



Street Stories

Gibbard Street

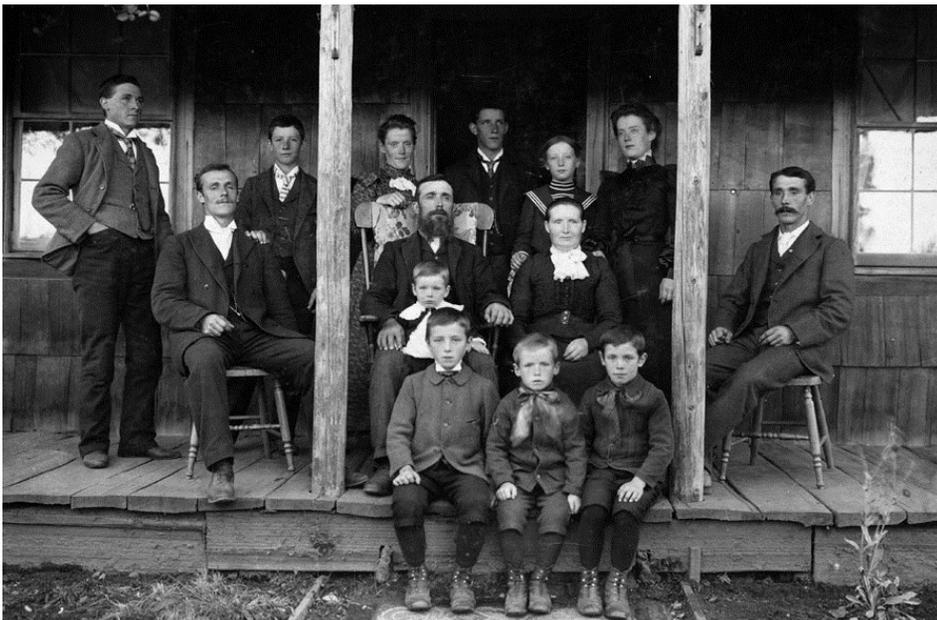
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A destiny that leads a baker from England to the untamed wilds of 19th-century Mission is worth considering.

Born in Buckinghamshire, England in 1853, George Gibbard left school at the age of eight in order to earn his living. Working for many years as a farm laborer, he eventually became a baker.

In 1875 Gibbard married Eliza Cook, with whom he would have 13 children. In 1884, the young family emigrated to Canada.

Eventually settling in Palmerston, Ontario, Gibbard established his



George and Elizabeth Gibbard, originally from England, prospered after they moved to Mission to escape Ontario's winters. Here they started a farm and raised their 13 children.

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own bakery and ran it for more than two years. However, Gibbard did not like the hard Eastern winters and, hearing of golden opportunities in the West, he sold his business, hopped the newly constructed CPR railway, and came to B.C. As his son John recalled, "A snowstorm was blowing as we left the East, and when we arrived at New Westminster, skunk cabbages were in bloom – quite a contrast in one week!"

After a couple of months, a man invited Gibbard to come see a homestead he wanted to sell him in Cedar Valley. To view the property, Gibbard took the stern-wheeler William Irving up the Fraser to Wren's Landing. There was a tie road out to the homestead, but the last stretch was only accessible by trail. In August 1887, Gibbard bought the homestead, settling his family into a five-by-six-metre cabin of split cedar shake.

A rugged, forested land in those days, the Gibbard children walked to school along the railway. One day, when they decided to take the road to school instead, they wisely brought a gun. On the way, they came across a bobcat and shot it, then carrying it to school. One can imagine the subject of that day's show-and-tell.

In time, Gibbard founded a farm on his land and grew prosperous. In the last years of his life, he was honored as one of the first pioneers in Mission. This hard-working baker from England, whom a New World transformed into a farmer and legend, passed away in 1922.

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society. If you have any questions or further information on the Gibbard family, please call us at 604-820-2621.

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