

Hi Samantha

(My August letter) September 22, 2013

Your July letter made me think of the ways in which summer camps have played such an important part in our lives over the years. They have been a part of my life – but when I thought of Fran and her family, they go back even farther.

For example, when her Great-grandfather James M. Shaver was a Minister at the Stella Mission, he organized and ran a summer camp program for the many new immigrants who came to the North End of Winnipeg. You may remember him because we visited the Stella Mission



where he was the Superintendent. We tried to get into the Mission, but it was closed, so we just read the plaque on the corner and spoke to a worker who was repairing the outside of the building. I have a photo of the mission that was taken by Rev. James Shaver many years ago one that we took when we were there in 2012.



I also have some photos of the building of a summer camp by your Great-great-grandfather Shaver. It was named “Oak Glade Camp” and was just a short distance from Stella Mission in Winnipeg. The family calls it “Kirkfield Park” for some reason or other. There is an interesting story about it (and the work of James Shaver) that was written by a man (Mr Spack) who went to the camp in those days (<http://www.hillmanweb.com/mikespack/history7.html>). I have included a photo of the camp that we have in the Shaver documents. Your Great-grandfather Shaver and his brother Bill helped in the construction of that camp – and participated in the programs that were organized for the camp members. Some of the buildings were constructed from old boxcars from the CPR railway.



Fran’s father (your Great-grandfather Shaver) continued his summer camp activities after he came to BC. He was a regular speaker and leader at the United Church camp in Naramata, for example. I even have a photo of that camp.



It had a huge building for meetings and sleeping. Since that time there have been other buildings added to it and it has become a retreat for many other groups besides church groups. Have you ever been there?

You may recall the story I told you of the time I went there and almost got drowned by a sudden wind on the lake.

Jack was also frequently a participant at Camp Fircom on Gambier Island – a camp with which Fran and I also share some history (and some photos – see below).

My first summer camp experience was at a camp near Vancouver. It was Camp Sanwes on Keats Island – one of the islands near Horseshoe Bay just north of Vancouver. I have some photos, though – that I took on my little

Brownie camera. I have included a couple here. I don't remember much about the camp – except for two things: having a crush on the Camp Director's daughter and wetting my bed (I think they were unrelated!). I took a photo of the Director's daughter that you can see here (I can't remember her name). There is also a photo of me from that time – that I have seen over the mantelpiece in your dining room. I also remember how I tried to



hide the fact that I wet my bed – and how the cabin leader found out and was kind enough to keep it secret as we figured out a way to secretly clean and dry out my sleeping bag.



Soon after Fran and I were married she got a job at First United Church as a

Community Worker. Some of her work involved helping at the summer camp at Camp Fircom on Gambier Island near Vancouver. I joined her for this camp. We had a good time with the various activities at the camp. I even have a photo of me and another camp member all dressed up as hippies for a skit that we were performing. Have you often been involved in making up skits? I used to enjoy doing this because it allowed us to put together some silly stuff and make fools of ourselves. I remember writing one for a high school event where I was cast as a bumbly, silly, girl. I think I still have the script for it somewhere. Unfortunately, however, I don't have photos of me dressed up as a girl.



Fran also has plenty of summer camp memories. Many of them are related to her years in CGIT – and Camp Fircom. I have included a few photos of her at these camps – and even one when my mother was at the same camp! Mum met Fran before I knew her!

I find the photo of Fran in her CGIT uniform amusing – since they look so dressed up for a summer camp! I presume this was for a special



occasion. I think you might have been to Camp Fircom. Do any of the cabins still look the same?

Some of my other camp experiences include a retreat at Camp Howdy (when Fran and I were students at UBC) and two work camps with the Student Christian Movement: one in Vancouver and the other in Toronto. These all have special stories associated with them – which I will reserve for another time. Perhaps you should ask Fran to tell you the one of Camp Howdy – since she played a major (if somewhat embarrassing) role in it.

Love,
Bill