

**NEIGHBOURHOOD HISTORY
TIMMS CENTER**

THE RAILWAYS

Late 19th century entrepreneurs with long term views of transportation envisioned railways which connected numerous (and somewhat isolated) towns carrying passengers and freight throughout the lower mainland and Fraser Valley. By 1910 there were two railways which passed through the City of Langley (then known as Langley Prairie), the B.C. Electric Railway and the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway. These railways generally followed topographic highlands to connect small communities and were constructed by locals who also supplied timber for bridges and railway ties.

Logging railways were an integral part of the local railway scene located predominantly in the Township of Langley. They were limited in extent and generally did not last many years as they needed to be near major railways in order to get logs to market or the Fraser River.

This café area is situated on the former B.C. Electric Railway yard. The diagonal sidewalk outside follows the railbed with the former Langley Prairie station on the north side. Within the City of Langley, this railway extended from west to east, Brydon Lagoon to Michaud Crescent (Hunter station), along the north side of Michaud Crescent to Langley's city hall (Langley Prairie station) and northeast along Glover Road.

You are encouraged to walk to view three heritage signs commemorating these three locations of the B.C. Electric Railway's Fraser Valley Interurban Line - from Brydon Lagoon to the Hunter Station site and the Langley Prairie station site.

B.C. ELECTRIC RAILWAY (BCER)

Of the twelve British Columbia Electric Railway interurban stations on the Fraser Valley Line in Langley Prairie and Langley Township, only two were in what would become the City of Langley, the Hunter station and the Langley Prairie station which was the major station in what became the City of Langley upon incorporation in 1955.

The B.C. Electric operated its passenger interurban service in Langley between 1909 and September 30, 1950, when the service was terminated in a significant ceremony involving B.C. Electric officials and politicians from the communities in the Valley that were served by the company's railway to Chilliwack, the Fraser Valley Line.

The arrival of the B.C. Electric Railway significantly impacted the growth and development of the City of Langley. The demise of the B.C. Electric's passenger service resulted from the introduction of cars and trucks and construction of new roads, making interurban passenger rail service uneconomical. The tracks through the City of Langley were removed in the early 1980s.

The interurban was a hydro-powered electric railway that provided transportation from Vancouver to Chilliwack along a dedicated track. It was rapid transportation during its time.

Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway (VV&E)

The Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway and Navigation Company (V.V. & E.), chartered in 1897, was part of a B.C. railway system that operated between the Lower Mainland and B.C.'s Boundary country. The V.V. & E. operated through Langley from 1908 to 1933 from Cloverdale to beyond Abbotsford. This was a passenger and freight line with an emphasis on long distance rather than local service that often transported logs to sawmills. It had only limited impact within Langley Prairie. This steam-powered railway had been taken over by, and formed part of, the Great Northern Railway system (BNSF today) in 1901. The arrival of the BC Electric Railway in 1910 had a more profound impact on Langley Prairie which became Langley City in 1955.

Parts of the V.V. & E. right-of-way were purchased in 1934 at a cost of \$240 for municipal roads. Colebrook Road, 50th Ave between 192nd and 200th, Grade Crescent and 47th Avenue east of 208th Street follow the original railway bed with some minor re-alignments. Grade Crescent is aptly named as is laid on the original "grade" of the railway. There were no stations within Langley Prairie, the closest being at Cloverdale (Surrey) and Lincoln (Benz Crescent, Township of Langley). There was a spur line on Grade Crescent near 208th Street which was used for housing logs on railcars that supplied the adjacent Federal Lumber Company (1918 – 24).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Henry Ewert and Graham MacDonell for wordsmithing the various signage manuscripts and for providing historic photographs and maps. The Downtown Langley Business Association provided the Langley Discover map. Sherine Industries designed and fabricated the various railway signs. Funding was provided by the City of Langley through its Arts and Culture committee fund. Bruce Downing, a City of Langley resident, was responsible for initiating the railway heritage sign project.

REFERENCES

Ewert, Henry, 1986, The Story of the B.C. Electric Railway Company, Whitecap Books Ltd.

Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society, Cloverdale, Surrey, www.fvhrs.org

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Sommer, Warren F., 1999, From Prairie to City: A History of the City of Langley, City of Langley publisher,

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WALKING TOUR

You are encouraged to walk the historic railway paths (circa 1909 to 1950) of the B.C. Electric Railway and the Vancouver, Victoria & Eastern Railway and read the site signage. These paths are shown on the map.

Two wooden carvings by Pete Ryan depicting the B.C. Electric Railway are also part of the walking tour. The Conductor (204th Avenue and Fraser Highway / Glover Road) and The Station (Glover Road and Logan Avenue) were donated by Gateway Casino.



PAINTING

Crossroads at Langley Prairie 1928

From an original painting by **Brian Croft**

Long before it became a crossroad, this spot was one of the prettiest prairies in the Fraser Valley. A path wandered by here; it was an important seasonal connection between the summer and winter villages of various groups of First Nations people. Later Yale Road was pushed up the Fraser Valley and as it passed through the broad prairie it crossed the old path and also connected with Trunk Road, (today's Glover Road), which traversed northeast towards Fort Langley. A few hardy pioneers, amongst them Adam Innes and his family, homesteaded the land and before long the intersection became known as Innes Corners.

In 1910, the British Columbia Electric Railway extended its Interurban Tram service from Vancouver and New Westminster to Chilliwack, thereby bringing rapid and reliable transportation to vast areas of fertile land. The railway intersected Yale Road at Innes Corners, adjacent to Glover Road. The crossroad that resulted played host to a new era of confidence and growth; and so it happened that the former hamlet of Innes Corners began its transformation into the village of Langley Prairie.

My painting "Crossroads at Langley Prairie – 1928" looks west down Yale Road from the BCER crossing and captures a bustling Langley Prairie. Just eighteen years have passed since the opening of the BCER Fraser Valley Line and already the crossroad is showing its potential as a center of growth. Several hotels, numerous stores and businesses have located here and brisk real estate sales reflect a growing interest in the area. Tragically "The Great Fire" of Langley Prairie swept through this scene on May 21, 1928, and destroyed most of the buildings in this view. Only the "Apartments" in the distance and the Vancouver Milling and Grain Company's outlet in the foreground on the right were spared.

Today, old Langley Prairie lives again on my canvas. Interurban tram number 1304, leading a two car special enroute to Chilliwack, is resting at the station platform. Folks are climbing on board for the run up the valley. The Langley Hotel is open for the breakfast trade and a contented patron reads the paper outside. Next door Sam Brown's Billiard Parlour and Barber Shop has just opened. Beyond is McLean's Dry Goods; Bill McLean is seated on a stool painting the new store name, Pioneer Dry Goods, perhaps reflecting the long-held belief that this was the building that housed the first general store at the crossroad operated by Alphonse Prefontaine. Next-door Wilf Derocher, owner of The Langley Tire Shop, is giving directions to a passing motorist while his three-year-old son, Raymon watches. Raymon is standing beside an automotive water can, one of his favourite playthings. On May 21st Raymon will narrowly escape death when pulled from his crib just moments before the fire destroyed his Dad's shop and home in the rear. Out of view beyond the tire shop are Fred Pollards Plumbing, J.E. Morris Grocery, Pete Prytherch's Shoe Repair and finally the "Apartments" shine in the morning sun.

I have painted in just a few of the industrious folks who built Langley Prairie. When the town burned they returned and built it up again. Such was the magic of this simple crossroads that people continued to arrive here. They built homes and business and eventually, in 1955, Langley Prairie became The City of Langley. In 1995 the City created a Coat of Arms. A large replica of the Coat of Arms was placed in the pavement at the center of the crossroads, the very heart of this place. -Brian Croft

PICTURES

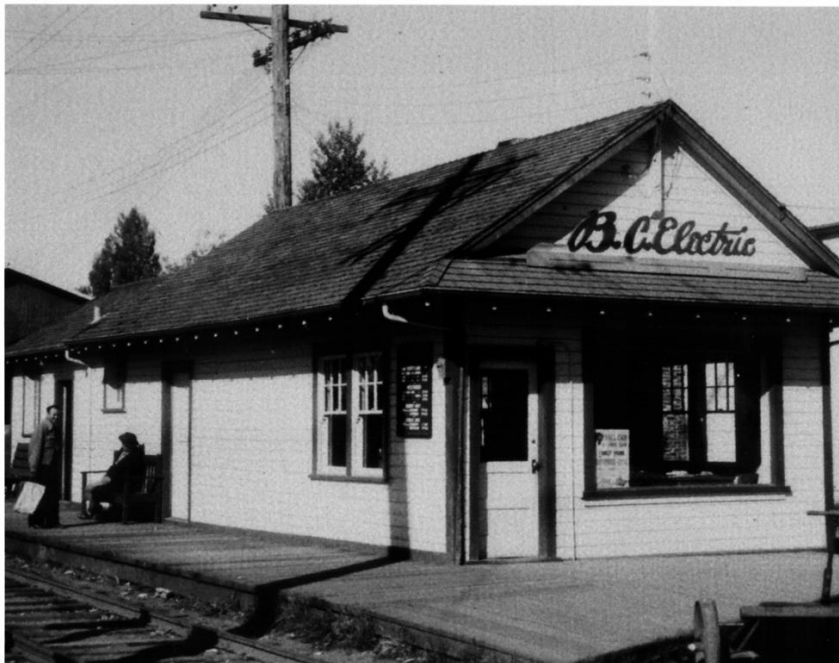


Cloverdale station 1930 (painting, B. Croft)



Cloverdale station 2021

The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society has restored and operates British Columbia Electric Railway Company interurban cars for tourism purposes on the original BCER route at Cloverdale. Explore and participate in the interurban railway history at the Cloverdale station (www.fvhrs.org).



Langley Prairie's new station opened July 1928, and was demolished circa 1955. Tracks were removed in 1970.



Langley Prairie station allocated some space for the William A. Bannerman and Son's real estate office in its building between 1934 and 1938.



BCER Anderson station at 192nd Street and the BCER pathway in Surrey.

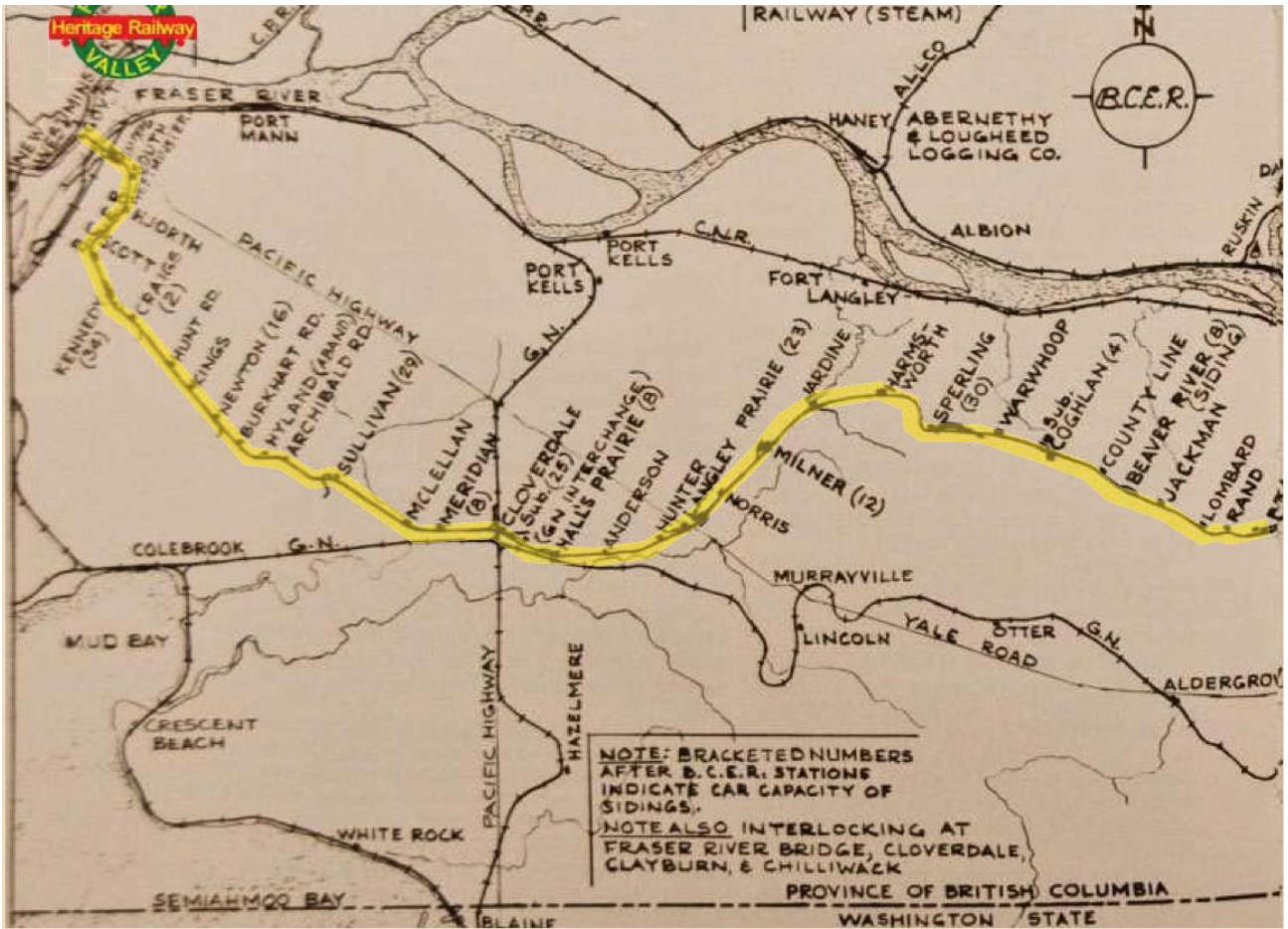


BCER Hunter station at 200th Street (formerly Hunter Street) and Michaud Crescent.



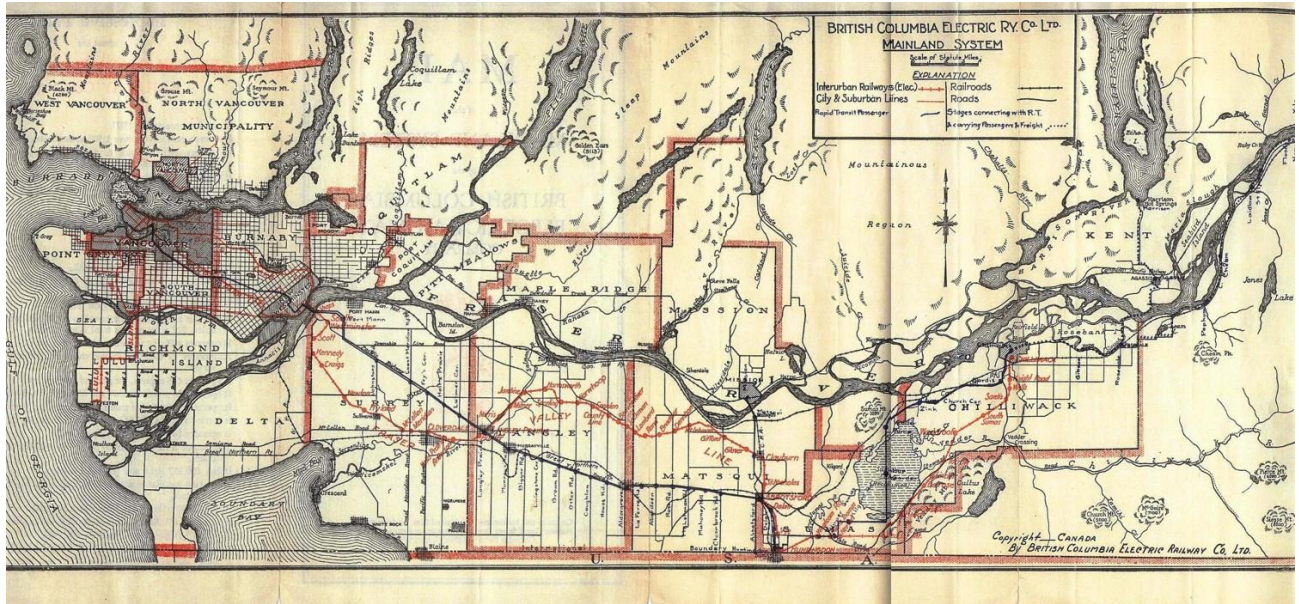
BCER Norris Station, formerly at Glover Road and Mufford Crescent, has been fully restored and is now located at the Leaf House property on 272nd Street. The extension of Mufford Crescent to connect with the redesigned Glover Road has eradicated the original Norris Station site.

MAPS

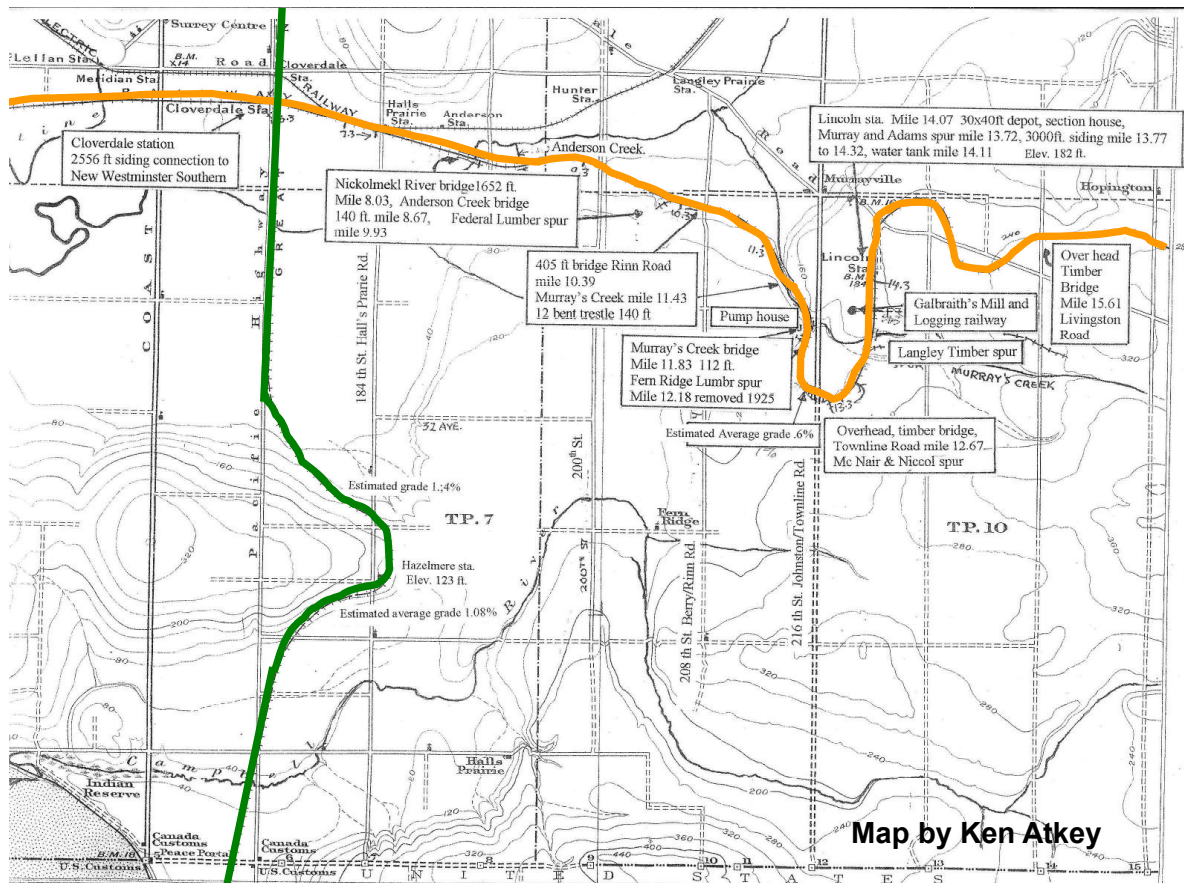


The B.C. Electric Railway map of the Fraser Valley system 1909 - 1950 created by David Reuss. It is interesting to note the Great Northern line which ran up the Clover Valley. As you cross the intersection of the Pacific Highway (176th) and the Fraser Highway, a small piece of that roadbed is still visible as a berm, on the south side, where it turned northeast and travelled up to Port Kells on what is now Harvie Road.

MAP showing the historic B.C. Electric Railway route (yellow) in the Fraser Valley.



Map (circa 1910) showing the historic BCER line in the Fraser Valley.



Map showing the historic Vancouver, Victoria & Eastern Railway route (orange) in the Fraser Valley. The New Westminster and Southern Railway (green) was also part of the Great Northern Railway in the Lower Mainland which is now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF).

WEST BOUND

EAST BOUND

Mixed 1		Distance from New Westminster	Time Table No. 1		Telephone Rings	Capacity of Sidings	Mixed 2	
Second Class	L Daily		Effective July 1, 1910	STATIONS			Second Class	A Daily
a. m.	7.30	20.5	.....	Langley.....			p. m.	6.15
s	7.35	19.8	.....	Milner.....	— . . .	Yard	s	6.10
s	7.45	17.3	.....	Berry.....			s	6.00
s	7.51	16.8	.....	Hunter.....			s	5.56
s	7.57	14.5	.....	Shannon.....		10 cars	s	5.52
	8.00	13.5	.....	Cloverdale.....	.. — ..	Yard		5.50
	8.05							
s	8.09	12.5	.....	Meridian.....		10 cars	s	5.41
f	8.11	12.0	.....	McLellan.....			f	5.39
s	8.17	10.2	.....	Sullivan.....	. . .		s	5.33
f	8.21	8.9	.....	Hyland.....		10 cars	f	5.28
f	8.32	4.6	.....	Kennedy.....		10 cars	f	5.20
f	8.38	2.2	.....	South Westminster.....			f	5.12
f	8.40	1.8	.....	Shops.....		10 cars	f	5.10
	8.50	.0	.....	New Westminster.....				5.00
a. m.							p. m.	
A Daily	1						L Daily	2

F—Flag S—Stop

Register—New Westminster, Cloverdale and Milner

Bulletin and Comparison Clock—New Westminster

At a safe distance before commencing the descent of Brownville Hill (mileage 4.6) eastbound, and Bear Creek Hill (mileage 6.6) westbound, and approaching railway crossings at grades, junctions, drawbridges and at points where trains are to be met or passed, motormen must make sufficient application to ascertain that brakes are in operating condition.

Trains must come to full stop 100 feet from crossing G. N. Railway, Cloverdale (mileage 13.5), and must not proceed until signal given by flagman that everything clear

Timetable 1910. Note that Berry station later changed its name to Langley Prairie station in 1911.

VANCOUVER TO CHILLIWACK

Mile- age	STATIONS	EASTBOUND			
		Fri. Only	2 Daily	4 Daily	8 Daily
0	VANCOUVER		8.25	1.20	5.30
12.5	New Westminster	6.30	9.10	2.05	6.25
13.3	Government	6.32	9.12	2.07	6.27
14.3	Shops	6.37	9.17	2.12	6.32
14.7	South Westminster	6.38	9.18	2.13	6.33
15.1	Hjorth Road	6.39	9.19	2.15	6.35
15.8	Scott	6.41	9.23	2.17	6.37
17.0	Kennedy	6.45	9.26	2.20	6.40
18.4	Craigs	6.47	9.28	2.22	6.42
18.8	Hunt Road	6.48	9.30	2.25	6.45
19.5	Kings	6.49	9.32	2.27	6.47
20.1	Newton	6.50	9.34	2.29	6.50
20.7	Burkart Road	6.51	9.35	2.30	6.51
21.5	Archibald Road	6.52	9.36	2.32	6.53
22.6	Sullivan	6.55	9.39	2.34	6.56
24.4	McLellan	6.57	9.42	2.37	6.59
25.0	Meridian	6.58	9.44	2.39	7.02
26.0	Cloverdale	7.00	9.47	2.41	7.05
27.1	Halls Prairie	7.02	9.51	2.44	7.08
28.1	Anderson	7.04	9.53	2.47	7.10
29.1	Hunter	7.05	9.55	2.50	7.12
29.8	Langley Prairie	7.07	9.57	2.53	7.14
31.0	Norris	7.08	9.59	2.56	7.16
31.8	Milner	7.10	10.01	2.59	7.18
32.9	Jardine	7.11	10.04	3.01	7.21
34.2	Harmsworth	7.13	10.07	3.05	7.24
35.7	Sperling	7.15	10.11	3.10	7.29
36.7	Warwhoop	7.16	10.13	3.12	7.31
37.8	Coghlan	7.17	10.16	3.14	7.34
38.8	County Line	7.18	10.18	3.16	7.36
39.3	Beaver River	7.19	10.19	3.17	7.40
40.0	Jackman	7.20	10.21	3.18	7.41
40.8	Lombard	7.22	10.23	3.20	7.43
41.5	Rand	7.23	10.25	3.22	7.45
42.3	Bradner	7.25	10.27	3.24	7.47
43.3	Dennison	7.27	10.30	3.27	7.50
44.4	Mt. Lehman	7.30	10.32	3.29	7.52
46.9	Gifford	10.38	3.35	7.57	
48.5	Glover	10.41	3.38	8.00	
49.5	Clayburn	10.43	3.40	8.02	
50.7	St. Nicholas	10.47	3.44	8.05	
51.7	Abbotsford	10.51	3.48	8.09	
53.2	Delair Road	10.54	3.51	8.13	
54.4	Vye	10.57	3.53	8.15	
55.3	Huntingdon	11.00	3.55	8.17	
57.8	Whatcom Road	11.05	3.58	8.20	
58.8	Upper Sumas	11.07	4.00	8.22	
59.4	Norton	11.08	4.01	8.23	
61.8	Arnold	11.09	4.02	8.24	
61.8	Vedder Mountain	11.11	4.04	8.26	
63.3	Reclaim	11.14	4.07	8.29	
63.8	Kidd	11.17	4.09	8.31	
65.1	Bellerose	11.20	4.11	8.33	
66.4	Stewart Rd.	11.24	4.15	8.37	
67.7	Yarrow	11.28	4.19	8.39	
68.6	Vedder River	11.29	4.20	8.40	
69.5	Woodroffe	11.34	4.25	8.45	
71.0	Lickman	11.37	4.28	8.48	
71.7	South Sumas	11.40	4.31	8.51	
72.6	Evans	11.44	4.34	8.54	
74.1	Knights Road	11.47	4.37	8.57	
74.1	Knights Road	11.50	4.40	9.00	
76.3	CHILLIWACK	11.55	4.48	9.08	

Light face type, a.m. hours; heavy face type, p.m. hours.

CHILLIWACK TO VANCOUVER

Mile- age	STATIONS	WESTBOUND			
		Fri. Only	2 Daily	4 Daily	8 Daily
0	CHILLIWACK		8.00	1.30	6.10
2.2	Knights Road		8.02	1.32	6.12
2.7	Sardis		8.06	1.36	6.16
1.7	Evans		8.08	1.38	6.18
4.6	South Sumas		8.10	1.40	6.20
5.3	Lickman		8.11	1.42	6.21
6.8	Woodroffe		8.14	1.44	6.24
7.7	Vedder River		8.16	1.47	6.27
8.6	Yarrow		8.18	1.49	6.29
9.9	Stewart Rd.		8.22	1.53	6.33
11.4	Bellerose		8.25	1.57	6.36
12.5	Kidd		8.28	2.00	6.39
13.0	Reclaim		8.30	2.02	6.41
14.5	Vedder Mountain		8.33	2.05	6.44
16.9	Arnold		8.35	2.07	6.46
17.5	Upper Sumas		8.37	2.08	6.47
18.5	Whatcom Road		8.38	2.11	6.49
21.0	Huntingdon		8.40	2.14	6.51
21.9	Vye		8.45	2.18	6.55
23.1	Delair Road		8.47	2.20	6.57
24.6	Abbotsford		8.49	2.22	6.59
25.6	St. Nicholas		8.51	2.24	7.03
26.8	Clayburn		8.53	2.28	7.05
27.8	Glover		8.58	2.33	7.10
29.4	Gifford		9.00	2.35	7.12
31.9	Mt. Lehman	7.35	9.09	2.45	7.24
33.0	Dennison	7.37	9.11	2.47	7.26
34.0	Bradner	7.39	9.13	2.49	7.28
34.8	Rand	7.41	9.14	2.51	7.30
35.5	Lombard	7.43	9.16	2.53	7.33
36.3	Jackman	7.44	9.18	2.55	7.35
37.0	Beaver River	7.46	9.20	2.57	7.40
37.5	County Line	7.48	9.21	2.59	7.43
38.5	Coghlan	7.50	9.24	3.02	7.46
39.6	Warwhoop	7.52	9.27	3.06	7.48
40.6	Sperling	7.55	9.30	3.10	7.50
42.1	Harmsworth	7.58	9.33	3.11	7.53
43.4	Jardine	8.00	9.36	3.13	7.55
44.5	Milner	8.02	9.39	3.15	7.58
45.3	Norris	8.03	9.41	3.17	8.00
46.5	Langley Prairie	8.08	9.44	3.20	8.03
47.2	Hunter	8.09	9.46	3.22	8.05
48.2	Anderson	8.11	9.48	3.24	8.07
49.2	Halls Prairie	8.15	9.51	3.26	8.09
50.3	Cloverdale	8.17	9.54	3.28	8.12
51.3	Meridian	8.19	9.56	3.30	8.15
51.9	McLellan	8.20	9.57	3.32	8.16
53.7	Sullivan	8.23	10.01	3.36	8.19
54.8	Archibald Road	8.25	10.03	3.38	8.22
55.6	Burkart Road	8.26	10.05	3.39	8.24
56.2	Newton	8.28	10.08	3.42	8.26
56.8	Kings	8.30	10.10	3.43	8.28
57.5	Hunt Road	8.31	10.12	3.44	8.30
57.9	Craigs	8.33	10.14	3.46	8.32
59.3	Kennedy	8.35	10.16	3.50	8.34
60.5	Scott	8.37	10.18	3.53	8.37
61.2	Hjorth Road	8.39	10.20	3.55	8.40
61.6	South Westminster	8.41	10.21	3.56	8.41
62.0	Shops	8.42	10.23	3.58	8.42
63.0	Government	8.47	10.30	4.03	8.46
63.8	New Westminster	8.50	10.35	4.10	8.50
76.3	VANCOUVER	11.15	4.00	9.30	

Light face type, a.m. hours; heavy face type, p.m. hours.

Timetable 1911. Cost of fare from Vancouver to Chilliwack (76.3 miles) was \$2.10 one way, \$3.85 return (Ewert, page 268).