

Former school teacher recalls Steelhead history

The small community of Steelhead has maintained an individuality of its own since the early development of the Mission district.

Mrs. L. Rambo has submitted the following story of the community which was written by Mrs.

Zelda Apps who was a school teacher at Steelhead in 1916.

Mrs. Apps writes that: "Steelhead, as I remember it in 1916, was a little colony of newspapermen's wives and children, living without their fathers and husbands, except for one or two weekends a month.

"The men worked in Vancouver for the World, Herald and Province newspapers.

"Having taken up homesteads, part of the deal was to establish residence for a certain length of time each year.

"The wives were mostly 'city gals', unused to making do with very little. Though I heard of the 'buckets of tears', they said they shed, I don't think any of them regretted their pioneer life in Steelhead.

"On weekends off, the men tramped in with huge packs on their backs. They came by CPR to Ruskin, then on the B.C. Electric train to Stave Falls, then by foot through the woods to Steelhead.

"Returning on Sunday they took messages and lists for the ones to come next weekend.

"Besides the newspaper men, (one of whom later became the mayor of North Vancouver), were a few bachelors and loggers.

Ernie Winch, the politician, was a homesteader. Charles Apps was another, and I'll always remember John Faber and his mule.

"Mr. Faber's land was towards the southwest of the settlement. He and his mule walked out to the Kennedy Road and then onto Mission for supplies. For his lunch he carried one of his long homemade loaves of black bread. He didn't ride his mule, but took equal turns in packing a large bag of feed.

"There was the little store with the five by six post office in the corner. Saturday was mail day. Anthony Taulbut, the mail man came in every Saturday about noon with his horse and small wagon. Besides the mail, which he picked up from the Mission Post Office, he brought fresh meat, drugs and other items that had been put on his list the week before. Saturday was the special day when one heard all the general news of the community.

"Tony's wagon with its one seat, most of which he required for himself, was the only means of transportation out, other than walking. I know Tony had some very hard trips, but he always managed to get the mail through, through snow and mud for half of the year, and dust and bumps the other half.

"Most of the homestead houses were covered with tarpaper on the outside. Some of the men used proof-plates on the inside as insulation. Some used sheets of newspaper, comics and all, to paper the inside."

Mrs. Apps informative letter will appear in a later column.

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