
NOYES, Violet

By Phil Rounds

Violet Noyes as Interviewed by Phil Rounds - January, 1987.

J.M. Robinson's excitement about the prospects of great futures in the Okanagan Valley seemed to draw people from many different areas and walks of life. Phil interviewed Violet Noyes in her room at the Retirement Centre and these are her memories.

Violet's parents, Wes and Violet Mitchell were farmers from Ontario and then they moved to Delorais, Manitoba, where her father was the representative for Massey Harris. Wes' health was failing and the doctors advised him to move west. At the time, J.M.'s sister lived next door to the Noyes and they were good friends. On a visit to his sister, J.M. convinced the Noyes that the climate of Naramata would be the place for them and so they made the move in 1907. Violet's father bought the first orchard in 1907 and planted it in 1909. The Happyland Boys were the unofficial welcoming committee and Mrs. Noyes remembers them with fondness. There were five young men - most of them coming from Lancashire County in England. They worked for J.M. making roads and clearing orchard land. Will Nuttal, Harry Hill, Tom Kenyon, Jimmy Crawshaw and Walter Land moved into the town, lived in a tent and were known to have a stew brewing on their stove for weeks at a time. These young men took up a very important place in the making of the town. It was they who met each new land owner and his family, got them settled, and began the task of clearing the land.

Will (Billie) Nuttal married Freda Mitchell. They then moved to the Schrech Ranch and ran it as well as their own orchard in the south of Naramata. Tom Kenyon married and owned the now Charlie Stein orchard. Harry Hill was killed while clearing the cemetery lot and Walter Land drowned.

Phil asked Violet about the Unity Club. It was started by Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Wellband, Mrs. Gillespie and Mrs. Manchester to help people who were in need. Mrs. Noyes mentions Joe Cracknell who died of T.B. at the age of 27 and Duncan Cameron who died at the age of 43 with a young son to be looked after. This was done by the Unity Club women. Both of these men are buried in the Naramata cemetery. Talk about a "Helping Hands" community!!!! The mystery of the "Little Red Schoolhouse", has been solved. The one room school was in the spot where George Raitt's home is today [location]. There were very few children but enough to hire a teacher. From there, the new school, which became the Community Hall, was built in 1909 - one room with eight grades. Mr. Rayner, (Cyril's dad) taught the high school grades, and then finally the present school was constructed in 1914 with just two rooms. The LITTLE room held grades one to three and the BIG room had grades four to six.

In 1919 Violet (Mitchell) married Allie Noyes. They had two children, John and Kathleen. The Noyes family ran a dairy with 8 to 10 cows - hand milked and they delivered to all of Naramata. Mrs. Noyes lived in Naramata almost all of her 92 years. She died in 1988 and Allie in 1963. Their daughter, Kay, died in the late 1990s. Kay's daughter, Georgeen and husband live in the original Noyes house on Ellis (Richie at 2 St). Mrs. Noyes was interviewed by Phil Rounds in 1987 and died a year later. What an incredible memory she had. She certainly played a big part in Naramata's history.

