
Bitesize History - People

SHAND, the Last Harvey of Castle Semple

The last Harvey who owned the Castle Semple estate from 1883 to 1908 was James Widdrington Shand Harvey. This article is about his son James George Gordon Farquahar Shand Harvey or just Shand to those who knew him. He was born in 1880 on the island of Mauritius, off the African coast. In 1883, he moved with his parents to their inherited estate, Castle Semple, in Scotland. He emigrated to Canada in 1905. He led a very simple life, working with pack horses and earning a meagre living as a trapper. He kept in touch with his sister Margaret who returned to Mauritius to live on the plantation owned by the family. He died in 1968 at the age of 88. Although Shand led a simple life he became a bit of a celebrity when his life in Canada was immortalised in the book "Pack Saddles to Tête Jaune Cache" by James G MacGregor.

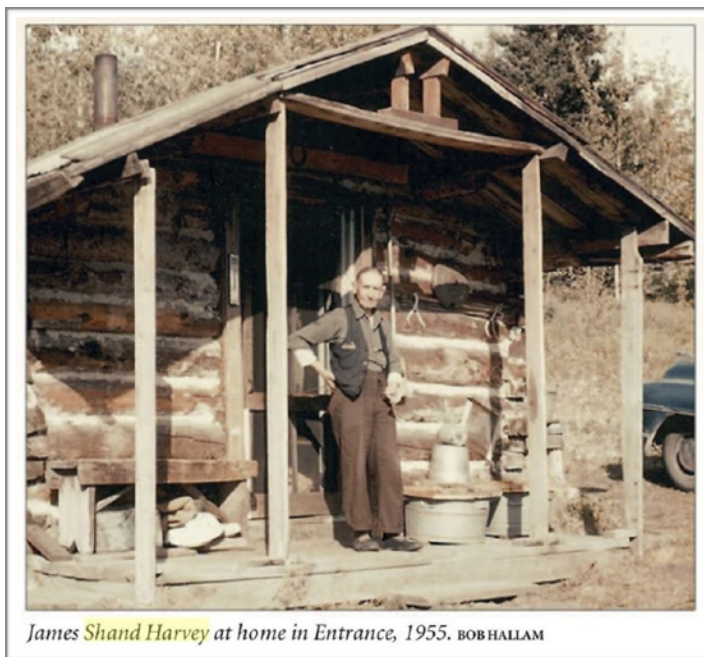
He arrived in Strathcona which is now part of Edmonton in August 1905. This was, literally, the end of the line, only wilderness lay ahead. As he stepped off the train he began an experience which was to last 63 years. His sole purpose for coming had been to see the Rocky Mountains. In the end he

homesteaded, surveyed, ran base lines, packed for railways and mountaineers, became a forest ranger and a trapper. He was a part of the early history of the area from Lac Ste Anne to Tête Jaune, but the area around Hinton and north to beyond the Muskeg River settlement, was his "estate", a far cry from the gardens and farmland of Castle Semple. He found work with a freighter taking



supplies to Lac St Anne. This route partly followed the Klondyke (1897) trail up to the Yukon. This possibly reminded him of Lochwinnoch and the Klondyke cabinet works.

He lived side by side with the native Indian population and learned to speak fluent Cree. In 1912 he vigorously defended the rights of the displaced Métis from Jasper to retain their settlement lands. His success in this matter may be down to that oil that has smoothed so many wheels, the old boy network or more politely, who you know. His best friend at Eton was the son of the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, the Duke was Prince Arthur the seventh child and third son of Queen Victoria and he served as Governor General of Canada from 1911 till 1916. A word in his friend's ear, who perhaps passed the message to his father the Governor General and hey presto problem solved. In the book "Pack Saddles to Tête Jaune Cache" Shand recalled how the old Queen used to drive up to Eton in her carriage to visit her grandson, and spoke of the times when the two boys went to Windsor Castle to have tea with her.



James Shand Harvey at home in Entrance, 1955. BOBHALLAM

In the spring of 1919 he contracted Spanish Flu, 100 years later we are living through our own "Spanish Flu". In 1921 he built a one room cabin in which he lived for 47 years, it still stands to this day.