

The Early Tokens of Nelson, B.C.

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Introduction

In the 1880's the Kootenays started seeing many prospectors coming into the valleys searching for minerals. The mountains, valleys and rivers in British Columbia run north-south. Transportation across them, or around them was extremely difficult. It was somewhat easier working north-south and so the first supply points were those in Washington state. But even if the prospectors found mineral deposits and managed to get a claim staked the problem was transportation.

In order to develop some cash flow the early mines that had rich ore would high-grade their ore, sorting by hand and rawhiding the ore to the lakes where they would load it on a lake steamer and get it to a smelter. Rawhiding was a winter activity. The high-grade ore was put into rawhide bags - the untanned hide of a cow or steer - and dragged down the hill by horses, or held back by the horse. All very fine unless the bag went faster than the horse. This process of rawhiding, loading on and off steamers, was very labour intensive and only high value ore would provide any return.

The development of the railways was critical. The mines needed reliable, inexpensive transportation to get the ore to a smelter. The railways needed mines to provide enough freight to pay for construction and to make a profit. It was a classic chicken and egg situation. The U.S. railroads obtained Canadian charters and built into B.C. from Washington state. The Canadian



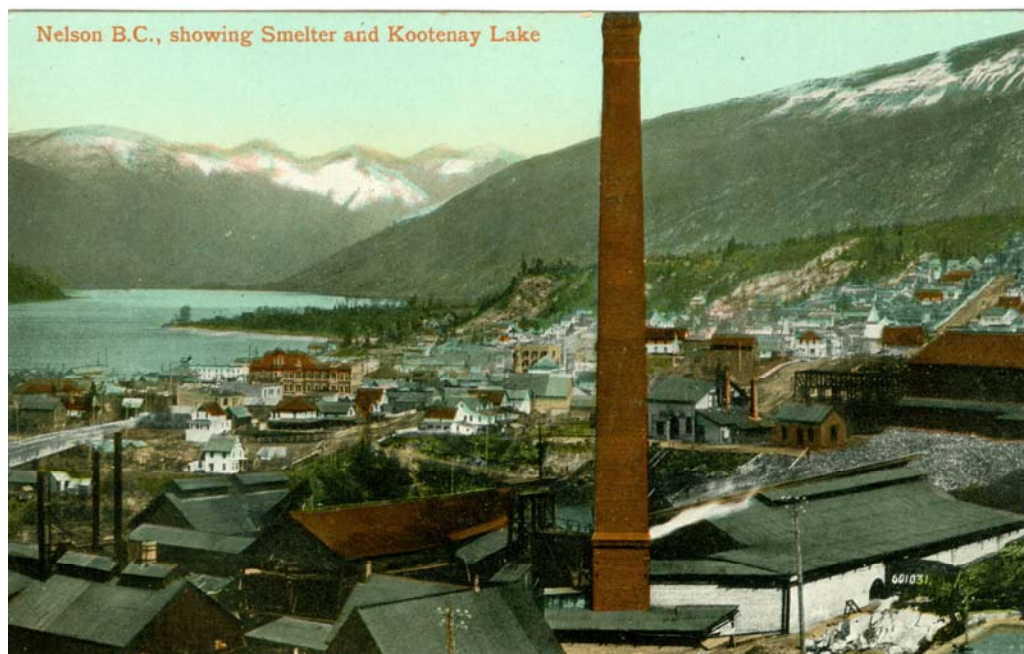
a 1914 Rand McNally Map showing Nelson to left of centre

Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) built short feeder lines between lakes, and relied on the lake steamers to connect these. Later they built railways around the lakes and constructed the Crow's Nest line in an effort to cut off the U.S. railroads.

The first major mine in the area, the *Silver King*, was located on Toad Mountain in 1886. Crop failures that summer had forced a number of individuals from Colville County, Washington to try their luck prospecting. Towards the end of the prospecting season two men of the Hall party stumbled across an outcrop of ore. The samples they took were found to be rich in copper and silver. The group came back next year and staked four claims, the *Silver King*, the *Kootenay Bonanza*, *American Flag* and the *Koh-i-noor*. The mine was ready to start producing ore in 1888. Nelson was established on the West Arm of Kootenay Lake below Toad Mountain as a transportation point. The community was first called Salisbury after the British Prime Minister, then Stanley after Lord Stanley, the Governor General of Canada (1888-1893). Finally in 1888 the name Nelson was selected in honour of Hugh Nelson, the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia (1887-1892).

The Halls and their partners had to fight off claim-jumpers, but they won the ensuing legal battle. They also needed much more capital, as the mine was a hardrock mine and thus expensive to develop. One of the partners, John McDonald, visited Scotland in 1891 to raise money, which was quickly expended, so he, Henry Croasdaile and Winslow Hall made a trip to England to seek financing. In June 1893 The Hall Mines Company, Limited was formed and purchased the mine for \$1,000,000. This U.K. incorporated company was registered in British Columbia in October 1893. With it came modern equipment, an air compressor plant, air powered drills, and ore crushing machinery.

The repeal in the U.S. of the Sherman Act following the Panic of 1893 closed many mines in the Kootenays, and the imposition of a 30% duty on lead ores closed the U.S. smelters to Canadian mines. Thus there was a push to build Canadian smelters. A smelter at Pilot Bay on Kootenay Lake was blown-in March 1895.¹ The Hall Mines Smelter was started in September 1895 and it was blown-in January 14, 1896.² At first the smelter was a small single furnace



postcard view, overlooking Nelson, c. 1905

facility with capacity of 100 tons per day, later it was expanded. The C.P.R. got involved in the Trail smelter in 1898 when its American builder, F. Augustus Heinze, decided to give up his Canadian interests to fight his Montana battles.

In these early days Nelson was truly a remote corner of the Province of British Columbia. The easiest way in or out was by steamer down the lake and river to Bonners' Ferry, then by foot or stage to Kootenai Station on the Pend d' Oreille to catch the Northern Pacific Railroad to Seattle, then by steamship to Victoria or Vancouver. A second way was by the Kootenay River to Colville, Washington, where the Spokane Falls and Northern Railroad could be caught. The third way was by C.P.R. train to Revelstoke, then down the river and Arrow Lakes to the Kootenay River which passes Nelson.

The lack of efficient transportation meant that the cost of freight was very high. As a result prices in Nelson were high, but it nonetheless developed as a regional supply centre. It remained awkward to travel east or west from Nelson until the C.P.R. built the Crow's Nest Line, after which transportation was much easier. The banks seemed reluctant to pay to bring coins in, there wasn't much demand for them, and it wasn't until the First World War that Nelson was to join "the cent belt," in other words to see the first one cent coins in circulation. As a result there are many more token issuers in Nelson than one would expect from a small city. The 1890 population was 250, but 450 people made it their headquarters. In the Canada Census for 1901 the population was 4,510 which was significant, compared to Vancouver with 26,000.³

The Silver King mine was more or less exhausted by 1902 and the company leased the mine out to its former mine superintendent on a share basis. Without a guaranteed source of ore, the Nelson smelter had to handle custom ore and its copper "stack" was converted to processing lead so that it could utilize the Slocan ores. The Hall Mines Smelter closed in September 1907. It was unable to compete with the Trail smelter as it was designed specifically for the ore coming out of the Silver King mine, which was unlike anything else in the Kootenays. In September 1911 the dormant plant burned down, the victim of a "firebug." With the closing of the



*Baker Street
c. 1912*

smelter, Nelson entered into a long quiet period. The lack of economic activity meant that there was little pressure to redevelop the town and today it has a wonderful collection of 1890's and early 1900's brick buildings.

Licensed premises at one point included five saloons, the Athabasca, the Bodega, the Manhattan, the Office and the Glue Pot, plus a number of licensed hotels. After 1914 provincial liquor regulations eliminated stand-alone saloons. From that time to have a license one had to have a hotel of a certain standard. Prohibition came into effect on October 1, 1917, but only lasted a few years. A study of the liquor regulations of British Columbia would earn more than one Ph.D.

Not all known tokens from early Nelson are illustrated or listed herein.

Hall Mines Canteen



N3720b:Aluminum:Round:33 mm⁴

The Hall Mines, Limited was incorporated in the United Kingdom in June 1893 and registered in British Columbia in October of the same year. The company operated a boarding house at the mine site on Toad Mountain. The company was re-organized in 1900 as the Hall Mining & Smelting Co., Ltd., incorporated in June 1900. The mine appeared to be exhausted by 1902 and was leased out to the former mine manager on a profit sharing basis. It was reopened in 1908.

The associated smelter, situated in Nelson, occupied thirteen acres of ground and was one of the largest plants of its kind in Canada. It was closed in September 1907 unable to compete with the Trail Smelter. The plant was destroyed by arson on September 6, 1911. The Canteen was undoubtedly at the mine site. It acquired a liquor licence from November 1899.

International Hotel

The hotel was opened in July 1890, one of the first hotels in Nelson. William Hunter and James Dawson were the first operators. By Feb 1891 Bruce Craddock took over Hunter's interest and Dawson & Craddock operated the hotel until it was destroyed by fire in January 1894. Dawson & Craddock did not rebuild, but took over a hotel at Halcyon Hot Springs.



N3965a:Brass:Scalloped:29 mm



N3965d:Brass:Round:30 mm

The story of the International hotel's destruction mentioned that, "...The main building was a 2-story frame, with a frontage on Vernon street of 50 feet and a depth of 50 feet on Stanley street. It was erected in 1890 and added to in 1892, at a cost of \$5,000. It was one of the few hotels in Nelson that was always run as a hotel and not merely as a saloon. The building and contents were insured ... for \$3,000, and the loss will be fully \$3,000 more ..."

Nelson News Depot



N4710a:Aluminum:Round:30½ mm

The Stanley brothers came from Quebec to Vancouver in 1889 where they opened a photographic studio. Gilbert moved to Nelson in the spring of 1892 with his brother Edward Hall Stanley, known as 'Ned,' and established a photographic studio. Within a year Gilbert Stanley had given up the this business and opened a news and tobacco stand. It later morphed into a book and stationery store. Gilbert and his wife had their first and only child, a daughter in September 1904, but she lived only four days. When he died in 1915 he was the only surviving charter member of the local Masonic lodge. He was survived by his wife and his brother, who passed away July 17, 1924, apparently unmarried.

Nelson Hotel



N4660a:German Silver: Round (star cutout): 21mm



N4660c:Aluminum:Round: 25 mm



N4655a:Brass:Round:21 mm



N4660d:Brass:Round:25½ mm

The newspaper, *The Daily Miner*, was first published in June 1890. By the third issue the Nelson House, operated by A.J. Marks and Charles Van Ness was advertising as the largest hotel in Nelson. By Feb. 28, 1891 it was already expanding "Ground was broke [sic] on Friday for an

addition to the Nelson house. The addition will be 2 stories high, with a frontage of 24 feet on Baker street, and have a depth of 70 feet. Thirty feet will also be added to the present building. This will make the hotel 50 x 70 feet, 2 stories high. There will be 28 bed-rooms, beside parlor, billiard, and club rooms. Marks & Van Ness, the owners, claim that they intend to keep fully abreast with the requirements of Nelson, and do not purpose allowing any hotel in the lake country to lead the 'Nelson' ..."

Charles Van Ness left Nelson in September 1891 to try his hand at mining in Mexico, leaving Marks to manage the business, which he did until February 1897 when he leased the Nelson Hotel to Mr. Stephen White of Brandon, "...Mr. A.J. Marks, the proprietor, retires from the business and will devote his time to mines and mining...."

White sold his interests, the lease and the furnishings to Clements & Reisterer in June 1900, and left for the east shortly afterwards. Arthur Vaughan of the Manhattan Saloon bought out Clements' interest in May 1901. The restaurant was operated by a number of different operators over the years.

Charles Van Ness was living in Rossland in 1899 when he died suddenly while visiting Grand Forks. This proved interesting as two different death certificates were issued for him which makes one wonder if he had used up the last two of his nine lives! His body was sent to his home town of Clinton, Indiana for burial. His old partner, A.J. Marks, passed away in 1904.

The hotel passed to Ink and Boyd in November 1904 and in 1906 Boyd retired, to be replaced by W.A. Ward. Ink and Ward were still running the hotel at the end of 1909. The hotel was destroyed by fire in May 1922. We will look at Ink and Boyd more closely under the Manhattan Saloon.

Athabasca and Bodega saloons



N2910a:

German Silver: Round (triangular cut-out):21 mm



N3010a

Brass: Round (holed): 21 mm

The Bodega token is bifacial except that the maker's name, "J.C. Irving, S.F." appears on the reverse. A German Silver example is also known.

James Neelands transferred the Athabasca Saloon to Patrick Russell in April 1900. The saloon was not mentioned previously in any issue of the newspapers but was first listed in the 1899 directory. In 1901 the Athabasca added a free lunch to attract business. Unfortunately Russell went broke in the fall of 1901. A trustee ran the business until it could be sold to E.J. Brown and E. Ferguson. Ferguson was out by May 1905. The saloon appears to be part of a hotel as it was occasionally entered in the directories as the Athabasca Hotel, but the saloon was the focus of the operations. In later years the hotel became the Savoy. The saloon would have closed on October 1, 1917 when Prohibition came into effect. The token was listed in the McColl Sale of 1903 as #259.

Abe Johnson opened the Bodega Saloon in November 1898 but not without some difficulty in obtaining his license. H. Colin Cummins took over the cigar and tobacco concession by April 1899, but later Johnson and R.E. Smith were operating it as well. Smith bought out Johnson in December 1899, but by March 1900 had sold to W.G. Robinson. In October 1902 Robinson sold the business to Davison and Walmsley, the latter being a partner in the Gluepot Saloon. A fellow named William Muller was shot in the saloon in October 1900, and on Dec. 26, 1900 the Jeffries-Sharkey fight was shown by a projectoscope set up in the saloon. The last mention of the Bodega Saloon was 1912. McColl, #261.

The Manhattan Saloon, Ink & Boyd



N4310b: German Silver: Round: 25 mm

N4310c: German Silver: Round: 25 mm

W.A. McVeigh, the owner of the Manhattan, died in September 1897. Strangely this was the first mention of the Manhattan Saloon. Charles Waterman sold the Manhattan in March 1901 to Charles H. Ink and Siegel "Doc" Boyd. Boyd had been a bartender at the Manhattan until he and Frank A. Brewer leased the bars on board three of the C.P.R. lake steamers in November 1898 with Boyd reported as running the bar on the *S.S. Nelson* until the *Moyie* was ready to run. The *S.S. Moyie* is now a museum ship in Kaslo. Charles H. Ink had been a partner with John Houston in *The Daily Miner* - Ink being an appropriate name for a printer - until 1892 and continued to be a printer (foreman) in Nelson until his death, although involved in such outside operations as the Manhattan, and later the Nelson Hotel.

Ink and Boyd sold the Manhattan to H.H. Pitts and Tom Rankin in November 1903, at the same time purchasing the Nelson Hotel business. Rankin sold his share in the business to J.J. Langridge in March 1904, and Pitts and Langridge ran the business until March 1906 when Archibald Reid purchased the saloon and changed its name to the No Place Inn. The name had reverted to the Manhattan by 1910. In 1911 a young Englishman shot and killed two men in the saloon.

Queen Cigar Store





N5660a: Brass: Round: 21 mm: Bifacial



N3250c: Brass: Round: 24 mm
(attribution not confirmed)

Crow & Morris, Rossland tobacconists who operated The Queen Cigar Store opened a branch in Nelson in April 1900, with Max Crow being the resident partner. They also opened a branch in Greenwood as the Queen Cigar Company. In October 1901 they decided to concentrate on their Rossland business and closed down their branches, selling the fixtures in the Nelson store to H.J. (Jasper) Phair, son of E.E. Phair of the Phair Hotel, who carried on as the Queen Cigar Store. In April 1904 Dan McNichol and Harold Smyth purchased the business from Jasper Phair who was planning to take a trip to California, then the World's Fair before returning to Nelson. In February 1905 Jasper joined his father in Spokane where E.E. Phair was running the Grand Hotel. The father eventually came back to Nelson, but we haven't been able to find Jasper after 1905. Note the odd denomination of 5 only 12½¢ cigars. A number of Nelson tobacconists used this denomination which we have not seen anywhere else. The original Queen Cigar Store token, N5660a, was listed by McColl, #238.



N5460d:
Aluminum: Rectangular: 32½ x 19½ mm



N6310a:
Aluminum: Octagonal: 25 mm

McNichol left the partnership in the Queen Cigar in December 1904 and Smyth carried on until May 2, 1907 when the Howard Bush and Gus Matthew took over the Queen Cigar Store. Bush and Matthew advertised in The Daily Canadian until the last issue, May 2, 1908. In early September 1908 the Bush Brothers advertised as proprietors of the Queen Cigar Store and continued to run it until 1923 when Harold Bush bought out his brother, Arthur. Harold continued to operate the business for many years. He passed away at age 99 in December 1969.



Bush Bros.



N3080a: Brass: Round: 21 mm



N3060a:
Aluminum: Octagonal: 26½ mm



N3060f:
Aluminum: Rectangular: 32½ x 19½ mm

Sherbrooke House, Joseph Sturgeon



N6160b: Aluminum: Octagonal: 25 mm

Joseph Sturgeon was first mentioned in early 1896 when he applied for a liquor licence for his Home Restaurant. In 1897 he was fined \$2 and \$1 costs for speeding over a bridge - exceeding 8 m.p.h. and not proceeding at a walk. He was running the Sherbrooke House by the end of 1899. The hotel was named after his hometown of Sherbrooke, Quebec. There are as many references to Sherbrooke Hotel as there are to Sherbrooke House. In 1901 the verandahs of all the hotels, including the Sherbrooke, were taken down as they had been built over the sidewalks. Later that year the sidewalk in front of the hotel was raised to match the new street level. Sturgeon built an 18 room addition to the hotel in the spring of 1901. Like a lot of others in Nelson he was interested in one or more mining claims. He sold the hotel to J. Boyer in August 1905. Boyer had a hotel in Ymir which he left in the hands of his brother.

After Sturgeon sold the Sherbrooke House he took some time off, then tried running a general store, but returned to the hotel business by buying the Club Hotel after only a few months. In November 1908 he was reported as the owner of the Goldhill townsite, on the Lardo river. When his health deteriorated he tried ranching. Joseph Sturgeon died of cirrhosis of the liver in February 1910. The Sherbrooke Hotel was torn down in 1994.

J.W. Gallagher



N3560a: Aluminum: Octagonal: 25 mm

James William Gallagher first advertised in December 1904 and there were no references to him earlier, although a 1922 advertisement stated since April 1, 1900. He ran a general store,

including groceries, but sold his stock to Joseph Sturgeon, formerly of the Sherbrooke House in February 1906. Sturgeon bought the Club Hotel only a few months later so didn't remain in the merchandise business for long. A credit directory published later in 1906 showed Gallagher in business and he remained in business until 1931. He was not listed in the 1932 city directory. He passed away in 1943 in Nelson, aged 79. The store was located at 102 Baker Street, down by the station.

Fairview Grocery, G. Fleming & Son



N3460a:
Aluminum: Octagonal: 25 mm



N3460b
Brass: Octagonal: 25 mm

George Fleming seems to have flown under the radar so to speak. The first newspaper reference to him is in early 1908 when he was said to be planning to build a new store. He occupied the store in December 1908 at which time it was said that he had started the first grocery store in Fairview eight years before. His store was the first two story brick structure to be built in Fairview. Ross Fleming took over from his father in September 1910 and remained in business until 1953 when he retired.

Cabinet Cigar Store, G.B. Matthew



N3160a:
German Silver: Round (sq. hole): 21 mm



N3160c:
Aluminum: Round: 25 mm



N3160d: Aluminum: Round: 25 mm

Gustave B. Matthew was an American who ran a tobacconist's shop in Ymir. In October 1899 he bought the Nelson Cigar Store from R. Ince and moved to Nelson. By March 1900 he was advertising as the Cabinet Cigar Store. In May 1901 he and John Henry Matheson, a barber, rented an entire building between them. In 1906 Gus had cleared 5 acres of a 118 acre ranch he owned nine miles west of Nelson, which he put up for sale. Later he had a ranch on Kootenay Lake to which he retired, leasing the Cabinet Cigar Store in April 1919 to John Daly, formerly of Ymir. Unfortunately he had to take the business back in the 1920's. He finally retired in the mid 1930's. There are many reports through the years of his fishing expeditions on Kootenay Lake. Several of his tokens have survived in the family, his great-grandson being a B.C. token collector. For a short time, between May 1907 and September 1908 he was a partner with Howard Bush in the Queen Cigar Store. N3160a was listed by McColl, #257. There is also a Matthews' Cigar Store token (N4360) which may have been used in B.C. by Gus Matthew, prior to his coming to Nelson.

Columbia Cigar Store

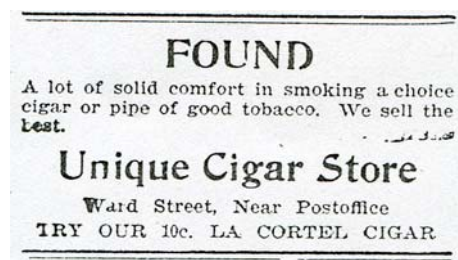


N3260a: German Silver: Round (crescent shaped hole): 21 mm

In 1901 Frank Graham was in partnership with John Henry Matheson, Matheson & Graham, barbers. In early June 1901 he opened Columbia Cigar Store at 212 Baker St. By the time of the 1903 directory he was no longer listed in the city. The years 1901 through 1903 were tough times in Nelson as metal prices were low and most of the mines were not operating.

In the late 1990's a small hoard of these tokens (10+) was found in Alberta, all were dug and blackened. The crescent cut-outs are known facing right and left on the obverse.

Unique Cigar Store



N6710a: Brass: Round: 21 mm

William Henry Dowsing was listed as early as the 1898 working as an agent or broker of real estate and mines. When the real estate business slumped he also became a tobacconist. The earliest reference to him and Unique Cigar Store was April 2, 1904 when he was quoting as being glad to see Gilbert Stanley out and about after an illness. Dowsing's first advertisement for the Unique appears to have been August 19, 1904 and his last was January 20, 1905. He was not listed in the 1905 BC Directory and there are no births, marriages or deaths recorded for anyone named Dowsing in British Columbia.

The Hume Hotel



N3750b: Aluminum: Cloverleaf: 29½ mm

J. Fred Hume, a native of New Brunswick, was an early resident of Nelson. He was a general merchant until mid 1894 when he sold that business but retained ownership of the Hume Block. In March 1898 he and his brother, Horace, opened the Hume Hotel. By June they were already building additional rooms. Horace was the hotel manager while J. Fred successfully ran for the provincial legislature in 1894. In 1898 he entered the Cabinet of Premier Semlin, remaining until the 1900 general election at which time he retired from provincial politics.

The hotel had a billiard and pool room, a barber shop and a cigar stand. In 1899 it also had two bear cubs which were kept in a compound beside the hotel.

In April 1901, Fred bought out Horace who had been suffering ill health and had been through two bouts of typhoid fever. Fred and his family moved back to Nelson from Victoria. Over the next few years his main interest seems to have been adding ore specimens to his display cabinet in the lobby. The hotel was sold in mid 1907. The Hume Hotel name has recently been reinstated, after being known as the Heritage Inn for some years. It is still operating in 2009.

Grand Central Hotel



N3660a:

German Silver: Round: 21 mm



N3660b:

German Silver: Round (crescent shaped hole): 21mm

The Grand Central Hotel was operating by 1897. The proprietors, Farley & Simpson, added forty rooms in June 1898 which made it one of the larger hotels in Nelson. The owners of the Lakeview Hotel, A. Thomas and Gus Erickson purchased the Grand Central on April 23, 1901, for \$20,000. Erickson took over the management of the Grand Central. In September 1905 the partners dissolved their joint hotel ownership, Thomas taking control of the Lakeview and Erickson taking the Grand Central. They remained partners in their joint mining interests. Erickson took a trip to Sweden in May 1906, the first time he had been back to his native country in 18 years. He continued to run the Grand Central for many years. A disastrous fire destroyed the hotel on October 13, 1920.

Russell & Thurman, and W.A. Thurman



N5910a:
Brass: Round: 21 mm

N6660a:
German Silver:
Round (holed): 21 mm

N6660c:
Aluminum: Scalloped: 28½mm

Russell and Thurman were partners in a tobacco shop from 1895 until 1898 when they parted company. Billy Thurman continued to run the business until the early 1930's. His brother was employed as a clerk, but apparently was not a partner. More than twenty years ago we interviewed Billy's son and wrote an article which appeared in the Transactions 1984, p. 43. Both the brass and the German Silver tokens were listed by McColl, #260 and #247 respectively.

Semaphore Cigar Store



N6060a
Brass: Round: 21 mm

N6060b
Brass: Round: 21 mm

The Daily News for Feb. 21, 1908 mentions that "T.J. Williams has opened a billiard parlor and cigar stand in the old Bank of Commerce building, corner of Stanley and Baker streets, and has in place an English billiard table, an American billiard table and a pool table, all of the finest make. Mr. Williams formerly was a locomotive engineer on the C.B. and Q. railway, and in choosing a name for his place of business has stuck to railway parlance by calling it The Semaphore." A later advertisement placed the business at 324 Baker Street. In April 1909 Williams sold the business to Messrs A.J. McDonnell & D.R. McDougall. Sometime before 1912 McDonnell had left the business, but this fact was not reported in the newspapers. In October 1912 McDougall sold the business to A.G. Gelinas who ran it for many years. He dropped the name Semaphore about 1928.

Note that the tokens say Williams and Dooner. We have not found the name Dooner in Nelson, and Williams seemed to be on his own when he opened and when he sold the business, so the question is whether Dooner was a dog who spent his hours in the store as the official greeter!

A.G. Gelinas



N3610e: Aluminum: Round: 24 mm

N3610d: Aluminum: Round (holed): 30½ mm

A.G. Gelinas is a later issuer of tokens, starting in 1912 when he purchased the Semaphore Cigar Store from D.R. McDougall. Sometime about 1928 he began trading as Gelinas Cigar Store and continued into the 1960's. One of his several tokens, N3610e, was a denomination peculiar to Nelson.

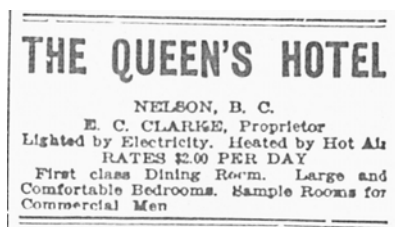
Queen's Hotel, Mrs. E.C. Clarke



N5710a: Brass: Round: 21 mm

Mrs. Elizabeth C. Clarke came to Nelson from Calgary where she had been associated with the Royal Hotel. She ran the Clarke Hotel for two years until May 1898 when she took on the lease of the Queen's Hotel. We assume that she was separated from her husband as the license was in her name, the 1901 Canada Census showed her as a married woman, head of the household and she was a Roman Catholic. British Columbia liquor license laws permitted women to hold licenses only when they were not living with their husband. She had two daughters and a son, James, who entered McGill medical school in 1904. In August 1908 Mrs. Clarke retired and the 1911 Census showed her living on her own means. However, following the sudden death of Thomas Madden she took over the Madden House for several years from late 1912 to 1917. She was living in Nelson in 1922, but may have left the province later as she neither remarried nor died in British Columbia.

Below: two ads, but the same person running the hotel



Humphreys & Pittock



N3860a: Brass: Round: 21 mm



HP & Co.

N3860b: Brass: Round: 21 mm: Uniface
(attribution not confirmed)

Thomas Stanley Humphreys opened a fruit stand and confectionery in late 1898. By early 1899 he had been joined by his cousin, John Whistance Pittock. Unfortunately the business failed and the stock was sold off in December 1899. They had shared premises with Frank Tamblyn who was running the Nelson Wine Company. After the business collapsed Pittock returned to Idaho where he sold real estate. In 1906 he married Frank Tamblyn's daughter, Stella. He was stricken with diabetes and died in 1908. Humphreys worked next as a bookkeeper, then started with the C.P.R. as a car repairman. He worked at Eholt, Grand Forks, and then at Beavermouth, on the main line. In the early 1920's it is believed that he was hit by a locomotive and suffered brain damage. He was institutionalized for the last 15 years of his life. A sad ending for both partners. A more detailed article on the firm and its founders has been published in the Transactions 2001, p. 22. N3860a was listed by McColl, #229a.

Frank A. Tamblyn



N6610a: Brass: Round: 21 mm

Frank Tamblyn was born in Ontario. For a time he homesteaded in Manitoba, arriving in the Kootenays by 1897. He prospected for a time, then ran a hotel in Ymir. In May 1898 he bought the Nelson Wine Company which had been started in September 1897, and ran it for several years. The newspapers don't mention it closing, but in 1904 he was a bartender on the *S.S. Moyie* and his wife was operating the Nelson Café. In 1905 he was offered an opportunity in Moscow, Idaho and left Nelson. A more detailed article is in the Transactions 2001, p. 27. McColl, #240.

Silver King Hotel



N6210a: Brass: Round: 21 mm

The Silver King Hotel opened in April 1891. The partnership of Mahoney & Johnson lasted just over a year when Mahoney left to go to Slocan Lake. Johnson continued to run the hotel until his death from pneumonia in October 1897. The hotel had a series of proprietors, who may or may not have been the owners of the building. When Joseph Harwood took over in December 1901 he changed the name to the Imperial Hotel, but A. Kleinschmedt restored the name in November 1902. By 1908 there had been five or six more proprietors. We do not know which proprietor issued the token. The name was changed to the Occidental Hotel by 1918.

Eli Sutcliffe



N6560a: Brass: Round: 21 mm

Eli Sutcliffe was a native of England. He came to Canada at age 21 and settled at Moosomin, Sask. about 1887. In the late 1890's he moved to Kaslo, then Sandon, finally settling in Nelson. Here he ran a barber shop on Baker Street, selling tobacco, fishing tackle and some other lines. He appears to have retired about 1933, but then moved to Ymir where once more he entered the tonsorial profession. He died in May 1942.

Nelson Street Railway



N4810a: Aluminum: Octagonal: 20 mm



N4810b: Aluminum: Round: 19 mm

The Nelson Electric Tramway Company was an English firm that established the streetcar system in Nelson. The first spike was driven August 1, 1899. With never more than two cars in operation and 3 miles of track it was the smallest system in the British Empire. It ran into serious problems quite regularly and the city took over the operation on a profit/loss sharing basis in 1905. A fire destroyed the car barns and equipment in April 1908 and it was not until 1910 that the Nelson Street Railway arose phoenix-like from the ashes and re-established the streetcar system, which operated until 1949. There are two references, neither of which mentions the tokens, and the Atwood-Coffee catalogue (6th edition) does not date the tokens. The tokens were introduced in the 1920's.

Douglas V. Parker, *Nelson Street Railway*, Bulletin No. 3 of the British Columbia Railway Historical Association, 1961

Art Joyce, *Hanging Fire and Heavy Horses, A History of Public Transit in Nelson*, City of Nelson, 2000

Vienna Bakery

In 1897 this was called the oldest bakery in Nelson. It has founded by John Humer in July 1893 and also was a restaurant. Humer sold to Robert Hurry in May 1897 and he in turn sold to the Robinsons of the Palace Bakery in April 1901. The Palace Bakery was, in turn, bought out by the Star Bakery, the Choquette Bros., in September 1904.



N6859a: Aluminum: Square: 24



N6859b: Aluminum: Square: 24



N6860c: Aluminum: Square: 24

Star Bakery, Choquette Bros.



N6410a
Aluminum: Rectangular 32 x 19 mm



N6410b:
Aluminum: Rectangular: 38 x 19 mm



According to an 1899 advertisement the Star Bakery was established in 1895. But the first mention of it in the newspapers was in mid 1899, although the proprietor, R.G. Joy, was added to the voters' list in January 1899 because he had a business license. Joy sold much of his bread through grocery stores, but he did open a Baker Street store in September 1899. He sold the business to L.H. Choquette of Trail, as of May 15, 1902. In December of that year Joy purchased a grocery store and remained in that business the rest of his working life. In the 1940's he wrote a newspaper column of historical reminiscences about old Nelson.

L.H. and Arthur Choquette bought R.G. Joy's Star Bakery, which they ran for many years. In September 1904, during a very slow time in Nelson, they purchased the business of one of their main competitors. Their advertisement at the time read:

“Consolidation of Bakeries. Choquette Brothers have purchased the Palace Bakery on Ward Street. There was not room in Nelson for two bakeries to live and make any profit. Flour is advancing in price and as Choquette Bros. did not desire to raise the cost of bread they hit on the plan of purchasing their competitors’ establishment. By securing all of the bread trade they say they will be enabled to keep bread at present prices and in this way the public will really get the benefit of the consolidation which they have affected. It would be necessary to raise the price of bread had the trade been divided between the two establishments, but as it is the price will be the same as heretofore.

The Palace Bakery on Ward street has been closed and the customers will be served at the shop on Baker Street. There will be a fine line of pies and cakes kept on hand to suit everybody. Mother’s bread, the same as was sold by the Palace Bakery, will be kept on hand. Send your orders in. Phone 205.”

L.H. Choquette served as Mayor of Nelson in the early 1920’s. Their other tokens are not shown.

O.K. Bakery



N5209a: Aluminum: Scallop9: 28½ mm



N5210a: Aluminum: Scallop10: 29 mm

David Crawford and R.B. Hay started the bakery in 1904. In 1906 Crawford withdrew and Hay carried on. At the beginning of November 1920 he sold the business to the Kelderman family and they introduced a new token, which is unusual because it is dated. Their tokens were subsequently counterstamped by later operators of the bakery (not illustrated). Hay later ran a bakery in Trail. An article on the bakery by Leslie C. Hill was published in the Transactions 1975, p. 86.

S.J. Gridley’s Bakeries



N3675a: Aluminum: Square: 25 mm



N6010a: Aluminum: Square: 26 mm

S.J. Gridley, an Englishman, moved to Nelson, worked for Choquette Bros. for about two years, then moved to Winnipeg to work in the T. Eaton bakery. After two years he returned to Nelson and worked for the Choquette Bros. until 1917. He left them to work for Ledingham’s Scotch Bakery, first noted in 1914. When Ledingham left for the old country in 1919 Gridley

bought him out. Gridley operated as the Scotch Bakery until November 1922, when he moved and opened the Palace Confectionery and Electric Bakery. He retired due to ill health c.1930. His obituary, April 28, 1933, mentioned that he was married but there were no children. His brother, Herbert Charles “Bert” Gridley died unmarried at age 74, November 22, 1957. He had worked for the Choquettes and later for his brother.

The Nelson and Pioneer Dairies



N4510b: Aluminum: Oval: 32 x 21 mm



N5510a: Aluminum: Oval: 31½ x 21½ mm



N5520d: Aluminum: Round: 25 mm



N5515b: Aluminum: Square: 22½ mm

Very little appeared in the press on either of these dairies. In 1903, McGregor and Towner bought out R. Laird [Leard?] and F. Hurry was called the pioneer dairyman of Nelson in 1905, but did his dairy have a name? Slightly contradictory information in A.C. “Ike” Towner’s obituary said that he and Alex Moore were operating the Pioneer Dairy by 1901. They sold out in August 1913. Which operator of the dairy issued N5510a is unknown. Other tokens are known but not illustrated. Towner later went on to run the Occidental Hotel in Nelson, then the Allan Hotel in Rossland.

Royal Shoe Store, R.A. Andrew & Co.



N5860b: Aluminum: Round: 25 mm

The company was in business in 1902 and R.A. Andrew took it over in 1904 and operated for many years. We surmise that the shoe business wasn’t as fascinating to the editors as the liquor trade for there were no mentions of the company or Mr. Andrew encountered in the newspapers. He did, however, advertise on a regular basis.

Pastime Billiard Hall



N5360b: Brass: Round: 21 mm

This is a late 1920's piece, but we included it because 6¾¢ is a highly unusual denomination. It is likely an engraving error.

Appendix I A list of all the known Nelson tokens from before WWII, dated to the best of our present knowledge:

N2910	Athabasca Hotel	1899 - 1917	(renamed Savoy)
N3010	Bodega Saloon	1898 - 1912	
N3060	Bush, H.	1923 - 1948	(Queen Cigar)
N3080	Bush Bros.	1908 - 1923	(Queen Cigar)
N3160	Cabinet Cigar Store	1899 - 1935	(see N4360)
N3250	C. & M.	1900 - 1901	
N3260	Columbia Cigar Store	1901 - 1902	
N3455	Fairview Dairy	... ? ...	
N3460	Fairview Grocery	1900 - 1953	
	as G. Fleming & Son	1905 - 1910	
N3560	Gallagher, J.W.	1900 - 1931	
N3610	Gelinas, A.G.	1912 - c. 1960	
	as Semaphore Cigar Store	1912 - 1928	
	as Gelinas Cigar Store	1928 - c. 1960	
N3660	Grand Central Hotel	1897 - 1920	
N3675	Gridley's Electric Bakery	1922 - 1930	(see N6010)
N3720	Hall Mines Canteen	1899 - 1902	
N3750	Hotel Hume	1898 - 1917	(still operating)
N3860	Humphreys & Pittock	Feb to Dec 1899	
N3960	Ink & Boyd	1901 - 1906	
	as The Manhattan Saloon	1901 - 1903	
	as Nelson Hotel	1904 - 1906	
N3965	International Hotel	1890 - 1894	
N4060	Kerr's Billiard Hall	1904 - 1923	
N4095	Kirby & Bush	1927 - 1932	
N4160	Kootenay Valley Co-Op. Dairy	1923 - 1964	(token use 1951-1964)
N4210	Ledingham's Bakery	1922 - 1936	
N4310	Manhattan Saloon, The	1901 - 1903	(Ink & Boyd)
N4360	Matthew's Cigar Store	b. 1899	(see N3160)
N4410	Maurer, Geo.	1910 - 1914	
N4510	Nelson Dairy	1903 - 1930	

N4655	N [Nelson Hotel]	1890 - 1922	
N4660	Nelson Hotel	1890 - 1922	(six point star cut-out)
	Nelson Hotel, M. & V.	1890 - 1896	(Marks & Van Ness)
N4710	Nelson News Depot	1895 - 1915	(Gilbert Stanley)
N4760	Nelson Recreation Club	1923 - 1931	
N4810	Nelson Street Railway	1910 - 1949	(token use began 1920's)
	(operated as Nelson Electric Tramway from 1899 until 1908)		
N5208	O.K. Bakery, Crawford & Hay	1899 - 1906	(tokens unknown)
N5209	O.K. Bakery, R.B. Hay	1906 - 1920	
N5210	O.K. Bakery, Kelderman	1921 - 1923	
N5211	O.K. Bakery, Smith & Green	1923 - 1935	
N5212	O.K. Bakery, Rex Little	1935 - 1950	
N5360	Pastime Billiard Parlor		
	Joe Manfrido	[likely not from Nelson, maybe Northport, WA, although pieces have been found in Nelson]	
	Pastime Billiard Hall	c. 1928	
N5460	Phair, H.J.	1901 - 1904	(Queen Cigar)
N5510	Pioneer Dairy	... ? ...] further
N5515	Pioneer Dairy, Towner & Moore	1908 - 1913] information
N5520	Pioneer Dairy, Leard	- 1903] required
N5660	Queen Cigar Store	1900 - 1948	
	Crow & Morris	1900 - 1901	
	H.J. Phair	1901 - 1904	(see N5460)
	McNichol & Smyth	1904	(tokens unknown)
	W.H. Smyth	1904 - 1907	(see N6310)
	Bush & Matthew	1907 - 1908	(tokens unknown)
	Bush Bros.	1908 - 1923	(see N3080)
	H. Bush	1923 - 1948	(see N3060)
N5710	Queen's Hotel, E.C. Clarke	1898 - 1908	
N5810	Royal Canadian Legion	c. 1923 -	(service check)
N5860	Royal Shoe Store	1904 - 1945	
N5910	Russell & Thurman	1896 - 1898	(see N6660)
N6010	Scotch Bakery, S.J. Gridley	1919 - 1922	(see N3675)
N6060	Semaphore Cigar Store	1908 - 1928	
	T.J. Williams	1908 - 1909	
	McDonnel & McDougall	1909 -	(tokens unknown)
	D.R. McDougall	- 1912	(tokens unknown)
	A.G. Gelinas	1912 - 1928	(see N3610)
N6110	Club 777	- 1912 -	
N6160	Sherbrooke House, J. Sturgeon	1899 - 1905	
N6210	Silver King Hotel	1891 - 1917	
N6310	Smyth, W.H.	1904 - 1907	(Queen Cigar)
N6410	Star Bakery, Choquette Bros.	1902 - 1943	
N6460	Star Grocery	1911 - 1932	
N6525	Strathcona Cigar Stand	1903 - 1953	
N6560	Sutcliffe, Eli	1898 - 1932	

N6610	Tamblyn, Frank A.	1898 - 1903	
N6660	Thurman, W.A	1898 - 1930	(see N5910)
N6710	Unique Cigar Store	1904 - 1905	
N6760	Van de Kamp's Bakery	1934 - 1952	
N6810	Victoria Billiard Hall	1905 - 1909	
N6859	Vienna Bakery, J. Humer	1893 - 1897	
N6860	Vienna Bakery, R. Hurry	1897 - 1901	
N6910	Wright's Cigar Store	1932 - 1937	

Appendix II Explanation of Sources and Methodology

In general the following sources have been consulted: B.C. Directories from 1890, Registrar of Companies records (incorporation documents, annual reports, some times interesting information, other times nothing), the daily and weekly newspapers. There were three main newspapers in Nelson. *The Tribune* published from November 1892 until November 1905, *The Miner* from June 1890 until April 1902 and the *Daily News*, which took over from The Miner and has carried on to date. There was also a short lived *Daily Canadian* which ran from June 4, 1906 to May 2, 1908. Working with old newspapers can be rewarding, with luck one might find a chatty editor, or an editor who likes to mention his friends, and if his friends are token issuers a lot of information can be garnered. From time to time, around Xmas or New Years, the newspapers would write up the leading merchants. While usually laudatory these short articles can have useful material. One has to overlook the standard phrases, "offers nothing but the best" or "only the best of liquors and cigars are supplied."

Vital events, records of Deaths, Marriages and Births were useful. The B.C. vital events index is on line. With a death date known, one can look for an obituary notice in the newspapers. Some times a person was prominent enough to have some details of his career given. Other times the names of children and grandchildren, and their whereabouts can be found. *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, published between 1912 and 1914 had two volumes of biographical articles and a couple of token issuers were mentioned.⁵ Voters' Lists can also help place a person if he or she happened to be a British Subject. There was an 1897 publication entitled, *First History of Nelson, B.C.*, written by a newspaper man named Charles St. Barbe, and among the capsule articles on prominent merchants and businessmen were a couple of the token issuers. On occasion we have been able to trace the descendants and that can be useful for illustrations and family stories and more rarely, tokens. An annual government publication, the *Report of the Minister of Mines*, provided some useful background information on the mines which created and sustained Nelson. I also have at hand Leslie C. Hill's notes on the Nelson tokens and used his rubbings where I could not obtain good scans or photographs. T.A. Thomson spent many hours proofreading and commenting.

This article essentially covers the time period to the autumn of 1908. The number of issuers is more than can be handled in a short talk and subsequent article, consequently we have had to omit some of them.

updated: 9 September 2009

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- ¹ *The Miner*, March 16, 1895, p. 1
- ² *The Miner*, September 14, 1895, p. 1 and January 16, 1896, p. 1
- ³ *The Miner*, August 30, 1901, p. 1
- ⁴ The reference number (here N3720b) refers to the B.C. Token Database developed by Ronald Greene and T.A. Thomson
- ⁵ Howay & Scholefield, *British Columbia, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal and Chicago, 1912 – 1914, in four volumes. Entries were noted for Gustave B. Matthew and L.H. Choquette.