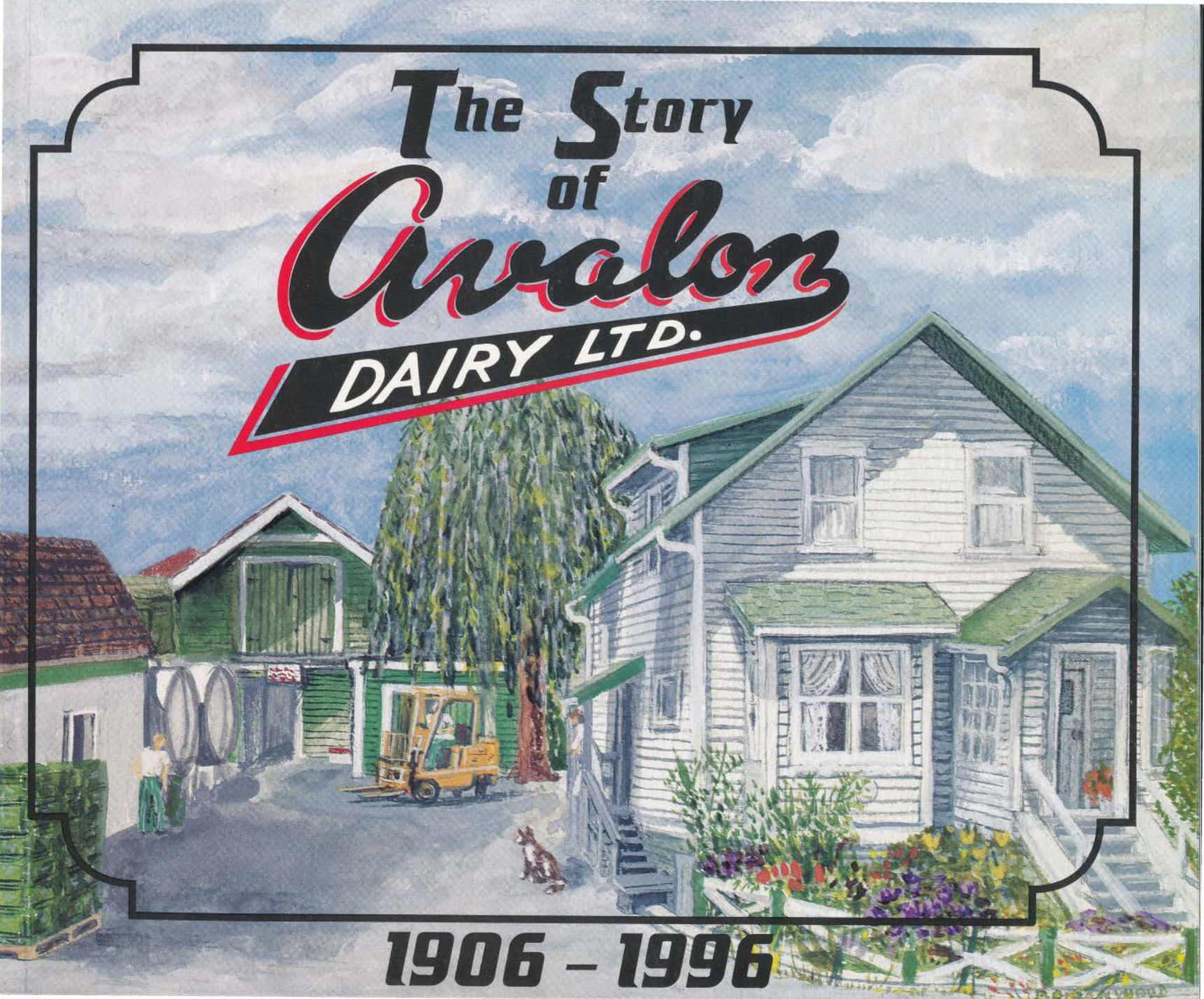
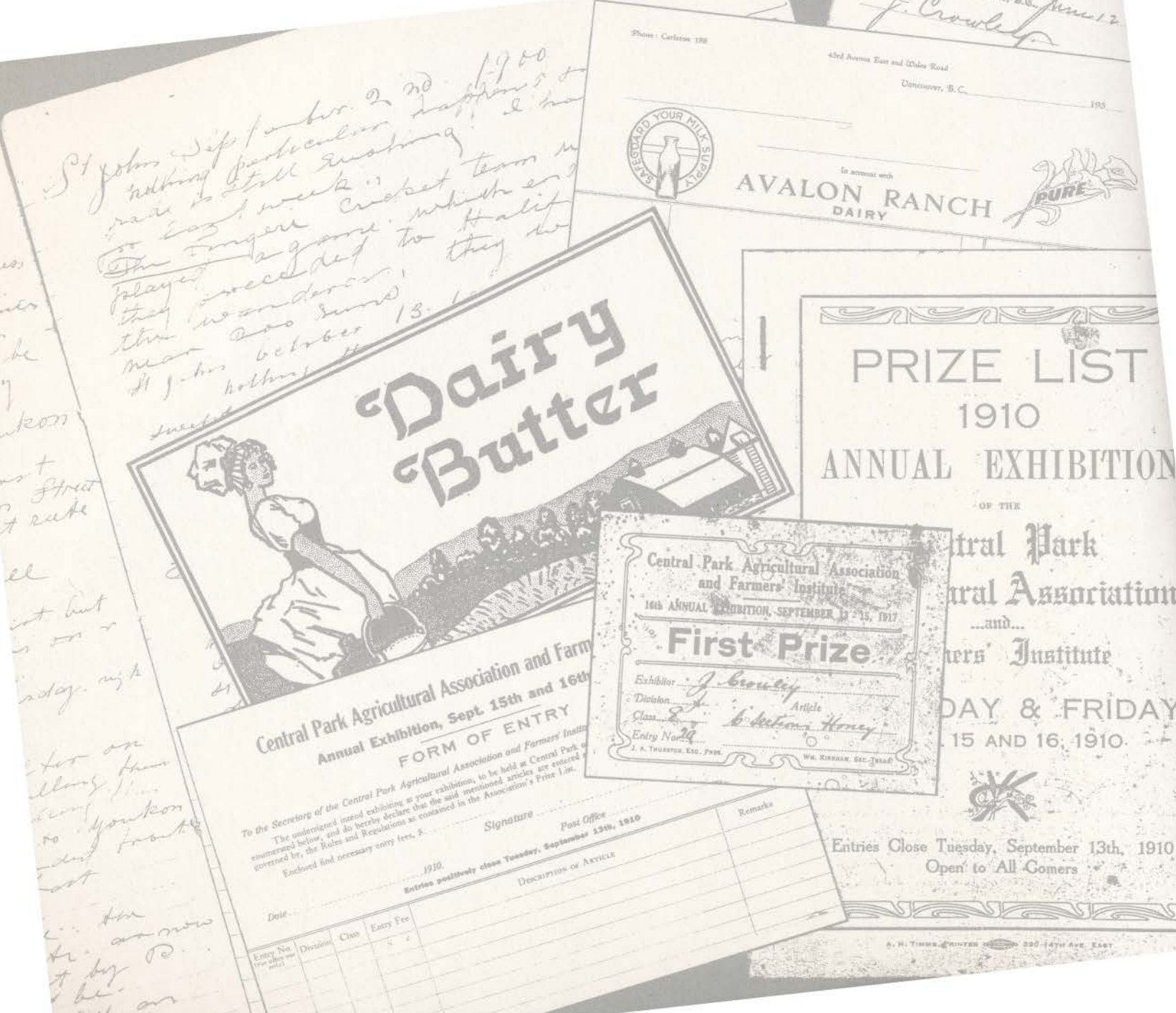

The Story of
Avalon
DAIRY LTD.
1906 – 1996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193
SAFEGUARD YOUR MILK SUPPLY
In account with
AVALON RANCH
DAIRY
PURE
Dairy Butter
PRIZE LIST
1910
ANNUAL EXHIBITION
OF THE
Central Park
Agricultural Association
...and...
Farmers' Institute
DAY & FRIDAY
15 AND 16, 1910
Entries Close Tuesday, September 13th, 1910
Open to All Comers
Central Park Agricultural Association and Farmers' Institute
16th ANNUAL EXHIBITION, SEPTEMBER 13 - 15, 1917
First Prize
Exhibitor J. Crowley
Division
Class 2
Article 6 Sections Honey
Entry No. 29
J. A. THURSTON, ESQ., PRES.
WM. KIRKHAM, SEC.-TREAS.
Central Park Agricultural Association and Farm
Annual Exhibition, Sept. 15th and 16th
FORM OF ENTRY
To the Secretary of the Central Park Agricultural Association and Farmers' Institu
The undersigned intend exhibiting at your exhibition, to be held at Central Park
enumerated below, and do hereby declare that the said mentioned articles are entered
governed by, the Rules and Regulations as contained in the Association's Prize List.
Enclosed find necessary entry fees, $
Signature
Post Office
Date
1910.
Entries positively close Tuesday, September 13th, 1910
Entry No.
Division
Class
Entry Fee
Description of Article
Remarks

The Story of Avalon Dairy Ltd., 1906 — 1996

Including a brief history
of the dairy industry in B.C.
by Everett Crowley

Jean M. Crowley

for auld lang syne
to Percy and Neil
best wishes
Jean
Crowley

The Story of Avalon Dairy Ltd., 1906 — 1996

The author wishes to expressly thank Agrifoods International Cooperative Ltd. for granting permission for Everett Crowley's articles in 'Butter-fat Magazine' to be reprinted here. The author also wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who participated in this endeavour.

Editor: *Merrilyn (Crowley) Farquhar*
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Design: *Kim Boutilier*

Printed and bound in Canada
by *Nik Cuff,* January, 1996.

To the many loyal customers of Avalon Dairy,
some of whom have been coming to Avalon for
their milk for over fifty years.

Contents

Preface

As President of the B.C. Dairy Council, Everett Crowley accepted a motion in 1977 that he write a history of the B.C. Dairy industry. Ev was keenly interested in the proposal and visited the Vancouver and Provincial Archives, museums, and libraries for the early papers.

It became a joint enterprise and Ev and I travelled the province from Vancouver Island to Prince Rupert and the Okanagan for interviews with retired farmers and dairy workers in order to record their memories of the early "creamery" era. Ev understood the pioneer's love of independence and recognized that their hardships were much like the early days at Avalon. These stories, gathered first-hand from such determined pioneers, were originally published in the Butter-Fat magazine in 1982 and 1983 and are reprinted here courtesy of Agrifoods International Co-operative Ltd. Ev thoroughly enjoyed seeing his efforts in print.

In 1984, I promised Ev I would follow his plan to complete his book but, in time, I realized that Ev's original goal of covering the complete history of the B.C. dairy industry might be too ambitious and was not the only story I had to tell. Ev had written his own biography and that, with records from our business and family, provided the basis for the "Avalon Story" from 1906 to 1996.

With diligent researching of the early industry, and the uncovering of boxes of musty Avalon papers, the story took shape. There were many highs and lows of fortune throughout the ninety years from buying a brand new Ford in 1916, to losing most of the milking herd to T.B. in 1919.

Some of the Crowley family anecdotes were included by Everett in the "Vancouver Book" by Chuck Davis in 1976. Part of Ev's photographic collection is displayed in the "Collingwood Pioneers Book" by Barbara Nielson, 1991.

That Avalon survived and eventually even prospered is a testament to the words of Jeremiah Crowley as recorded, in his diary

Fate backed by luck and staying power is sometimes rewarded.

It has been my good fortune to acquire the talent of Phyllis Greenwood who prepared the art work and the cover. I am very grateful to my daughter Merrilyn (Crowley) Farquhar for helping me in the preparation of the final manuscript. I hope this book will be accepted as the record of a family business that survived to be included in the "Vancouver Heritage Collection" of 1986 and continues on to this day.

January, 1996

JEAN MARGUERITE CROWLEY

Part I

Looking back:

A brief history of the Dairy Industry in B.C.

The Beginning of a Dairy Industry in B.C.

By
EVERETT
CROWLEY

Reprinted from ***Butterfat Magazine,*** *January - February, 1982, vol. 59, no.7, pp.9-11*

In 1778, when Captain James Cook was exploring the Pacific Northwest, he landed at Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island to repair his ships. There is a record that he had cows with him that he had purchased in California. We presume that when he left Nootka, he left the cows behind.

The next mention of cattle in B.C. is in the "History of the Northern Interior of B.C." by Father Maurice, a pioneer Catholic priest, wherein he tells of cattle being brought over the Rockies in 1837 by the Hudson's Bay Company to their trading posts at Fort St. James and Fraser Lake.

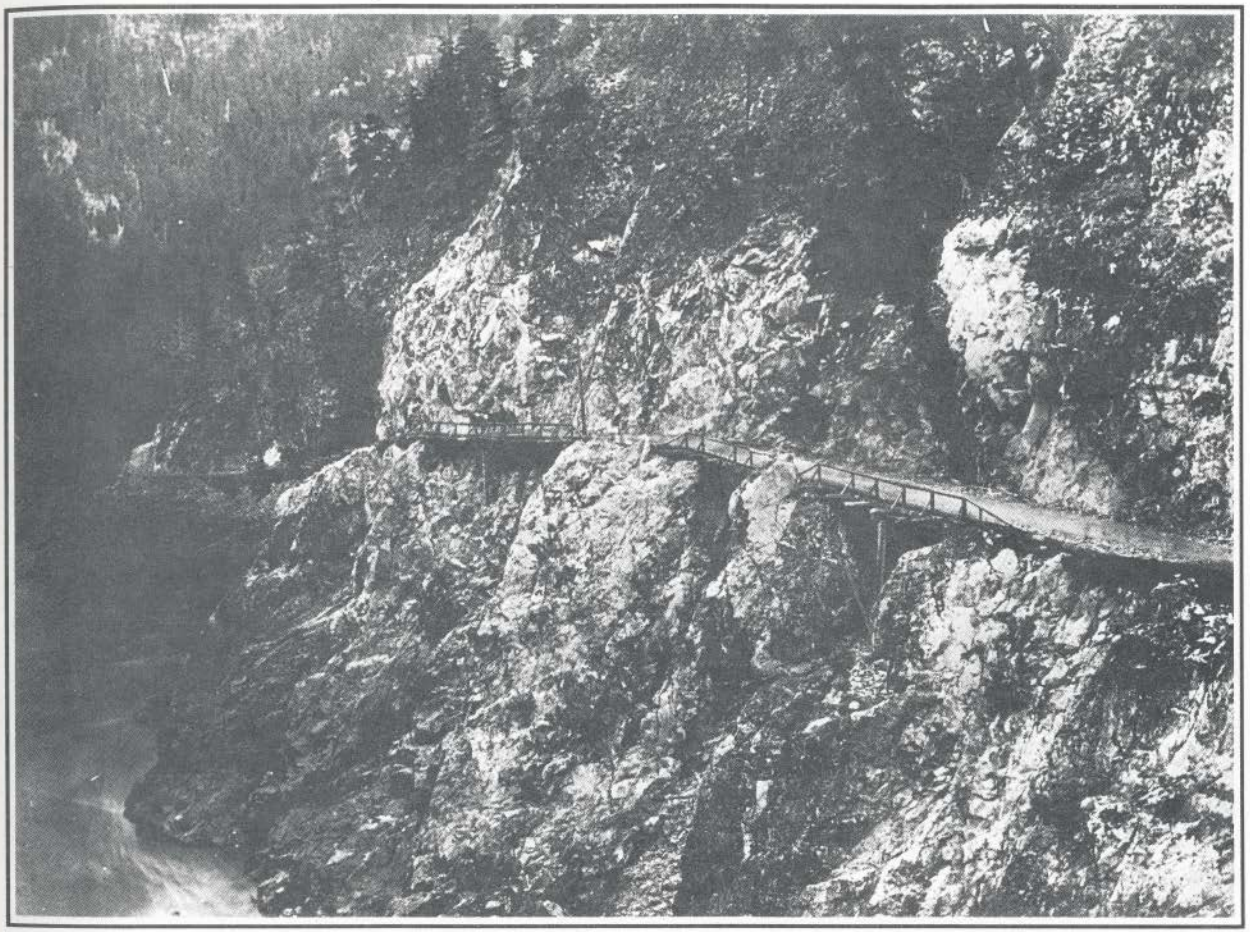
Then, in 1843, Sir James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company brought a herd of cattle to Fort Camosun, a settlement later known as Victoria. At that time, Dr. John McLaughlin was Chief Factor for the HBC with headquarters at Fort Vancouver (now Vancouver, Washington, USA). The dispute between England and the USA over the international boundary was getting hotter with a possible outbreak of military hostilities.

Dr. McLaughlin had a premonition that the boundary would ultimately be settled in favour of the USA and, not wishing to be in American territory, he dispatched James Douglas to establish headquarters on Vancouver Island. (In 1846, the Oregon Treaty established the 49th parallel as the International Boundary.)

By 1846, Mr. Roderick Findlayson operated two farms of 70 cows each for the HBC at Fort Victoria. He is credited with being the first dairyman in B.C.

At that time, Alaska was owned by Russia and the Russians were trading down the coast as far as California. There are records of Mr. Findlayson doing business with the Russians. In 1858, he became Chief Factor of the HBC and, when the Colony was purchased back from the HBC, an "assembly" for the Colony of British Columbia was established. Mr. Findlayson became one of the seven members appointed. Victoria was chartered as a city in 1862. Mr. Findlayson was mayor of Victoria in 1878.

Meanwhile, on the mainland, gold had been discovered on the Fraser River and by 1858 there was a tremendous influx of miners from California and even from Australia.



In the 1860's, thousands of pounds of butter moved from the Fraser Valley to the Gold Fields over canyon trails.

The demand for dairy products increased proportionately and while butter was supplied mainly from California, there are records showing a sale of some 2500 pounds of butter in 1868 to the "Cariboo Gold Diggings" by the Chadsey Bros. of Chilliwack. There was another sale of 6000 pounds to a dealer in Barkerville who resold it for one dollar a pound.[1]

In 1884–85, the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed through British Columbia. This opened up large tracts of land for settlement and mining development. Between 1880 and 1890, the population doubled. Mining had replaced fur trading and lumbering was about to come into its own.

Because more people were going into agriculture, the government passed, in 1895, the "B.C. Dairy Association Act", mainly to assist in the formation of co-operatives. The following year it passed the "Creameries Act" and creameries began to spring up.

The first creamery was established in 1895 in Ladner, by Mr. A.C. Wells – known as the "Delta Creamery". The same year Evans Bros. opened a cheese factory near Chilliwack and in 1897, the Wells operation amalgamated with the Delta Creamery to form the Edenbank Creamery at Sardis. Edenbank in turn became a part of the FVMPA in 1919.

By 1901, there were nine creameries operating in B.C. One was on Saltspring Island, another at Salmon Arm and one at Mission City called "The Western Condensed Milk Canning Coffee and Creamery Company Limited". It operated a steam boat on the Fraser River picking up as much as five tons of milk and cream a day. They made up to 2500 pounds of butter a month, paying farmers $1.20 per can (100 lbs.) in the summer and $1.30 per 100 pounds in the winter.

By 1910, there were 23 creameries, one cheese plant and a number of dairies throughout the province.

1 Veronica McCormick, *A Hundred Years in the Dairy Industry: A History of the Diary Industry in Canada and the Events that Influenced It.* 1867–1967 (Ottawa: Dairy Farmers of Canada, 1968)

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES.

ROAD:
OUT P.202 N.64

LADNER:
OUT P.323 N.726

SEYMOUR CREEK:
OUT P.358 N.114

By 1902, Ladner was an established dairy farming area. The first creamery to be established there was Delta Creamery in 1895.

Early farms were carved out of the bush, such as Seymour Creek Ranch, established in 1865 by Hugh Burr in Burrard Inlet.

Chilcotin Butter Sold in Vancouver Shops

By
EVERETT
CROWLEY

Reprinted from ***Butter-Fat Magazine,*** *March - April, 1982, vol.60, no.2, pp. 18-20*

In his book "An Emigrant In The Canadian North West", H.E. Church tells of his butter-making experiences at Big Creek in the Chilcotin. [2] Big Creek is 40 miles north west of the Gang Ranch and 20 miles south of Hanceville on the Chilcotin River.

Church came into this country before the turn of the century in search of ranch land – he had emigrated from England a few years before.

While working on a ranch near Calgary, he met and married Gertrude Nixon. The couple moved to Comox, B.C. with plans to raise a family and establish a small dairy farm. But, Church found he preferred ranching and a drier climate so he left for Big Creek, preempted 320 acres there and built a log house and barns. Then, in the spring of 1903 he sent for his family which was now two boys and four girls. The oldest child, Elsie, was seven. Another daughter was born at Big Creek.

In those days, the C.P.R. station at Ashcroft was the stopping off place for those heading North to the Cariboo, or West to the Chilcotin. From there to Big Creek it ordinarily took 14 to 17 days by wagon, depending on the weather. The trail to the Chilcotin crossed the Fraser River at the Gang Ranch, with the help of a friction ferry. This was the road into the Chilcotin before the bridge was built at Sheep Creek.

Once settled in their new home, Church realized the need for added income so he started making butter. By 1910 "The Church Ranch" had a herd of 17 good milk cows which had been purchased on a trip to the Fraser Valley. From railhead they were walked to the ranch, crossing the Fraser on an "ice-bridge" in 35F below zero weather. Most of the butter was sold by Mrs. Norman Lee through her store at Hanceville.

The following spring, he freighted, over the same trail, a 1000lb. churn and a 500lb. gas engine. That year they made 2250 lbs. of butter which sold for $.35 per pound. Mr. Church had a Babcock tester and kept a record of production of all his cows, culling out the poor ones.

The following year –1912– they made 3000lbs. of butter and won second prize at the New Westminster Fair, and in 1913 they won first and second prize for their entry. The butter had to be made at least a month before the show as it

2 H.E Church, *An Emigrant in the Canadian Northwest* (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd.).

took over two weeks to get it to railhead, about 200 miles by packhorse and wagon, and then to New Westminster by train, another 200 miles, in unrefrigerated boxcars.

Church's eldest daughter, Elsie (now Mrs. E. Brown), a spry 86 year old who lives in Vancouver, revealed yet another phase of the butter operation. In the winter, they cut ice in a nearby lake, packed it in straw and stored it in ice sheds. The ice lasted all through the summer.

At their peak, 1914, production reached 4000lbs. which sold for $.40 a pound and in 1917 they sold 600lbs. on the Vancouver market at $.50 a pound. By then, the First World War was in full swing and the oldest boy, Dick, had enlisted in the Navy. Help was hard to find. This, combined with the P.G.E. railway reaching Clinton in 1917, thereby opening up the interior to Vancouver merchants, made butter production increasingly difficult.

Butter production at the Church Ranch dropped annually until 1924. When the railway reached Quesnel, they stopped making butter altogether.

Also in 1924, a creamery was built in Quesnel. This ushered in a new era of the dairy industry in Central B.C.– the development of agriculture and the growth of creameries and dairies in the North.

Church died on his ranch in 1933, Mrs. Church spent her later years with their daughter Madge (Mrs. Edgar Tretheway) on the Coniagas Ranch in Haney.

No Disorderly Conduct

The usually quiet town of Clinton, whose winter population numbers twelve males, was enlivened on the 22nd of February by a ball. Ladies and gentlemen from all parts – some travelling 200 miles – to attend. All the hotel beds being full, the stores of Foster and Beedy were thrown open for the accommodation of the lodgers. The ball took place in Smith's Clinton Hotel and was actually – we tell no fib – kept up for six days and nights. The whole affair passed off happily and without occurrence of a single untoward incident.

From the British Colonist, of Victoria, March 19,1871.

Clinton Hotel, Clinton, B.C. (Cariboo Road). Established 1861. Destroyed by fire, 18th May 1958, reputed to be the oldest hotel west of Winnipeg.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES
OUT.N.52A P.164A.

Railways Boost Central Interior Creameries

By
EVERETT CROWLEY

Reprinted from ***Butter-Fat Magazine,*** *May - June, 1982, vol.60, no.3, pp. 13-14*

In the January-February issue of Butter Fat, I mentioned that cows were brought into the Fort St. James and Fort Fraser areas by the Hudson's Bay Company as early as 1837.

The potential of this agricultural land was well known but the growth of the area suffered from lack of transportation. It wasn't until 1914 when the Canadian National Railway was completed into Prince Rupert that dairying began to replace beef in the Central Interior of B.C.

After the first World War (1914 – 1918), many of the veterans acquired land under the "Soldier's Civil Reestablishment Act". The patriotic slogan of the day was a "Farm for Every Hero". Despite the fact that many of these ventures failed, (old soldiers were not farmers) many did succeed and in 1920 the Nechako Creamery was built in Vanderhoof. It was a co-operative which experienced financial difficulties from the outset. It was taken over and operated by Valentine's Dairy of Prince Rupert, then by the P. Burns Co. but it was eventually closed in 1933. By that time, the government had spent about $66,000 on the dairy trying to keep it viable. In 1937, the plant was sold to H.E. Rose who moved the equipment to Prince George and began making ice cream. Rose's Ice Cream operated for many years, eventually selling in 1966 to FVMPCA.

In 1924, a cooperative creamery was built in Quesnel to accommodate the many cream shippers who were establishing along the Fraser River benchlands. Dairy farming continued to expand and in 1934, Mr. Alfred Miller built the Interior Creamery at Prince George. This creamery operated successfully for many years drawing cream from McBride to the East and Hazelton in the West.

An increasing volume of cream was being produced in the Bulkley Valley and in order to better accommodate these producers, the Interior Creamery built a plant, the Bulkley Valley Creamery, at Telkwa in 1939.

Mr. Thor Paulsen, who was the butter maker in the Prince George plant became the new manager at Telkwa. Mr. Paulsen still lives in the log house he moved into in 1939 when he came to Telkwa.

He has kept over the years an invaluable source of information on interior dairy news, the monthly issues of "The Interior Dairy Guide" published by the Interior Creamery at Prince George. This bulletin was sent for free to every cream shipper along with his monthly cream cheque. At one period there were 235 shippers – most of whom the creamery operators never saw.

Practically all the cream came to Telkwa by train from Burns Lake in the East and Hazelton to the West. The Grassy Plains area between Francois and Ootsa Lakes had been settled by a Mennonite Colony from Saskatchewan and these people invariably sent the highest quality sweet cream to the plant.

Transportation was the greatest challenge to the settlers. Mr. Paulsen tells of one shipper whose place was on the opposite side of the river to the railway station. At times he had to row his cream across the river then pack it half a mile on his back to the station.

The cream cheque in many instances was the grocery bill for many settlers. The "Bulletin" was continually admonishing farmers – "don't keep cows – let cows keep you – a family can live on the cream from eight cows at $.28 per lb. butter fat".

In 1941, Interior Creameries built another plant at Williams Lake which Mr. Paulsen also operated. This plant only ran for a few years, closing its doors again in 1945.

Old timers in the dairy and creamery business spent long arduous hours in order to survive. The strain of overwork often ended in physical breakdown. This was Thor Paulsen's fate, but after four years of complete rest he was back in harness. He bought the Telkwa plant in 1947, which had been shut down during the war years, and for the next 20 years Telkwa Creamery Butter was a major factor in the economic life of the Central Interior. It wasn't uncommon to get Bulkley Valley butter on the Vancouver market.

In order to encourage greater production, the government had initiated a producer subsidy on manufacturing milk. By 1968, more stringent regulations were introduced for shippers to qualify for the subsidy. During the same decade, many of the farmers had diversified into logging and lumbering.

Thus cream shipments dropped dramatically and in 1969, Telkwa Creamery closed its doors.

The old building still stands on the bank of the Skeena River. The old ammonia refrigeration equipment is still in place and the new owner has retained the atmosphere of the original creamery.

Thus far, I have dealt briefly with creameries in the Interior. The struggle by dairies to stay in the business in Prince Rupert, McBride and other interior communities will be dealt with in later articles.

For Half A Century Saltspring Island Creameries Made Prize-Winning Butter

By
EVERETT
CROWLEY

Reprinted from ***Butter-Fat Magazine,*** *November - December, 1982, vol.60, no.6, pp. 7, 25*

Of the nine creameries established throughout B.C. at the turn of the century, most had a short life. The notable exception was the Saltspring Island Creamery which operated successfully for over 53 years (1904–1957).

The Saltspring story really begins in Lisbon, Portugal in 1850. That year, there was a terrible plague raging throughout Portugal, decimating whole families and leaving countless numbers of orphans, among them two young brothers named Joao and Delarvo. In Lisbon's harbour at the time was an American sailing ship under Captain Norton, bound for New York. He took the two boys on board as cabin boys. In due course, he adopted them and gave them his name. After a number of years sailing, the two brothers settled on Salt Spring in 1860. Delarvo and Norton's son, Francis, went to work for H.W. Bullock, an Englishman who arrived in 1896. By October 1896, according to the "Salt Spring Island Parish and Home", "Mr. Collins (who worked for Mr. Bullock) has decided to erect his butter and cheese factory at the Vesuveus end of the Island and will also have a place in the valley. Nearly all the necessary machinery has arrived from England and the building will be put (up) at once."[3]

Francis Norton worked in the creamery and became a butter-maker. In 1903, he left the island to work for the Victoria Creamery, which had been established in 1897.

During this time, another creamery was being planned. From the May 1896 issue of "Parish and Home", "Mr. Cundell has bought over the creamery plant from Messrs. Malcolm and Purees and will run it this summer. He will want the milk of forty cows and those who contribute it will receive full market value for the butter made, less 5c a pound, and also will get back their skim milk". First grade creamery butter was then selling for 35c per pound. (76c a kilogram).

Then in June 1903, this item occurs. "The buildings for the Cooperative Creamery of Ganges Harbour are to be erected forthwith. W.H. Bullock, president, G. Scott vice-president". Mr. Scott remained in this capacity for 43 years.

And in February 1904 – "The Saltspring Island Creamery has been in full swing since the first of the year. About 80 cans of cream arrive each

3 *Church Bulletin* published monthly between 1895 and 1907 by Rev. E.F. Wilson, resident Anglican Minister.

week on the boat from Sanich – the total output of butter is about 2400lbs. (1090 kg); 300lbs. (140 kg) is local and the balance belongs to the Victoria Creamery –" (their own plant was being renovated).

This creamery had a long and distinguished career culminating in 1939 when Salt Spring Island butter was served 'by appointment to the King and Queen' during the Royal Tour of B.C.

Over the years, the butter won many prizes for quality at various agricultural fairs across Canada. Walter Drake who guided the creamery for 37 years insisted on one quality only – the best. Production rose from 13,608 kg a year in 1904 to 63,504 kg a year in 1928. By that time, there were 135 farmers shipping cream, many of them from the surrounding islands. Their cream was picked up twice a week by inter-island ferries, such as the Island Princess, and landed on Mouat's dock for the creamery.

By 1947, the lifestyle of the Islanders had changed dramatically; only 65 farmers were now shipping cream. The plant was sold to D.G. McKenzie, a dairy farmer at Fernwood on the Island. He installed modern dairy equipment and besides supplying the Island with pasteurized bottle milk, he shipped up to 225,000 litres a year to Victoria.

The population of the Island was changing. The summer influx of holidayers vastly outnumbered the local residents, and most of the farms were sold to gentlemen farmers. Modern packaging and transportation sealed the fate of the Saltspring Island Creamery. It closed its doors in 1957

Ladle used for scooping milk from milk cans

Roots In Comox: The Predecessors to Our Courtenay Plant

By
EVERETT
CROWLEY

Reprinted from ***Butter-Fat Magazine,*** *July - August, 1983, Vol. 61, no.4, pp. 12 - 14*

Of the nine creameries that were established at the turn of the century in B.C., the Comox Cooperative Creamery had the longest and most successful operation.

Settlers had come into the Comox Valley as early as 1862 and some of the early farmers had built a thriving business selling butter to the coal miners at nearby Cumberland, and as far away as Nanaimo and Victoria. The distant places were supplied by boat as there were no roads.

Following a petition signed in 1863 by all the farmers in the Comox Valley, a shipment of Durham cattle was dispatched from the Tolmie Farm near Victoria, via the schooner "Douglas".

On March 12, 1901, the farmers in the Valley held the inaugural meeting of the Comox Cooperative Creamery. The first minutes state:

The adjourned meeting of the 7th instant was held in the Agricultural Hall and called to order by Dr. Millard in the Chair. On account of the absence, through sickness, of Mr. H.A. Halliday, who previously acted as Secretary, Mr. Walter McPhee was appointed. The canvass committee reported that 255 cows had been guaranteed.

Discussion took place regarding the organizing of a joint stock company, but the proposition was not favourably received.

It was moved that the Creamery, if started, should run the first season till the 1st of November. The election of officers and directors proceeded as follows:
– President, Wm. Grieves; Vice President, Thos. Cairns; Secretary, Walter McPhee; Treasurer, Jas. McPhee.
Directors – T. Beckensell, M. Ball, F. Childs, Wm. Matheson, Jas. Parkin, T.E. Williams, R. Carter.

By 1901, the Creamery had been built by Hugh Clark and Frank Childs. The building had been financed by a loan from the government of $1500.00, a contribution of $1,000.00 from James Dunsmuir, and contributions of $100.00 and $200.00 from local members, for a total of $4,040.00.

In 1902, the Comox Creamery acquired the services of W.J. Carroll and this association lasted for 34 years. Mr. Carroll is credited with the success of the Creamery because of his dedication to the plant, even going as far as Comox to pick up cans of cream in his buggy, for the day's run which began at three in the morning.

At first, the cream was ladled off the milk cans by the farmers, but as cream separators became more prevalent, Mr. Carroll insisted on separated cream to ensure uniformity in his butter.

Comox Creamery butter was exhibited wherever an agricultural fair was held and invariably took first or second prize. The competition between early creameries was very keen.

As the Co-op expanded over the years, it included a feed and machinery department for its members and also began to sell ice which it had cut and stored from the nearby Maple Lake.

During the First World War, a condenser was built in Courtenay which had the effect of bringing Holsteins and other breeds of cattle into the Valley. These breeds gave more milk and less cream. At the same time, the Creamery was stressing the need for more Jersey cattle which produced more butterfat.

When the war ended in 1918, the need for condensed milk lessened considerably and the condensers closed about 1920. The Creamery then expanded its operation to accommodate the lower butterfat milk.

The cooperative continued to flourish over the next three decades, changing to meet the growth in the area. The "Comox Argus", the community newspaper of the day, provides some anecdotes.

At the February 1931 annual meeting, the directors voted to build a plant at Powell River. They also voted to accept only cream from tuberculosis-tested cows. Mr. R.V. Hurford gave a report of his trip to Ottawa where he was successful in convincing the government to prohibit the dumping of butter on the Canadian market by Australia.

In 1931 there were 320 shareholders in the Comox Creamery.

The annual meeting in 1939 quoted the prices paid to its members for cream – Special $.25, Grade 1 $.23, and Grade II $.21 per pound of butterfat. Sales of ice cream which they had been making since 1923, were up, but butter production was down.

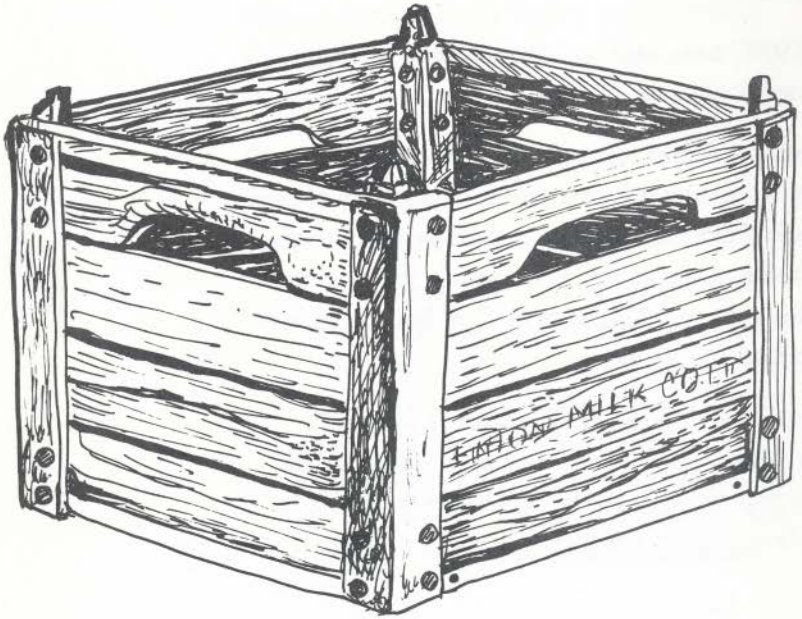
Then, in 1943, the directors voted to build a new butter plant, a new hay barn (the original barn was built in 1919), and a new building for hardware and machinery. They also purchased

Hardwood milk case used by dairies in the early 1930's and by Avalon up till the 1950's. A case held 12 glass quart bottles and when full weighed 65 lbs. The name of the dairy was branded into the wood.

the Carroll home which stood next to the Creamery.

In 1945, they branched out into the dairy business, selling milk (in bottles) locally and in Alberni, Victoria and Powell River.

Farmers return's rose from $.48 per pound of butterfat to $.70 and a new era for the Creamery was launched. The Air force base at Comox justified the expansion of the Creamery, as it used large amounts of pasteurized milk.



In 1946, there were 418 members of the Creamery. The new plant, constructed at a cost of $38,796.00, remained in use till 1982.

In 1946, Mr. Carroll retired after 34 years of faithful service. At the farewell dinner, R.V. (Jack) Hurford recalled some of the problems of the early days like the time when wooden barrels were sold full at 10 cents per pound.

When compulsory pasteurization was introduced in 1956, most of the part-time producers sold their cows to the shippers who opted to become full-time milk producers.

Over the years, modern transportation and equipment changed the local industry to the point that, in 1968, the directors of the Creamery voted to amalgamate with the Fraser Valley Milk Producers' Association. Thus began a new chapter in the life of one of the earliest Creameries established in Canada and one which remained autonomous the longest.

In 1982, the FVMPCA built a $4.5 million plant to accommodate the output of the 25 shippers in the Comox Valley, many of whom are second and third generations of the founding members of the Comox Cooperative Creamery.

Early Dairying in Vancouver and The Fraser Valley

As mentioned earlier, in the lower mainland the demand for dairy products had increased along with the rapid growth in population, which began in 1858 with the discovery of gold in the Cariboo. As thousands of men arrived seeking gold, the authorities saw a need to have a central government on the "lawless mainland", and in 1858 governor James Douglas took over control of both the colonies on Vancouver Island and the mainland, which then became British Columbia.[4]

This rapid growth in the province was further encouraged by the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1886 and with the establishment of the mining and logging industries.

Between 1871 and 1881, the population increased by over 1/3 and between 1881 and 1891 it nearly doubled. Domestic production of dairy products could not keep up with demand and much of the butter required by the province's population was imported, either from "foreign" sources (California and Australia) or from other provinces in Canada.[5]

As it grew to meet this domestic need, the dairy industry became well established in the South-West corner of the province: particularly in the Fraser Valley which was eminently suitable for dairying in both land and climate. The B.C. Department of Agriculture encouraged the valley farmers to "contain themselves primarily to dairying, fruit culture, and root crops in the Lower Country, leaving cereals to those of the Upper Country [as this would] result more favourably to the interests of all".[6]

From unpublished notes of Everett Crowley, completed by Merrilyn (Crowley) Farquhar

On Vancouver Island, Alexis Casanave, who had come to British Columbia from France via San Francisco, settled outside Victoria in 1862 and went into partnership with Pierre Clavery in a dairy, delivering milk in the Victoria area.[7] On the mainland, Hugh McRoberts began farming on Sea Island at the mouth of the Fraser River in 1862 and others soon followed. The McCleerys, McRobert's nephews, built a farm in the same year on the present site of the 10th green of the McCleery golf course. A.C. Wells established the

4 Michael Kluckner, *Vancouver The Way It Was.* North Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1984, p.10.

5 Harold A. Innis, (ed), *The Dairy Industry in Canada.* Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958, p.217, 36.46% and 98.48% respectively.

6 Ibid, pg. 218 as reprinted from the B.C. Department of Agriculture Report of 1896.

7 This farm, which moved to the Courtenay area in 1921, carries on with the third generation of Casanaves. See Butter-Fat, June, 1985, pp. 16–19.

Edenbank Farm at Sardis in 1866 and the Ladner brothers began farming south of the Fraser River in 1868. The enterprising Chadsey Brothers of Chilliwack settled on Sumas Prairie where they drove in dairy cattle.

By 1869, when the gold rush had declined, there were about 15 farms on the Fraser River delta producing butter, eggs, beef, pork and vegetables for the local population.[8] Many of these farms were operated by Americans left over from the gold rush, a few Royal Engineers, and former Hudson's Bay Company employees.

New Westminster (which had been established as the city of Queensborough by the Corps of Royal Engineers during the 1850's as their base for road surveying and construction) was by then, along with nearby logging operations, the principal mainland market for dairy products. By 1881, it had a population of 1,500 and in 1888 purchased 20 cases of dairy products a month from Chilliwack.[9] Among those who supplied the New Westminster area, were the Evans brothers who, in 1897, went into business with Wells and some other dairy farmers in a creamery or butter-making plant in Saris.

Vancouver began in the early 1860's as the thriving settlement of Granville, commonly called Gastown, on Burrard Inlet. In 1884, the CPR decided on Vancouver as its western terminus. It had its first boom re-building after the fire of 1886. The first transcontinental passenger train arrived on May 23, 1887, signalling both more rapid growth for Vancouver and the decline of both New Westminster and Victoria as the major B.C. cities.[10]

In Vancouver there were a number of small dairy farmers in and around the city supplying butter, cream, milk and eggs. Joseph Jones, who had a farm of 58 cows at Westminster and Windsor Roads, began farming in the 1890's. Across Brewery Creek, Sam Garvin established a ranch on East 19th Street in 1889, in order to supply his False Creek Dairy at Westminster Road and Front Street, the first to be issued with a city

8 Morag Maclachlan, *Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association: Successful Co-operative* M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1972.

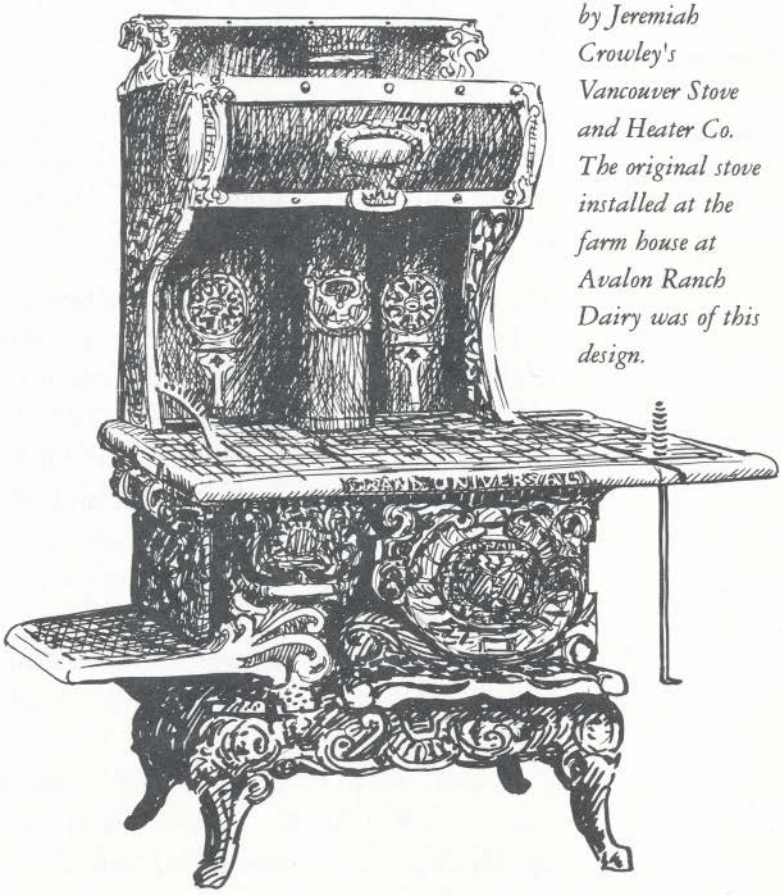
9 Harold A. Innis (ed), *op. cit.* p. 216.

10 Harold A. Innis (ed), *op- cit.* p. 216.

11 Michael Kluckner, *op. cit.* p. 123.

12 Everett Crowley, Interview with Percy Young. N.D.

dairy licence. Later, his son Sammy opened the Pure Milk Dairy at 515 East 10th Avenue.[11] In the 1890's Percy Young began working at the Rose Hill Dairy on Marine Drive on land leased from John Oliver, later Premier of British Columbia. Since there were no standardized milk bottles, Young delivered milk in any bottle available, usually beer or whisky bottles or by can and measure.[12] William Shannon began farming in Southlands in 1887. The McCleerys built a second farmhouse at 2610 Marine Drive in 1892 and supplied some of the first butter in Vancouver.



"Grand Universal" cast iron stove. This was similar to those manufactured by Jeremiah Crowley's Vancouver Stove and Heater Co. The original stove installed at the farm house at Avalon Ranch Dairy was of this design.

Problems Faced by the Early Dairy Farmers, and the First Attempts to Encourage or Regulate the Industry

From unpublished notes of Everett Crowley completed by Merrilyn (Crowley) Farquhar

Dairy farmers and vendors in Vancouver and up the Valley faced a number of problems associated with a pioneer industry. The demand for dairy products was still relatively small and for a variety of reasons farmers had difficulty finding a suitable outlet for excess milk: scattered communities, poor transportation, lack of volume, imperfect sanitation methods, and a shortage of trained dairy workers. Competition came from dairy farmers on the Prairies and overseas.

The provincial Department of Agriculture endeavoured to raise dairy production and standards by drafting the Agricultural Associations Act, which the government passed in 1888 and amended in 1890 to provide for the establishment of dairymen's associations. It stimulated the formation of Cow Testing Associations which became directly responsible for the subsequent improvement in milk quality. In 1895, came the Milk Fraud Act which allowed managers of factories to test samples of milk from suppliers and to inspect their farms. The Creameries Act of 1896, encouraged (by way of loans up to $2,000) the establishment of co-operatives and associations throughout the province. (In 1901, there were 9 creameries operating throughout the province, in 1910 there were 23.) The provincial government also helped with drainage, dyking and clearing land, inspection and information regarding crop improvement and better methods of milk handling.

At the federal level, the Dominion Experimental Farm at Agassiz helped farmers improve the quality of dairy products through demonstrations and the dissemination of information. The Dairy Branch of the Department of Agriculture opened in 1890 and helped with the development of creameries and cheese factories. It began to promote cold storage facilities in 1895 by providing bonuses to butter-making plants. The federal government generally held jurisdiction over industrial dairy products, having passed the Dairy Products Act in 1893 to control labelling and protect cheese producers from imitation cheese and the Dairy Industry Act of 1914 which prohibited the manufacture, importation or sale of oleomargarine.

Much of this government action was the result of pressure by farmers' organizations. In 1882, Surrey Centre farmers established the Farmers' Alliance, a co-operative designed to induce the provincial government to assist in developing agriculture. The Alliance was superseded by the

Farmers' Institutes in 1897 which, among other things, informed their members about technical developments and the co-operative movement. The British Columbia Dairymen's Association was founded in 1896 to distribute material on new production methods and to help in the creation of creameries.

One of the leading problems facing farmers, dairies and governments was poor milk quality. Without refrigeration, milk was easily subject to spoilage and only a few consumers had ice-boxes. Pasteurization, still in its infancy, was not practised or even believed in. During the summer months infants regularly died of "summer diarrhoea". In 1912, 49 infants died in Vancouver from this infection. Milk was also a medium for tuberculosis, scarlet fever, diphtheria, brucellosis (undulant fever) and septic sore throat. In 1912, nearly one third of fatal cases of tuberculosis in childhood came from being infected with bovine tuberculosis.[13] Consumers complained and the press regularly covered this serious and potentially explosive issue.

In 1908, the Vancouver Medical Association appointed a commission of four doctors to investigate the Vancouver milk supply. Commissioner Dr. C.S. McKee found many farms in an unsanitary condition and urged the introduction of voluntary chemical and bacteriological standards. If a farmer attained these standards and bottled his own milk, he could use the name Vancouver Medical Association on his cans and bottles. Although the commission had no authority, its influence led to the introduction in Vancouver of "approved" milk.[14]

Voluntary measures helped but healthy milk depended upon standards that could only come through legislative enforcement. The failure of voluntary standards led the provincial government to appoint a royal commission in 1911 to enquire into the sale of milk and the management of dairies. The commission reported in 1913 and the Milk Act of that year embodied recommendations which gave the municipalities the right to enact by-laws for the regulation of the production and sale of milk. Anyone who sold milk or cream had to be licensed and municipal health inspectors now inspected dairies on a regular basis, sending samples of milk for bacteriological testing to the city laboratory.

13 *Report of the Royal Commission on Milk Supply in British Columbia.* Victoria, B.C.: 1913, pp. 9 and 24

14 Ibid., pp. 12

Just as Vancouver-area dairy farmers were adopting better production methods and the dairies were improving the quality of their milk, the construction of new railway links brought competition into the city. Since 1897, an inter-urban rail line had been running between Vancouver and New Westminster. A bridge opened across the Fraser River at New Westminster in 1904. That, and the completion of the Great Northern Railway to Vancouver in 1907, allowed Surrey farmers ready access to the Vancouver market for the first time. The Vancouver and Lulu Island Railway, linking Steveston to Vancouver and Eburne to New Westminster, reached completion in 1905. A train which connected Agassiz to Vancouver began operation two years later. In 1910, the BCE completed its line from Vancouver to Chilliwack, which gave Valley farmers access to the city market for their dairy products. Prior to this, Chilliwack farmers had been forced to use the costly method of river boat transportation to New Westminster or the CPR. Trains had never proved very practical as they were not regular enough for daily pick-up. This had resulted in dairy farmers sending their surplus to the Chilliwack Creamery Association, the Edenbank Creamery or the Borden evaporating plant in the Chilliwack area. With these new transportation links, the city's dairy farmers faced competition from farmers throughout the Fraser Valley and Delta and, even more seriously, from those in Washington State. In 1913, for instance, three-quarters of the milk consumed in Vancouver came from across the border.[15]

While these transportation links were necessary for greater access to Vancouver, they had the effect of reducing the price of milk, especially when the BCE added a milk and vegetable train from Chilliwack to Vancouver in 1911. Access to cheap American milk and to a large number of farmers eager to supply the Vancouver market, combined to drive down milk prices, establishing for the first time bitter relations between farmers and dairies. The enmity would last for the next 50 years. Prices fell from $2 to $1 per ten-gallon can.

Dairies faced their own difficulties. Frequently, there was a shortage of milk in the winter when farmers could not afford the high cost of feeding their cattle and this was followed by an increased

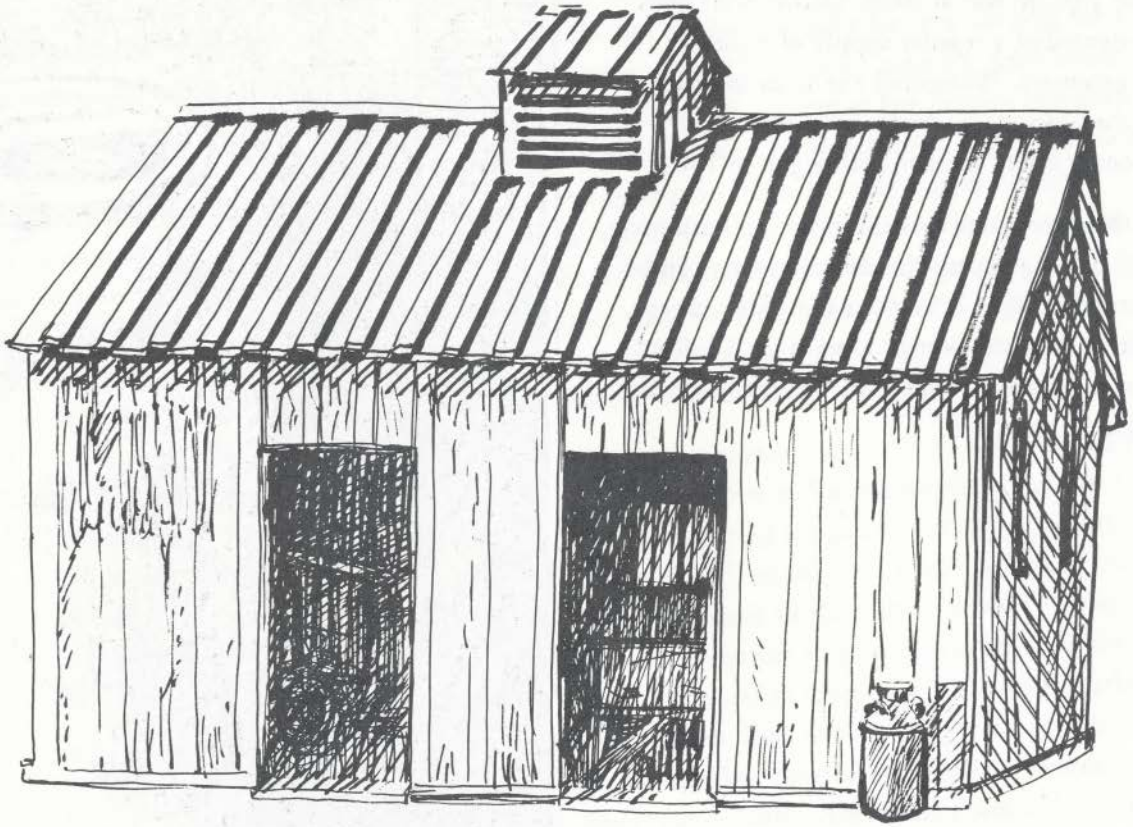
15 Harold A. Innis (ed) *op. cit.* p.227

16 Veronica McCormick, *A Hundred Years in the Dairy Industry: A History of the Dairy Industry in Canada and the Events that Influenced It.* Ottawa Dairy Farmers of Canada, 1968, p. 15.

supply in the summer when cows freshened and luscious pasture was at hand. Dairies were thus never assured of a regular supply of milk for their customers. Worsening the situation were the higher costs faced by farmers during the inflationary boom market that began in 1909.

That the government was interested in both promoting and regulating the dairy industry can be understood in light of the fact that dairy cheese had been a major export product since 1890. It was not until 1906 that wheat became the leading export product.[16]

Two gallon milk can.

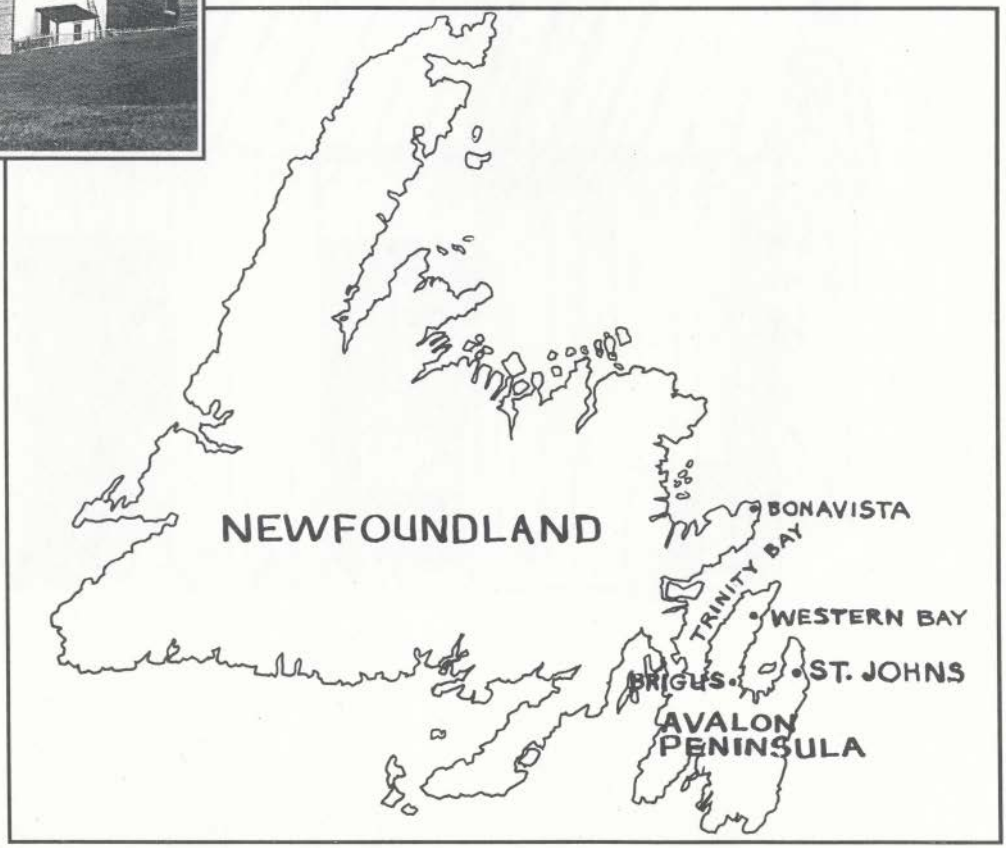


The original milk house at Avalon Ranch, where milk cans were kept.

Part II

The Story of Avalon

Western Bay, Avalon Penninsula, Newfoundland, now called Bradley's Cove, circa 1950's.



Map of Newfoundland showing Western Bay on the Avalon Peninsula.

The Avalon Story Begins in Newfoundland

The story of Avalon begins in Newfoundland, where Jeremiah Crowley was born October 9, 1875, in the small town of Western Bay on the Avalon Peninsula. The Crowley family originated from Ireland, and it is thought that they settled on the peninsula in the late eighteenth century.

Jeremiah's father, William, was a fisherman by trade and was also an active Methodist and a lay preacher.[17] His mother, Flora Kennedy, was an organist at Western Bay Methodist Church and came from the neighbouring community of Riverhead. They married in June 1873, and settled in Western Bay, which at that time was a growing fishing community.

Jeremiah had a sister, Elizabeth Jane, born on November 16, 1877. Their mother died in 1884 when Jeremiah was nine years old and their father, who was often away fishing sent them to board with their cousins, the Kennedys, in St. John's. The Kennedys were a prosperous family including seven sons, all of whom became professionals.

Nine-year old Jeremiah began work as a metal worker, making buttons and crochet hooks. He earned $2 a week which went toward his board. His education was not forgotten, however; in two years Jeremiah completed all the education he had previously missed. He kept a journal in which he recorded the events of the day. Thus began a life-long habit of recording events, expenses, and thoughts for the day, often in several note-books which might contain several of these categories and which were thriftily used and re-used over the years.

Jeremiah's school exercise book of 1890 (he was 14) shows the fine hand-writing required at that time and considerable aptitude in the subjects required: Dictation, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, and Composition.

According to his journal, Jeremiah felt bitter about being left with the Kennedys by his father, perhaps more so because his father remarried in 1886 and came to live in St. John's. The Methodism of the day had a strong influence in Jeremiah's life. He remained adamantly opposed to drinking and playing cards, though this may have had as much to do with the Temperance Movement of the late nineteenth century. His journal entries include observations of Michael Kennedy's alcoholism and "alcoholic rages". In addition to diary entries Jeremiah wrote a

17 Charles Leach, *The History of the Rise & Progress of Methodism.* (Barnes & Co., 1912).

number of temperance essays. His own children were brought up as Anglicans and Presbyterians.

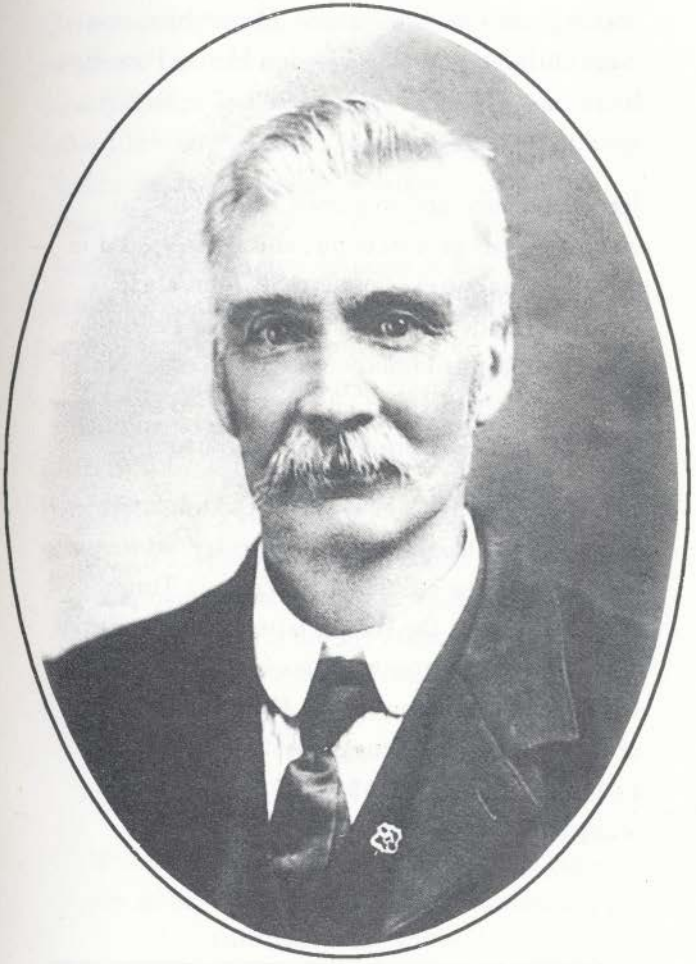
Much of the turn-of-the-century boom was the result of the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush which had brought thousands of hopeful gold seekers from distant parts to British Columbia. Even as far away as Newfoundland the Klondike had caught the attention of Jeremiah Crowley, then a young iron moulder. Newfoundland was, wrote the 21-year-old bachelor, "getting more and more hateful. I will soon leave this Island for some distant land".[18] When a friend told him about a $15 excursion fare to Vancouver via Halifax, Jeremiah took his chance. (He was, however, expected to cut wood for the train's boilers as part of this fare.)

Departing St.John's on February 22, 1898, on the ship "Grand Lake" Jeremiah sailed through miles of ice and choppy seas to Halifax, arriving there the following day. After a night recovering from seasickness at the Palmer Hotel, he visited the Citadel before boarding the train bound to Montreal and Vancouver. In his journal, he noted the splendid scenes along the way, especially the great glaciers in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. On arrival he found Vancouver crowded with gold seekers. Rather than join them on their journey north, he decided that logging would be a more secure form of employment and soon found work in a logging camp at Blenkinsop Bay on Vancouver Island. He wrote, "The scenery of the sound is splendid" and that he enjoyed the work but, being a small man of 130 lbs., found it difficult.

On July 15, 1989, he received a letter containing troubling news. His Newfoundland sweetheart Maud, was pregnant. He wrote in his diary that he was "in a hell of a state", and would return to St.John's in six weeks if things were not right. He left via Comox for New York in August and on September 21, 1898 Jeremiah Crowley married Annie Maud Brown in St. John's.

Maud's family came from Sackville, New Brunswick. Her father, William John Brown Jr., was a good-looking, bewhiskered man who enjoyed popular philosophy. William John's father, also William John, had been a colour-sergeant in the 1st Battalion, 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, with service in Halifax, Barbados, Trinidad, and Antigua. While stationed in Halifax, William John married outside the

18 Journal of Jeremiah Crowley, dated 7 May, 1935 (CFP).



Grandfather Brown in Newfoundland, circa 1900's.

Grandfather Brown with grandson, circa 1915.

barracks church against the wishes of his superior officer. When he died of cholera while fighting in the Crimea, his wife and young son, born in England in 1850, were left without support.[19] William John Jr. eventually became an iron moulder at Fawcett's Foundry in Sackville, New Brunswick. There he met and married Alice Mary Geary. Their daughter, Annie Maud, was born in 1876. Twenty years later, in 1896, her family moved to St.John's, Newfoundland, where her father entered actively into community life and became a founding member of the city's Independent Order of Odd Fellows fraternal lodge. He owned a duplex on Hamilton Avenue, half of which he later sold to Jeremiah Crowley as the young couple's new home.

Jeremiah remained restless and anxious to better himself. He visited Sackville in early October, 1898 and returned home late in December to a new baby boy, William Stanley, born on October 24th.

During the next few years he completed his apprenticeship as an iron moulder and work became a little more stable and better paid, but it was never very secure. In 1901, Jeremiah travelled to Sydney, Nova Scotia, to look for a farm. Though he was impressed with the country, nothing came of this venture. Meanwhile, two more children arrived – Gordon Henry Powell Bruce in 1900 and Flora in 1902. The family would eventually total 13 children.

Jeremiah continued to pursue his interest in improving his prospects but also participated in the many activities offered in St. John's. He joined the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, serving as Noble Grand of Atlantic Lodge No.1, played cricket and studied part-time to improve his education and employment opportunities.

In 1901, Jeremiah's boss at the Consolidated Iron Foundry Company, J.L.Brownley, wrote on his behalf to the editor of the Victoria Times, enquiring about the cost of farmland in British Columbia. The letter was passed on to R.E.Gosnell, secretary of the Provincial Bureau of Information, who suggested that land could be bought for between $5 and $75 per acre, according to the location.[20]

19 After his death, William John Sr.'s barrack box was returned to England and then to Halifax to his wife's possession. Eventually William John Jr. inherited it. In 1979, Jean & Everett Crowley returned it to the Halifax Citadel (CFP).

20 R.E. Gosnell to J.L. Brownley, 25 February 1901 (CFP).

Jeremiah filed away this information until 1905, when he decided on another visit to the Pacific coast. Before he left he made several enquiries about farming in B.C. He wrote to Arthur L.Kendall in Cloverdale, a fellow Odd Fellow, about settling in Surrey. Kendall's advice to Jeremiah was "to buy 40 acres of low land well drained and cultivate and farm it properly...This much can be bought for $3,000.00".[21] He also wrote to Fred J.Hart, a real estate agent in New Westminster, enquiring of the economic situation in B.C. The reply, in the boosterish tones of the day, stated:

> *We are pleased to note that it is your intention to come out to this favoured country, where the grass is always green, and you will enjoy with us the finest climate in the world, and we can also assure you that men without capital can do well here in any line they choose. This is the easiest country {in which} to make a living in the world. When you come out we will be pleased to show you about, and give you any information and assistance in our power.*[22]

Powder horn brought from Newfoundland when the family moved west to B.C. Scrimshaw (carving of ship) was done by Newfoundland fishermen in slow times.

Armed with a letter of introduction from another Odd Fellow, Jeremiah visited Vancouver to look at farming prospects. He returned home impressed and ready to move. His in-laws, the Browns, were convinced to cast their future in the West as well.

The duplex in St. John's was sold and, early in 1906, William and Alice Brown, Jeremiah and Maud Crowley and the four Crowley children, Stanley, Gordon, Flora and Roy departed for Vancouver.

They travelled first by packet steamer to Sidney and then by Intercolonial Railway and CPR day coach to Vancouver. The arduous ten day journey was interrupted by the birth of another Crowley, Vernon, in Montreal. The family arrived in Vancouver in March, 1906.

21 Arthur L. Kendall, M.D. to J. Crowley, 1 April 1905 (CFP).

22 F. J. Hart & Co. to J. Crowley, 31 March 1905 (CFP).

The Crowley Family Arrives in Vancouver and Avalon Ranch Dairy Begins

In 1906, Vancouver was a bustling new city of some 53,000 people. It was growing by leaps and bounds and people from all over Canada were flocking to its shores.

Vancouver's population was predominantly men working in the lumber, shipping and fishing industries. Downtown was east of today's commercial centre, in the area along Water and Cordova streets between Granville and Carrall. Other commercial areas were Granville Street, dominated by Canadian Pacific Railway investments, and a less prestigious area along Westminster Avenue (Main Street), where Charles Woodward had opened his department store in 1892. The streetcar had already reached south to the new residential areas of Kitsilano and Fairview Slopes and beyond these to the more distant South Vancouver.

Jeremiah Crowley and his family of five children, wife Maud and Grandparents Mr. and Mrs. William Brown, arrived on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, 1906. That year they bought a small farm on Wales road at Kingsway (then Westminster Avenue), including a house, a barn and six cows – they were in the dairy business. That farm is now Norquay Park.

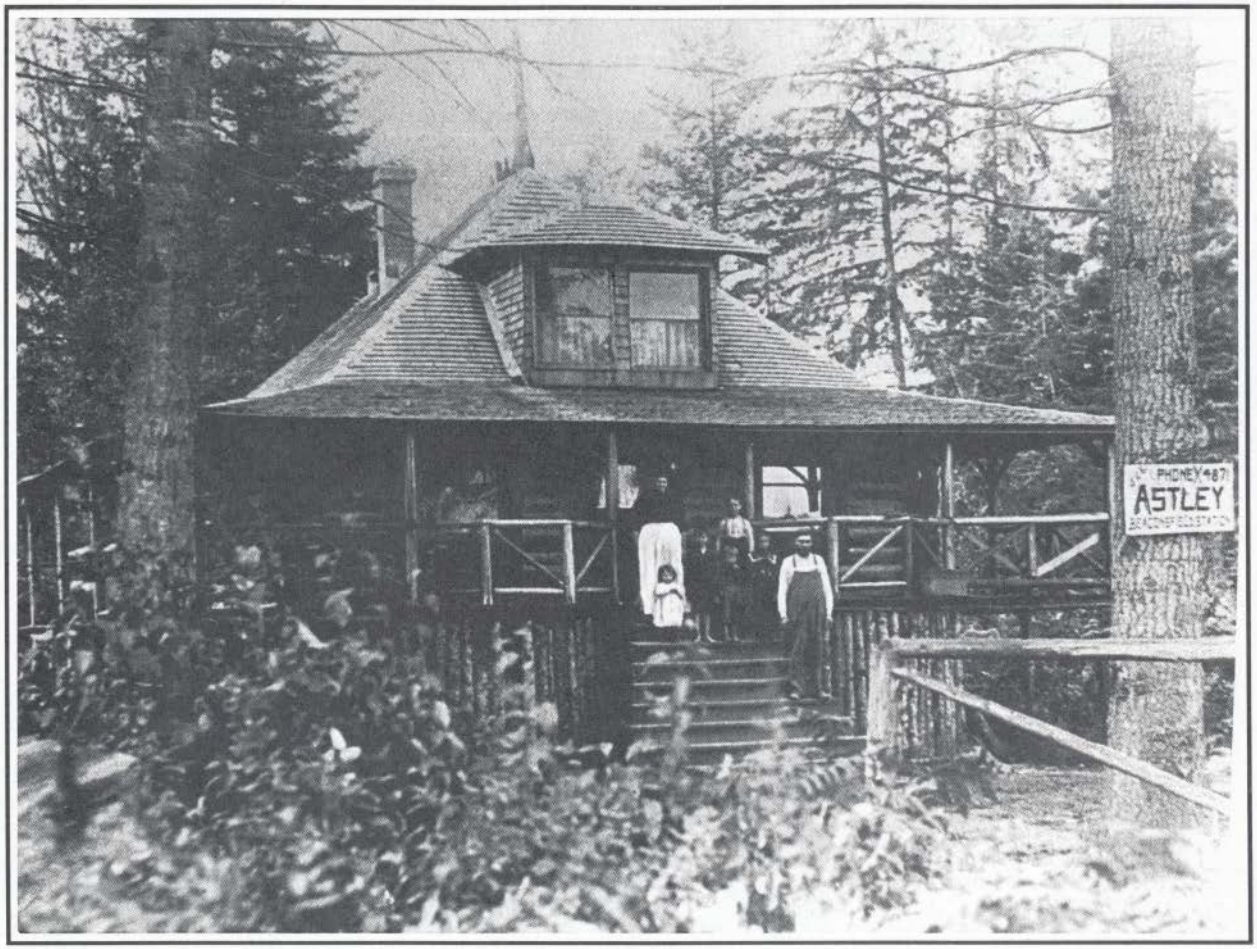
Jeremiah Crowley was a stove–plate moulder, and he obtained a job at Ross & Howard's Foundry at the foot of Clark Drive on the Burrard Inlet. Mrs. Crowley and her father, William Brown milked the cows. In the forest opposite them on Wales St. was a beautiful cold water spring which became the milk-cooling system.[23]

Once settled, the Crowleys bought a horse and wagon and, with the help of a Sikh labourer, cleared the trees opposite the farm with powder and capstan, a device used with horse and a pulley to uproot trees. They drained the land by digging a ditch, installing home made drains and broke up the ground with a team of horses. The whole process took about six months but the costs of this operation were more than offset by the first crop of potatoes from the new land. The rest of the trees were gradually removed but even after 18 months they could not always see the sun until mid-day. Once the land was reasonably clear, the family planted over 100 apple trees, a large vegetable garden to support themselves and the livestock and purchased more cows.[24]

23 Everett Crowley, *Avalon Dairy History,* November 1984, unpublished article.

Young Englishman (Jack Ellis) milking in the barn at Avalon Ranch Dairy, circa 1912.

Ivan Ovens family home, the nearest neighbours to the Crowley's original farm house on Wales St. (near what is now Norquay Park) circa 1912.



Besides increasing their dairy herd, they bought several dozen chickens and sold their eggs daily. By January 1907, there were 80 chickens and 60 chicks.

Collingwood, the South Vancouver area in which the Crowley family had bought their farm, lay between Wales Road on the west,[25] Boundary Avenue on the east, 29th Avenue to the north and Marine Drive to the south. It was heavily forested and well supplied with spring water. The working population, composed mostly of small farmers, was nearly 1,000 and growing rapidly. The principal thoroughfare in the area was Westminster Road which, until the B.C. Electric (BCE) built its tram line to New Westminster from Vancouver in 1897, boasted a coach service which stopped at a series of road houses en route. There was the Junction at Fraser and Kingsway, the Gladstone Inn at Gladstone and Kingsway, the Pig and Whistle at Stamford and Kingsway and the Royal Oak Hotel in Burnaby.

The South Vancouver neighbours of the Crowleys and Browns were of a conservative nature. Fearing that the municipality might incur large debts, people in the area refused to pay high taxes preferring the municipality to employ tax defaulters on public works. In every municipal election, candidates won with the slogan "Keep the debt down".[26] This situation prevailed until the boom of 1909. By then the need for a water-works, new roads, sidewalks and schools was so pressing that the citizens voted in favour of several money by-laws to begin construction.[27]

24 Jeremiah had been a serious gardener in Newfoundland raising cabbages, parsnips, savory, tomatoes, sunflowers, and other plants. In one of his diaries he kept a detailed record of the weight of his vegetables from the time of blossoming to harvest.

25 Wales Road is now Wales Street. Collingwood East was part of a parcel of land granted in 1875 to George Wales who had served in the Royal Engineers under Colonel Richard C. Moody. The name Collingwood has been attributed to some of the principals of the Westminster and Vancouver Tramways Company, who came from Collingwood, Ontario. The Royal Engineers surveyed the New Westminster Road and it became known as Kingsway in 1913.

26 Patricia Roy, *Vancouver: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980), p. 68

27 Alfred Henry Lewis, *South Vancouver Past and Present: An Historical Sketch of the Municipality from the Earliest Days and Its Incorporation to the Present* (Vancouver: Western Publishing Bureau, 1920).

South Vancouver, however, was not without amenities. It had a telephone system and electricity. The BCE tram, on its daily service between New Westminster and Vancouver, stopped at Collingwood East station at Joyce and Vaness,[28] taking fifteen minutes to reach downtown. A number of businesses sprang up around the station, including a post office, several stores such as Fraser Bros. General Store, Foreman's Feed Store, Fred Scott's butcher shop, a blacksmith, two public schools and two churches.

The Crowley's first attempts at dairy farming could not be expected to cover the family's expenses. Jeremiah wrote that he did "particularly well when I milked my first cow on the ten acre farm", but he still continued to work as an iron moulder . He had learned to be a master stove-plate moulder in Newfoundland[29] and, while Maud Crowley ran the farm and Alice Brown tended the children, he continued that occupation, first at Letson & Burpee, then as foreman and pattern–maker at the Vancouver Furnace Company on Powell Street.

There he fashioned metal patterns for the Empress Furnace from wooden models, making them ready for the moulders. "It was quite an undertaking in those days," he wrote, "I was about the only one that could do that class of work." He was such a talented and trusted employee that he was soon promoted to an executive position. He went on to work at Ross & Howard's Foundry at the foot of Woodland Drive while accumulating enough capital to establish his own Vancouver Stove & Heater Co., at the corner of Arbutus St. and 11th Avenue. He took charge of building the plant, installing the equipment and then running the business. Unfortunately, he and the other investors faced severe competition from Eastern firms and, when they were caught short of capital in the severe recession of 1913, the plant folded and Jeremiah began to operate Avalon Dairy on a full-time basis.

28 In 1987, Jean Crowley and the Collingwood Pioneers Club circulated a petition to rename Skytrain's 29th Avenue station "Collingwood" as a historic marker for the community along the original Central Park Tram Line. They captured much support but were unsuccessful in their bid to retain the Collingwood name. However, in 1994 two streets in the newly revitalized 'Collingwood Village' at this same location were named after area pioneers; one is Crowley Drive, another is Gaston Avenue.

29 Journal of Jeremiah Crowley

Maud's parents, the Browns, had settled on Wales Street with the Crowleys. At first, William Brown found work at the Albion Iron Works in Victoria. He too kept a careful account of his earnings and expenditures which he recorded in his journal . He returned to Vancouver permanently in March 1907, when his wife, Alice, became ill. He began work that month at McLean & Powell, moving to Ross & Howard in April and then joining his son-in-law at the Vancouver Stove & Heater Co. in September. At the same time, he shared some of the responsibility of running the dairy and helped with the care of his grandchildren.

By 1909, now with seven children, the Crowley family and the Browns were growing out of the house at 4985 Wales. In his journal, Jeremiah recorded that "When the boom in land came I sold out for a fair price and bought where I now reside at 43[rd] and Wales Road which I converted from bush to a cow ranch and with the increasing population did fairly well in selling milk."[30]. The new two and a half acres further south on Wales Road cost $2500.00.

There was a house nearby which he rented for his family, along with some extra land for $35.00 a month. The cows were driven the nine blocks of corduroy road to 5805 Wales Road. Once more came the arduous task of clearing the land, made difficult by the swampy terrain. This time they had to build a skid road, which required constant maintenance, from the dairy to Wales Road.

A Sikh labourer was hired to help with these tasks. One of the Crowley children later recalled that he brought chapattis for lunch every day and that sometimes the children got to share them.

As well as clearing the land, the family began to build their home which took nearly three years to complete at a total cost of about $2,000.00. Jeremiah's journal carefully records the additional expenses of connecting the electric power and furnishing the house.[31]

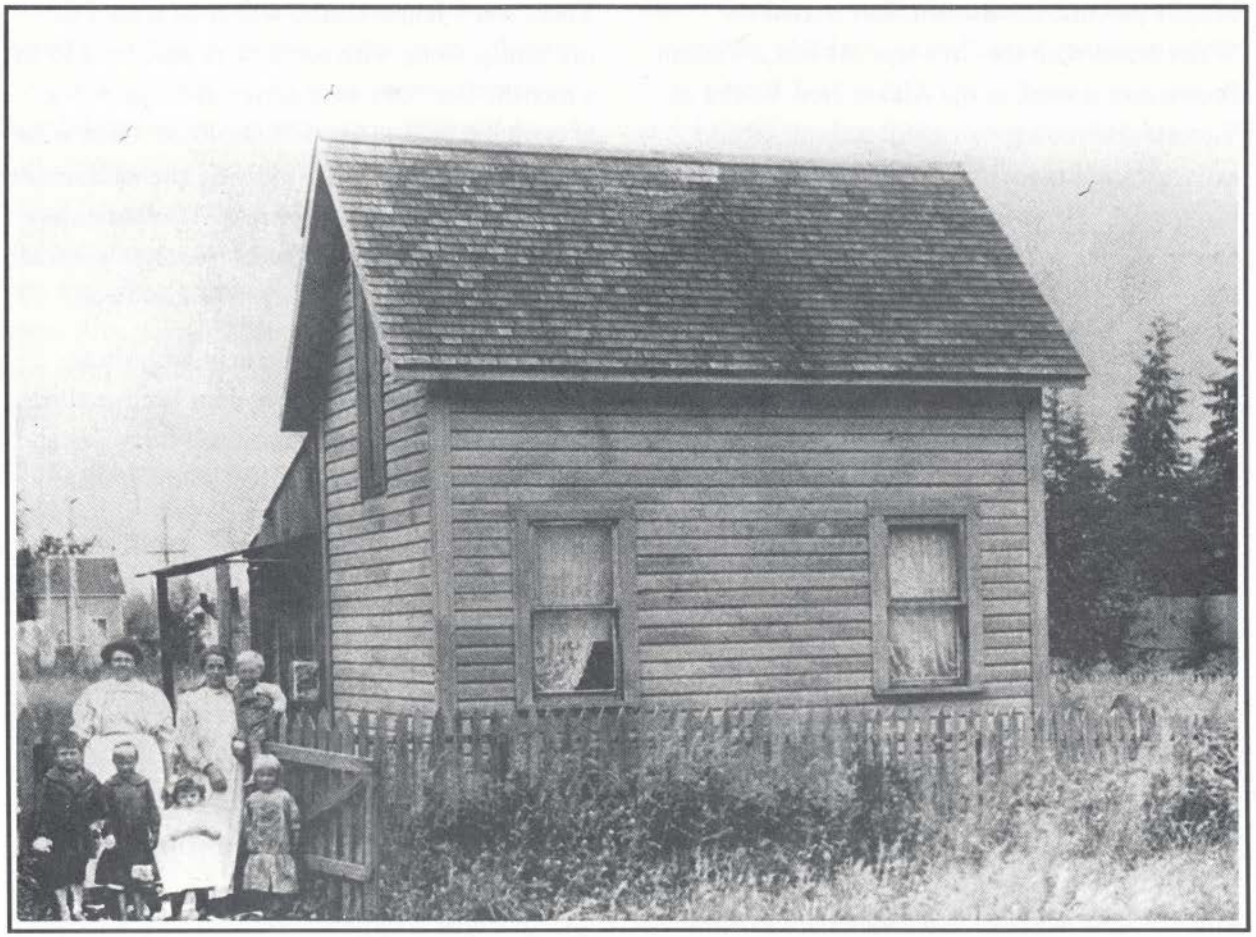
Thus Avalon Ranch Dairy was established at 5805 Wales Street, where it remains to the present day.[32]

The Crowleys and Browns, now with some farming experience, expanded Avalon Ranch. Jeremiah purchased some adjoining land and hebought more chickens, guinea hens, 19 additional cows, and a pair of geese. He also bought

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.



Second Ovens family home (after a fire destroyed their former house) located at what would now be the corner of Rhodes St. and 41st Ave., circa 1912.

some property for investments; a lot in False Creek in Vancouver, and 160 acres in Star City, Saskatchewan. Jeremiah

The geese came from a neighbour and the story is told that the Crowley boys cut willow switches from a nearby tree in order to drive the stubborn geese to Avalon Ranch. On arrival home, they thrust these willow switches into the ground, where they took root and grew into the two stately willow trees which shade Avalon Dairy today.

The enlarged herd grazed on any available clear land. Jeremiah supplemented their grazing with alfalfa hay, as he was well aware of the importance of good quality feed, which helped to improve the butterfat content of milk. He bought the hay from a farmer in the Fraser Valley who had it delivered via the interurban tramway to Beaconsfield Avenue. There, Jeremiah would hire a team of horses to take the hay to Avalon. The Vernon Feed Company (predecessor of Buckerfields) at Broadway and Kingsway also delivered cattle and horse feed to Avalon Dairy Ranch.

Jeremiah kept a good herd of cows, mostly Jerseys or Holsteins, purchased from a local cattle dealer, which he bred with a quality Jersey bull at Winters' farm on the Vancouver Road or at John Cristy's at Kingsway and Carleton. At this time Jerseys, Ayrshires, and Guernseys were popular but Holsteins, great milk producers, soon began to dominate herds, even though the butterfat content of their milk was never as high. In order to help improve the herd, William Brown kept a record of the breeding habits of all the dairy cattle in the vicinity, including those at Avalon Ranch. By the end of 1911, there were five calves and Jeremiah was able to sell them and five cows – Blackie, Molly, Flossey, Dolly and Nancy – for a profit.

Jeremiah succeeded where many others had failed thanks to the attention he paid to the quality of his herd.

At this time, there were a number of small dairies operating, all of them producers-vendors, scattered over the farm lands then existing in Vancouver and in two adjacent municipalities, southVancouver and Point Grey. As well, milk was brought in from northern Washington via the Burlington Northern Railway. Avalon, along with some other independent dairies, picked-up part of their daily supplies from a mail car on the C.N.R. flats (23 cents a gallon in 1912).

Jeremiah had become a skilled gardener as a young man in Newfoundland. He put this experience to good use and planted an extensive vegetable garden to feed his growing family. Jeremiah also planted grass and mangels (a kind of turnip) for the cows and added bees to his inventory, building the hives himself. The honey was excellent and occasionally the customers on his route had the chance to purchase honey on the comb. His attention to his garden and bees paid off: Jeremiah's produce became well-known at the agricultural fair held by the Central Park Agricultural Association, Farmer's Institute and Women's Institute each September in the Central Park exhibition building. Competition was fierce among the many small farmers and gardeners of South Vancouver. (In 1917, Jeremiah won first prize (75 cents) for his Savoy cabbage and also first prize ($2.00) for his honey.)

By 1912, the dairy had well-established routes. Father-in-law William Brown delivered a small route in the Kingsway and 33rd Avenue area, using a Democrat carriage (which had a fixed set of wheels at the front); while Jeremiah had another route closer to Avalon.

The Crowley children worked hard as well. Stanley, the eldest, helped with deliveries. Gordon, now 13, began to help his mother with the milking. Jeremiah had hired Jack Ellis, a farm lad who had recently arrived from Sheffield, England, to help with the dairy work. Ellis delivered milk at dawn in the winter and during the night in the summer. Jeremiah did the rest of the dairy work himself – milking the cows, repairing the machinery and shoeing the horses (a skill he was to pass on to his sons).

In 1912, Jeremiah purchased a small hand-bottler (a cone-shaped machine that filled one bottle at a time which was then capped by hand) and also a 17 horsepower boiler, the steam of which was used to wash the bottles. In 1913, he purchased a new larger milk wagon with free-turning wheels for $185.00. He painted it green and had it inscribed in cream letters with the name Avalon, the telephone number and licence number.[33]

Jack Ellis drove the new wagon which was modified to include a weight which he would drop

33 In the 1920's, these colours were reversed to today's dark green on cream. Early Avalon stationery was inscribed with a milk bottle and, as a mark of purity, a lily.

Central Park Agricultural Hall, 1907. An agricultural fair was held annually; as well the hall served as the first Collingwood community centre where dances, concerts and debates were held regularly.

to stop the wagon and prevent the horse from moving on. Everett Crowley wrote:

> *At first, milk was delivered by "can and measure". Customers supplied their own pot, pan, pail or jug. A pint or quart measure was dipped into the larger can to fill the customers' containers ...*
>
> *All the milk was raw. Pasteurization had not yet been introduced (it did not become compulsory until 1949) and homogenized milk was unheard of. Milk was distributed by horse and wagon in round glass bottles to the homes and in 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 gallon cans to the restaurants and institutions.*[34]

Milk delivery by "can and measure" was a slow and unenviable task, particularly during the winter months. It was to disappear when Jeremiah introduced bottles early in 1915 at the request of Alexander Burchett a grocer on Kingsway. This helped to increase his customer base; the "can and measure" method of delivery had never been very popular. The bottles came in half-pint (for cream), one-pint and two-pint sized (for milk), topped with pasteboard caps inscribes with "please wash and return"[35]. For years a constant price prevailed at 5 cents a pint and 10 cents a quart.

When the cows did not produce enough milk for the customers on his routes, especially during the winter months, Jeremiah took several milk cans by streetcar to pick up extra supplies from Sammy Garvin's dairy at 525 East 19th Ave.,, or from the City Dairy & Produce Company at 414 East Pender. At the back of City Dairy was Almond's Dairy, well-known at this time for its delicious five-cent ice-cream cones.

Everett, the seventh of Jeremiah's children, recalls accompanying his father to Almond's Dairy as a young boy and watching the cone-making machine which had four arms with a waffle-type of gas-heated cooker on each arm. The operator poured batter into the six-hole cooker, pulled the top down, moved the arm over and repeated the process. By the time the cycle was completed, the cones were cooked. The operator then opened the hot mould, pulled out the six cones, discarded those that were badly formed or burnt and then poured more batter. "The warm discards made good eating for a small boy".[36]

34 Everett Crowley, *op. cit.*

35 In approximately 1892, J.J. Joubert Ltd. in Montreal had introduced bottles and pasteboard caps and was the first to deliver milk by this method. Veronica McCormick, *op. cit.* p.6.

Late in 1913, when Jack Ellis returned to England, his place was taken by Arthur H. Stocker who lived nearby on 47th Avenue. When Everett Crowley interviewed Art Stocker, he said he had always felt very fortunate about obtaining this job. Work was very scarce in the winter of 1913. There was pressure on employers to hire married men first. When one of the customers heard that Mr. Stocker had been given Jack Ellis' job, he expressed his anger to Jeremiah in no uncertain terms.[37]

Art, who had milked cows before, began work on Boxing Day in 1913. A short wiry eighteen-year-old, he had come to Canada from Yorkshire with his father in 1909 and had taken a number of jobs including delivering newspapers and painting and decorating. Stocker's beginning salary with Avalon was $40.00 a month with one week's holiday each summer and a half-day on Wednesdays. Though he lived at Avalon, he gave $10.00 to his stepmother for washing and repairing his clothes, spent a portion on numerous pairs of shoes which he wore out while running on the delivery route and the rest he deposited in the Bank of Vancouver in Cedar Cottage.

His Avalon duties were many and various: he had to groom the horse, wash the wagon and grease its wheels, wash bottles, arrange for the horses to be shod, milk the cows, occasionally carry messages to McKee's Dry Goods in Cedar Cottage (where Maud Crowley bought the family's clothing) and deliver milk. He carried 36 unpasteurized gallons a day.[38] To make deliveries easier, he dropped half his load at Wales and Kingsway and returned for it later. At noon, or earlier in the summer, while Art was on his way home, Jeremiah would meet him at Slocan and Kingsway with an extra load and to pick up the empties. In the meantime, Art fed his horse a nose-bag, collected accounts from his customers, picked up any extra bottles that had "disappeared" and sold his customers milk tickets, at 10 one-quart tickets for a dollar. Reaching home early in the afternoon, he turned over his accounts to Jeremiah Crowley and then it was time to milk again, wash the bottles, and at last, sleep.

36 Everett Crowley, *op. cit.*

37 Everett Crowley interview with Art Stocker, circa 1980. (CFP).

38 The route he took was north along Earles Road, south on Rupert Street, west along 22nd, south on Nootka, west to Slocan, south on Slocan to Kingsway, thence to Victoria and 41st, then south to 49th and back home to Wales.

By this time a number of dairies were competing for the Vancouver market. Among them were the large Standard Milk Company,[39] the local Collingwood Pure Milk Company near Kingsway, Turner's at 17th and Ontario and Valley Dairy on 6th Avenue. Art Stocker always had to be on the lookout for new customers. He watched any vacant house until new residents moved in and then tried to be the first to obtain their business. If a customer moved to a new home that was within a reasonable distance, he would continue to serve the customer. Though this could make the route longer, he was able to increase the number of his customers significantly by the time he left in 1918. He was a likeable young man and many customers would take a pint of milk from him even if their regular delivery came from a competing dairy. Among his customers were Mrs. Deeley on Fairmont Street (the wife of Fred Deeley "the cycle man") and James Fletcher's Store at 4218 Commercial, the predecessor of Fletcher's Fine Foods.

The Municipality of South Vancouver, where Avalon Ranch Dairy was located, introduced its own milk by-law in 1912 which encompassed a system of inspection and licensing to enforce milk quality. (By 1915, when the municipality issued 29 dairy licences and 61 cow-keeper licences, the standard of milk deliveries had begun to show a marked improvement in quality and cleanliness.)

At Avalon Ranch Dairy, Jeremiah Crowley studied municipal by-laws and provincial hygiene and dairy production manuals. He continued to successfully cool his milk with cold water or had ice delivered by Garvin's. When the city inspector came to test his milk it was found to be of excellent quality. A letter from a potential customer confirms this:

> *I was informed by the milk inspector of this city that you had good milk, and would probably be able to deliver same to me. I have twin babies and want good milk for them.*[40]

39 The Standard Milk Company was supplied mainly by a group of farmers who began to organize about 1913. These farmers ultimately assumed control of the Standard Milk Company which became the FVMPA in 1919.

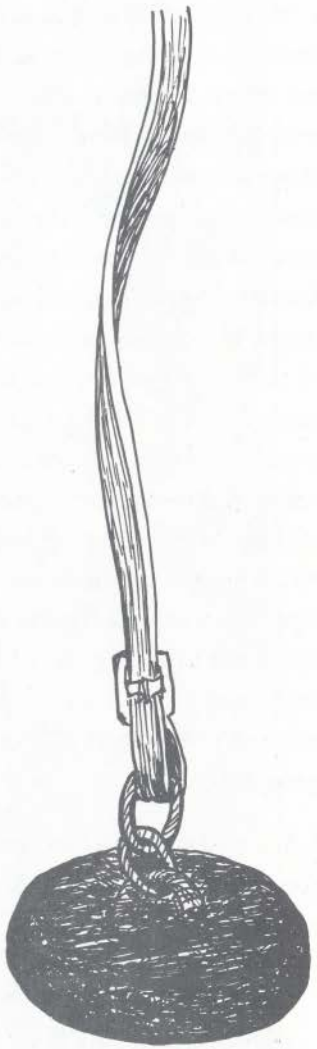
40 Letter from an Avalon customer, N.D. (CFP).

41 Everett, Crowley. *op. cit.*

In 1913, there was a recession which brought hard times for everyone, as Everett Crowley vividly described:

> *1913 witnessed the first of a series of recessions that seriously affected the economy. Business slumped, jobs were scarce and real hardship was the lot of many unfortunate families. Charity existed only in the hearts of the neighbours – there was no unemployment insurance, no old age pension, workmen's compensation or social assistance, – only soup kitchens and poorhouses.*[41]

Many who had speculated heavily in the real-estate market were forced to sell their property for delinquent taxes. By then, Jeremiah Crowley had luckily sold off most of his investments but with the failure of his own business in 1913 (The Vancouver Stove and Heater Co.), and the failure of his local bank and mortgage company in the following year, he was finally forced to mortgage Avalon Ranch Dairy.



Tether wagon weight, used to "anchor" horse-drawn delivery wagons (used by Avalon until the 1920's and occasionally there-after in times of deep snow, until the horses were eventually retired).

The First World War: Boom — Then Bust — for Avalon

With the declaration of war in 1914, business boomed and the whole economy was geared to the war effort. Shipyards supplied vessels to the Imperial Munitions Board, the salmon canning industry provided tinned salmon for the War Purchasing Commission, the lumber mills delivered wood for the Admiralty, and the Sullivan and Rossland mines shipped lead and zinc to the Munitions Board. The war and booming industry led to a severe shortage of farm labour as workers enlisted or left to work in the shipyards and mines. Inflation increased the cost of machinery and feed became particularly expensive as the army brought up large quantities for its cavalry regiments and horse-drawn artillery and supply wagons. There was no corresponding increase in the price of milk which had, for many year, remained at 10 cents a quart. Many farmers suffered losses. But Avalon Dairy survived and even prospered.

In his Avalon Dairy History, Everett Crowley described the war years. The Avalon Ranch Calender of 1915 advertises:

> *J. Crowley* *Avalon Ranch*
> VENDOR OF PURE NATURAL MILK
> FROM A CHOICE HERD OF 30 COWS

During the war, the public schools had garden plots laid out on the school grounds where each senior class has a vegetable plot to lookafter. Much of the manure for these gardens came from Avalon Ranch Dairy. Business continued to grow, and in 1916 a Model-T Ford Touring car was purchased (Full price $360). In later years this same Ford was converted to a truck which became a fixture on South Vancouver roads for many years, with Jerry Crowley wearing a Christie stiff (Bowler hat) and smoking a pipe.

During the war, brewers grains were available from the Vancouver Brewers on 6th Ave. and Scotia St., and the writer recalls accompanying his grandfather on an all day trip, leaving in the dark in the morning and returning home in the dark of evening with a load of wet brewers grain.[42] *Wales Rd. and Bodwell Road. (now 34th Ave.) were plank roads, as was Westminster Rd.*[43] *which was planked on the left side only, as the rule of the road then was to keep the the left.*[44]

42 Brewers grain was used for cattle feed.

43 New Westminster Road, which ran from Vancouver to New Westminster, became 'Kingsway' in 1913. Between Central Park in Burnaby and New Westminster it was often called the 'Vancouver Road'

44 Everett Crowley, *op cit.*

Grandpa Brown, Jeremiah Crowley and grandson Harvey with a calf in front of Avalon barn, circa 1914.

Everett Crowley and sister Sylvia in front of cornfield at Avalon. The corn was grown for cattle feed, circa 1917.

School children also actively participated in the War-time conservation effort. As well as their school vegetable gardens, high school students took part in the 'Soldiers of the Soil Movement', a scheme designed to employ school children in farm work during the summer months, replacing those who had sought employment elsewhere or had gone overseas. Students left school in April, returning in September. Mr. C. B. Keir recalled that he began working at the Independent Dairy (666 E. 16th Avenue) at age fiteen and, that after one day's instruction, he started out on a delivery route at 2 a.m., returned to the dairy at 12 noon, where he still had to take care of the horses and remit the monies collected from his customers. He also had to contend with such problems as horse-chasing dogs, new horses to break in and even a police constable questioning his youthful ability to manage a milk route.[45]

Despite war-time pressures, Jeremiah followed the latest developments in Dairy technology. He was always ahead of his time, teaching himself algebra and trigonometry, how to repair machinery, even how to sew. Although costs were rising he invested in the dairy, building a new barn with a cement floor (which had to be frequently resurfaced due to the pitting created by the acid content of the milk) and modern steel stanchions down the centre. By 1917, the farm boasted 22 cows, 1 bull, 13 heifers and three horses. In 1918, he purchased a De Laval milking machine (the first in the area) and a Beatty manure carrier. He also built tracks for manoeuvering the milk and wooden cases of bottles to and from the delivery wagons.

Jeremiah had taken out a loan to buy his first car, a Model T Ford. Until then, he had to travel by streetcar to pick up his extra supplies of milk and cream. He took delivery of his car at the CNR station. The Ford representative gave him a driving lesson to Knight Road and Kingsway and then he was on his own. He managed to steer the car on a straight course to Wales Road but, waving to a neighbour there, swerved and ran into a potato patch. He was very fond of his Model T, later converting it to a delivery wagon. For company he sometimes took with him a Bantam rooster and a cat, the rooster riding on the steering wheel and the cat on the floor.

Toward the end of the war, Jeremiah found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Taxes were increasing but milk prices were still too low to cover costs. Cattle feed was very scarce

45 Everett Crowley, interview with C B Keir, Febuary 6, 1980, (CFP).

and, at $60 a ton, expensive. Because feed was so expensive, Jeremiah leased additional pasture on the site of today's Norquay Park (where he had begun in 1906), around Trout Lake, and at 5650 Wales Road from George Wales, the pioneer settler of South Vancouver.

In 1917, Jeremiah had to stop paying Art Stocker. Instead of leaving, as most employees would have done, Art continued to work at Avalon out of indebtedness to Jeremiah for hiring him during the depression of 1913. Life was made more complicated for Art when he was called up by the military that same year. As he had been brought up a Christadelphian, he did not believe in bearing arms. On December 6, 1917, he was ordered to appear before Mr. Justice Macdonald to justify why he should not be called up to fight "in defence of Canada and the Empire." Since there was no one to replace him on the delivery route he had to rush to finish it and then catch the streetcar down to the courthouse. "What puzzles me" said the court, "is that if you are opposed to fighting, why is it that you can not do something to help the county you live in. Surely there is some service that you could take part in, in which you could serve the nation better than you are doing."[46]

Apparently, the courts of that time did not regard dairy work as a worthwhile war-time contribution. Art was finally granted an exemption on medical grounds. He carried on working as Avalon's sole employee but eventually left when a paid position, delivering bread for Shelley's 4X Bakery, was offered to him.

At the end of the war, the political climate for dairy farmers began to improve. 'Farmer' John Oliver (who helped form the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association in 1913) became premier of British Columbia in 1918, replacing Conservative Bill Bower. A common-sense premier who appealed to all, Oliver always wore a brown tweed suit and square-toed boots.

His government tried to improve the lot of farmers by providing funds for Sumas Prairie land reclamation and a Land Settlement Board. But his policy of a "Farm for every Hero" was not very popular with those veterans who had no wish to farm. Moreover, he came to power at a difficult time. In 1918, rising prices caused Vancouver longshoremen and steel shipworkers to go on strike. Then, in 1919, at the time of the

46 Vancouver Province, December 6, 1917.

Winnipeg General Strike, there was a sympathetic strike of street railmen, electrical workers, telephone operators and some shipping employees.

South Vancouver was still sparsely populated and it could not afford to provide much needed amenities without raising taxes to an untenable level. The municipality of South Vancouver soon began to discuss with the City of Vancouver the possibility of a merger.

Sports activities were popular pastimes. The Collingwood community fielded teams in lacrosse, soccer, and baseball. In 1918, the local newspaper enthusiastically reported that the Collingwood Junior League Soccer Team had beaten the neighbouring Longshoremen, a Senior League Team. The Carleton Centre Baseball Club were league runners-up in 1921, and went on to be the champions in 1923-24.

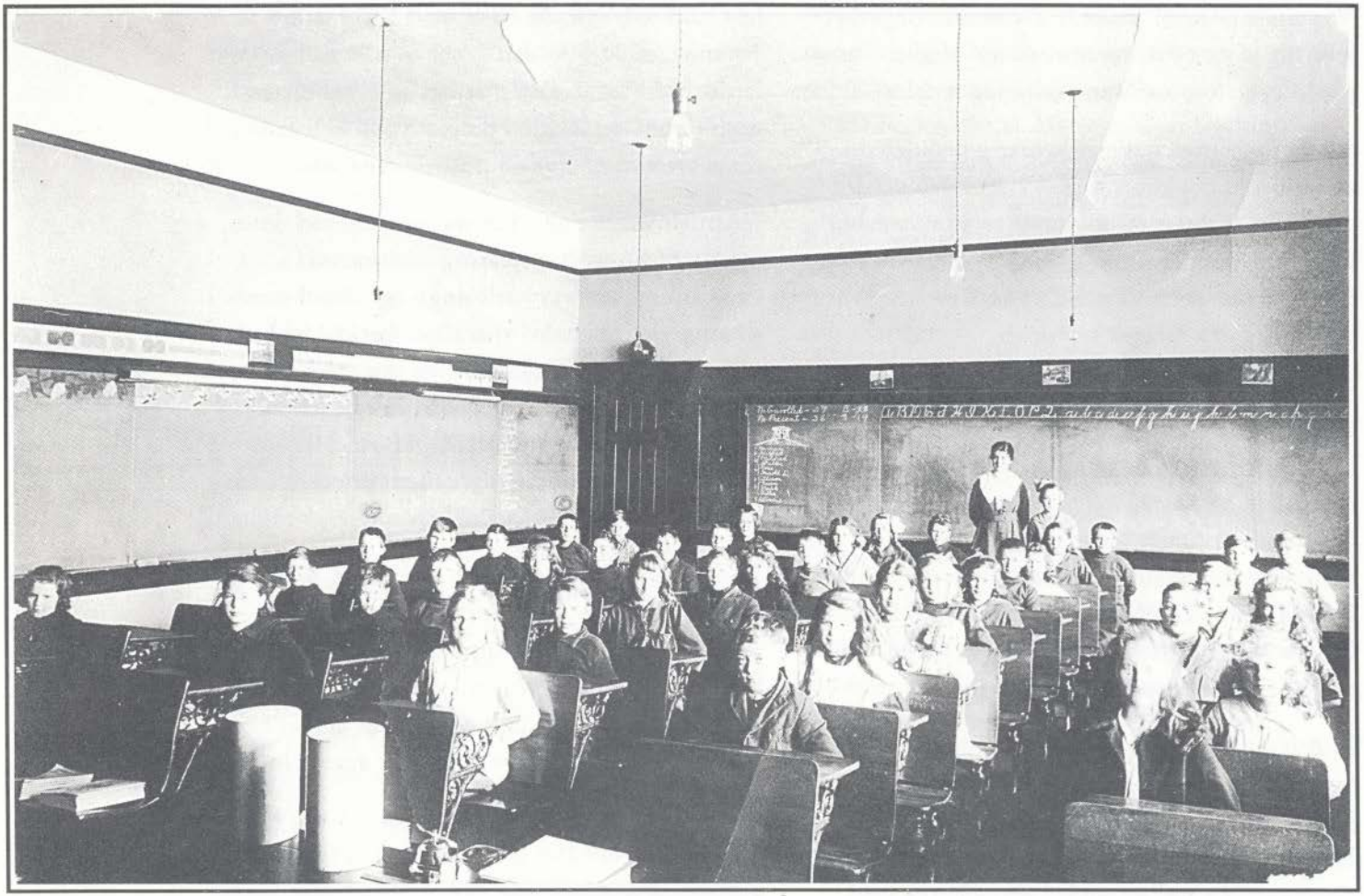
In August 1918, Jeremiah found himself overextended and was forced to auction most of his cows, 44 head in all, to pay outstanding bills. Harvey Crowley, who was five years old at the time, recalls a well-attended auction, the yard full of wagons and Model T Fords. Though auctioneer William Atkinson commented that it was one of the best herds he had ever handled, he could only sell the cows for $2,233, a loss to Jeremiah of $1,500. Art Stocker, who had just left to work at Shelley's, at last received his back wages from the auction proceeds and agreed to come back to Avalon on a part-time basis.

Jeremiah wrote that, "life was now up and down, mostly down with increasing taxation and a large family... it was hard slugging..." and somewhat wryly concluded that, "fate backed by luck and staying power is sometimes rewarded."[47] He kept back half a dozen cows from auction which Maud milked and a neighbour, Mrs. Ovens, came in to look after the housework and children.[48]

The Ovens family originally resided on Wales St. near Norquay Park, and were the nearest neighbours to the Crowley homestead. When their house burnt down in 1912, the Ovens family moved to what would now be the corner of Rhodes St. and 41st Ave. and were again close neighbours of the Crowleys.

47 Journal of Jeremiah Crowley (CFP).

48 Ivan Ovens, interviewed in 1994 at the age of 89, recalled that his mother would often return from her day's work at Avalon laden down with produce, butter, eggs, and milk as part of her wages.



Miss Evans classroom at Carleton School, Everett Crowley in back row left, circa 1916.

After the War, Jeremiah's financial problems at Avalon became even more serious. Milk prices had reached their high at war's end with a quart selling for about 14 cents. By 1921, however, with a greatly increased supply glutting the market, prices fell as low as seven cents a quart. Jeremiah sold his Saskatchewan farm in 1920 for $1,500. To supplement the family income he used his prize Holstein bull to service local cows at $5 per cow. On top of all these difficulties, William Brown, Maud's father, died in January, 1922, leaving Jeremiah on his own at Avalon.

Jeremiah had continued to purchase extra milk from the City Dairy Produce Company until late in 1919 and was paying a seven-cent premium for its non-Association milk.[49] With his herd seriously reduced after the auction, he needed to purchase a lot of milk. For a while he bought milk across the border in Bellingham, delivered via the Great Northern Railway. He picked up his supplies at the interurban station on Earles Road but, since the milk often arrived sour, he eventually made the pragmatic decision in 1922 to buy from the Co-op although he was opposed in principle to its' aims. He was very much an individualist. Avalon absorbed its' own surplus in the summer and had to buy extra milk in the winter when its' customer's demands exceeded supplies.

Jeremiah had been forced to mortgage the Avalon Ranch in 1914 and now was burdened by the debt and unable to pay even his municipal taxes. 1924 was a crisis year. The mortgage holder threatened to foreclose for the $2,745.16 owing and South Vancouver tax officers arranged to sell the Crowley property for back taxes.

Fortunately, there were no willing buyers. Jeremiah kept the mortgager at bay by occasional payments and, with higher milk prices after 1926, repurchased the Avalon Ranch from the municipality with $3,000 loaned by a relative. Tax arrears, however, remained at $4,000, which he agreed to pay over time. (The back taxes were eventually settled in 1936, when Jeremiah offered the City of Vancouver the sum of $2,500, which was accepted. The mortgage, renegotiated in 1936, with $1,000 still owing, was paid off in 1939 with money inherited from his cousin Michael Kennedy).

49 The Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association was a farmers Co–operative formed in 1913 to help farmers achieve stable prices for their milk and find outlets for milk surpluses. By 1923, the Co–op had increased its membership to 60% of dairy farmers in the province.

Avalon was not the only South Vancouver property in tax arrears. Large numbers of others were forced to sell or forfeit their land for taxes. Many of the parks in South Vancouver were created out of land sold in tax sales.

Even the municipality could no longer raise enough revenue for services or to pay the interest on its debts. The situation became so serious that the municipality could not even afford to expand its water supply for the growing population. Suddenly there was not enough municipal water to cool the milk at Avalon. Jeremiah was then forced to borrow the facilities of the Ratcliffe Dairy at 528 East 11th Avenue where young Harvey went to help out. When the municipality of South Vancouver merged with the City of Vancouver in 1929, this problem disappeared. After this experience, however, Jeremiah always kept a working well under the barn in case of an emergency.

In 1919, Jeremiah had been hired to teach first-year drawing, foundry and smithshop in the applied sciences vocational training program for returned soldiers at the University of British Columbia. The university was then housed in the Fairview shacks at the present site of the Vancouver General Hospital.[50] Some of the students Jeremiah taught at these classes were to become well known Vancouver citizens including John C. Oliver, who became city engineer and Harry V. Warren, who distinguished himself as a geologist and pioneer in the field of trace mineral elements found in plant life.[51]

When the university moved to Point Grey in 1923, Jeremiah was invited by the Hon. John D. Maclean, Minister of Education to the laying of the cornerstone of the new science building. In 1924, the Board of Governors appointed him as assistant in iron moulding for two weeks in September at a salary of $150, but he declined to continue shortly thereafter because of the distance to the new university campus.

With retail milk prices now controlled at 11 cents a quart, small independent dairies began to offer their customers "preferred" raw milk – high butterfat, unpasteurized milk that was exempt from the Act. The city health department took exception to what it saw as an abuse of quality control methods but it had no power to stop the

50 UBC records do not exist for Jeremiah's first year of teaching iron moulding, but do record his employment for the summer sessions, 1921–1923.

51 Warren was responsible for discovering that trees absorb lead emitted in automobile exhaust.

Everett Crowley, age 15, 1924.

sales. The number of small independents selling "preferred" raw milk increased from 6 to 60 in one year.[52] Pasteurized milk sales declined accordingly. Initially this shift caused a disruption in the marketplace. Jeremiah was a firm believer in pasteurized milk but sometimes filled a few bottles of raw milk for those customers requesting it.

By 1921, some of the Crowley family had left home for work or travel: Gordon, at age 21, left to work on a freighter, followed by a working trip across the United States; Roy had returned from working on a freighter during the war; Flora worked as a maid at Vancouver General Hospital before leaving to marry Carl Ellingson of Spence's Bridge; Melbourne (a keen horticulturist who seemed to have inherited his father's gardening skills) and Vernon were still at home – they would both begin work as iron moulders; Everett, Mabel, Harvey, Cleveland (Con) and Grant were all still at home.

Harvey Crowley remembers the difficulties of his 1920's boyhood. "We had milk with potatoes and sometimes potatoes with milk. It was a real struggle for existence. Everybody went broke."[53]

However they found time to play after their chores; the barn, especially the hayloft, was always popular. During the winter months they loved skating on the Avalon pond which was regularly hosed by local firefighters to keep the ice smooth. Nearby "40 Acres", between 45th and 50th Avenues, and Trout Lake were other popular skating areas. Everett and Melbourne, close in age, caught fish with a pitchfork in Still Creek at 38th and Wales. One of their favourite pastimes was to run and swing from the single rope attached to a cedar tree on the property.

52 Butter–Fat, Febuary 1931, p.15.

53 Interview with Harvey Crowley, 1986 (CFP).

Surviving the Depression Years

The depression years were difficult for the dairy industry and for Avalon. Milk production was increasing while consumption was decreasing and imports were on the rise, notably from New Zealand where farmers had lower production costs. Even within Canada competition was fierce. Many Prairie farmers, facing low grain prices, had turned to dairying and were exporting milk and butter to British Columbia. Everett Crowley wrote:

> *In 1927, {I} graduated from South Vancouver High School. The depression was beginning and by 1929 thousands of men were criss-crossing Canada 'riding the rods' in search of jobs. Eventually this state of affairs resulted in labour camps where men were paid $1 a day. By 1930, I was out of a job and the thing I hated most was about to happen. I took an empty wagon and started to build a route. That was my lot for the next fifty years.*[54]

Jeremiah Crowley also recorded his thoughts in his journal. He wrote that "the depression which is rampaging all over the country had not left us people out...Taxation has reached a crushing point here... The city is hopelessly in debt and the Province of B.C. about $200,000 for a population of 600,000 people." Though the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary was the big news in Vancouver on 6 May, 1935. Jeremiah also recorded a protest against relief camps, held by 10,000 people in Vancouver at Hastings Park Arena that day.[55]

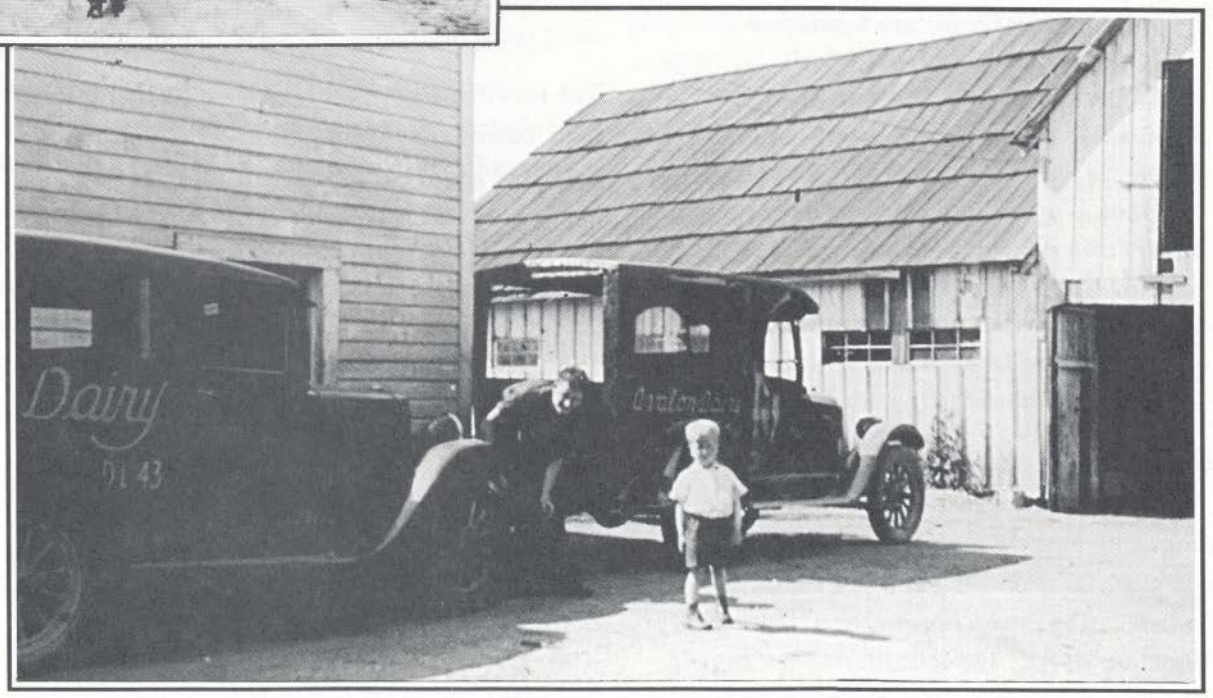
In the rapidly shifting market situation at the onset of the Depression, Avalon suddenly had to change its status from producer-vendor to simply dairy. Just as the Depression hit, Avalon's dairy cattle were found to have tuberculosis.

The provincial government had been doing sporadic bovine tuberculosis testing for a number of years. By 1914, the federal government had introduced regulations which allowed all towns and municipalities to request a federal inspection to test local dairy cattle. Gradually, individual towns and cities took advantage of this new service. The resulting losses to many farmers were considerable as many individuals lost entire herds of cattle to the slaughter house. In 1922, the federal government gave the program greater weight. It moved to establish restricted areas for

54 Journal of Jeremiah Crowley

55 Everett Crowley, *op cit.*

Jeremiah Crowley in Avalon barnyard with Ford car (license 72–301), circa 1928.



Pat West (with Gordon Crowley's son Vern) and Avalon delivery trucks, circa 1933.

the eradication of bovine tuberculosis[56] and in 1926, the provincial government requested aid under this program. Federal inspectors tested cattle every year until the disease was wiped out.

In 1931, Avalon's cows were found to be infected. All of them were driven to the slaughterhouse at 43rd and Prince Albert. There was limited compensation. A cow that cost $200 during World War 1 was worth about half that in compensation from the federal government. Jeremiah was in no financial position to replace the herd. He could either quit the dairy business altogether or buy all of his milk from farmers and continue solely as a dairy, bottling and delivering as before. There really was no choice. The depression was at its depth and the Crowley family depended on Avalon for its livelihood.

Jeremiah advertised in the Province newspaper for four or five shippers who could send him two or three cans a day. He received replies from several farms and even one from a Co-op member who would be willing to ship "preferred" raw milk. Avalon Ranch Dairy continued to purchase its milk, became solely Avalon Dairy and never owned it's own cows again.

Few of the Crowley children were interested in dairying. Jeremiah had the reputation of being an eccentric man and his family found him difficult at times. However, jobs were scarce and some of Everett's other brothers were also to return to work at the Avalon. Gordon went to work as a driver for the Vancouver Heights Dairy, returning Avalon to work as a jobber. Harvey had a job in a cement factory and eventually returned to do inside dairy work and take on a route. Cleveland (Con) worked for a short time in a smithshop then returned to drive a route on Capital Hill. Others of the Crowley children still lived at home while going out to work. Mabel went to work as a secretary in the offices of a candy factory and later was to manage the firm of Valley Wholesale Tobacco in Chilliwack. Sylvia, who strongly resembled her mother, became Maud Crowley's main homehelp. Sadly, Grant (Bus) was to die of bone marrow cancer in 1936, at 16 years of age. Vera, (Bubbles), was still in school.

By 1929, the practise of pasteurizing milk was becoming more common, although it was still a highly contentious issue. The advantages of

56 Gordon C, Church, *An Unfailing Faith: History of the Saskatchewan Dairy Industry.* Regina: University of Regina Press, 1985, p. 126.

Jeremiah Crowley (in bowler hat) with his sons, haying the back field at Avalon, circa 1931.

pasteurized milk would be disputed for many years to come. Some customers resisted the change. They objected to the idea of 'cooked milk', did not like the taste and believed that their children would do better on raw milk. One of the strongest arguments against pasteurization was that it was an excuse for the sale of 'dirty milk'.[57]

Not everyone chose to convert to pasteurization. Many small dairies could not afford it and there were plenty of customers willing to buy raw milk. But undulant fever, scarlet fever, septic sore throat and typhoid continued to be a problem and there were continual cries for compulsory pasteurization. Jeremiah had decided to convert to pasteurization at Avalon and, as he was very clever mechanically, set out to make his own equipment.

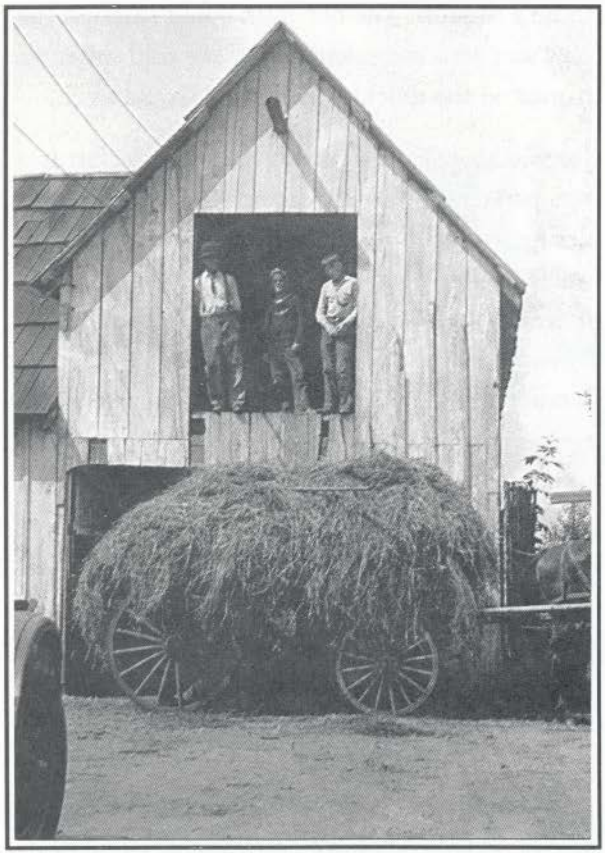
He first experimented with a type of box pasteurizer in which wooden cases holding 12 quarts were placed. The box was insulated and had a heavy lid. Steam from the boiler was turned into the box and everything was pasteurized – cases, bottles and milk. Then cold water was passed through the box to cool the milk. It turned out to be a disaster. The hot milk oozed through the caps and became cooked and, if the cold water was turned on too quickly, the bottles would crack.

Jeremiah's next design was more successful. It was patterned after the factory-made open vat design in which milk was heated using hot water and then slowly agitated with large paddles. The milk was then cooled by water (later by mechanical refrigeration) and bottled. Jeremiah made several of these milk pasteurizers and sold them to other dairies.

He began using the Babcock test at Avalon which measured the butterfat content of milk and thus was able to offer customers their choice of butterfat content (either 3, 4, or 5 percent at that time) in their milk.

Avalon survived the depression by scraping along in whatever way was possible. Some customers came to the dairy door to pick up their requirements, dropping their money in a can and making their own change. Most sales, however, were by delivery. Several routes were taken by jobbers, agents selling the milk on commission basis and by the end of the Depression Avalon had five: two operated by Charles West and his son Pat in Collingwood East, and three

57 *Arguments for an Against Pasteurization'*, reprinted by Jersey Farms from The Canadian Dairy and Ice Cream Journal, 1933 (CFP)



Jeremiah Crowley, son Cleveland (Con) and friend in barn hayloft at Avalon, circa 1935.

others by Bill Parker, Don Christopherson and Gordon Crowley.

Gordon Crowley's route in the East Hastings area mostly serviced customers on municipal relief. Each municipality paid for such items as milk, groceries, bread, meat, clothing, shoes, shelter, light and fuel for the unemployed who could not afford to buy their own. The City of Vancouver paid only 6.67 cents per quart for relief milk in 1933, a much lower price than dairies received from regular customers.

Everett Crowley recalled that:

> *In the early days of night delivery, a whole book could be written on the events while delivering on a route. Everything from delivering babies to laying out dead people, and all the while the faithful horse went about his duties with marvellous obedience. It has been said, and with a good degree of credence, that the horse would do the route himself if the customer would take his requirements off the wagon and start him up again; without fail he would stop at the next call. It was not uncommon for the horse to take the wagon all the way back to the barn without incident, with the driver sound asleep on the empty cases.*[58]

On January 13, 1936, the City of Vancouver passed a bylaw prohibiting night-time delivery of milk between October 1 and April 30. For some time, drivers had been complaining their milk wagons were hit by cars at night and those with motorized vans complained they could find no open service stations. While the by-law was a great relief to delivery people and their families, consumers complained bitterly of not receiving their breakfast milk in time and of the danger to the health of the children and the sick. The 'Fresh Milk League', seeking an amendment to the bylaw, got up a petition of 400 names but was unable to persuade the civic health committee to rescind the new order.

For the first time, dairy drivers could entertain the possibility of a 'normal' family life. "Everyone knows how disagreeable it is not to have milk for breakfast," said Everett Crowley, "but I will venture to say very few people realize just what the milkman has to do to get the milk to your doorstep. When a man has to start out to do his day's work when almost everyone else is going to bed undoubtedly there is something wrong."[59]

He went on to say:

> *Traditionally, milk had always been delivered in the early hours of the morning. Those engaged in delivery witnessed the sun come up in the morning and go down again in the evening, 365 times a year. Everyone had to have milk before breakfast and a common starting time was one o'clock in the morning. It was a regular occurence to have to leave a party early to go home and feed the horse and load the wagon. Sunday was the same as any other day, except no collections were made on the way home.*
>
> *Great was the public consternation when the industry decided to cut out Sunday delivery. The daily press carried headlines of the threat to public health, particularly to babies who doubtless would suffer health deficiencies for the rest of their lives. After much controversy, Vancouver City Council passed a by-law prohibiting Sunday delivery. All this, of course, was before refrigeration and only those who could afford it had ice delivered once a week. Milk was 12qts for a dollar.*[60]

Charles West began jobbing for Avalon in 1932 when Jeremiah was in the middle of modernizing the dairy building by installing more windows, a ventilating system and mechanical refrigeration.

58 Everett Crowley, *op.cit.*

59 Draft of a letter by E. Crowley to Vancouver Province, n.d. (CFP)

60 Ibid.

Jeremiah Crowley and Pat West (long time Avalon delivery-man) in vegetable garden beside the barn at Avalon, circa 1935.

Sylvia and a friend in the hayfield, circa 1931.

An ice-skating party at Avalon, winter of 1935. The local fire department would flood the pond from the nearby fire hydrant to renew the surface. Strings of lights were put up around the pond to allow for night skating. (Two of the Crowley children are in this photograph: Grant {'Bus'} at the extreme left, Vera {'Bubbles'} second from right.)

West put together a Collingwood East route in February and Pat, the 16 year old son, helped his father in the mornings. When he left school that June he joined his father full-time receiving $18 a week plus board. The two then split the route, Charles keeping 160 customers for himself and giving 220 to Pat. They would start delivering at 3:30a.m,. having loaded up their vehicles the night before.

It was a difficult time to be in the jobbing business. Competition was fierce, especially from the Co-op's Associated Dairies and the popular locally-owned Melrose Dairy on Kingsway which also sold ice-cream. After deliveries were done, Charles would canvass for customers, sometimes acquiring 'dead beats', customers let go by Associated Dairies. A third of their customers were on relief – the city providing seven quarts a week to two people and 14 to a family of four. Some people would cash in their relief tickets to buy food. Things were made even more difficult when customers could not afford to pay their milk bill and then West, faced with a dilemma, extended them credit. Also, when the milk money left by customers with their bottles for collection was stolen, they had no choice but to give their customers credit. This situation was improved when Avalon introduced milk tickets, ten for a dollar, but sometimes these were also stolen (paper tickets were later replaced by reusable tokens).

It could not have been a worse time to begin a new route. The Depression caused chaos in all agricultural sectors, not least in the dairy industry. Many dairy farmers could not afford to take out auto licences or pay their bills and a good number of Soldier Settlers in particular lost their farms for delinquent taxes.

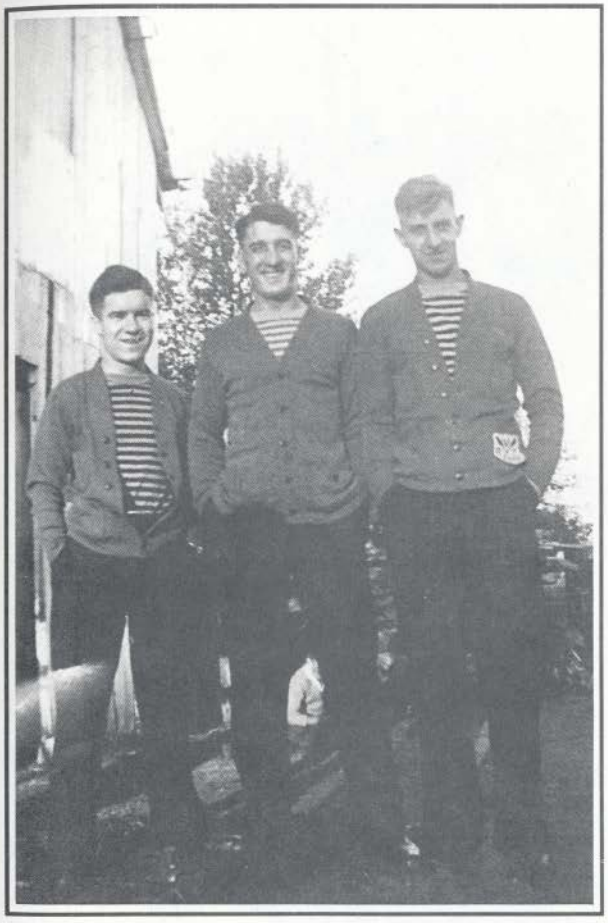
Everett Crowley was the seventh son in the large Crowley family and was eventually to take over from his father as the owner/manager of Avalon Dairy. Born in 1909, he graduated from South Vancouver High School in 1927. He had been a good student, excelling in history and diligently studying Latin as his father had done. He would have preferred a career in the law but his father's attempts to save for his children's higher education had been wiped out by the vagaries of the dairy market. After he left school, Everett found a summer job as a bag boy at a Moraine Lake guest house in the Rockies. In the winter, he worked at Ghost River Dam in Alberta. In 1928, he began work as an iron moulder at the

Vancouver Stove & Heater Works, then became a stockman at the tile company of Darlington and Haskins. Somehow he continued to play football and saxophone (the latter an irritant to his father) and to take night-school courses in technical drafting and book-keeping. In 1930, he lost his job "and the thing he hated most was about to happen". He did not get on well with his father but he had little alternative – he took an empty wagon and a case of milk and started a route.[61] Later on, he was to observe that there was no better education than being a door-to-door salesman.

By then, the rest of the Crowley children had found other occupations. Vera, who still lived at home, worked as a stenographer and Roy as a bridge contractor. Both Gordon and Melbourne were iron moulders, as was Vernon, whose political beliefs caused him constant arguments with his father and, more seriously, blacklisting by local employers after the war. (He was said to have refused an order to make ship's propellers on the grounds that the working conditions were inadequate.)

By 1938, Everett Crowley had been doing a milk route for eight years and was becoming more committed to Avalon Dairy. He was a young man, still in his twenties, and perpetual night work was hardly congenial. He had been courting Jean Fraser, a graduate of John Oliver High School, who had attended the University of British Columbia where she graduated in bacteriology. She was then working at the Vancouver General Hospital. The Cedar Cottage United Church young people's group offered them most of their social and sports activities and Ev's model A Ford was their transportation. In August 1938, they were married at the Cedar Cottage United Church. For their three-week honeymoon (unheard of those days), Jean and Everett took their 1926 Dodge and home-made trailer through the United States to Moraine Lake in the Rockies where Ev had worked after leaving school.

61 Everett Crowley, *op. cit.*



Left:
Everett Crowley (centre) Boyd Gordon (right) and Bill Ebert (they called themselves 'The Three Musketeers'), circa 1930.

Right:
Sylvia and Mel with a friend and an Avalon dairy truck, circa 1930.

Bill Parker, Avalon delivery-man, with horse and sleigh and his dog, at 51st Ave. and Fraser St. during the winter of 1935.

Avalon delivery wagon in original colours of dark green with cream lettering.

The Second World War Brings Prosperity and Post-War Problems

In another year the country was at war. The Boeing aircraft factory on False Creek bought tons of Sitka spruce from the Queen Charlotte Islands for the construction of Mosquito bombers, the Trail smelter could not keep up with the demand for ammonia, lead and zinc for armaments, while Vancouver shipyards made Liberty-class merchant ships and Victory ships for the Royal Navy. The increasing prosperity attracted workers from outside the province, contributing to an acute housing shortage which continued for several years after the war as returning servicemen made Vancouver their permanent home.

In the first year of the war, when world trade was disrupted but before the chronic food shortages of most of the war years had begun, Jeremiah took the initiative of advertising has intention to manufacture condensed milk for export in the 1940 Canadian Trade Index. He received dozens of responses from merchants in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Pacific. But rapid changes, especially the assumption of control over almost all phases of agricultural production and export by the Canadian government, soon closed off Jeremiah's planned export venture.

Declaration of war gave the federal government powers which neither province nor dominion had been able to secure from the courts in peacetime. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board, which began the control of milk marketing in September 1942, was able to impose a new order on the dairy industry. It succeeded in obtaining supply management where one marketing act after another had failed. Rising prices, a consequence of war-time demand for manufactured milk products, was a factor in the lessening of the bitter conflict between the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association (FVMPA) and the independent milk producers, which had characterized the Depression years. Great Britain, cut off from its usual sources of dairy products in Europe, began to look to Canada for its supplies. As Canada geared its surplus milk industry for the export market, the Wartime Prices and Trade Board provided subsidies of up to 30 cents per hundredweight for surplus milk. The war brought prosperity to the dairy industry.

As a means of maximizing production, the Board allocated monthly production quotas, imposed price controls on feed and provided a subsidy of two cents per quart for consumer milk prices. Farmers, however, were not very keen on these subsidies because they knew that, when the war was over and the subsidies were

Everett Crowley ploughing the front field at Avalon, circa 1945.

Maud Crowley, Christmas, 1942.

lifted, consumers would have to pay more and that increases in milk prices always cut demand.

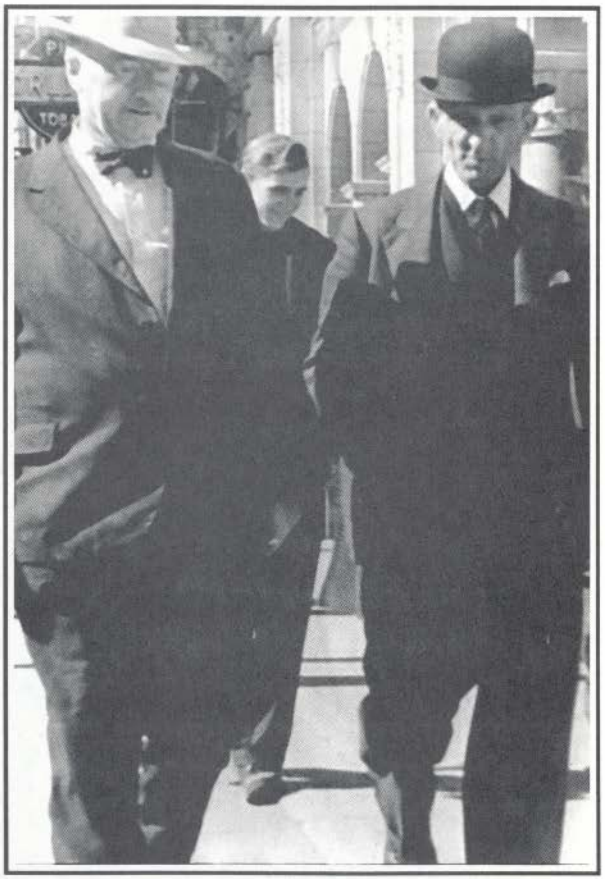
The war years were not without difficulties for the dairy industry. Many delivery jobbers, producer-vendors and farm workers left the industry to serve overseas or in high-paying armament plants. Between January, 1940 and March, 1942, the number of farm labourers dropped by 18 percent. Other difficulties included shortages of fertilizers, feed, fuel, tires, milk bottles and tin for milk cans, especially after the Japanese captured Singapore in 1942.

In May of that year, to cut down on gas and rubber consumption, the Wartime Prices and Trade Board ordered the dairy industry to rationalize its haulage routes. The FVMPA and the two independent associations, the Milk Shipper's Agency and the Independent Milk Producers Co-operative, allocated individual haulage zones from farm to dairy and from dairy to consumer. Wholesale dealers of produce, eggs, poultry, and dairy products were asked to deliver to half of the Vancouver area's retailers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the other half on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.[62] Small delivery dairies were requested to confine their routes to their immediate vicinity. Avalon shortened its routes, some by as much as 50 percent, and gave up its Kitsilano route in 1941, when delivery-man Bill Parker left. Avalon had complied with the Board's wishes, but the route would have been difficult to maintain in any

case, given Bill Parker's departure and difficulties obtaining tires and gasoline.

Avalon experienced all the problems of wartime shortages though it was fortunate enough to have a reasonably stable workforce. Everett was too old to enlist and stayed at Avalon along with his brothers Con and Harvey who, by then, were discharged from military service. Bill White was hired to help Ev inside the dairy, testing, weighing and grading the milk. Pat West had been turned down for service and stayed on at Avalon with his father, Charles, who retired in 1944.[63]

Jeremiah Crowley, who had turned 65 in 1940, was still active around the dairy. Eccentric as ever, he spent summer afternoons asleep under the big maple, accompanied by his beloved orange cat, the occasional goose and yet another Bantam rooster. Also next to him would be one of a succession of dairy dogs which remain a feature of Avalon to this day.

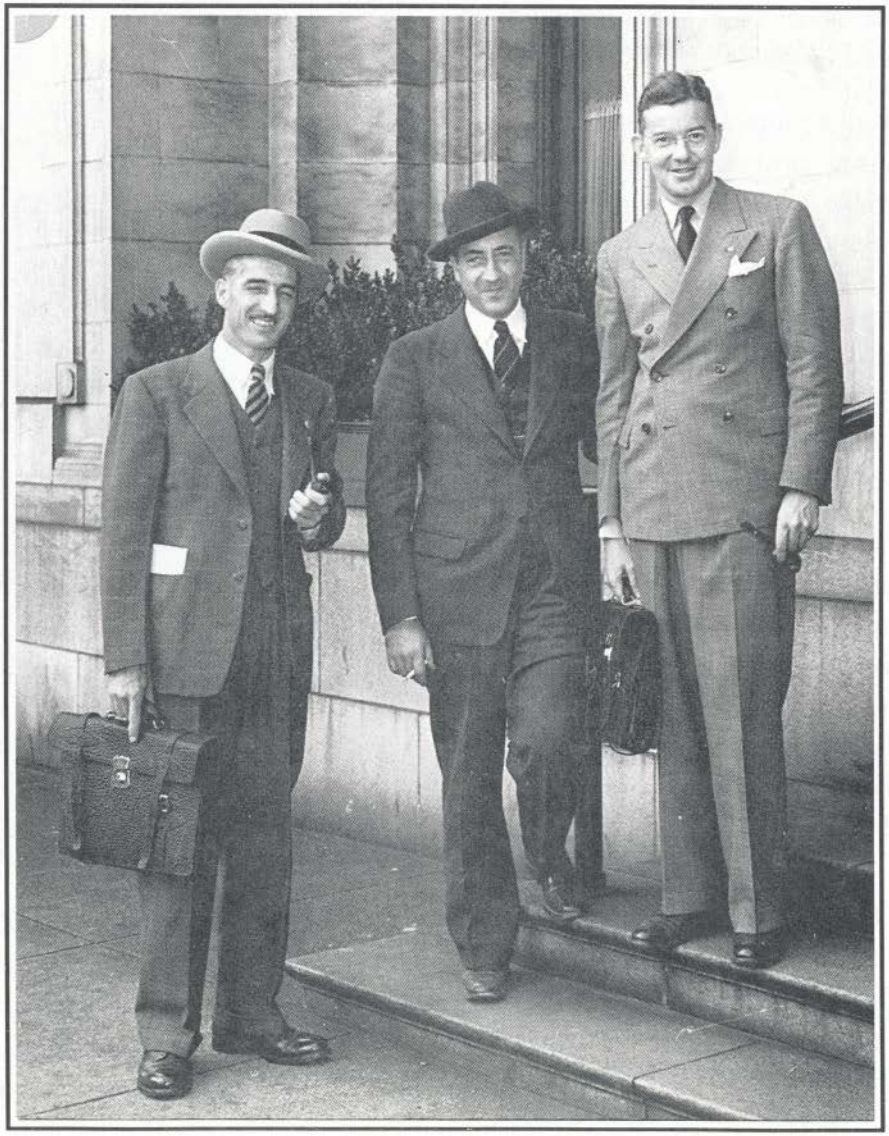


Jeremiah Crowley with a friend on Granville St., circa 1940's.

Even with Jeremiah, Ev, Con, and Harvey Crowley, Pat West and the others working, Avalon did not always have enough employees. The federal government, which controlled the movement of the wartime labour force, sent along

62 W.L. Macken to Milk Distributors, August 18, 1942. (CFP).

63 Pat West was very active as a sports coach. His first team was the Avalon Dairy team, a girl's softball team at Robson Park sponsored by Jeremiah Crowley. They wore the Avalon colours, green shirts embroidered in the back with the Avalon name in white. It was quite common then for dairy owners to sponsor team sports.



Three presidents of the Vancouver Junior Board of Trade; Everett Crowley, Malcolm Ferguson, and Archie Cater, photo taken 1945.

people to work at the dairy but they seldom proved very suitable. Eventually, Ev and Harvey decided to go it alone, each doing a route 12 hours a day, seven days a week, while Pat West, along with Tommy Styles, continued their jobbing routes. Con helped his father and Bill White inside the dairy. As an efficiency measure, they introduced a home-made automatic bottle washer. The machine could wash, rinse and steam-sterilize four cases of 12 bottles each. When all the cases were washed it could be converted to wash and sterilize the milk cans.

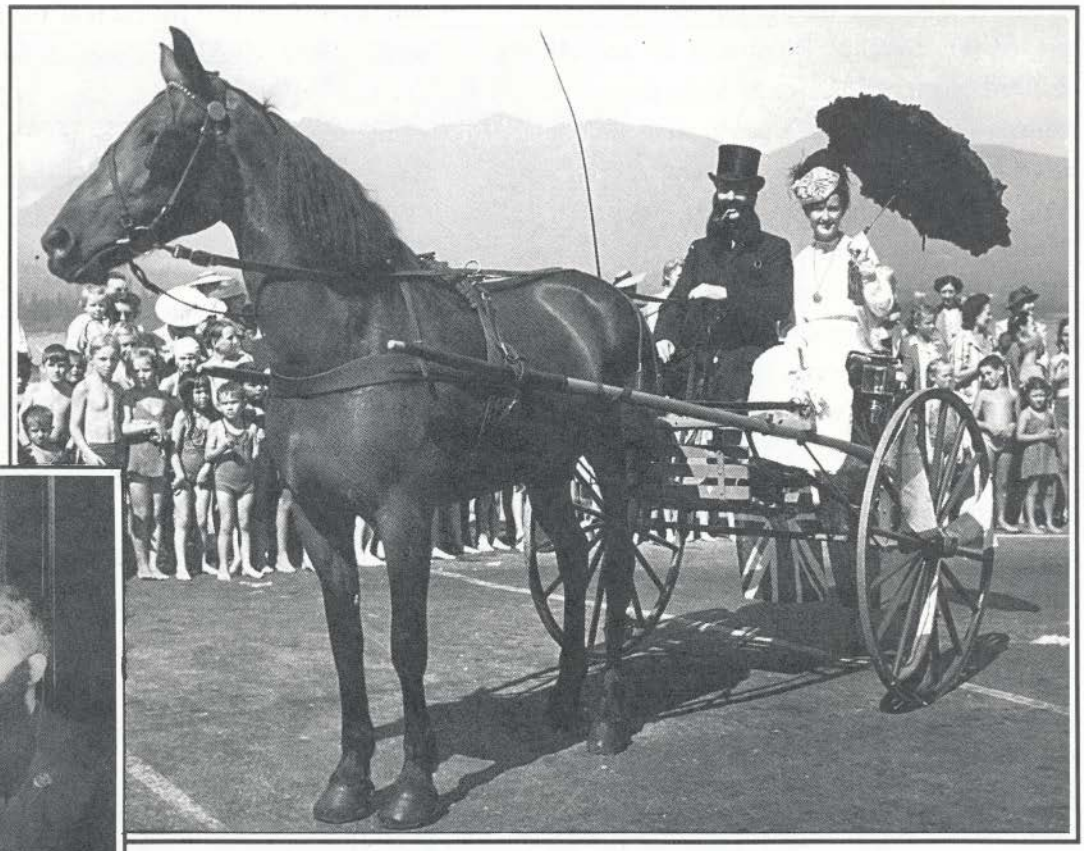
Before the war was over, the federal government, only too aware of the collapse of farm prices after World War 1, made plans for a more stable conversion to a post-war economy. In 1944, it introduced an act "for the support of prices of agricultural products during the transition from war to peace" which established the federal Agricultural Prices Support Board. The new Board, which began operation in 1946, initially supported the price of butter and cheese, particularly when margarine became legal in 1951. It later changed its transitional mandate to the permanent one of "stabilizing the prices of agricultural commodities in order to assist the industry of agriculture to realize fair returns for its labour and investment and the costs of the goods and services they buy, thus to provide farmers with a fair share of the national income."[64] It mandated marketing controls largely to the provincial boards but continued to subsidize cheese, skim milk and other industrial dairy products.

In British Columbia, milk became a provincial public utility in 1946 when the Public Utilities Commission took over responsibility for stabilizing prices from the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. It created a one-person Milk Board in the hope of reducing conflict Between Co-op members and the independents. The Board fixed the price of milk to both producers and consumers. The consumer price was set at 12 cents per quart, two cents higher than the subsidized wartime price. In an effort to deflect the expected criticism of the price increase, the Vancouver Milk Distributors' Association (of which Avalon was a member), took out advertisements in 1945 in the local newspapers warning of the removal of the two-cent subsidy. The Association exhorted dairy drivers to "help the industry to meet its post-war problems be explaining this [the price rise] at every opportunity."[65]

64 Veronica McCormick, *op. cit.* p.58.

65 Circular distribution to members of the Vancouver Milk Distributor's Association, July 19, 1945 (CFP).

Everett and Jean Crowley, in period costume, with horse and buggy in a reenactment of the dedication of Stanley Park in 1889. The parade was held during the summer of 1943.



The independents were not entirely happy with this situation. Production costs had increased during the war and were again rising rapidly, and they would have preferred a larger increase in consumer prices. The Co-op members favoured the new price control scheme. Reduced competition and a guaranteed Board price for milk had allowed them to increase their shares of the market substantially during the war. Increased prices might prevent them from maintaining that share.

Consumers were suspicious. They complained bitterly when the subsidy was removed. The most identifiable target for their wrath, now that war-time zoning had been lifted, was the large number of small dairies duplicating delivery routes. W.L. Macken, General Manager of the FVMPA, defending the status quo, stated in an address to the Provincial Council of Women in October, 1946, that all distributors were working at full capacity and more deliveries, not fewer, were needed. He explained that though delivery zones had been established under the exigencies of war, when they had been tried in the 1930's they had failed because customers preferred to patronize the dairy of their choice. He emphasized that Vancouver milk prices were low compared to Toronto, Seattle and New York City, noting that from 1939 to 1944, while prices of groceries had risen by 118 percent, milk had increased only 40 percent from ten cents a quart in 1935 to 14 cents in 1946. In the meantime, wages had increased 60 percent between 1935 and 1944, and farmers were facing very high production costs.[66]

One important result of the increase in milk prices to consumers after the war was a decline in consumption. Because prices were fixed to the consumer and producer, the competition moved to a different arena – the wholesale level. In order to attract and retain new fluid milk customers, larger dairies began to offer inducements such as low-interest loans and gifts of refrigerators and freezers to hotels, restaurants and stores. Small dairies, such as Avalon were unable to play this game. Competition became so fierce that arguments even broke out between different Co-op's. The Richmond Milk Producer's Co-op (formerly the Richmond and Marpole Farmers' Association) complained that the FVMPA offered low ice cream prices to lure away their customers.[67] The FVMPA, facing high production costs, was unable

66 Butter Fat, November, 1946, pp. 2–4.

67 Report of the Royal Commission on Milk, 1954–1955, p. 14.

to pay the established Board price to its producers. It found a reason not to – it was not legally bound under the Co-operative Association Act to comply with Board orders. It continued, however, to complain about others who, because of high costs, failed to pay the Board price. The Milk Board was concerned with the illegal enducements offered by the larger dairies, but, though their existence was common knowledge, it found it increasingly difficult to collect evidence to prosecute.

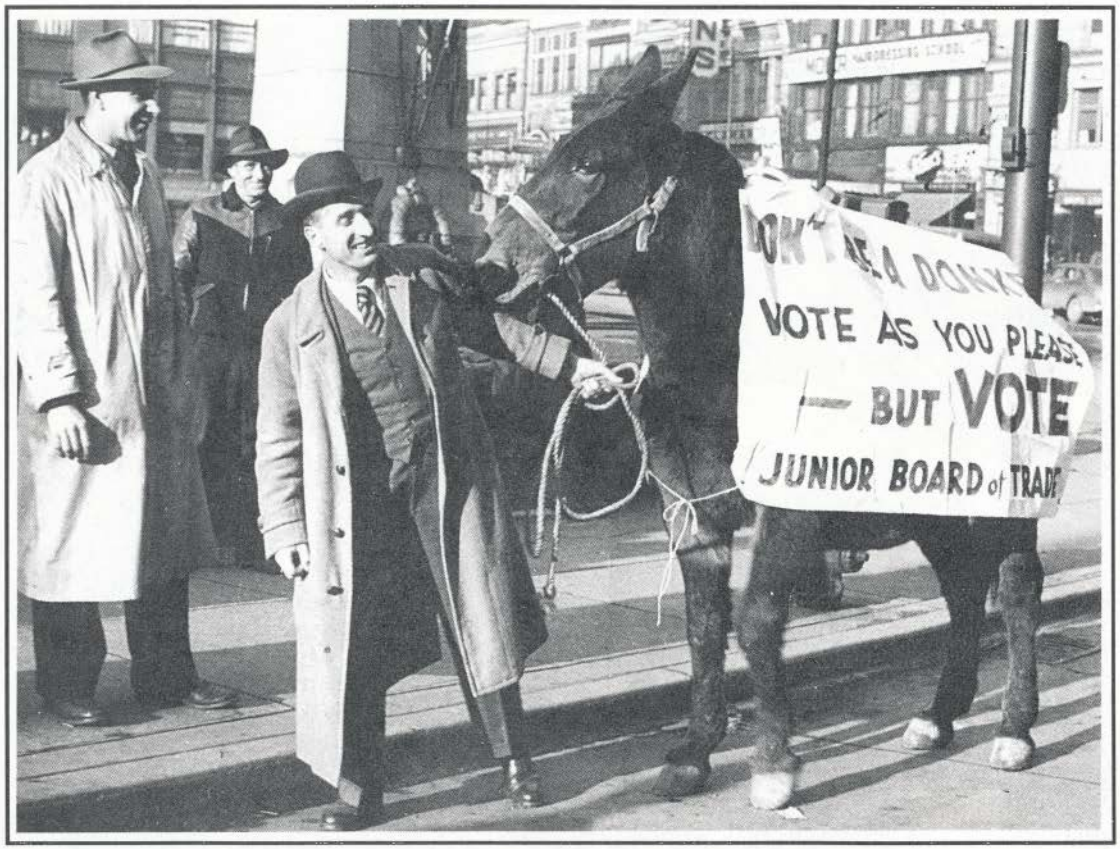
The result of this increasing competition was the loss of revenue to both Co-op and independent farmer. Acton Kilby of the Milk Shippers' Agency asked the Milk Board to reimpose feed controls and he commented on how difficult it was to keep a "boy on the farm when whistle punks are getting $1.17 per hour in logging camps."[68] Some farmers gave up and sold their herds.

Avalon, too, had difficulty keeping workers. Wages were high and jobs were plentiful. The dairy kept the routes it had been allocated during the war and, in a move toward greater efficiency, began to remodel the plant by enlarging the dairy building, raising its roof and building an office. It also seemed an appropriate time to upgrade the sewage system.

Avalon was required to take all milk produced by its suppliers. Skim milk was not yet popular among consumers, so any milk left over from processing, Avalon either sold to pig farmers or dumped in nearby drains. This practice had attracted rats and resulted in a sour smell in the hot summer months when excess milk was most likely. This caused nearby residents to complain.

Jeremiah made arrangements with the city for the necessary permits for a drainage tiles and remodelling. Everything seemed ready for the contractor when the city issued a stop-work order. Since the dairy, it said, did not conform with the residential zoning of the neighbourhood, no expansion could take place. Twigg Island Dairy at 38th and Fraser agreed to bottle Avalon's milk and to continue for as long as necessary. Jeremiah fought the City of Vancouver on the grounds that when the City absorbed South Vancouver in 1929, Avalon's acreage was zoned farmland, not a residential property and therefore, it should not be subject to new zoning bylaws. When the city continued to disagree, Jeremiah threatened to sue.

68 Vancouver Province, March 11, 1948.



Everett Crowley at Victory Square in downtown Vancouver. Ev and the mule took part in the Junior Board of Trade "Get Out and Vote Campaign" in 1945.

Everett and Jean Crowley at Moraine Lake, B.C. on a Junior Board of Trade "See B.C. First" Caravan, 1946.

Eventually city officials relented, agreeing to let the modernization go ahead but would not allow the dairy roof to be raised or the office to be built. The contractors installed the new sewers and enlarged the dairy building, the office eventually taking up part of the basement of the farmhouse.

In 1948, with a newly renovated dairy, Jeremiah and his sons felt it was time to buy a new surface cooler and pasteurizer, this time a vapour-type to replace the paddle-type that Jeremiah had made in the 1920s. They also purchased two new delivery vans and a homogenizer from Twigg Island Dairy. The homogenization process, by which milk is forced though a screen of very small holes in order to break up the fat globules of cream had been in existence for many years but homogenized milk became popular only in Edmonton, where it sold for a premium price. In Vancouver, where there was great price resistance, the dairies could only sell it at the same price as regular cream-topped milk.

In 1951, three years after the modernization was complete the barn burned down. It was suspected neighbourhood children playing in the barn set fire to the hay crop. The barn's roof was entirely burnt off but the old wagons and the horses were saved and moved to temporary quarters. The stanchions, which Jeremiah had purchased during World War 1, survived and fetched $200 each, more than the purchase price nearly 40 years earlier. The barn was re-built incorporating the part of the old structure which remained.

Everett Crowley on the cover page of the Board of Trade magazine in September, 1945, the year of his presidency. He was photographed wearing his usual Avalon working uniform of striped coveralls.

Crowley family portrait taken after Jeremiah Crowley's funeral, 1950.

The surviving delivery wagons and the two old horses no longer fitted the changing dairy industry. Horses were fast disappearing from the street; Avalon finally retired theirs in 1953. The last horses used in milk delivery in Vancouver were those that belonged to Guernsey Breeders' Dairy an independent which, when it was taken over by Jersey Farms in 1955, replaced its Clydesdale horses with motorized vans. No longer would the traffic on Burrard Street bridge need to be cut from three lanes to two during the morning rush hours to allow horses to cross.[69]

Jeremiah was very fond of animals and had never destroyed his horses, always claiming that they deserved, after more than 15 years of service to retire to pasture. There had been Blackie, Brownie, Bent Beak, Sandy – a nervous strawberry roan who could turn on the tap for a drink – and many others.

In 1946, Jeremiah and Maud took a three-month trip home to Newfoundland while their sons ran the dairy. Jeremiah had always maintained links with his original home, at one time becoming president of Vancouver's Newfoundland Association. Formed in the early 1930s, it was a well patronized organization with 150 members that held an annual picnic and dinner.

Jeremiah died at the age of 74 in September, 1950. He had become ever more difficult over the years, especially to his children. But his intelligence and organizational abilities had served Avalon well during the difficult years of the 1930s when the dairy industry experienced its worst times. His knowledge was always useful to his sons as they maintained the struggle in the post-war years. "He was well respected and his opinion was well thought of," wrote a former employee of independent Crystal Dairy.[70]

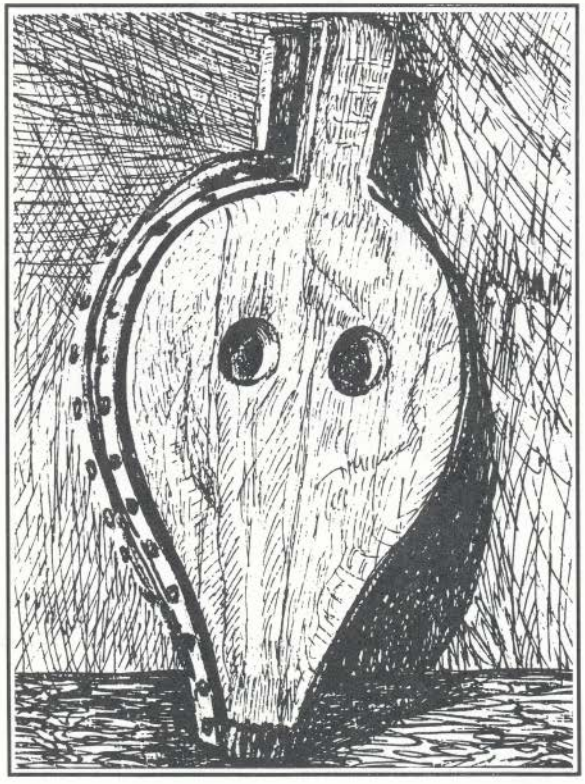
Like many a Newfoundlander, Jeremiah Crowley left no will. Legislation required that the estate be divided between the surviving spouse, who would receive one-third, and the children, who would divide the balance; a situation that was bound to cause conflict in a large family. After much discussion, Everett, Harvey and Con, who had been running Avalon, decided against selling the dairy. (Avalon was now situated on non-conforming property, in the middle of a residential area, and the City of Vancouver would be unlikely to issue a dairy licence to a new owner. This problem had occurred as other small dairies folded.) The family

69 The Vancouver Sun, June 19, 1955.

70 Cyril E. Pheby in a letter to Everett Crowley, June 27, 1979 (CFP).

could have sold the land for housing, but moving the dairy elsewhere, far from its established routes, was impractical. And, with their mother only receiving one third of the estate, there was her future financial security to consider.

The three brothers incorporated Avalon into a limited company with their mother holding the principal interest while they held the balance. Maud Crowley become president, Everett vice-president and Thomas Campbell, a friend of Ev Crowley's from the Junior Board of Trade and now Avalon's lawyer, became Secretary, Con and Harvey became directors but with equal status to their brother. All assets, except the land, were transferred to this new company and it paid rent to Maud Crowley for the property. In 1952, now aged 76, she sold the dairy property to Avalon Holdings Limited and moved from the Avalon farmhouse to an apartment on Victoria Drive with her daughter Vera. After renovating the house, which was now in need of repair, Jean, Everett and their three children, Merrilyn Jeaneve, born in 1940, Fraser Grant, born in 1942, and Leon Everett, born in 1945, moved to 5805 Wales.



Shop bellows used in Avalon Dairy barn forge for horseshoeing. Jeremiah Crowley, and later his son Everett and some of the other brothers, learned this necessary skill.

Maud Crowley died in 1956 at the age of 80. Much loved by her children and grandchildren, she was happiest when the large dining room table was crowded with her family. She had seen two of her sons die at an early age, Stanley at age 14 and Grant at age 16. A half century had passed since she and Jeremiah had settled in Vancouver to start the Crowley farm and Avalon Dairy.

The 1950's are Challenging Years for Avalon

While Ev, Con, and Harvey worked together at the dairy, Everett gradually assumed a position of leadership. He shared many traits with his father Jeremiah, notably a fierce independence of will and spirit and a dogged determination to see things through. He, too, was a fighter.

Everett would need all his skills, acquired and inherited, to keep Avalon Dairy going in the rapidly changing milk industry of the 1950's. Improved cattle breeding and technology had resulted in higher milk production per cow. This contributed to an exodus of people from farms and a gradual increase in farm size. The Korean War, which increased the demand in the U.S. for live cattle, had attracted a number of dairy farmers into the cattle business. The result was a decline in milk production. This changed in 1952, when an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Western Canada forced the U.S. to impose a ban on imported cattle. Milk production began to increase once more.

Higher production was also encouraged by the high price given dairy farmers through the Milk Board's control, at both the retail and producer levels. Between 1949 and 1954, Vancouver retail milk prices rose 29 percent, outdistancing both the consumer price index and milk prices elsewhere in Canada. By 1954, retail milk cost consumers 22 cents a quart, a higher price than any other city in Canada except similarly controlled Victoria. Farm prices also rose from $3.95 to $5.03 per hundredweight for standard (3.5 percent) milk. The sharp rise in consumer milk prices was reflected in an actual decline of milk sales despite population increases.

Overproduction and controlled prices brought cut-throat competition for sales. Dairies, both independent and Co-op, increased their use of premiums and gifts. The situation was ripe for change and the early 1950s brought a series of events that would rapidly alter the face of the industry in B.C. resulting in a virtual end to the remaining small dairies. It began in 1951, when Canada Safeway, which was at that time the largest grocery chain in the Lower Mainland, applied to the Milk Board for a reduction of one cent in the price of store-bought milk, a move that would create, for the first time, a difference between the price of home-delivered and store-bought milk. Almost all groups in the industry (Basil Gardom's small independent producers' group was an exception) opposed Safeway's

application, But in April 1952, the Board granted permission for store milk to be sold one cent per quart lower than home-delivered milk.

The need to reduce home delivery costs became imperative. Large vendors, like the FVMPA's Dairyland, asked the Milk Board to allow it to introduce skip-a-day delivery. Consumer groups, including the Consumers Association of Canada and women's groups, such as the Council of Women, favoured the price reduction for store-bought milk but, because refrigerators were by no means a universal feature in homes, complained bitterly about the request for skip-a-day delivery. The Milk Board responded positively to the FVMPA's request and within a few years the new system was in general use. Everett Crowley, at Avalon, resisted the new system for another decade continuing daily delivery until 1965, when he too was forced by costs to go to skip-a-day delivery.

Changes in retail price and the frequency of home-delivered milk were the first of many changes. The Social Credit government, elected with a precarious majority in the summer of 1952, announced in February 1953 that it would decontrol the price of milk, a move popular with consumers. The farm price would, however, remain controlled at its existing high price. The government strategically put off the dropping of price control until after the election called for on June 9, 1953.

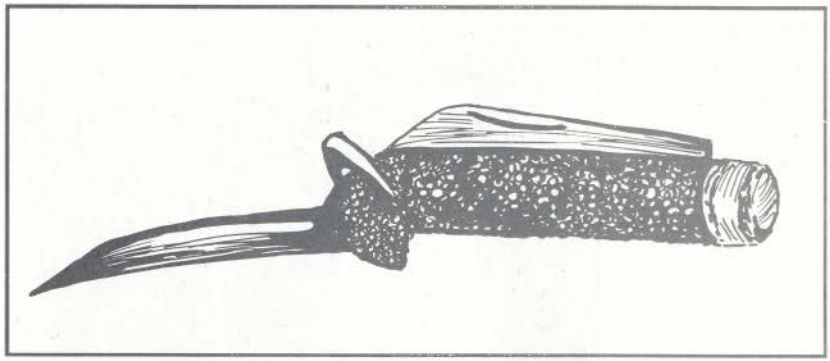
"Pure election bait," said Everett Crowley, (who was once again running for election as a Liberal in Vancouver East). "They propose bringing in controlled prices at the consumer level just soon enough before the election to promise the consumer cheaper milk yet to assure the farmer his pay cheque wouldn't be affected." The Victoria Daily Times reported that the Premier hoped there would be a milk war",[71] and quoted Everett as saying, "The Social Credit's promises on milk are ridiculous. If milk was to be sold at lower prices on the city market, he said, there were only two sources from which those price cuts could come – from the worker in the industry or from the farmer himself. Decontrol will knock the props out from under the entire agricultural economy of British Columbia."[72]

71 Victoria Daily Times, May 15, 1955, p.18.

72 Everett Crowley, letter to the Editor, The Vancouver Sun, May 29, 1953.

But Premier W.A.C. Bennett won his majority, and the Milk Board began hearings on retail prices. Safeway lobbied the Board for the abolition of retail controls. (Through its Lucerne subsidiary, it had already asked for a licence to open its own processing plant). The independents and Co-op members, happy with the stability created by controls, presented briefs opposed to Lucerne's demands. Their complaint against Lucerne was that "by close integration with its parent company, Safeway, and by refusing to supply all but one of the many different kinds of services [e.g. hospitals and rest homes] supplied by the milk distributor, it can get its costs of operation far below those of any distributor serving the public generally." Lucerne, they maintained, was, "not a true public utility operation and should never be allowed to depress the price of milk to the detriment of the true public utility operators – the distributors". To protect their share of the market, some independents suggested to the Milk Board that distributors be allowed to go to a six-day-a-week delivery and inaugurate a system of quantity discounts.[73]

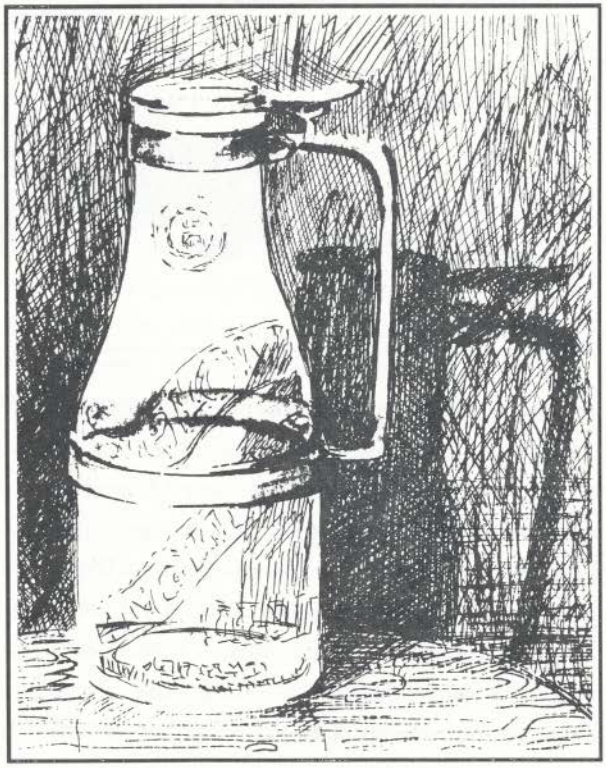
Ev Crowley's brief for Avalon Dairy emphasized that decontrol of the retail price alone would be "unfair, discriminatory, and will, as one of its results, contribute to instability in the industry." The majority of producers, he pointed out, were members of co-operatives who owned their own distribution plants. "Legislation intended to guarantee producers a basic price cannot be effective for these producers, as their return must be governed by the retail price. If in the course of a milk war the retail price is slashed, then these producers might of their own choosing receive less than the basic price set by the Board."[74] He would be proved right.



Harness punch used at Avalon Ranch for making and repairing harness for the horses, circa 1910.

73 Brief submitted to the Milk Board hearing, August 4, 1953, by Creamland Crescent Dairy, Drakes' Dairy, Dairyland, Frasea Farms, Glenburn Dairy, Jersey Farms, Palm Dairies, Royal City Dairies, National Dairies, Seal Kap Dairy, Sunnybrook Farm Dairy (CFP).

74 Everett Crowley's brief to the Milk Board hearing August 4, 1953 (CFP).



Metal frame server used with long-necked round quart bottles, circa 1900's.

In October 1953, the Milk Board delivered on Premier Bennett's promise. It removed the order fixing milk prices to consumers but maintained fixed prices to producers. Safeway immediately dropped its store price by another cent, to 20 cents a quart. Retail price cuts increased consumption but did not solve the problem of oversupply. Indeed, the Milk Board's decision to introduce production quotas, while intended to bring order to the industry by limiting production only succeeded in increasing production. Farmers increased their milk output in order to secure the largest possible quota, as the quota had become the key to success for them.

These changes created chaos and cut-throat competition in the industry. Safeway's application for its own Lucerne dairy licence was refused by the Board, only to be taken on appeal to cabinet, a provision allowed for under the Public Utilities Act. The Social Credit cabinet heard the appeal in November, 1953 and granted a licence to Lucerne in June, 1954. This was a move predicted by Everett Crowley a year before. At that time, he had requested that the Milk Board "be elevated to a truly judicial status, instead of its orders being subject to review and a veto of the Provincial Cabinet."[75] Safeway

began supplying its stores with milk from the Richmond Milk Producers' Co-op late in 1954, and opened its Lucerne division early in 1955. Super Value soon followed with the Shannon brand supplied by the independent Shannon Dairies.

The Milk Board, in order to maintain its price to farmers, ordered dairies to purchase a bond sufficient to cover half a month's shipment. This order, which did not apply to the co-operatives, was protested by several dairies who, finding competition increasedafter decontrol, could not maintain the fixed price ordered by the Board.[76]

At the time, Avalon was selling 150,000 gallons of milk a year and Everett Crowley refused to take out a bond, not so much because he minded being bonded, but because the bonding scheme was not universally applied. He argued that the FVMPA and Richmond Milk Producers' Co-op selling rate was lower because it included a much greater amount of milk sold at the wholesale price which was several cents less than retail. In other words, while he was expected to pay the full supplier price and required to be bonded to do so, his co-op competitors, falling under the Co-operative Association Act and so not bound by Board orders, could pass back to their producers any losses accrued from gaining new business.[77] It was to Everett Crowley's credit that Avalon's suppliers agreed to keep shipping to the dairy despite his refusal to become bonded. The Milk Board took him to police court where he was fined $10.[78] Some of the other independent dairies helped defray the cost of Crowley's appeal. (J.J. Grauer of Frasea Farms sent Avalon $100.)

75 Ibid

76 Morag Maclachlan, *op cit,* p.129

77 Proceedings of the British Columbia Royal Commission on Milk, 1954-55, 4008.

78 The Vancouver Sun, May 21, 1954.

The Clyne Commission and the Disappearance of the Independents

On June 9, 1954, Mr. Justice J.O. Wilson gave judgment in the case of *re Crowley* (Avalon Dairy Limited). The Milk Board's bonding scheme, he wrote, was illegal because it did not carry out the purpose of the Public Utilities Act. That legislation was intended to protect the consumer; instead the producer was being protected by making distributors post security. Justice Wilson instructed the Board to issue Avalon its licence and the Board was forced to cancel its bonding scheme and return the monies collected.[79]

This ruling greatly reduced the power of the Milk Board to enforce its orders. In the following month, five more dairies, large and small, ceased paying the Board's producer price, cutting it by 40 cents a hundredweight. The courts dismissed an action by the Milk Board against the Milk Shippers' Agency to enforce payment. The Milk Board appealed, only to lose when Judge Arthur E. Lord held that it had no power to direct payment of the producer price. Jersey Farms, Palm, Little Mountain and Seal-Kap all ceased to pay shippers the Board price. Even Avalon, which had done so despite its court victory, now stopped paying as well.

As a result of the decision in this case, price controls virtually disappeared and the government recognized that the ensuing chaotic situation could not possibly benefit either consumers or the dairy industry.

Retail sales for dairies were declining. Avalon's 1,500 retail customers were abandoning the dairy for cheaper store milk though it still had five routes distributing 300 to 400 gallons a day.[80]

In February, 1955, Avalon announced that it would pay its suppliers $4.63 and pass on the saving to its customers by offering discounts for additional quarts purchased in a single call. Avalon would price its first quart per customer at 22 cents with additional quarts matching the store price of 20 cents.[81]

In September, 1954, the provincial government appointed a Royal Commission, asking Mr. Justice J.V. Clyne to inquire into any matter relating to the production, marketing and distribution of milk which he considered in the public interest.

79 In *re Crowley* (Avalon Dairy Limited), 12 WWR 626.

80 Proceedings of the British Columbia Royal Commission on Milk, 1954-55, 4008.

81 The Vancouver Sun, February 14, 1955.

Mr. Justice Clyne moved rapidly in his investigation. He deemed it unfortunate that all controls should disappear just as he was about to begin his investigation and asked that the government re-impose milk producer price controls which it did in May, 1955, at the old price levels. Justice Clyne consulted experts, questioned more than 140 witnesses and heard 56 briefs. He visited a number of dairy farms, where he found both spotless installations and, in some, indisputably filthy barns and shocking conditions. The latter were ordered to stop shipping milk immediately.

Mr. Justice Clyne's report was submitted in October 1955, and established the regulatory framework enacted in 1956 as the Milk Industry Act, which continues to guide the dairy industry to this day. His recommendations were comprehensive; they touched on production, distribution, store sales, labour, health and controls. His basic conclusion was that control of the milk supply was in the public interest, and that in the case of an essential food commodity such as milk, the public interest was best served by guaranteeing to the producer a minimum price that would maintain a constant supply of clean, fresh, safe milk to the consumer. He reported that there could be no peace or stability until the present "inequitable" division of the fluid market in favour of the independents is corrected.[82]

All dairy farmers should receive the same price for milk of the same quality, Justice Clyne said. The price should be set, not as the Board had done (by estimating), but by a formula based on production costs, inflation, supply and demand; equalization for the difference between fluid milk and manufactured milk. The end result would be a price lower than that set previously by the old Board (a price that had been subsidizing less-efficient farmers). Enacting such a policy would, however, require production quotas in order to guard against over-production.

Underlying Justice Clyne's recommendation was a philosophy of amalgamated efficiency. He noted that there had been a steady decrease in the number of milk distributors, from 84 in 1948 to 27 in 1955, and found that as the milk-distributing industry was in "most serious financial straits [It was] highly unlikely that the Board will be besieged with new applicants for licences. It was, he felt, "a sensible trend to amalgamation" and that "the number of distributors

82 Report, Royal Commission on Milk, iv.

should be reduced by normal economic pressures ...Some of the distributors are verging on insolvency ... and it is impossible for others to make a reliable profit."[83]

No one realized this more than Ev Crowley, struggling to keep Avalon afloat against the dictates of the Milk Board, and the giants of Dairyland, Palm and now Lucerne.

Everett Crowley had made a submission to the Royal Commission on behalf of Avalon. When asked by the Board whether he favoured any form of [production] control, he qualified his answer:

> *If legislation can be brought in with full controls so that everyone is equal under the law I would preferably have full controls. But, in view of the fact that there is no type of control that can be devised to control co-operatives, then the best way of controlling them is free and open competition ... The dairies have evolved a quota system on their own, which seems to work pretty well for the industry, with the possible exception of a large Co-op. ... they set up a quota system which in effect has some control of the market, which I think was good for the industry.*[84]

Even as the Clyne Commission was underway, the number of milk distributors continued to shrink. In 1954, there were only 28 lower mainland and Fraser Valley distributors, half of them in Vancouver, down from 84 six years earlier. The Richmond Milk Producers' Co-operative Association absorbed the small Frasea Farms and Jersey Farms took over the Guernsey Breeders' Dairy. Dairyland, by far the largest already, continued to grow. It absorbed Royal City Dairies in 1958, and in 1960, Shannon Dairies, which supplied Super-Valu. As well, it expanded to serve Terrace, Prince Rupert, Kamloops, the East and WestKootenays and Vancouver Island. Between them, Dairyland, Palm, and Jersey Farms controlled most of the market.[85]

With the disappearance of Sunnybrook and Hillside dairies in 1966, Avalon was the sole remaining independent. A few dairies found specialized niches – Olympic Dairy Products specialized in yogurt and Lo-Cost sold jug milk, for example, but the specialized dairy product

83 Proceeding, Royal Commission on Milk, pp. v,vi,xi

84 Ibid, 4015

85 Avalon ranked 17 out of the 28 distributors in volume, but sold only 32,000 quarts a month, a tiny fraction of the market.

market was also dominated by Safeway, Lucerne, and Foremost.

Declining retail sales for dairies had resulted first in skip-a-day delivery, then the end of Sunday delivery in 1966, and would eventually eliminate home delivery of milk entirely. Another consequence of this change was in terms of storage – dairies needed larger coolers for storing cases of milk, and customers needed larger fridges in order to store more than a day's supply of milk. A smaller, lighter, square glass bottle replaced the old round bottles, thus allowing for more efficient milk storage.

Many different packaging materials and sizes were tried; including 2 and 3 quart glass bottles, 3 quart plastic jugs and (soft) plastic pouches. Bulk cooling delivery systems (tanker-trucks) would revolutionize delivery from farm to distributors; it completely eliminated the use of milk cans.

Milk would go straight from the cow via an automatic milking machine to a cooling tank and from there to a tanker-truck. The new system was extremely expensive for the small shipper, requiring a $2,000 investment in a milk house, hot water tank, steel washtubs and cooling tank. While initial expenses were great, the system would mean significant cost savings for both producer and distributor.

In the mid 1950's, Safeway's Lucerne began paying a premium price (over that set by the Milk Board) to dairy farmers for higher-butterfat content milk. Palm Dairies followed with a premium to farmers delivering by the bulk cooling system.

Avalon refused to pay a premium or bonus on the contention that if the intent of the Milk Board order was to equalize returns to the farmers, it was just as wrong to pay more as it was to pay less. As a result of the bonusing system, by 1958 Avalon had lost all its shippers. The Milk Board then directed the FVMPA to supply Avalon with its fluid milk requirements at Board prices. They acceded to the Board order, but because they were put to an additional shipping expense, the FVMPA added a charge of 10 cents per 100 pounds of butterfat. Avalon took the stand that, although the FVMPA was licensed as a vendor, in this instance it acted like a producer replacing the ones Avalon had lost to Palm. The FVMPA appealed, arguing that it was a vendor supplying another vendor. Everett Crowley wrote to the Minister of Finance,

protesting that this premium charged to the independent distributors, including Avalon, would force them to subsidize the co-operatives.

Avalon notified the Milk Board of its intention not to pay the charges (at this time collected by the Board, which then passed them on to the FVMPA). The Board assessed Avalon for the amount owed. (By 1961, it amounted to nearly $6,000.00.)

In February 1964, the case came to trial. The lawyer for the Milk Board questioned Everett Crowley's competency to speak to the intricacies of Milk Board legislation, (even though he had just asked him to explain why Avalon found the Milk Board order ultra vires and discriminatory, and Everett had complied.)

There were nine adjournments (none requested by Avalon), and five different judges. At one time, a request was made for an adjournment in order to amend a discrepancy in the Act which had been pointed out by Avalon's lawyer, Gordon McQuat. (The judge refused this request.) Everett Crowley was quite sure the presiding judge, Mr. Justice Harry J. Sullivan, fully understood the case. However, on the day before the decision was to be handed down, Mr. Justice Sullivan was elevated to a higher court, and the case had to be re-tried before Mr. Justice Ruttan, who found in favour of the Milk Board (on what appeared to Avalon to be narrow technical grounds).

An appeal was out of the question, due to financial considerations – the costs were prohibitive. Everett Crowley refused to pay the outstanding debt, which stood until Avalon sold its delivery routes to FVMPA in 1973, and the amount outstanding was withheld by the co-op in order to settle with the Board. However, when dairies later went metric, Avalon received all of FVMPA's imperial quart glass bottles at no cost; and so Avalon ended up coming out ahead financially, even though they had lost in the courtroom.

Avalon Cheese: A New Venture by Avalon as Small Dairies Fight to Survive

Everett Crowley continued to run the dairy with his brother Con, (Harvey had left Avalon for employment elsewhere). Avalon expanded its production line, stocking related dairy products – chocolate milk, cottage cheese, buttermilk, and, as low–fat milk became more popular, 1% and 2% milk.

In 1961 they began a new enterprise; making Italian-style cheese. With the chain stores taking a larger share of their customers every year, the manufacturing milk market looked for a promising field of diversification. When Vince Abbinante and Paul Scardillo approached Ev and Con with the idea of making mozzarella cheese for the pizza trade, they considered the idea with great interest. Avalon had the space and the equipment and its fluid milk quota allowed it to buy manufacturing milk for cheese-making. Scardillo and Abbinante had the technical expertise but no access to milk. So began Avalon Cheese – incorporated separately but sharing the dairy's facilities. The enterprise began modestly, using two Sweeney Cooperage barrels for the processing, but gradually progressed to metal tanks, then specialized cheese-making equipment imported from Italy.

Everett Crowley and his partner in the Avalon cheese business, Vince Abbinante, demonstrate "Milano" mozzarella made at Avalon, circa late 1960's.

The cheese business prospered from the beginning. By 1970, Avalon had made a considerable investment in cheese manufacturing including the purchase of specialized Italian cheese-making equipment and the expansion and replacement of the wooden dairy building with a cement-block structure. Six Italian cheese-makers were making mozzarella, scammorzi, cacciavelo, riccota, burrini and provolone cheeses.

Avalon Dairy is in the cheese business and Everett checks some burrini cheeses hung to cure.

These products sold well in the Italian-Canadian community, and were also popular in the health-food market as they used a vegetable rennet as the starting compound. The FVMPA put Avalon Cheese on a quota (though at a premium) which ranged from 100,000 to 800,000pounds of milk per month, depending on the market and the availability of manufacturing milk.

The new cheese enterprise had its own set of problems. At the federal level, the Department of Agriculture was subsidizing the production of excess milk in an attempt to establish a variety cheese industry in Canada. A further aggravation was the periodic disruption of the market by imports of foreign cheese subsidized by the country of origin, as well as competition from Manitoba and Quebec cheese sold to British Colombia at a lower, Ontario price.

A more pressing problem was the lack of a steady and reliable supply of manufacturing milk to meet the cheese plant's growing needs. On at least two occasions, Avalon Cheese was cut off from its FVMPA source of manufacturing milk. Ev Crowley requested that the Milk Board take over the distribution of surplus milk, since it controlled the price. While he agreed that the FVMPA should first supply its own plants with milk (since it had invested in these facilities), he noted that if it charged a premium for supply of manufactured milk, as it did to Avalon, then the purchaser should have equal access to the milk because he was contributing to the costs of the Co-op's operations.

With no guarantee of a steady milk supply in B.C., Avalon Cheese purchased a cheese operation in Calgary, only to find that their competition would be another mozzarella cheese plant which was heavily subsidized by the Alberta government. The Crowleys and Abbinante decided that they could not compete in such a situation, and took the first opportunity to sell out in Calgary.

In 1981, after 20 years of operation, Ev and Con Crowley sold their Avalon Cheese shares to Vince Abbinante, and in 1983 the business, renamed Bari Cheese, moved to a new plant at Victoria and Commercial Drive. Con Crowley went to work with Abbinante at Bari, and worked there until he retired. All of the cheese equipment went to the new plant. (Avalon still sells Bari cheese, along with other B.C. cheeses, at its Wales Street retail outlet).

Cheese manufacturing had been one way to increase business; Avalon had sought others. In 1966, the Crowleys, in the hope of expanding their customer base, purchased the trucks and routes of Sunnybrook Farm Dairy, the dairy that had fought the Milk Board's levies in the early 1960's. It was a small independent producer-vendor located at the foot of Knight Street on Marine Drive. Called Sunnybrook, or simply "Hay Bros.", it was about the size of Avalon. This acquisition initially doubled Avalon's business.

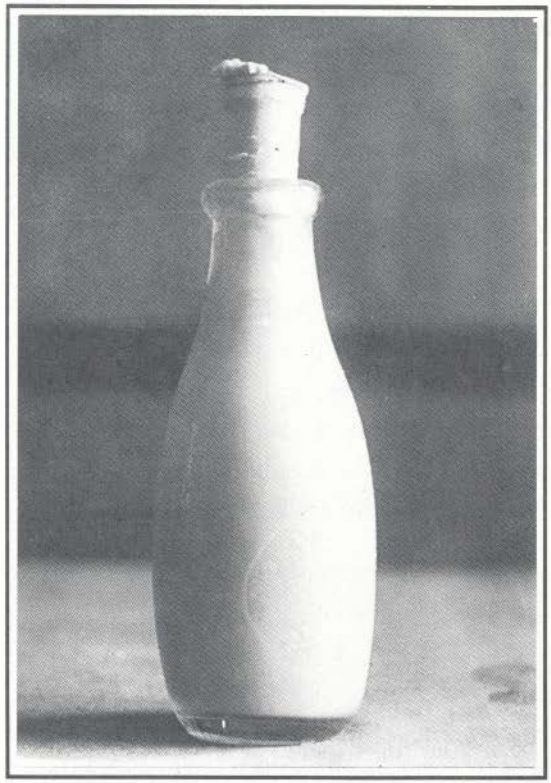
The cheese business and the purchase of Sunnybrook kept Avalon afloat at a critical time. Since there was only Hillside Farm Dairy left, (and it sold out to Silverwoods in 1966), Avalon had to fight hard to maintain a place in an industry concentrated in the hands of a few large firms. Everett Crowley, an astute public relations man, made every effort to keep his customers loyal. He advertised Avalon products regularly in the local press and kept his customers informed of his services through flyers. He felt had disappointed them, however, in 1965, by introducing every-other-day delivery and cutting out Sunday delivery. He sent each customer a note saying he was trying to keep costs down and pass on savings to them. "Ours is a family business and our policy has always been 'live and let live'., he wrote. We like to think you support us on that principle", he wrote.[86]

He received written replies from nine 25-year customers and from a number of long term customers who were particularly impressed with Avalon's service. In the words of one customer of 26 years, "I remember one winter with heavy snowfall when many dairy was unable to make delivery, Mr. Crowley would make the delivery in snow drifts on horsedrawn sleigh."[87] A 10-year customer wrote "I want to say that I do not care for these new fangled paper bottles. Give me the old timers of glass....I can keep my eye on the cream line.... Our milk man [Pat West] is a prince among men like the pony express riders of old. Comes rain or snow or sleet our milk is always sitting on the porch every morning."[88]

But Avalon Dairy was losing the struggle to stay afloat. The success of the cheese enterprise and the purchase of Sunnybrook were only stopgaps in what now appeared to be an inevitable process, – the disappearance of all the small dairies – including Avalon; only Avalon was left after 1966.

Drivers' union wages were now so high that Avalon, which employed non-union drivers but had to pay competitive wages, could not even make enough to pay salaries for Con and Ev. An increase in delinquent home accounts aggravated the difficulty. At last, in December 1973, after a loss of $17,000 on that year's deliveries, Avalon gave up home delivery and sold its trucks and eight routes to Dairyland. It was the end of a long tradition. The Crowleys had been delivering milk for over 65 years; Avalon's milk wagons had come and gone; now, too, the cream and green delivery trucks were to go.[89]

Ev wrote to his customers informing them of the sale, letting them know that Dairyland would be delivering their milk in the future. If they preferred, he said, they could always come to Avalon for their milk, but it had become too costly for him to deliver. Affable Pat West, always popular with his customers, had been with Avalon Since 1932, (35 years as a jobber then as a delivery driver) went with the routes to Dairyland. Wilf Baxter, who had been with Avalon for 16 years, left to become a janitor at U.B.C. and Hans Fuhrimann, Avalon's dairyman, went to Prince George to find work.



A bottle of milk delivered on a cold snowy day.

86 Everett Crowley letter to Avalon Customers, 1965 (CFP).

87 Alfred Anderson to Avalon Dairy, 1965 (CFP).

88 Mrs. E. Gray to Avalon Dairy, 1965 (CFP).

89 It is interesting to note that in the 1990's, home delivery of milk and related products has again become a viable business, although Everett Crowley had predicted that "truck delivery ... is fading into history." Everett Crowley, *op. cit.* He would of course have been delighted to be proven wrong (Ed).

The New Avalon — Health Food Stores and Glass Bottles

In January 1974, after the sale of the routes, milk bottled at Avalon fell to 24,000 pounds from the previous month's 133,000 pounds. It would have been the end of Avalon – except for one thing. The 1960s had produced a small but growing number of health conscious and environmenally aware people. They wanted food as close to the natural product as possible and they found it in Avalon's unhomogenized cream-line milk, its natural cheese and its glass bottles. Hippies, (some of them owners of health food stores) began to make regular trips to the dairy. The health food business increased rapidly.

In 1975, just as Avalon's business began to turn around, Everett Crowley decided he had better think about retiring from his long hours of daily duties at Avalon. He was now 67 years old. Con and Harvey also wished to realize some retirement funds from their Avalon holdings. Accordingly, some of the dairy property was sold (the street of houses to the west of Avalon's dairy plant was once the back field); and Everett asked his son Lee to join him in the business as a partner.

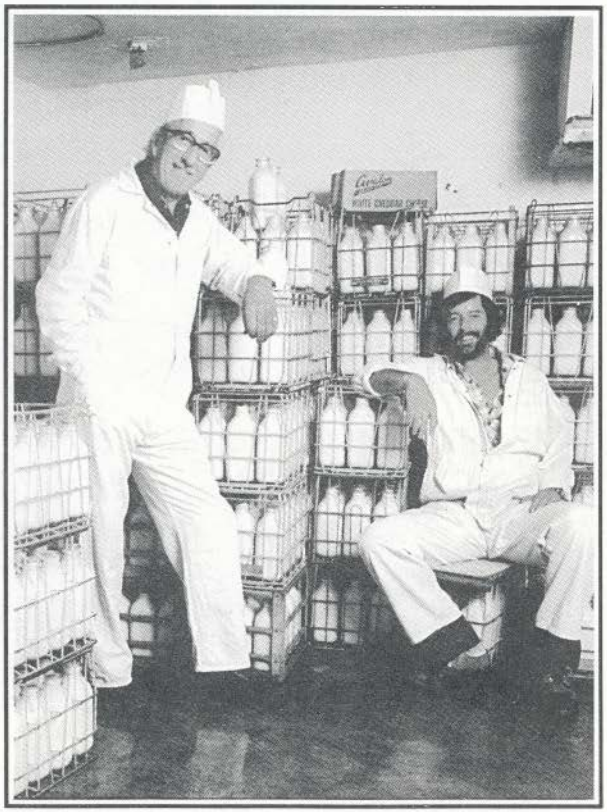
The dairy had survived some seventy years under two generations of Crowleys and Everett felt it was time for the next generation to take over. To Lee, operating Avalon Dairy was both an opportunity and a challenge. When he began, Lee and one employee performed all the dairy work though Everett continued to be responsible for accounting and public relations and was always available to lend a hand or give advice. Everett enjoyed watching his son Lee make something of a business that had been near the edge of extinction for so long.

Two young men who lived in the neighbourhood, Norm Low and Ken Ross (a family cousin) came to work at Avalon in 1977. Both are still there today. Revenue at the begining of that year was low – averaging $26 a day. Walk-in customers to Avalon would drop their money in an old coffee can on the counter.

Health Food stores began to request deliveries and for some time the dairy survived by making deliveries for three days a week alternating with bottling milk for another three. Business picked up so rapidly that by July 1977, Ken Ross was delivering five days a week and Lee and Norm were bottling 100 cases of milk a week. Avalon bought another truck, and was soon to purchase two more. Avalon revived the practice of using jobbers for home and store delivery service. It had worked well for Avalon in the past and was to prove sucessful again.

In July, 1976, Avalon Dairy celebrated its 70th anniversary. Jean and Everett Crowley hosted a huge celebration on the front lawn at Wales Street, decorated with lights and wired for music. The event was organized by Con Crowley and his wife Marion, and Harvey Crowley and his wife Lillian. 130 Crowleys and their descendants attended including the six surviving children of Maud and Jerry Crowley: Melbourne, Everett, Mabel, Harvey, Con and Vera, along with former longtime employees Bill Parker and Pat West. It was a fitting occasion on which to celebrate the years of hard work and family ownership and the survival of Avalon in the dairy business.

One of the biggest changes for Avalon was the requirement in 1977, that it conform to metrification regulations by converting half-pint, pint and quart bottles to half-litre and litre bottles. Avalon was, by then, the only dairy on the Lower Mainland still using glass bottles and had literally scoured Canada for quart bottles and cases no longer used by dairies that had converted to other packaging. Everett and Jean Crowley, who were enjoying more travelling in their retirement by travelling, drove across Canada looking for bottles. They obtained 3,000 12-bottle cases from Winnipeg, 5,000 from Regina, a number from Nova Scotia, while 9,000 came from Dairyland. When even these bottles had disapperared, Avalon had to make preparations for new litre bottles. After much research, Everett Crowley obtained a loan from the British Columbia Development Corporation and bought



Everett Crowley with son Lee in Avalon dairy cooler with cases of Avalon milk in glass bottles ready for the next day, 1980.

Three generations of the Crowley Family celebrate Avalon's 70th anniversary in 1976. (Everett and Jean Crowley are at the centre of the photo.)

half and one-litre bottle moulds at a cost of $17,000 each. Consumers Glass in Vernon made the bottles.

There was still a concern, however, about non-return of bottles. After much consideration, Lee decided on a 50 cent deposit. (He had been concerned that consumers might think this too high a price but, as luck would have it, the soft drink companies announced an increase in their deposit the day Avalon's litre bottles came into use.) In 1980 the quart bottles had cost Avalon 20 cents each; the new litre bottles cost 50 cents each.

The decision to stay with glass bottles, part of the reason for Avalon's success, now created a new problem for the company. In 1983, the

provincial sales tax auditors assessed back-taxes owing on 'sales' of bottles over the previous seven years. Lee claimed that the bottles were recyclable and therefore tax-exempt and presented a brief on September 11, 1984, to the Minister of Finance stating Avalon's case. Avalon had to pay up under protest, however, when a Sheriff arrived one week later with a Writ of Seizure and Sale. The issue was aired in the media, public interest was aroused, and 6,000 Avalon customers signed a petition protesting the situation. Phone calls and letters of support flooded in from interested consumers, recycling advocates, the national and provincial dairy councils, and from both local and federal politicians. As a result, the tax was lifted in March of 1985, and it was back to business as usual at Avalon.

Avalon Today: A Postscript

Today, Avalon Dairy still carries on business at the same location at 5805 Wales Street. A heritage plaque marks the entrance, advising customers that Avalon is the oldest continuously-operating dairy in B.C. A pond in nearby Everett Crowley Park is named after "Avalon."

Some things have changed. There are no longer any cows or horses grazing in the front field. Avalon now offers five different kinds of milk for sale: standard or 'cream-line', regular homogenized and 1 and 2 percent, and skim. It also offers cereal and whipping cream, buttermilk, chocolate milk, goat's milk, eggnog at Christmas, yogurt, cheese, and butter. Consumer tastes have changed and standard milk, which used to account for 75 percent of Avalon's sales, and was responsible much of Avalon's success in the difficult years of the 1970s, now makes up only 10 percent of sales. Low-fat milk has become much more popular. Avalon also offers an extensive list of related dairy products, juices, eggs, and various specialty items, custom packaged to Avalon's specifications.

Avalon's customers come from all over Greater Vancouver, and long-term customers from the neighbourhood still walk over to Avalon to get their milk. "Jobbers" now deliver Avalon milk throughout the Lower Mainland and to many other areas of B.C.

Some things have not changed. Avalon still sells 'cream-line' milk in glass bottles. The bottles[90] are still sterilized, and cases washed with steam though the steam turbine to power the washer, which Jeremiah Crowley bought during World War I, has since been replaced. Lee Crowley continues to operate Avalon following the business practices and policies established originally by his father and participates too in the work of the dairy associations his father had long supported.[91]

This year, Avalon celebrates its ninetieth anniversary. As Everett Crowley so aptly commented, "Avalon has defied all the laws of survival in this highly competitive world, including that of gravity since we refuse to sink into oblivion and in so doing confound all."[92]

90 In October 1988, when the government announced that traces of toxins were found in cardboard milk containers, many new customers came to Avalon. Now in the 1990's some other dairies are returning to the glass bottle, which has always been considered the best and safest container for milk.

91 Lee Crowley became a Director of the B.C. Dairy Council in 1985 and was President of the B.C. Dairy Foundation in 1990–91.

92 Everett Crowley papers (CFP).

PHOTO COURTESY *THE PROVINCE*, MARCH 20, 1994

Jean Crowley standing beside an original Avalon milk wagon, March 1994.

Appendix I: Family Tree

JEREMIAH CROWLEY
b. 1875, d. 1950

ANNIE MAUD BROWN
b. 1876, d. 1956.

Birth and Death dates of Jeremiah Crowley, Annie Maud Brown and Crowley Children

1. **STANLEY**, b. 1898, d. 1913.
2. **GORDON**, b. 1900, d. 1970.
3. **FLORA**, b. 1902, d. 1937.
4. **ROY**, b. 1903, d. 1956.
5. **VERNON**, b. 1906, d. 1971.
6. **MELBOURNE**, b. 1907, d. 1984.
7. **EVERETT**, b. 1909, d.1984.
8. **MABEL**, b. 1911, d. 1977.
9. **HARVEY**, b. 1913.
10. **SYLVIA**, b. 1915, d. 1958.
11. **CLEVELAND (Con)**, b. 1918, d. 1994.
12. **GRANT**, b. 1920, d. 1936.
13. **VERA**, b. 1924.

Appendix II: About the Authors

As lifelong residents of South Vancouver, Everett and Jean Crowley actively participated in many aspects of their community as volunteers for numerous community organizations and associations, and as elected representatives in civic positions. Jean Crowley still makes South Vancouver her home where she lives in the 'new' Collingwood Village.

They travelled B.C. extensively from one end of the province to the other – in the early days with a Model A Ford and a tent, later in more comfortable vehicles and finally in the relative luxury of a camper van.

Ev loved a good story – both in the telling and the hearing. In his retirement nothing suited him better than the task he and Jean set out to do to produce this book by gathering historical details and personal anecdotes told by dairymen and women throughout B.C.

Ev worked hard for his community through the Junior Board of Trade, the South Vancouver Lions, the Liberal Party, the Killarney Community Centre Association, the Vancouver Parks Board, The Town Planning Commission, and the B.C. Dairy Council.

He was fascinated by the history of people and places. He and Jean were both founding members of the Collingwood Pioneers Club (each member having resided in Collingwood East for fifty years or more).

Ev Crowley's participation in his community was as much a part of his life as was Avalon. He first entered municipal politics in 1948 on the poll-tax issue. He lost the election, but made his name widely-known.

In 1946, Everett had been charged for non-payment under the Poll Tax Act, and in 1947 he chose to go to jail for a three day term rather than pay a tax he considered to be 'taxation without representation'. He arrived at the jail wearing his Homburg hat set at a jaunty angle and a grey worsted suit. He was well-prepared for either hard labour or solitary confinement, as he had brought with him his striped denim coveralls and a briefcase full of papers on steam engineering that he needed to study. Everett gathered much public support, (the Poll Tax Act was later repealed), and his three day term was reduced to two for good behaviour.[93]

93 The Vancouver Sun, September, 1947

A committed Liberal, he had carried the Party's declining banner in Vancouver East in 1952 and 1953 and in Vancouver Kingsway in 1957.

In the municipal election of 1968, Everett Crowley was first elected to the Vancouver City council, and then retired from office six weeks later on a recount. As always he took his losses with good grace but the fact that, in his view, the peoples' choice had been thwarted, rankled him. He later served for many years on the Vancouver Parks Board and also was appointed to the Town Planning Commission.

In 1987, three years after his death, the Parks Board dedicated the Everett Crowley Park, a 100 acre site at 54th and Marine Drive in honour of his contributions to the Parks Board and the Killarney and Sunset Community Centres.

Jean Crowley was born October 13, 1913. She is the daughter of James R. Fraser and Louise Gimby and grew up in the Cedar Cottage area of South Vancouver. She too has had an active community life. She was NPA School Board candidate in 1955 receiving the most votes ever cast for any civic office in Vancouver to that time. She became Chair of the School Board in 1959 and was also the School Board's representative on the Town Planning Commission. She made a courageous plunge into B.C. provincial politics in 1967, running as a Liberal in Little Mountain against the high profile Socred Cabinet Minister Grace McCarthy. In 1970, she became President of the Vancouver Kingsway Federal Liberal Association. She was President of the East Enders Society in 1968/69, a Vancouver organization founded to help destitute and homeless women. As President of the Provincial Council of Women from 1971-1974, she worked on the issues of housing for single women and helped start a new council in Prince George.

In 1986 at Vancouver's Centennial, Jean Crowley was one of the Vancouver pioneers honoured with Distinguished Pioneer Awards "recognizing 100 Senior Citizens who have make a substantial contribution to Vancouver".

She helped to plan and publish a history of Collingwood through the Collingwood Pioneers Club and a history of the East Enders Society. She has now completed her stated goal for the 1990's which was to complete the Avalon Book.

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MANUSCRIPTS:

Crowley Family Papers (CFP)

Addendum

To footnote 37, page 43

Jean Crowley attended a celebration held in Dec., 1995, to honour Art Stocker on his 100th birthday.

Errata

		error	*correction*
Page ii	paragraph 1	Neilson	Neilsen
Page 35	paragraph 2	Boundary Ave	Boundary Road
Page 56	paragraph 2	...Everett, Mabel, Harvey, Cleveland (Con) and Grant were all still at home.	...Everett, Mabel, Harvey, Sylvia, Cleveland (Con) and Grant were all still at home.
Page 68	paragraph 3	Model A Ford	1926 Dodge
Page 87	paragraph 4	difference	differential

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General Rate	-	3.05 Mills	General Rate	-	15.95 Mills
Loan "	-	10.20 "	Loan "	-	10.20 "
School "	-	7.85 "	School "	-	7.85 "
Board of Health	-	.50 "	Board of Health	-	.50 "
		21.60			22.50

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Roll No.	DESCRIPTION Wd	D.L.	Blk.	S.D.	R.S.	Lot	No. of Acres or Lots W.	L.	Total Assessed Value	1900 to 1913	1914	1915	Local Imp. Arrears	Local Imp. Nett, 1915
1887	2	721	8					2.52	$637.80			132.90	—	—

Amount Payable		
1900-1913		
1914		
1915	132	90
Local Improvement Arrears		
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Interest		
Gross Total		
Rebate	5	20


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