

**Ed Kendall** *recalls growing up in early White Rock*

# Pioneer spirit

**E**d Kendall's family has been part of the changing face of White Rock for more than three-quarters of a century, and he has the memories to prove it.

His mother, Magdelene, was the oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Hill, who moved west from Manitoba in 1920 to farm acreage on Campbell River Road.

Ed was born five years later, and grew up with his two brothers, Douglas and Joseph, in a house that still stands near the foot of Stayte Road.

He remembers helping his grandmother in the store she ran on the seafront road

near Keil Street in the 1930s. Being an enterprising woman, she sold milk, eggs and other produce from the farm.

Her daughter was cut from the same cloth. In 1945, Magdalene took over



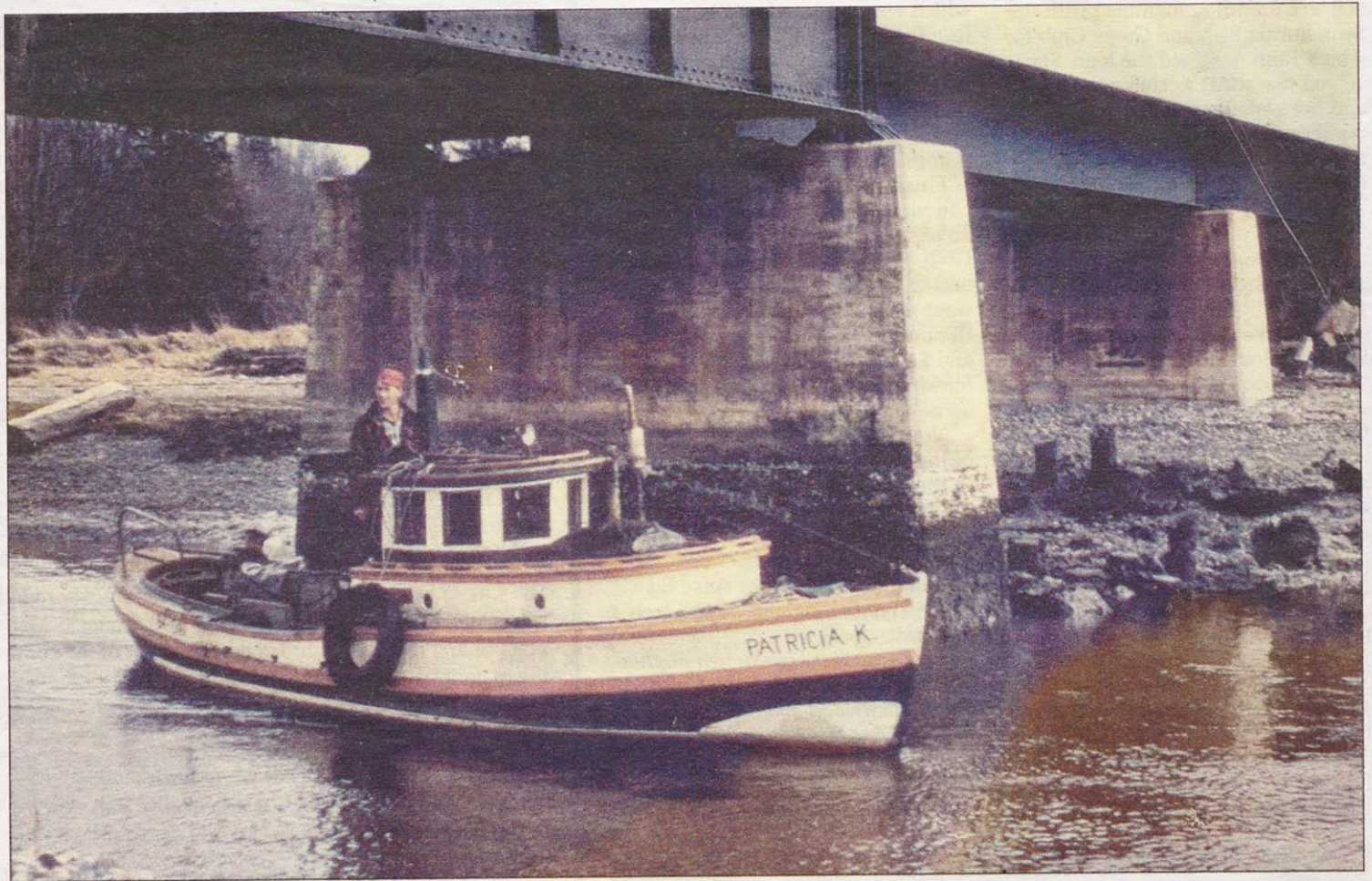
librarian's duties in the small room allotted to the library in the municipal building at the foot of the pier. She tended this post for 23 years.

When the White Rock city hall was built in 1963, she supervised the transfer of the library from the tiny seafront site to the more central location.

Her service to the community was recognized at the opening of White Rock's new library in 1976. On her death in 1980, the Magdelene Kendall special collection was established to perpetuate her memory.

In a recent interview, Ed gave us a glimpse of his boyhood.

"One day in 1936, walking home from (the old) White Rock Elementary school, smart-ass little kid – me – jumped off an old cedar stump at the corner of Best Street and Buena Vista, all gravel and open ditch. I hurt my ankle, showing off I guess, and



*White Rock Museum & Archives photo*

**Clockwise, from top: Ed Kendall, on his boat the 'Patricia K', passes under the railway trestle on the Little Campbell River; Ed and Ruth Kendall, 1989; The crab shack at the mouth of the Little Campbell River.**

hobbled down the road, knowing I had chores to do at home.

"Anyway, there's only a half dozen houses on the whole damn road. Mr. Hugh was clearing the land to build a house, and he's hollering 'fire.' Well, I'm a farm kid, so I know what 'fire' means: they're blowing stumps. There's a big boom, and there's whatever flying all over the place, but I was smart enough to get behind a telephone pole. Mr. Hugh soon finds me and he goes, 'What happened to you, kid? What happened to you?' He was really shook up like he had hurt me, and said, 'Where do you live?' I said, 'Down by Campbell River.' So he said he'd better take me home, and I said I'd be happy if he did."

With his injured ankle, and no doctor in White Rock – let alone a hospital – Ed spent two months in hospital in New Westminster, resulting in the loss of his school year. The ankle never fully healed and prevented him from joining up in the Second World War.

When he could get around again, he joined his friends in scavenging for beer



bottles for pocket money. Their route along the King George Highway near the international border frequently provided excitement from incidents at customs, the details of which Ed has added to his stock of local anecdotes.

Ed took over a mooring lease on Semiahmoo Band land in 1945 to begin crab fishing, the career that he was to follow for 28 years. The shack the fishermen used to make repairs to the traps was a place where small local boys gathered to learn to fish.

"The kids were always snooping around. Rai Howlett and his crew lived close by, and he loved fishing, and I loved fishing. We became good pals, so knee deep in mud we were down there fishing at the mouth of the Campbell River. I haven't seen a



lot of Rai in the last few years, but I don't think he goes down and stands in the mud anymore, but maybe he does."

In 1948, Ed married Ruth, the eldest of the indomitable McKay sisters of Crescent Beach, and began their family of daughter Patricia and sons Tom, Rob, and Richard.

Described as a 'community extrovert' by her sister Jean Kromm, Ruth served in numerous volunteer capacities in the formative years of the Peace Arch Hospital before being named co-ordinator of volunteers, a position she held from 1979 to 1986. She also found time to set up the Semiahmoo High School Alumni archives, which are now part of the White Rock Archives collection.

Their passion for fishing led the

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# A life spent on the water

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Kendalls to become deeply involved (Ed as a founding member) with the Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club for which Ruth designed the logo. She served two stints as club president, and her wide knowledge of fisheries conservation led to various appointments, including a place on the Pacific Salmon Commission.

Sadly, Ruth succumbed to cancer in 1996.

When a boating accident claimed the life of their son, Richard, in 1970, Ed sold his boat and established a land-based company but never lost his love of fishing.

One incident still mystifies Ed, in spite of his extensive knowledge of the Campbell River.

"Being a crab fisherman, and where we worked out of, we went under the railroad bridge, tied up, and no big deal. I'd been under there a thousand times. I don't know what year it was, but it was GNR, not BNR.

"Anyway, I'm at home, and I hear a hell of a boom, and it's way down there where we tie our boats up, and I'm on the opposite side of the Campbell River. I thought one of our boats blew up.

"So I went whipping down there, and our boats are ok, but they blew half the ties off the train trestle.

"The reason they did it was to remove the original pilings which were replaced by a concrete foundation in 1940, when the original wooden pilings, banged in across the river, were simply cut off at water height. We went in and out between two rows of sawed-off pilings, never complaining.

"Finally, I realized someone had complained about the pilings being an obstruction to river traffic. The GNR people, I think, put dynamite beside the pilings, and everything went flying, the trestle, too. All the ties on the bridge were hanging, and I thought, 'Why the hell are you blowing the bridge half apart to blow up a couple of pilings?'

"Now, if you go to the east end of the trestle you'll see a big dent in the cross tie where one of the pilings went up and struck it in the explosion."

To be sure, a lot of water has passed under the bridge since Ed began crab fishing, but he still feels a part of it.

*The Peninsula's best-known mother-and-son historians, **Lorraine and Hugh Ellenwood**, are dedicated to preserving history through the **White Rock Museum & Archives**. Call 604-541-2222, or email [whiterockarchives@telus.net](mailto:whiterockarchives@telus.net)*