WHONNOCK NOTES

Occasional papers of the Whonnock Community Association to promote the research and understanding of the past of our community.

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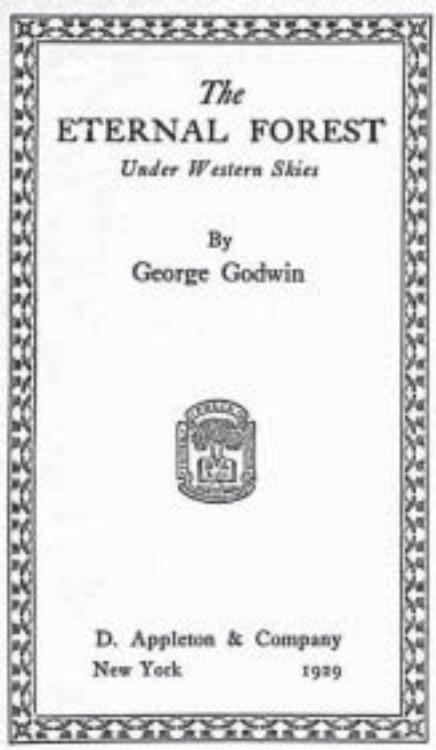
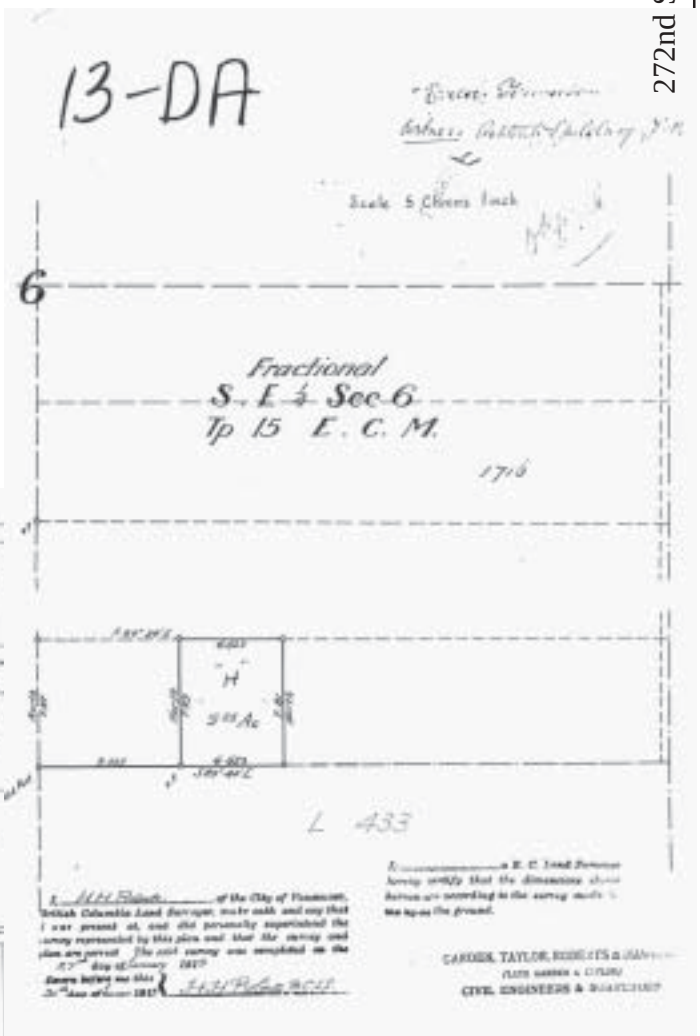
Ferguson's Landing: George Godwin's Whonnock

By Fred Braches

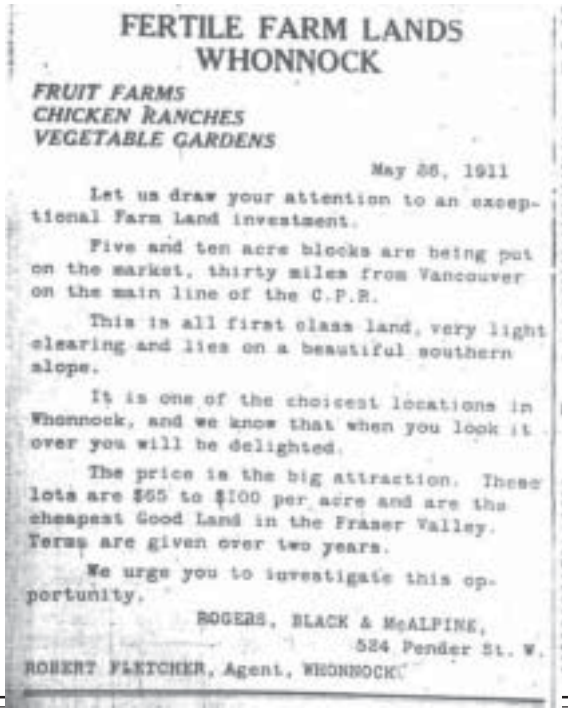


Right: *Survey sketch map of Godwin's property January 1912. The sketch map shown is still in use today, because the property is unchanged till this day, aside from a new "right-of-way" to the west shown on the modern map below.*



Above: *Modern map of a part of Whonnock with the original Godwin and Fletcher properties marked. Fletcher's land was subdivided after World War II. The word STORE indicates the location of the original Whonnock General Store.*

Right: *An advertisements like this one (note Robert Fletcher's name) may have lured the Godwins to Whonnock.*



FERTILE FARM LANDS
WHONNOCK

FRUIT FARMS
CHICKEN RANCHES
VEGETABLE GARDENS

May 26, 1911

Let us draw your attention to an exceptional Farm Land investment.

Five and ten acre blocks are being put on the market, thirty miles from Vancouver on the main line of the C.P.R.

This is all first class land, very light clearing and lies on a beautiful southern slope.

It is one of the choicest locations in Whonnock, and we know that when you look it over you will be delighted.

The price is the big attraction. These lots are $65 to $100 per acre and are the cheapest Good Land in the Fraser Valley. Terms are given over two years.

We urge you to investigate this opportunity.

ROGERS, BLACK & McALPINE,
524 Pender St. W.

ROBERT FLETCHER, Agent, WHONNOCK

Maps courtesy of the Municipality of Maple Ridge

The library van in front of the post office in Whonnock in 1929, the year The Eternal Forest *was published.*
Photo from the collection of Robert Tisdall.

Introduction

In 1929, when the novel *The Eternal Forest Under Western Skies* appeared, the book created quite a stir in Whonnock. George Godwin, the author, andhiswifehad lived in Whonnock a short time just before the Great War. They were a young couple fresh from England who kept their distance from the community. After they left Whonnock, the Godwins were quickly forgotten, until Whonnock found out about Godwin's new novel, published in New York, describing the harshness of settlers' lives in the Fraser Valley.

Although Godwin had used different names for the places and the characters in his novel, the residents of Whonnock recognized themselves and their friends and neighbours as models of the subjects in the book. Under the alias "Ferguson's Landing" a queer, hard-working and struggling little community was depicted where gossip was an universal and permitted vice. Its residents were not portrayed in a favourable light. Most upsetting was an allegation involving a murder of a well-respected young man. People did not talk openly about the novel, although the book—and gossip—circulated. Even today it is not difficult to recognize in some of Godwin's characters people living in Whonnock some eighty-five years ago.

With time, most associations of Whonnock residents with Godwin's characters have blissfully disappeared from memory, as did the book and the gossip. Why then dig up this long forgotten, and for some painful, incident in Whonnock's history? Because a new edition of Godwin's *The Eternal Forest* appeared a few years ago including information and photographs pointing to Whonnock or Port Haney as the stage of the novel. Questions arose about the stories behind the characters in the book.

An effort is made in this issue of *Whonnock Notes* to find a place for the novel in our local history. Tracing Godwin's steps in Whonnock as reflected in the life of his main character of the novel, the Newcomer, we will have a closer look at the characters and stories that upset the settlers, trying to separate facts from fantasy.

We can only do this with the resources available to us today and unfortunately that does not include the input of those who knew what really happened. It promises, however, to be an interesting excursion into the past of our community.[1]

Whonnock, January 2000

1 As is mostly the case in my search for Whonnock's past I was shown the way to *The Eternal Forest* by my good friend and mentor in these affairs: Brian Byrnes. Brian tells me that, years ago, when he asked Richard Whiting about Godwin and his book, Whiting's only comment was: "that beastly beggar."

Ferguson's Landing: George Godwin's Whonnock

George Godwin's book *The Eternal Forest under Western Skies* was published in New York in 1929. An edited version appeared in 1994 under the title *The Eternal Forest*. The editor, Dr. Robert S. Thompson, included an introduction by George Woodcock, a foreword, a biography of George Godwin, a map, various illustrations, extracts from George Godwin's journal, end notes, and a table of content—welcome features for the reader of the novel. Dr. Thompson, a nephew of George Godwin, unfortunately felt the need to "improve the punctuation, revising a few unreadable passages...never edited in the first place, and toning down...offensive and derogatory remarks... referring to people of 'ethnic' origin." The need to make those changes is debatable. The consequence of these "improvements," even if they are insignificant, is the loss of integrity of the reprint. Fortunately a copy of the 1929 edition is available for study at the Vancouver Public Library for instance.

In his foreword Dr. Thompson proposes that *The Eternal Forest* has both literary and historical values.

Most will agree that the book is a good read. As far as its historical values are concerned reviewers Brian Elliott in *BC Studies* (#110) and Gordon R. Elliott in *BC Historical News* (Summer 1995) suggest that the book should be used "as a source of historical understanding" and "to adjust...thinking about much of the past." Although the book undeniably provides insight into socio-historical aspects of the period, *The Eternal Forest* is not a portrait of a community as Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield* for instance. Even if Godwin's story sounds true to the reviewers mentioned, one should not forget that Godwin's book is a novel. Godwin paints the picture of the community "Ferguson's Landing" and its struggling, and sometimes succeeding, human beings with the brush of a romantic novelist. By selecting pseudonyms for places and people Godwin himself seems to signal that the community and the people he describes are not the same as the people and the places he knew or met during his stay in Whonnock—or not entirely the same.[2]

The story of Godwin's failed attempt to settle in Whonnock attracts the sympathy of those romantics amongst us who made similar efforts. They will enjoy sharing Godwin's struggles and his views of man and nature. *The Eternal Forest* is not a historic novel, but as any document the text echoes the period in which it was written. Godwin's views of the social realities he observed will be of value for students of the history of the period, even if the book fails to provide the important new outlook on Fraser Valley history promised by the reviewers. For the local historian in Maple Ridge, looking for facts rather than fiction, the novel is of debatable value because the accounts of people and events can not be accepted at face value. However, the first publication of *The Eternal Forest* was a curious, and for some a painful, incident in the history of Whonnock and for that reason the book should not be ignored, in particular since this new edition has appeared on many bookshelves. It seems appropriate to shine some new light on the concerns of the Whonnockians in the 1930s.

There is little doubt that Godwin modelled at least some of his characters, their world, and their experiences on reality. When the book appeared in 1929 it created quite a stir in Whonnock. Behind Godwin's pseudonyms and the descriptions the people of Whonnock recognized themselves and their com-

2 *The dominant line of The Eternal Forest is of course the effort and failure of the Newcomer to build a satisfactory life on his recalcitrant patch of forest. But...the portrait of this protagonist is rather like a sculpture almost at its final stage but with the features still incompletely determined....In contrast are the sharp sketches of these characters [his neighbours] themselves, borrowed or adapted, one assumes, from real life.* From Introduction by George Woodcock (xii).

munity. The Newcomer, the centre figure of the, looks disdainfully—some would say sardonically—at his neighbours, and some of the events he describes in the novel verge on slander. Most disturbing is a suggestion that a respected member of the community is a murderer. Common decency forbade conversations about the book or the admission that one had read it.[3] Still, copies of the book did their rounds in the community. There were also rumours that copies of the book were purchased and destroyed to avoid circulation. Indeed, no copies seem to have survived in the hands of Whonnock residents, although the older residents continue to remember its existence. For today's descendants the sting is no longer as personal as it must have been to the individuals and their immediate families, but even they may have resented to see a reprint of Godwin's novel.

Those who lived in Whonnock in the years before the Great War may have recognized—or thought they recognized—more people in the population of Godwin's novel than we do today. They may have known implied details and gossip, now lost, pointing to specific individuals in the community and the novel.[4] It is tempting, but unwise, to assume that every character in the novel represents an existing person in Whonnock, in the first place because some of Godwin's characters seem to be a fusion of more than one person into one archetype. Godwin, the novelist, also may have modelled some of his characters using traits of an individual he met outside Whonnock at another time and another place, to suit his story. Consequently we can not and we should not expect to find a true equivalent in Whonnock for all characters in Godwin's cast. Still, there are some individuals in Godwin's novel who look conspicuously like real persons who lived in Whonnock in Godwin's time. Those individuals in particular will be discussed as well as the community of "Ferguson's Landing" and its inhabitants as presented by Godwin. Finally, based on newspaper reports, an effort will be made to show that the allegations of one of Godwin's characters about the murder at the store in Whonnock were did not reflect the truth. "Ferguson's Landing" and its inhabitants are in the first place fictional creations, even if Godwin helped himself freely from the rich mixture of characters a community as this has to offer.

In other words the focus of these notes is on the locals, or as Dr. Thompson chooses to call them: the rustics, the Newcomers, and their community. Ignored will be the substance of the *Eternal Forest*, the lyrical descriptions of the landscapes and the forest, the Newcomer's enjoyment of physical labour, his search for himself and the meaning of life, the concern about the oriental—mainly Japanese—influx, the racial stereotypes acceptable at the time, and the connivers of the day luring settlers into get-rich-quick schemes.

The Godwins in Whonnock

George Godwin—a free-lance journalist—spent most of his life in England where he died, 85 years old, in 1974. Between 1928 and 1948 he published some twenty books on a great variety of topics.

In 1911 George Godwin married Dorothy Purdon, and in 1912 the young couple left England for Canada. They arrived in the Fraser Valley via Calgary and lived a few years in Whonnock (p xii). As is the case with most one-time residents, there are hardly any records of their presence left in Maple Ridge. In George Godwin's case his name appears on the Roll of Honour[5] showing Whonnock soldiers who went to the Great War, but nowhere else. The Godwins were no churchgoers, neither did they have children at school age when they were in Whonnock. Mrs. Godwin did not join the Ladies Club and was not

3 Brian Byrnes, personal communication.

4 There is no one left who witnessed the Godwins living in Whonnock. When the book appeared in 1929 those born before and during the Great War, and still living in Whonnock, were teenagers.

5 According to the minutes of the meeting of the Ladies Club the Honour Roll of man and woman from Whonnock serving in the C.E.F. was presented to the Club on 5 April 1916. These rolls were meant to encourage recruiting.

involved in managing the hall. The directories of the period were entirely filled with information of the cities of New Westminster and Vancouver and ignored most of the settlements in the Fraser Valley.

When did the Godwins come to Whonnock and when did they leave?[6] The excerpts of Godwin's journal in the new version of *The Eternal Forest* shows the first entries with the name Whonnock dating from the fall of 1912. In February 1913 Godwin writes an entry with the title "The Simple Life," describing life at their new-found home (p 308). On 27 January 1913 a five-acre lot was surveyed and the Maple Ridge assessment rolls for the years 1913 and 1914 show Mrs. George Godwin name as taxpayer for the property.[7] The acreage was located to the north of the land owned by Robert Fletcher and consisted of parts of properties the year before owned by Alfred Blomberg (to the west) and Enoch Knudtsen (to the east). Blomberg contributed three acres and Knudtsen two acres to this square five-acre property. The land was probably put together by Robert Fletcher, a real estate dealer and a long-time resident of Whonnock. The land, where the Godwins lived, must have changed hands some time in 1914, since the assessment roll of 1915 shows a new owner, Robert Harris.[8] This seems to suggest that the Godwin's left Whonnock before 1915. The Godwins' first child, Eric, was born when they stayed in Whonnock. Their second child, Monica, was born in Ireland on 21 January 1916.[9] If the Godwins left Whonnock in 1914, did they spend some time in Vancouver before they left for England? Godwin's granddaughter, Lucy Godwin, believes that he was with the *Vancouver Sun* either prior or after Whonnock. [10]

Judging by some entries in his journal there are clear affinities between Godwin's experiences there and those of the Newcomer, the main character of *The Eternal Forest*. The experiences of the Newcomers in the novel and the Godwins seem to run parallel. Both couples came fresh from England, attempted to make a living from some acreage and gave it up, the Newcomer because of his health[11], the Godwins rather, as the family understands it, because Dorothy gave George Godwin an ultimatum: "sell it (Whonnock) or I am going home alone," for she hated "the wilderness."[12] As George Godwin reflected in his journal notes in April 1913, it is obvious that D[orothy] "cannot share with me the longing for these bright stars."[13]

The Newcomers

George Godwin presents the nameless main characters of his novel as the Newcomers, which is also what the neighbours would call new settlers.[14] They arrive at Ferguson's Landing; he is "...a tall man in his early twenties...a man with a remote manner..." and she "a woman of about the same age, fair, pretty and slender" (p 9).[15] They climb from the tourist coach of the Montreal-Vancouver intercontinental onto the platform of the station to be met by Bob England who shows them a number of properties for sale.[16]

The land they buy was not densely forested. One of the settlers calls it a "rough slashing."[17] Logging has been going on for half a century, and it is unlikely that any first-growth forest would have been standing on this land sloping towards the river. This must have been a second growth forest, still very common in Whonnock today where few have resisted an opportunity to turn a stand of timber on their property into money. The trees on the Newcomer's place are mostly alder as well as some firs, maples and cedars. The land is covered with first-growth stumps which have to be removed to do some farming.[18] It is sloping land, a bit of hillside, lacking water, and hardly fit for agriculture.[19]

6 Lucy Godwin, George Godwin's granddaughter suggests that: "he came out here and worked for the *Vancouver Sun* and explored, while she [Mrs. Godwin]waited in England. He took his savings from working at the Sun and bought the Whonnock property." Personal communication J. E. (Ted) Roberts, January 2000.

7 This shows again how important the municipal records of the Municipality of Maple Ridge are for research of local history and genealogy.

8 Assessment and collectors rolls of the Municipality of Maple Ridge. The Municipality also holds a unique survey, probably from 1915, showing what must be a complete list of inhabitants of Maple Ridge. The list shows Robert Harris and his mother. It also shows that Robert is a soldier. Robert Harris died in France in 1916 and his name appears on the memorial plaque at Whonnock Lake Centre. A Mrs. Harris continued to live on the property. Brian Byrnes used to cross the former Godwin property on his way to school and Mrs. Harris insisted to clean his nails when she could catch him.

9 Information about Monica Godwin from her daughter, Lucy Godwin. Personal communication J. E. (Ted) Roberts, January 2000. The Newcomers in the book have another baby during their stay in Ferguson's Landing. Page 196:*"Yes, I was.* [up half the night] *The new baby is at the worst time. He will be better after he gets to six months."* Page 273: *The baby is in bed, but the elder boy sits in his high chair beside his father.*

10 Godwin fought with the Canadian infantry. Lucy Godwin adds: "Gramps [George Godwin] volunteered to fight and off [from Whonnock] he went, got gassed, pensioned off from the Armed Forces..." Personal communication J.E. (Ted) Roberts, January 2000.

11 Dr. Thompson suggests that George Godwin contracted tuberculosis during the war in France (xxii), however, George Woodcock reports in his introduction that George Godwin already suffered of the decease when he enlisted (xii).

12 Lucy Godwin, granddaughter of Dorothy and George Godwin, quoted by John E. (Ted) Roberts. Personal communication, January 2000.

13 Page 310: Journal (24).

14 Page 290, Note to page 9: "Newcomers. There are many parallels between the Newcomers and Godwin himself...."

15 Page 10: Tom Purdy, the station agent thinks: *"English as they make'em and green as grass. Do'em good if they come and live in this God-forsaken hole—the fools!"*

16 Page 17: *The afternoon was spent in search of a "location," and it was soon obvious that every available ranch in the settlement, save those by the water's edge, was situated upon the steep slope of a long timber bank.*

17 Page 79: *To build a house like that in the middle of a rough slashing! Page 28: ...the clutter of the clearing, with its uprooted stumps, its tangle of vine-maples, its felled alders.*

18 Page 34 *"The alders were felled easily because they were young...* Page 40: *Alder bottom" "...peppered with first growth fir stumps..."* Page 129: *...a clutter of felled alders, with a few second-growth firs,*

The neighbours wonder why the Newcomer has purchased this land and question the honesty of real estate agent Bob England who has sold the land.[20] Of course Bob England needs the money and is eager to sell but he does not mislead the Newcomers. Before they decide to stay he warns: "If you settle in the Landing don't run away with the idea there's money in it. There isn't" (p 19).[21]

Subsistence is certainly not foremost in the mind of the Newcomers when they buy the place. Otherwise they would have preferred a ranch on the water's edge or at least something more level than theirs. But for them this is an enchanted place, looking down over the valley and the river to the snow-covered mountains.[22] The Newcomer is out there, doing physical labour unknown to him before. He fells the young alders and enjoys doing that. He stands in awe in front of the giant Douglas firs. "Yes, to the Newcomer the bush spoke. It gave peace to his mind and satisfaction to his soul" (p 35). But there is little to feed his body.

From the outside the Newcomers' house on this un-cleared land is like its builder, old Anderson: "it was plain, rugged, strong, very honest and very useful" (p 29).[23] In the eyes of their neighbour Johansson it is senseless to build a house big enough for ten, just for a man and wife. A two-room shack would have done.[24] It has two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen (p 27). But inside Anderson's structure it is their own place, a bit of England, and in the Newcomer's view "...the best furnished home in the settlement, with its armchairs, chesterfield, bronzes and pictures in oils, its bedroom with the big brass bedstead" (p 160).[25] In those early days Bob England unexpectedly comes up one evening and surprises them in evening dress. "Fellow had on a dinner jacket, and she was in some filmy stuff" (p 26).

The purpose of cutting those young alders and maples down may well have been in the first place to clear some space around his new house and also to improve the view from his property onto the valley, the Fraser, and the mountains beyond. At first the Newcomer finds pleasure in that work. When he comes down to the store his jeans are fading and his elk-hide boots are darkened and scratched. The Newcomer starts to grow some potatoes and perhaps some vegetables and certainly flowers.[26] He clears not more than a half-acre patch intending to start a crop of potatoes the following year, and builds some chicken houses as well. However, "That small patch of bush had eaten up his little capital...it was all gone" (p 96, p 153).

We are told that the Newcomer then starts to hire himself out for work "earning bread by the sweat of his brow" (p 153), although later in the book he admits to be unskilled in manual labour (p 264). We see him returning late from his work "a weary man at the end of each [day]...No more grand living, no more long evenings around the fire."

After the birth of their baby the Newcomer questions his wife if they ought to sell the property, "since there was no decent living to be made upon the place," [27] but she is not yet prepared to leave the comforts of a home with a new-born baby and he has come to love the forest. Still he finds time to wander off in into the bush, to "sit down on a rotted log and watch the life of the forest," observing chipmunks[28] and woodpeckers" (p 194).

At the end of the novel the Newcomer is portrayed as a small commercial farmer, now eager to "escape" from the "penury and drudgery of life at Ferguson's Landing" (p 193). As he correctly predicted his hard work succumbs under the competition of everyone but the Anglo-Saxons.[29] Of course the Newcomers have known from the beginning that their efforts would be fruitless,

maples and cedars.

19 Page 28: *From its northern boundary, the land sloped sharply down towards the river. Below, the pattern of the finished England place lay like a piece of torn Persian carpet in little geometrical sections of green, brown and russet.* There is not more than a half-acre of flat land on the northern side of the property, where the house stood would have been. Most of the property is on a steep slope. There is no building on the property today.

20 Page 28: *"Why did you buy dis [sic] place anyway—a bit of hillside?"* Page 40: *"That young English fellow up behind your place, Bob England. What in God's name can he do with that land?"... "Alder bottom." Yes, but peppered with first growth fir stumps that'll cost him fifteen to twenty bucks apiece to blow out." "The soil's is no good there either."...Why two years ago Johansson nearby couldn't get a mug of water from his well, no, sir."..."And the slope of the layout is such that you couldn't plough on it. The team would fall off onto Bob's place."...Bob England "needed the money."*

21 Even in the end the Godwins do not seem to feel cheated by Bob England. Page 191: *Certainly they had be deluded, listening to the bland talk of the Vancouver real estate men, reading their lying literature which made ranching in the Valley appear as a picnic in the garden of the world.*

22 Page 28: *How could they tell Anderson how they had tramped the settlement for the ideal location and found it here? How could they explain just what this enchanted place meant to them, looking down over the Valley and the silver river to the far white mountain? Together, undisturbed, encircled by the bush, alone.*

23 Page 27, 28: Anderson can not be recognised as a specific Whonnock resident. With his calloused hands he *"had built half the settlement...."He moved slowly planting his great feet firmly, his face wooden as the planks. Slower than the second coming but he is thorough."* The Norwegians built many structures in Whonnock. Olaus Lee just completed the Ladies Hall in 1911.

24 Page 79: *To build a house like that in the middle of a rough slashing! To spend more than a thousand dollars on a house big enough for ten—just for man and wife! ...to build a house at all, when a two-roomed shack would have been enough! To build before clearing!*

25 Page 25: *"O, yes, they've money, I should say. I had a peep in their living-room. They have good furniture, very good. Oil paintings, and the settee which came up the river by boat, it is very good."*

26 Page 101: *[In August] the Newcomer got a tiny patch of potatoes in and his woodshed finished.* Page 279: *By the flower-bed, where the air was scented with the nicotina he loved so well...* Page 195: *"He had marked out flower beds with the smaller boulders gathered while clearing; in summer, flowers adorned the pace: simple flowers, such as petunias, stock, begonias, pansies, Canterbury bells.*

27 Page 189: *...There seemed but little prospect of making a living of these few acres, even if they had finally won from the bush, cultivated, and brought it into bearing....[H]e was coming to see that, whatever he did, there was no decent living to be made upon the place. First of all, he had insufficient acreage. Then the lay of the land (sloping steeply towards the river below, although it looked to the*

given the land they own (p 189). Still we have to believe that in the third year the Newcomer has put five acres under cultivation.[30] This in spite of the fact that their money dried up clearing the first half-acre, that he has to hire himself out as a labourer, and he still is wandering in and out of the forest. There is a reference to chickens, but there is no mention of cattle or horses, essential for a small farmer to cultivate the land.[31] It is improbable that the Newcomer, an unskilled worker as he admits he is (p 264), would single-handedly convert an unsuitable piece of land into five acres of land under cultivation within three years.

It is possible that Godwin, like the Newcomer, did some occasional work helping out ploughing, digging a well, or fixing a roof, and, perhaps doing statute labour on the road. He may also have witnessed and joined in the communal efforts to control a forest fire. But it is unlikely that the Godwins had ever thought of commercial farming. Godwin intertwines his own life in Whonnock with fictional facts and events. His own time does not match the Newcomer's time, and it is not possible to establish a chronological order. Seasons and years intermingle and no efforts are made to bring fantasy in line with facts. Both the Newcomers and the Godwins could say that they "...contrived to live, but it was a poor enough living and very different from the one they had expected" (pp 192, 194, 261). But the sentence could be interpreted in different ways.

It is obvious that the Newcomers see themselves a notch above their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, but that is not the real reason of his withdrawal. Right from the start he is described as "a man with a remote manner" (p 9), and one of the reasons why they buy their property is to be "together, undisturbed, encircled by the bush, alone" (p 28). "Little was seen of the Newcomers. They kept to themselves (p 153). Solitude and keeping to themselves is a theme repeated throughout the novel. Even when he works in a group, as when he joins the statute labour team, he withdraws with his thoughts and his sandwiches and his book (p 264). The Newcomer befriends himself with Old Man Dunn. Dunn is not liked by his neighbours, who he considers to be "Little folks...with little minds and little ideas" (p 99). But the Newcomer is at least prepared to learn some skills from the neighbours. The Newcomer's wife, on the other hand, teaches herself baking from a book: "Another woman would have gone breezily to a neighbour and borrowed in an hour the other's experience of years. Not so this woman. She bought a book and taught herself" (p 158).

Godwin lets the parson's wife think: "Unutterably vulgar they were, these Ferguson's Landing women. They did not read anything, except the weekly *Family Herald and Star*, which came on the transcontinental from Montreal. They talked about disgusting ailments, mostly obstetrical, and about their men, as if they were animals to be fatted. They made their own clothes" (p 78). And perhaps that is what the Newcomer's wife has in mind when she chooses to consult the book, rather than spend an hour with a knowledgeable neighbour's wife.

As candidly as he studies others in the community the Newcomer observes and studies his own "little woman." He thinks: "She looks tired. Her hair is not groomed, She has no corsets on and the big apron makes her look shapeless" (p 159).

At the end of the novel Godwin lets the Newcomer look through a window at his sleeping wife and the baby in her arms (p 283). That window stands as a metaphor for the way the Newcomer observes the world around him. He

south) was too steep for practical purposes. Then again...only two white settlers in the whole of Ferguson's Landing were making a living from the land: Johansson and Fuller. One couldn't count the Olsons, who worked at many other things. Their finished ranch was but a profitable home with them.

28 According to Brian Byrnes, chipmunks were part of the fauna of Whonnock before they were exterminated by house cats.

29 Page 197: *"...In this country it's Chinamen, Japanese, Hindus and Swedes, Italians, Norwegians, every other race—anything but the Anglo-Saxons."*

30 We don't learn what he grows there either. Page 195: *At the end of his third year the newcomer had his land slashed and five acres cleared an under cultivation.*

31 Page 153: *Tools, lumber for the chicken houses.* Page: 196–197: *"I'm selling all the hens—the whole lot of them." "You're not! All those pedigreed Leghorns, and when they are laying so well?"..."You see it is pure waste to keep the damn things."* Page 271: Stopping by the Dunn's the Newcomer is offered a glass of milk: *"Milk...warm from the cow ...a woman smelling of byre."* Obviously not a part of the Newcomer's household.

32 Page 287: *He had a clear picture of the old pioneer in his mind: a sturdy Scot, hard as nails and dogged as a Highlander is dogged.*

33 At the end of the book, in the Epilogue, we meet the opposite of Captain Ferguson: Angus Ferguson, third generation, a real estate man, a

stands outside and looks in. There is a barrier between the couple and their neighbours. Only conversations between the couple (they don't have first names) seem to flow both ways. In other conversations the Newcomer mostly looks and listens silently and from the outside.

The absence of information on the Godwins in the records and in the memories of the community may suggest how remote they were and wanted to be: outsiders, looking in, but not joining in the community.

Where in the world is Ferguson's Landing?

In the prologue to *The Eternal Forest* Godwin presents us with a creation myth of Ferguson's Landing. He tells us about a Captain Ferguson, a sturdy Scot[32] longing for land and eager to turn settler, who sailed his ship *Maria Ellsworthy* 37 miles up the Fraser River until his wife made her choice and the ship "dropped anchor in the shadow of the bush, and Captain Ferguson made his first landing" (p 3).[33] Dr. Thompson suggests that the old man Ferguson is based on Maple Ridge's Hector MacLean Ferguson (p 289 Notes), but perhaps the mythical Captain Ferguson and the real Hector Ferguson have not more in common than their name. It is more likely that Captain Ferguson is a reflection of another captain, Captain Rogers of Godwin's youth, a retired skipper "who stood for the romance of strange places...that led me to bush life on the Pacific Coast" (p 301, Journal). Captain Ferguson is the precursor of the Newcomer telling us about his dreams and expectations when he came to Whonnock.

Dr. Thompson proposes that Whonnock is "the 'Ferguson's Landing' of *The Eternal Forest*" (p xxi, Foreword and p 289). However, at the same time he suggests that Port Haney was at least part of the inspiration behind "Ferguson's Landing." In a map (p xxxii) he even shows Port Haney, not Whonnock, as "Ferguson's Landing." Dr. Thompson's latter idea may stem from his impression—based on outdated information—that the Whonnock Store, at the foot of what is today 269th Street, burnt down in 1911, before Godwin arrived. Dr. Thompson suggests that if there was no store in Whonnock, Godwin could have used Charlton's store and post office at Port Haney as a model for the store in the novel. As we know today, the Whonnock Store burnt years after Godwin's departure from Whonnock, and Godwin did not have to base his description on what went on in and around the store in Haney. He must have visited the Whonnock Store and its post office more often than any other place in the years he lived on the hill behind the store. It is more likely that the Whonnock store the residents of Whonnock were the model for the novels. Perhaps the frogs in Ferguson's Landing betray the true name of "Ferguson's Landing:" "Wan-Ik, Wan Ik." [34]

Other geographical names, such as Vancouver (unchanged), Sapperton, Port Murdock, Pitsville, and Langford will not be given further attention in this context. An exception will be made for a place called Carlyle in the novel, upstream from Ferguson's Landing, where the Carlyle Lumber Company have their sawmill.[35] Thomas Carlyle, (1795–1881) Scottish essayist, philosopher, and historian inspired many reformers including John Ruskin who, after studying art and architecture, became deeply involved in social reform.[36] The community of Ruskin, to the east of Whonnock was named after John Ruskin and Godwin may have chosen the name Carlyle knowing about his connection with Ruskin.

city man in Vancouver. Page 287: *...a soft and flabby man, slowly chewing gum and exhaling a sickly odour of the tonsorial parlour. A man with fat, pink hands set off by carefully manicured nails. A man with a taste for flashy ties and a mouth made conspicuous by many gold fillings.*

34 Page 280: *From far off he could hear the bullfrogs croaking their two-noted spring song devoid of joyousness and melancholy as a threnody. Cric, cric, cric. Or was it, Wan-Ik, Wan Ik? A throaty croaking, maddening, deadly, down there in the swampy places where they bred, unseen, beside the mosquitoes. Page 282: ...and from the distant river, the bullfrogs: cric...cric...cric—or was it Wan-Ik...Wan Ik.* Brian Byrnes in a note to Dr. Thompson: "This 'Whan-ik' is more likely the call of the Pacific tree toad. Bull frogs are not native to BC and introduced [Bull] frogs make a single soaring noise much like a lost cow, and only in July and August."

35 Page 122: *The Carlyle Lumber Company had a spur-line through the bush from their sawmill at Carlyle, seven miles up the river from Ferguson's Landing.* E.M. Heaps & Co., Ltd. at Ruskin had a spur-line leading north. See *Maple Ridge, a History of Settlement,* Ruskin map on page 55.

36 According to Stephen Wildman, Curator of the Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, UK. John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle may have met the first time in the winter of 1846-1847. There are nearly 200 surviving letters between them.

37 Extracts of the articles on Whonnock published between 1908 and 1912 can be found in *Whonnock Notes* No. 1, "Transcripts from the Fraser Valley Record (1908–1912)." After 1912 the Mission newspaper has no correspondent reporting regularly on Whonnock.

38 Page 46: There is a mention of the hall in the novel. *And when it comes to the social side, he [the Norwegian Kurt Olson] can play concertina, and fiddle and dance as good as any of them at the Recreation Hall.*

39 The minutes of the meetings of the Ladies Club have survived and are part of the collection of the Maple Ridge Museum.

40 Page 22: The novel suggests that Blanchard secured the appointment by arrangement with Bob England. Whiting was appointed postmaster when he bought the store from his predecessor. However, as far as we can tell, Bob Fletcher was no broker in that deal.

Whonnock and Ferguson's Landing

> A queer little community of small ranchers they were, these folk of Ferguson's Landing. Why, many of them were so pettifogging that they boasted not even an old hack to take their crops down to the CPR depot. Instead they trudged the miles of dust-laden road or rough brush trail from the outlaying clearings, arms taut on home-made wheelbarrows (p 102).

Like the people in Ferguson's Landing, most living in the settlement Whonnock were never rich and some people were simply destitute. As the Reverend Collins puts it in a letter dated 22 April 1914 published in a journal called *Across the Rockies*: "...nearly all the people are simply making a scratch living and have not a cent to bless themselves with." This is an image which comes clearly across in *The Eternal Forest* but to the local historians, trying to recognize life in Whonnock, the book offers little else to satisfy their curiosity.

The *Fraser Valley Record,* published in Mission, shows Whonnock to be a vigorous society with bazaars, pheasant shooting, political meetings, evening dances, and other parties to collects monies for a variety of purposes, picnics and recitals.[37] Churches (there were four different ones) and their organizations played an important part in the lives of the residents. Whonnock also had its Settlers Association and Ratepayers Association, and the school board held meetings. The ladies of Whonnock formed the Ladies Club in 1911 and went on to build a public hall in Whonnock. They proudly held their first council meeting at the hall in May 1912 and it soon became the centre of social life in the community. The minutes of 1913 mention amongst others, "vocal and instrumental" concerts, badminton matches, dances, and the presentation of the melodrama "Out in the street."[38] This is an enormous communal volunteer action, where everyone gives what they can in all manners.[39] The meetings of Maple Ridge Council show a constant effort on the part of the residents to get roads and bridges repaired and new ones built. In the winter of 1912–1913 an electric streetlight is installed in Whonnock. In April 1913 the Whonnock residents petition for a cemetery. This is an energetic community working together to get things done.

The Eternal Forest shows the reality of a hard life, the struggle to survive, the failures and the shortcomings of individuals, but all characters at Ferguson's Landing are lonely people reflecting the solitude of the Newcomer and perhaps of Godwin himself. With the exception of some glimpses at the general store and post-office the novel does not echo communal life as it did exist in Whonnock. The book does not speak about the lively activities in the community of people finding strength in being together.

In comparison with the real Whonnock, Godwin's imaginary Ferguson's Landing is a rather gloomy place lacking the positive vibrations and energies of people trying together to make a hard life liveable for themselves, their children, and each other.

The General Store

> The general store, which embraces the post office and performs the function of a bank, is about a mile distant. Here the ranch produce (in the shape of eggs) can be traded for other necessities so that even money itself becomes, in a great measure, indispensable (Page 309: Journal, February 1913).

Local historians will find pleasure in reading Godwin's glimpses of the general store: a place where everyone converges to exchange mail and gossip under a hanging oil lamp or twice a week at nine o'clock in the morning when half the settlement came down to get the on Old Country mail (p 23). In the years when George Godwin lived in Whonnock the old general store with its post office still existed. It had served Whonnock since its earliest days at its original site, now under Lougheed Highway in the extension of 269th street. It burned down some time after the Great War and long after Godwin left. Richard Whiting was the store's owner in Godwin's days. Whiting purchased the store from L.C. York and became postmaster in 1908. Whiting limped and supported himself with a cane. He was well regarded by most in the community and in particular by the Anglo-Saxons. He remained postmaster till as late as 1953 and therefore many people living today remember him. If we believe the testimony of some of his contemporaries, Whiting must have been somewhat untidy.

That is also the impression one gets of the store in Ferguson's Landing: "...[a] counter that was dark with the blood of many carcasses, and just now decorated with a big cheese upon which an army of flies billeted, a side of bacon from which stuck a long knife to which adhered soft soap, a bucket of guano-tainted eggs and a pile of lard tins"..."hickory axe-shafts hung festooned from the ceiling (p 21-22).

Blanchard—note that this French name corresponds more or less to "Whiting"—the shopkeeper and postmaster,[40] late as always, pushes the waiting men aside "...limping, sweating and smiling..." to enter that preposterous [closet-like] post office" to open the bulging grey mail bags (p 22). Yes, like Whiting, Blanchard had a limp: "after all, gentlemen, I am lame" (p 23).[41] He is a man slow in everything, even paying his suppliers slowly. But he is also easy on his creditors, although he is not a good-natured man (p 22). Godwin describes Blanchard, looking like a mischievous satyr,[42] as a man "with half-a-dozen shades and not one of them honest" (p 26). Did Godwin have an axe to grind?[43]

Most of the main characters in *The Eternal Forest* show up in Blanchard's store at some time or another. The store and the post-office—like in Whonnock at any time—are a focus of the community where mostly the men of the settlement meet and gossips, a "...vice, universally condoned and practiced by every member of the community" (p 19). Not all coming to the store at Ferguson's Landing can be traced back to their roots in that other settlement, Whonnock, as easily as Blanchard. However, there are a few more.

Bob England

To the south of the property where the Godwins lived is the property once owned by Robert (Bob) Fletcher. Robert Fletcher was a long-time resident of Whonnock, and the 1901 census reports that he migrated from England as a young lad of 17 in 1886. When he came to Whonnock is not clear. In 1895, 26 years old, he married Georgina, a 22-year old daughter of Ole Lee Sr. Georgina came from Trondheim, Norway, to Whonnock in 1892. Aside from farming and other things he could find to do to make money, Fletcher was active as a real estate agent for the area. Robert Fletcher died in France in 1917. Georgina was very active first in the Women's Association of the Norwegian Lutheran church and then for many years as secretary for the Ladies Club and their hall.[44]

41 And again on page 92: *...and limped off...*

42 Page 47: *...his tongue, like a tiny flashing snake, moistened his thin lips; his left eyebrow lifted imperceptibly...*

43 Godwin has no kind words for Hanks, Blanchard's assistant in the store either. Page 22: *His* [Blanchard's] *lymphatic assistant....* Page 38: *...that fat fool of a Hanks...* Page 44: [Hanks] *(who was standing like a somnambulist, tying parcels, an automaton with projecting tongue and laboured breath).* Page 50: *...Hanks, fat. lymphatic Hanks...sleeping...*

44 In 1919 the Byrnes family settled on the Fletcher property. The house, which underwent several changes over the years, is now owned by the Webb family.

45 Counting back from 1913 twenty years would place his arrival at a couple of years before 1895.

46 Page 41 *Like most little men Bob England felt the urge to impose himself physically....He got up and swaggered like a cockerel.* Page 57 *There is Bob in the best room, in shirt-sleeves, crushing the*

antimacassars, knocking pipe-ash on the patterned carpet, drinking his whiskey. A regular nuisance he is. Page 268 *There is Bob, pipe in mouth, doing chores aimlessly, or strolling, hands in pocket, through his garden, He talks of making a tennis court.* Page 268 *True, he is in debt: always has been, always will be. But once a quarter comes that Old Country letter with its bank draft to save the embarrassing situation. Remittances keep Bob England going.* It is doubtful that Robert Fletcher was a remittance man.

47 Page 17: Women were scarce in those days and he had married, soon after settling, the daughter of old Ole Nelson, who had settled at the edge of the Sapper's road..."When we married ... Hulda could not speak a word of English."...She was a big-hipped woman with placid features and deliberate movements...But I've learnt Engleesh.

48 Page 161: It is for instance Bob England who "brought up his sled with the chestnut team..." to take the Newcomer's wife down to go to Sapperton where her baby was born a week later.

49 Page 116: After these words Godwin quotes the text of an old Norwegian song here.

50 For more on the Norwegian settlement see *Whonnock Notes* No. 5: "The Trondheim Congregation, The Norwegian Minute Books of the Lutherans in Whonnock."

51 True Norwegian surnames would end on "—sen" rather than (Swedish) "—son."

52 Page 213: *Sitting with his fast bulk upon a hard wood chair, his two legs spread, his fat freckled hand upon his knees, he stared at his raw-boned wife [Freda]with the bland eyes of a great child. She knew he needed her protection, with his slow wits and cocky self-assurance, his simulated cleverness, his transparent cunning of a peasant...his moon face flushed...* Page 276: *...slow-minded, matter of fact...*

53 Page 213 *...this shrewd woman...* Page 276 *...raw-boned Freda...* Page 277:*...obedient, patient, kindly Freda...* Page: 276 *...raw-boned Freda.*

54 Page 27: *Kurt Olson would* [build the house] *quicker, but he is in Nome.* Page 36:*...he would be coming back from the North, out of the Yukon...* Page 45 *...He is a miner, a boat builder, the best salmon fisherman on this stretch of the Fraser, an expert carpenter, a lumberjack and a farmer. He can play concertina and fiddle and dances as good as any of them at the Recreation Hall....Yes, I reckon he is an educated man.* Page 50: *...a giant of a man....Norwegian giant...* Page 69: *...this brooding inarticulate Norseman...* Page 101:*...Kurt Olson returned from the North and fished the river (and came out once more top boat)...* Page 102:*...Kurt Olson would perhaps be persuaded to take out his concertina and play in the great kitchen of the Olson place....*Page 276:A *laconic man, little given to long speeches.* Page 276: *What joy in the old man's eyes! Kurt, the well-beloved. Kurt the masterful, the clever.*

55 Page 277: *Little Ole can do as he will with his uncle. [Kurt] He is on his high knee. A little flaxen figure between the bridegroom and bride. A symbolic figure, a sign and a portent.* Were the Godwins present at that wedding in Whonnock?

56 Page 49: *...was slim and pretty. Her dark hair was matted to her forehead; beneath it, her large eyes were very blue.*

57 Page 48: Bob England: *"Nothing wrong with*

This is how Godwin describes Bob England: "Like most old-timers [he] turned his hand to anything. He had spent thirty years in the Dominion, and twenty of them at Ferguson's Landing.[45] He was one of the oldest of old-timers, a short, thick-set man with a slow manner, a philosophical air of indifference to lack of money, bad crops, logging contracts which showed a deficit after a hard winter's work, and horses that went unaccountably lame. "He was a philosopher in his way, for he had the creed of the Easy Way deeply ingrained in an indolent, kindly nature....he was an expert in many things...(pp 13,14).

Bob England, a small man, was not punctual nor uncharitable, thorough, or in a hurry. When he meets the Newcomers at the station he wears boots caked in mud and covered with dust. He is dressed in "blue pants [that] were patched at the seat, and his dingy yellow canvas shirt lacked the lower portion of the sleeves." He is "smoking a corn-cob pipe with his hands deep into his pockets"[46] (pp 14, 15).

England's marriage to Hulda, a Norwegian— not an Anglo-Saxon—is explained by the fact that that there were few white women around in the early days. She is described as a "big-hipped woman with placid features and deliberate movements." When she married she did not speak English and Godwin shows that she still speaks with an accent.[47]

The path to and from the Newcomers' house leads over Mr. England's property. In those days everyone walks across someone else's land once permission has been granted. After selling of the land Bob Fletcher and Georgina must have continued sharing their knowledge with and giving support to the Godwins, much as those newcomers wished to keep to themselves.[48] Through Georgina the Godwins came to know the Lee family and other Norwegians, always hospitable and friendly.

The old songs of Norway, wistful, sometimes melancholy, melodious anyway.[49]

Norwegians played an important part in settling Whonnock.[50] The Andersons, Nelsons (Nilsen), and Lees (Lie), fisherman in the first place but also farmers, started to own land in Whonnock shortly after 1887. The men were capable in the woods and they were good carpenters and construction workers. The women were equally capable in managing the affairs of house and family. These were the perfect settlers. However the Klondike gold rush of 1898 lured many away to the north where some of them settled permanently.

On page 36 of the novel we meet the patriarch of the Olson family, Ole Olson[51]. He is six foot two inches tall, bent, with a thin, wiry body. His face is ruddy, the colour of bronze, and he has strong white hair. He is very old. "His loins had peopled half the settlement." He keeps to his own and speaks only Norwegian (page 36). Ole Olson's daughter Hulda is married to Bob England and his son Axel to Freda, whose small son is also called Ole. Kurt Olson is another son, spending time between Nome and other places in the north and Ferguson's Landing. After a romantic courtship Kurt marries Lulu Armstrong, the daughter of Mrs. Armstrong.

The Olson family of Ferguson's Landing seems to be inspired by the Lee family of Whonnock. Ole (Andreas Olauson) Lee is the patriarch of the Lee family and he has nine children including Axel, Ole, Martha Marie, Georgina and Karl Gustav. Georgina (Hulda in the book) married Robert Fletcher (Bob England). Either Axel Lee or Ole Lee Jr. or both may have inspired "Axel[52]. Ole Lee was married to Frieda Johanson—did she give more than her name to Freda?[53] Karl Gustav Lee could have been the model for Kurt.[54] Karl Gustav

Hugo Lee spent much of his life in Alaska and in 1914 he married Stella Oliver.55 Perhaps she has been fictionalized as that dark-haired, blue-eyed girl Lulu.56 Obviously the people in the novel are not the same as the real people and characteristics of one or another are blended with those of another and recreated by the author, playing their part in the novel. To illustrate the creative process at work: Ole Lee Sr.'s daughter Martha Marie may have inspired that whirlwind Mrs. Armstrong, Lulu's mother in the novel.

Nothing wrong with them. Old timers the Armstrongs.[57]

All women in *The Eternal Forest*, including the wife of the Newcomer, are small, tired, weak, gentle, placid, sometimes clever, enigmatic, thin-legged, and even those who are wide-hipped or raw-boned are never strong or overpowering. But Mrs. Armstrong is different. She is a tall, voluptuous woman, at once feminine and unwomanly (p 59). A woman "with a burning temperament and an insatiable appetite for pleasure, excitement and constant change of scene and company" (p 62) a tornado of a woman with a magnetic forceful will and with no pity in her eyes (pp 63, 105). She is a "whirlwind drawing to her door the unattached men of the settlement" (p 104). She is a "feckless housewife." (p 58) Besides, "hallmark of sloth," an empty woodshed near the winter (p 57).

Blanchard comments "That house hasn't a good name. Half breeds hang about when Armstrong is away" (p 47). "Fate," says Godwin about Mrs. Armstrong, "...had made her the grass-widow of a man who seldom spoke, who never looked at her, or, looking at her never saw the woman before him. A poor son of man, with a taint of Red blood a generation or two back. A man who went on mad drunken orgies. An unappetizing man, whose mouth always oozed from one corner the brown saliva of the tobacco-chewer" (p 62).

No one else living in Whonnock in Godwin's days than Mary West, could have stood as a model for Mrs. Armstrong. She was born Martha Marie Lee.[58] After the death of her first husband, Ole Nelson, she married George West, a son of Henry West, the well-know builder of paddle-wheelers across the river. George's mother was a Louisa Fallardeau from Fort Langley, with Kwantlen ancestry, and the West children were therefore classified as "half breeds." Therefore George West had, like Mr. Armstrong, "a taint of Red blood a generation or two back." Half breeds in Godwin's eyes are by birth not the right kind of people. Yes, in our language Godwin is a racist, believing in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons. Not that racism is gone today, but those who feel like Godwin don't say it so loudly and certainly not in print.

Mrs. West was a leading force in the early days of the Ladies Club and, the around the time the Godwins lived in Whonnock, the minutes of their meetings show her competence, talents and drive. Mrs. West had trained as a nurse in Alaska which helped the people in the community on many occasions. She was a woman who took charge of things and who was liberated from many conventions of the day.

The only man in the settlement...who could afford not to work

Godwin describes Ted Wood as "a lean man with a lantern jaw and arched nose [who] spoke with a refined accent of English county-folk. But his black hair, his sharply chiselled features, his slow movements gave him away for what he was—a half-breed, born in a shack of a Kanaka squaw and a Scotch father. ... he was the only gentleman in the settlement because he was the only man who could afford not to work" (p 45). Godwin adds: "His wife, who kept

them, Old-timers, the Armstrongs"....[Bob England] had drunk many a bottle under that decayed, lichened roof."

58 For more on Mrs. West see. Fred Braches and Linda Mattis, "Mary West: A mover and shaker." *Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows News*, 10 February 1999

59 Page 48 *"...the fellow is a breed and we all know it."*

60 Page 154: *A thin little woman, she might have stepped out of a Sussex village high-street, from a rectory or from a manor house.*

61 Page 76: *A man with a thin, cavernous face, full-lipped.* Page 77: *A melancholy little man with grievances.... He stretched his thin legs...* Page 120*: Eyes shifting in embarrassment "Ah, a fire... I think it is my duty to stay and look after the women."*

him, had built a great house" (p 74).[59] Mrs. Woods is "prim, proper, dowdy, plain, a colourless little woman. Kindly, but afraid of reality" (p 154).[60]

No one back in the 1930s would have failed to recognize the Boulangers as the models for Woods and his wife. Boulanger—French for Baker—was the original name of the Baker family and August Baker decided to reclaim the original family name when he married Elizabeth Spilsbury.

Rev. Corley, parson of the Church of England

The reverend Mr. Corley is a full-lipped man with a thin, cavernous, melancholic, face and deep furrows from his high-bridged nose to his coarse mouth. His pastoral work is a failure and in Mary Anderson he finds a true sympathiser.[61] A conversation with a whore in Vancouver and a talk with a fellow Irishman, the Catholic priest father O'Reilly, bring him back to reality and his wife. Agnes, his wife, is described by Godwin as a "colourless suburban-bred, narrow-minded, dry, flat breasted little woman."[62]

"Agnes was overlaid with 'lady'" (p 259) In her "correct little room," sit the women from Ferguson's Landing, "their work-calloused hands crossed in unaccustomed idleness," using terms like "It sure is," "You bet yer," "I'll say so" (p 78). They are vulgar women in the eyes of the parson's wife.

It would go too far to assume that Godwin had pastor Arthur William Collins of St. Paul's in Whonnock in mind when he created the pastor of Ferguson's Landing and his wife. From the novel and his journal notes it is evident that Godwin felt strongly against the church, and the Rev. Corley and his wife may have had their counterparts somewhere else than Whonnock.

The murder in Whonnock General Store

The consequences of Godwin's words on individuals could be painful. No more so perhaps than for Richard S. Whiting, whose counterpart Blanchard is accused of an unsolved crime.

In the beginning of the novel Blanchard mentions a murder in the store and tells that the man made a clean get-away. He thinks that it was a put-up job. He adds that someone had seen a woman dressed in white running from the back of the store to Armstrongs'. Old Jim, the chief, tells Kurt that at the night of the murder he saw Mrs. Armstrong, Blanchard and the murdered man drinking and laughing in the store. The murdered man made advances to Mrs. Armstrong, angering Blanchard, who stroke him with a bottle. The murdered man pulled a gun. Mrs. Armstrong grabbed him and the gun dropped. It got into Blanchard's hands, who shot and killed the man as he went after Blanchard. Mrs. Armstrong ran off to her house.[63]

The story is based on the fact that on 8 June 1911 Dearman Probert, about 23 years old, who assisted in the store, died in a Vancouver General Hospital of shot wounds inflicted in the Whonnock store on 26 May. The murderer was never found. Reports on the crime appeared in the major papers and various versions were printed. The *Vancouver World* of 26 May 1911 reports that "a man dressed in sailor's costume entered a store at 4 o'clock [this morning] and demanded what loose cash there was on the premises." When the unnamed proprietor refused the request, "the stranger drew a gun and shot him in the stomach." He changed clothes and "is supposed to have taken the early train to Vancouver."

The *Vancouver World* reported the next day that D.E.G. Probert was shot in a clothing [!] shop in Whonnock was in Vancouver General Hospital. "The doctors hope for his recovery." Their description of the crime: "...the man

Page 174 *His sallow face wore a set expression of melancholy and the deep furrows which ran from high-bridged nose to coarse mouth seemed to deepen.... he found one true sympathizer—Mary Ellison*. Page 178–179:...*his church was empty because he did not understand how to fill it. That Presbyterian, working his two churches, ran constantly between Ferguson's landing and Carlyle and kept them both chock-full*.

62 Page 77: *The parson's wife...kept herself to herself...she preserved the reserved bearing usual in Ealing*. Page 78:...*she drawled in the manner of the heroines of her Society novels...a colourless little woman, suburban-bred, narrow-minded, dry, flat breasted*. Page 177: "*Agnes is the sort of woman who should have married a vicar with a comfortable living....Here she is lost.*" Page 258: *She had married him because she had seen the fate in store for old maids in a Dublin suburb*...Page 259: *But Agnes was overlaid with 'lady'; that was what was so frightful. The artificial had crushed and swamped the primitive in her....She never dared to be herself*.

63 Page 48–49: Blanchard's version of the story: "*You weren't here when the store murder happened....They never got the fellow. He made a clean get-away. They telegraphed down the line. No go....Well, he was supposed to have smashed open that door...[b]ut he never did. It was a put-up job. There never was a holdup man in the store at all....You know what old Mrs. Hitton [only mentioned here and not defined] says? From her windows over there,...she can see the store. Well, I've heard her say myself that a minute after the shot rang out a white figure flitted from the back of the store across to Armstrong's house....Yes, woman's figure.*" Page 238: Old Jim, the Chief tells the following story: "You remember murder at the store, maybe?...One day—that day—I go down after dark to the orchard behin' store. I go to steal apples and maybe a chicken. See? Blanchard was paying his tinned music, and I crep' up under the window to watch, for I hear much laughter and I tink: where laughter, there whiskey. Well, sir, there they was having a hellofa time. Mrs. Armstrong, she was sittin' drinkin', and there was Blanchard, sittin' drinkin' and there was some other stiff sittin' drinkin'. That was the feller they found with a bullet in him....I seen the who ting. Blanchard, he went out, and other feller, he started making up to Mrs. Armstrong. Presently, Blanchard come back from store. Very mad, Blanchard. He limp across room and swipe other fellow with bottle. The other feller pulled his gun. Yessir. Mrs. Armstrong she jump up an knock it outer his hand. Blanchard grabbed it, other feller sprang at him. Blanchard fired. Then Mrs. Armstrong run off....God's truth, she ran back to her house skeered outer her life."

entered the store while Crowe [a relative of Whiting's] and Probert, who were in charge, were asleep. After helping himself to some clothing "...he wakened Crowe at the point of a gun, demanding to know where the cash was kept. Crowe led him to Probert." Crowe grappled with the man, who had pointed his gun at Probert and several shots were fired hitting Probert in the stomach. The murderer escaped in the confusion. The *Daily News* of 27 May reports more or less the same story, adding that Crowe led the robber to Probert because Probert had the keys to the cash drawer.

The story as reported in *The British Columbian*, New Westminster, of 26 May puts Whiting in the store as well and Whiting, not Crowe, attacking the robber from the rear, causing the double-barrelled gun to discharge with disastrous consequences for Probert. The *Vancouver Sun* put the story of the burglary on the front page of their issue of 3 June 1911, after Probert died. They did not do much research, reporting that Probert was shot point-blank when he surprised the intruder.

Many years later, in the *Vancouver Sun Magazine* of 5 March 1955, well-known historian author B.A. McKelvie retold the story under the title "Murder for a Meal." He must have interviewed a number people in Whonnock who had first-hand information, since it contains details not reported in the press at the time of the accident. Dearman Probert and Thomas Crowe slept upstairs in a building adjoining the store. They did not hear the breaking of glass of the window of the little post office in the store. The intruder helped himself to clothes and food and found a shotgun that a friend had loaned to Probert. He went over to the building next door and demanded the keys of the cash drawer. Crowe called Probert to wake up and Probert jumped up from his bed and grabbed the barrel of the gun. In the fight that followed two shots went off injuring Probert in the stomach. The intruder escaped. Crowe ran to the West house and Probert followed him. Mrs. West and Mrs. Olaus Lee, Mary West's sister-in-law, took care of him till the doctor arrived. Mr. Whiting, who lived up the hill near the Fletcher property, was notified and ran to the store with Olaus Lee and Crowe to inform the authorities.

Conclusion

For most of the residents of Ferguson's Landing—they can be found listed below—no clear connection could be established with individuals living in Whonnock in the years just prior to the Great War. The curious amongst us may still search for more connections with people living in Whonnock 1912–1914, but it may be a futile search.

This review may have shown that Whonnock is the source of inspiration for Godwin to create Ferguson's Landing and at least some of its population. The residents in Whonnock were right to believe that they and their friends were used as models. It is also understandable that the old-timers had no reason to feel pleased that they were used and how they were used by Godwin. It is understandable that some felt personally attacked and hurt and that they ignored or rejected the book. It is unlikely that anyone went as far as destroying copies of the book, but those who felt affected had no reason to talk about it. The book went the way of many insignificant books: it just faded away.

It is unlikely that Godwin used the novel to get even with Whonnock residents, as some may think or have thought. He may have considered his characters and his stories too much at odds with reality to be taken seriously by anyone, least of all by the Whonnock residents who knew the facts. He may not have understood how factual and personal people would take his words.

Godwin wrote a work of fiction and probably never intended to expose some unsavoury secrets of Whonnock residents, but over time curiosity and gossip—Godwin's vices of small communities—created an aura of notoriety around *The Eternal Forest* as if it contained some secrets about the old-timers, and that is simply not the case.

The publication of *The Eternal Forest* is by itself part of Whonnock's history and as such worth a short visit. The book's value as a primary source for the local history of Whonnock is naught, since fact and fiction are inseparable. Nevertheless the book hold some jewels. It lets us, for instance, join the old residents of Whonnock in that store just above the rail tracks, spinning yarns as they waited for Old Country mail. Godwin was there and looked and listened for all of us!

No counterparts identified

This is a list of resident of Ferguson's Landing without identified counterparts living in Whonnock prior to WW I. The citations at each particular character are not comprehensive and only provided to form an idea of the personality created by Godwin. The book itself, not these excerpts, should provide complete information. Page numbers are shown in brackets

Anderson, Old

(27) *...calloused hand....He moved slowly planting his great feet firmly, his face wooden as the planks....Slower than the second coming but he is thorough.* (28) *He had built half the settlement.* (29) *...house in his own likeness: it was plain, rugged, strong, very honest and very useful....squirting a jet of tobacco juice...*

Doctor

(23) [Johanssons] *...was walking to Carlyle for the doctor.* (168) *He stood revealed a pale young man with a lick of wet black hair plastered to an unhealthily pallid forehead.* (279) *The doctor's place was three miles from Ferguson's Landing and the nearest way was along the track of the CPR. The Newcomer took it. Three miles back made six miles in all, and that after a day's* work.

Dunn, Tom

(26) *Old man Dunn, burly, bearded, rubicund ... small, shrewd eyes. They hated him... and he repaid their rancour with a contempt... They called him "The Sage"... started in Yorkshire mines...mastered Latin...A good brain in a big body....But he was a failure.* (27). *...crimson cheeks...grey beard...blackened nails.*
(39). *...bronzed face...iron-grey beard. [Blanchard thinks him a] Sententious old fool! Lets his wife do all the work and wears out his pants reading books.* (53) *...steel spectacles perched on his great nose.* (for reading)
(96)*...The Sage was none too popular. His views damned him —and so did his neglected place.* (97) *They sat down on the doorstep, facing the orchard beyond which ran the river.* (98) *...gnarled hand...Thirty years ago...I cleared twenty acres of heavy timber...now I just do sufficient to keep me and the wife going...they think I am a lazy old man.* (99)*...spelling out the Greek grammar.* (100)F*ailure, in a word. Restlessness, the eternal quest and defeat. And yet defeat without surrender....service was the root principle of any community claiming to be civilised.* (148)*...five Japanese families in Ferguson's Landing* [There were none in Whonnock till after the First World War]. (272) *"Yes, my dear fellow, we are going home."* (274) *"Under this system," Old Man Dunn had said, "the harder the work, the less the reward; the manipulators and exploiters make the money. There's so many parasites that descent folk can't live any more."*

Dunn, Mrs.

(53) *She baked once a week—the best bread in the Landing...you must have strong arms for kneading of the dough (and Mrs. Dunn's arms were thin like a chicken's legs without their feathers).* (167) *Poor little Mrs. Dunn, with the thin body and darting movements of a hen.*

Ellison

(16)*...the Ferguson Place, now owned by the Ellisons (an Old Country family who had fled form the task of conquering Lincolnshire clay to grapple with the problem of becoming a bush rancher).* (175) *The Ellison family were a graft from the Old World to the New. They had brought with them all the class notions of traditional England. Not the England of cities but the England of counties where tradition survives. They understood perfectly the social scheme which allots to each his place, and approved it. They knew precisely who were their social superiors and gave them an ungrudging deference, without loss of dignity or self-respect. Just as they placed those lower than them selves in the social scale and drew the line with care and exactitude.* (176) *.... little old man with the iron spectacles and iron whiskers... Things had gone awry in this new land. "There is no respect," Ellison told his wife. "They don't seem to have a feeling for what's right a proper, all mixing up together. It's a country without gentry..." The Vicar was an Old Countryman like himself....An interesting and sympathetic man.*

Ellison, Mary

(79) [The parson's wife] *did not know how often he* [the parson] *took Mary Ellison for an airing in his rig... sometimes once a week, sometimes twice, and at times after dark.* (175)*...that Madonna face,...* (179) *"... soft and gentle and sympathetic...she is like the Sistine Madonna."*

Fuller

(75) *...plain, but exceedingly efficient...Most of the folk... raised chickens: Fuller alone made them pay.*
(76) *Fuller had grown every year more and more like an egg: his head with a brown egg with eyes, ears, nose and mouth.... when his little wife had her babies, they took after their father. Their little faces were like eggs, too: white eggs, too big for their little bodies....Fuller watches...sharp eyes." The survival of the fittest is the law of life"...He...picks up a tender ball of golden fluff, Its little head with its bright eyes is between his thumb and forefinger. It is dead. he helped along the law.*
(102) F*uller's...big gooseberries fixed a big price at Sapperton market.* (132) *yes, Fuller was the man: he*

understood the Valley. He could make anything at all pay. (145) [Oil] *whole thing's a swindle. Worse than the real estate ramp.* (150) *He had saved for many years. "If things get to bad here," he said, "I'll up stakes, sell to the Japs, and go south to Florida. I've been studying conditions in Florida...and it's a country where a man can make good." Oh, wonderful Fuller!*

Hanks

(22) [Blanchard's]...*lymphatic assistant....* (38) *That fat fool Hanks...*(44) [Hanks] *was standing like a somnambulist, tying parcels, an automaton with projecting tongue and laboured breath.* (50) *...Hanks, fat, lymphatic sleeping...*

Heggerty, Mr.

(41) *He was the poorest man in the settlement and it was said that his children (he had eleven) often went hungry; that his wife was dying of consumption; that he was a fool. worse than that he was a failure. A man...with a right to be indignant against the world.*

(43) he...*had been nothing better than a professional bum.* (44) *Full of absurdities and meanness. A cowardly creature sneaking away from life into the bush.* (77) *"I* [Rev Corley] *was out to see those Heggertys. Rough people. Having a struggle. I fear that man's an evil influence here."* (90) [sells his land to Japanese] *...to git out of it, out of the solitude, the want and the lack of everything, back to a town where there's bars and pool rooms.* (91) *slow moving mind* (92) *One more in a series of foolish moves that made up his feckless way of life and which pulled his faithful little wife and children, happily unaware, along the weary road of failure.* (88, 91) *...his little son Joe....*

Heggerty, Mrs.

(41) *It was said... that his wife was dying of consumption.* (42) *...the silent woman who would bend over the washtub as he sat at the deal table of their low log cabin and grumbled at life* (178) *...the outraged Mrs. Heggerty, hair soft and damp from application over the washing tub, skinny arms bare, face red with indignation, as she had flared out to the parson's lady. "Who's your good woman? Go to hell and take your damned charity with you!"*

Hitton, Mrs.

(49) saw ... a *white figure flitting from the back of the store across to Armstrong's house.*

Johanssons, Mr.

(46) "*I never knew a man who would break his back as a hired-out man like that Swede does."*

(71. 72) *...his lumbering gait covering the ground at five miles an hour, his enormous hands swinging like clubs at the end of his long arms. A tall, ramshackle man in blue overalls, patched and weather-stained, and heavy elk-hide boots into which the ends of his pants were thrust. ... loose-jointed.. made strong by a nervous system of tempered steel...lifted great weights by will power.... he was the only man at Ferguson's Landing who could turn his hand to any of the many crafts that a good peasant is a master of.* (73) *...using every ounce of muscle, every fibre of nerve tissue.... he was a bargain-dirt-cheap so he had work for ten men.* (79, 80, 81)...*humble in his mind; he was a simple man....little time for book-learning....He had a friendly smile....gaunt man....patient man.* (84) *...slow-moving brain....* (131) *J's gaunt figure lumbered across the slashing, his huge hands swinging at his sides.* (143) ...simple *single-aimed man....Long thin nose to which the grey powder of his snuff adhered.* (150) *...his fifty acres were bought and paid for....*(170) *He was a patient man....In a straight-backed chair Johansson slept. His mouth was slightly open, and, at its corners, the snuff tobacco which he sometimes ate oozed in yellow rivulets onto the stubble of his chin.* (173) *He rubbed his two hands together. They were immense hands, hands as big as the hands of Epstein's* Christus. *Calloused, sinewy, hairless, very strong. He spat upon furrowed palms and rubbed the two leathery surfaces together. (210) ...he belches across the table, picks his teeth, spits and blows his nose through thumb and finger. But consider the man himself! Good God. He is heroic. He has beaten the bush single handed, He works like a horse. You never see him idle, doing nothing. ... He is a man.*

Johansson, Mrs.

(57) *...her homely face...(*80) *...grey-faced* (165) *...her head fallen forward on her meagre breast...her mouth with its colourless lips, lolled open.*

Johansson, Mary

(73) *Mary, his daughter, slept heavy in the profound sleep of the adolescent.* (74) *Mary was clever and she would grow to be a school marm. She was good at her books... her myopic eyes.* (80) *...wide eyes peering through the strong lenses of her steel-rimmed glasses... good girl, very quiet, and her face shone with soap. She was clever at her books....(*82)*... a girl who had book-learning and who did ciphering in her head.* (163) *...twisted her neat head to see the pictures.* (167) *...she was prim and demure. From behind her round spectacles her grey eyes looked at her father....with the experience of thirty years but her softly-rounded body spoke of mere adolescence.*

Mann

(57) *Mann, up at the brickyard...* (58) *Bullheaded Mann with such big ideas, always about to make a fortune, so glib and convincing with his fat laugh and fluent tongue.*

But somehow, always just overlooking some silly little point which brought his schemes to nothing....Mann needed the money for his brickyard now. (84/85) *A big, burly man...dressed in a blue serge suit and wearing a felt hat. His fat red face was shrewd and good-natured, his little eyes were sharp and bright. It was Mann from the brickyard. Mann, whose name was none too good, a man with the reputation of a cheat and twister. ...big, fat, soft and self-indulgent ... Mann, dominating the store by virtue of that intangible quality which makes one man master, another servant, had soft muscles but an alert brain. ... [Man] was said to be a bad influence on the settlement, always dead broke or spending money in lashings.* (132) *Man had sold his Brickyard.* (133) *A passion for gambling.*

Old Jim (Aboriginal)

(21) *...whose only strong views concerned his inalienable right to wear seatless pants when he came down to the store from the Indian Reservation to relate strange things, things seen and things heard, in the hope of hearing even stranger things.* (67) *...sunning his spidery legs, his gaunt old body... his withered face is a map of many lines and his eyes are half-burnt, smouldering fires...This old man, this drunken old thief, this squaw-beater.* (68) *...the Old Chief with but twelve tribesmen for a following...with no seat to his pant...an insatiable thirst for fire-water.*

O'Reilly, Old Father. Catholic priest

(254) *Father O'Reilly was an old man who had put in forty years in the West; a wise old man, with a charitable and understanding heart, and a cassock powdered with dandruff. He had fat, soft hands and carried them locked over his sagging pouch.* (255) *Of course the Indians and the breeds were Catholics to one man.* (255) *...service at the dilapidated Catholic chapel once a month.* (258) *...a sweet old man but oh, how dirty* (256) *He had always been poor and overworked in the early days in Dublin.*

Preedy, Tom, Station Agent

(7) *...whose days were divided between the depot and the cultivation of thirty acres of logged-off timberland which resisted every effort of his short arms and legs.... all that Tom Preedy loved and longed for ... London. and all his particular London meant to him.*

(8) *...his mind capable of infinite futile regrets, was barren of invention...(*72) *Little TP spending half his time in the dingy depot office, pawing his official railway forms and fretting.* (111) *whining voice.*

Preedy, Mrs. Tom

(9) *...the little worn-out little woman..."*

Stein

(92) *...stroking his long beard and looking about him with the air of a government official* [at Heggerty's place] (148) *...sold out to Japanese... Stein had money.*

Tidberry, Carlton, MLA

(100) *..."no good grafter"*

The Vancouver Province, B.C. Magazine
5 March 1955

MURDER FOR A MEAL

By B.A. McKelvie, Foremost B.C. Historian

Illustrated by Bert Sanderson

The mysterious stranger listened to their music, then sneaked into their home, to kill.

It was a quiet, peaceful evening in late May, 1911: two young men were sitting on the verandah of their resi dence adjoining Whiting's store at Whonnock. One of the pair was kindly, popular Dearman George Probert, clerk in the store; the other, Thomas Charles Crowe, a friendly farmhand, had but recently arrived. Richard Whiting, the store owner was a relative. Probert and Crowe occupied rooms upstairs in a building adjoining the store. It was necessary to go outside from the store to reach their quarters.

The work of the day was over and the two friends sat on the porch. Probert played his accordion as the long twilight was gradually consumed by the warm night. Crowe listened contentedly. There was another auditor of that impromptu concert. He was a stranger, but the lads did not pay much attention to him as he sat on the railway grade, smoking his pipe and watching them intently.

Who was the stranger on the track? That question has never been answered, and would not have been asked but for the happening of a few hours later. Was the man who watched the friends bid adieu to a pleasant day with music, to come in the night and murder one of those happy boys? His profit? A stolen meal and a cigar.

Probert and Crowe were both good sleepers, as became healthy young fellows. They did not hear the breaking of glass in the darkness of that May 26 morning, as the window of the little Post Office in the store was jimmied. The dog that slept on the premises, for some reason gave no alarm—but then he was used to strangers.

The cool, calculating thief—whoever he was—slipped into the store. His movements were daring and deliberate. He lighted an oil lamp, reducing the radiance of its glow by not placing a glass globe over the flame; but it gave the illumination he required. He selected a stout pick-handle from the hardware section, and then made a leisurely survey of the stock. He dallied for some time amid the clothing, taking off and trying on various garments—but they were, for the most part, overalls and jumpers, and these were evidently not to his taste. In the process of examining the clothing stock, he discarded his own coat—a substantial garment of some blue material, and a felt hat. Then, his attention being taken by other fancies, he neglected to put them on again.

He next prepared himself an abundant meal from the groceries, and emptying a meal sack on to the floor, he filled it with a choice selection of foodstuffs, ready to be removed when he departed. It was money that he wanted, and he found the cash drawer of the store and that of the Post Office locked. In searching about he found a shotgun that a friend had loaned to Probert a few days before, and he had no trouble in locating a handful of No. 3 shells to fit the weapon.

Armed, he went outside and boldly climbed the stairs to where the two friends were sleeping. Crowe heard him on the landing and called out for his chum. The heavy-sleeping Probert did not hear—but the robber did. He seized hold of the door handle, and such was his strength, that although he tugged the wrong way, he tore the door off its hinges, and splintered the frame.

"He came into my room and told me to get up and throw up my hands," Crowe related several days later to the coroner's jury. "He pointed the gun at me and demanded the keys of the drawer. I told him I did not have them, as I was not connected with the store.

"He was so threatening and I knew I could do nothing with him myself, I told him he had better come into another room where there was somebody connected with the store, He pointed the gun at me and told me to go ahead.

"I called to Probert: he was in bed, He said, "What's up?" I replied, "Here's a man who wants the keys."

Probert sat up in bed and exclaimed, "What?" Then he fell back again. The man told him to get up. He had the gun about two feet from Probert's head. Probert jumped

up and as he rose threw the bed clothing of himself and grabbed the barrel of the gun."

There followed a terrific fight, as the young fellows clad only in their sleeping gowns battled the thug in the faint grey dawn that seeped through the curtained window, for the possession of the shotgun,

"I closed with the man," Crowe explained, "Probert was on the bed holding the gun and kicking. His intention apparently was to kick the gun out of the man's hands, but I told him he was only kicking me, We were struggling and got away from the bed. The man swung me towards the door. I thought Probert had the gun. Before I could get my feet and turn around, the gun went off twice, I saw Probert holding the barrel and in a bending position over the gun. I thought he was injured so I ran through the back door."

Crowe ran for help to the West's house. Turning, he saw the wounded Probert following. He would stagger a few steps and then double with pain. He was assisted into the West household where Mrs. West and Mrs. Olaus Lee ministered to him until Dr. Funk arrived later.

Mr. Whiting was notified, and with Olaus Lee and young Crowe ran to the store. The robber had cut the telephone wires, but these Mr. Lee quickly repaired, and while Whiting was telephoning to the provincial police at New Westminster, and Crowe was dressing. Lee started alone to track the killer.

The gunman had remained long enough to steal the money out of the trouser pockets of his victim before descending the stairs. He had jumped over the back fence and had made for the railway track. Lee tracked him, but he had quite a head start. Seeing some track workers, Lee quickly told them what had happened and borrowed their speeder. On this he traveled west for several miles, following footprints on the right-of-way. Then he lost them. There was no person around when he reached Port Haney, about 6 am. "But when I was standing there," Lee said, "a man passed on the river in a boat. He was bareheaded. His clothes appeared to be dark."

Probert was taken to Vancouver General Hospital where he died on June 3 from the terrible wounds inflicted by the double blast from the shotgun. In answer to questions by his employer, Whiting, the dying lad gasped: "He pointed the gun at me and I caught hold of it. I got it away from him and he reached out his hands and pulled the triggers."

Despite the efforts of the police, no clues as to the identity of the man who listened to the pleasant music of Probert's accordion, or to the bareheaded man who was seen, going down the river that morning in an open boat have been found. The shooting of Dearman George Probert is still an unsolved case.

The Coquitlam Star

8 May 1912, the year the Godwins came to Whonnock.

TEN THOUSAND ACRES OF WEALTH AND BEAUTY

Whonnock, Maple Ridge, One of The Loveliest Spots In British Columbia. Lumbering, Fishing And Farming Are Main Industries

(Contributed by R. Fletcher.)

The delightful residential district of Whonnock, situated on the north bank of the Fraser, 32 miles from Vancouver, lying between Haney and Mission, Is conceded by all who know it to be the beauty spot of the Fraser Valley.

The district contains about 10,000 acres of fertile land lying on a gentle southern slope with a frontage of about five miles on the Fraser River. On account of its sheltered position and extensive views of the Fraser Valley and the surrounding snow-capped mountains, it is rapidly attracting the attention of the more discriminating land buyers and home-seekers, who appreciate the natural beauties of the district in conjunction with the fertility of the soil, and in this respect Whonnock stands unique. As soon as these facts become more generally known, there is little doubt but that it will be chosen as the residential spot of the Fraser Valley, the more especially considering the moderate prices asked for land at present.

Signs of the times are already in evidence, as some prominent people of Vancouver, amongst them being Mr. C. E. Tisdall (M. P. P. for Vancouver) having recently purchased homes at Whonnock.

Although it is now over 30 years since the first white man settled in Whonnock, there was, owing to the lack of roads, very little progress made until quite recent years. But of late, owing to the progressive road building policy of the Provincial Government, good roads are being opened up in every direction, and as a consequence settlement is increasing very rapidly. The road building program for this year will open up one of the finest stretches of land in the district, a tract which up to the present time has lain idle simply for lack of means of transportation.

There are at present two brick-yards in operation in the district, and machinery for a third is already ordered and is expected to be in operation before the close of the present season. A sawmill is being erected on the banks of the Stave River at a cost of half a million dollars. This mill will be run by electricity generated at the Western Canada Power Co.'s plant at Stave Falls, and when completed will have the most modern and up-to-date equipment of any mill in the world.

Boring operations for coal are now in progress on the western extremity of this district, and as outcrops of coal

also occur on the eastern boundary and at various intermediate points Whonnock expects to be the centre of a vast coal producing area. A variety of clay discovered in one of the brick-yards, after being subjected to exhaustive tests, both practical and analytical, has been pronounced by experts to be unequalled for the manufacture of talcum powder, polishing powder, fine pottery, etc. The property is bonded to a well-known firm for $75,000.

Salmon fishing is extensively carried on at this point. Old fishermen consider the Whonnock drift one of the finest on the river. There are, as a consequence, a number of people in this settlement who make a comfortable living from this source, independent from the revenue they derive from agricultural pursuits, which they carry on in conjunction with the fishing.

The agricultural possibilities of this favored locality are being more and more demonstrated every year. All varieties of large and small fruit are being grown to perfection, and Whonnock has more than once had the honor of placing the first crate of berries on the market. Hay and roots of all descriptions are profitably raised; potatoes being an exceptionally paying crop.

Poultry raising is also a very profitable industry, and is being conducted on a very extensive scale. The district is adequately supplied with stores, churches, schools, wharf, telephone service, etc., and a Town Hall now nearing completion will fill a long felt want. This building, 60 feet long by 32 feet wide, is being built entirely by voluntary subscriptions and labor, under the auspices of the Ladies' Club.

From the sportsman's point of view Whonnock cannot but appeal to the most exacting, as both large and small game abound.

During the fishing season many devotees of the gentle art make Whonnock their base for excursions to Stave River, Whonnock Creek, Rolley's Lake and various other small streams and lakes, all of which abound with different species of trout. Grouse are perhaps not so plentiful as formerly, and this is probably traceable to the fact that the pheasants have increased so rapidly and to such an extent that the grouse have been driven farther back.

Present means of transportation are the C. P. Railway and river boats, which ply between Chilliwack and New Westminster, and the Dewdney Trunk Road.

Directly across the river is the Canadian Northern. In the course of the next year or two an electric tramway will also be running between Vancouver and Mission City, which will be of immense value to the district.

Courtesy Valerie Patenaude,
Curator, Maple Ridge Museum