

## Chapter 4: The Great Railway

### part two



**The Hossack Mill**  
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After slinging liquor across the bar at the Fort Langley Hotel for eighteen months, Murdock McIver decided to return east with the intention of marrying the eldest daughter of the McIver clan at Tolsta, Quebec. Upon his arrival there he learned that she was already married. Undaunted he married her younger sister Annie and returned west with her over the railroad he had helped to build.

When Murdock McIver's first children came of school age, he became a member of the school board. He was instrumental in the building of the East Langley School on a bluff above his farm in the early 1890s. The teachers that taught at the school over the years usually boarded at the McIver home. For years board remained at \$10 a month. With rising costs McIver eventually raised it to \$12. The teacher who was staying with them at the time complained that it was too high. McIver suggested she go and stay with the neighbours. The young lass packed her bags and went off in a huff to call on the Harris family. She was soon (122) back. Henry Frederick Harris was not interested in boarding her for anything less than \$12 a month either. At the next school board meeting McIver asked for the teacher's dismissal claiming that she was incompetent.



**Mr & Mrs Murdock  
McIver**  
Worked on C.P.R.  
construction as a powder  
monkey before running the  
Fort Langley Hotel.  
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In 1885 Thomas Prior Mufford and his wife, the former Millicent Udy, and their children, arrived in Langley and settled on the north end of the Hudson's Bay Company farm. Mufford had been born and raised in Cornwall, England, and had apprenticed in the country's ancient tin mines. In 1863 he left home aboard a sailing vessel bound for the American goldfields. He crossed the United States by rail to Placerville, California, but unfortunately the gold of the district had been worked out (123) prior to his arrival. He returned home and shortly afterwards married a child bride who was also from Cornwall.



**Thomas Prior Mufford**  
(1838-1907)  
Settled on the north end of  
the Hudson's Bay  
Company's Farm.  
(page 124)

In 1874 the pair, and their two children, John, aged four, and Annie, aged two, had left England for Canada. They settled for eleven years in Drayton, near Guelph, Ontario, before venturing west on the newly completed Canadian Pacific Railway with six children. Thomas, Katie, Frederick, and Lulu May had been born in Ontario. Mufford first got work in the coal mines in Nanaimo. Here a son was born and a daughter died of typhoid. After a one year stay in Nanaimo, Mufford decided to come to Langley. His wife complained that the original homestead was too wet and as a result her husband bought a lot of the Hudson's Bay Company Farm from James M. Johnstone. By this time the choice Hudson's Bay Company farmland was selling for \$25 an acre.

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Mufford's brother Joseph also settled on two lots of the Hudson's Bay Company Farm. He was married to Ann Franciss of Trelowith, Cornwall, and left for Ontario in 1880 or 1881. They put in a winter with his brother before coming to Maple Bay, Vancouver Island, where his son William John taught school. Upon moving to Langley this son married his cousin Annie and began teaching in the Langley Prairie School on the Nicomekl River.



**Joseph Mufford**  
( - )  
Settled on the south end of

Another railway man to come to Langley in 1886 was David William Poppy. Born in 1861 in Norfolk, England, Poppy had come to Canada in 1883 to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He hired on at Winnipeg and worked his way west across the prairies on a survey gang laying out cities. He (125)

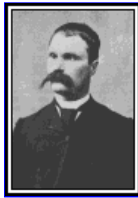


**David William Poppy**  
(1861- )  
Ex C.P.R. labourer who  
settled in South Langley  
(page 126)

assisted in laying out Medicine Hat, only to learn that Indians had come along afterwards and pulled up all the stakes and used them for firewood. Poppy reached Banff--the end of steel advancing west--in the late spring of 1884. He quit his job and footed it with a friend through the Rockies to Spence's Bridge--the end of steel advancing east. The trail was poorly marked. A bear got into their food supply at one of their camps and to keep from starving, Poppy and his chum had to kill a porcupine. They saw only 2-3 other individuals on their way through. A good day was 20 miles. Reaching Spences Bridge Poppy took a train to Port Moody. He spent the winter of 1884-5 splitting rails on Vancouver Island. He left the Island and took a contract to grade streets in Vancouver. He was lucky and got paid for the job just prior to the Great Vancouver Fire that wiped out the city.

In September, 1886, he came out to Langley with a man whom (126) he had met in Vancouver. Poppy and his friend, James Melrose, took up abandoned homesteads.

Poppy lived in a cabin erected by the previous owners. He would prove up his land during the winter and work out in the summer. He worked one summer as a foreman supervising 300 Chinese on the Esquimalt to Nanaimo Railway around Ladysmith. Another summer he hauled pilings from Burnaby to the Vancouver waterfront. He also spent a summer in a logging camp in Surrey. One spring before going off to work he planted a few rows of beans on a knoll near his cabin. Returning in the fall he found his crop to be nil. His friend Melrose dubbed the knoll Bean Hill. The name is still used.



**John Anderson  
Forslund**  
(1853-1942)  
Pioneer Swede in the South  
Langley district.  
(page 127)

In 1886 John Anderson Forslund and Anders Janssen of Gotenberg, Sweden, arrived in South Langley with intentions of settling. Both had left home together in 1876 enroute to New York. Here they split up. Forslund, 23 years of age, spent a (127) number of years working in various logging camp in Michigan and Wisconsin before coming up to Canada to work on Canadian Pacific Railway construction through the Rockies. The movements of Janssen are not as well know. He spent time in Oregon and then went to northwestern British Columbia. At any event the two friends got back together in New Westminster in 1885 and the following year they came to Langley. Janssen promptly changed his name to Andrew Johnson. They were a short time later joined by Janssen's brother and a friend. Ander's brother Frederick was killed in a logging accident in Surrey shortly after his arrival. Frank Olsen, his cousin, took over his homestead.



**Anders Janssen**  
(1854-1927)  
Came out with Forslund  
(page 128)

One of the founders of Port Kells, located along the Fraser River right on the Langley-Surrey border, was a construction worker on the Canadian Pacific Railway who was present for the driving of the last spike at Craigellachie in 1885.

Henry Kells was born in Bulterbet, County Cavan, Ireland, (128) around 1842. He apparently came to the Pacific Coast twice--the first time he travelled by way of Cape Horn to San Francisco. It is not known how he returned east but some time later he lived at Smith Falls, Ontario. He left Ontario and travelled across the United States over the Oregon Trail with the Joseph Lorenzo Smith family. Smith, upon his arrival in British Columbia, built a hotel at Port Douglas on the Harrison-Lillooet Trail to cater to the miners. Kells assisted him. Smith, learning about the route for the Cariboo Road, gave up this hotel and built a second at 47 mile, afterwards known as Clinton, and had as (129) his first customers miners that arrived on foot. Shortly afterwards the Cariboo Road passed by his door step. For a very short time Kells drove stage between Ashcroft and Clinton. Leaving the Cariboo, Kells went to New Westminster, where he met and married Mary Ann Kells in 1883. She was the sister of another Henry Kells. Although not closely related she and her brother came from the same county in Ireland.



**Henry Kells family  
around 1900.**  
Founders of Port Kells.  
(page 129)

Henry Kell's brother-in-law Henry Kells had hop-scotched from Ireland to Toronto, Ontario, to New Westminster, to Langley. He had been a shoemaker in the Royal City.

In 1886 the brothers-in-law with the same name formed a partnership and bought a one mile square of land which they named Port Kells. They, like William and John Hammond, two brothers that laid out Port Hammond almost directly across the river, divided their section into city-sized lots and envisioned their properties becoming great ports of the future. Neither ever materialized. Henry Kells the shoemaker sometime before 1900 left with his family for Edmonton, Alberta, leaving his brother-in-law, and his family, the sole owners of the waterfront townsite.

Henry and Mary Ann Kells raised a family of two boys and lived on the West Langley property for the rest of their lives. He died in 1918 two years after being badly gored by a bull. She died the following year.

In 1877 D.W. Poppy rode south to Lynden to resolve a dental problem. Coming back he felt quite ill so stopped at a Scandinavian Settlement on Lynden Prairie. The owner of the farm was Johan Peter Swanson, who expressed a desire to live in Canada. Poppy told him that his neighbour was wanting to sell. Swanson investigated and bought the farm which was situated on the Yale Road.

Swanson, his wife Carolena Sophie, and their two sons, Charles John, three years, and William Peter, three months, had left Kalmar Lane, Vestervik, Sweden, in the spring of 1875 for a better life in America. They sailed to England and there boarded another vessel bound for New York. Here they boarded an immigrant train which took them to Beatrice, Nebraska. Swanson worked here for a farmer for a couple of years. The (130) farmer provided them with a log cabin. A prairie fire wiped out the cabin and all their belongings brought from Sweden. They were saved from the fire by friendly Indians. The Swanson family moved from Nebraska to the Squak Valley near Seattle. A short time later they again moved to Clearbrook, Washington. Their next move was to Lynden Prairie. It was here they chanced to meet Poppy. By this time the Swansons had three boys and three girls.



**Mr. & Mrs. Johan Peter Swanson**  
Owned the 'Minnesota Chief'  
(page 131)

Swanson worked hard on his Canadian farm. It was heavily timbered but within a few years the big Swede, with help from his sons, was able to see the sky.

Swanson made arrangements to purchase a 10 horsepower 'Minnesota Chief' steam-powered threshing machine for \$300. It was shipped out from Hamilton, Ontario, and took the entire (131) savings of the pioneer family. The venture soon paid off since it was the first steam-powered thresher in the Lower Mainland. Swanson was kept busy doing custom work with it for the farmers in Langley, Surrey, and Delta, moving the machine from farm to farm with a team of oxen. Once when the thresher bogged down on the Yale road, Swanson gave a display of his great strength. He lifted each wheel clear of the mud and had ready attendants place planks under them. Each corner of the machine weighed half a ton. The fact that the machine was mired in the mud made the lift even greater.

Swanson's business extended south of the border when his friends and former neighbours asked him to do their work as well. Swanson agreed only after they promised to clear the paperwork at customs in Port Townsend. Foolishly he took his machine into the States without confirming that it had been cleared through customs. His failure to do so almost cost him the threshing machine.

He had taken only two weeks to thresh all the American fields around Lynden and the season was just about over when the sheriff approached the Aldergrove entrepreneur. The

sheriff appeared one day at a farm just south of the Canadian-United States border claiming that the machine had never been cleared at customs. Apparently an American plying the same trade had heard of the Canadian pirate and had jealously complained to the authorities at Whatcom. The sheriff seized the machine and painted Old Glory on in in 3 or 4 prominent places. Swanson was told by the sheriff that his machine would be sold at auction in the Puget Sound Community.

Swanson felt sick. Fortunately for the Swede the news of the seizure spread quickly among the Aldergrove and Lynden farmers. Some 25 of them, half American and half Canadian, agreed to work together and steal the thresher back from the American Government and return it to Canada. The men, supervised by Swanson, pulled the caper off. Swanson was never caught; however, he received word that if he ever set foot upon American soil he would surely be arrested. He never did.

Swanson's daughter Clara went to work in the Towle's Commercial Hotel at Fort Langley. The hotel was sectioned off (132) into two compartments. In one of the rooms only men gathered to drink. No women were allowed. Story has it that one pioneer got a little liquored up and stripped naked in order to do a little jig on a table top. For a joke one of the other patrons ordered a meal for the performer. Miss Swanson got a shock when she kicked the swinging door from the kitchen open and made an entrance with a tray of food. She let out a scream which attracted the attention of Mrs. Towle. Grabbing a buggy whip the hotel proprietor went after the drunken dancer who ran bare foot from the premises with Mrs. Towle in hot pursuit. She gave him a good flailing with the whip before returning to the hotel. Miss Swanson later married Mrs. Towle's one-armed son George.

In 1877 William John McIntosh established himself at Fort Langley. He had left Bruce County, Ontario, the year before at the age of 23 and upon reaching Langley bought John Taylor's blacksmith shop. No doubt he met Otway Wilkie, Taylor's son-in-law and a member of the Commission of Special Provincial Police, through the purchase of the business. In any event, McIntosh, a splendidly built man well over six feet tall, took the job as the municipality's first policeman. He worked as a blacksmith and went to emergencies when called upon.

McIntosh built a home immediately as he was hoping his intended bride would soon be coming to join him in Langley. Unfortunately this did not happen and he did not marry Catherine Hart Dalgleish until 1894. The marriage took place in Arran Township, Bruce County, Ontario. Kate had remained in Ontario because her mother suffered a stroke and she felt duty-bound to take care of her. Shortly after the marriage the newly-weds came back to Langley. Two years later the bride's parents came to live with them. That same year Mrs. McIntosh had her first and only child--a daughter. This baby, delivered by Dr. George Drew of New Westminster, was the first caesarean child born in the province. The doctor's tools consisted of a bottle of whiskey, the kitchen table, and a butcher knife. The baby was named Isabel Drew McIntosh in honour of the delivering doctor.

In 1877 the William Henry Vanetta family sold their farm at (133) Langley Prairie and moved to Shortreed. This settlement in South Langley on the Yale Road, had just before been named for two Ontario Brothers, Robert Junior and Duncan Shortreed, who operated a General Store.

The following year Vanetta's white farm house was made the first custom's station in the area with Vanetta as the first custom's officer. He was to keep this position for the next 25 years. The Vanetta family's move to Shortreed prompted two other families to follow them. They were Mrs. Vanetta's brother, Alexander Murchison Junior, and his wife, the



**Philip Jackman**  
(1835-1927)

Reeve of Langley 1895-97,  
he was the last of the  
surviving Royal Engineers  
that came to British  
Columbia in 1859 under  
Colonel Moody.  
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former Amelia Sarah Jackman, and the bride's parents Sarah Ann and Philip Jackman Senior.

Jackman Senior was no stranger to the Langley district. Born in the parish of North Lew, at Hathleigh, Devonshire, England, he had arrived in British Columbia as a sapper Royal Engineer on April 12, 1859, on his 24th birthday. He spent the first part of (134) the fall of 1859 camped in a tent at Derby. From there he was sent up to Port Douglas at the head of Harrison Lake and worked as a chopper on the construction of the original Cariboo Road from the head of Harrison Lake to Lillooet under Captain John Marshall Grant. The corps managed to finish ten miles of the road from Port Douglas before freeze-up. Jackman also assisted in the laying out of the streets of New Westminster. In the spring of 1861 he was working out of Hope, putting in the Dewdney Trail to Rock Creek when he chopped off a toe. During the winter of 1862 Jackman moved supplies to Yale, on the frozen Fraser, to be used by the men who were engaged in work on the Cariboo Road out of Yale.

In 1863 Jackman married Sarah Ann Lovegrove who came to British Columbia with her parents. Her first job in the new country was housekeeping for Colonel Richard Clement Moody, the man in charge of the Royal Engineers in British Columbia. She was born in Windsor, England.

Shortly after Jackman's discharge from the Royal Engineers he went gold hunting in the Cariboo. He grubstaked a man for \$500 but got only excitement out of the fellow's claim, for he never struck pay. In June, 1865, Jackman was foreman of a work gang putting through the New Westminster to Yale Road. It was while engaged in this work that the top of a tree fell on him and broke the bones in the back of his right hand. Upon appealing to the government, he eventually got the position as the first policeman in New Westminster. Many a drunk he packed home in a wheelbarrow.

He next went to work on a Canadian Pacific Railway survey crew.

Upon coming to Shortreed, Jackman homesteaded a quarter section of land and opened a small store. He ran it for three years before realizing that the store was a losing proposition. He left his store for the job as fishery guardian on the Fraser during the summer months. He would row up and down the river with a long pole sticking down in the water from the bow of his craft. It would snag up on any set nets and Jackman would turn in the culprits. He always made sure any families that were having it (135) rough always got a salmon. His position as fishery guardian lasted for 14 years.

Apparently it was Jackman that suggested the name for Aldergrove, on account of the plentitude of alder, for Shortreed. From 1895 to 1897 inclusive, Jackman was Reeve of Langley. Jackman was the last of the surviving Royal Engineers that came to British Columbia. His death occurred in 1927 at the advanced age of 92.

In 1877 flour mill owner James Hossack sold his portion of former Hudson's Bay Company fort property to Alexander Mavis. This man was known to John Maxwell from his Cariboo days.

Mavis had been born in Cumberland, England, in 1825. He had been among the first into the California and Cariboo gold rushes. Mavis had eloped from England in 1848 with his sweetheart (136) while bound for the California goldfields. Unfortunately, a boiler explosion on the ship killed this woman and she was given a sea burial. Mavis continued onto the diggings to soon return home a rich man. Gold fever forced him to come to British Columbia to take part in the Cariboo discoveries. At Barkerville he got the nickname 'Gardener'



The Ruins of Fort Langley  
in 1902 when owned by  
Mavis.  
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The Mavis home at the old fort.  
(page 137)

because he tried unsuccessfully to grow a garden. When he settled in Langley, John Maxwell recognized him as Alexander Gardiner, and was astonished to think he had known him by an incorrect name because of his hobby.

Prior to returning to Langley in 1887 with intentions of retiring, Mavis had been a gentleman farmer on Jarrow-on-Tyne, Northumberland. Here he had married Mary Fiddler Horn Nicholson and fathered seven children. Giving this life style up, he brought his wife, mother-in-law, and children to British Columbia. Once settled Mavis purchased the grounds which had (137) been the Hudson's Bay Company fort. Two buildings were still standing at the time. These he converted into cattle and chicken sheds. They lived in a company house built by Ovid Allard in 1872. Mavis built the first dyke in the municipality with horse and scrapers on the Salmon River.

Mavis was not the only person to get a portion of the Hudson's Bay Company post. Otway Wilkie was another. Upon leaving the Canadian Pacific Railway survey gang late in 1884 he had returned to Langley to marry Catherine Taylor, the hotel keeper's daughter. She bore him ten children. Once married Wilkie bought some 13 acres of the former trading post property. He had done well working on the survey gangs and wrote home to Ireland telling his family about the opportunities in British Columbia.

As a result, his parents, a sister, and two brothers joined Otway in Langley in 1887. They had crossed Canada on the Canadian Pacific Railway and upon reaching Langley set up housekeeping in the old Fort House.

Otway's father, Henry Wilkie, had received his education in private schools and in Dublin's Trinity College. He had joined the Irish Civil Service upon leaving school and in 1861, at the age of 41, was appointed Assistant Registrar General at Charlesmont House, Dublin. He had some time earlier married Alice Gordon. He retired in 1879 and moved to Scotland and then South England. In 1887 he and his wife and three of their family of 14 left for Canada. A daughter Janet joined them three years later.

Another newcomer into the South Langley area in 1887 was Alexander Cameron. Robert McKee Jr. was on his way to school when he first encountered the red bearded Scotsman playing his bagpipes while coming up the hill to Murray's Corners. The Scotsman was alone. Upon his arrival at the Corners, he rented the old Murray home.

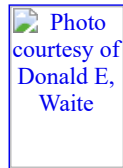
Cameron was not joined by his wife and family until the spring of 1889. His wife was the former Harriet Roberts. The pair had been raised in Middlesex County, Ontario. She brought with her three sons and three daughters. She also made sure that her husband's Durham cattle made the train ride across Canada without mishap.

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It was Cameron that named the first Post Office in the district. He was its Postmaster. He named it Lochiel after his ancestral home in Scotland. Cameron build the Lochiel School on land donated by Thomas Biggar. A large tract of land was named Biggar's Prairie in South Langley area after this early pioneer.

James P. Smith came out in 1888 seeking a homestead in the South Langley District. He had come out from Paisley, Bruce County, Ontario. His ancestors had migrated from the Hebrides to Prince Edward Island in the 1750s. Smith was twice married. His first marriage was to Mary McLoughlin who bore him three sons and three daughters. When she died he married Ann McQuilken who bore him another son and daughter. Her

youngest child was only two weeks old when she arrived in Langley.



The Cameron Homestead  
(page 139)

In 1888 Roderick Cummings took up a homestead in South Langley two miles south of the Yale Road. Cummings was a native of Hunter's River, Prince Edward Island, and had left home with Donald Matheson to do grade work with a wheelbarrow on the Canadian Pacific Railway between Port Arthur and Winnipeg. They quit the grade work in the fall of 1884 and returned east. They came to Victoria the following year by American rail. In 1886 Cummings came to Vancouver, where his first job was foreman over 100 Chinese, who were land clearing for Isaac Oppenheimer. Cummings later managed one of three hotels in Vancouver. That same year he married his friend's sister Flora Matheson.

On homesteading in Langley, Cummings knew at least one of his neighbours. He had worked with D.W. Poppy, railroading around Chemainus on Vancouver Island. At Langley, Cummings began slaughtering hogs and cattle to supply the logging camps in the district.

In May, 1888, John Skea and his wife, the former Elizabeth Scollay, arrived at Langley with their 17 month old daughter and stayed with the Peter Spence family. Skea's brother James had come out to Langley the year before. John Skea had been born in 1863 in Iday, in the Orkney Islands, off the coast of Scotland.

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Upon reaching maturity he had served three years as a baker during the Zulu War in Capetown, South Africa. He returned to Scotland in 1885 and was married.

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Picnic at Lochiel in the  
late 1880s

Many of these pioneers  
were present a few years  
later at the John Murray  
barn raising picnic wearing  
the same suits, dresses,  
and hats.  
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Once Skea built a home he began expanding his dairy herd. For years he fished the Fraser to supplement his income.

That same year, 1888, Hugh Davidson and Robert William Riddell came to Langley and opened up a General Store at Murray's Corners. The two had gone to school together in Perth County, Ontario. Upon leaving school Davidson had gone to work in Montreal as a clerk. Some time after their arrival the two partners married the daughters of Robert McKee. Riddell and his wife lived in William Murray's Hotel until their own home was built. When their store burnt to the ground, the two immediately rebuilt and in a year and a half paid off the debt to Robert P. Rithet, a prominent wholesaler in Victoria.



The Davidson and Riddell  
General Store at Murray's  
Corners.  
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The following year the first church was built at Murray's Corners. It was built under the ministry of the Reverend Alexander Tait who had been sent out to the Fraser Valley two years earlier by the Presbyterian Mission in Toronto. The site for the edifice was donated by Henry Mutrie. The contractor was Johnston K. Nelson and his sons. According to the record (142) books of the church, the first bush was cut on October 2, 1889. The dedication of the church took place in February, 1890. The name Sharon was picked by contractor Nelson from the first chapter of the Song of Solomon: "I am the rose of Sharon and lily of the valley." The original pews of the church, some of which are still used, were purchased from the Royal City Mill in New Westminster and reached Murray's Corners by team and sleigh up the north side of the Fraser, then across the river by hand pulled sleighs, and finally by horse and sleigh from Fort Langley to Murray's Corners. It was one of those winters in which the Fraser River froze hard enough to allow freight to be moved across the ice. The Reverend Tait remained for three years.

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**The West Mill**  
(page 144)

In the late 1880s or early 1890s Henry West built a scow bottomed steamer named the Defender at the West Mill. When the Canadian Pacific Railway came through the valley West had contracted to cut ties for the line. In order to build the Defender, West teamed up with William Burton Taylor. From Digby County, Nova Scotia, Taylor and his wife, the former Anna Reinhardt, had come out to Mount Lehman via the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1887 to take over a homestead willed to Mrs. Taylor by a cousin by the name of James Bangs. Both West and Taylor had much in common. Taylor had worked in the Maritimes as a ship's carpenter. The two men were helped in the riverboat's construction by West's young son William. When finished the Defender was captained by West's son John, while Taylor's son Edward was the purser. Edward later married West's daughter Elizabeth.

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West used the Defender to tow log booms from their timber leases on Stave River and Harrison Lake, down to the mill since the timber around their Langley mill had been depleted.

It was West, a devout Roman Catholic, who donated the lumber for the construction of the white Roman Catholic church located just to the east of their mill on McLellan property. This little church was named St. Mary's in honour of Fred McLellan's wife. West was not so generous with all his lumber for the church construction. In 1888 he sold lumber on credit to the Indians of the Whonnock Reserve for the building of a Roman Catholic church. The church was built but West was never paid. Four years later West, two of his sons, and David Rayberger, went over to collect the outstanding debt. West took along his Winchester rifle just in case there might be trouble. There was, when Rayberger poked one of the Indians in the ribs with the muzzle of the rifle. The rifle discharged and out a hole through another Indian's shirt. He was not hurt. Rayberger, a few moments later, was hurt when an Indian hit him with a pike pole, breaking his arm. The West party managed to jump into their skiff and escape home across the river. Repercussions followed when one of the Indians swore out an information in New Westminster charging West and Rayberger with attempted murder.

West and Rayberger were not the only two to run afoul the law. Alexander Houston was charged and convicted in the New Westminster courts for the murder of his Indian grandmother. His father sold all his real estate in the Royal City to pay for the court expenses. Despite his efforts, his son was convicted on circumstantial evidence.

His grandmother's body had been discovered in her ransacked cabin on Barnston Island. Investigation revealed that whoever killed the woman had unlocked the door. This door was secured by a bolt which was attached a lengthy rope. The rope passed outside the cabin by means of a crude pulley. To get into the cabin one had to know where the rope was hidden outside. By pulling on the end of the rope the bolt would be drawn unlocking the door. Evidence at the trial revealed that only a handful of people knew the means of gaining entry into the cabin. One of these was Houston. On the night of the murder Houston had been drinking heavily with two other fellows. The two were never seen again and simply vanished from the Lower Mainland. Houston took the fall for the three and was sentenced (145) to serve out his time in the British Columbia Penitentiary. Houston maintained his innocence all his life.

In 1889 Charles Hubert Williams and his father-in-law John Powell arrived in Langley with their wives and children. The pair had left Herefordshire, England, three years earlier. They had landed at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and from there proceeded west by rail way to St. Thomas, Ontario, where they remained two years. Williams, a stone mason by trade, was unable to



find enough work. Leaving Ontario, Williams and Powell came to Vancouver shortly after the great fire. Here Williams found good employment.

The two families came to Langley aboard the sternwheeler Bon Accord. Their first night was spent in the Commercial Hotel upon their arrival at Langley. The following morning J.B. McLeod's son John took the two families by team and wagon to the Immigrant Shed. This shed, an abandoned homestead, was located on the Yale Road just east of Murray's Corners. It was here the two men decided to homestead. Powell's son George Eli later married Ada Stone; while his daughter Sarah Ann married William Ramage. William's daughter Emily Grace married Charles Thomas Mufford. It was this daughter that unwittingly became involved in a prank that Robert Allen Oakes pulled on the Muffords, Maxwells, and the Larmons.

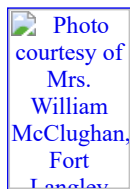
Oakes' justice, and his pranks, got him into troubles with his neighbours. It also got his neighbours into trouble with each other. For a prank Oakes went out and told some of the Mufford boys that the Maxwell and Larmon boys were out to get them. He then went and told the Maxwell and Larmon boys that the Mufford were out to get them. The joke culminated in a real Donnybrook following a late evening service at the Langley Prairie Methodist Church. John Mufford and his cousin were ambushed in the darkness by some of the Maxwell family. Out of sheer fright John Mufford literally speared one of his antagonists in the throat with an umbrella that he happened to be carrying. He and his cousin then fled into the night like scared cats. John at that time did not know whether or not he had killed someone.

Charles Thomas Mufford's turn came about an hour after the (146) first outbreak. He had taken longer as he had walked his girl friend Emily Grace Williams home. He encountered the Maxwell and Larmon boys who were by this time armed with clubs. They reckoned that if Muffords would resort to an umbrella rather than bare fists that clubs were in order. When Charles was accosted by three or four opponents, he took off into the night as fast as his legs would carry him. The short stocky man was soon overtaken and surrounded. He managed to land one good punch before getting knocked out of the fight. Despite the fact that Mufford was out of the fight the melee went on without him in the pitch darkness. His opponents literally clubbed the tar out each other. Mufford, in all the confusion, managed to escape home.

The following morning the Muffords were in a quandary as to what to do. John decided to saddle up and ride into New (147) Westminster and ask his friend Judge Bole for advise. The learned judge suggested he attempt to ascertain the identity of his attackers and charge them with assault. The task of identification did not take long. One of the Maxwells had both his eyes so blackened that he could not see out of them for weeks. Other neighbours also showed signs of having been in a good scrap.

The court case that followed did not result in any convictions but it did reveal that the real culprit was Oakes.

The appearances of small businesses within the municipality brought about the need for better communication. In 1889 the Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraph Company agreed to give Fort Langley communications via the New Westminster-Chilliwack line which followed the Yale Road. Stanley Towle undertook to lay the poles for the line, 50 yards apart, from Murray's Corners to the fort.



Robert Allen Oakes  
Langley prankster  
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Thank you.