

MUSEUM MUSINGS JANUARY 2010

As we near the end of the first decade of this millennium I thought it would be interesting to look back one hundred years to see what was happening on Texada in the year 1910. The most significant event was the first of the three major fires that destroyed the business section of “downtown” Van Anda. These fires took place in 1910, 1912 and 1917. Our photo today depicts the smoking remains after the second fire in 1912. Look for the first Model-T truck on the island.

John Kelly wrote of the 1910 fire in the Texada Lines Winter 1991 as follows, “First came the fire of 1910 which ripped through two stores operated by Al Deighton and Kirkness Brothers as well as five other buildings. This was the centre of town at the time, and only the hard work of the bucket brigade saved the Texada Hotel. It was very dry at the time and a strong westerly breeze fanned the flames beyond the efforts of the townspeople. The destruction was total but such was the optimism and spirit of the people that rebuilding started almost immediately. However, Texada Hotel, so gallantly saved, was to burn later that year. It was rebuilt and named the Windsor. Deighton’s store emerged as a larger building with a community hall overhead, and Kirkness Brothers rebuilt somewhat larger too, with a number of transient rooms for rent on top.”

Fire was always a major problem in those early days and Van Anda was not alone in suffering from fire. Vancouver was virtually destroyed in 1886 followed by New Westminster in 1898 and Victoria in 1910. We are fortunate to live in an age where we do not depend solely on wood burning for heat and our firefighting capability is much improved. We do burn some wood however so keep your equipment in good working order and keep your chimneys clean!

The Texada Heritage Society wish all of you the very happiest of new years. Until next time look after each other and remember to think and act green.

Norm MacLean

