





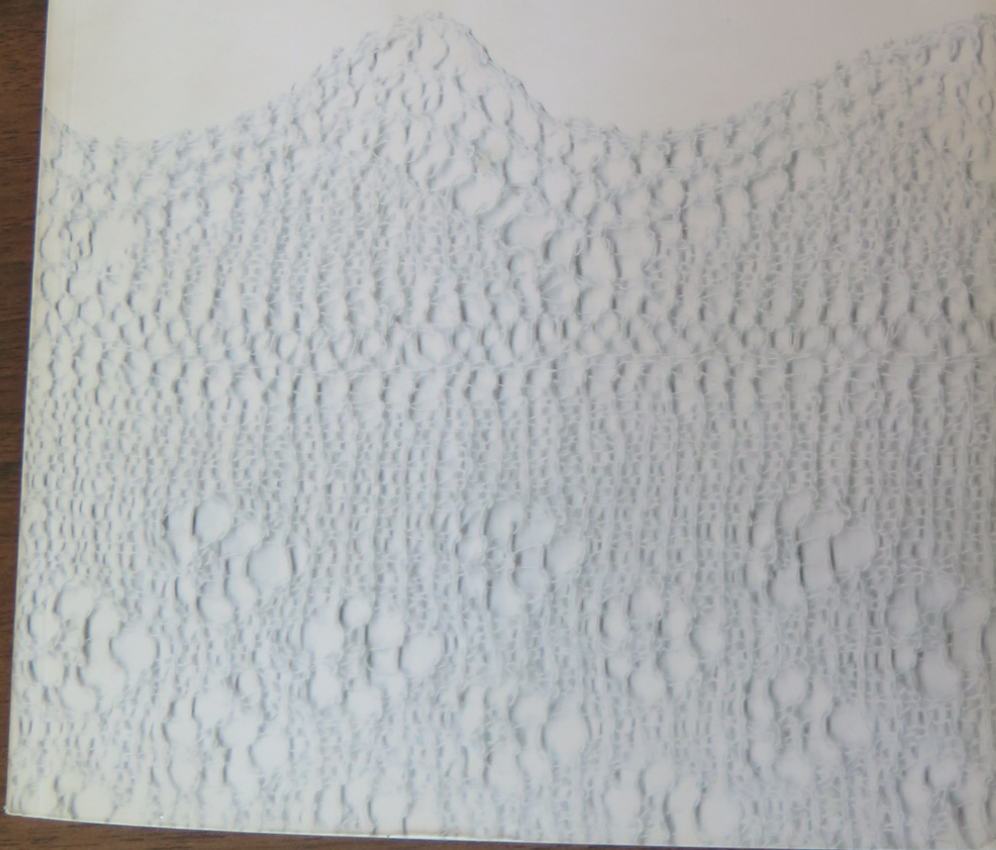






My Story

THE MEMOIRS OF FRANCES BARTON



2930 Gravelly St.,
Vancouver, B.C.
May 27, 1947.

The Board of Beacons,
West Point Grey Baptist Church,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sirs:

A major scandal is being uncovered in Ottawa, with regard to the sale of B.C. property belonging to those persons forcibly evacuated from this coastal area during 1942. The daily newspapers quote the total losses incurred due to these sales as being approximately \$5,000,000 (Report to Public Affairs Committee of House of Commons, May 1947).

To the shame of our Baptist denomination, the Custodian (official responsible for these sales) is a prominent member of the First Baptist Church, here in Vancouver. This man, in the course of his week-day work, during the war years, has caused great financial hardship to a minority racial group in Canada, and is surely so far from observing our Master's new commandment ("Love one another" - John 13: 34-35) that he should not be elected to positions of church leadership.

It would appear that we as Baptists must be very careful indeed to avoid any modern "Pharisees" holding responsible positions in our churches! A recent radio commentator has expressed it this way, "Let us be Christian in all our activities, or stop pretending."

In particular, I am asking that each of our delegates to the forthcoming Convention be instructed to express active opposition against further nominations or appointments being conferred upon Mr. Frank G. Shears of First Baptist Church.

Cordially yours,

Donald J. McIntosh

of Grandview-Hastings East Baptist Church.

2930 Graveley St.,
Vancouver, B.C.
June 27, 1947.

Mr. Frank G. Shears,
3906 West 12th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Shears,

I enclose a copy of a letter sent to certain Baptist churches which, I trust, is self-explanatory and justifies your position. I deeply regret I misjudged you in the earlier letter.

May I say again I appreciate the frank, impersonal stand which you took at last night's meeting? Later in the evening, I had an unexpected conversation with Mr. J.A. MacLennan and, as a result of these two factors, I have come to view your position in an altogether different light.

I trust I may count on your co-operation on a friendly basis in the future.

With kindest Christian greetings, I am

Cordially yours,

Donald J. McIntosh

2930 Gravelly St.,
Vancouver, B.C.
June 27, 1947.

The Board of Deacons
of the Baptist Churches contacted one month ago.

Dear Sirs:

At a First Baptist Church meeting last evening, attended by about 25 persons, mainly Baptists, Mr. F.G. Shears outlined the many difficulties which confronted him in his capacity as Vancouver Director of the Office of Custodian, and assured us that in all his dealings with the Japanese-Canadians he has been motivated by the highest Christian principles, and that he is not responsible for any of the (admitted) hardships and losses which have been endured by these evacuees, being impelled himself by an impersonal governmental policy. I accept Mr. Shear's explanation, and desire to retract any undue criticism directed against this gentleman. The accusations should not have been made upon him personally, but should have been against the government policy. I wish to assure you that I now respect Mr. Shear's attitude, and if all of the officials handling this governmental problem had been of Mr. Shear's calibre, the final outcome might have been a much happier picture.

The Social Service Committee Report at our Convention of May 31, 1945, speaking of the rights of minority racial groups, stated that "... this is one of the most serious problems confronting our country. We feel that our churches are being tried for their lives on this issue. If we dare to speak boldly, though we suffer great persecution, we will justify our right to live and call ourselves Christian. ... Will we, as a body of Christian people, let our Canada do things that will bring her into everlasting disrespect; will we let our Canada be the thorn in the flesh acting as the primary cause of future wars?" It is suggested that your members should read the pamphlet, "The Japanese-Canadian Situation To-day." (January 1947 issue.)

The Baptist Federation of Canada has already taken an aggressive stand on behalf of the Japanese-Canadians, and has assisted their cause financially.

While it will be observed that the previous letter was written without the endorsement of any specific congregation, the time seems opportune for all professing Christians to demonstrate brotherly love in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Cordially yours,

Donald J. McIntosh

c.c. - Mr. F.G. Shears.

The voices of three people dissatisfied with their treatment by the custodian's office:

1a) ...As it was said, that a stove and a carpenter's tool box was left in the Custodian's care. I went to the committee to request them to have those things sent to me but they would not hear of it. They said that if the things were for sale they would have them sold in Vancouver. They wanted to know whether I would work. They put nothing but difficulties in our way. As I am old it is very hard. Whether the box will come I do not know.

1b) ...Without saying a word they have sold everything we left in Steveston and though I have written several times to the custodians I have not had any replies. Think this all very undeserving.

2) And I got the letter from Vancouver saying that they sold our land. I guess you got it too, but let me tell you this. DO NOT RECEIVE ANY MONEY of the land they sold. My opinion about this land is, even if they sold the land for 5000 I wouldn't receive that money from them. We know what the hell to do after the war you see. They sold it for 1650 and the balance is 1648, and they sold it a year ago, letting us know now. We will fix them guys after the war. But for god sakes, don't get that money for our property. Talk it over with our parents please.

Then an exchange from T.B. Suzuki and F.G. Shears:

From T.B Suzuki

Dear Mr. Shears,

On receipt of your letter dated June 8, 1944, I learned of the sale of my property at Sunbury BC

The price of 1963, is to my belief far less than what would be considered as fair sale.... (Follows reasons for complaint regarding sale price)

...Mr. Shears, I know that your office was given the authority to dispose of Japanese property. I also know that your office agreed to obtain a fair price for them....

I also pleaded with the Japanese people to trust in your office because you could do your best for them....

(But) I cannot accept the sale of my property as being fair, nor can I say that the price of some of the others who had come to discuss the sale of their land by your office as being fair sales.

... Mr Shears, I am not blaming you personally, but I wish to go on record as being very dissatisfied with the sale price of my property as negotiated by your office.

I would be very grateful for either a personal or official letter from you.

Continuing my trust, I am

Sincerely yours,

Tatsuro Suzuki

From Gdad

I am in receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant and have carefully read your comments in connection with the sale of your property.

The frank and courteous manner in which you present your complaint does not pass unnoticed and I assure you that it has been the desire of their office to fulfil its obligations in as just and fair a manner as possible.

The policy of liquidation was, as you are aware, decided upon by the government authorities at Ottawa and in the case of all properties, outside of the group of farms sold to the Director, the Veterans' Land Act, for use of returned soldiers, we have endeavoured to treat every sale on its individual merits....

(And further conversation continues regarding policy and what choices are made regarding Mr' Suzuki's land and personal property.)

Then:

The consideration to any definite claim is a matter beyond our control at the present time and we are unable to advise what the situation in this regard may be at the close of hostilities. Your letter, however, will remain on our file as an indication of your opinion in regard to this sale, and in the event of the matter being re-opened at a later date, and claims are being considered, our records will be available.

I trust, in the meantime, your confidence in the desire of this office to administer and carry out government policy in the best interests of those

concerned may be maintained.

Yours truly
F.G. Shears
Director