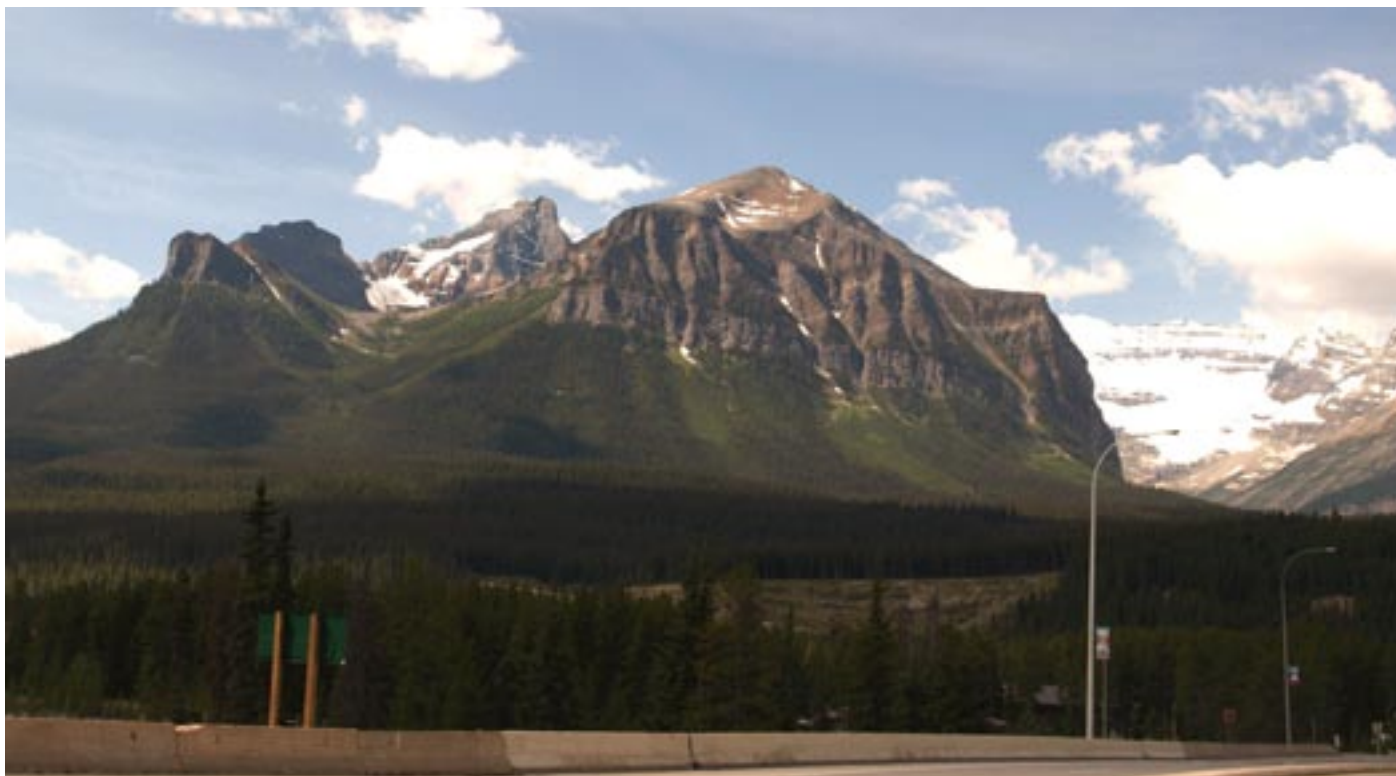


Saddle Peak,
Mount Sheol,
Haddo Peak,
and Fairview
Mountain



they explored this region in 1894. Fairview is now its official name. This rather unprepossessing peak was viewed as a real point of beauty by some of the early travellers. Dr. Charles Walcott, a geologist who was in this area in the early 1900s, went so far as to say that this peak is “worth a journey across the continent to see!”² But Fairview does hold a valuable position as a landmark in the Bow Valley.

In his classic book, Monroe Thorington speaks fondly of his hikes up the mountain: “A small peak as a rule is the best viewpoint because there is still something left to look up to... And so it is with Fairview. Year after year we have come back to it; perhaps as a convenient training walk, but more likely on account of the sheer beauty with which it is surrounded.”³ From the Saddleback, it is indeed pleasant to continue to Fairview’s summit for the splendid vista.

Just peeking (peaking?) over Saddle Mountain is Mount Sheol (2,779 m). Sheol is the Hebraic name for hell, and this peak was so dubbed by Samuel Allen for its brooding

demeanour. I find it rather delightful that Sheol looks down over Paradise (Valley).

Haddo Peak (3,070 m) is high enough that it also makes an appearance between Saddle Mountain and Fairview. It was named for Lord Haddo, eighth Earl of Aberdeen. For the first half of summer, Haddo holds a snow field on its shoulder, known as the “Haddo Spot.” Sheol and Haddo are along a ridge system that connects to Mount Aberdeen, which is not visible from this vantage.

Mount Victoria, which lies behind Lake Louise, is just visible from the Trans-Canada, but we won’t get distracted by that beautiful peak just yet. Farther to the northwest, two peaks are visible that border Lake Louise on the other shore. Mount St. Piran (2,649 m) was named for the patron saint of Cornwall, England. This was the birthplace of the first manager of the chalet at Lake Louise. Behind it is Mount Niblock (2,976 m), named after John Niblock, a superintendent for the CPR. Just to the left is Mount Whyte, named for a Vice-President of the CPR.

Lake Louise

One day, when Tom Wilson was camped in the Bow Valley just northwest of Mount Temple, he was puzzled by a booming sound he kept hearing. He mentioned it to Edwin Hunter, the Stoney Indian accompanying him. (Hunter, a.k.a. Gold Seeker, had shown Bill Peyto the ore sample.) Hunter explained that the noise came from avalanches crashing down in a valley nearby. He called the place *Ho run num nay*, meaning “lake of little fishes.” Wilson convinced Hunter to show him this place, so they hiked up through the forest and came out of the trees to see the green water of the lake spread out in front of them. Wilson was awestruck. He named this breathtaking body of water Emerald Lake.

Some time later, Wilson returned to the lake and was amazed to see that it was no longer green – it had turned a beautiful blue. He is said to have then renamed the lake after the young lady who accompanied him that day, whose name was Louise. She is variously said to have been the daughter of Sir Richard Temple, Pollock, Markham, Edwards... In other words, we don't know. Officially, the lake is said to have been named after Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the sixth child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and the wife of the Marquis of Lorne. Wilson later wrote to park Superintendent J. Harkin to object to the association: “What did Princess Louise ever do for Canada, to have her name on the most beautiful spot in Canada...? Marquis Forlorn!”⁴ Wilson later named a lovely lake farther to the west Emerald Lake.

Mount Victoria and Mount Lefroy

The southwest end of Lake Louise is beautifully framed by Mount Victoria (3,464 m), with its cap of ice sparkling in the sun. Yes, it is named for the monarch. But it had previously been named Mount Green after Rev. William Spotswood Green, a member of the British Alpine Club who visited the Rockies in 1888. After visiting the lake, Green is said to have had an enthusiastic discussion with Van Horne of the CPR about the great tourism potential that the location offered.

Victoria is made up of a long ridge with three summits, the centre one the highest. The glacier probably filled the entire

valley and carved out the basin that is now the lake about 25,000 years ago. Evidence of its passing is left in the form of striations marked in the rock, and in the moraines around the edges and at the end of the valley. The Chateau Lake Louise sits on the terminal moraine of this great glacier.

A high pass, now named Abbot Pass, separates Mount Victoria from the other peak that frames the end of the lake. There is considerable confusion about the naming of Mount Lefroy (3,234 m), and this name was applied to various other peaks (including Victoria) before it was determined that this is the peak that would officially bear the name. General Sir John Henry Lefroy was an astronomer who worked all across Canada in the 1840s making observations used for mapping. His focus was particularly on magnetic declination, and his work was instrumental in locating the magnetic north pole.

Lefroy had long been the target for mountaineers keen to do first ascents around Lake Louise. In 1884, it was almost conquered by Walter Wilcox, Louis Frissel, and Wandell Henderson, but they came very close to disaster in their failed attempt. Frissel, nearing the top of the mountain, took a hold on a loose rock that gave way, sending him tumbling off the wall. Although he was caught by the rope, he sustained a head injury. Dangling from the rope, Frissel was unable to help himself, and the remaining pair had to lower him to a secure place. Once they got Frissel to a safe spot, Wilcox went down for help, and they all lived to climb again.

Then, in 1896, Lefroy became the site of the first climbing fatality in the Canadian Rockies. Philip Stanley Abbot of Boston, a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and an experienced climber, had earlier made two unsuccessful attempts on this peak together with Charles Fay and Charles Thompson. They returned in 1896, determined to reach the summit that year. They ascended the pass between Victoria and Lefroy – a treacherous narrow gully named the Death Trap because of the constant rockfall that careens down it. The party safely made the pass and, figuring that they were past the area of greatest risk, climbed upward and reached a steep and difficult section that offered no view ahead. Abbot went ahead and let the others know that he was making his way along a cleft that looked like it would take him through.

Falling rock forced the remaining party to unrope and move to a more sheltered position. There, they asked Abbot