

# FRED DEWHIRST

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

From:

# This Was Yesterday

By ISABEL M. CAMPBELL



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION link between Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek was probably of greater interest to local folk than the Herald Tribune's reported plan of Canadian Coachways to inaugurate daily service between the B.C. town and Edmonton, read in the Dec. 5, 1946 issue.

OVER IN THE BEZANSON district Fred Dewhirst was given a rousing send-off on his voyage to England.

"A large number of his many friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L.J. 'Moose' Nellis last Saturday to wish him a happy trip," wrote the news stringer in the Dec. 5, 1946 Herald-Tribune. "For supper and during the evening two large turkeys scaling 32 pounds, with all the trimmings, vanished, as Mrs. Nellis knows well how to prepare.

"'Moose' was in his usual jovial mood and recited 'The Face on the Bar Room Floor' and was the highlight of the evening; the Brothers LaValley, Fuss and Roger, sup-

# Arson Charged After Man Hurt in Blaze

Keith A. Shepherd, 28, of 325 Michigan, was charged before Judge William Ostler in provincial court today with committing arson at the apartment house where he lived early this morning.

He was remanded to August 13 without making a plea, and bail was set at \$2,500.

A retired man was reported in poor condition in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph's Hospital with injuries suffered as a result of the fire.

John Dewhirst was seriously injured when he jumped from a window to escape flames which subsequently destroyed the top floor of an apartment building, Victoria Fire Chief Eric Simmons said.

He said the fire department responded to an alarm at 2:28 a.m. today and did not leave the scene until 6 a.m.

The building at 325 Michigan was a 2½-storey structure which had been converted into an eight-suite apartment block. The fire destroyed the two uppermost apartments.

Damage to the building was estimated at between \$7,500 and \$10,000.

Other occupants of the building were forced to leave the premises because of severe damage to the structure, he said, and some of the bachelor residents were provided with temporary accommodation by Victoria City Police.

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# 'He Was a Rare, Rare Man And Proud to Be a Pioneer'

By STEVE HUME

Every year on the second Sunday in August former residents of the Peace River country gather for a picnic.

When they meet at the Gorge this year one of the most familiar faces will be absent. Fred Dewhirst won't be attending for the first time in years.

He was 82 years old and he was a pioneer in the rugged Peace River Valley just after the turn of the century.

## DIED THURSDAY

He died Thursday night at St. Joseph's Hospital of the

extensive injuries suffered when he jumped 30 feet from the second storey of a flaming building in the early morning hours of the same day.

He jumped from one of the windows in his small attic apartment at 325 Michigan to the lawn below.

As flames ripped through the top floor of the old house converted to an apartment block, he was taken to hospital and placed in intensive care with a fractured pelvis, shoulder, ribs and undetermined internal injuries.

Eight hours later a 28-year-

old man who lived in the same building was charged in provincial court with arson. Keith Shepherd was remanded on \$2,500 bail without election.

Mrs. Maurice Ball, of 4064 Cedar Hill Cross Road, said she first met Fred Dewhirst years ago in the Peace River country.

"He looked forward to these picnics," she said. "He was proud to be a pioneer.

"He was a rare, rare man."

"He was a member of Silver Threads and he was always doing things for people," Mrs. Ball said.

"He always took a walk, every day, one of the things he was proud of was a button he won in a walkathon a few years ago. He always wore it.

"Fred played the piano and belonged to the bowling club. He certainly was spry."

She said his main hobby was the baking and decorating of wedding cakes.

"By a year ago June he had made more than 350 cakes. He made the cake for my daughter's wedding."

He was born in 1888 in Denholme, England, a small town in Yorkshire.

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**DEWHIRST**—On August 6, 1970 at St. Joseph's Hospital, Frederick Dewhirst, aged 82, of 325 Michigan St., a resident of Victoria for the past nine years. Survived by a brother in England. He was a member of the Silver Threads. Funeral service Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. in HAYWARD'S FUNERAL CHAPEL, 734 Broughton St., Rev. Dr. H. W. Kerley officiating. Cremation.

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# JURY TRIAL CHOSEN IN ARSON CASE

Keith A. Sheperd, 28, of 325 Michigan, elected for trial by judge and jury today in provincial court on a charge of committing arson.

He was remanded to Sept. 4 for preliminary hearing.

A retired man, Fred Dewhirst, died at St. Joseph's Hospital from injuries suffered when he jumped from the top floor of a 2½-storey structure at 325 Michigan.

Fire destroyed the top floor of the building.

Damage was estimated at between \$7,500 and \$10,000.

# ATTIC ESCAPE NEED SEEN AT FIRE PROBE

A coroner's jury investigating the death of **Fred Dewhirst**, 82, of 325 Michigan, recommended Monday night that rooming houses provide alternate fire escapes for third-storey attic suites.

The jury made the recommendation after an inquest into the circumstances of Dewhirst's death following a fire in his rooming house.

Access to a fire escape across the hall was blocked by flames and Dewhirst may have moved near to the window to escape the blaze the jury found. He was killed from a plunge 25 feet to the ground from his apartment window.

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# Police Court

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**Fred Dewhirst**, an 81-year-old man, died as a result of injuries suffered when he plunged 30-feet from his apartment window at 325 Michigan after falling while attempting to escape the flames.

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Penelope Ann Clarke, 19, of 3780 Savannah, who appeared

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# ARSON TRIAL ORDERED

Twenty-eight-year-old Keith Shepherd was committed for trial in higher court on a charge of arson Thursday following a preliminary hearing in provincial court before Judge William Ostler.

Shepherd was charged Aug. 6, a few hours after a fire at 325 Michigan in James Bay, the rooming house where he had an upstairs room.

Fred Dewhirst, an 80-year-old tenant at the house, died later the same day of injuries sustained when he fell 30 feet to a lawn below his upper-storey room.

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# *Manslaughter Charge From House Fire*

Keith Shepherd, 28, of 558 Sumas, earlier charged with arson, was charged with manslaughter Tuesday before Judge Edmond Jorre de St. Jorre in provincial court.

Bail was set at 2,500.

Shepherd was charged with arson following a fire Aug. 6 in which **Fred Dewhirst**, 82, was killed by a fall from the third storey of a burning house on Michigan Street.

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Keith Alfred Shepherd, 28, of 558 Sumas, was committed by Ostler for trial in a higher court on a charge of manslaughter arising from the fire death of Frederick Dewhirst, 82, after a fire at 325 Michigan Aug. 6.

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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES AND HOSPITAL INSURANCE
DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS
REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Reg. No. (Office use only)

70-09-012451

51 33

1. PLACE OF DEATH

Name of city, village, town, district municipality or place: Victoria, B.C.
Street or road: St. Joseph's Hospital

2. LENGTH OF STAY: 9 years
In Province: 9 years
In Canada (if immigrant): Over 65 years

3. PRINT FULL NAME OF DECEASED: DEWHIRST FREDERICK

4. PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF DECEASED: Victoria, Michigan Street, House No. 325

5. SEX: Male
6. CITIZENSHIP: Canadian
7. RACIAL ORIGIN: White
8. Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced: Widowed
9. BIRTHPLACE: Denholme, Eng.

10. Date of Birth: March 8, 1888
11. AGE (Last Birthday): 82

12. (a) Trade, profession or kind of work as logger, fisherman, office clerk, etc.: Farmer
(b) Kind of industry or business, as logging, fishing, bank, etc.: Farming

13. Date deceased last worked at this occupation: about 1955
14. Total years spent in this occupation: all adult life

15. If married, widowed or divorced give name of husband or maiden name of wife of deceased: Ida Not known

16. Name of father: Dewhirst Not known

17. Maiden name of mother: Not known

18. Birthplace - Father: England Mother: England

19. I certify the foregoing to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Given under my hand at: Victoria, this 8 day of 1970
Signature of informant: Sarah M. King Relationship to deceased: Niece

20. Burial, Cremation or Removal: Cremation August 12, 1970

21. Undertaker: Hayward's Funeral Co. Address: Victoria, B.C.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

22. DATE OF DEATH: August 6th 1970

23. I HEREBY CERTIFY that I have personally completed an inquest as to the death of the said deceased on August 17th 1970

CAUSE OF DEATH: Irreversible shock due to (or as a consequence of) hemorrhage into the cavities of the left chest. It is the result of multiple traumatic injuries and fractures.

24. If a woman, did the death occur either during pregnancy or within 90 days following pregnancy? Inapplicable

25. (a) Was there a recent surgical operation? No (b) Date of operation: 1970

26. If a violent death, fill in also: (a) Accident [ ] Suicide [ ] Homicide [ ] (b) Date of injury: Aug 19 1970

How did injury occur: Fire and explosion caused by one Keith A. Shepherd to lodging house in which deceased resided. Deceased fell from his attic window to ground, sustaining injuries, multiple traumatic injuries and fractures, and was thrown into bodily shock.

27. Signed: E.D. Jorre de St. Jorre Designation: Coroner

28. Print name of Doctor or Coroner, whose signature appears above: E.D. Jorre de St. Jorre

29. Notations

30. I hereby certify that the above return was made to me at: VICTORIA, B. C.

Dated: SEP 23 1970 1:15 1970

District Registration No. (Signature of District Registrar)

IMPORTANT: Any change or correction made in the completion of this form must be initialed by the person certifying the information. CITIZENSHIP (NATIONALITY) is defined in terms of the country to which the person owes allegiance. The term "Canadian" should be used as descriptive of a person who was born in Canada or who has rights of Citizenship in Canada, unless he or she has subsequently become the citizen of another country. RACIAL ORIGIN - State the racial origin, traced through the father, in terms of the people or race to which the person belongs such as: English, Scottish, German, etc. or in terms of one of the following racial groups: - White, native Indian, Negro, Chinese, Japanese or other.

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DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY

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## FRED DEWHIRSTS

Fred was born in England. He came over the Edson Trail with the Crowe brothers about 1910. He met and married Ida Colby in 1920. They lived with Colbys until 1921 when Fred homesteaded the (S.E. 31-71-2 W6). Here they went to live. Dick Howarth lived with them a great deal of time, especially when his Mother was nursing at the Pouce Coupe, B.C. Hospital. Licious saskatoons grew near their house. Fred was not much



Ida Dewhurst and her coyote hound.



Fred Dewhurst with cake for Art and Gladys Reese and children, Janet and Gwen.

of a farmer. He was more of an entertainer, played the piano for many dances and liked organizing sports days. He decorated many beautiful wedding cakes — one was for Hazel Lupton and Ernie Ford. Another time he decorated a cake and the community had a shower and dance for Art and Gladys Rees and their 2 little girls when they lost their home and all their belongings in a fire.

When Ida's Father — Frank Colby died in 1932, Fred and Ida moved back to be with her Mother and stayed. Her Mother passed away in 1936.



Fred Dewhurst.

The new lumber school was built by Ed Allens not far from Colbys in 1919, and Ida Colby taught there and again after she was married as "Mrs. Dewhurst". Ida was a wonderful woman — a friend to everyone. She died in 1946 and is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery with her parents.

Fred stayed on at the Colby Farm for a number of years, which he now owned. He had sold his homestead to an English couple a number of years before (Jack and Florence Haworth.)

He made quite a few trips back to England and each time he came back, he would bring some people with him. Once, it was his nephew Milton and his wife, Lilly. They would stay a year or so and then he'd bring someone else. One family was the Ted Eskdales. Later on Ted went to theology training school and became a minister of the United Church of Canada. He was ministering at Dawson Creek, B.C. in 1966.

Fred finally sold out and left Bezanson and went to Victoria, B.C. He was killed in a rooming house fire there in June, 1957.

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