



# Street Stories

## Smith Avenue

GPS: [49.23444897,-122.3084297](https://www.google.com/maps/place/49.23444897,-122.3084297)

The next time you use the phone or run the water, you might take a moment to think of Sam Smith, one of the founders of the Mission telephone service and waterworks.

Born in Quebec, Smith came out west when the CPR was constructed and, working as a construction supervisor, helped build the Granville and Cambie Street bridges. After settling in Dewdney in 1895, he continued working on many building projects, including the construction of the Mission railway bridge.



*Sam Smith raised and sold horses at his Dewdney farm—many of which went on to win prizes locally and in Alberta.. Two exceptional horses raised by him were: “Nicomen Chief” and “Laird O. Dewdney” which won multiple championships.*

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Another pioneer, Mr Appleby, said of Sam Smith: “He became a figurehead in Mission. He wore a congress hat and a long black coat which made him look like a business man.”

Smith definitely was an entrepreneur. He helped advance the first phone service in Mission, buying the company off its original founders, John Catherwood and Thomas Northcote.

At the annual general meeting of the Mission Telephone Company in February of 1927, Sam reported there some “three hundred phones in service, extending to Stave Falls, Mt. Lehman, Clayburn, Deroche and Hatzic Prairie..” He also announced plans for the “early publication of a directory.”

After selling the phone company to BC Tel, Smith then bought the Mission Waterworks Company. According to the local paper, “The company was in a rundown condition and he built it up into the efficient organization it is today.”

In 1930, Smith erected a building on Main Street to house the waterworks office. The building stands to this day. It is located across from Athenas Bar & Grill and holds two stores, Xà xtsa Douglas First Nation Mission Satellite Office and Prominence Nail Design. Green with white trim, you can see the prominent white initials S.S. and the year, 1930, on the façade of the building.

When Sam Smith died in 1937, his obituary read: “[He] was not only well known but was highly esteemed by all who knew him.”

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 Smith, please call us at 604-820-2621.

*by David Buss; edited with additions by Val Billesberger*

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