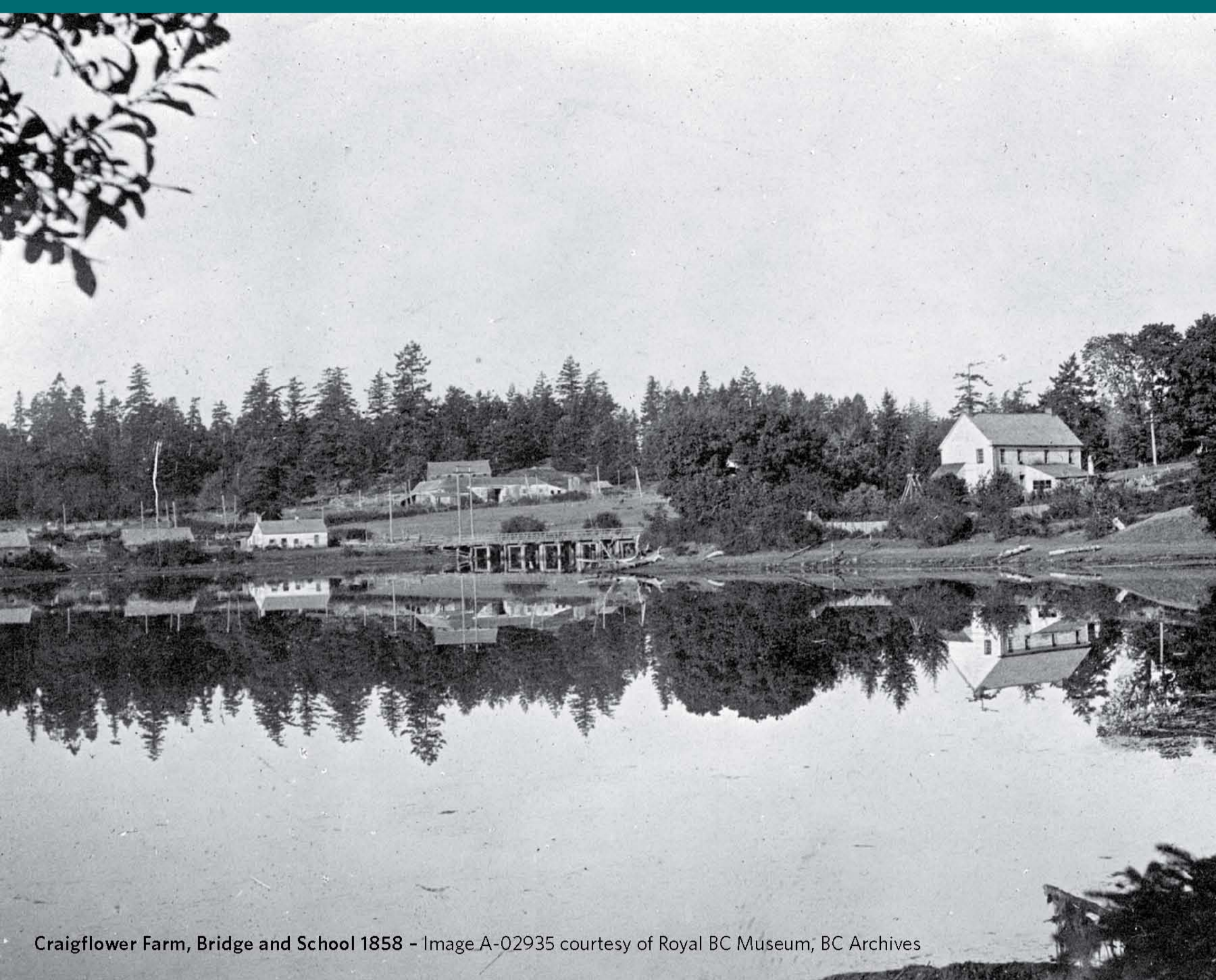


Early Settler History



Craigflower Farm, Bridge and School 1858 - Image A-02935 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

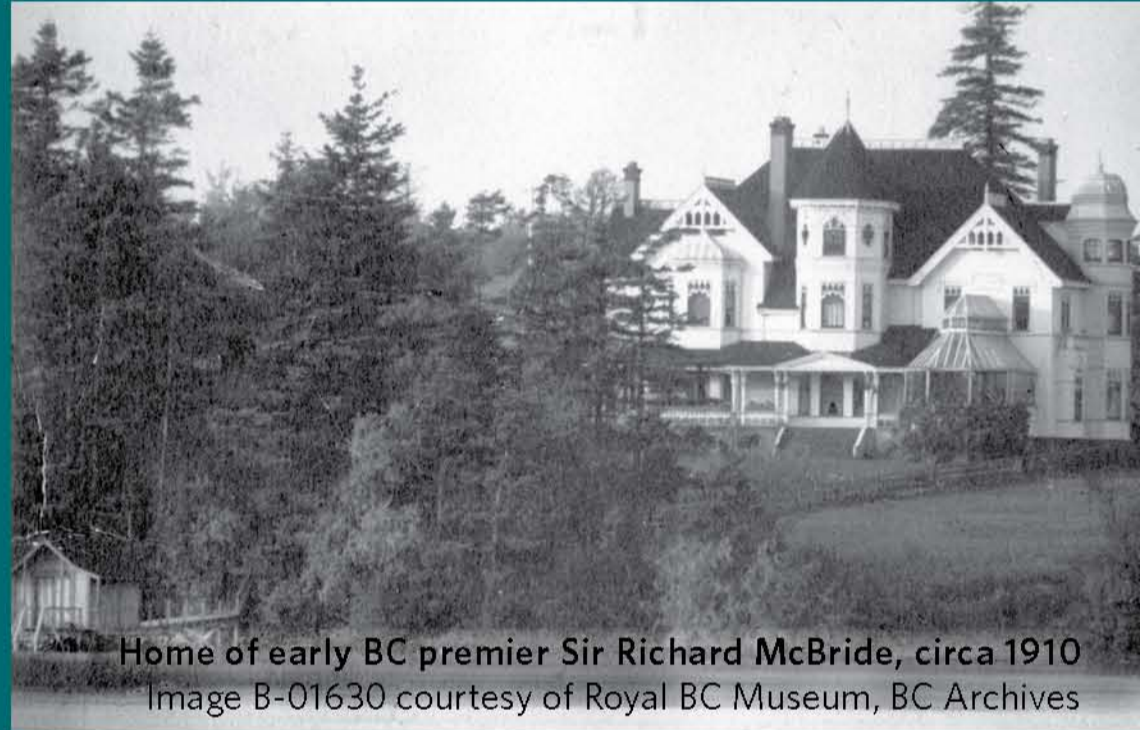
IN 1843, THE HUDSON'S BAY Company (HBC) established a fort on what is now Victoria Harbour. Several large farms were soon established in the area, operated by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company and later the HBC. Forests were cleared for growing grain and vegetables and raising sheep and cattle. A steam engine at Craigflower Farm was used to operate a sawmill and to grind grain for making ship's biscuits

and other sturdy bread products for the British Royal Navy based in Esquimalt Harbour. A variety of troubles including poor soils, lack of good livestock forage and financial difficulties led to the dissolution of the large farms in 1865. Several former HBC employees later acquired land of their own in the region, and some began farming and other enterprises along the Gorge.



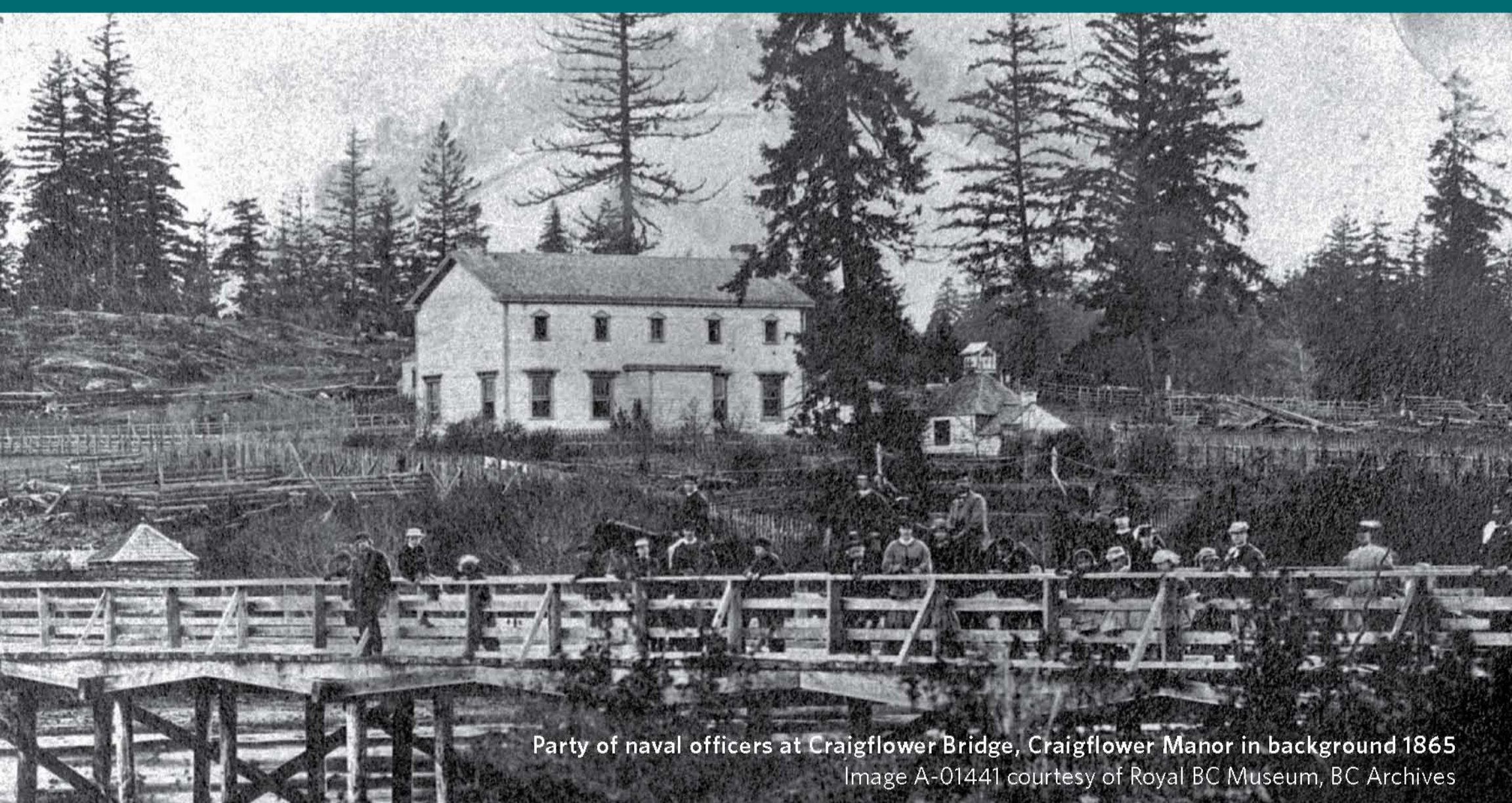
Craigflower School circa 1900
Image A-02664 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Craigflower School opened in 1855 with 26 students. In early days, the teacher and family lived upstairs and pupils from outlying areas often boarded with them.



Home of early BC premier Sir Richard McBride, circa 1910
Image B-01630 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

The gold rush era in the 1850s and '60s caused a surge of development in the area and an influx of new settlers to the region. As Victoria grew, many stately homes were built along the Gorge by the prosperous merchants and business people who made their fortunes in the growing colony.



Party of naval officers at Craigflower Bridge, Craigflower Manor in background 1865
Image A-01441 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

