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NOVEL STUDY AND  
TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

THE GAMBLER'S  
DAUGHTER

BY SHIRLEE SMITH MATHESON

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## CLASSROOM USES

*The Gambler's Daughter* is an historically-based young adult novel that spans several geographic regions of western Canada, touching on many important aspects of Canadian history in the 1940s. *The Gambler's Daughter* can be taught as a novel study, or as an integrated, multi-disciplinary unit which could include studies of: the building of the Alaska Highway, Canada's involvement in World War II, the Gold Rush, Ukrainian settlement, and First Nations studies. Students may also use *The Gambler's Daughter* to study the novel form to learn how a story develops, how fact and fiction might be merged and how basic literary elements such as setting, characterization, plot, tone, conflict can be employed to create an exciting and effective narrative.

In the *Activities* section of this guide, students will be encouraged to connect with the story by writing letters from the points of view of several different characters. They will be introduced to the language of people from a particular region and time, allowing them to "hear" these characters speak. Students will also have the opportunity to write a critical analysis of the events that take place, and of the conflict situations presented in the story.

## SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY

World War II had an incredible impact on Canada's north country. The Alaska Highway was built to facilitate the movement of defense vehicles and personnel between

the American and Canadian borders. Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941 the governments of both countries joined in the project. The new Highway would transport people and supplies cross-country from the United States, through Canada (Alberta, B.C., the Yukon Territories) to the Alaskan coast, in preparation for the possibility of an attack by Japanese forces who had taken position on the Aleutian Islands, close to Alaska.

This highway (which was solely owned by the U.S. until 1946, when Canada assumed ownership of the Canadian portion) increased the population that came to the North and brought in jobs and money to the region. The new wealth was a prime target for entrepreneurial con artists like Bean Trap Braden who were in the area to trap other men's "beans," or money, and make off with it.

Many incidents in this novel are based on true events. *The Gambler's Daughter* combines the stories of Henry Courvosier and Bert Sheffield who once lived at Weasel City, the story of the American Air Force transport airplane that went down in the mountains near the Tuchodi Lakes, the construction of the Alaska Highway, the history of Helena and Butte, Montana, and the history of towns in southern B.C.'s Slocan and Lardeau valleys.

## GEOGRAPHY

*The Gambler's Daughter* takes place in the Northern British Columbia wilderness, at a settlement that once



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existed, called Weasel City. Weasel City got its name because it was a good place for the trapper and a bad place for the weasels. It was on the Muskwa River near Kleedo Creek.

In 1936, two trappers, Henry Courvoisier and Bert Sheffield, had their home cabin at Weasel City. Henry was musical, and was known for carrying his violin with him on the trapline. But he and his partner were said to be responsible for the Great Fort Nelson Fur Robbery of 1936. The story of the armed robbery, and the capture of the bandits is introduced because the robber's cabin, in which Loretta, Teddy and Bean Trap live is the scene for the opening chapters of the novel.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

Bean-Trap Braden has an odd way of talking. Match the expressions used by Bean-Trap with their meanings, as he explains them to Loretta and Teddy:

- Bean-Trap** - a trapper of other men's beans, i.e. money  
**fading from the scene** - getting away from a place where one has had trouble  
**gaff** - a house or room and sometimes refers to a place chosen for a robbery (in this case, it refers to Bean-Trap's gambling establishment)  
**jawbone** - a system of credit which allowed fur trappers to purchase supplies and was repaid when they brought in furs at the end of the season  
**cold deck** - a system of cheating which used a specially-prepared pack of cards, substituting a "stacked" deck for the cards that had been shuffled and cut  
**bomb** - a large sum of money  
**apple** - a victim, an "easy mark"  
**chilled someone off** - committed murder  
**shiv** - a long, thin-bladed knife  
**acky-lark** - a fraudulent trick ("lark") of substituting a harmless liquid for aqua-fortis ("acky"), a nitric acid sometimes used by fences (receivers or buyers of stolen goods) in tests to ensure whether gold was real  
**salting the mines** - inserting gold fragments, or liquid gold, into rock samples to convince prospectors of a find  
**doctor** - an expert in altering anything from certificates and bonds, to mining results, in order to falsify claims  
**Craps King** - "craps" is a gambling game using two dice. The bet is won if the first throw is seven or eleven.

- It is lost if the first throw yields a two, three, or twelve. If it is any other total, the player throws again, either until he repeats it (and wins) or turns up a seven (and loses).  
**snake's eyes** - rolling two ones with the dice  
**go on the Erie** - keeping silent because the wrong person might be listening  
**the dice are cold** - the player (throwing the dice) is not winning  
**on the lam** - hiding out (possibly from "lamster," a deserter from the British Armed Forces)

## SETTING THE SCENE

Choose a place where Loretta has lived (or travelled to) at various times in her life. Look up any references you can find to describe this area, and discuss why you would or would not like to live there:

- Seattle, Washington
- Fairbanks, Alaska
- Eagle, Alaska
- Fort Nelson, B.C.
- Weasel City, B.C.
- Edmonton, Alberta
- Butte, Montana
- Helena, Montana
- Spokane, Washington,
- Kaslo, B.C.
- Nelson, B.C.
- Ferguson, B.C.

### *Designing the setting*

Describe (1) the interior of their cabin at Weasel City, (2) their room in the MacDonald Hotel in Edmonton, and (3) their house in Ferguson. Cut out pictures to decorate them!

### *Transportation*

Four methods of transportation are mentioned in the story (dog-team and sled, boat, train, bus). Choose one, and describe what it would be like to be with Loretta and Teddy on their trip. For example, it would have taken them twenty-four hours to travel from Dawson Creek, B.C., to Edmonton, Alberta, via the Northern Alberta

Railway. Think of where they might have slept, what and where they would have eaten, the things they would have seen.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**Loretta Braden** is the narrator of the novel. At fourteen, Loretta is looking after her younger brother, Teddy, and teaching him to read, write and do arithmetic. When they are forced to flee with their stepfather, the notorious gambler Bean-Trap Braden, she has to confront her own fears and disapproval of his choice of employment.

**Teddy Braden** is Loretta's six-year-old brother. Teddy puts on a brave front as he and Loretta follow Bean-Trap from town to town one step ahead of the law. But at times, Teddy seems to admire his father's ways too much and Loretta worries that he might follow the wrong example.

**Bean-Trap Braden**, also known as William J. Benedictson, is Teddy's natural father and Loretta's step-father. Bean-Trap is tough with a personality and lifestyle to match, but he loves his children and wants to give them a good home, even though he continues to find himself at the centre of misadventures.

**Christina Mary Louise Braden** is Loretta and Teddy's mother, who has passed away the Easter before the action in the novel begins. She is missed and often remembered by Loretta, Teddy and Bean-Trap.

**Jay Smith**, featured in *Flying Ghosts*, is a fifteen-year-old boy whose love of airplanes and adventure takes him the length of the newly-constructed Alaska Highway and into the feared Valley of Lost Planes. Since Jay's father Jed burned down Bean-Trap's gambling house in Alaska, the Smiths and the Bradens have been sworn enemies but Loretta and Jay write each other despite their parent's history, defying the unforgiving Bean-Trap.

**Bugs (Barry Nuggs)** had just come North when Loretta and Teddy met him in Fort Nelson, but shortly thereafter a terrible accident crippled one leg, and was forced to Edmonton to work in a bank, a useful position, as Loretta and Teddy find out at the end of the novel.

**Mr. Benton** is the Weasel City trading post manager who "sees all, knows all, and says nothing," obeying the 'Code of the North'. He threatens to close Bean-Trap's gambling house and put the police on his trail.

**Millie LaFont** is a Sikanni woman married to Pete LaFont and mother of six children ranging in age from one to sixteen. Although Millie speaks almost no English, language is not a problem as she becomes Loretta's only friend in Weasel City.

**Black Mike Michaluk** is a dark, mysterious man who snowshoes into Weasel City one day with a bag of gold and a "bomb" that Bean-Trap suggests was acquired by "chilling someone off." Bean-Trap knows that he's no "apple," but gets mixed up with him nonetheless, causing the Bradens to flee from Weasel City for their lives.

**Mr. Majec** is Loretta's teacher at Silver Cup School, in the little mining town of Ferguson in the east Kootenays. As Loretta compares her own life to the adventures described by Robert Service and other writers introduced in his class she realizes her past is history, but her future is in her own hands.

**Mr. Phipps** is the Principal of Silver Cup School who puts on a brave front to welcome Loretta and Teddy while cautiously keeping his distance from their odd-looking guardians, Bean-Trap and Grandpa "Doc" Woloshyn.

**Joan Myers** is Loretta's first friend her own age in Ferguson. Joan's family owns a local clothing store and is fairly wealthy but Loretta learns that she has more in common with her than she originally believes when she discovers that even the Meyers have secrets to keep.

**Grandma and Grandpa Woloshyn** are the proprietors of the Liberty, a boarding house for miners. Loretta and Teddy, who don't have grandparents of their own, are immediately curious about their Ukrainian heritage and eager to have one of their litter of kittens. Bean-Trap knows Grandpa as "Doc" Woloshyn, a former "fence" that could "doctor" anything from papers to gold.

**Bill Docherty** is a Montana truck driver who uses his own network to assist the runaways in their escape over

the border and into Canada.

*Joe Hofer* is a member of the Hutterite Brethren and he, too, helps Loretta and Teddy to get to Canada with no questions asked. He smuggles the two children in the back of his truck along with his cargo of geese.

## PLOT OUTLINE

This section combines a chapter-by-chapter summary of the plot with related questions and activities in **bold face** to be assigned to students for Language Arts discussion.

### CHAPTER 1

In a remote log cabin in Weasel City, in the middle of the night, we meet the Braden family: fourteen-year-old Loretta; her five-year-old half-brother, Teddy, and her stepfather (Teddy's father), Bean-Trap. Through Loretta's new friend, Millie LaFont, we learn that Loretta and Teddy's mother died several months ago in Fairbanks, Alaska while Bean-Trap was away. When he learned of the tragedy and sent for the children, they travelled through Alaska and the Yukon Territories to B.C. to Fort Nelson. There they met fifteen-year-old Jay Smith, his friend Barry "Bugs" Nuggs, and Jay's famous bush-pilot uncle, Matthew "Midnight" Smith. We discover that Jay's father had set fire to Bean-Trap's gambling house in Eagle, Alaska years before! Bean-Trap is furious when he learns of the children's connection as all Smiths are his sworn enemies.

Bean-Trap Braden set up a new gambling house in a remote place thirty-five miles from Fort Nelson called Weasel City in June, 1942. A war is raging overseas, and a new highway to Alaska is being built from Dawson Creek, B.C., through Fort Nelson, to Fairbanks, Alaska, to carry troops and supplies north. The area is no longer remote, and the new activity (and money) has attracted many people. Loretta and Teddy learn they must not speak to anyone about Bean-Trap's business because "Loose lips sink ships!" **What do you think this means? How does it apply to Bean-Trap's order for the kids to "Go Erie"? Explain. Do you think that the children are afraid of Bean-Trap? Why or why not?**

## CHAPTER 2

Loretta discovers that they are living in an historic cabin, formerly occupied by two men who (six years ago) had staged the Great Fort Nelson Fur Robbery! Loretta must also be the cook, housekeeper, and school teacher to five-year-old Teddy. **Compare the methods Loretta used to teach Teddy how to count and to read with Bean-Trap's systems. Which do you think would work best?**

Loretta is becoming good friends with Millie even though there is a great difference in their ages (Millie is married with four children), and Millie cannot speak very much English. **When Millie indicates that she would like Loretta to teach her to speak English, what does Loretta do? How do they communicate before they share a language?**

Teddy asks Loretta to read him a story from a book by Grey Owl called *Sajo and the Beaver People*. Grey Owl dedicates this book "To children everywhere and to all who love the silent places." **What can you find out about Grey Owl, his wife, Anahero, and their beaver kittens, Chilawee (which means Big Small) and Chikanee (which means Little Small)?**

### CHAPTER 3

Teddy celebrates his sixth birthday and the children later sneak inside Bean-Trap's gaff. Loretta is surprised - and not too pleased - to learn that Teddy knows a lot about gambling but when Mr. Benton comes in and tells Bean-Trap he's going to have to shut down, Teddy asks, "If they are having fun, why don't they like him?" **How would you answer Teddy's question?**

When Millie's family learn that she's been playing with cards in order to learn to count, they think she's been gambling and refuse to let her associate with Loretta and Teddy. Loretta compares this misunderstanding to the Bible story in which Jonah is thrown overboard and swallowed by a whale. **What do you think she means when she says, "It's only a matter of time until people here decide to shove us overboard, but who will save us as we slide down the throat of a whale?"**

## CHAPTER 4

Loretta is exchanging letters with Jay Smith and Bugs. **Why does she worry that Bean-Trap will find out about them?**

Loretta and Teddy discuss the history of the Sikanni Indian people, Millie's ancestors. They are called "People of the Rocks." **Why?**

Teddy's art lesson encourages him to draw the animals he sees around him, and he draws a moose. When Millie sees his drawing, she makes certain observations. **What does she say about Teddy's moose?**

Black Mike Michaluk comes snowshoeing down the river ice, and his arrival means trouble for the Bradens. **Why do you think Bean-Trap is so worried about Black Mike?**

## CHAPTER 5

Bean-Trap tells Teddy a bedtime story about a Greek card-player named Nico Zographos. This is a true story, and it is obvious that Nico is one of Bean-Trap's heroes. **Why?**

When it seems that Nico is losing the game the Greek Syndicate decide to "go for broke" and shout, "*Tout va!*" which means "No limits!" **Why does Bean-Trap think that taking this risk is the most heroic thing that could be done? How does it apply to the last words in this book, written by Loretta to Bean-Trap?**

When Black Mike Michaluk appears at their door, Bean-Trap is furious. "I told them never to come to the house!" Bean-Trap exclaims. **What does this show about Bean-Trap's character?**

He says later, "What's the use? I try to do good, raise my kids the only way I know how. Nothing works out." **Do you think Bean-Trap is sincere in his determination to protect the children?**

Loretta overhears the men talking about Black Mike Michaluk. She learns that an American transport plane

had crashed a few months before in the Tuchodi Lakes region of B.C., with an army payroll and eleven men aboard. **Why does she think that Black Mike might have come upon this accident and taken the money? Why does she think they will soon have to leave Weasel City?**

## CHAPTER 6

In the dark of night, the Braden family flee Weasel City on dog-sled. The driver takes them on the river ice to Fort Nelson, where Bean-Trap visits a doctor to have a bullet removed. They travel from Weasel City to Edmonton staying in an hotel and visiting a department store and bank. The children celebrate Christmas before heading south into the United States, to Butte, Montana. "The city of Butte is a mile high and a mile deep!" Bean-Trap says excitedly. "It's got mines...those fellows go underground --I stay above ground, and mine gold!" **What do you think he means?**

When Loretta asks what happened in Weasel City that caused them to leave in the middle of the night, Bean-Trap's response is, "What you don't know, won't hurt you." **Why might this be good advice, considering their lifestyle?**

Bean-Trap says he plans to deposit "a lot of money" into a bank account in Edmonton. He tells Loretta that she must memorize the bank account number so if anything happens to him, the kids will be looked after. He implies that with this money, "You'll never have to 'toady' to anybody." **Loretta isn't sure she understands what he means. Do you?**

Loretta concludes that it was a bullet from Black Mike's gun that was found lodged in Bean-Trap's side. She adds that she knows "Black Mike was no 'apple'." **What does she mean?**

## CHAPTER 7

The Braden family goes south to Lethbridge on the train, then boards a bus to cross the Canada-U.S. border to Helena, Montana. **Why do you think Bean-Trap had their certificates altered to show new names? Why does the city of Helena impress Bean-Trap? Why**

would Bean-Trap say that “the war is the best thing that ever happened to the economy”?

When they re-enter Canada going to British Columbia, Bean-Trap intends to check out the Slocan, Lardeau and Kootenay districts for a likely place to set up his new “gaff.” **Why does he decide against setting up in Three Forks or Sandon?**

In southern B.C., the Bradens hear that Japanese-Canadians were moved inland from the coastal areas of the province. Although at this time the war is being fought overseas, in both Europe and the South Pacific, the highway and the incarceration camps bring the war “home.” **Write a diary entry about the preparations for war written from Loretta’s perspective.**

## CHAPTER 8

When the family arrives in Ferguson, B.C., they meet Grandma and Grandpa Woloshyn who run the Liberty Hotel. But Bean-Trap and Grandpa have met before. **Draw a picture of Grandpa and include a paragraph about his past and present profession. Do the same for Grandma.**

When Loretta learns “Doc” Woloshyn’s can falsify gold readings and documents she says, “I’m tired of hearing about people who cheat to get ahead. It doesn’t get people anywhere” **Give examples from this story that support her feelings.**

Grandpa and Bean-Trap accompany Loretta and Teddy to Silver Cup School to get them registered. **Why do you think Loretta observes that “the secretaries and teachers have become very quiet” when the group goes into the principal’s office? Why does Grandpa consider Ferguson a perfect place to live?**

## CHAPTER 9

Mrs. Louie shows Loretta and Teddy to their classes and tells them about how the area was settled. **How does this history compare to that of your own town or city? Describe Loretta’s and Teddy’s first day in Silver Cup School. How does your school welcome newcomers?**

## CHAPTER 10

Mr. Majec introduces the students to the poems of Robert Service, who lived in Canada for many years. **Look up some of Service’s work, and recite his poetry to the class. Do you think there are still people and places like this in the North?**

Joan Meyers is Loretta’s first friend her own age. **What do the girls talk about? How is this different from what Loretta would discuss with Millie, or with Grandma?**

## CHAPTER 11

Loretta learns more about the Woloshyn’s family background. **Look up the Ukraine (which means “frontier”) on a map, and find the Austro-Hungarian province of Galacia. Trace the Woloshyn’s voyage to the United States, then to Edmonton, Alberta.**

After school Loretta and Teddy walk home with Joan and recount what happened during the day. **Why do you think Joan Meyers was so shocked by Teddy’s choice to read the story of Noah’s Ark? When Teddy brags about his father in front of Joan, it has devastating results. Why?**

## CHAPTER 12

Mr. Majec’s essay assignment allows Loretta to explore the story of Chief Joseph, a Nez Perce Indian chief, best known for his military retreat of 1877 through Idaho, Washington and Montana. She learns in her research that the story begins in June of 1877 when negotiations failed between his tribe and U.S. military officials in a conflict over Nez Perce territory. Joseph realized that his warriors could not face the U.S. forces, and ordered the retreat. He conducted the retreat brilliantly, fighting off U.S. troops and leading his people more than a thousand miles, but was finally forced to surrender about forty miles from the Canadian border. **Why do you think she choose the story of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce?**

After Loretta reads her essay on Chief Joseph, she adds a *parable* of her own. **How does her story about the**

**Devil and the gambler compare to her own life? Why does Loretta instinctively know she can never share a friendship with Tommy Turcotte?**

## CHAPTER 13

Joan's family is moving away, as are Grandma and Grandpa Woloshyn. And now, Loretta and Teddy must leave Ferguson. **How often have you moved? How did you adjust to your new home?**

When a vengeful gambler arrives looking for Bean-Trap he threatens the children until Bean-Trap arrives and a fight ensues. Both men are seriously injured and the cabin is wrecked. Loretta and Teddy are told to leave before the police arrive. **Do you think this is good advice, given their circumstances?**

## CHAPTER 14

Loretta decides she must leave a letter for Grandma and Grandpa, and follows Teddy's advice to "write it in code." **What will Grandma and Grandpa be able to figure out from her letter?**

**How does Mr. Majec's discussion topic in Social Studies, "In Canada, every person controls his own destiny" apply to the Bradens' situation?**

When Loretta and Teddy arrive in Edmonton, they decide to look for Bugs. **Name three ways he helps the children.**

Loretta writes a letter to Bean-Trap, calling him "Dad." **Why is this significant? What does "tout va" refer to in the story? What will Bean-Trap learn from reading this letter?**

## ACTIVITIES

### SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY

- Trace the route of the The Alaska Highway, from Mile Zero at Dawson Creek, B.C., to Mile 1,523 at Fairbanks, Alaska. For more help, visit the website mentioned in the Additional Resources section of this guide for a mile-by-

mile description of the highway.

- Describe what Loretta and Teddy might see, hear, smell, taste, and feel when they went for a walk (1) in Weasel City, (2) in Edmonton and (3) in Ferguson.

- Loretta teaches Teddy and Millie about reading, writing, history and geography. What aspects of Canadian history would you teach to someone who was learning it for the first time? How would you do it?

- Write a short fictional story based on an historical event mentioned in *The Gambler's Daughter* or some other aspect of Canadian history that interests you. Begin with a real event but make up characters and situations with which to tell the story. Share them with the class.

- There are many aspects of Canadian history represented in the novel, some of which are listed below. Chose an activity near your community that will better your understanding of them:

- 1) the building of the Alaskan highway
- 2) the significance of the Canada Pacific Railway
- 3) Ukrainian immigration to Canada
- 4) mining/trapping
- 5) ghost towns

- Some of the many foods Ukrainian immigrants brought to Canada are described in *The Gambler's Daughter* (holopchi and perogies). Choose a Ukrainian dish and make it with the class, or plan a "potluck" where several students bring a variety of pre-made dishes for everyone to enjoy. Or, someone of Ukrainian descent could visit the class and teach you how to make perogies, holopchi and other tasty dishes.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

The favourite words for an author to ask when writing a story, are "WHAT IF?" Then the author adjusts each scene to see how it might work within the story. Pretend that you have found an old trunk containing letters which tell part of this story. Write a letter and its response from each of the characters below outlining events you think might be included:

- 1) from Loretta to Jay
- 2) from Loretta to Bugs



- 3) from Loretta and Teddy to Bean-Trap
- 4) from Loretta to Grandma and Grandpa Woloshyn
- 5) from Jay to Bugs

- Write a letter to Shirlee Smith Matheson. She has been to Weasel City. What would you like to know about it?

- Imagine you are a newspaper or radio reporter following one of the following stories:

- 1) the burning of Bean-Trap's gaff in Eagle, Alaska
- 2) the crash of the American plane
- 3) Black Mike Michaluk's arrival in Weasel City
- 4) the building of the Alaska Highway

Write an article or broadcast script describing the situation. You may record your radio broadcast for the class, or pretend you are making a newsreel and use a video camera for your "investigation."

## VISUAL ARTS/MUSIC

### *Visualize*

- What do you think Jay Smith looks like? Bugs? Millie? Choose your favourite character from *The Gambler's Daughter* (preferably one that isn't already pictured on the cover) and draw them. Barbara Munzar, the artist who created the cover illustration, used pencil crayons, but you can experiment with pastels, paints and charcoal.

- Draw the inside of Loretta's cabin in Weasel City. Read the description in the novel closely for the location of the table, chairs and stove.

- Loretta has a box where she keeps her special things. Bring a shoebox from home and decorate it as you would like. What will you keep inside it?

### *Dramatize*

- Choose a section of the novel that you would enjoy acting out. With two or three other students, perform this part of the novel for your classmates. You may be able to find old-fashioned clothing, shoes and hats from your local thrift store to make your presentation more authentic.

- Select a poem by Robert Service, or some other

Canadian poet you enjoy, and present it to the class. Explain why you selected that poem.

## OUTSIDE RESOURCES

### *An Expert Visitor*

Invite one of the following to be a Guest Speaker in your class:

- Shirlee Smith Matheson, author of *The Gambler's Daughter*
- an experienced card player who can show the students how to shuffle, deal, and count the cards
- someone of Ukrainian descent, like the Woloshyns
- actor/storyteller Tom Byrne, who dramatizes the poems of Robert Service. For more information on arranging a performance, see the *Resources: Audio Recordings* section of this guide

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

Dickson, Lovat. *Wilderness Man: The Strange Story of Grey Owl*. Scarborough: Signet, 1973.

Grey Owl. *The Men of the Last Frontier*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1931.

Grey Owl. *Sajo and the Beaver People*. New York: Charles Scribners, reprint 1971.

Smith, Donald. *From the Land of the Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl*. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990.

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Abraham, Carolyn. "Profit and Salvation: Hutterite Brethren embrace prosperity in God's Good Prairie" *Calgary Herald*, October 13, 1997.

Stevens, Mark. "Annals of the West, Chief Joseph's Revenge", *The New Yorker*, August 8, 1994.



Kostash, Myrna. *All of Baba's Children*. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1978.

Matheson, Shirlee Smith. "On the Way to Weasel City", *CANSCAIP News*, Fall 1996.

Ramsey, Bruce. *Ghost Towns of British Columbia*. Vancouver: Mitchell Press Ltd., 1963.

Woodcock, George. *British Columbia: A History of the Province*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990.

Woodward, Meredith Bain. *Land of Dreams: A History in Photographs of the British Columbia Interior*. Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1993.

Holloway, Samuel D. *Yukon Gold*. Outcrop (Yukon) Ltd., The Northern Publishers, 1985.

Schneider, Ena. *Ribbons of Steel: The Story of the Northern Alberta Railways*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1989.

## Videos

Shirlee Smith Matheson's novel *Flying Ghosts*, which is the "prequel" to *The Gambler's Daughter*, is being made into a television movie to be released the Spring of 1998. For more information, visit the Owl Television Inc. website at <http://www.owlkids.com>

### Highways North

1944, 15 min 00 sec

Title Code: 105B 0144 299 MSN: 18555

### Legacy to a New Land: A Celebration of Ukrainian Settlement in the West

1991, 112 min 17 sec

Title Code: 111C 0183 105 MSN: 20143

### Legacy to a New Land: A Celebration of Ukrainian Settlement in the West

1991, 112 min 17 sec

Settlement in the West (16 min.)

Ukrainian Winter Holidays (22 min.)

Laughter in My Soul (10 min. 7 sec.)

Teach Me to Dance (28 min. 35 sec.)

Ted Baryluk's Grocery (10 min. 19 sec.)

Title Code: 111C 0183 105 MSN: 20143

## Websites

<http://www.beachholme.bc.ca>

The Beach Holme page. Includes information on *The Gambler's Daughter* and Shirlee Smith Matheson (latest projects, tours and readings, contacting the author, etc.).

*British Columbia ghost towns:*

<http://travel.bc.ca/activity/bc/attract/index.html>

A site that offers links to historical attractions around British Columbia as well as its ghost towns.

*Robert Service:*

<http://www.top.monad.net/~artude/service.html>

The "Original Homepage" of Robert Service. Very informative, a good place to start. Contains images, related website links and much more.

[http://www.inch.com/%7Ekdkka/public\\_html/r%7Eservice.html](http://www.inch.com/%7Ekdkka/public_html/r%7Eservice.html)

A bright and colourful Robert Service page. More "kid-friendly" than the last, with excellent visuals.

*The Alaskan Highway:*

<http://www.alaskan.com/>

An informative website of Alaskan travel info. Includes a mile-by-mile guide to the Alaska highway.

*Ukrainian culture:*

<http://www.brama.com/art/kids.html>

A website of Ukrainian cultural links.

[http://www.brama.com/ukrainian\\_museum/index.html](http://www.brama.com/ukrainian_museum/index.html)

Ukrainian museum in New York. Beautiful visuals of Ukrainian arts and crafts as well as links to other Ukrainian websites.

<http://www.infoukes.com/culture/>

An excellent source of Ukrainian cultural information.

## Audio Recordings

TALES OF THE FAR NORTH PRODUCTIONS, along with world-renowned actor and storyteller Tom Byrne, have created a “spellbinding portrayal of Robert Service poems” that highlights the poet’s most famous works. Tom Byrne details the life of Robert Service, mingling Service’s poetry with a biographical account of the eccentric poet’s life. Many of Service’s poems are outrageously funny, making poetry and Canadian history, both fun and educational at the same time. Available on CD, cassette and video formats. To order, contact:

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shirlee Smith Matheson is the author of this guide and three published novels prior to *The Gambler’s Daughter*:

*Prairie Pictures* (McClelland & Stewart) 1990

*Flying Ghosts* (Stoddart) 1993

*City Pictures* (McClelland & Stewart) 1994

All three titles have been awarded the Canadian Children’s Book Centre Our Choice Award and *Prairie Pictures* and *Flying Ghosts* were nominated for the Manitoba Young Reader’s Award. *Flying Ghosts* has been optioned for a film and *City Pictures* was published in Sweden. Matheson received the Alberta Nonfiction Award and the B.C. Historical Federation first prize, and was a finalist (silver) for the B.C. Book Prize in the non-fiction category. She is the author of several non-fiction works including:

*Youngblood of the Peace* (Detselig Enterprises) 1991

*This Was Our Valley* (Detselig Enterprises) 1989

*Flying the Frontiers* (Fifth House) 1994

*Flying the Frontiers Volume II* (Detselig Enterprises) 1996

*A Western Welcome to the World* (Cherbo) 1997

Matheson also publishes short stories and plays and gives readings and workshops in schools and libraries. She has worked as writer-in-residence in several cities

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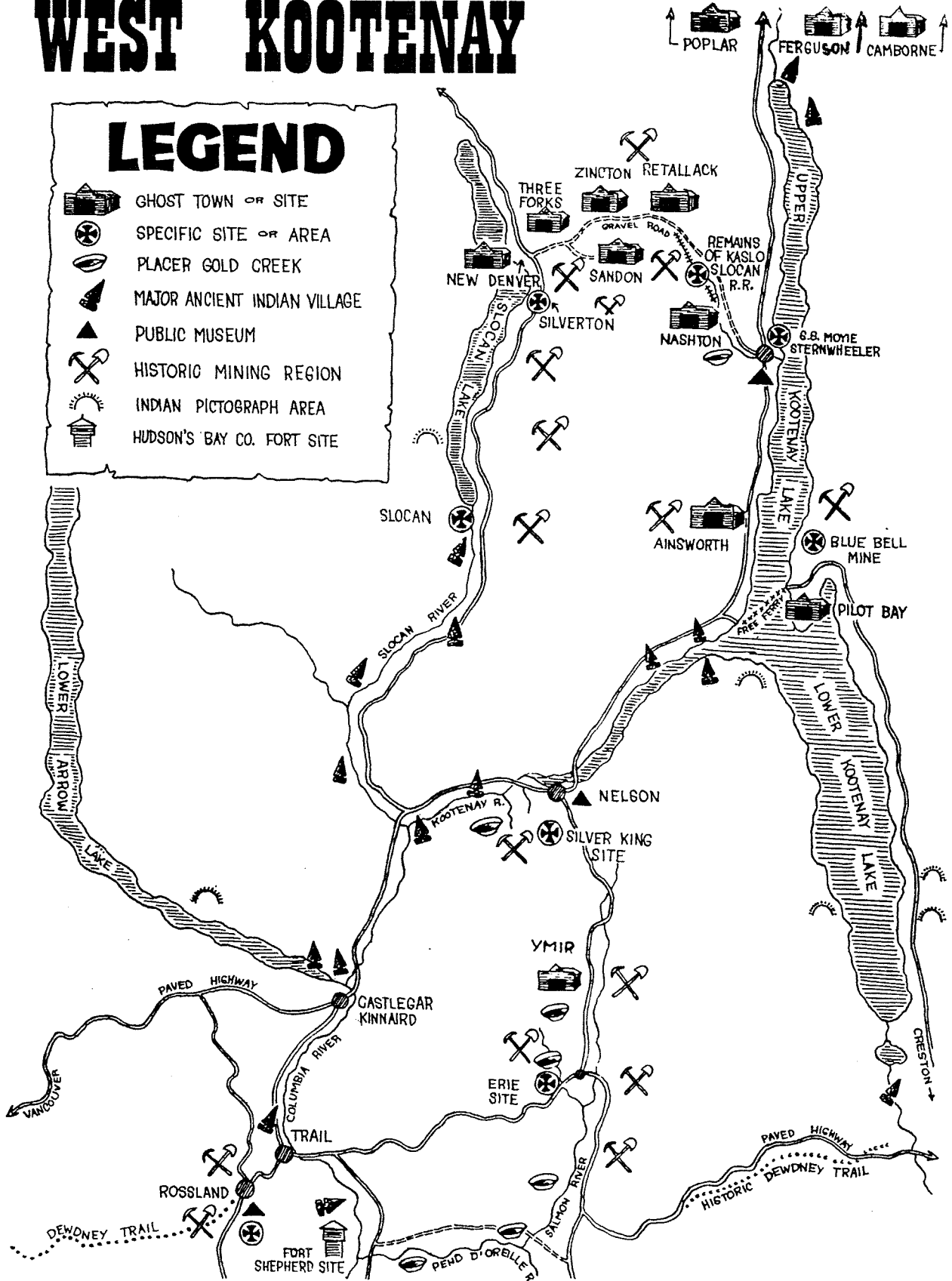
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Cabin at Weasel City, British Columbia, 1932, once occupied by Henry Courvoisier and Bert Sheffield. Photo courtesy of Shannon Soucie (Lash Callison collection).



Andy Daney's freight wagon crossing the bridge on Halfway Creek between Ferguson and Trout Lake City - 1902.



The Lardeau Hotel in Ferguson today.