



Constance Mary Dempster

(1888-1965)

Constance Mary Dempster, known as 'Connie' by her family and friends, was born in Yorkshire, England to Arthur and Mary Hodgson. When she was 7 years old, the family immigrated to Canada and around 1907 moved to Hatzic.

Pursuing her dream to be a nurse, she trained at Vancouver General Hospital and following her graduation in 1916 joined their staff. During the time that she worked, it was viewed as rather scandalous for a woman to earn a living and therefore, she did all of this without the support of her mother.

After two years at the hospital, she enlisted as a nursing sister along with five other nurses from Vancouver General and served overseas in England during WWI as a member of the Canadian Army Medical Corps (C.A.M.C.) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

In addition to her "exemplary personal conduct" and her "very tactful, bright, cheerful" manner, Constance proved herself to be an "excellent" nurse with "good administrative" and "surgical" skills while serving on the frontlines.

Upon her return to Canada in 1919, she continued to work as a nurse in Mission until her marriage to Francis Dempster on February 19, 1925. They lived on a farm in Dewdney and had 4 children: Frank, Betty, Mike and Heather. Her oldest son recalled: "The farm had 10 prune trees, sweet corn, rhubarb, raspberries, and 40 cows that they milked each day."

Besides helping with the operation of the family farm and taking care of the children, Constance had a vegetable garden to tend and served as the "neighbourhood nurse" in the area. She was often summoned by nearby residents to handle local emergencies, including delivering babies, and helped save the lives of several people.

Connie was also actively involved with her children's school and the All Saints Anglican Church in Mission. She died on November 10th, 1965 in her 78th year, survived by her husband, four children and ten grandchildren.

Copyright © 2015 by Mission District Historical Society

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by copyright may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from the Mission District Historical Society.

