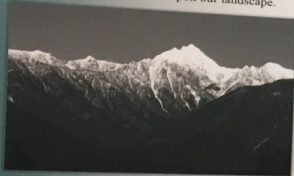


# Grade 6

## The Search for Gold

### Wild Horse Creek

The year is 1863, and a group of prospectors are panning for gold on a flat gravel bar on Wild Horse Creek. The sounds of clanking metal and casual conversation are broken by the cheers and excitement of Jack Fisher realizing that the hard trek from Washington state on the Walla Walla Trail has paid off for himself and the men who came with him to the East Kootenay. The memory of these men including Jack Fisher, John Galbraith, William Fernie, and Pat Sullivan are forever etched in our local history books and upon our landscape.



Joe Finlay had found pumpkin seed size nuggets in his pan the previous year. He had travelled to the Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Tobacco Plains for supplies and in the excitement of the moment revealed his bonanza to the customs agent. Joe's secret was out and it spread like wildfire. The Gold Rush was on!

### Notorious Fisherville

The race was on to stake the first claims. Jack Fisher's group moved up Wild Horse Creek where they pitched their tents on a level bench above the creek. They named the tent city "Fisherville" and it steadily grew as thousands of men and a few women came into the area seeking their fortunes. The town soon boasted saloons, stores, a brewery, butcher shops, a blacksmith shop, miner cabins, and a cluster of brothels called Tonyville. Thus was the birth of the East Kootenay Gold Rush and the wild times of Fisherville.



### The Dewdney Trail

In an attempt to restrict American prospectors from leaving the country with gold taken from the rivers and creeks of south-eastern British Columbia the Canadian government decided it was necessary to establish their presence in the area. In 1864 reports sent back to Victoria stated that Wild Horse Creek had ten major gold claims and that there were close to five hundred minor claims in the area.



In the spring of 1865 Governor Frederick Seymour, concerned that taxes were not being collected and that revenue was being funnelled out of the country, commissioned Edgar Dewdney to construct a four foot wide trail that would extend from Fort Hope to Fisherville on Wild Horse Creek. This trail was to be called the Dewdney Trail.



Dewdney and his team constructed a usable trail through the rugged wilderness of southern British Columbia, and by the fall of the same year pack trains from the west coast were arriving at Fisherville. The construction of the Dewdney Trail allowed the Canadian government to collect gold taxes and duties while opening the area to merchants. This allowed settlers to make their way into the East Kootenay.

Do you know where the Dewdney Trail entered Cranbrook?

The Dewdney Trail entered Cranbrook along 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

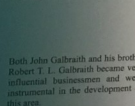
## Pioneers, Prospectors and Proprietors

### Galbraith's Ferry John Galbraith

The Wild Horse gold rush brought thousands of prospectors, merchants, and entrepreneurs to Fisherville. All of them trying to make their fortunes in one way or another. These fortune seekers arrived on the west bank of the Kootenay River on their way to gold rich creeks and rivers bringing with them supplies and freight. Realizing the need for a ferry to cross the turbulent Kootenay River very lucrative business. Galbraith established a ferry service north of the confluence of Wild Horse Creek and the Kootenay River below present day Fort Steele. At the peak of the gold rush in 1865, John Galbraith was charging \$5.00 per person and \$10.00 for every loaded pack animal.



Soon buildings were built around the ferry office which had become known as Galbraith's Ferry. Galbraith's Ferry steadily grew as pioneers and settlers moved into the area bringing families and starting businesses. In 1888, the town was renamed Fort Steele after Superintendent Samuel Steele.



Both John Galbraith and his brother Robert T. L. Galbraith became very influential businessmen and were instrumental in the development of this area.

### Perry Creek The New Eldorado

Like at Wild Horse Creek, men's fortunes were also made on Perry Creek. In 1867, Frank Perry and two other men found gold on a creek twenty-five miles south of the Wild Horse. Perry Creek was considered the new Eldorado. Within a very short period of time Old Town had been established complete with hotels, saloons, a trading post, houses, and cabins. Like Fisherville, Old Town became a bustling gold rush town and thrived until the gold was gone.



In 1924, Perry Creek Gold Mines Limited completed the building of a thirty-two foot high and seven foot wide water wheel. The water wheel was used to turn a turbine that produced electricity for two pumps that brought water 150 feet out of the mine below. It was then delivered to a sluice box where it was washed and examined for gold.



Hydraulic mining was a quick and effective method of mining gold. This process involved spraying large volumes of pressurized water which would cut into the hillsides. The eroded material would be washed into sluice boxes for closer inspection. The lasting environmental effects of hydraulic mining can still be seen throughout British Columbia.



## Scavenger Hunt:

- Economic self-interest can be a significant cause of conflict among peoples and governments. From the gold rush to Colonel Baker to the arrival of Sam Steele—our displays show how economic self-interests shaped our local environment. Our curriculum based scavenger hunt includes the urbanization and migration of people, regional conflict, and inequality issues.
- The students will be broken up into small groups and will work together to answer the questions.