

AN EPIC

by Nina Anthony

With apologies to Longfellow

By the shining Howe Sound water
Stand the roots of Squamish town-site;
Town-site of the white and red men.
Dark behind it rise the forests,
Rise the spruce and fir and hemlock.

In '74 men drove their cattle
Down the trail from Pemberton,
Down the trail to rushing Lynn Creek,
For the logging men to feed on.

Here in Squamish where they rested
Men did think that here was pasture,
By the flat lands near the rivers
For the cows and steers to graze on.
Van Rimmer came from Moodyville
And did buy four hundred acres;
Four hundred acres of the marsh land,
And shipped his cattle here to fatten,
On the dyked land he had salvaged.

In '75 when Colonel Moody,
Who was backing young Van Rimmer;
Drowned beneath the big sea water,
The town of Squamish was abandoned,
And the cattle starved and perished,
Others eaten by the red men.

In '82 when spruce had value
Big trees stood along the Squamish,
Trees of mighty girth and tallness.
Jim McGee then brought his cattle
For to pasture near the rivers,
And did log the fir and spruce trees.

In '86 they sent Norwegians,
For to build their homes in Squamish,
And to colonize the district.
They built their houses in the lowland.
Across the river from Sobotka's.
And in the fall the rising waters
Did invade their homes and gardens.
So they moved them from the Squamish,
To the land of Bella Coola,
Where descendants still are living
With their gardens and their fishing.

Then lay Squamish lands abandoned,
Until men from far Puyallup,
Came to see if hops would grow here,
Hop farms by the river marsh lands.
And they saw that land was good here,
So they asked the men of wisdom,
For grants of land to grow their hops on.
"No" said the great men of wisdom,
We will keep it for our people,"
And they laid the valley in pre-emptions.

Bill Mashiter came in '90,
And did start a store and hotel,
For the people in the Valley
And the travellers from the city.

In '91 two things important
Happened in the Squamish Valley.
A post-office was established,
In the store beside the river,
And a boat made regular service
Up Howe Sound to Squamish landing.
Twice a week did Captain Mooney
Bring the mail and news and groceries.

In that same year there came a preacher;
A Methodist from Gibson's Landing.
And he held religious service,
In a cabin by the river,
Owned by Allan Rae of Squamish.
Then he came no more to Squamish,
And the church it was neglected,
In the valley of the mountains.

In '93 from far Vancouver,
Men came up to start a hop ranch;
On the big expansive clearing.
On the land that now is Carson's.

In '96 a young Miss Edwards,
(Who later married settler Judd),
Started worship in the Valley.
And bible classes were attended;
And the settlers on the Sabbath
Travelled to the different cabin,
Where they worshipped and held classes.

In '04 before election,
 The opposing party members
 Were to send two boats to Squamish,
 For to take their loyal supporters
 Down to Gibson's far the voting.
 Only one boat came to Squamish,
 And the Liberals were left standing,
 On the dock at Squamish landing.

In '06 a school was started,
 In the valley of the white peaks.
 And the children of the settlers
 They began to get their learning.
 The next four years were uneventful,
 In the valley of the snow peaks;
 Valley of the farms and logging.
 And the people they were prosperous.

In nineteen nine a man named Jim Gill,
 Built a railroad in the valley,
 The "Howe Sound-Pemberton Valley
 Northern,"
 Which did run as far as Cheekye.
 In nineteen eleven the Howe Sound
 Railway,
 Changed the name which then was
 Squamish,
 And the Railroad called it Newport.
 They laid it out in surveyed town lots,
 And did sell the lots for plenty.

In '13 the P.G.E. bought,
 The old Howe Sound-Northern Railroad.
 And then started the construction
 Of a railroad to the northland.
 Another town within the Province
 Also had the name of Newport;
 A contest 'mongst the Newport children
 And the name that won was "Squamish."

In 1913 there was published,
 A paper called The Squamish Standard;
 A single sheet of local happenings,
 Happenings of the growing district.

In March, '15 a train from Squamish,
 Took Officials through to Lillooet,
 And the railroad was established.
 Regular trains then ran bi-weekly,
 On this Pacific Great Eastern Railroad,
 In the month of June of '15.

In '15 was also builded
 A new two storey, four room schoolhouse;
 For the children then were many,
 In the town between the rivers.

In '16 the train was tied up,
 For about four months that winter;
 And the crew they had to ski out,
 From the little town of Pemberton.

In '19 the electric light plant,
 Was constructed by the river.
 And the Howe Sound water system,
 Was purchased by the Railroad.

In '21 when leaves were turning,
 On the trees upon the mountains,
 Heavy rains were then descended.
 And the rivers were all swollen;
 Then the little town of Squamish
 Flooded high with muddy water,
 And the people took to boating.

In '23 the streets were flooded
 Once again by the high water,
 High water from the stormy salt chuck,
 And the dykes they were all broken.

Years have passed and left their memories,
 In the minds of grand old timers,
 And the valley it has prospered
 With its logging and its Railroad.
 With its farming and its mining
 And the people should be happy
 In this valley of the snow peaks.

The poem "*An Epic*" is found in the City of Vancouver Archives' William Mashiter folder*, in the Major Mathews Collection.