

R.H. Trueman **1856-1911**

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Probably more than any other photographer of his generation, Richard Henry Trueman worked tirelessly to record the vast expanses of southern British Columbia. With his heavy glassplate camera in tow, Trueman climbed mountains, forded creeks and endured all manner of hardships to capture the the images he wanted, particularly when it came to his two greatest subjects: railroads and steamships. Some of his most stunning photographs focus on the rail and steamship lines that operated in the Slocan at the turn of the century, such as his famous shot of a K&S locomotive stopped at Payne Bluff.

Born in Ontario, Trueman travelled extensively through Alberta and British Columbia before settling down, somewhat, to three studios in Vancouver, Sandon and Revelstoke. The booming city of Sandon and the surrounding area with its great concentrator mills and tram lines and spectacular scenery captivated Trueman, and his artistry and attention to detail still stand out, nearly a century later. Trueman's photographs, usually printed as platinotypes, sparkle with clarity and sharpness, and many of the most beautiful photographs in the Sandon Historical Society Museum collection are his work.

By chance, Trueman happened to be in Sandon at the time of the catastrophic May, 1900 fire, and his 'before and after' shots are striking. He returned repeatedly to Sandon to capture the rebuilding efforts, and it is largely through his dedication and skill that such an excellent photographic record of this period survives to this day.

Reco Avenue in Sandon was one of Trueman's favorite scenes, and the photograph above is a fine example of his work. It is worth noting that everyone in the photograph is dressed in their 'Sunday best', right down to the little girl with her pet dog on the steps to the right of the photo. As well, all the subjects are obligingly turned to look at the camera. It is apparent that, with his

fine eye for composition, Trueman has carefully posed the entire street! This is not the only case of Trueman posing a vast scene for his camera, and most subjects were more than willing, as he was a noted photographer throughout the Canadian west in his day.

R.H. Trueman's work in British Columbia spans a little more than 20 years, from about 1890 until just before his death in Revelstoke in 1911. He left the province and the country an enduring legacy with his photographs, and our historical record has been vastly enriched by his talent and dedication.