

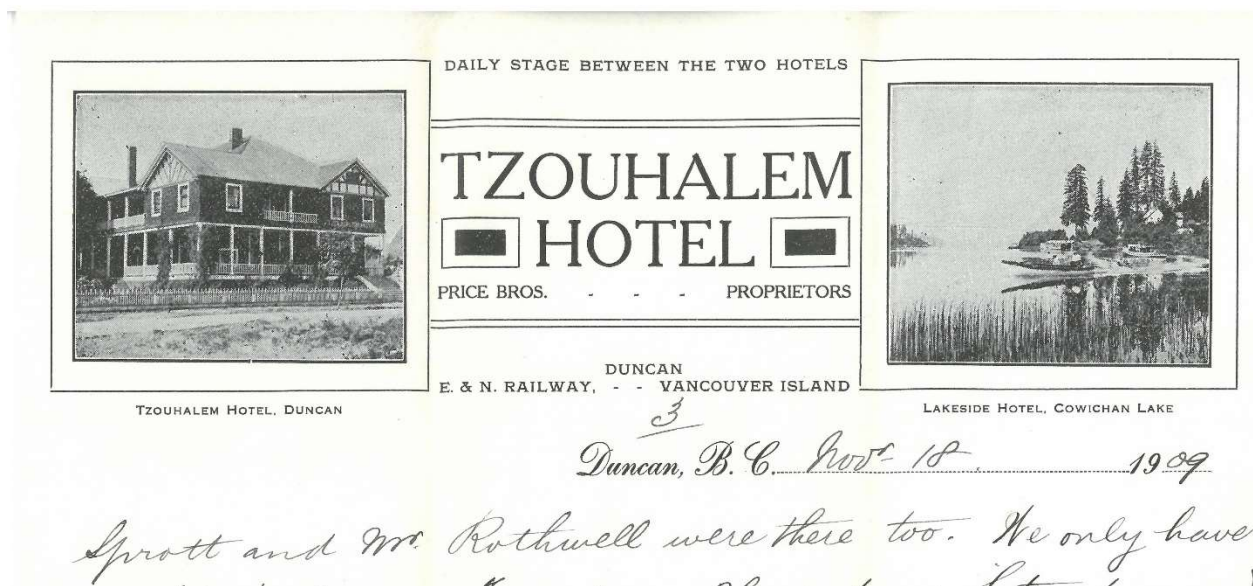
Curator's Corner

Four Letters to Mrs. M. Letters 2 & 3

The Gerry Wellburn Collection is one of many that the BC Forest Discovery Centre manages. (1) Part of this collection includes four letters written by A.M. of Duncan BC to a Mrs. M. in Hazelton BC. These letters provide an interesting and fascinating glimpse of life in the Cowichan Valley in the early 1900's. (2) (3)

Using stationery from the Tzouhalem Hotel, the first letter is dated September 12, 1909 and the last is dated February 27, 1910. (4)

The 2nd letter (last page only), and the 3rd letter (last 3 pages) with footnotes are as follows.



Sprott and Mr. Rothwell were there too.

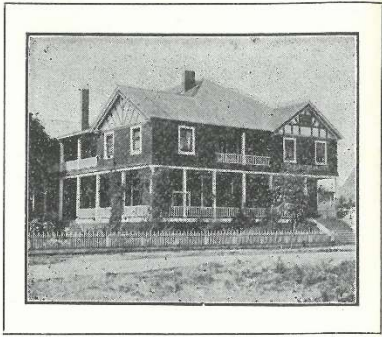
We only have double trains on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays now, but there is also a Victoria and Nanaimo mail in the evenings on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Some people suggest that the near approach of the elections (the 25th) had something to do with the extra mail service (5).

You will know that by this time the Beadwell's have sold their place at the Lake and have rented a place for a month. Mrs. Hamish Morten says she hears they intend to move up to some place near Cumberland soon. Their baby is very sick and is in charge of a nurse, I understand.

Mr. Girdword and Miss Ward (daughter of Robert Ward) were married last week and have gone up to the Lake. He is to manage the Lakeside Hotel, I understand from the people who bought it from the Prices. (6).

Yours sincerely

A.M.



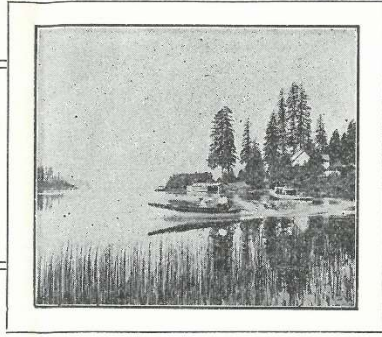
TZOUHALEM HOTEL, DUNCAN

DAILY STAGE BETWEEN THE TWO HOTELS

TZOUHALEM HOTEL

PRICE BROS. - - - PROPRIETORS

DUNCAN
E. & N. RAILWAY, - - - VANCOUVER ISLAND



LAKESIDE HOTEL, COWICHAN LAKE

2
Duncan, B. C. Dec 12 1907

get under the house, but I looked through a crack in

get under the house, but I looked through a crack in the door and I couldn't see anything wrong, and the shack itself seems all right from the outside. I will have another look at it soon. It would be well to have the mud cleared away from the passage as soon as there seems no likelihood of more earth coming down, but it will do no harm allowing the walk up to the verandah to wait. You might let me know what you want done about it and if you want it replace who you would like to do it.

I saw in the papers you have been having rather nasty weather, but your house will probably be built to stand the cold.

I suppose you have heard about Captain Barkley's death – being burnt up in his house into which he had gone to try and save some of his things. He was buried in St. Peters churchyard and Captain Parry and some blue jackets and marines came up from Victoria to attend the funeral. It is supposed that he died from excitement. (7)(8)

I have been to two new places since writing you last – the Goddens' and the Parker's. The Goddens seem very nice people. I think the youngest Miss Parker is engaged to Mr Alington.

Mr. Hayward was elected on the 25th as you will know. Poor Mr. Evans lost his deposit. (9)

Last Sunday and Monday there was skating here, but it snowed on Monday night and has been thawing ever since and raining a good deal.

I was at the Hamish Mortens for dinner the other night. John Hall was there too, and we had bridge afterwards.

Miss Nilsin gave a little dance the night before last for Miss Bagley, who is leaving soon I think. Mrs. Springett played the piano.

She (Mrs. Springett) met with an accident the other day. It seems she was driving along the road near Mr. C. Bagett's farm when Mrs. Horace Davie caught up to her. She stopped to let Mrs. Davie get past, but in trying to pass their wheels got locked and Mrs. Springett was pitched out of her rig with one of the little Springetts on top of her. No one was badly hurt although Mrs. Springett hurt her shoulder a little. Mrs. Davies rig was damaged pretty badly. Mrs. Springett said she (Mrs. S) couldn't help laughing, but she didn't think Mrs. Davie was very pleased.

I saw Willie and Hamish today and they both seemed very well.

Wishing you and Mr. M. a Happy Christmas and New Year.

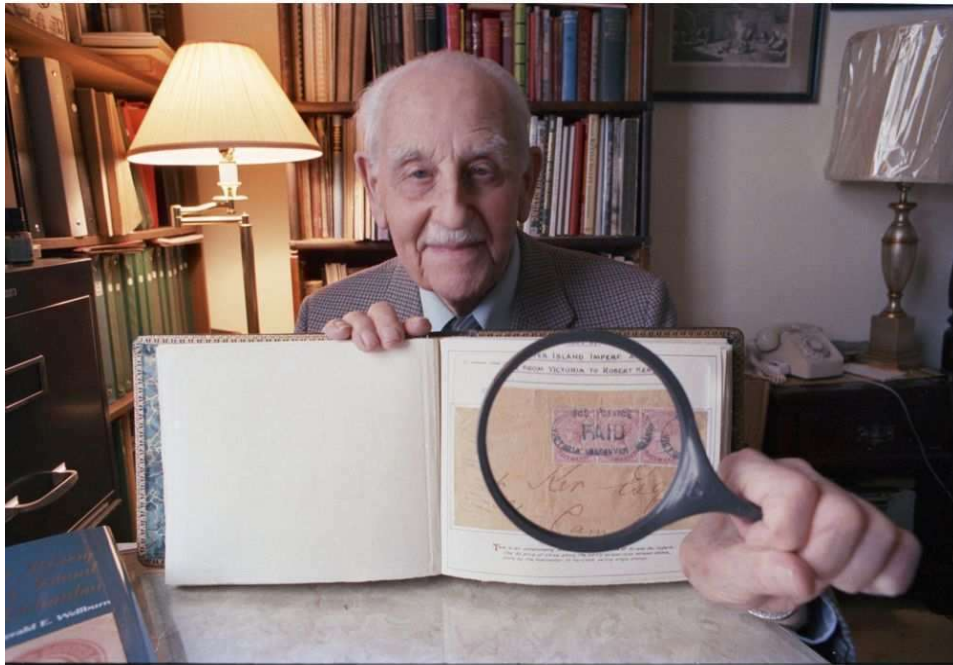
Yours Sincerely

A.M.

PS I don't know if I told you that Pitt & Peterson and Mr. Jaynes are amalgamating their business at the beginning of next year. Haven't sent down Jaynes' last bill to be paid. (10)

(1) Gerry Wellburn, the founder of the BC Forest Discovery Centre was a legendary collector of British Columbia history. His locomotives, logging equipment, and Cowichan Valley artifacts form the basis of the Forest Discovery Centre's collections.

In addition, Gerry was also a collector of British Columbia stamps and postal history. He is widely acknowledged to have had one of the finest collections of postage stamps in Canada, particularly from B.C.'s colonial period. Wellburn auctioned off his collection in 1987 for \$1 million, and in 1990 he published a book on the postal history of British Columbia and Vancouver Island.



February 10, 1988. Gerald Wellburn holds a magnifier to a stamp postmarked 1866 Victoria Vancouver Island. Photo: John Yanyshyn/Province John Yanyshyn / PNG

(2) A.M. (name withheld) was possibly a postal clerk at the Duncan Station (Duncan) Post Office.

(3) Mrs. M (name withheld).

(4) The Tzouhalem Hotel was built in 1901 and graced the corner of Front Street and Trunk Road. It was owned and operated by brothers Frank & Ernest Price from 1901 to 1923.

(5) The 12th BC Provincial election was held on Nov. 25, 1909. The Conservative Party won its third consecutive term with 52.3 % of the popular vote.

(6) The Lakeside Hotel (Lake Cowichan) was built in 1893 by Francis (Frank) Henry Price.

(7) In 1892, Captain C.E. Barkley purchased 100 acres of land in the Chemainus River Valley, situated between Chemainus and Duncan. He would walk to the E&N Station at Hall's Crossing and hand his letters to the mail clerk on the train when it stopped there. Neighbours began asking the Captain to take their letters also, and soon the postal authorities supplied him with a mailbag. When a post office was opened, Captain Barkley was appointed postmaster and the post office took the name of his house, Westholme, in which it was located. Captain Barkley named his house Westholme because it was his 'home in the west' but it may have been the name of a family property in England. Captain Barkley was the grandson of Captain C.W. Barkley, who in 1787 discovered and named Barkley Sound.

On November 22, 1909 Captain Barkley perished when a house to which he had recently moved into was consumed by fire. In his eighties, he ran back in twice to retrieve historic documents, perishing in the fire on his second attempt. One of the lost documents is believed to be his grandmother's (Frances Barkley) diary.

(7a) The Westholme Post Office was closed in 1973 and acquired by the BC Forest Discovery Centre in 1974.

(8) John Franklin Parry joined the Royal Navy in 1877, entered the Survey Branch in 1883, and became a Vice-Admiral in 1920. His principal work as a hydrographer took him all over the world, including Coastal BC from 1901 to 1910.

He was Captain of the H.M.S Egeria from 1903-06 and 1908-10, a Fantome class sloop. The Fantome class was a six-ship class of 4-gun screw composite sloops built for the Royal Navy during 1873 and 1874.

His last important work was to preside at the International Hydrographic Conference in London in 1919, when 45 delegates, representing 25 nations, assembled in an endeavour to apply lessons and experiences of war, on an international scale, to the needs of peace.



H.M.S. Egeria

(9) William Henry Hayward won his 2nd term on November 25, 1909, with 365 votes as opposed to John Newell Evan's 175 votes. Hayward represented the Cowichan Electoral District from 1907 to 1918.



William Henry Hayward

(10) Cowichan Merchants Ltd. was a partnership begun in 1910 between Thomas Pitt, Andrew Hans Peterson, and William Penn Jaynes.

Beginning in 1902, Pitt and Peterson operated a retail general merchandise business under the name Pitt & Peterson in the Duncan Emporium Building. In 1910, Pitt and Peterson joined William Jaynes to form the Cowichan Merchants Ltd. In 1910 and built a new three storey premises on the corner of Station and Craig.

Their first building burned down on 25 November 1911 and was replaced by the current Cowichan Merchants Building which opened in September 1912.



Cowichan Merchants Building, 1912
Photo: Cowichan Valley Museum