

My Recollections of Yarrow

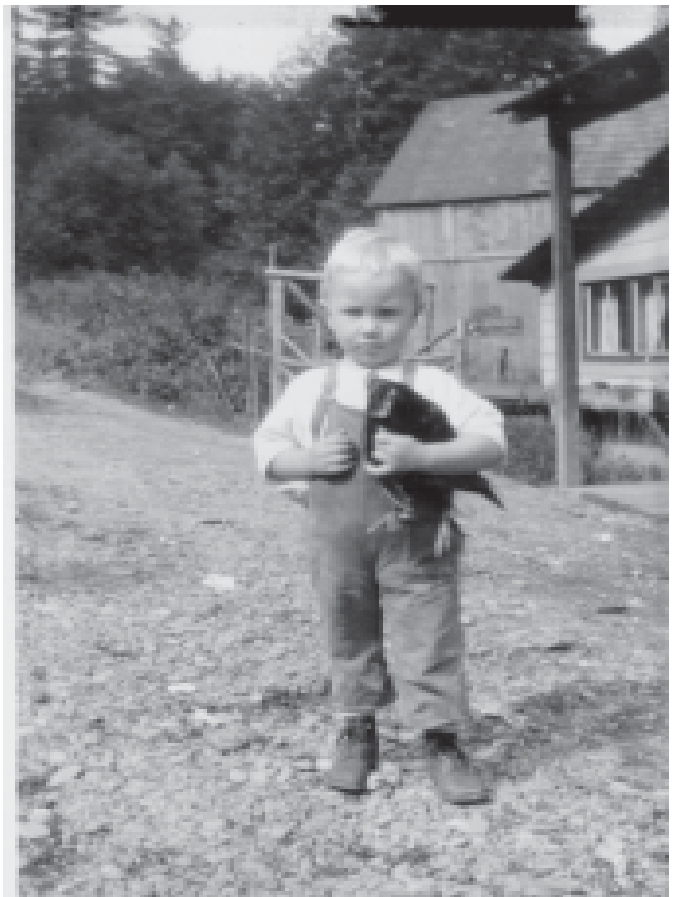
By Arthur C. Siddall

I am not sure if this dissertation was to be centered around mom and pop or the township of Yarrow, however, as I carried on with my recollections of Yarrow, they eventually centered around mom and pop as I found the two subjects inseparable.

My earliest activity I can recall is walking the mile up the hill to the 'little red schoolhouse'. The reason for this lasting impression was, one day the teacher, Bernice Theimer, was following us and caught me throwing rocks at the Golder's mailbox. That cost me detention and the strap. Very embarrassing because she was staying with mom and dad at the time and I had to face her across the dinner table. Isabelle Marr was my other teacher, and all was smooth sailing for six school years.

The little cabin on the hill, across the road from our house was my 'retreat'. Except one night during a terrific thunder and lightning storm mom told dad to come and get me as she was certain I would be terrified. And I was. The cabin was a great place for friends to congregate, and it was here that Curly (last name unknown) got me interested in the radio and electrical field. In fact, dad put his cigar down long enough to find me an old car generator which we installed on a water wheel in the little creek. Neither the water flow, the wheel, nor the generator were adequate to light my cabin so I rewired the generator by wiring the armature and field in series and connected to a 110 volt circuit hoping to create a series motor. This was successful and I learned that theoretically a series motor will race to infinity.

As for the water, dad taught me to fish for trout in the creek. I can remember that mom cleaned the fish (and plucked the chicken). A trip to the supermarket is how we do it now. Mother and dad decided I could go to school in Chilliwack for grades 7 and 8. For a while I stayed with the Powells in the Hart Block at 5 corners and for a while Vivian and I lived in a small house next to our grandparents. We always looked forward to the ten mile BC Electric interurban ride home to Yarrow on the weekends. I had a lot of friends in Yarrow and during the summer, one of our favorite pastimes was to go roller skating at Cultus Lake. I can recall being very nervous when ladies' choice was announced, but I can't remember, was it because I couldn't skate well enough or just that I may not be asked. Mom used to bawl me out every night I came home late, and of course I deserved it. After all I was only 11 or 12 years old and I had to get up before 5:00am and bicycle across the valley to work at Eddie's Nursery. The first summer I tied budded roses for 11.5 cents an hour. But next summer I got promoted to a budder. From 1935 to 1940 while attending Vancouver Technical High School, I again looked forward to riding the interurban for a stay in Yarrow.



Me and my pet bantam hen



It may be of interest to note that the year after my graduation, Vancouver Technical went co-ed. By now I was old enough to realize the sacrifices my parents made to send me away to school. As parents I am sure they would have said that 'sacrifice' was not an appropriate choice of word to use. Many of my friends from Tech. came up to Yarrow with me, Norm Rowland, Jim McKay, Ralph Madden, etc., and with mom it was, the more, the merrier.

My most vivid recollections began after my discharge from the navy in 1945 and Jeanette came over from Ireland to become my wife in 1947. Most of what follows was Jeanette's input so I will use the terms 'we' or 'our'. We spent Christmas 1947 in Yarrow and it will always stand out as one of the most memorable old Christmases ever. Mom, as usual, had oodles of goodies prepared, and the Mennonite choir came up to the door and sang Christmas carols.

On another Christmas occasion, Frances and Jim O'Malley, and Muriel and Stinson Clarke came up to Yarrow, and although some of us got stuck in the snow, a good time was had by all. To this day, they all still talk about it at Christmas time. How mom was able to put up, I don't know.

After Sharon was born, we drove to Yarrow quite often and although she was too young to remember, she certainly got excited when we said we were going to visit Nana and Grandpa. On trips in later years, Sharon recalls the houses on Majuba Hill, picking wild berries with Nana, the purple grapes, the

apple trees and the creek. She also remembers a lot of shiny gold in white rock, and slippery sheets of some mineral substance. (Probably the fool's gold and mica). Maybe that was the start of Sharon's interest in geology. To retrogress a bit, Jeanette remembers tearing her silk stockings on the wicker seats in the interurban tram. Of course because every conductor knew mom and dad, it didn't take long for BC Electric to replace them. (The stockings, not the seats).



Me and My marimba

On leave from the Navy with dad at the upper house at Yarrow



Jeanette and me after leaving the Navy. Yarrow, 1947



Jeanette also remembers Gus Landin, and George 'Mac' McLinden... always aware of our arrival and ready for a chat. We remember mom working all hours in the post office, particularly if the books didn't balance to the penny. I don't know if dad had the same problem in Siddall's General Store. All I recall of the store when I was really young, apparently I was stealing biscuits and eating them, out of a barrel and later found out they were dog biscuits!

We still, and always will, visit Yarrow whenever we get a chance, most recently in September 1994. Many things change, but enough remains that Yarrow will always hold a place in our hearts.

