



Monograph No. 6

The Maitland-Dougall Family of Duncan, BC

By Bruce Pollock

It's a non-descript cover addressed to Mrs. J. Maitland-Dougall in Hazelton, BC, and postmarked at the somewhat scarce Tzouhalem post office. But the simplicity of the cover belies the story of a remarkable family in the Cowichan Valley of British Columbia.



Figure 1. Cover addressed to Mrs J. Maitland-Dougall in Hazelton, BC dated 12 Oct 1910. (Ex-Wellburn.)



Figure 2. Winifred McKinstry Watson.

Winifred McKinstry Watson was born 26 Nov 1873 in Thurgoland, Yorkshire, the daughter of Alfred Watson, MD and Fanny Eaton. She emigrated to Canada with her family in 1890 and they settled in Cowichan, although Dr. and Mrs. Watson later moved to Alberni in central Vancouver Island in 1895.

James St. Leger Maitland-Dougall was born in Fife, Scotland in 1867, the youngest son of Vice-Admiral William Heriot Maitland-Dougall. He came from a family line of the Earls of Lauderdale and illustrious Royal Navy officers, including Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Lewis Maitland. In the aftermath of the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon was trying to escape France and avoid the angry mobs who were after him, so he surrendered to Sir Frederick and was transported to Britain on board his ship HMS Bellerophon.

James and his older brother Frederick immigrated to Victoria in 1886. Initially, James was employed in survey work and helped to survey the original plan of Nelson, BC. Later, he worked for the federal government as an immigration agent in Vancouver. Frederick owned a farm near Comiaken, Cowichan Bay and was a neighbor of George Corfield who farmed and also ran the general store and post office named after him.

James returned to Vancouver Island in June 1892, taking a position as a constable with the BC Provincial Police in Cowichan. It was here that he and Winifred met and in 1894, they were married in Victoria. They had two children, both sons. William McKinstry Maitland-Dougall was born 14 March 1895 and Hamish Kenear Maitland-Dougall was born 4 April 1897.



Figure 3. Hamish, William, James and Winifred Maitland-Dougall.

Winifred was an avid gardener and her vegetables won many prizes in the annual Cowichan Fall Fair. She had family on the west coast of the Island at Ucluelet and Tofino, as well as her parents and sisters in Alberni and she would often take the boys out there to visit and stay during the summer months. With family and friends flung from Ucluelet to England, there was a steady stream of correspondence to and from her.

James showed a talent for police work. According to his obituary in the *Victoria Daily Colonist*, "He did brilliant work in solving a murder mystery, attracting the attention of Superintendent Hussey, who sent him on various missions to Northern British Columbia and the west coast of Vancouver Island. He assisted in solving eight murder cases, and was instrumental in personally effecting the arrest in five cases."



Figure 4. Incoming mourning cover from Conway UK via New York dated 7 Jan 1902. Apparently, the Maitland-Dougalls had nicknamed their house "The Wigwam". (Ex-Wellburn.)



Figure 5. Mourning cover addressed to James from Alberni 12 Mar 1904. This was probably related to the death of Winifred's sister, Marjorie. (Ex-Wellburn.)



Figure 6. Mourning cover to Winifred Maitland-Dougall from Alberni, BC postmarked 28 Mar 1906 and paying twice the domestic rate. It is undoubtedly related to the death of her father in Alberni (22 Mar 1906) and likely the cover came from her mother or other family member. (Ex-Wellburn.)



Figure 7. Mourning cover to Winifred, postmarked on the Victoria & Wellington RPO Northbound, 1 Nov 1906. (Ex-Wellburn.)

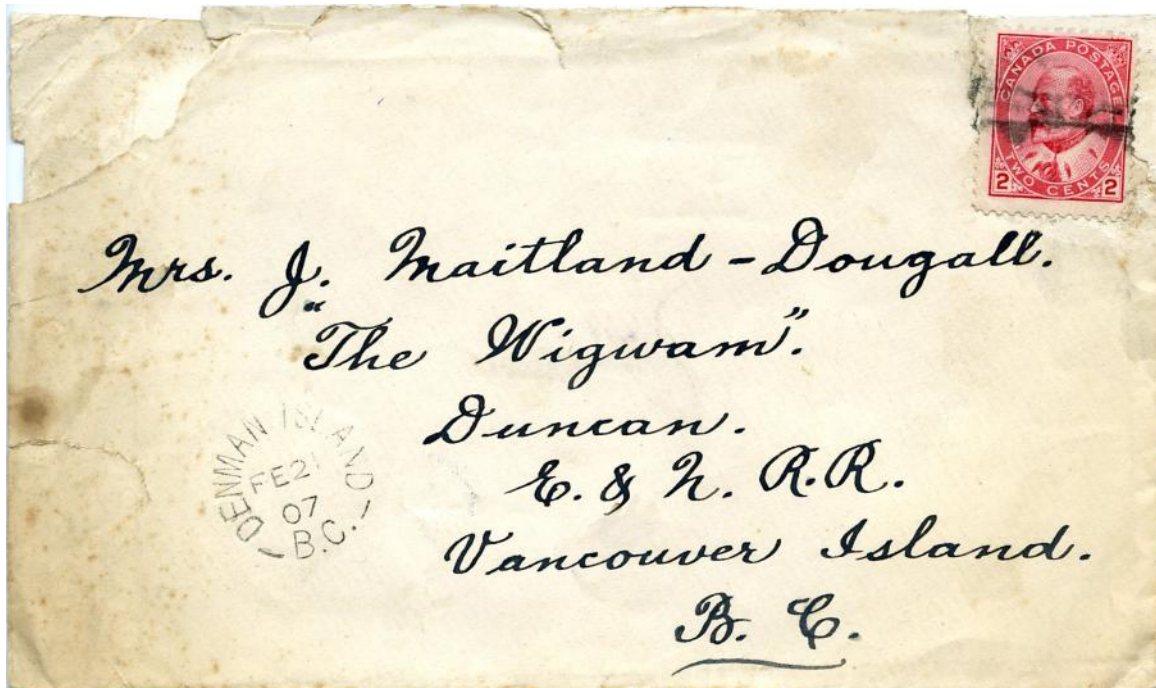


Figure 8. Cover to Winifred from Denman Island, BC postmarked 2 Feb 1907.
(Ex-Wellburn.)

James was involved in the tragic death of William Henry Lomas, an early settler in Cowichan and respected Indian Agent for much of Vancouver Island. The Victoria Daily Colonist of 28 Oct 1899 carried the following report from Duncan that Lomas had killed himself that morning at 8:30 am.

"He [Lomas] went to his office about 7, and was then in the best of spirits. Indian Constable Tom came in later and about 8 Mr. Lomas told Tom to look for Constable Maitland-Dougall as he wanted to see him. Maitland-Dougall and H. Morton came along a few minutes later and Tom called to them. Mr. Lomas was at the side door. When Maitland-Dougall turned around he heard a shot and said jocularly, 'Who are you shooting?'

"They went into the office and found Mr. Lomas sitting in his chair, holding a revolver in his right hand. The bullet entered his head at the back of the right ear. There was bulging over the right eye, apparently the course of the bullet. Death was instantaneous..."

Shortly after this, James left the police force and became the provincial Government Agent in Duncan until 1906 when he went briefly into the real estate business. But in 1909, the Provincial Police established a new district in Hazelton, BC and in the summer of that year he accepted an offer to become its chief constable. It is unclear why he would agree to return to police work after a ten year absence and move to a remote area of central BC, but it was James's reputation for "brilliant work" that caused the Provincial Police to recruit him.

The early 1900s saw an increase in European settlement in the Skeena River and Bulkley Valley region and, just as it had everywhere else in the province, the government saw no reason to negotiate land treaties with the First Nations people. As the settlers streamed in, native unrest grew. Threats of violence became more open and common and the settlers demanded a protective police presence. The Provincial Police authorities felt that James had the skills needed to resolve such a difficult situation.

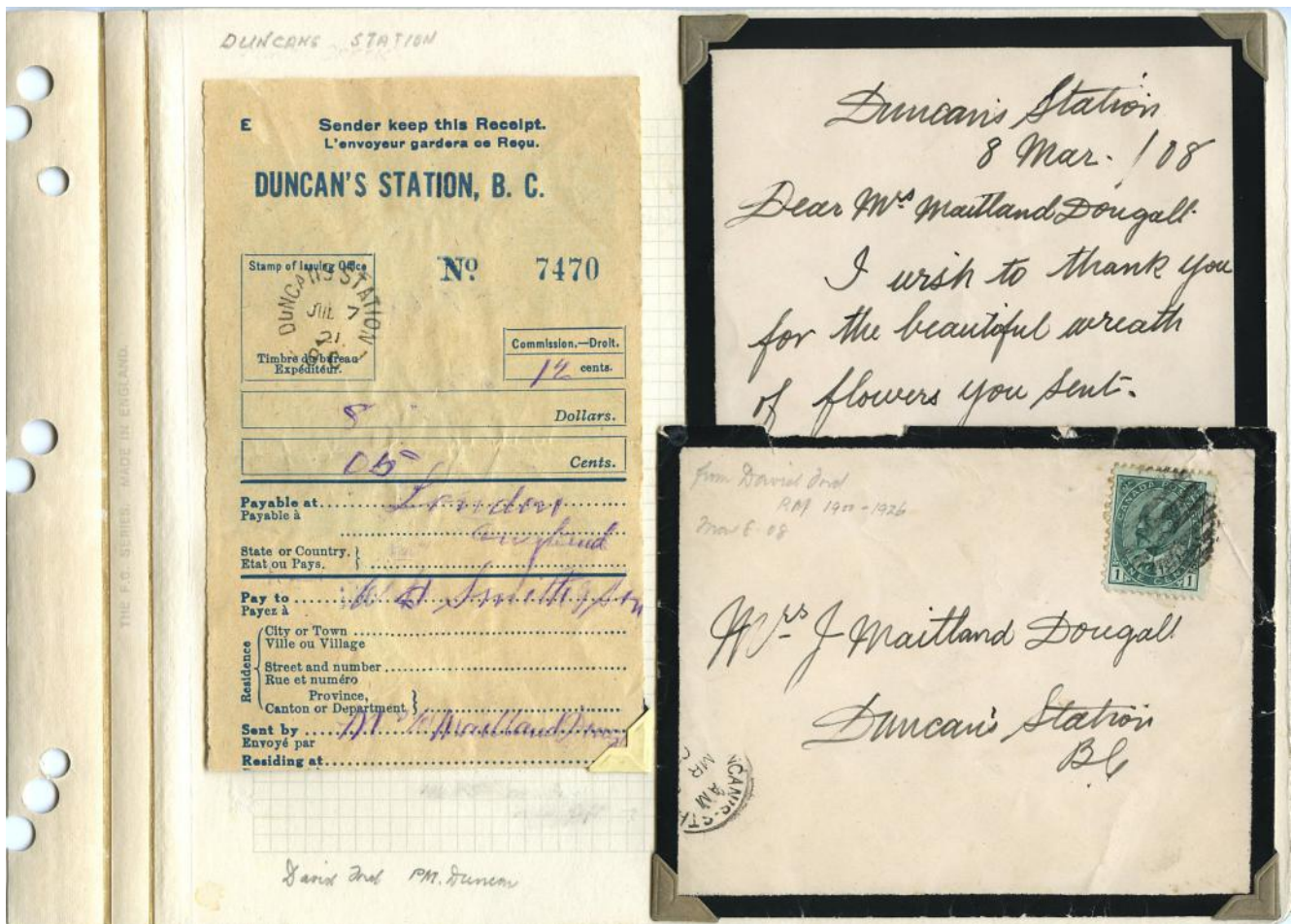


Figure 9. Gerald Wellburn page containing a money order receipt from Mrs. Maitland-Dougall dated 7 Jul 1921 and a mourning letter and cover from David Ford after the death of his wife dated 8 Mar 1908. Ford was the postmaster at Duncan's Station from 1900 to 1926. The money order was made out to W. H. Smith & Son, booksellers in London, England in the amount of \$8.05.



Figure 10. Incoming cover to Winifred from Hampstead Sub-Office North West dated 25 Mar 1909. (Ex-Wellburn.)

Newspaper articles from the period explain the background (Figures 11 and 12). Viewed through a 21st century lens, statements such as, "With the advent of settlers the Indians showed objection to the taking up of public lands putting up a sort of claim to all the territory," (my emphasis) are so obviously tone deaf to the problems facing the indigenous peoples. Treating them as intruders on their own lands is a fate they have suffered since European contact. Elsewhere in the same report, the Victoria Daily Times said, "The Indians object to the road through their reserve, and the settlement of 'their' land by the whites." (Emphasis in the original.)

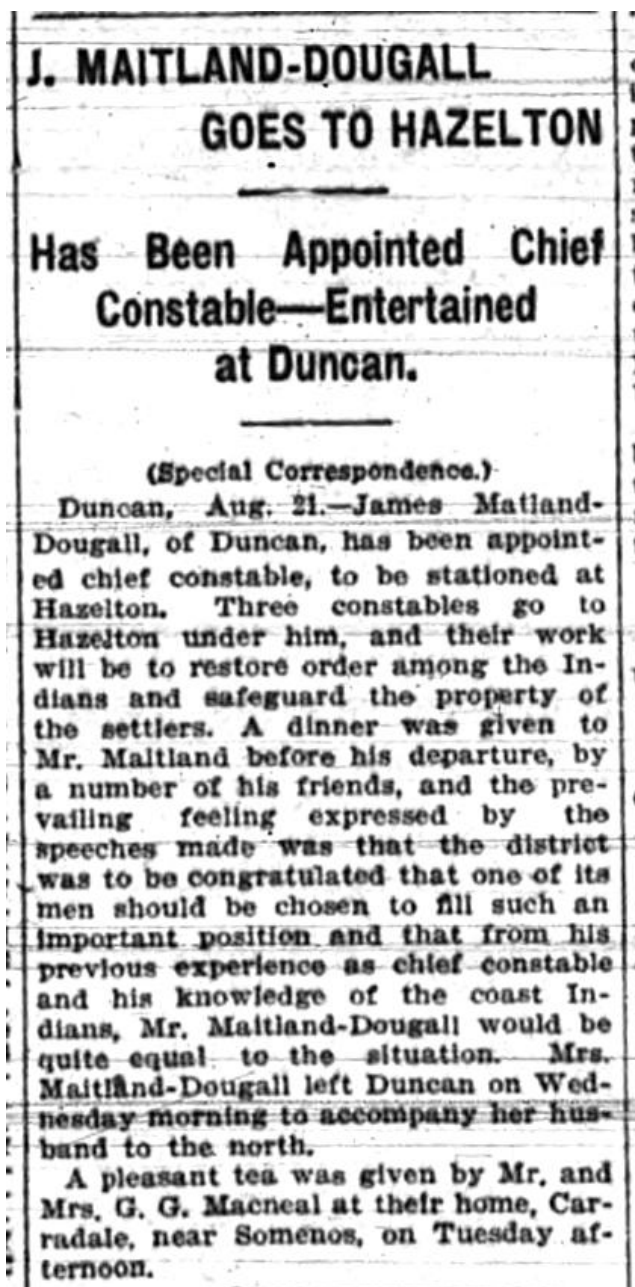


Figure 11. Victoria Daily Times article
23 Aug 1909.

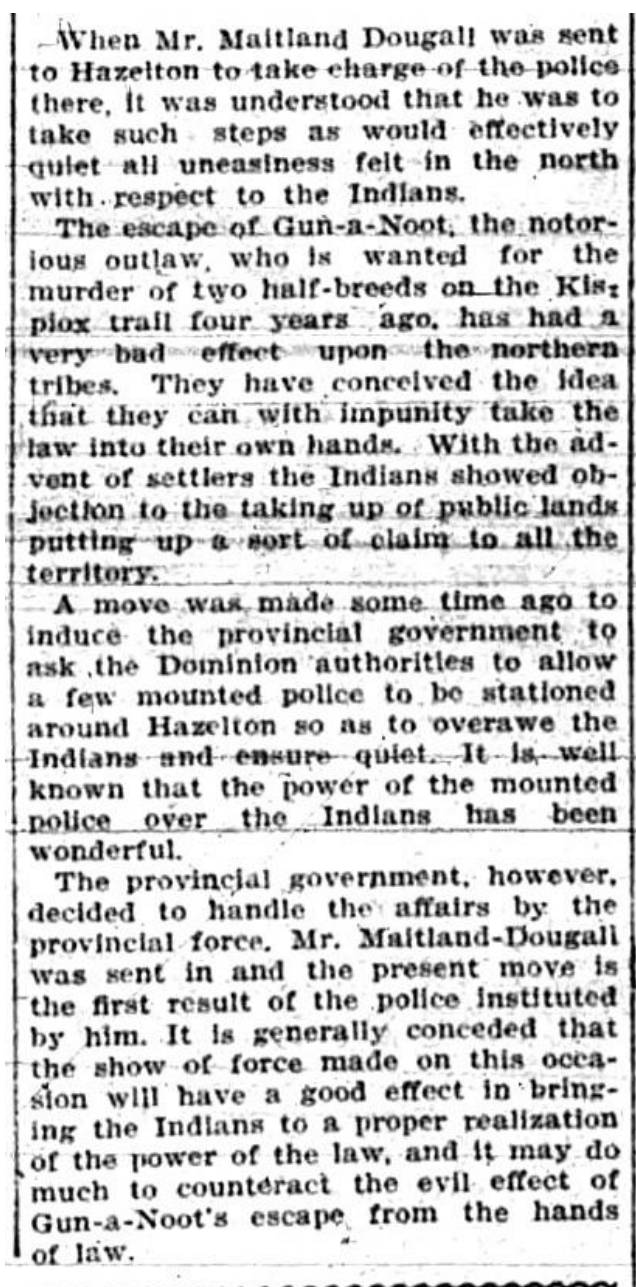


Figure 12. Excerpt from report in the Victoria
Daily Times 8 Nov 1909 explaining why James had
been sent to Hazelton. The Gun-a-Noot story is an
epic unto itself.



Figure 13. Kispiox Village in the early 1900s.

By the late-summer of 1909, about the time of James's arrival in Hazelton, First Nations leaders had been taking more active steps to protect their land and rights. They ordered the government telegraph operator in Kispiox "to vacate his home or suffer the consequences." Later, they stole equipment and supplies, including explosives, from a provincial road construction crew and ordered them to stop the construction of a road through the Kispiox valley and threatened them with violence if they did not.

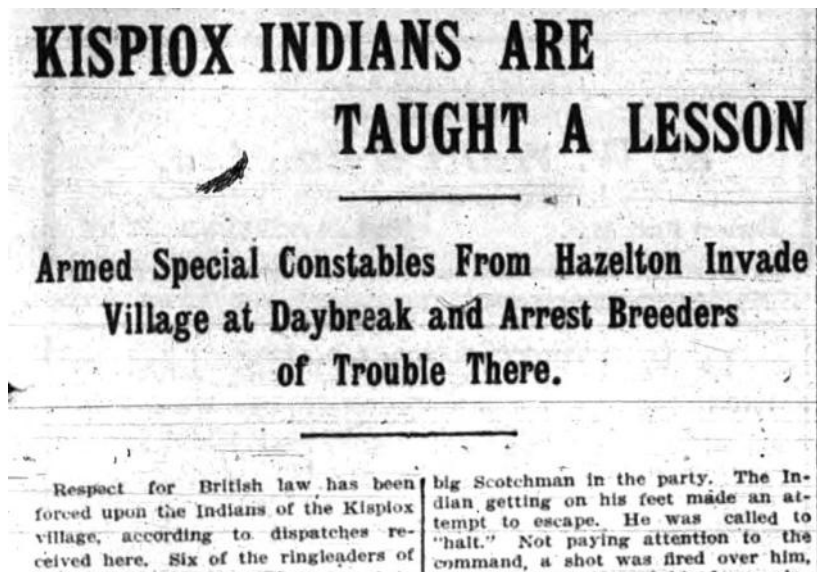


Figure 14. Excerpt from the Victoria Daily Times 8 Nov 1909 following James's early morning raid on Kispiox

In early November, James swore in fifty Special Constables and led a pre-dawn raid on Kispiox village eight miles north of Hazelton and conducted a door to door search. Some of the villagers put up resistance and fighting broke out, but in the end, six of the so-called 'ringleaders' were arrested and brought back to Hazelton to be charged and tried. The Victoria papers applauded the action by saying that "respect for British law has been forced upon the Indians..."



Figure 15. Gerald Wellburn page showing covers from Kispiox and Kitselas. The Kitselas cover is in Winifred's handwriting and is addressed to Hamish who was attending school in Duncan while his parents were in Hazelton.



Figure 16. Cover to Winifred from Tofino, BC postmarked 25 Feb 1911. (Ex-Wellburn with his manuscript 'By Sleigh & Train'.)

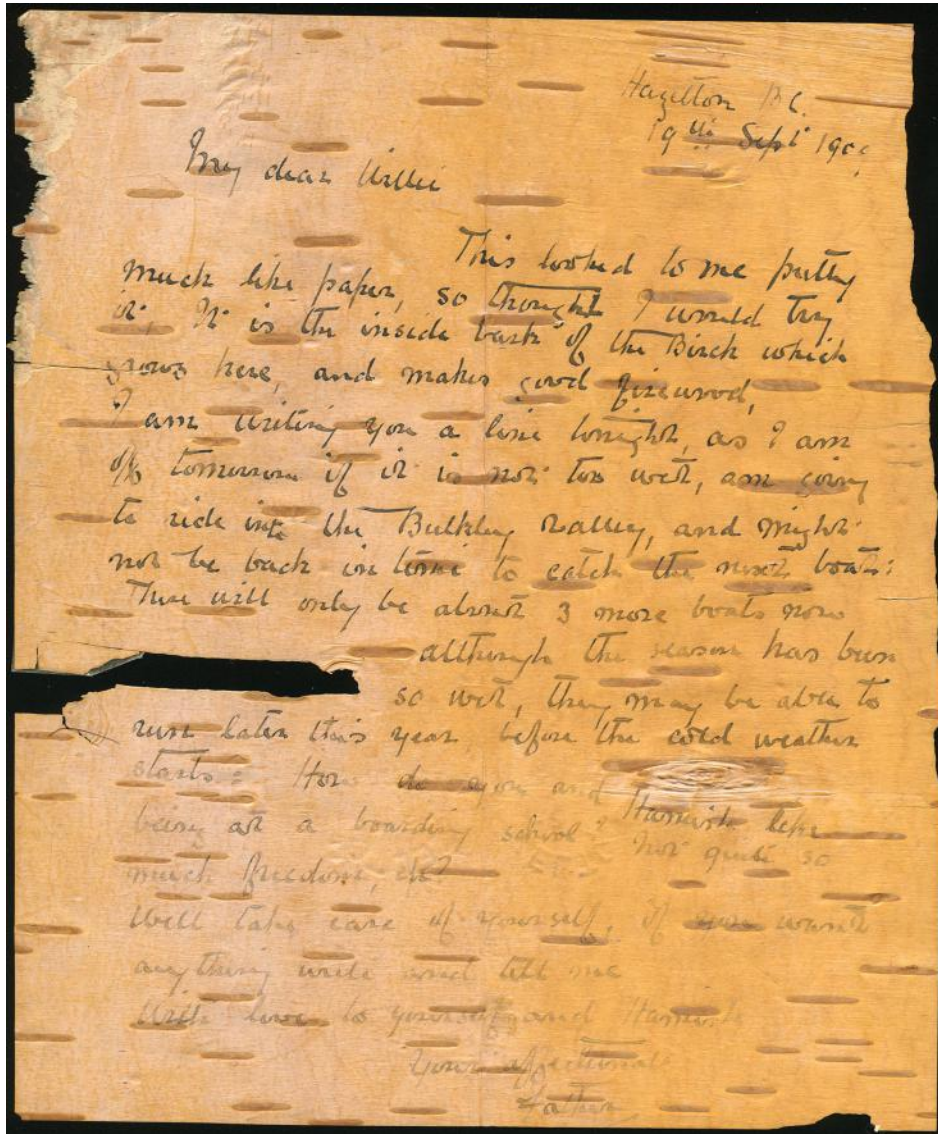


Figure 17. Birch bark letter from James to William dated 19 Sep 1909.

From the inception of the Colony of Vancouver Island, this culture of Britishness superseded any notion of 'Canadianness', something possibly not found to the same extent elsewhere in Canada. British immigrants went to some lengths to maintain the class system they had enjoyed in the old country.

The class attitude was quite pervasive in the Cowichan Valley well into the mid-twentieth century, even resulting in a gently mocking article in a 1955 issue of Maclean's magazine about the 'longstockings', as the British immigrants were called. The nickname came from the knickerbockers, puttees and shaggy tweed jackets which was their favoured attire for outdoor activities. There was a local anecdote about a retired British army major who was heard to complain that "some damned Canadian is moving in next door." Another I recall hearing in my youth was that a lost motorist stopped to ask a longstocking for directions. He replied, "I don't believe we've been properly introduced", and walked away.

All of this led inevitably to the creation of an English boarding school system for parents who did not want their children educated alongside Canadian children whom they saw as scruffy, impertinent, and unruly. In 1904, a group of parents formed the Quamichan Lake Private School which they felt would better fill the needs of young British gentlemen. They approached Percy Skrimshire who had been teaching in a local public school and invited him to become its first headmaster.

And so, during this period while James and Winifred were in Hazelton, William and Hamish remained in Duncan and attended the Quamichan Lake Private School.

Shortly after arriving in Hazelton, James wrote to William on a piece of birch bark (Figure 17). "I am writing you a line tonight, as I am off tomorrow if it is not too wet, am going to ride into the Bulkley Valley, and might not be back in time to catch the next boat. There will only be about 3 more boats now although the season has been so wet, they may be able to run later this year..." And then he closes by asking "How do you and Hamish like being at boarding school? Not quite so much freedom, eh?"

While they were in Hazelton, it appears the Maitland-Dougalls left some of their affairs in the hands of Alexander MacLean, a Duncan lawyer. Letters from MacLean to Winifred contain reports on how the boys are doing, maintenance issues regarding their vacant house, and the latest social gossip (Figure 18).

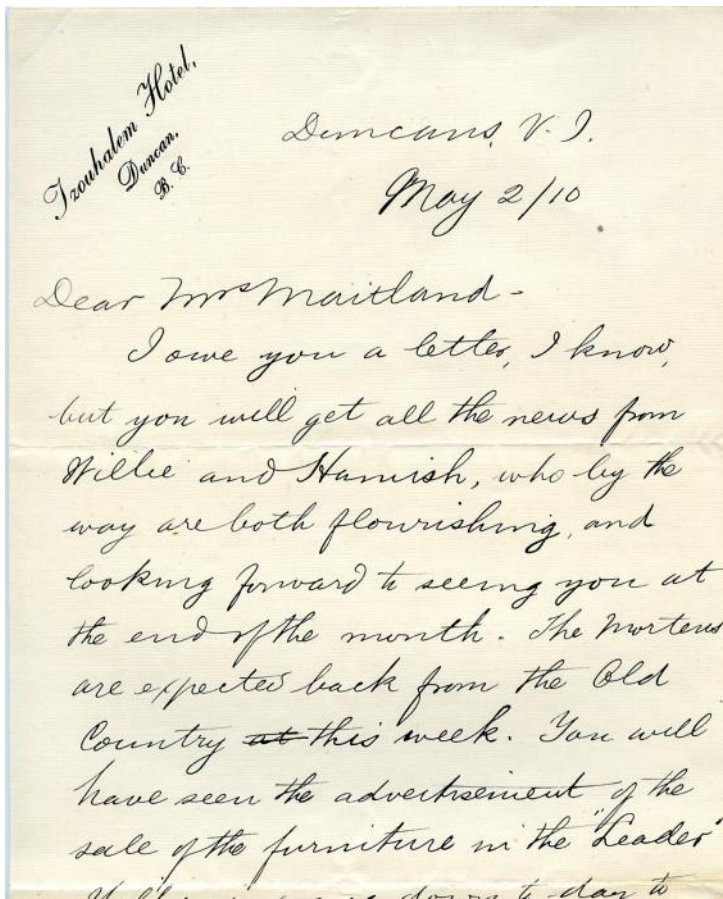


Figure 18. Excerpt of a letter from Alexander MacLean to Winifred in Hazelton dated 2 May 1910. (Ex-Wellburn.)

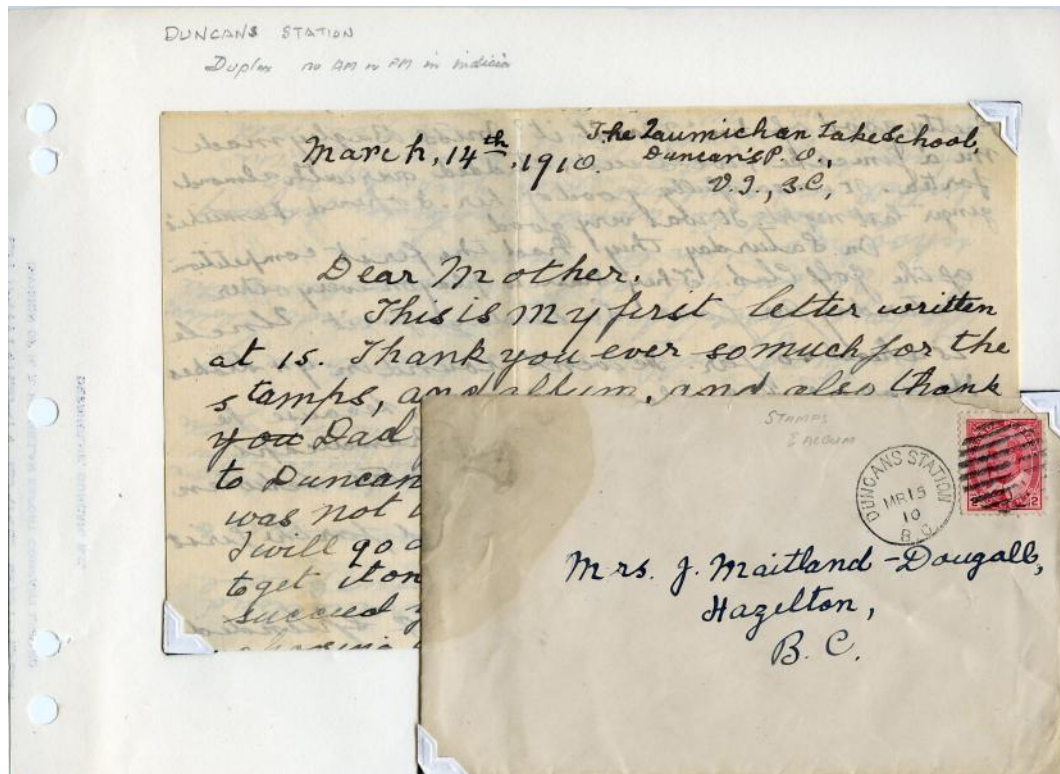


Figure 19. Gerald Wellburn page containing a cover and letter dated 14 Mar 1910 from William to his mother, writing to thank her and his father for his 15th birthday gifts which included a new watch, stamps and an album.



Figure 20. The Hazleton post office in the early 1900s. R. S. Sargent was the first postmaster at Hazelton from its opening 1 May 1899 until 11 Aug 1927. (BC Archives photo)

The Maitland-Dougalls were in Hazelton for only a couple of years and upon their return to Duncan in the spring of 1911, James was again appointed Government Agent, a position he held until his retirement in 1932. It's possible that he made his reinstatement to the position a pre-condition for accepting the Hazelton assignment.



Figure 21. Folded letter cover from Winifred to Hamish.

In September 1911, Winifred wrote to Hamish. He had been visiting his grandmother and aunt Nellie (Eleanor) and Winifred was making arrangements for him to come home to Duncan on the train, presumably to return to school. This folded letter cover (Figure 21 and 22) was sent in care of Edward Burdett-Garrard Esq. who was Nellie's husband. He died during WWI.

Duncan - B.I. -
Sept 12th 1911

Dear Hamish -

You will be starting home
on ~~Thursday~~ Saturday - Dad has sent you
\$5. - Aunt Nellie has another \$5. for you
Railway fare will be under \$3. & Motor \$3.
It would be nice to give both Auntie &
Grammie a little remembrance - Fruit is always
useful - I bought a case of peaches
for \$1.25 the other day, if there are any
in Alberni buy each a case, if not
choose grapes or plums, Bishop's gener-
ally has most fruit I think - It will be nice
again & we shall have Sunday together - Go
see at 5 in the evening, Huskey & I will
see you - There is a letter, also a postcard in
The letter has Prince Rupert postmark & has ex-
actly every word - I would like to have
Hazelton M^{rs} Cox! Made my 1st bread
& cake the day before, but it was a
one, shall have a cousin one waiting for
M^{rs} Leo was scrubbing floors yesterday after-
noon & attached me a slice of salmon!! M^{rs} M^{rs}
killed us two cockles & gave us two young
mackerels & 3 cucumbers & 1/2 lb. some
fallen apples, a cauliflower & a cabbage!
The weather is still warm, I am just
longing for a bath! - Love to all,
especially "My old Dutch!" Do you know
know who she is? Your loving Mother

Perhaps of interest to philatelists, Winifred makes enthusiastic reference to receiving a letter and postcard with a Prince Rupert postmark, although her entire message is not clear because of the reduced letter cover. So it seems that Winifred and the boys were all interested in stamp collecting.

Figure 22. Contents of the folded letter cover, slightly reduced on right side. Hamish had been staying with Winifred's sister and her mother and Winifred is giving him some instructions about his return to Duncan.

But the remarkable story of the Maitland-Dougall family does not end there.

In the early years of the 20th century, Britain became increasingly concerned by the cost of the navy required to maintain its empire, as well as by the rising militarization of Germany. Since the former and now maturing colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa were enjoying the benefits of the Royal Navy's protection, it was suggested that the dominions should contribute to the navy's cost. Canada declined simply to pay for this and in 1910 opted instead to create the Royal Canadian Navy which it would use for self-defense and offer to Britain in times of need. At the same time, the government established the Royal Naval College of Canada in Halifax.

Within a few months of writing to his mother (Figure 19) and following the path of his naval ancestors, William applied to the nascent RNCC. He scored the highest mark on the entrance exam in all of Canada and on 1 Jan 1911, he enrolled as a naval cadet in the first class to be accepted to the college. He was two months shy of his 16th birthday which was in accordance with the enrollment requirements. Bear in mind that throughout much of this period of application, enrollment, and travel to Halifax, his parents were in Hazelton while he was in Duncan.



Figure 23. Inaugural cadet class of the Royal Naval College of Canada, Halifax. I believe William is standing in the center, back row.



Figure 24. Victoria Daily Times article 7 Jul 1913.

Graduating after two years at the college, cadets were then expected to serve one year as Midshipman to get 'big ship experience'. On 15 Jan 1913, William was assigned to HMS Berwick which was based at the Royal Navy's North America and West Indies Station in Bermuda. In September of that year, Hamish, who was probably in his last year of high school, wrote to William with the news from home. The post card (Figure 25) was addressed to William in care of The Admiralty in London and redirected to Bermuda.



Figure 25. Postcard from Hamish Maitland-Dougall to his brother William postmarked Duncan's Station 15 Sep 1913. Redirected to Bermuda where William was stationed with the Royal Navy on HMS Berwick. (Ex-Wellburn.)



Figure 26. Cover from James to Hamish on board HMS Berwick on Duncan Government Agent stationery and postmarked Duncan's Station 3 Jan 1914.

William completed his naval training just as Europe was sliding towards war. After serving briefly on HMCS Niobe (one of the first two ships of the Royal Canadian Navy), he was assigned to HMCS Shearwater, a submarine tender based in Esquimalt. This launched a naval career that would focus primarily on submarine service. As the war began, he was assigned to the Royal Navy and in 1915 served as the Navigating Officer on HMS H10 (submarines generally were not named at that time) and by 1916 had been promoted to Sub-Lieutenant on HMS D3.

On 1 Jan 1917, he was promoted to A/Lieutenant and was given command of HMS D1. At the time, he was the youngest RCN officer to command a ship of any kind. I have seen conflicting stories that this appointment meant he was also the first Canadian to command a submarine. However, another story said that William had served under a submarine commander from Vancouver, so even if he was not the first, he was certainly one of the first.

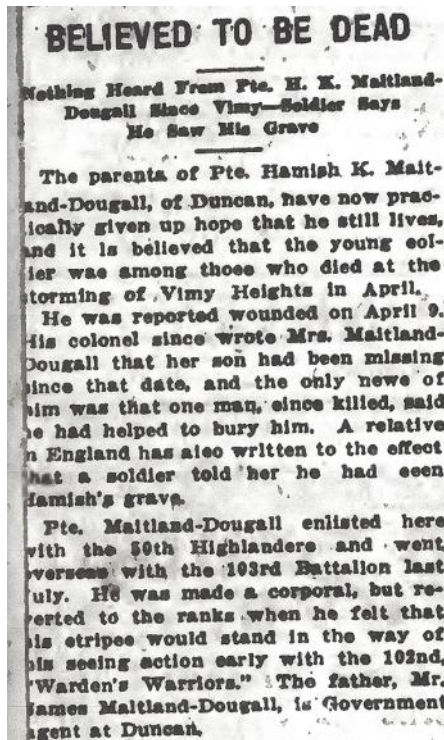
In the meantime, Hamish joined the 102nd Battalion of the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force in December 1915. After completing his basic training, he shipped from Halifax on board SS Olympic on 23 Jul 1916, arriving in Liverpool July 31. He was promoted to Lance Corporal and spent the autumn of 1916 in England assigned to the 16th Canadian Reserve Battalion. On 13 Feb 1917, he was sent to France and rejoined the 102nd Battalion.



Figure 27 and 28. Hamish and William Maitland-Dougall in uniform taken at the home of their great-aunt in England, Summer 1916.



On 9 Apr 1917 Lance Corporal Hamish Maitland-Dougall of the 102nd Battalion, CEF, participated in the initial Canadian assault on Vimy Ridge and he was killed, only five days after his 20th birthday. Adding to the agony for his parents, the fog of war created a great deal of uncertainty about his status. Initially reported wounded, he was later reported wounded and missing on May 30. But it wasn't until November 12 that he was confirmed as killed in action.



NAME		REG'T'L. No.
RANK AND CORPS		M. F. FILE No.
NO.	CA	DATE
Maitland-Dougall Hamish		706658
102nd Bn		102nd Bn
NATURE OF CASUALTY		FOLLOWS
M 4094	9-5-17	Reported wounded April 9th 1917
M 5495	30-5-17	Pres. rep. wounded now rep. wounded and missing April 9th 1917.
Pres. Report London 14-11-17		
Recd 31-10-17		
M 6335	12-11-17	Pres. rpt. wounded and missing now rpt. killed in action April 9th 1917.
A. F. B21904		
Rouen 2-11-17		
Pres. rep. killed & missing now killed		
in action 9-4-17. (Recd 30-1-18)		

M. F. W. 42-31M.-4-17.
H. Q. 1772-30-303.

Figure 29 (left). Newspaper report of Hamish's death at Vimy Ridge.
Figure 30 (right). Hamish's casualty record in the months following the battle.

By late 1917, William had transferred his command to HMS D3. At 14:20 hrs on 12 Mar 1918, a French AT-0 airship commanded by Lieutenant Saint-Remy on coastal patrol northwest of Dieppe spotted an unidentified vessel running at speed on the surface. It was HMS D3.

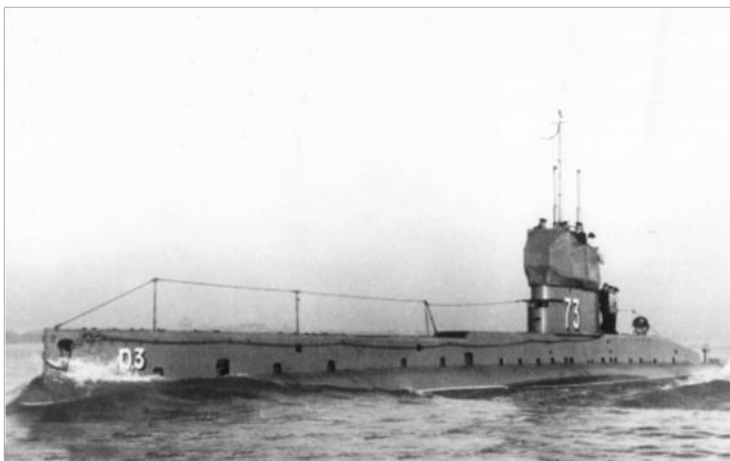


Figure 31. HMS D3.

As the airship neared the submarine, rockets were fired from the rear of the vessel. Lt. Saint-Remy was not aware that this was a standard Allied signal that the submarine was friendly and instead, took it as a sign of attack. He positioned the airship for a bomb run while his radio operator opened fire with a machine gun. The submarine began to dive and the airship dropped two bombs just wide of the vessel. It then dropped four more bombs forward of the sub's last position. Shortly afterward, the conning tower broke the surface and four men appeared in the water, but the submarine sank. There were no survivors in this terrible case of mistaken identity.

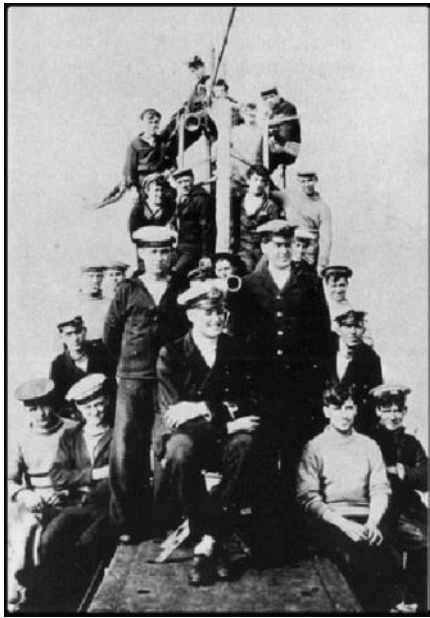


Figure 32 (left). Officers and crew of HMS D3. William is front and centre.

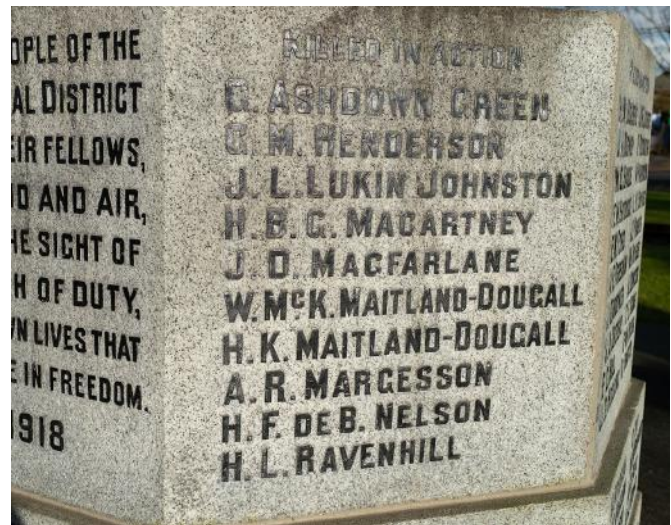
Figure 33 (right). Lieutenant William McKinstry Maitland-Dougall.

William died just two days before his 23rd birthday.

It's hard to imagine how any parent could recover from the loss of a child, let alone both children. In 1921, the City of Duncan dedicated its new cenotaph and Winifred was asked to unveil it. Hamish's and William's names are recorded on it. She had a brass plaque remembering their lives installed at St. Peter's church, Quamichan and she would sit beneath it during services. James died in Victoria in 1940 and Winifred passed away in Duncan in 1954. Both are buried in St. Peter's church.



Figure 34. Winifred Maitland-Dougall later in her life.



Figures 35 and 36. Contemporary photographs of the Duncan cenotaph.

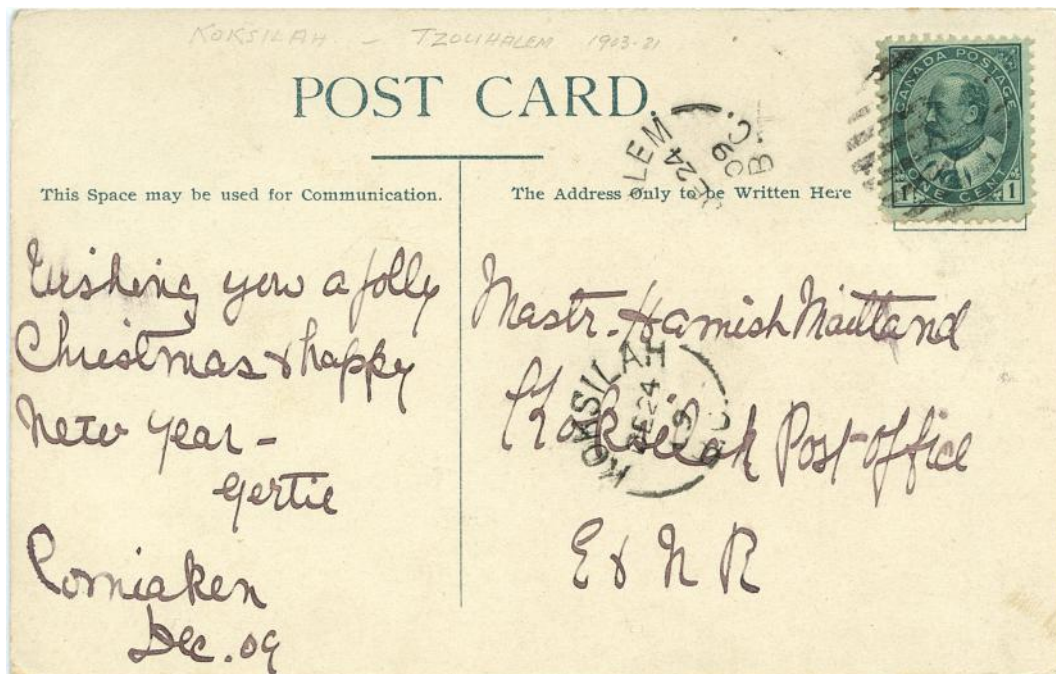


Figure 37. Christmas greetings to Hamish from Gertie at Comiaken, postmarked Tzouhalem 24 Dec 1909.

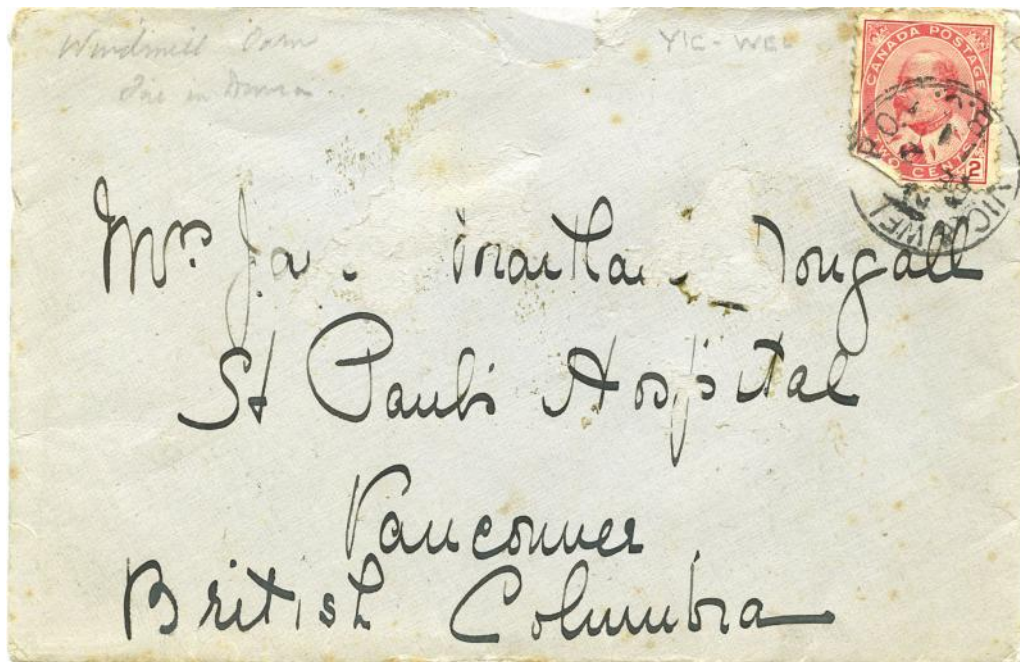


Figure 38. Cover addressed to Winifred who appears to have been admitted to St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. Victoria & Wellington RPO, but the year is obscured in the dater.



Figure 39. Henry Oswald Wellburn

But wait – there's more. And it's a connection of special interest to Canadian philatelists.

The Daily Colonist obituary tells us that in 1899 "...Mr. Maitland-Dougall was made Government agent at Duncan, succeeding H. S. Wellburn." This is a small error, the former agent was Henry Oswald Wellburn. However, when I saw the Wellburn name in the obituary, I wondered if there was a connection to Gerald Eley Wellburn who spent most of his life in Duncan.

After a bit of online genealogical research, I determined that Henry was a first cousin of Gerald's grandfather. It's not clear when Henry came to Canada, but according to government documents he was acting as government agent in Duncan as early as 1891. Gerry Wellburn's branch of the family arrived in about 1911, continuing a common practice of families immigrating in waves.

Acknowledgements

Family photos and genealogical information were provided by J. Redford and ancestry.com. James's obituary and other news articles are from the on-line archives of the Victoria Daily Times and the Victoria Colonist. Hamish's military record is from Library and Archives Canada. William's naval history and photographs are recorded in several places including the Canadian Virtual War Memorial and nauticapedia.ca.