

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST (#2) ?

Is it in danger of happening again? Barely 3 years after the demolition of Van Anda's premier heritage "Astor" house another 100-year old historical home is threatened.

The Burditt house is the elegant 2-story farmhouse with the wrap-around porch located below the tight highway bend just before the Oasis.

Haddon Burditt with his Irish bride, Mary, moved into a rough cabin (still standing on the property) some time after 1915. They paid \$1638 for the cabin and the 160 acres of farmland.

As well as selling their produce (vegetables and meat) Haddon worked wherever he could to get by - mining, road work, delivering mail.

Haddon was able to gain salvage rights to the infamous Pocahontas whiskey still after it was raided in 1928. In fact, parts of the structure were used to build the currently endangered house.

Over the years the Burditt house became a centre of local community activities. The family also offered lodging to teachers employed at the nearby Marshall school.

In 1954, 16 acres with house and meadow were transferred to their daughter (also Mary) and the remainder was sold to BC Cement in 1957. After a series of renters the house was rescued in 1981 by the late Mary's husband, Reg Kelly who, with Heritage support, refurbished the interior, replaced the roof and renovated the porch and moved in.

The unique history of the home attracted its latest occupants - longtime Texada residents (the late) Pete and Monica Stiles who appreciated its heritage value and stayed 25 years!

Yes, I'm sure from a certain point of view there are many reasons to demolish the place. But what about the loss of our island history? The ugly bare mound of rubble left behind in Van Anda is a sad remembrance of the stately 1899 Astor house that once stood there.

If demolished, how soon will it be until we miss the familiar vista of the Burditt house and orchard as we hug the highway corner and rush onwards to chase after our modern lifestyle?



Peter Lock

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