

THE BURDITT HOMESTEAD

The two-storey Burditt house is a recognizable landmark on the Van Anda - Gillies Bay road. The elegant wrap-around covered porch and picturesque orchard draw one's attention from the original one-room cabin just behind.

Built in 1915 by previous owners, the rough shack served as home for Haddon and Mary Burditt for 12 years while they farmed the 160 acres (purchased for \$1638). Haddon was a former British navy sailor who married the young Irish farm girl, Mary, in Vancouver in 1913.

The couple and their daughter, also Mary, struggled to get by. Haddon worked at the mines, laboured at roadwork and delivered mail via his rural service (from 1931 to 1941 - Van Anda to the Bell farm). He also offered door-to-door meat delivery using an ax to hack off choice cuts from the back of his truck. In addition, a few former Klondike prospectors were allowed to build cabins on the homestead. Room and board were offered to teachers at the nearby Marshall school which their daughter attended. Selling farm produce later helped young Mary pay her Vancouver Normal School tuition in 1935.



When the infamous Pocahontas whiskey still was raided in 1928 Haddon Burditt gained salvage rights and spent two weeks at the site. He used the lumber to build the two-storey house we see today. The huge liquor tank was re-purposed as a water reservoir.

In fact, there are reports that Haddon himself was engaged in the "distillery business" with incriminating evidence dumped (after a tipoff) into nearby Myrtle Lake before police arrived to investigate.

In 1954 16 acres (including house and meadow) were transferred to daughter Mary and the remainder was sold to BC Cement in 1957 for \$1440.

Mary later married Reg Kelly. Many years after her death in 1966, Reg remarried and moved into the home with his second wife, Selma, in 1981. The house interior was modernized, the porch rebuilt and a new roof applied. The original framing remains.

Today, as one turns the tight corner of the highway, the picturesque rural scene reveals yet another interesting story in Texada's rich history.