

Begins

CB: 1921. I went to University in Montreal and my father and mother were on the ranch in the Okanagan Valley. My father and mother had been missionaries in China and retired to the farm in the Okanagan Valley. During the war when student ministers were very short and the church was short of ministers, they'd just have small scattered churches, my father had been asked to take small charges which ordinarily were served by student ministers, since he had refused to take an ordinary ministerial appointment, since he objected to conducting sacraments. Bethtry? of the Presbyterian Church in B.C. asked him in 1921 to go to Wellington and take the charge there because they were having troubles there. I'm not sure how much detail they gave him of what the troubles were. In actual fact, they'd had a very unfortunate situation in the Wellington area being very short of ministers a man had turned up with excellent credentials and they'd given him the job, and it later turned out that he was a New York taxi driver who had stolen the credentials and though at the start he was well received in the Wellington area, by the end of the year a number of babies arriving that shouldn't have been and the miners got very angry, ran him out of the area. I never heard the details but I understand they tarred and feathered him and said that they would never have anything to do with another minister again and forbade their women to even speak to a minister of any sort. When father and mother arrived they were given one of the miner's houses to settle in and the first Sunday they turned up at church there was a lady cleaning the church and she was quite polite to them didn't speak very much and when she finished cleaning asked it if was alright and they said yes and she immediately left. Nobody else came and that was that. Through the week they decided to visit with the miners' homes and they would see people moving around a house and would go knock on the front door but there was no answer and they could get nobody to answer them. They would go onto another house but people remained indoors with blinds drawn when they went to the houses. In the course of a year or two they broke down the prejudices of the area and became a very much a part of the community. At that time, my father was very seriously ill and he died in the autumn of 1924. During the summer of 1924, I got a job with the C.P.R. as a guard on a Chinese train. The Chinese were being brought through Canada and the bond and ahh you could get a job with the C.P.R. which would give you transportation across the continent and nothing else, but I wanted to visit, knowing my father was ill - so I came across and on arrival in Wellington, on my way to the house which occupied my father and mother I stopped at a little general store and to buy a package of cigarettes and the clerk in the store was very keen on who I was and what I was doing, why I was in the community and he put the bags of cigarettes on the counter and held his hand over it until I'd given him satisfactory answers and I told him ???? the storekeeper kept his hands over the pack of cigarettes until I'd given him satisfaction as to who I was and why I was in the community and I told him that I was my father's son, he said Uh-uh (60), that's the whitest, black crow I ever met son. With that I went on home not quite sure what he was talking about but I knew later when I understood the circumstances. Later that fall, when father died in Vancouver he had left strict instructions that this sort of funeral, the money was rather short in our family at that time, but the miners decided otherwise. They appointed a committee who came over to Vancouver and insisted on undertaking father's funeral. They arranged to have him embalmed which is other ideas but took him back to Wellington and had a very elaborate and expensive monument made and they had a community work bee and cleared up the old burial ground that was very, very neglected and put this elaborate marble and granite monument. The grave and monument is still there and Mary and I visited approximately 10 years ago, however, when we returned 2 years ago we could no longer find it. The old cemetery looked to me as if it had been cleaned up at that time, when my father was buried it had been more or less neglected again ever since.