

BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

"Caroline" and "Virginia"

Marquerite C. Davies

Vernice V. McIvor

*This was a winning
play in the Drama
Festival*

Cast: Century Sam.

As many representing different trades
and development as you wish,
dressed appropriately - the CHORUS
is composed of these people.

Place: British Columbia.

Time: 1958. Setting: As simple or elaborate as you wish.

Lights go up on Century Sam ambling along stage apron
to a campfire which has a few crude seats near it.

Sam: Hello, folks! I'm Century Sam. Sort of the patron saint
of B. C., you might call me. Except that I'm no saint!
I've been around 100 years in this province -- so you can
be good and sure I've seen plenty. Wild days, sad days,
dark days, proud and happy days.
It's been quite an eye opener to me, watching B.C. grow.
There were times when I had to apply the liniment -- growing
pains can be mighty painful, you know!

Most folks agree history is the big events that took place, and that's so -- but I can't help but remember the little things that happened. And it's the way people face up to day by day happenings that's the real test. It took people of courage and toughness to equal nature in this province. Big mountains, big trees, big rivers, big distances -- yep, you had to be a big fellow to survive.

Mind if I draw up a stump beside you -- and talk about some of the things I've seen and heard in the last hundred years? (Pokes up fire, then sits down). Sometimes I sit before my campfire and in the flame and shadow I see them all again. The big men, with their big dreams -- Simon Fraser, David Thompson, Cook, Vancouver, Alexander MacKenzie -- (pauses a moment) --

(As Sam talks figures dressed appropriately have drifted across the stage and others continue to do so as he goes on).

But it isn't the big men of history I've been thinking of these last few days. It's the fellows I knew back in the Kootenay, folks who lived beside me in the Okanagan, the

seinerman who hauled fish in with me on the Fraser, Old Nicholas who ran aground with me up there in the Queen Charlottes -- fellows in the Cariboo, the Peace, the Cassiar -- why, I -- I -- (breaks off, staring at the group that has gathered behind him). Why, Jim, you old leatherneck, you! And Hank -- (turns to audience, glowing). That's what happens every time I get thinking of my old friends of long ago -- they come back to visit me! Just can't keep away from this good old province, I guess.

1st Man: Sure Sam, old friend, we come back to talk things over with you.

2nd Man: That's it, Sam. Things seem to have changed a bit since we knocked 'round together. How about catching us up on happenings?

Sam: And that I will! Things sure have changed. Why you wouldn't know -- Hey, there, Buckskin -- haven't seen ye since fur trading days up North. And you, Charlie Jonson (pronounced

Yawnson) the last I saw of you -- you and Mike O'Toole were heading up to the new gold strike on Goat Creek! Tell me, what did happen to you on that trip? Perhaps you fellows could do a little catching up for me first.

Jonson:

Well, Sam, you see it was like this. You remember that Mike -- how he was about water. He didn't like it not much for his neck but he always kept fallin' in it. Six times I save that son-uv-a-gun by the hair of his head. Well we start headin' up for Goat Creek in a hurry yet. It was quicker by the river so we take the canoe -- tho I think before we begin it maybe not so good an idea --

CHORUS:

The stream was swift and silent
And very, very deep.
The man who'd float upon it
Must his wits about him keep.
But Mike, he got a'dreamin'
Of his girl in County Clare --
One minute he was paddlin'
And the next -- he wasn't there!

ALL THERE WAS A'FLOATIN'
WAS HIS OLD BLACK HAT!
JUST HIS DUSTY, RUSTY,
OLD BLACK HAT!

Jonson took that headgear
And tossed it on the bank
And then he saw some long, red hair --
He grabbed before Mike sank.
After much maneuvering
They lay panting on the ~~bank~~ shore.
Jonson rose and looked at Mike --
You ought to've heard him roar:

"Six times I save you --
You make me mad's the deuce!
You make us late for Goat Creek --
And you also lose my snooze!"
He stamped upon Mike's headgear
Then -- (swear my tale is true) --
HE SAW A NUGGET.....
They'd found the Eldorado of
The whole durn Cariboo!

Sam: Good for you, Charlie! Good for you.

Amanda: Remember me, Sam?

Sam: Amanda! I should say I do. You came over the Edison trail when it wasn't much more than a footprint in the grass.

Amanda: It wasn't much of a highway then -- if that's what you mean.

Sam: Tell these folks about it.

Amanda: Well, my husband and I, with our family had gone clear across Australia looking for a home. Somehow we found nothing that suited us. So we returned and stayed in Alberta. Then we got the feeling that the B. C. Peace River country might be just what we wanted. So we started up for Fort St. John.

CHORUS: (Individual voices where required):

So we rounded up our horses
And we herded up the cows;
We greased the lumber wagons
And we mended up the plows.
With all our worldly goods beneath
That flapping canvas sail,
We sat Mother on a box
And hit the Edson trail.

Amanda: Friends joined us. A Chinese friend intended to start a laundry somewhere up in the Peace. We let him ride our big black stallion.

CHORUS: Along the streets of Edmonton in dignity we passed.
"Where're you folk headin' for?" the friendly
strangers asked.
"Peace Libber! Peace Libber!" carolled out our
Mr. Wong.
And somehow, folks, I'll have you know, it
sounded like a song!

Amanda: It wasn't all a song tho, by any means. We were three months on the trail. With children, you can guess what that was like. And the trail itself -- you've never