

“UH OH POCO!”

The Story of Port Coquitlam

More than 100 years ago, the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) built train rails connecting all of Canada. When the C.P.R. arrived in British Columbia it built a train station in Coquitlam called “Westminster Junction” because of the railroad branch line that went towards New Westminster.

The community that formed around the station eventually became Port Coquitlam. Port Coquitlam became a City on March 7th, 1913 and later the City had a big celebration with a parade, a banquet, a dance and they planted trees.

The town was very tiny. Life moved very slowly. People were happy. In 1914, one year after Port Coquitlam became a city the First World War (WWI) was announced.

Canada joined the war and soldiers from our country and our city, Port Coquitlam, were sent all the way to Europe. Those who stayed behind helped by making bandages and clothing and loaning money.

It was hard times for Port Coquitlam, and the war cost the City a lot of money but after four years, the war was over.

People were excited the war was over but then people all over the world started to get sick with the **FLU!**

This flu was called the Spanish Flu.



Residents of Port Coquitlam were getting sick too. They got the flu from sick soldiers who had come to Port Coquitlam on the train.

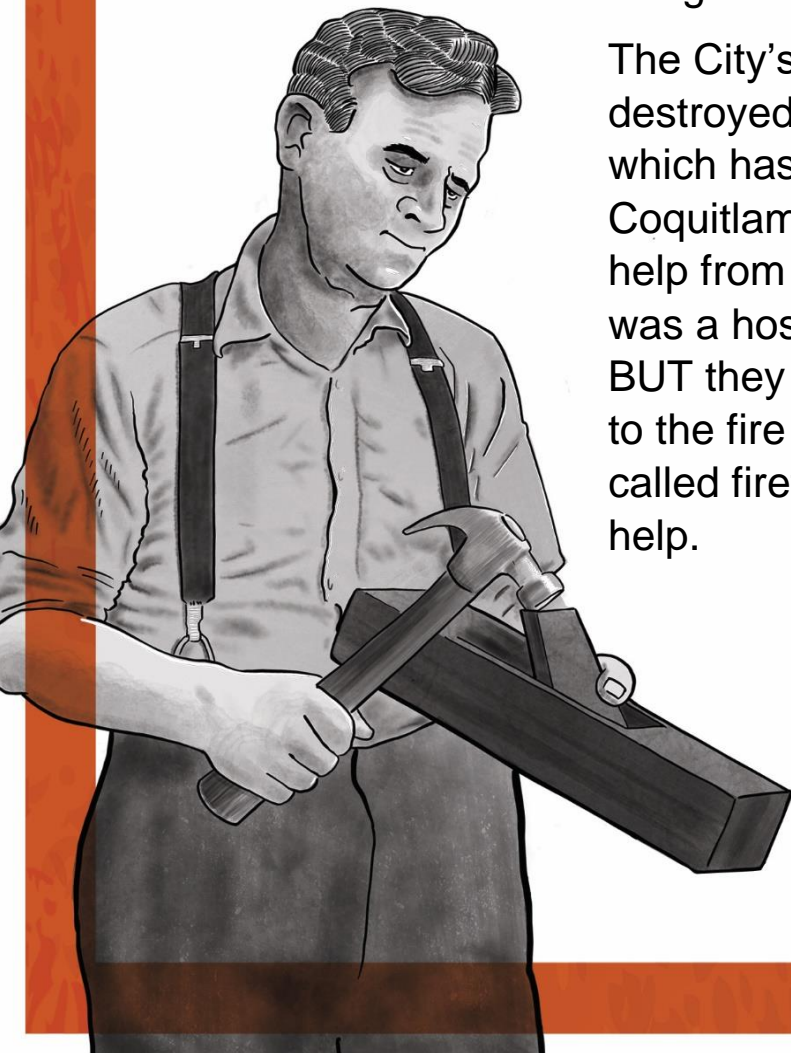
To stop the flu from spreading, Port Coquitlam closes its schools and people were not allowed to gather. Aggie Hall, Port Coquitlam's Agricultural Hall, was used and tents were set up around the building to take care of all the sick.

Eventually people recovered. While the flu was not good it did help scientists learn and many years later, they were able to create a vaccine. Once people got better, life in Port Coquitlam returned to normal. Children went back to school.

But it was not long before something else happened. A **FIRE!** Port Coquitlam's fire hall had caught on fire and it began spreading through town.

The City's fire equipment has been destroyed except for the town's fire truck which has been pushed out of the hall. Port Coquitlam needed help so they called for help from firefighters from Essondale which was a hospital nearby. They came quickly **BUT** they could not connect their fire hoses to the fire hydrants. Port Coquitlam then called firefighters from New Westminster to help.

When those firefighters got to PoCo they were able to connect their fire hoses but the hoses sank into the pavement and then burst into flames.



Eventually, the fire was put out. Nobody was hurt but lots of homes and businesses had been destroyed. The people of Port Coquitlam though were not stopped and they began to fix things.

Life again returned to normal. The trees grew, the birds chirped, and the sun shone brightly.

But then one day it began to rain hard and it did not stop. It rained so much that the water in the three rivers surrounding Port Coquitlam (Coquitlam River, Pitt River and Fraser River) began to rise.

The water got higher and then because it was so high, logs floated down the Coquitlam river and got jammed underneath the Coquitlam River Bridge blocking water from going through underneath.

And then, BOOM!

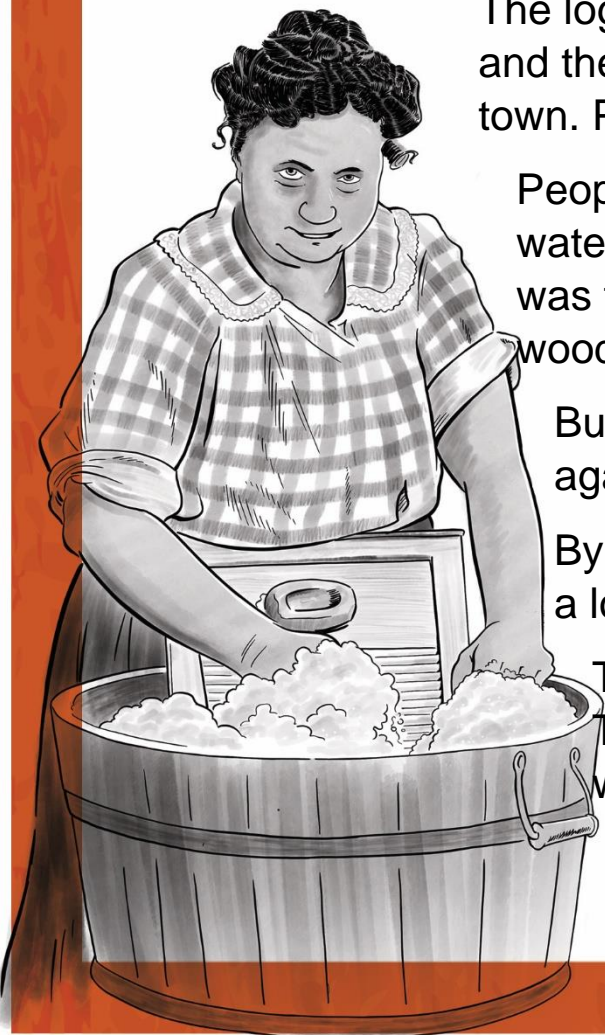
The logs broke through and took out the bridge and the water that had been stuck spilled into town. Port Coquitlam began to **FLOOD!**

People were panicked! They could see the water underneath them. The whole downtown was flooded and homes, businesses, and wooden sidewalks floated down the river.

But the people of PoCo were not stopped and again, they began to rebuild their town.

By now, the City of Port Coquitlam had spent a lot of money.

They had spent money during the war. They spent money when people were sick with the flu and they spent money repairing



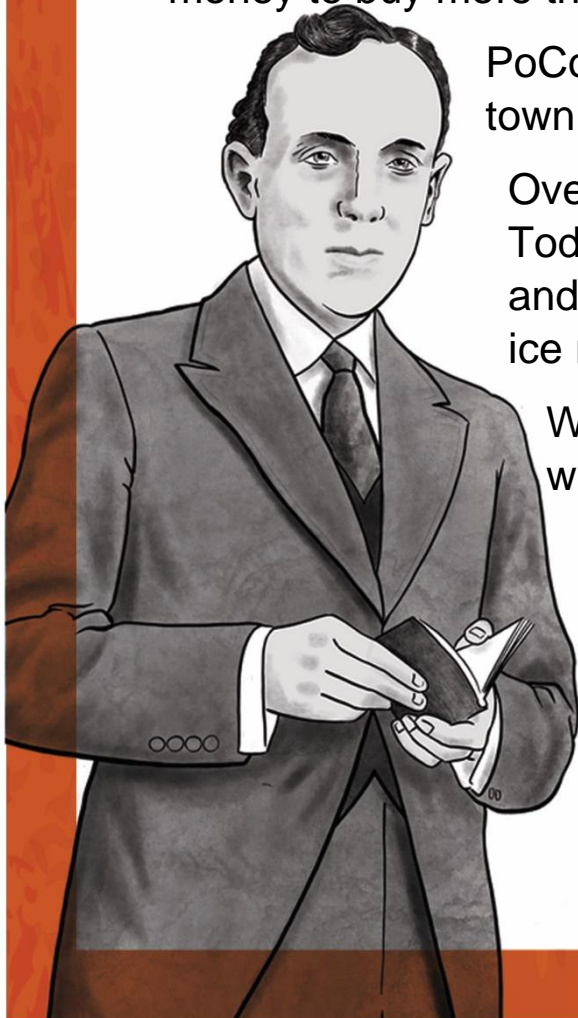
people's homes and businesses that were damaged in the fire and flood.

The City was now faced with the possibility they could run out of money. How was Port Coquitlam going to get bigger and grow if they had no more money? The City was scared. We call this the time of **FINANCIAL FEARS**.

They sold their expensive fire truck and tried to sell the properties of people who had not payed their taxes to raise money.

To save money the Mayor of Port Coquitlam, Arthur Mars, decided that they would shut down City Hall, the place they worked. They saved money by turning off the heat and working only from one room.

After a lot of hard work and many years, the City of Port Coquitlam began to finally save money. Eventually, they had saved enough money to buy more things and build more buildings.



PoCo got bigger and more people moved to our town.

Over the years Port Coquitlam continues to grow. Today, we have lots of schools, homes, stores and restaurants, a brand-new swimming pool and ice rinks.

We have lots of celebrations like May Day when there is a big parade.

So, even though Port Coquitlam has had a lot of **UH OH** moments like when people got the **flu**, when the town almost burnt down from a **fire**, when people lost their homes because of the **flood**, and the City experienced **financial fears**, they bravely carried on.