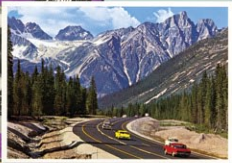
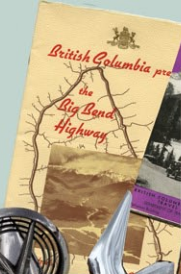
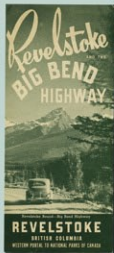


Highways

Revelstoke to Golden



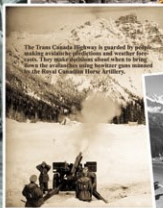
August 2, 1962 - Imagine you are in a line-up of 3,727 cars stretching for 10 miles. It is a stifling 95 degrees and you have waited for 7 hours. Finally Provincial Minister of Highways "Flying Phil" Gaglardi declares the Roger's Pass section of the Trans-Canada Highway open. You travel by car for the first time through this majestic mountain wilderness.

But this is not the first Revelstoke to Golden section of the Trans-Canada Highway. The Big Bend Highway, following the Columbia River, was the first. Construction began in 1929 and finished in 1940 after 10 years of plotting and planning, blasting, grading and bridging. A joint effort of the Dominion and Provincial governments, the Big Bend Highway was a triumph of courage and patient skill. Now it is mostly underwater in lakes created by the Revelstoke and Mica Dams. The seasonal road of gravel and dirt was dusty, narrow along cliff faces, and dangerous with steep drops to the river. Pressure from the Provincial governments for a year-round road to the coast increased and the route through Roger's Pass was finally chosen for the Trans-Canada Highway.



Big Bend Man Camps

"Relief" men from all over Canada built the Big Bend Highway during the Depression. Camps were set up all along the 190 mile route. At one point, funds were cut by Ottawa and only the "most destitute" men were kept working. The camps were ultimately home to 17,248 men. The men were fed, housed and paid \$7.20 a month. An allotment of tobacco was included in the rations. Families were not allowed. Inspections showed that a high standard of cleanliness was maintained.



First car through new Big Bend Highway, c.June 29, 1940 RMA P2753

Picnic in Rogers Pass, RMA P2618



Ski Jumping in Revelstoke

REVELSTOKE Presents A Ski Jumping Classic
The 1944
**CANADIAN NORDIC
CHAMPIONSHIPS**
AND
The O'Keefe Tournament of Champions

Mount Revelstoke
National Park
All accommodations
by special arrangement
through the Revelstoke
Tourist Office
Revelstoke, B.C.

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
MARCH 6-7-8

Dances - Bands - Parades
Judo Tournament - Open Curling Tournaments - Ice Skating - Bowling

REVELSTOKE, B.C.
The Heart of the Rockies

“What good is a town without a ski jump?”

World Champion ski jumper and Revelstoke local Nels Nelsen, 1926

You are standing at the bottom of the long snowy uptrack leading to the signature event of Revelstoke's winter carnival - ski jumping, when a man with intense eyes and massive hickory skis on his shoulder effortlessly steps past you. He is followed by a pack of admiring boys. They whisper his name - Nels Nelsen - and recite his accomplishments: BC Champion, Canadian Champion, World Champion. Just this year, the Spalding Sporting company included him in their 'World Champion' sporting card collection, along with Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth. And today you have come to see this legend of ski jumping soar through the sky and jump farther than anyone else on the planet. You will not be disappointed...

The "Big Hill" in Mount Revelstoke National Park or the "Nels Nelsen Ski Jump", as it would later be known, was the only place in Canada where world records in ski jumping were set. For over six decades, jumpers came from as far away as Norway, Finland, Sweden, Japan, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and the United States to compete in the Tournament of Champions. This site commemorates the countless Revelstoke residents who worked tirelessly to bring world-calibre ski jumping to our town and to celebrate the bold athletes from around the globe who dared to *Fly Without Wings* in Revelstoke.



Tournament of Champions

“A 10-Second Flight – To Fame or Fatality”

As told to Vancouver Sun reporter Denny Boyd by veteran Vancouver ski jumper Jack Roocroft on the eve of the Revelstoke International championships, February 1959.

“**Revelstoke** - You put your slab-like skis over your shoulder and begin the slow, solemn walk up the narrow, winding trail to the top of the Nels Nelsen jumping hill. As you plod through the calf-deep snow, you try not to think about where you are going and what you are going to do. Up you go, higher and higher. Finally, you are at the level of the jump-off and you scoop up a handful of snow to cool your sweat-bathed face. You go higher, right to the very top of the in-run.

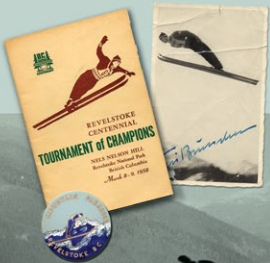
As you wait for the signal, you fidget and look out. You can see nothing of the jump-hill below you or the crowd which waits silently. All you can see in the distance is the silver thread of the Columbia River and the bleak mountains. The hill captain shouts, “Clear the hill” and in a moment, you see the start flag. You kick yourself off. Crouched low, you skim down the in-run gathering speed. You hit the take-off and are launched into space and suddenly you see the town of Revelstoke spread below you. There is a tremendous roar of wind in your ears and a stream of water pours out of your eyes.

You come down on to the transition of the landing hill with a jolt that whacks into thighs and hips. At a blistering pace, you streak down the slow curve of the out-run. In nine or ten seconds, it is all over... there has never been a jumper who has gone to the top without the nervous tension that knots a man's stomach. ”

Scan this code and soar back into history. Watch the short film “Flying Without Wings” about Revelstoke's colourful ski history.



Jack Roocroft



Photos and artifacts courtesy of Revelstoke Museum & Archives. Design by Rob Buchanan

