

The Seven Seas

by Sharon Proctor

Remember the “Seven Seas” floating restaurant? Until 2002 it was moored at the foot of Lonsdale. It was originally the old North Vancouver Ferry #5, which carried cars and passengers between North Vancouver and Vancouver in the 1940s and 50s. In those days, our ferry service was owned by the City of North Vancouver, and the ferries docked here. When the ferry service ended in 1958, the City decided to create a marina in this spot.



Undated photo of Ferry No. 5. NVMA 13340.

Harry Almas and his family, who owned the King Neptune Seafood Restaurant in New Westminster, wanted to purchase Ferry #5 from the City and turn it into a floating restaurant. The City thought it would be a great centrepiece for the marina. So in 1959 they sold it to Almas for \$12,000, and signed a five-year lease for the waterfront lot.

The family spent \$120,000 to \$150,000 converting the 150-foot-long vessel. They kept the two wheelhouses on the upper deck, the engines, and rows of windows on each side. On the other hand, the car deck was totally transformed. Its port side became two dining rooms. The starboard side became a stainless-steel kitchen, walk-in coolers and a freezer. A 240-foot, 4800-pound undersea power cable connected the vessel to North Vancouver’s power grid. Later, a spectacular 48-foot

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A 1960s postcard showing “Seven Seas Seafoods” and its buffet (inset). At one point the buffet featured 22 cold dishes, two hot dishes, five salads and five desserts. NVMA 14082.

neon sign was installed on top. The new restaurant enjoyed great success -- first as “The Ship of the Seven Seas,” then as “Seven Seas Seafoods.”

Diners enjoyed a wide variety of food choices. The regular dinner menu, for instance, offered sea foods, salads, hot and cold appetizers, seafood pastas and vegetable dishes. The weekend buffet had such delicacies as oysters on the half shell, pickled octopus, calamari, sea bass in peanut sauce, curried Dungeness crab, and Singapore squid. And the wine list featured some 70 different international wines by the bottle and ten by the glass.

As time passed, however, the vessel began to show its age. Plus, the Almas family and the City grew increasingly frustrated with the arrangement. It all ended up in Federal Court in 2001. The verdict came in June 2002: the City won. The Seven Seas was towed to Vancouver Pile Driving at the foot of Brooksbank Avenue, where it was demolished.

Sources: North Vancouver Archives; Seven Seas food menus; Federal Court Docket #T-503-99; City Council Minutes; North Shore News; The Outlook; Vancouver Sun.

Garden Court

 by Sharon Proctor

An impressive house once sat at Chesterfield Avenue and Keith Road (718 Chesterfield). Its yard ran uphill from Keith to 8th Street, and Mee Creek flowed through it. The house was built in 1907 by William Bailey, a Vancouver stationer. He and his family lived here for many years, along with a “domestic,” a nurse, and a gardener. Then, in the mid-1920s the Baileys lost everything and moved to Vancouver. Their old home became the Garden Court apartments. That’s when Arthur Cowley, his wife Lilian, and children Gordon and Eileen moved in. They stayed from 1930 to 1941. Gordon has wonderful memories of the place: “Garden Court was one big family.”

“When they lost their home, the Baileys moved to 12th and Blanca, across the lane from where we were living then. Our families became close friends.” Then the 1929 Depression hit, and the Cowleys also lost everything. Fortunately Mrs. Bailey knew an agent for Rand & Fowler, who were overseeing their former home, now an apartment house. She learned they needed a caretaker; the Cowleys got the job. “We lived in the basement rent-free in exchange for overseeing Garden Court. Mother managed the building, collected rent, and ordered the fuel. The rest of us took care of the coal furnace and water heater.”

“Garden Court was one big family.”

Inside the front door was an entryway, with a door to the main-floor apartment, stairs to the upper floors, and the building’s only telephone. The main floor suite was elegant. “Its living room spanned the width of the house, and had an inlaid hardwood floor and a beautiful fireplace. Behind was a dining room with another fireplace, and then a kitchen. On the east side, a porch had been glassed in and made into a



The Chesterfield side of Garden Court in the 1930s. The front door is behind the “checkered” railing. NVMA 16054.

bedroom.” There were three suites on the second floor, one on the third. The building’s only bathroom was on the second floor. “It was big and beautiful, all tiled. Everybody had a ‘bath time’, one night a week, when they could use the bathtub.

“Outside were all kinds of exotic trees,” recalled Cowley, “and a creek that ‘roared’ in winter and during spring runoff.” There was an overgrown fruit orchard on the creek’s east side, with “wonderful fruit-bearing trees.” The yard was terraced, with the house on the lowest level. The next level was grass, where residents played badminton. The third one (by 8th) had a vegetable garden tended by William Bailey. Yes, *that* William Bailey! Around 1933, William and Jean Bailey moved back into their old home -- as renters (second floor).

Our sincere thanks to Gordon Cowley of West Vancouver, for sharing with us his memories and photos of Garden Court.

Other sources: 1910, 1930 & 1965 Fire Insurance Maps (North Vancouver); 1911 Canadian Census; City Directories.



Young Gordon Cowley and his sister Eileen each had a tent in the yard. They slept outside in summer. NVMA 16053.



With their school (Queen Mary) across the street, the Cowley children came home at noon. They’d eat lunch on the bridge with their mother and throw crumbs to the fish below. The fish (trout) “got to be pets.” NVMA 16052.



A small apartment building (748 Chesterfield) and the high-rise on the right (701 West Victoria Park), sit on the former Garden Court site. Sharon Proctor photo.

Along the tote road... by Sharon Proctor



Walter Draycott's sketch (edited by the author) of the main part of Shaketown before 1907. The tote road runs the length of it; the flume approaches at the lower right. NVMA, Walter Draycott fonds No. 26.

In the late 1890s and early 1900s Lynn Valley's main route to Moodyville was a bumpy, greasy tote road "paved" with logs laid crosswise. It was originally used to haul raw logs to the mill below. Then, in 1903

Hastings Shingle & Manufacturing Company built a mill by today's Mill Road, and sent processed wood via the tote road. Soon the latter was much more than a freight route. Loggers and mill-workers built houses ("shacks") alongside it and moved into them – many with their families. By

1907, the settlement had gained a cookhouse, a bunkhouse for teamsters, a shingle-bolt camp, horse stables, a horse hospital, a tool shed, blacksmith shop and a little one-room school.



There was even a community hall for religious services, meetings and special events. This was "Shaketown," precursor to our present-day Lynn Valley community. The tote road was Shaketown's "main street."



Most buildings were made of cedar boards, with cedar shakes on the outside walls and

roofs. One exception was the community hall. It had the usual shake roof, but its walls were logs. As for domestic water, residents got it either from a couple of nearby streams or from a wooden flume that passed close by.

The flume was a wooden channel filled with flowing water -- from both Upper Lynn and Rice Lake. It carried shingle bolts from the mill down to Moodyville. Households beside the flume had permission to install a little "mini-flume," leading from the main one to a barrel by their house. They could draw flume-water at night.

For groceries and other essentials, and to cash paycheques from the mill, people had to walk or "ride" the tote road to Moodyville, then catch a ferry to Vancouver -- an all-day round-trip.

But Shaketown didn't last long. By 1908 streets were being laid out around Lynn Valley, and new settlers were arriving in great numbers. The final blow was the completion of Lynn Valley Road in 1910, followed by construction of Mountain Highway. The tote road became obsolete, and Shaketown was gradually abandoned. Most of the buildings were either destroyed by fire or torn down.

Sources: (1) North Vancouver Archives, Walter Draycott fonds No. 26 – his maps, drawings and notes based on interviews with former Shaketown residents, plus a personal memoir he received from one-time resident Thomas Hustwait; (2) "Early Days in Lynn Valley," book by Walter MacKay Draycott (2000 edition).

Left top: Shaketown's community hall, with the tote road in front. Walter Draycott drawing. NVMA, Walter Draycott fonds No. 26.

Left bottom: Shaketown's school around 1905 (aka the "First Lynn Valley School"). It sat by the tote road, where the latter ran between Institute Road and Church Street. Behind it was the stream that still flows here. NVMA 6648.

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The Shipyard and Mountaineering Pals

Coveralls are back in style this summer! Dressed in authentic and sometimes humorous wartime outfits, Shipyard Sal and Sam will entertain you this summer with a fast-paced interactive hour of music, song, stories and poetry about our important but little-known World War II Shipyard history. With patriotic music hall songs and rivet toss re-enactments, aided by lightning-fast costume and character changes, Sal and Sam will guide visitors through the war years "on the docks" with humour and a poignancy that will be especially memorable.

Join the NVMA's Shipyard Pals for entertaining fare at The Shipyards (foot of Lonsdale) during July and August. Also look for the Mountaineering Pals at Lynn Canyon Park on rain-free Sunday afternoons. For more information: nvmaprograms@dnv.org or 604.990.3700 ext 8008. See nvma.ca for the most up-to-date information.



Connections

Janet Turner, Archivist



One hundred years ago, on June 28th 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria fell to an assassin's bullet, and events led inexorably to the so-called "Great War", declared by England on August 4th. The days were noted in terse diary entries by Lynn Valley pioneer Walter Draycott. By year's end, that diary accompanied him to the trenches near Ypres, Belgium. Year by year throughout the War, Draycott maintained his diaries, leaving a unique personal record of the experiences of an enlisted man at the front lines.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of WWI, NVMA will launch a website (GreatWarChronicle.ca), where each of Walter Draycott's diary entries will be

posted exactly one hundred years to the day after it was written. For the past few months, a team of volunteers has been transcribing the diaries' sometimes difficult-to-decipher hand-writing. The most significant entries will be voiced by local actor Gordon Roberts, veteran of the musical "Billy Bishop Goes to War". Photographs and battle-field drawings by Draycott will add depth and detail to the website, so that followers of the blog can better imagine the locations and conditions he encountered. Join us in July, as we begin our World War I journey with Walter, from Lynn Valley to the trenches of Belgium.