

Oct. 8, 1985

Betty Drummond

John James Shaw

My father was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1864. He had 3 brothers and 3 sisters. At age 14 he went as an apprentice to Fairfield Shipyards, eventually becoming an engineer-architect. In the 1890s he was asked to go to Japan to work for the Mitsubishi Shipyards.

At the time of the offer he was engaged to be married, but decided to see what the Japanese shipyard was like first. He told his fiancée about life in Japan and persuaded her to come out. The wedding was to be held as soon as the boat arrived, but it came in late and the Church of England minister wouldn't marry them after 12 noon. So she stayed the night with friends and the wedding took place next morning.

They lived in Nagasaki, where their four children were born, three girls and a boy. Early in 1908 the Mitsubishi yard decided they knew enough about shipbuilding to dispense with the services of the English engineer, so they let him go. My father booked passage back to Scotland, planning to return to work at Fairfield's. However, his eldest sister wrote asking him to break his journey at Duncan, B.C., where she was then living with her husband and two children.

So on April 1, 1908 my father and his family arrived in Victoria. His sister had found rooms for us. Mother went to look at them and thought them satisfactory, but was worried that the landlady wouldn't

**A Horse in the
Dining Room**

AND OTHER MISADVENTURES OF
BETTY DRUMMOND
will be featured at the SSI
Historical Society's October 8
meeting at Central Hall at 2 pm.
Guests welcome.

take us as all four of us children had whooping cough. But the landlady's daughter said "Bring them all in. I'm an R.N."

We stayed until we found a house, but we only spent nine months in all in Victoria. My father of course stayed some time with his sister at Duncan, and also went fishing at Campbell River. He did a trip on the steamer that went up one side of Saltspring Island to Nanaimo and down the other side coming back to Victoria. He fell in love with Fulford Harbour as it reminded him of the Scottish sea lochs.

He considered the North End with the idea of raising sheep, but the mosquitoes were bad there, and he had had enough of them in Japan. So he hurried down to Fulford and decide to buy the Wilson farm. Although he had been offered a job at Yarrow's shipyard in Victoria, he turned it down because he thought the \$100 a month starting salary was too low. Actually it was good money. He stuck with his plan of farming, an occupation about which he knew absolutely nothing. This was a mistake, and one the family had to live with, starting on January 1, 1909.

Not all the disasters were due to our ignorance. We lost most of our pigs and sheep the winter Saltspring had 5 feet of snow. At one time we were so poor that my father had to borrow money from his brother in Glasgow to put food on our table. Then our aunts sent out their cast-off clothes to us. My grandfather was a partner in a wholesale clothier's business in Buchanan Street, so the clothes were good. That was nice for us, but also embarrassing, because it made the island people think we were well off.

When we took over the Wilson farm we had horses, cows, sheep, pigs and chickens. The cream went to Victoria until a creamery opened at the foot of Ganges hill. We collected 500 eggs a day. Most of them were shipped to the Empress Hotel and all of them had to be candled.

Then we went in for raising foxes for the fur business, but that didn't work out. In fact, nothing on the farm was really successful, except the dairy cows. We built up a milk round serving the whole Fulford area, but just when that was getting started, my father died. So he never lived to see his farm doing well.

Now I'll tell you about some of the things that happened on that farm.