



# Street Stories

## Allan Street

GPS: [49.2158818,-122.3822196](https://www.google.com/maps/place/49.2158818,-122.3822196)



*Watt Allan in 1912- the year he first arrived in Stave Falls where except for his service overseas (1914-1919) lived there until his death in 1964.*

*Mission Community Archives 0339-PR341-007*

Born in Gargunnoch, Scotland in 1891, Alexander Watt Allan immigrated to Vancouver, Canada on the SS British Empire in June 1911 at 20 years of age.

By May 1912, he found employment in Stave Falls at the Western Canada Power Company, taken over in 1920 by the BC Electric Company (BCE).

When WWI broke out, Watt deployed with the 1st Canadian contingent overseas in September 1914 and was stationed with the 16th Battalion, Canadian-Scottish. On April 19th, 1915, he received a serious gunshot wound during the *Capture of Hill 60* located south of Ypres in Belgium. His injury required him to spend the next year in military hospitals convalescing.

For the remainder of his service, Watt worked at various military hospitals in Britain, where he met his future wife, Violet Lilian Newport with whom he would have three children: Wallace, Grace, and Vera. Allan was a Sergeant in the army when he was formally discharged in May of 1919.

Following the war, Watt with his wife and two children boarded a ship for Canada, arriving back in Stave Falls in 1920 where their third child was born. In 1931 he purchased a plot of land on Dewdney Trunk Road and built the family home, a beautiful craftsman-style house which still stands today.

Following his return to Stave Falls, Watt

worked 45 years for BCE. From 1920 to 1945 he was with the Stave Falls Railway - once claimed "the shortest incorporated railway in Canada." Starting off as a hostler and working up the ranks to become a fire-man, he eventually became a conductor for the two-shay steam-powered locomotives used by the railway.

When BCE switched from steam to electric locomotives in 1926, Watt adapted, working as a trolleyman, conductor, and motorman until the railway's abandonment in 1945. Additionally, between 1931 and 1945, he served as the Agent-in-Charge of the Stave Falls Railway.

Not one to stop working, Allan Watt continued to work for BCE, first in construction and then as a floor man until his retirement in December 1956. His retirement was noteworthy enough to get a large spread in the local newspaper published on January 2, 1957.

A private man, not much is known about him outside of his 45 years of dedicated work, but we can see the tracks of someone who touched many lives.

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 about Watt Allan, please call us at 604-820-2621.

*by Charis Young and Val Billesberger*