

Community Assn. Early Days

Beginning on February 3, 1923, in the Ocean Park cottage of Mrs. Woods, a small group of persistent, public-spirited people determined that Ocean Park needed a community organization.

From its origins in 1923, the Society met at the homes of various members and there were refreshments offered after the meeting had been adjourned. One meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. and the party went on until midnight! These meetings must have served the dual purpose of achieving results for the community, and providing opportunities for socializing with friends and neighbours.

By November 5, 1925, the Declaration for the 'Ocean Park Society' was signed by:

Robert Hughes, minister	President
Thomas Broatch, farmer	1st Vice-President
Dougal McArthur, carpenter	2nd Vice-President
George Giblin, railroad worker	Secretary
Ambrose Cope, carpenter	Treasurer
(E. L. Hughes, married woman)	witness)

and it read:

"The object of the Society is:

- to create a community spirit by fostering an intelligent interest in all community affairs;
- to co-operate with similar organizations in matters pertaining to the general welfare;
- the raising of funds for building a Community Hall, establishing a community centre, and promote a social, educational and recreational interest in the neighborhood.

The operations of the Society are to be carried on in the district surrounding Ocean Park, in the Lower Delta, Province of British Columbia.

Dated at Ocean Park, in the Province of British Columbia, this 5th day of November, 1925."

The first meeting of the Ocean Park Community Association in the Hall was held on March 10, 1926.

In January, 1927, there was a discussion about "whether it would be better to hold the ratepayers' meeting on the same evening as the Community Hall meeting, thus avoiding so many meetings involving the same people." "Mr. Henry moved the Resolution that the two societies meet on the same evening each retaining its own identity, with their own officers, procedure [sic] of business taken alternately by each society. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Broatch and carried." In March of that year, the OPCA portion of the meeting *started* at 10:00 p.m.

Even in those days, not all OPCA meetings were held in the Hall. The group still met at residents' homes on occasion.

What was important was the fact that public-spirited individuals of Ocean Park continued to act on behalf of all its residents.

Source: OPCA Minutes

— Research by Anne Helps

Dougal McArthur 1862-1929

In the course of my research into the early Minutes of the OPCA, I became very interested in Dougal McArthur because of his extensive involvement with the Association. He was a Trustee in 1924, a founder signatory on the Constitution as 2nd Vice-President in 1925, 1st Vice President in 1926 and 1927, and an active participant in OPCA meetings from Oct. 29, 1924 to Nov. 9, 1927. In addition, he was appointed building supervisor for the construction of the Hall in 1925-1926. During that time, he loaned the OPCA \$40 for 12 months interest-free. He supervised 'the making of the seats'. With assistants, he laid the floor and was authorized to purchase the necessary oil, turpentine and wax. He and Mr. Cope, another active OPCA member, offered to build permanent steps for the Hall. And in 1927 he was asked to get estimates for the first major work the OPCA proposed after the completion of the Hall – an addition for a kitchen, stage area and dressing rooms at the rear of the existing structure. The next time after Nov., 1927 that his name appears in the OPCA Minutes is during the meeting of March 1, 1928 when a motion was passed "that we write Mr. McArthur a letter of good cheer."

That led me to conclude that Mr. McArthur was not well.

Then there's note of his attending the Jan. 14, 1929 annual meeting at the Hall at which time he, and a group of other OPCA members, were recognized for their contributions to the Hall expansion. He was also re-elected as a member of the Executive. But there is no further mention of him through the remainder of that year.

Curious, I did research at the Vancouver Public Library and discovered that Dugal [sic] McArthur died on Feb. 16, 1929 at his residence on McArthur Street [now 128A]. He was 66 years old, of Scotch parents, born in Fingal county, Ontario. He had lived in Ocean Park for 12 years, and was single. His occupation was listed as 'carpenter'. Last but not least, he was buried on Feb. 23, 1929 in the Ocean View Cemetery which I discovered is in Burnaby.

A further note of mystery is that, according to the daughter of Rev. Robert Hughes, the post master at the time Ocean Park obtained its own Post Office building, a 'D. McArthur' was the post master in 1919 and 1920. In that I've never come across another such similar version of Mr. McArthur's name in the community and we know from his death certificate that he had lived in Ocean Park since 1918, there is a strong probability that this is Dougal McArthur, as well.

Now I know or can surmise considerably more about Mr. McArthur and I am even more fascinated by his sense of community spirit. A single man, doing hard physical labour, still found time to make Ocean Park a better place to live. His support and encouragement during these critical early years made a difference in a way that tangibly exists today.

I hope he takes my research as a compliment and an acknowledgement of his very real contribution to the community.

— Anne Helps Sources: OPCA Minutes, Wrigley's Directories, Mr. McArthur's death certificate, 'The Ocean Park Story', anecdotal evidence.



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