

IN THE 1890S

Red Mountain's gold mines drew thousands of miners from all over the world. Despite the rough, remote mining camp being no place for women and children, many enterprising women set up homes and businesses here. By the turn of the 20th century, the recently incorporated City of Rossland was a thriving, cosmopolitan community made up of miners, labourers, business people, and their families.

2366.0120 - Columbia Avenue, circa 1896



2302.0001 - Miscellaneous Group

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Women

IN ROSSLAND

AT THE TURN OF
THE 20TH CENTURY



AT WORK

The 1901 census captured a unique snapshot of Rossland's history. The preceding years were Rossland's boom years with rapid population growth and mineral extraction. Three months after the census took place, a bitter strike began, leading to a decline in population.

- Number of women in Rossland over 16 = 1308 (of 6,132 total population)
- Of these 1308 women over age 16, 101 declared themselves to be head of a household

Occupations:

- Medical Doctor (1), Nurse (14)
- Accountant (1)
- Teacher (17)
- Minister of Religion (2)
- Painter/artist (1)
- Musician (2)
- Theatre Person (5), Actor (1), Stagehand (2)
- Stenographer/secretary (3)
- Bookkeeper (5)
- Post office clerk (1)
- Telegrapher (2)
- Other clerks (7)
- Liquor dealer (1)
- Hotel keeper (8), Restaurant keeper (1)
- Boarding house keeper (7)
- Housekeeper (42), Other housekeepers (3)
- Cook (4), Waiter (1), Waitress (16), Dishwasher (1)
- Domestic servant (31), Chambermaid (8), Launderer (6)
- Hairdresser (1)
- Gold miner (4)
- Broker (1)
- Baker (1)
- Tailoress (2), Tailor (1)
- Dressmaker/seamstress (27)
- Milliner (7)
- Printer (1)
- General labourer (1)

After a fire swept through town in 1902, 6 of the 19 people who declared losses were women, suggesting that women were a significant part of the economic community in Rossland. The clothing trade categories (dressmaker, seamstress, etc.) could be somewhat embellished as this is often the category in which prostitutes were listed.

Women, people of Chinese or Japanese heritage, and boys under the age of twelve were legally prohibited from working underground in British Columbia's mines starting with the 1877 "An Act to make Regulations with Respect to Coal Mines."

Women were able to work above ground in the mining industry, which did prompt many heated debates. In 1897, the BC Legislature extended the prohibition of women from underground work to hard rock mines - like those in Rossland. As historian Jeremy Mouat summarizes, "...both social and legal barriers constrained women from participating freely in wage labour in Rossland, as elsewhere."

2366.0055 - Two women, taken from trestle on railway line to White Bear Mine



MRS. M. E. ALLAN

Mrs. Allan built Rossland's premiere hotel, the Hotel Allen, in 1895. While little is known about her, she was clearly a savvy business woman of some means. Her hotel continued to be a well-regarded establishment until it burnt down in a fire in 1978.

Mrs. Allan had several husbands and at times, they worked for her at her hotels. Her maiden name was McLaughlin and some of her married names were Allan, Davis, and King.

"In assuming and conducting successfully so important enterprises in addition to the management of her hotel, Mrs. Allan has manifested a grasp of business affairs both gratifying and surprising to her many friends. She is a lady of education and culture, of graceful manners, with the ready and tender sympathies of a mother and a tact and judgment in business affairs unusual in her sex."

- Harold Kingsmill, 'First History of Rossland, B.C.', 1897.

2282.0068 - Hotel Allen, circa 1909



IN THE COMMUNITY

Rossland had many clubs and societies associated with national and international orders and local Church congregations.

Some of these groups were:

- Eastern Star, Alpha Chapter #1 – first chapter in Canada
- Deborah Rebekah Lodge #13 – instituted in April 1899
- Pythian Sisters – charter granted January 18, 1901
- Ladies of the Maccabees – Women’s Benevolent Association
- Ladies Legion Auxiliary #14 – formed in 1931
- Catholic Women’s League – formed in 1933
- Girl Guides & Brownies – formed in 1934
- Jobs Daughters – charter granted in 1946
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Ladies Auxiliary – formed in 1946

2302.0002 - Group of women singing



ROSSLAND LADIES V. GRAND FORKS LADIES

Played at the Rink on Wednesday afternoon before a large crowd of spectators. The line-up was as follows:

Rossland	Position	Grand Forks
Eva Blackman	GOAL	Elen Sloan
Sara Lee	POINT	Edna Trauweiser
Madge Keating	C. POINT	Adeline Livesley
Pearl Forteah	ROVER	Irene Haversty
Tessie McDonald	CENTRE	Helen Sloan
Nellie Stark	LEFT WING	Ida Hartinger
Ethel Fox	BIGHT WING	Hazel Livesley

Grand Forks pressed vigorously at first but a sudden dash by Madge Keating let in the home side and a shot from the left wing all but scored. Eva Blackman saved a hot shot from the visitors' right wing. After eight minutes Helen Sloan scored for Grand Forks with a long shot. Ethel Fox made a fine run on the right but no tangible success accrued. Rossland continued to get a little the better of the exchanges and then amidst great excitement Nellie Stark shot and the equalizing goal was counted. There was some doubt as to the genuineness of this point as the Grand Forks team maintained that the puck had not gone into the net, but the goal umpire gave it and it was allowed.

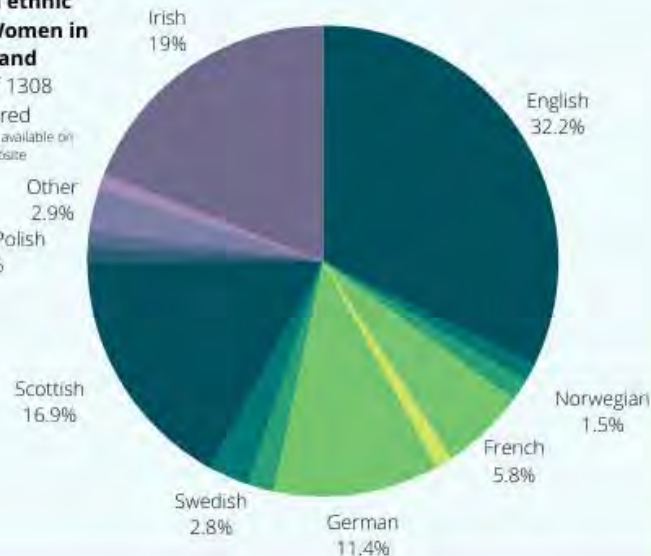
In the second half Grand Forks repeatedly attacked and the home goal keeper had to work hard to keep her charge intact. This she managed with much cleverness. The home attack then got the measure of the visitors' defence and some excellent combination gave Tessie McDonald a fine opportunity and she scored with a lively shot. During the whole of the game, and especially in the latter half, Madge Keating made some brilliant dashes. The best of these came just before the close when, securing the puck near her own goal, she beat every opponent by speed and cleverness and registered the third goal amidst excited applause. The game ended in a victory for Rossland ladies by three goals to one.

Rossland Miner, Saturday, Feb. 18, 1911

Declared ethnic origin of Women in Rossland

1304 of 1308 declared
Full Breakdown available on our website

Other 2.9%
Russian/Polish 1.1%



SPORTS

The Rossland Ladies' Hockey Team originally formed to play in the 1900 Rossland Winter Carnival - as a "novelty" for the attendees. To join Rossland's club, each player had to pay the then-not-insignificant fee of 50 cents. Enough players for two full teams eagerly paid up and a powerhouse was born.

The Rossland's ladies hockey team lost 2-1 to Grand Forks at the 1917 provincial championships - "the first loss for our women's team in fifteen years," lamented the local paper.

The 1900-18 Ladies' Ice Hockey Team was inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame under the Pioneer category in 2018.



2285.0006 - 1900 Ladies Hockey Team

SUSIE MCCLUNG INGRAM

Miss Frances Susan "Susie" McClung arrived in Trail Creek Landing (now Trail) on October 3rd, 1893. She intended to become a cook at the Le Roi mine camp where her father was. These plans were not pre-arranged it seemed, as once she arrived at the camp after a bumpy and arduous journey, her father greeted her with:

"What in the world are you doing here, child?"

Susie herself stated that she was the first woman to live in Rossland. Though Susie was young, she soon went to work cooking, cleaning, and caring for the men at camp. After some time in the Red Mountain mining camp, Susie began to travel to Spokane, Northport, and Midway, taking jobs where they became available, following the development of the region. Besides working for other mines as she travelled, Susie also worked as a doctor's assistant and as a dressmaker before meeting and marrying her husband Bart Inghram in 1895. They had three children.

We get an eye into Susie's life thanks to her memoir: *The Girl* - published in 1936.



AT HOME



Homes in the late 19th century were quite simple until the appearance of electricity. Rossland was lucky to get electrified early - in 1898. It was a lot of work to run a household, and each family member - including children - had to do their part. Children would be responsible for different duties dependent on age, gender, and abilities. By age 10, young men were likely helping their fathers with work full-time, tending to a farm, or taking on their own job. Young women would be responsible for rearing younger children, tending the garden, sewing, needlework, and helping with livestock like chickens or cows. Even young children were given chores early on and could help with laundry, fetching water, tending to the garden, cleaning and mending duties. Mothers had their hands full! They had to ensure there were provisions for all seasons, clothes for all family members, and often were responsible for educating children and tending to the sick and elderly. Women would often seek help from their community and work bees between households were common to help with the heavy workload. Women would help each other with childcare, sewing/quilting, batch cooking, and more. Preserving the yield from the garden harvest, livestock and hunts was their responsibility; salting, curing, canning, and dehydrating foods was a necessary skill. Women had to make sure their larder and root cellar were full - they couldn't just grocery shop as we can now! In the spring and summer months, foraging for food was also important; collecting huckleberries, blueberries, and wild strawberries, as well as mushrooms and any botanicals for their home medicine cabinet. Health care wasn't always easy to access, so folk medicine was a required skill. Dressing wounds with plantain, yarrow and clean burlap was a go-to remedy for abrasions. Mustard plasters and onion fry poultices were used for congestion or mucus - common in a mining town.



EVERY WOMAN SHOULD READ THIS LETTER

And Take Mrs. Ripley's Advice
 Lots of women are suffering because with their backs, when they need not do so. Mrs. Ripley had such frightful pain in her back that she could not do her household. - WILLIAMSBURG, VA.
 I cannot refrain from writing you about the benefits I have received from taking GIN PILLS. I suffered dreadfully with my back and have suffered with it for twenty years. I had everything I ever did in my life. There is nothing that can hold a place with GIN PILLS for curing Pain in the Back which women are subject to.
 Mrs. WILLIAMSBURG, VA. writes: Write for free sample box. I had GIN PILLS at once a box - a lot and money refunded if they fail to relieve. - Price and Chemical Co. W. Va.

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 Room B, HOTEL WIND

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