduceus was removed in 1969 ? I am even more curious about the insertion of the totem pole.

According to the description of the coat of arms, as granted by the College of Heralds, the pole is a "Thunderbird Totem of Kwakiutl design". Wallis and Adams state that it shows representations of an eagle, grizzly bear, and halibut. I believe that

the totem and the caduceus have performed similar functions for very diverse cultures, and that each has blessed and protected its civilization for a very long time. But why interchange them ? Does the substitution indicate a loss of confidence in our commercial-industrial society, and a suspicion that aboriginal wisdom might be of value to us all ?

The City of Vancouver courteously replied to my questions, and sent a copy of a report that had been submitted to City Council on this subject. I was interested to read about the definitive symbolism and fastidious attention to detail involved in the design of coats of arms. According to the city report;

> Grants of armorial bearings are made by the Crown or State. They are valid forever and cannot be assumed, changed or discarded at will.
>
> Symbolic devices are timeless, and cannot be outdated. Symbols on the central shield reflect lineage, experience in warfare, travel, etc. The lion shows courage; the bear protection; the boar fierceness in battle; the horse readiness; the dragon defense; and the griffin daring.
>
> Each of 5 basic colours has meaning; gold symbolizes generosity; silver peace and honesty; red bravery, strength, justice, and generosity; blue truth and loyalty; green hope, joy, and love; black grief.
>
> Supporters, usually animal figures beside the shield, are generally restricted to corporate bodies or persons of high rank. In the Vancouver coat of arms the logger and the fisherman are the supporters.
>
> In 1988 Canada became the first Commonwealth country to establish its own heraldic office, the Canadian Heraldic Authority. The Vancouver coat of arms has not been registered with that body.
>
> The report states that; ".....The shield also features a Kwakiutl totem pole that shows our First Nations heritage,....."

Several questions were answered by the report to City Council, but to date I have no answer to two questions. Was the totem image an authentic design by an aboriginal artist, and if so who was he or she ? Second, since Vancouver is built on land (from the Fraser River to Burrard Inlet), originally occupied by the Musqueam people (of Coast Salish affiliation) why was a Kwakiutl totem selected ?

A few readings on the arts of the Coast Salish and Kwakiutl people, and a friendly conversation with an aboriginal artist in Vancouver, confirmed that the arts of aboriginal people in this area are considered to be forms of wealth more permanent and meaningful than material possessions.

Totem poles and family crests, house posts, stories and myths, songs and dances, all illustrated lineage, honor, and status within family and clan groupings. As such they were possessed, honored, and protected, (by oral tradition), in much the same way as the coats of arms granted to families and institutions by the monarchies of Europe.

Heralds were first mentioned in English history at the time of the First Crusade, 1100 A.D., and in 1484, King Richard III chartered the College of Arms to research and validate claims to nobility. Because carbon dating of the Great Fraser Midden, at Marpole in South Vancouver, has shown that aboriginal people have been at that site for 3000 years, it seems possible that the roots of Musqueam heraldry are older than those of English history.

The possibility of rivalry for prominence on the bearings between descendants of aboriginal, European, and many other cultures now visible in Vancouver, caused me to stop and think. In the process another concern became clear, the bothersome principle that armorial bearings in all cultures are designed to identify, honor, and preserve the prestige of important individuals, families and institutions.

One solution would be the abandonment of heraldic practices, freeing us from long outdated rule books of noble lineage. There is another approach not possible before this electronic and digital age. I prefer to dream of a modified coat of arms for Vancouver that looks ahead as well as back.

Low relief granite panels above entry to City Hall.

I suggest that the granite carved mural design over the entry doors of City Hall be enhanced with a new centre panel, displaying new bearings in the form of an illuminated display. In fine weather the stone carved images would remain in view, assuring us that everything is going well in Vancouver. When the weather changes, the first drops of rain will trigger an electronic display that washes out the centre panel of the stone design, and replaces it with a brilliant holographic picture of an alternating coat of arms.

The new design will show a homeless person (the bearer) taking shelter under a simple roof, with a Musqueam carving at the peak. The supporters will be a shopping cart (dexter) and a plastic bag for worldly possessions (sinister). A banner under the new bearings will proclaim that The City honors all citizens; .....

Coats of Arms
Courtesy of the Office of the City Clerk

Photographs and drawing by Arthur Allen

URSUCAST VERECUNDUS

Arthur Allen

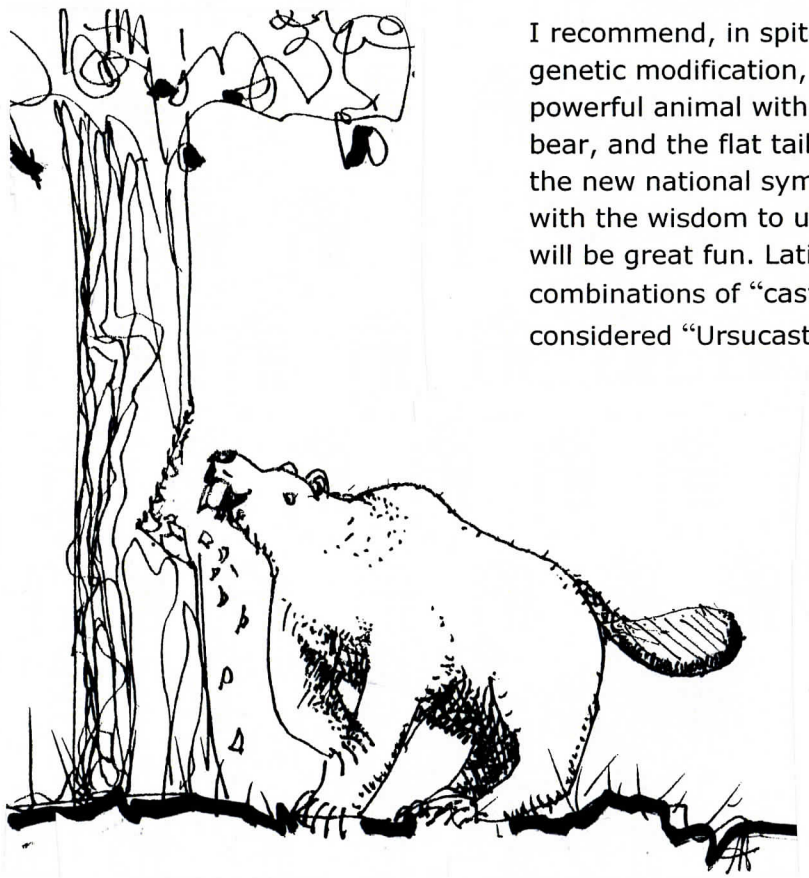
1995

Two friends in California occasionally ask me about the polite and deferential character of Canadian citizens. I have replied that we emulate our national symbol, the beaver, a cautious, suspicious, and hard-working animal conditioned during four centuries when it was cruelly trapped for its fur pelt. My American friends are of the quiet and sensitive variety, and I do value their opinions. In this case I added that while Canadians prize their gentility, many of us question the ability of our modest beaver to deal effectively with eagles when they occasionally fly north across the 49th parallel making loud noises.

A trip to the library showed that most nations and powerful financial institutions boast of their prowess by pretending to be predatory animals and birds. In a world where British Lions, Russian Bears, American and German Eagles, Chinese and Welsh Dragons, Indian Tigers, and the lions, gryphons, and serpents of various banks compete for power, Canada is among the few nations that adopt peace loving mascots.

The imbalance of power in a world where beavers struggle with much stronger creatures is worrisome. For example, the wise use of Canadian natural resources, including oil, natural gas, timber, and especially water envied by wasteful neighbors south of the 49th parallel, needs a healthy population of well-oiled, hard-working beavers. I doubt, however, that the shy beaver will be able to maintain adequate dams or succeed in global struggles where eagles, lions, gryphons, bears, dragons, and serpents now interfere with financial and national interests guarded by gentle animals. In international trade, oil and water do mix, and we must be strong and careful.

Canada's work as a peacemaker has recently changed. I hope that we will regain our earlier spirit, and follow an ancient Greek practice by creating a hybrid creature of peaceful intent, but of greater strength. In our case we could combine the size and power of the grizzly bear with the patience and forethought of the beaver. In the process we must ensure that the ferocity of the bear does not overcome the gentility of the beaver: we must be careful not to create a dangerously unpredictable beast.



I recommend, in spite of deep reservations about the ethics of genetic modification, that Canada develop a new mascot, creating a powerful animal with the strong body, legs, and claws of the grizzly bear, and the flat tail and large teeth of the beaver. Psychologically the new national symbol would be conditioned to gentle strength, with the wisdom to use it wisely. Finding a name for our new pet will be great fun. Latin, as always, will be useful, offering various combinations of "castor fiber", and "ursus arctos horribilis". I have considered "Ursucast" and "Fiberilis", but prefer "Castogrizz".

My American friends suggest; **Ursucast Verecundus**

THE PHYSIOLOGUS FOUNDATION

Arthur Allen

2009

News items, August 2002;

-- Genetic scientists have developed a featherless chicken.

-- Genes of mice and toads have been interchanged.

Considering my life to date, three score years and ten in the prairie, mountain, and coastal regions of Western Canada, and in view of the wonderful flora and fauna of this part of the world, I am ashamed to admit that for three score of those years I was ignorant and unconcerned about biology and the fate of living things. With the appearance of the bio-technology revolution, now taking much of our time and energy and raising great apprehension, I began to pay attention. I now have a simple understanding of biology, and a general picture of traditional agriculture and its efforts to improve crop quality and production by cross-pollenization and other processes of modifying plant materials. Cross-breeding of wild and domestic animals, involving cattle, bison, and yahk has interested me, and efforts to farm wild animals have caused worry, especially now with the appearance of Chronic Wasting Disease, (a variant of Mad Cow Disease), in the wild deer and elk populations of the Canadian prairies.

During a trip last summer, to visit relatives still living on the land in Saskatchewan, my readings on the dilemmas of bio-technology intensified, with a corresponding rise of the

Homo Monstrosus

After Fortunio Liceti, 1665

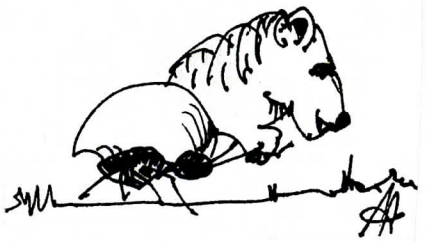
anxiety needle of my worryometer. In spite of this anxious state, one night I calmed down and went to sleep after a pleasant evening with the family during which we sniffed a little whiskey and watched a show of sheet lightning in a magnificent thunderstorm passing nearby.

I went to sleep easily, but shortly after midnight woke up with a start, with lingering images of a weird dream still on my internal video screen. The last things to fade were the images of several strange animals, including an ant-lion, with the body of an ant and head of a lion, and other preposterous creatures.

Before full consciousness could restore confidence in my sanity, I was convinced that a bolt of lightning from Zeus on the great thunderhead had short circuited my cranial mother-board. I know that ants have great strength, but I doubted the mobility of the ant-lion combination, and the mental health of a giraffe-mole which would seem to suffer emotional conflicts about whether to live underground, or browse in the tree-tops. By now I was awake, and about to file these images in a folder titled, "Strange Dreams", when I remembered reading a chapter on genetic transplantation including recent experiments on selective interchange of genes between different species of animals. There was another short circuit and the smell of hot wire in my brain. Again I questioned my sanity, but suddenly knew that I had made a great discovery; ie; the creation of hybrid animals from unlikely combinations of existing species did not originate with recent genetic science; Physiologus knew about it long ago, and H.G. Wells reminded us of the facts in 1896, in his story *"The Island of Dr. Moreau".* Physiologus clearly deserves posthumous credit for original research and discovery. Obviously the images of my dream had come from that work.

Physiologus (the Naturalist), was a book by an unknown author, (possibly Aristotle or King Solomon) published in

The Giraffe Mole



The Ant Lion

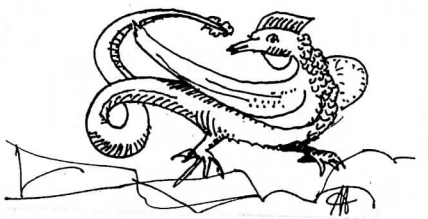
Alexandria sometime in the second to fourth centuries, B.C. (1) It is credited with a very early collection of drawings, descriptions, and opinions on the behaviour of many wild and strange animals that were believed to inhabit inaccessible wilderness areas of that time. Classical scholars may dispute an assertion of the originality of Physiologus because there are much older myths that also refer to unlikely combinations of animals, including well known goat-men, (satyrs), and eagle-lions, (gryphons), of Greek mythology. Physiologus' ideas may have been influenced by earlier myths, but I support a claim on behalf of Physiologus because it was dealing with natural science, as it was then known, not with mythical figures.

The work of Physiologus survived through many centuries, and became popular in spite of conflict with other researchers. It was influential in preparation of the *Bestiaries,* books of the beasts, of imaginative medieval times, which set forth opinions on the strange behaviour and moral significance of many improbable creatures.(2) It was finally buried, probably suppressed by jealous biologists, and lay unattended on library shelves for several centuries.

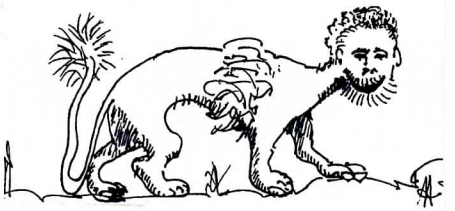
In order to celebrate my rediscovery of the wisdom of Physiologus, and to continue our endless search for truth and justice, I propose the following measures;

1. That all claims by genetic scientists concerning original creation of hybrid animals, by traditional or bio-technical methods, be declared fraudulent.

2. That credit for original research and discovery in these matters be granted (posthumously), to the author of Physiologus.



Basilisk



Manticore

3. That perpetual patents, and all profits derived from commercial activity arising from genetic transformation of animals be donated to a trust fund, The Physiologus Foundation; (scholars of Greek mythology may prefer the word Phoundation ", rather than "Fizzyologus).

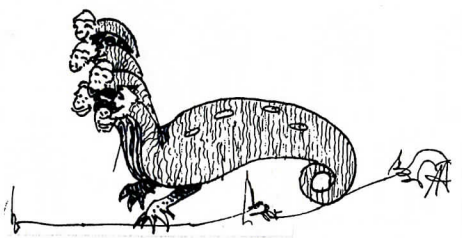
4. That the F(Ph)oundation be charged with responsibility for perpetual maintenance and repair of the animal kingdom, including all costs that may arise from unnecessary and/or unethical applications of genetic science and engineering.

I propose these measures for the benefit of all grandchildren, and hereby grant rights for the use of this document to the next generations of my extended family, on condition that they uphold high ethical standards in their creation of children, and in dealings with genetic science and engineering.

ps. Further research may be required, to resolve a possible dispute between the author(s) of Physiologus, and Empedocles, an ancient Greek thinker who believed that chimeras, (half man, half beast), developed from different animal parts that wandered around in search of each other, and combined for advantage in their struggle for survival. Possibly a suitable royalty from the (F)Phoundation would satisfy any surviving descendants of Empedocles.

1. Anne Clark, "*Beasts and Bawdy",* (London, J.M.Dent and Sons, 1975), p 26.

2. Illustrations marked, *, taken from, "*The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes*" , (London, William ?aggard), 1607), Pages not numbered, name unclear. Drawings by Arthur Allen.



* **Hydrus**