

GROWING BUSINESSES

Continued settlement in the area brought businesses to serve a growing population, and vice versa.

The 1920s was a time of growth for Langley's business community. At the beginning of the decade, Langley's communities were served by small general stores. Items not in stock could be obtained through catalogue mail order, or picked up at larger retailers in New Westminster or Vancouver. The general store often served as the local post office, and sometimes had the only telephone around. This was the case at the Noel Booth Store in Fernridge. After moving there in 1921, Gertrude Booth became the post mistress and ran a small store while husband Noel Booth commuted to a plumbing business in Vancouver, picking up goods for the store on his trips.



(Above) Fred Pepin driving the P.Y. Porter truck in a parade, 2006. Porter ran the Murrayville General Store from 1917 to 1979, and used this 1926 Ford Model T to make deliveries. It is now in the Museum's collection.



(Above) The Timms' Theatre Block. Throughout the 1920s people came from all around to see silent pictures, and usually one of the Timms women would play the piano accompaniment. Timms' sold refreshments in the space just east of the theatre.



(Left) The Langley Electric Bakery, ca. 1923.

(Right) Duckworth's as it appeared in the 1940s. Jack Duckworth opened the dry goods store in 1927, and turned it into a department store in the following years, finally providing a place to shop for clothing in Langley.



Garages became increasingly important to the car-owning masses. Charlie Reid's Fort Langley garage and blacksmith shop had burned down and was replaced in 1923, likely with more emphasis on the garage than the blacksmith shop. Similar changes took place at Arthur Anderson's Murrayville Garage. In this case, the front section of the garage was replaced in 1922; Anderson continued to run the blacksmith shop and shoe horses in the older part of the building while son Benny ran the service station in the front, capturing the passing traffic on the newly paved Yale Road. Further east on the Yale Road, the Ross Brother's Garage opened in 1922 at Jackman Road (272nd Street) in Aldergrove. To the west, Wilfred Des Rochers' Vulcanizing opened in 1921 in Langley Prairie at the Yale and New McLellan (56th Ave.) Roads. He offered vulcanizing, a process that fuses a tire's components together, as well as gas and oil.



(Left) Yale Garage, ca. 1929. Alf Marr, brother of the doctor, came west and settled in Langley Prairie, where he owned and ran the Yale Garage on Yale Road (Fraser Highway).

(Right) Employees of the Flannigan sawmill in 1928, including A. J. Pepin, age 21, far left.



Despite all of the growth, one industry began to appear less and less on Langley's landscape during this decade. Several sawmills operated in Langley up until this time, but as the land became increasingly clear of suitable trees, several mills closed or were lost to fire and not rebuilt. A few remained, and some continued operating as shingle mills.