

Colorful Pioneer, Aged 86, Leads Quadruple Anniversary

Few Can Beat Record of Charlie Durham,
Here Since 1892

The unique event of a quadruple birthday party within a family took place on Thursday of last week at the home in Usk of Charles Durham, dean of pioneers of the Skeena River district. The celebrants were the 86-year-old "Charlie" himself; his daughter, Mrs. Nellie Adams, also of Usk; his daughter-in-law,

Mrs. George Lurnam of Vancouver, and his grandson, Allan Durham, also of Vancouver. Relatives came from various parts of the province to join in the anniversary reunion which was a memorize event. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Durham, Usk; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Adams, Usk; Mr. and Mrs. George Durham and son, Allan, Vancouver; Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Bowie and son, Ian, 150-Mile House; Mr. and Mrs. A. Blackhall and son, David, Prince Rupert; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Verner, Usk.

Born at Molde, Norway, in 1861, it was back in 1892 that Charlie Durham first hit the Skeena River, coming north aboard the old side-wheeler Princess Louise to work as storekeeper in Robert Cunningham's cannery. There were few canneries on the river in those days—Inverness and North Pacific in the slough and Standard and Claxton on the main river. The first Aberdeen, near the present Tyee, had just burned down and Balmoral was only starting.

Those were the days when sockeye sold for 7c apiece and springs for 25c regardless of size. There were no Japs and mighty few white men in the fishing, the industry being confined pretty well to the Indians. Fresh meat was largely venison and they paid \$1 apiece for deer.

Everybody was happy. The early canners were waxing rich, the fishermen were making a good living and there were no complaints. But Charlie did not stay long at Essington, hustling back to Vancouver in a 10-day

voyage of the Princess Louise on which there was such a crowd of passengers that three men had to share every bunk, taking their sleep in eight-hour shifts.

Ten years later, however, in 1902, Charlie headed north again as a telegraph lineman, homesteading at Kitselas, whence he moved, after serving overseas with the 102nd Battalion in the First World War, to Usk where he has since resided.

While the most of his life has been spent in this district, Charlie Durham has also seen a good deal else of the world. He went to sea in sailing ships and sailed out of London and Liverpool, marrying 62 years ago, he finally decided to settle down in Montreal at which port he quit the steamer Oregon, a transatlantic vessel of the old Dominion Line. Followed employment with the Canadian Pacific Railway and, finally, transfer to Sudbury, Ontario, as dining car storekeeper. The nickel-mines were working strong in those days and Charlie went to work at the mines as accountant and paymaster. It was from there he came to British Columbia and Port Essington.

The sea called Charlie again for a couple of years after he left Port Essington to return to Vancouver and he sailed to the Orient aboard the old Empress of China. Then, as the Yukon gold rush was commencing, he became interested in the hotel business, acquiring the Grand Hotel on Cordova Street across from the old Canadian Pacific Railway business. But "Mother," a confirmed temperance wo-



CHARLES DURHAM—Real pioneer of Skeena Valley who celebrated his eighty-sixth anniversary at a quadruple party within the family last week. He is shown here with Mrs. Durham. They have been married sixty-two years.

man, did not agree with the saloon angle of that enterprise and "Father" sold out and worked for a time in the Rogers sugar refinery, later becoming identified with the fishermen's union in the Fraser River.

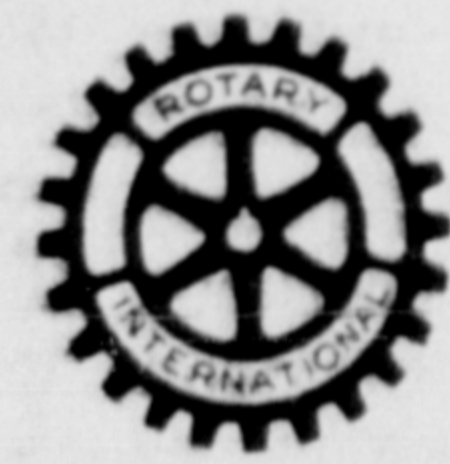
Charlie's has been a colorful career and the years rest lightly on his shoulders. Active and frisky, too, on occasion he looks 20 years younger than the record shows. In town the last few days, he has been receiving the admulatory congratulations of numerous friends.

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WRECKING A TRAIN WRECK—Four main lines of the Illinois central railroad were tied up when 29 freight cars went off the rails near Moline, Ill. A huge crane is called into play and a line of giant jackstraws is shown in progress.

WEDNESDAY, Wales, 6—
before the compulsory registration of births, Isabella Sheppard, deaf but in good health, is between 109 and

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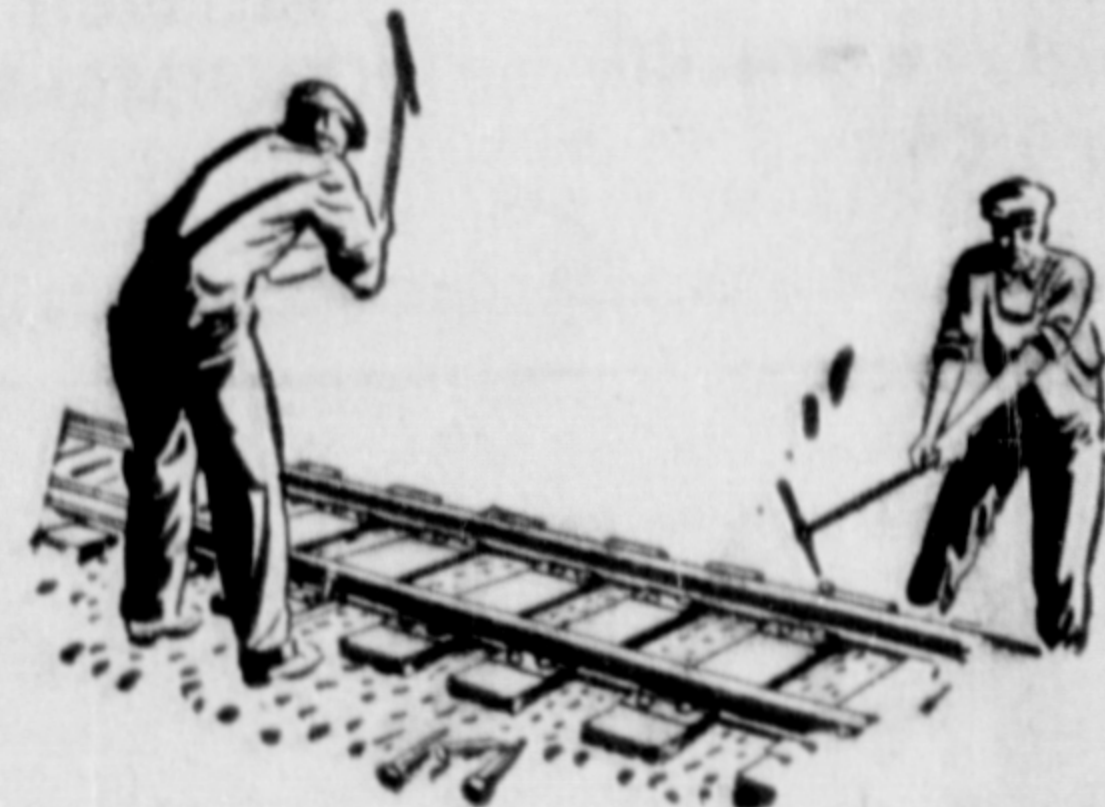
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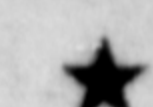
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