



Langley  
Heritage  
Society

{MARCH 2014}

Langley Heritage Society  
P.O. Box 982  
Fort Langley, B.C.  
V1M 2S3

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE {MARCH 2014}

As the Langley Heritage Society prepares to celebrate thirty-five years of dedicated effort to preserve the heritage of our community, we face an unprecedented attack on the foundation of Langley. Critical guidelines for Fort Langley are being stripped away to allow a developer to build an inappropriate project. Coupled with the attack on the ALR lands and complaints from Willoughby residents about density and parking, it is not a surprise that Brookwood residents have little faith in our council to do the right thing.

I wish to thank everyone who endured the three night public hearing. The 1400 people who submitted a petition and were unable to attend were thus represented at the hearing.

We welcome our new members and your desire to help protect the parts of Langley that you value.

We hope that you can attend the March 25 general meeting where John Gordon will be giving his photography nature presentation, and also urge you to attend the AGM on April 11 at the Community Hall in Fort Langley. Be sure to contact the social committee regarding your donation to the pot luck dinner.

Fred Pepin  
LHS President

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Looking at Langley History  
Page 2-3

Membership Fees Reminder  
Page 3

Down By The Station  
Page 4

Memories of CNR Life  
Page 4-5

Annual General Meeting  
Page 5

Upcoming Programs  
Page 6

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Langley Heritage Society  
is online! Go to  
[www.langleyheritage.ca](http://www.langleyheritage.ca)  
for society news,  
membership information,  
photographs, project  
updates, our blog and more.

**“LOOKING AT LANGLEY HISTORY:  
SCANDINAVIAN SETTLERS IN ALDERGROVE”  
{BY MAUREEN PEPIN}**

Clusters of families from Norway, Sweden and Finland came to the County Line area (north on 272<sup>nd</sup>) during the late twenties and thirties. These people settled near each other because of their common language and culture, helping each other with the hardships and primitive living conditions of the time. Their experiences sound very similar as they struggled to learn the language and take care of their families.

Many men were fishermen in their homeland and reverted to this occupation for livelihood in Canada. They would be away from their families for long periods of time along the Fraser River and up the Coast. Others were away in logging camps where “Big Swedes” were in great demand. Their wives and families remained at home on their small farms, coping with lonely isolation, children and very primitive farming conditions. Many Scandinavians lived as bachelors, working hard to develop the communities of Langley. Many of these people had left fine homes in Sweden, Norway, Denmark or Finland, being lured by extravagant promises by an over zealous Canadian Immigration program. A few examples of their lives are as follows:

Arvid Anderson, born in 1880, immigrated from Sweden, settling on Angling Road (267<sup>th</sup>) around 1930. He lived as a bachelor and it was rumored he came from a wealthy family, but left Sweden because of a broken romance. He built his barn using timber from his own 20 acre property, carrying the lumber from the back of his property without help. Unfortunately, he developed “pipe smoker’s cancer” on the left side of his face, but in a last desperate measure, arranged for treatment at the Mayo Clinic. No one expected to see him again, but after the removal of an eye, part of this cheek bone and many skin grafts, he survived and returned to Aldergrove as an example of the miracle of modern medicine. After World War II, he returned back home to Sweden.

Another family from Norway was Hans and Berna Davidsen; he arrived in 1924 and she in 1930 with their four children in tow. Coming from a good home in Stavenger, Norway, they found that the only store was the Red and White General Store on County Line, with mail being brought by the BC Electric, and the only social activities at the County Line Community Hall. There was no special language teaching in the schools.

Emil Jensen and Marie Everson were both born in Norway, but did not meet until Marie came to Chicago. On May 26, 1883, three weeks after Marie arrived, they were married. They travelled across the USA, finally settling in Bellingham, Washington. The couple built a house there, but decided to come to Canada c. 1903. Emil did carpentry work and had a small herd of cows. After several years, they moved to Barnston Island where he purchased a dairy farm. However, on February 17, 1919, at age 68, Emil died of a heart attack while taking his milk to the ferry. Marie died in 1951 at the age of 92.

After Alfred Edberg and his wife Hulda immigrated from Sweden, they ran a small dairy farm. Alfred would be away earning a living in logging camps, while Hulda cared for the farm and their children. One time their house caught fire and the children from the nearby school formed a bucket brigade from a nearby stream and saved the house; a perfect example of pioneer community spirit.

Albert Gjertsen came to Canada in 1925 from Norway, leaving his wife Lilly and two daughters behind. He tried farming in Saskatchewan, worked at Fraser Mills and then went fishing on the Fraser. Drawn by the advertisements which said "Land is free for those who want it," Albert purchased 20 acres on Angling Road for \$250 and began to clear the land of its stumps with dynamite and winches and stump pullers, finally burning what was left. Due to the road conditions, all the lumber for the house had to be carried by hand for the last half mile to the building site. In 1932, after the house was built, he sent for his family. They had a stormy eight day crossing to New York, then five more days crossing the prairies by train, gazing at the bleak prairie winter scenery and the sod houses. Ugly, black stumps and muddy patches of snow formed a very disheartening scene when they arrived in Aldergrove. The children had to learn a new language and adapt to a new culture which taught, for example, that Norway was still living in medieval Viking conditions, worshipping the thunder god, Thor.

Source: Marshall Cronkhite, "Scandinavian Settlers" in THE PLACE BETWEEN, Volume I, p. 521 – 525.

## **MEMBERSHIP FEES - REMINDER**

If you have not yet paid your membership fees, please note that you can do so at the AGM in April. The prices are \$8.00 for an individual and \$15.00 for a family. Should you have outstanding dues for this year, you will be contacted by telephone with a reminder. Everyone is welcome to join!

## **“DOWN BY THE STATION” {BY BAYS BLACKHALL}**

A few more weeks before we open the Station, but we are all looking forward to May and better weather. However, lately there has been a lot to do just trying to save the “heritage” guidelines for Fort Langley.

In the meantime, Margo Harrison has sent the schedule for the FLAG program for the new season in our baggage room. Joining the group are three new artists. We welcome Wendy Neilson, Angela Weichel and Pat Weibelzahl; all well known local artists.

The Schedule for 2014 is as follows:

Show #1. “Micro/Macro” - May 10<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>

Show #2. “Artists Choice” - June 1<sup>st</sup> to July 27<sup>th</sup>

Show #3. “Sunflowers and Poppies” - August 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>

Paint Ins with FLAG artists on site working and doing demos will occur on Tuesday, July 1<sup>st</sup> and Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Also in September, there will be several FLAG members who are involved in the Langley Studio Tour will be working on site.

## **“MEMORIES OF LIFE IN A CNR STATION” {BY DIANE SIMPSON}**

Conducting the business of the railroad in Fort Langley and being the custodian of CNR property was a serious responsibility; one that Dad didn't take lightly. He didn't often discuss work with me, but occasionally humorous situations developed while serving the public in Fort Langley, as in other places we lived.

Imagine his surprise upon answering a knock at the back door one Sunday morning to be confronted by a very proper English lady in riding attire, complete with jodhpurs, properly tailored jacket and hat, and a request that their hunting group be able to quarter their hounds in the freight shed while they waited for their horses to arrive. With a completely straight face, he asked her if they might then like to quarter their horses in our living room. Somehow, the horses arrived quickly so the freight shed was not required; mutual dignity restored without a standoff and the annual Fox Hunt was on its way.

That was the last request to use the freight shed for anything but freight I am sure, but a Fox Hunt goes on in the Fort Langley-Aldergrove area to this day, using kennels for the hounds.

There was no daily passenger train that stopped in Fort Langley in the late 1960s, but it was possible to have the transcontinental flyer stopped for a passenger travelling across Canada – Montreal or points east, for instance. A gentleman came in one day to buy a ticket to Halifax, having arranged for passage on a steamship to Europe, where he planned to travel for two or three months. The arrangement was made for him to board in Fort Langley and on departure night, the signals changed to a stop position on the signal pole outside and flag up to stop the train and see that the conductor had the passenger safely on board for the beginning of his long journey.

After the passenger had returned from his European tour, he stormed into the station one day, complaining loudly that the inefficient railroad (not quite his earthy term...) had managed to lose his trunk containing a great number of antiques and artifacts. He had carefully gathered these during his travels, he explained, and the railroad would have to pay, and that was that. Father, in his usual calm way, got the claim forms ready for him to fill out. A long, expensive list was compiled and sent to the authorities to be reviewed and paid. About a year later, of course, the inevitable happened – the trunk arrived back at the station still locked and untouched. Alas, upon opening the trunk, the extensive list of treasures claimed appeared considerably smaller than originally stated.

I was quite amused by this story and of course immediately wanted to know if the fellow ever had to repay what he had claimed, but in spite of my questions, all I ever got out of Dad was a twinkle in his eye and an enigmatic smile.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

Date: Friday, April 11, 2014

Time: Meet & Greet will be at 5:30pm, dinner at 6:15 pm, AGM to follow

Place: Fort Langley Community Hall

No awards presentations this year.

Guest Speaker will be Michael Kluckner, former President and Director of the Langley Heritage Society, artist and historian.

Please contact Rosemary Genberg ([povertyhill@shaw.ca](mailto:povertyhill@shaw.ca) or 604-534-2338) to let her know if you are coming and what your pot luck contribution will be. *RSVP*

*Deadline: April 7, 2014 @ 6:00 pm.*

**LANGLEY HERITAGE  
SOCIETY 2013-2014  
SPEAKER SCHEDULE**

Members' meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm at historic Milner Chapel, located at 6716 - 216th Street. Stay for social time, coffee & refreshments after.

September 24, 2013

Glennis Zilm

Nursing in Early B.C.

October 22, 2013

Larry Jacobsen

Memories of the Kootenies

November 15, 2013

Douglas Day Potluck

Dennis Wasylenko

Fort Langley's Fort

January 28, 2014

John MacDonald

Kennedy Trail

February 25, 2014

Francis Mansbridge

West Vancouver Growth

March 25, 2014

John Gordon

Birding in Lower Mainland

April 11, 2014

Annual General Meeting

Michael Kluckner

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

{March 25, 2014}

John Gordon & Birding in the Lower Mainland

Involved in community newspapers since 1983, John Gordon's professional photography career began on Vancouver Island at the Campbell River Courier/Upper Islander before moving to the Lower Mainland in 1989. Based in Langley, his work can be seen throughout the Lower Mainland. Awards include two Kodak Gallery awards, Fuji Masterpiece award and a Nikon Digital Imaging award.

**SUPPORTERS & SUPPLIERS**

LHS wishes to express our gratitude to supporters who contribute to our projects. We recommend these trades people and suppliers.

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