CANAL Baillie-Grohman Canal, British Columbia

(FOR ACS USE) # 4

STATUS Abandoned, should be protected

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION & CLOSURE 1887-89/ 1902

LOCATION (ENDPOINTS OF CANAL) 50°09'N,115°50'W (NF 8355)

Joins Kootenay and Columbia Rivers at Canal Flat, B.C.

LENGTH CANAL 1.3 SLACKWATER 0 TOTAL 1.3

LIFT LOCKS	NBR.	DIMENSIONS	AQUEDUCTS	TUNNELS
	1	LOCK CHAMBER 30 x 100	NBR.	

DESCRIPTION: [Type of navigation, features of note (include USGS coordinates where useful); e.g., feeders (navigable & otherwise), locks other than above, type of locks, use of unusual material or methods of construction, present owner, present use & condition, etc.]

This was a steamboat canal, connecting the headwaters of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers across a low area at Canal Flat, 53 miles above Cranbrook, B.C. In spite of its quite recent date, it was a pioneer venture. It was constructed by William A. Baillie-Grohman, big-game hunter and author (1851-1921) who thereby generated some fascinating canal history but deserved a better fate. Begun in 1887, the canal was excavated by horses and scrapers, and by Chinamen with side-dumping wheelbarrows. To build the wooden lock and guard (flood) gate, steam sawmill machinery was shipped in by rail and boat from Ontario, as well as steam pumps to drain the lock excavation. Unfortunately the income from tolls was not as expected, because only two steamboats used the canal, the Gwendoline, passing up in 1894, and the North Star going down in 1902. Sadly, the North Star was three inches too wide and thirty feet too long for the lock, so the gates were burned down and replaced by two dams fore and aft; then the forward dam was blown up with dynamite to lock the boat through. Since that time floods have completely washed away the flood gate (at the upper,Kootenay, end), and all but the foundations and upper sill of the lift lock. This was a crib structure of about 6 foot lift, and deserves some study as a rare example of a wooden lock. Notable are two upright metal plates, bent to fit the lock-gate posts, and serving as hollow quoins for the lower gates. The remains of the upper sill show signs of burning. The canal bed is still intact, and parallels the CP tracks. There is an historic marker at the Columbia (N) end of the canal. To reach the lock, turn right on the road 1.0 mile S of the marker, for 0.2 mi., then left 0.1 mi. to the canal; the lock is a few yards to the right (N). The heaviest canal excavation extends about 1 mile from the lock to the Kootenay River,where the flood gate was, at the upper end of the canal. Cranbrook can be reached by plane and has car rentals. There is a small hotel in Canal Flat (now called Canal Flats).

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANAL'S PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:

REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: W.E. Trout, III, 1932 Cinco Robles Drive, Duarte, CA 91010

DATE 19 May 1973

BIBLIOGRAPHY SUMMARY: [Published works relating to Canal]

W.A. Baillie-Grohman, Fifteen Years' Sport and Life in the Hunting Grounds of Western America and British Columbia, London, 1900 (illus.)

Mabel E. Jordon, "The Kootenay Reclamation and Colonization Scheme and William Adolph Baillie-Grohman", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, v.20, 1956 (illus.)

Norman Hacking,"Steamboat Days on the Upper Columbia..." BCHQ v.16, 1952, pp 1-15 (map)

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, LOCATION OF PHOTOS, DRAWINGS & IMPORTANT PERIODICAL REFERENCES

TOPO MAPS: 1:250,000 82J (Kananaskis Lakes)
1: 50,000 82J/4 west (Canal Flats)

NATIONAL REGISTER & HAER (HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD) STATUS:

DIAND: (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) Protection of the lock site and canal is recommended.

RETURN TO: CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, C/O P.H.STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK 10549