

in "Milltown" he is rather lumped in with everybody else. With the development of Gastown as a tourist attraction more attention to its "founder" would have been appropriate. Another mistake in the same area is the obscuring of a fine photo mural by superimposed artifacts and pictures (although the artifacts themselves are most interesting and apropos).

The style of the texts is perhaps a little stiff. A few more quotations would have added flavor, although there are plenty of original newsclippings.

The day I was there it was extremely hot; I hope this is not a permanent feature. The music also got a little tedious; a push button might be preferable -- one tune at a time.

The model of Hastings Mill is a mite disappointing. Its plain white background does not enhance it; the labelling is difficult to follow and I could not help feeling the whole thing was back to front. Sound effects might help if funds become available.

Among some smaller details, I noticed a catalogue number very visible on a saw, strapping rather obviously holding tree and bark together (no epoxy?), a possessive apostrophe missing in the first line of a prominent text, and a photo mural that had two panels mounted out of line with the others: surely easy enough to rectify?

However, let not this list of criticisms detract from my general appraisal -- that "Milltown" is a success and a credit to its developers. I look forward to hearing their impressions of the B.C. Sugar Museum which will open in January 1977.

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Genesis of the Milltown Gallery

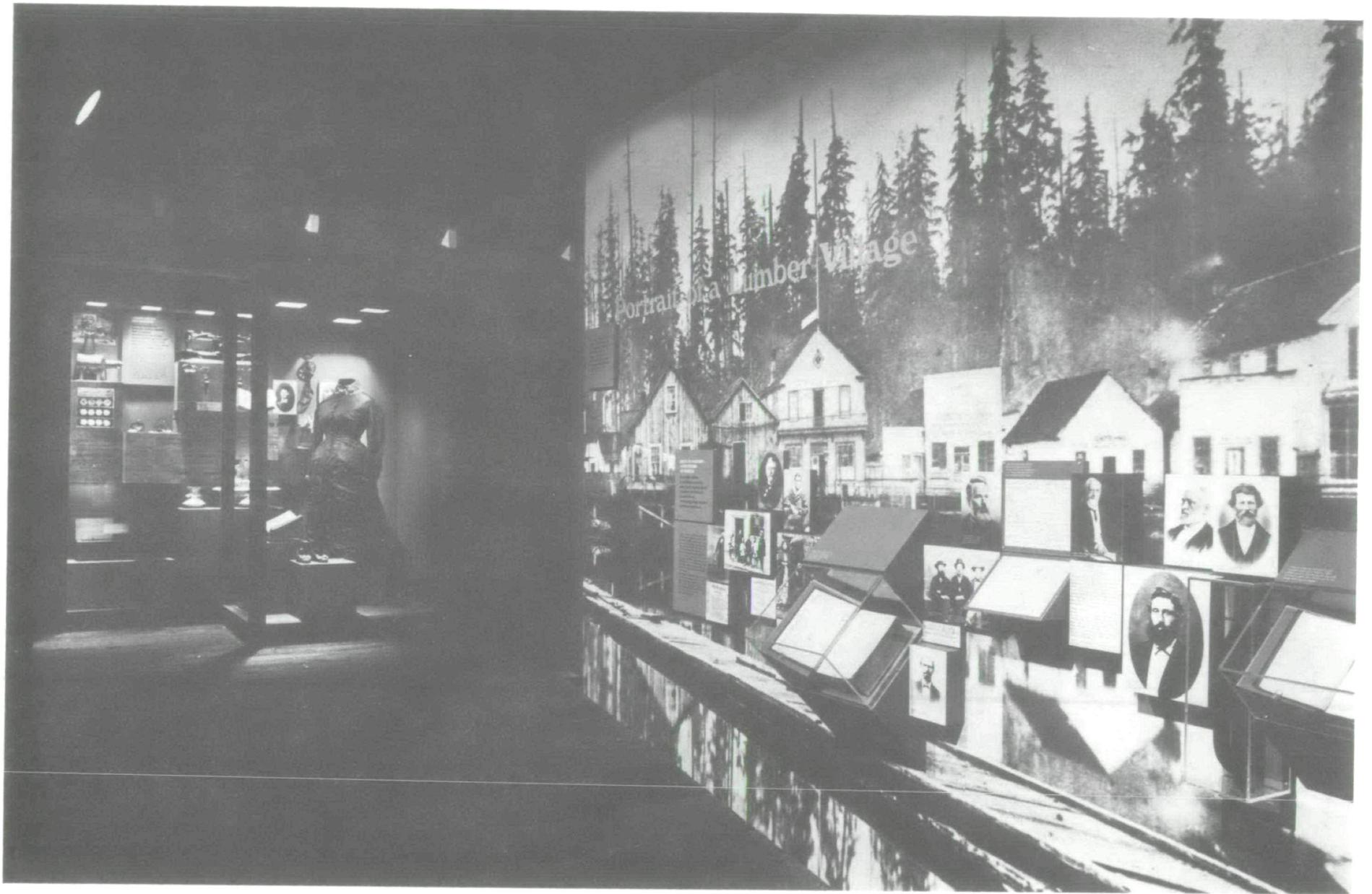
Planning for this gallery, which is part of a chronological

sequence of three "permanent" galleries dealing with the history of the western part of the B.C. Lower Mainland from the 1770s onward, began in the spring of 1972. The gallery focuses on the economic, political and social developments which were centred in Burrard Inlet from 1860 to 1890 resulting in the creation of the young Victorian city of Vancouver.

In considering the final nature of the exhibit several factors should be emphasized. Firstly, two different curators of history shared the task of storyline preparation, artifact location and selection, copy writing and working the project through with the designers. This meant in particular that when I took over the project in June 1973 the major conceptualization was complete and construction was already underway on a portion of the design concept. Without necessarily suggesting that the design solution would have been different if I alone had prepared the storyline, nevertheless I was, to a certain extent, faced with a fait accompli in working with decisions which provided for a tri-partite division of the 30' x 60' space, the emphasis of certain themes and the building of certain display structures and rather costly reconstructions.

To put it a different way, my predecessor and the two resident designers envisaged a "visual dramatization" of the period in question rather than the building of neutral display elements for a certain set of artifacts. In connection with the latter I would stress that selection of artifacts by and large followed acceptance of the basic design and in fact one of my major tasks has been to locate correct period artifacts to be set in the three main areas.

Moving through the gallery, through time as well as physically, these areas deal with three topics: (a) Burrard Inlet logging and lumbering 1860-1880, centred in the Hastings Sawmill operation, (b) the nature of life in Gastown, the lumber settlement spawned by the mill operation, and (c) the transformation of Gastown into Vancouver through the great fire of 1886 and the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway the following year.



(Photo: Vancouver Centennial Museum)

Two things made artifact selection a problem and increased the time required to complete the task. Little detailed research work had been undertaken to discover the nature of nineteenth-century sawmill technology in the region or the scope of manufactured domestic goods available in New Westminster stores, the local supply centre, from 1865 to 1890. In addition, the great fire itself and the destruction of the original Hastings Mill by fire in 1886 had almost entirely obliterated the potential store of artifacts with a local provenance. For this latter reason alone, the search was for representative rather than actual local examples.

As a result of all these considerations, the artifacts finally chosen tended to be selected not just for correctness of period but for their ability to represent a whole sub-theme. This was a useful approach when there was, as it turned out, a scarcity of appropriate material and no need to furnish a whole period setting. For example, in the Gastown section and within the sub-theme entitled "School Bells and Church Bells" the artifacts consist of two prescribed school texts printed in 1867 and 1869, a school bell ca. 1885, a school slate of the late 1860s, two Bibles, the silver neck cross worn by Gastown's first Anglican rector and a watch belonging to one of the early Methodist missionaries who preached in the Inlet settlements. There is nothing novel in this approach of course; many museums have chosen this route. However, we found it particularly suitable in a situation where, in effect, artifacts were being used to dramatize a number of historical themes.

In several instances, considerations of space and lack of appropriate artifacts dictated the use of models and reconstructions. The large and detailed model of the Hastings Sawmill ca. 1875 is of the former type; the 7/8-scale reproduction of part of an 1887 C.P.R. colonist car is of the latter. Both required considerable amounts of research and design time and both were extremely costly. We decided to produce the small model because we located only one original artifact, a mid

nineteenth-century circular saw, and in addition we believed that the nature of the operation in terms of process and machinery would be of considerable interest to the viewer. The colonist car reconstruction was seen as a kind of "period room." Here the visitor can walk into the car and, it is hoped, leave with some sense of how things must have been. It is of course far from a total walk-in "historic site" experience, but lacking greater space and with no costumed guides available it is as close as we could come.

Now that the gallery is complete my principal concern is that there are still too few artifacts to induce the visitor to come back for another look. I have a suspicion as well that we should have tried harder for flexibility in the design of some of the cases. This would have permitted and even encouraged us to install new artifacts in an exhibition which will probably last for five or six years, a factor which would make economic sense for our institution.

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La Fabrication artisanale des tissus; appareils et techniques.

Québec: Musée du Québec, Ministère des Affaires culturelles,
 1974. 103 p., illus. ISBN 0-7754-1892-7 \$4.00

The researcher of historic Canadian textiles often experiences great difficulty in finding literature to provide assistance in his field. There exist, of course, certain standard texts: Harold B. and Dorothy K. Burnham, Keep Me Warm Warm One Night: Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada (Toronto: