

Fred Carter  
by Karen Till & Elaine Rickards  
English Immigrant  
Tunisian  
May 27, 1912



FRED CARTER

Fred Carter was born July 23, 1900 in Manchester, England and emigrated to Canada arriving in Quebec City May 27, 1912 on the Tunisian. He died in Vancouver, BC, December 15, 1985.



Fred often spoke to his family of his trip from Manchester to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where he was reunited with his father. He was sent alone, at the age of 11, as he was the oldest child and as one of his brothers became ill his mother and the remaining family had to delay their passage. He spoke of “feeling like a big shot” traveling alone although he later appreciated how hard it must have been for his mother to let him go on his own. Before the ship reached Canada there was a smallpox outbreak on the ship. This led to a three week (May 11-June 1) quarantine off the coast at Gros Isle, near Quebec. As a result, the pastries his mother had packed in a tin box for his train journey were confiscated. When he left the ship he remembers a Salvation Army man taking him to the train and buying him food for the four or five day train trip West.

As his father was farming south of Moose Jaw, Fred was to find Mr. Cooper in Moose Jaw who knew his father. After walking the wrong direction first he reversed himself and eventually arrived at the correct address. From there another man who had borrowed a horse from his father took him by horseback to his father’s place. Fred commented that there were many coincidences that fell into place which allowed him to get across the country successfully.

Life was rough in Saskatchewan as Fred looked after the animals, cooked, loaded hay, and walked four miles for groceries as needed. He remembered being attacked by mosquitoes and flying ants while working out in the fields. His father filed for land at the second station out of

Moose Jaw (Buttress) but it was so poor that his father took a job seeding land 12 miles away and only came home on weekends. The barn they built housed them and their animals together.

In 1915 his father signed up for the war and left Fred in charge of the farm over the winter. It was a very bad winter and Fred walked to town bringing green poplar home for fuel. During that time he had some correspondence with his mother but until his father received wages in the fall, the family could not come to Canada. From 1915-1917 Fred worked on various ranches and was a delivery boy in town, being cared for by various people in Shaunavon and Swift Current. These people remained very important in Fred's memory throughout his life.

In 1917, Fred lied about his age and signed up for the Army. He often said that he felt the propaganda glorified war as an opportunity for going to a foreign country. He was sent to France and in one early attack he was captured and held prisoner by the Germans. He was seriously injured at that time and, after the Armistice, he was taken by hospital train to Boulogne. There was a time when he was rejected for travel to England because the medics did not think he would survive. Eventually, though, he was moved to a London Hospital for three months. From there he was finally sent to a Canadian hospital in Orpington, then shipped back through Portland, Maine and finally back to Winnipeg.



After many hospital stays, in 1922 Fred had his leg amputated just below the knee as a result of his war wounds. At the same time he had back operations which further limited his activities. He was determined though and people who knew him on the Prairies during this time spoke of him as a cowboy. He enjoyed horseback riding and would race with his artificial leg sticking straight out.

Fred worked the farms in southern Saskatchewan. He tinkered with electronics and enjoyed the new radio communications. He also had one

of the first model T cars in the area. In the late 1930's he moved to Vancouver to follow Florence Leupold, a school teacher from Bracken, Saskatchewan. They were married in Vancouver December 30, 1938 and briefly lived in Olalla in the Okanagan valley where Florence taught.

They moved back to Vancouver and Fred worked as an elevator operator in the Federal Building in Vancouver until he retired in 1967. This was a job provided to war amputees by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Fred's physical activities were limited because of his war injuries but he always had a car and family holidays were important to him.

Fred and Florence had three children, Karen, Richard (Dick), and Elaine, all of whom now live in the Vancouver area.

In 1969, his ill health was diagnosed to be caused by an infection at the site of his World War I leg amputation. The doctors at Shaughnessy Hospital, in Vancouver, were amazed that such an infection could break out over 50 years later. So was Fred!

While working, and after his retirement, Fred was active with the War Amps of Canada. He received a Meritorious Service Award for his work with them and in assisting amputees from both World Wars.



Fred lived in the same house in Vancouver from 1944 until a few months before he died in 1985. He had seen Florence through a rough few years with cancer until she died in 1981. All his life he was a voracious reader and enjoyed gardening, especially flowers, to the fullest. He remained inquisitive and mentally alert throughout.

He was positive about his life and remained so pleased that he had come to Canada in 1912 and had the opportunities that came his way.