

K.G. Joy MICKO - J.L.M.  
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V 2/5 Biographics of settlers John M. Harris  
November 20, 1940

So many oldtimers kept urging me to visit J.M. Harris of Sandon, so whilst at New Denver I enquired about the way to get there. Well someone said that in the good old days we used to charge \$10 for a round trip to Sandon from here, but young Black will be down from Sandon with the mail tomorrow and you make make arrangements with him. So I left word for Balck to come to the hotel and as soon made a bargain. At 12:30 p.m. we started up the mountain road to Sandon. There were about four men in the 1937 Ford model ore truck. It looked quite capable and proved so for that truck could climb that mountain road.

"Quite a climb," said I.

"Yes", said he, "and you will get quite a view when we get higher up."

A steering gear that was a little out would not be much good on this road for there was just enough snow to make it slippery.

Andy Black told me he was born in Sandon. He was the driver. His father had kept a store there, and at one time had some good mining property. I remember Art Emory telling me about his first trip through the Slocan in 1893 and meeting an oldtimer by the name of Black.

"He was my father I guess," said the boy Andy.

As we went along he showed me the points of interest along the road. He showed me Cunningham's mill and other mills. At one point we met two cars going to New Denver. Men were driving that were looking for minerals that had been lying dormant for some time, and now that demand owing to the war would make mining more profitable.

We arrived at Sandon and stopped at John Harris' dwelling, hotel, store, and home. I introduced myself and offered my hand. he took it and gave me a good grip, said I had a nice name, etc. etc.

"Sit down by the fire, make yourself at home."

I felt at home immediately and told him what brought me to Sandon. I was then introduced to Mrs. Harris, a gracious lady, as hospitable as her husband, and one you could not help liking. They seemed so happy in this small town in the Selkirks, living beside mountains that had given many tons of silver and lead to those who had the courage and energy to go after it.

Mr. Harris looked very healthy. He had a great complexion, a good strong frame and a good accent. It sounded to me like some people I knew as a boy in Kent, England.

He is, you might say, king of Sandon, not dictator, he owns waterworks, electric light plant and mines. He is also electrical engineer, operator, master mechanic and manager. His home has all the electrical appliances that a lady of the house could wish for. He regulates the temperature of his home so that tangerine oranges and also lemons grow on potted trees facing the window from which you can look at mountain peaks with their snow tops looking like a gigantic Christmas card. The

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snow is 20 to 30 feet deep at times. He showed me an ingenious contrivance made of sheet metal, rubber, and bolts with which he used to stop leaks in the steel pipes that had been in use for a number of years, and when he put this snug and tight there were no leaks. He informed me of the difference in the two bolts. One was iron, the other was made by a process some young Vancouver fellow discovered which could mix iron with zinc so that it does not rust. It forms an alloy of iron and zinc and is very serviceable. Then we went into matters of historical interest. Interesting to the present generation and those to come. Perhaps it is needless to write. Oldtimers like to talk of pioneer days.

John W. Harris was born in Virginia, U.S.A. on January 28, 1864 and came to Sandon, March 28, 1892. Mr Harris informed me that Eli Carpenter was grubstaked by Scott McDonald of Wallace, Idaho, and discovered the Wonderful ore in the summer of the year 1891.

"The ore", continued Mr. Harris, "was put on exhibition in my office at Wallace. I got excited and came to Sandon 1st. May, 1892 and located the town site and an extension of the Slocan Star known as the Rabbit's Paw. There was an extensive lawsuit. It was won eventually, lasting five years and costing the plaintiff \$100,000. We and the opposition were always friendly. Bob Lennie and S.S. Taylor did the work. E.P. Davis was also one of the lawyers.

I remember being in S.S. Taylor's office when he showed me a large volumn of printed matter detailing this famous mining case. (R. Joy)

"The last I heard of S.S. Taylor was he is sojourning in one of the Channel islands, either Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney , or Sark. 3,000,000. was taken out of the Rabbit's Paw, now known as the Silversmith.

"Before the fire there were twenty-seven hotels and 2,300 people. After the fire, seventeen hotels. The Klondyke boom arrived and Sandon's population decreased.

Sixty-three tickets for the Klondyke were sold in the railway office one morning. Then sivler went down, and now Uncle Sam is buying gold from England at \$35 per ounce, which is only costing England \$14 to mine, and Uncle Sam is still buying. The population of Sandon at the present time is seventy-five and one hotel.: (1940)

"I was married in 1926".

Not to give you an idea of the prosperity of Sandon at one time here some interesting figures from one mine owned by Mr. Harris.

#### Dividends

|      |            |           |
|------|------------|-----------|
| 1895 | \$7,500.   |           |
| 1896 | \$30,000.  |           |
| 1897 | \$100,000. | (Feb. 15) |
|      | \$50,000.  | (Apr. 30) |

This is followed by a detailed statement of Shipment and winds up with the following remarks.

Pursuing an analysis of the returns it was found that the mine has shipped in the four years of its development 1,690 tons of ore from which has been extracted as a net yield for the company 16.8 ounces of silver and 5,982 pounds of lead. The ounces of silver were 404,035 and the pounds of lead 1,196,987. (??) The entire produce of the two classes of ore has averaged 239 ounces of silver and 42.27 per cent lead to the ton. Mr Harris gave me from his store of memory some notes re richness of the ore from the mines in the vicinity.

(Mr. Harris interviewed November 20, 1940 by R.G. Joy)