

RECREATION

In the 1920s, people were able to enjoy leisure and recreation as they never had before.

The decade brought general prosperity, and an increase in consumer goods allowed the average Canadian access to new conveniences. Using credit to buy goods was rare at the beginning of the decade, but by the end of the decade it was a well established custom, allowing consumers to be in the market for automobiles, washing machines, furniture, and household appliances much sooner than they would have been able to without credit. Many got into debt, a habit that is, unfortunately, still seen today.

Several new community halls were built in Langley in the 1920s, and continued to be as important to residents as they had been in earlier years. While an integral part of easing the isolation of rural life, halls continued to be a place to get together in larger groups than could be afforded in the home. From municipal polling places, meetings of Great War Veterans' Association, farmers' co-ops, women's associations, cribbage leagues, whist drives, weddings, dances, and fundraisers, something always seemed to be happening at one of the halls.

Individuals contributed their own land for community good. Coghlan Hall was built on 256th Street in 1920, on land donated by William Forman, and the Fernridge Hall was built on 24th Avenue in 1921 on land owned by Edward Stinchcombe, who donated it to the Fern Ridge Farmers' Institute in 1927. An 1898 community hall built on D. W. Poppy's property was donated to the newly formed Otter Improvement Association in 1925. It was busy almost every Saturday night through the decade, and in 1931 was moved to Fraser Highway and 248th Street, where it is now McDonald's Stoves.

In Fort Langley, the Community Improvement Society purchased the old municipal hall from the Township in 1925. The community raised funds and volunteers built the current hall in 1931. A hall was built in Willoughby in 1924 as a place for students to go to school; funds were raised by local residents holding dance parties at various homes, and John Bray donated the land. And in Langley Prairie, the Langley Amateur Athletic Association's Hall was built at the Athletic Park, now Douglas Park, in 1924.



(Above left) Murrayville's community hall was built around 1910, almost the same time as the one in Milner (below), and both existed on the second floor above store space. The Murrayville Toy Factory was located below when a fire started by a cigarette burned the hall and a neighbouring house to the ground in 1921. The lot sat vacant for several years until being rebuilt in 1928. (Right) The hall as it appeared in 1982.



(Above) The Milner Community Hall, right, in 1923. Note the shadow cast by the Milner Methodist (United) Church.



(Above) Girls Basketball team with coach P. Y. Porter, 1926.
(Left) Milner basketball team, 1922.

Jazz was included or influenced the music played at community dances. Although the roots of jazz went back decades and even centuries, there was a boom in its popularity during the decade assisted by radio, which many were now able to have in their homes. This led to it being referred to as the "Jazz Age" after F. Scott Fitzgerald published a collection of short stories in 1922 titled "Tales of the Jazz Age."

With a larger population and more facilities, organized sports boomed, but existed alongside more rural skill competitions such as ploughing matches. Although 30 years old, basketball gained popularity in BC in the 1920s for both men and women. Women locally might have been inspired by the Edmonton Grads, a women's team invited to join the International Women's Sports Federation, where they were declared world basketball champions and continued to make headlines globally.

Picnics continued to be another popular pastime in the 1920s. Local churches, fraternal orders and community groups regularly held these events in the summers, sometimes nearby, and sometimes as a day trip out of town.



(Above) Langley Prairie picnic to Pitt Lake, 1920s.
(Right) *The Province*, July 27, 1925.

