



Owen John Fuller.

## Fuller Watson Store

OWEN JOHN FULLER, after his retirement from the CPR in 1904, moved with his wife Mary along with their two boys and two daughters, to the Kitsilano part of Vancouver before moving out to Haney in 1912 and buying property on Dewdney Trunk Road just to the west of Lillooet Road. Mary had two bachelor brothers, Arthur and William Eaton. A third brother, married to Mary Beckett, eventually set up the Eaton's Paint Shop on Ontario Street just north of the BC Telephone Exchange office and opposite the Duncan Graham blacksmith shop. The William Greenwell family, also from the Kitsilano part of Vancouver, moved out from Vancouver the same year and bought adjacent property.

The Fuller McDonald Ltd. General Store on Front Street was incorporated 26 June 1924, with principal partners Owen John Fuller and Austin McDonald and junior partners William Charles Fuller and John Owen Fuller. When the R. L. Carter General Store burned to the ground, Edward Thornton Matchett rebuilt on the site. The two junior partners were the sons of Owen J. Fuller. McDonald had come out to Port Haney from Ontario and had a butcher shop on Front Street. He sold and moved to the interior town of Summerland. A short time later Owen J. Fuller's daughter Rose married John Drury Watson and McDonald sold his interest in the company and Watson bought in, resulting in a name change to Fuller Watson in 1926. It was about this time that the senior Fuller stepped aside making way for his two sons and son-in-law to take over the control of the company. John Watson was originally from Sarnia, Ontario, and had come out to work for Imperial Oil at the Ioco Refinery. To avoid confusion with the two Jacks in the new firm, everyone called the trio Bill Fuller, Jack Fuller and "the man from Okie" (for Ioco).

John Carr purchased a portion of the old Howison estate since Front Street going west turned into River Road before being called Carr's Hill. The Carr farm was at the top of the hill and extended north as far as Dewdney Trunk Road. Carr, having first owned a store on Front Street, had the first freight business in Port Haney hauling produce from the farms into Vancouver and returning with goods for the Fuller Watson store. Carr had twin daughters who were drowned in a small pond directly east of the Thomas Haney home. The pond was eventually filled in with sawdust from the Maple Ridge Lumber Company.

## Maple Ridge in 1925

*Marion Graham (later Mrs. John Owen Fuller) in a 1925 university project wrote about her home town:*

Maple Ridge is a Valley Municipality situated on the Fraser River twelve miles from New Westminster and twenty-four miles east of Vancouver. It has a number of harbours of fresh water of ample depth to make them accessible to the largest ocean freighters. This area of this district is 42,000 acres, the assessed value of the land being \$1,783,000. The land slopes up from the Fraser River to a height varying from fifty to one hundred feet. At this elevation a plateau runs back to the foothills of the Coast Range of mountains that form the northern boundary of the municipality. This plateau varies in width from four to six miles and extends the full length of the corporation, a distance of 13 miles. From east to west the boundaries are 12.5 miles apart, from north to south about 7 miles. There are in all 7 small towns in this district. They are as follows Port Hammond, Port Haney, Yennadon, Webster's Corners, Albion, Whonnock, Ruskin. Port Haney is the municipal as well as the largest centre. It is there that the Reeve and Council meet in the Municipal Hall. Haney has developed more rapidly than the other centres. The population of this district is 5,000. There are about 400 Japanese settlers in the district.

Maple Ridge has an ideal climate that is very similar to that of the South of England. The scenery from any point is magnificent with the great Fraser River in the fore and the majestic snow-crowned mountains in the background. Beautiful little lakes in the mountain district, with streams, on at least two of which picturesque falls exist, descending from the lakes to the Fraser, add to the beauty of the locality and to those who love beautiful surroundings it is ideal. The Alouette River and the Kanaka Creek are the two picturesque streams of this district, the former flowing into the Pitt River and the latter into the Fraser River. There is an abundance of rain and plenty of sunlight for vegetation. On account of the natural drainage of the quick drying properties of the soil there is very

little inconvenience caused by mud of any season of the year. The average length of winter is put at six weeks. Snow seldom lies long when it falls, but has been known to stay as long as three weeks at a stretch. The climate is so favourable that poultry houses are built with open fronts. About a mile from Port Hammond there is a fully developed thirty-acre prune orchard that has never suffered from frost.

The natural resources of Maple Ridge are valuable and readily available. The proximity of extensive timber tracts is of importance to local lumbering operations. There are too, some splendid waterpower propositions awaiting further development. The available clay deposits were for years the main source of supply for brick, tile and terra cotta. Salmon fishing is not what it was formerly but the perennial harvest of the Fraser River may still be considered a local resource or industry. Oil is being bored for nearby but so far the precious base metals are negligible. Mixed farming and dairying bring good results but poultry raising and small fruits culture, being rapidly brought to perfection, may be reckoned the chief 'resources' of the district.

The abundant supply of perfectly pure fresh water is valuable to Maple Ridge. The towns of Port Haney and Port Hammond have their own water-works systems where electric pumps hoist the water from ever-flowing springs. The numerous creeks crossing the municipality supply plenty of water for pasturage purposes.

Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal and Baptist communions are all represented by several well-established congregations in the little centres. The Women's Institute of Port Haney has several thriving branches of this Canadian wide organization. The Agricultural Society, which has charge of the annual fall fair at Haney, offers a change for and enjoys the substantial support of all sections, while live Board of Trade, with headquarters at Hammond and Haney implement the work of the municipal council. The small fruit growers and shippers have co-operative organizations of growing importance. The various secret and benevolent societies, for example the

I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) are strongly represented throughout the district, as also is the United Farmers and the Farmers' Institute.

Poultry raising in Maple Ridge has become one of the leading pursuits of the people. One man started with a flock of 200 birds and in six years time had eight hundred thoroughbred white Leghorns. These 800 hens produced \$3,200 in stock, clear of all feeding costs. Of course this is an exceptionally high return. During the laying season the hens of this district produce on an average of 300 cases of eggs per week, these being shipped to adjacent markets. The poultry business has grown to such an extent that the average farmer who had one to fifty birds a few years ago, now has 2000 to 3000. The United Farmers' Ltd. Is a company formed for the purpose of buying feed and other supplies direct from the mills. Their turnover last year amounted to \$125,000. The farmers hold the stock in the company and thus benefit by the reduced prices. The head office of this company is in Port Haney. Two other branches are also in Port Hammond and Whonnock.

Strawberries, raspberries, loganberries and blackberries are the small fruits that have been cultivated here with great success. The large fruits are apples, plums, pears, apricots, crabapples and cherries. The fruit trade with the eastern markets has been increasing each year particularly with the Prairie Provinces. The estimate of fruit shipment for one season was 40,000 crates of berries, chiefly strawberries and raspberries. At Haney there are two associations that deal with fruit handling – the Pacific Berry Growers' and the BC Fruit Growers' Associations. The Pacific Berry Growers have established a large canning factory at Port Haney in which they can every kind and form of fruit and vegetable that is available. This factory employs about 60 persons altogether in the fruit season. There is also at Haney a cold storage plant in which the fruit may be kept for many days.

Dairying takes next place to the poultry and fruit business in Maple Ridge. Dairy farmers ship milk and cream daily to Vancouver where it is handled by their own association. The mild climate, the short feeding and housing period, the abundant



**John Owen Fuller and his wife Marion née Graham.**

pasturage and water in the summer, the good crops of roots that are produced, all go to make this area a suitable dairying district.

Life in rural communities is dependent on good highways and in this respect Maple Ridge stands second to none. Two trunk highways known as the Dewdney and River Roads cross the municipality east to west while there are numerous good roads running north and south from the foothills to the water's edge of the Fraser River, there being a total of over one hundred miles of improved highways situated within the municipality's boundaries.

It is worthy to note that the first motor truck service to be inaugurated in the Fraser Valley is now in operation here, that of the Federal Truck

Service. There are also other truck services that care for the local freight and produce of eggs, fruit, etc. The Pacific Stage Co. takes charge of the passenger business with their large green buses. The greatest carrier system is the CPR's main line of tracks that follows the north bank of the Fraser River of the municipality from east to west. The regular steamers ply up and down the river carrying freight and making regular calls at wharves, one of the largest being the 'Skeena'.

The main industry in the district is the lumber business. The largest company engaged is the Abernethy-Lougheed Co. This company is situated about 2 miles northeast of Port Haney. They employ between 200 and 300 men. As an example of BC's lumber industry, this company sent to the world's fair at Wembley (England) a section of a tree that measured 10 feet in diameter. Other large companies that engage in the lumber business in Port Haney are Maple Ridge Lumber Co., and Commercial Lumber Co. In Port Hammond the Hammond Cedar Co. is established and in Ruskin the Stoltze Mill. The Port Haney Brick Co. is situated next to the Maple Ridge Lumber Co. This company manufacturers all kinds of brick, tile piping, processed brick, etc.

Another industry that employs a large number of hands is the Brown Bros. Co.'s hot houses and nursery plants. These hot houses have over five acres under glass with 42 acres under cultivation for nursery purposes. The Co. has their headquarters in Vancouver. The 200 acres agricultural farm of Spencer's Ltd. situated near Albion is another example of how exceptionally good the soil is for roots and vegetables as well as flowers. David Spencer Ltd., Vancouver, BC. own this farm.

The residents of Maple Ridge have an abundance of electric energy at their disposal. Electric light in the houses and buildings is but one of the many uses in which the energy is put on the farm. The BC Electric Co. supplies the residents of Maple Ridge. The generating plant of the company is situated at Stave Lake (just outside the boundaries of Maple Ridge). The BC Telephone Company has 2 telephone exchanges in this district, one in Port Haney and one in Port Hammond.



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Fuller Watson, Bank of Montreal, Knox Cafe, Pacific Berry Growers, and the Port Haney CPR Station.



The interior of the Fuller Watson store in 1937.

In 1931 the Fuller Watson proprietors decided to relocate to the top of the hill where Ontario Street intersected with the newly built Lougheed Highway. They discussed the move with the restaurant and bakeshop proprietors, who agreed to rent space from their new store. The Bank of Montreal also agreed to relocate directly across from the new Fuller Watson store, and it wasn't long before a bit of a centre came into existence.

Fuller Watson were able to build the new store for \$4,601.25. Watson took charge of the construction project and hired men who had rung up debt at the old store during the depression years. He paid their salary half in cash and half in paying down their debts, and everyone was satisfied with the arrangement.



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