



Jasper-Yellowhead Museum & Archives

Chateau Miette

Our Archive Manager, Meghan Power, loaned me an interesting file to read last month. The research file, requested from the Public Archives, was created by Wayne Brasseur for Park Superintendent Rory Flanagan in 1980. It

contains a series of letters written by representatives of the Grande Trunk Pacific Town and Development Company and the Department of the Interior concerning the proposed development of Fiddle Creek area of Jasper National Park. There were plans for a town, a hotel and even a mono rail. The first letter in the file was written in 1909 but the correspondence continues into 1914. In 1909 the park was only two years old and the railroad hadn't yet reached Fitzhugh but by 1914 the Grand Trunk Pacific had arrived and Fitzhugh had become Jasper. The letters are fascinating in their content and language but are especially interesting for the historical names. Among those mentioned are Howard Douglas, A.O. Wheeler, H.R. Charlton, Charles M. Hays, Col. Maynard Rogers and J. B. Harkin.

The first letter, written to R. H. Campbell, Superintendent of Forestry and dated March 5th, 1909 states:

Dear Sir:-

Referring to my letter to you of the 4th instant, with reference to leasing lands within the Jasper Forest Park of Canada.

I now beg to apply on behalf of the Grand Trunk Pacific Town and Development Company for the hot springs on Fiddle Creek located about 8 miles upstream from the mouth of Fiddle Creek, together with a right of way 100 feet wide between said springs and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway near the mouth of Fiddle Creek to be used for pipe line, drive way, steam or electric railway.

Yours truly,

G. U. Riley

Land Commissioner

The letters continue over five years written by a variety of commissioners, superintendents and presidents and include many reports and legal documents. It's evident that there was a great deal of frustration in the process involved in obtaining approval for the project. Also included in the file were diagrams and estimates for the mono rail mentioned

in the first letter. It consists of one ten ton locomotive followed by six ton cars. Expenses were estimated for an engineer (\$6.00 per day) and a brakeman (\$3.00 per day) for four trips per day hauling cars of gravel a distance of three and a half miles.

One of the final letters in the file, dated July 2nd, 1914, states:

Dear Sir:-

The Department have been making enquiries as to the possibility of constructing a mono-rail to the Hot

Springs at Jasper, a distance of about 12 miles. I have asked for blue prints of track and cars and other data to forward to the Department to give them an idea of the cost of the proposed line. Will you please get hot footed after the powers of D to secure

me a set of blue prints showing the track, the present car and the present gravel car. They have sent me a data as to the cost per mile but this is not sufficient we must have a plan of the track and the car, therefore, I again ask you to get busy and send me a set of blueprints. If they don't want to pay for them send them here C.O.D.

Yours faithfully,

P. C. Barnard-Hervey, Esq.

Chief Superintendent

It's hard to imagine a huge project like this on the banks of the Fiddle River. Perhaps it's a good thing that bureaucratic wheels turned so slowly and the Chateau Miette was never built.

January 2007 marks the start of centennial celebrations for Jasper National Park. The museum is planning a summer exhibit called Rough Trails and Wild Tales: A Hundred Years of Stories. We are always on the look out for artefacts, photos and documents to add to our collection. If you would like to donate items to the museum, please contact us at 852-3240 for an *Intent to Donate* form or visit our website at www.jaspermuseum.org

