

William Walton

1862 - 1952

William Walton was born in England on October 16, 1862. As a young man he and his brother immigrated to Canada. In 1883 he survived the shipwreck of the Kincarden on the Great Lakes. With ten other survivors, he walked 120 miles to the nearest settlement through severe winter weather. Two men froze to death en route. Some time later, he and his brother made their way west and walked through the Rockies to the end of the "steel" at Moodyville, now known as Port Moody. Two years later he lost all his possessions in the great fire of Vancouver. It was one of the highlights of his life when, in 1932, a pioneer meeting in Vancouver found 400 survivors of the fire present. Medals were presented to each. After the fire of 1885 he took up residence on an island which he named Dead Man's Island. This name was later changed to Denman Island. The search for gold found him on the trail of '98 when he went to the Yukon. He served as Lance Corporal with the 104th Battalion in World War I. After the war he was employed as a road foreman and did construction in Gastown--now known as the city of Vancouver. He retired in 1932.

A kindly man in all his ways, he had a special love for animals which brought him many pets. While fishing on the Fraser River he had a pet seal that liked to crawl into his tent on the riverbank, get warm by the fire and slip into bed with his human friend. A pet racoon did lots of tricks; a pet beaver nearly felled a tree on his tent while he was sleeping and he walked for miles for milk to feed a fawn whose mother was killed by coyotes.

He resided in Coquitlam for 45 years and was known as "Uncle" to his many friends. Active in the garden and able to prepare wood and kindling for household use until three weeks before his death, his last days were happily spent with his family on Johnson Street. One of his keenest pleasures was listening to "Are You Listening?", a popular radio quiz show, and it was rare, indeed, that he failed to know the answers.

Many tales of explorations and experiences were silenced with his passing. He was interred in Fraser Cemetery in New Westminster.

The above information was obtained from a newspaper article and the personal memories of Mrs. Alice Lefebvre, niece, of Maple Ridge.