

OLIVE'S VAN ANDA DIARY - 1897

Harry and Olive Treat's first trip together to Texada in 1897 must have been filled with excitement and anticipation for the newly-weds as they arrived on strange island shores.

Excerpts from Olive's Van Anda diary (now held in Virginia Tech's Special Collection) were recently shared thanks to former Texada resident Budd Arnold who visited the museum this summer.

Wealthy east coast socialite Olive Graef was 27 years old in 1896 when she married handsome Harry Treat, a smooth-talking Chicago lawyer. Embarking on their honeymoon by train, their Texada connection was forged during a chance encounter with Ed Blewett who persuaded them to invest in his Van Anda Copper and Gold mineral properties.

Harry had chosen the right woman for his bride. Although Olive was featured in Vogue magazine's 1894 *Fair Women from Vogue* portraits of "some of the attractive women who adorn the social life of our foremost cities," she proved to be a sturdy and adventurous companion.

Olive wasted no time getting to know Texada. She states that she went deer hunting and helped Ed Blewett stake claims. Her diary entries tell of hiking to the mines and descending via rope bucket and ladders. Harry writes: "No other woman would have had the courage. The miners all think the world of her."



She visited Mr Chung, the Chinese "overseer," finding him "respectful and hospitable." Olive states they talked for an hour and shared "two bottles of Pommery" and "Chinese nuts."

Another entry tells how the newly-weds watched the felling of the "great trees" near the wharf at the site they had chosen for their "Honeymoon Cottage."

That log cabin seemed aptly named. Their diary entries express a great affection for each other. Harry writes: "I know her. I worship her. I love her." Olive adds: "Kim (Harry) is awful sweet to me."

Olive's last Texada entry tells of leaving on April 22 for Vancouver aboard the Union Steamship *Comox*. Though the couple eventually relocated to their Seattle mansion, Olive retained a fondness for life on Texada and returned in summers to visit friends. "I like the life in my log cabin...one must have a breathing spell," she wrote later.

Personal diaries such as this one help us put a human face on the past.