

## Early Movers and Shakers of Ocean Park Hall

Three intrepid members of the 'Ocean Park Society', its Chairman Mrs. Cope, along with Mrs. Wood and Mr. Giblin, approached Mr. John Horner, who lived on the north-west corner of Horner Road (15A Ave.) and Ocean Park Road (126 A St.), on February 6, 1923 to ask him to provide land for a community hall. Less than two weeks later, plans commenced to raise funds for a structure with a platform (i.e. stage). At first, Mr. Horner was prepared to offer the land with a 99-year renewable lease but, after continued discussions, by October 24, 1924 Mr. Horner had agreed to give the land outright.

Plans were undertaken by the group to provide specifications for the materials required, and to purchase items in increments due to lack of funds.

The Building Committee established on October 28, 1924 at a general meeting consisted of Messrs. Dougal McArthur (building supervisor, in real life a carpenter), Ambrose Cope (also a carpenter), L. Laronde and George Giblin (a railway worker).

The Secretary was instructed to purchase a box of powder to blow up the stumps on the site in order to clear the land.

Operating whist games was an early way to raise funds. There is reference to Mrs. E. W. Leeson offering her home for an organized whist game in 1923, as well as helping to find refreshments for the evening. One recorded 'take' for an evening was \$3.22. The old saying 'every little bit helps' certainly applied here.

The following people helped to collect funds: Mrs. Carlson, \$5.50; Miss Verna Bolton, \$4.00; Mrs. Cope, unknown.

Various individuals and groups in the community pledged funds: Girls' Sunbeam Club (1923), \$10.00; Ocean Park Ladies' Auxiliary (1923), \$30.00; Dr. A. M. Sandford (1924), \$10.00; Dr. Lavell Leeson, \$7.00; Rev. Hughes, unknown; Ladies' Circle, \$20.00.

(The value of a 1925 \$1.00 today is \$9.00. – Source: Darcy Bullock, Scotia McLeod)

Although there is no reference to its founding, the Ladies' Auxiliary appears often in the Minutes of the meetings prior to completing the Hall, busy contacting people and raising funds for the building.

Originally, in a plan drawn up by Mr. Knudson and presented to a meeting on September 26, 1924, the Hall was to be 50 feet long by 30 feet wide with a platform. Through amendment, it was modified to 40 feet long by 28 feet wide, with no platform, despite several attempts to return to those original dimensions. Although it isn't clearly stated, a reasonable assumption based on a review of the Society's Minutes would be that they simply didn't have enough funds or expectations of same to proceed with the more elaborate plans.

After the building had been erected, there was a period of time before money was available for window glass when the window openings were boarded up.

FINALLY, this invitation was issued:

The Executive and Ladies' Auxiliary  
of the  
Ocean Park Community Hall  
request the pleasure of  
Your Company  
at the  
Opening Supper and Entertainment  
on Wednesday, March 3rd, 1926 at 6:30 p.m.  
Admission: Adults 75 cents, Children 35 cents

According to the unidentified newspaper clipping in the Surrey Archives, over 100 people attended the banquet concert and dance. Rev. Hughes was the toastmaster.

There must have been a tremendous sense of achievement and

community spirit at that moment. After all, in only three years, a small group of people had found a site, raised money and built a premises for community residents to use. I wonder if they ever thought the Hall would be still standing and used 75 years later.

During 1926, there was a breathing space between large projects but on-going maintenance was a continual expense.

On September 12, 1927, they began the next big project. Mr. McArthur was asked to get an estimate of "an addition to the back of the Hall to be used as a stage in the middle and dressing rooms and kitchen on either side." In October, they decided the addition should be approximately 18 feet by 14 feet. The President asked anyone interested to submit plans before the next meeting. At the November 9, 1927 meeting, Mr. Henry "suggested that we get a practical man's idea of how we can get the best results with the least possible cost."

At the March 1, 1928 meeting, a building committee was selected to present a plan of the proposed Hall addition. The Committee consisted of Messrs. J. Carlson, A. Cope, G. Giblin, T. Broatch, L. Laronde, K. Henry, R. Hughes, W. A. S. Crux, and A. Ringstad.

We owe a great deal to those pioneers who found the time and energy to work for the community when everyday life was gruelling and less comfortable by far than what we experience today. Obviously, many of the same people were involved in ensuring that the Hall and the Association carried on, despite the shortage of funds available to them. Their continued personal involvement, and their contributions in time and donations were the strongest factors in determining the success of the OPCA.

– Research by Anne Helps

### DID YOU KNOW? by Dave Henderson

Until the Great Northern Railway came through in 1909, the only way to get to Ocean Park from New Westminster was via the 1904 New Westminster Bridge, the Old Yale Road, Johnston Road, Crescent Road, and then on to the Ocean Park Road which in places ran through farmer's fields and involved the opening and closing of gates.



## MUSIC FESTIVAL

Fri., Sept. 15, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. • Sat., Sept. 16, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Sun., Sept. 17, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Camp Kwomais, 1367 -128th St., Ocean Park, Surrey, B.C.

Admission: Day Tickets start at \$10.00



## Macintosh Computer Consultant

- pre-purchase consultation
- preventive maintenance
  - troubleshooting
  - training

Neil Harnett

Tel: 536-1091

email: nharnett@home.com