



Glass Wall Signs

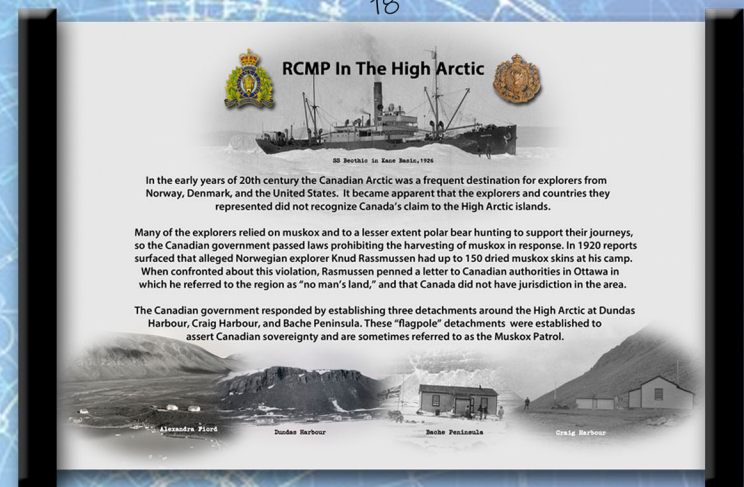
Affordable and easy to install with our exclusive wood supports or aluminum stand-offs. Custom Designs A Specialty!

3'h x 4'w



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Office Door/Wall Signs

The "BX" area of the North Okanagan is a 6,000 acre geographical area north of Vernon, BC. BX Ranch, BX Elementary School, BX Creek, and BX - Swan Lake Fire Department are all places we know well that use that mysterious prefix, one that has a rich BC history.

Born in Quebec City, F.J. Barnard was only 12 years old when his father died. Through hard work, he was able to provide for his mother and siblings, and at 20 married Ellen Stillman. Two years later he moved to Toronto with his wife and son. As Barnard was still not able to earn a satisfactory living, he left his wife and son in 1858 and travelled on a trading ship from New York to Victoria. Several of his fellow passengers died due to the terrible conditions of that class stowage. Barnard survived, and with only a five dollar gold piece in his pocket he left Victoria for Yale. Initially he supported himself by splitting and delivering firewood in Yale until he had saved enough to stake a claim, which he sold for a small profit. In 1859 Barnard was elected constable in Yale. This was an especially dangerous job in those days as claim jumping and disposing of the claim owners were common and very serious crimes.



FRANCIS JAMES BARNARD 1820 - 1899

Barnard's last duty as a policeman was to escort two prisoners down the Fraser in a canoe to the penitentiary in New Westminster. A large and powerful man, Barnard was able to thwart two attempts by the prisoners to escape, but it spurred him to find another line of work. Barnard then hired on as a purser on the newly built Fraser River steamer "Fort Yale" on which his wife and son arrived in 1866. On its very next trip two miles above Hope at Union Bar, the massive boiler exploded, killing five of his colleagues. Barnard was thrown clear and he took this as a clear sign he should again look for a less hazardous and more lucrative line of work. In 1866 he was awarded the government postal contract to deliver mail to newspapers to the Cariboo gold rush towns. With the aid of a small mule he walked the difficult 700 mile round trip on a regular basis.

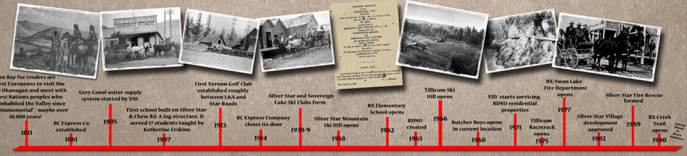
BARNARD'S EXPRESS & STAGE LINE - THE BC EXPRESS COMPANY - THE BX

Barnard parlayed this small contract into a full fledged freight, passenger and mail service between Yale & Barkerville. The stage line became known as "Barnard's Express" or "The BX" and by 1874 grew to service routes covering more than 1000 miles in BC's Interior. The company continued to grow and in 1875 the Provincial legislature passed a bill formalizing the name "The BX Express Company". It became the first established land transportation system west of the Rockies and second in size only to the legendary Wells Fargo Co. The growing, twice a week stagecoach trip from Yale to Soda Creek took 50 hours requiring horse changes every 12-20 miles. Not only a pioneering businessman, Barnard was also an elected member of the BC Legislature from 1866-1870 and later as an MP from 1879-1887. He was considered by many to have been a prime mover in BC's Confederation signing.



The BX Express Co. owned and operated a famous and massive - even for the day - 6,000 acre horse ranch called The BX Ranch in Priest Valley which later became known as Vernon. This was an era when the horse was still regarded as "king" and The BX made every effort, regardless of expense, to obtain the finest horses for its Cariboo service. In 1868, some 400 head of breeding stock was purchased in California & Mexico and driven north to its BX Ranch. Francis Barnard died in 1899 and by 1920 The BX Express Co. closed its doors after 50 years of service on track. Train & steamboat transport rendered horse powered stagecoaches obsolete and inefficient antiquities. By then the ranch had been sold, but the new owners continued to use the land for small farming. Over the years the BX Ranch lands were subdivided and sold in smaller parcels which became the region we know as the BX today.

Trusted by all - miners, bankers and government officials alike - Barnard pioneered a daring and sophisticated business enterprise that made a significant contribution to the development of this area and the entire Province of British Columbia.



THE BX HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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 BC PEAK AREA SOCIETY ASSOCIATION
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