

Percy Charles (P.C.) Edwards



P.C. Edwards was born into a large family in England. He started in photography at an early age in a large studio in London. There he became an accomplished photographer and technician and remembered working on many portraits of Queen Victoria, other Royalty and heroes of the Boer War.

In 1903 he came to Canada, intending to settle on a homestead in Saskatchewan, but decided to get off the train in Boissevain. He worked on a farm and in a tinsmith shop that winter and came to Killarney in 1904 to open a studio with a Mr. Scott. Scott left for the US in 1910 and P.C. operated the studio until his death.

The studio was first located upstairs on the east side of Broadway about where No. 523 is now. In 1917 a fire destroyed several businesses in that part of the block and he lost everything as well as all of the negatives of the early days of Killarney. Many prints of these negatives are around today, especially in the JAV David Museum. P.J. Sherlock rebuilt the building, and the studio reopened on the ground floor.



Edwards Photo Studio – second floor of the (first) Sherlock Block

P.C. saw many changes in photography, from the days of glass plates to roll film. In early days he would load up a buggy and drive around the country taking pictures of the threshing outfits so workers from the east could send home pictures of the wild west. He also operated studios in Cartwright, Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Manitou for many years.



At Killarney Lake - Edwards was fond of outdoor photography, which offered special challenges.

Numerous Killarney scenes are available in the J.A.V. David Museum Collection.

An Anecdote from “Trails & Crossroads”

The first mixed train reached Killarney on January 3, 1886, according to the records of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This was a great day for the people of Killarney. New arrivals came in reasonable comfort by train, and the day of the long trek to Brandon was ended. The first regular passenger train arrived on March 28, 1886. It came three times a week, and going down to see the train come in became a favorite pastime. Often, however, the train was late. When W. J. Wood brought his family from England, they had been delayed by icebergs, and his daughter and her husband failed to meet them. They were standing wondering what to do when P. C. Edwards, the photographer, spoke to them and called Mr. Wood by name. He recognized him because he had enlarged a photograph of him and was able to direct him to the home of his daughter, Mrs. Thomas Howell.



A photographer did not make much money during the thirties and many a chicken or quarter of beef was traded for Christmas portraits. With the war years, business picked up and most of Killarney's servicemen and women had their portraits taken by P.C. before they went over-seas.



Many towns had photographers, but many tended to not stay long. Mr. Edwards made Killarney his home and got involved in all aspects of community life. He documented cultural and social events and highlighted natural attractions over a long period of time.



P.C. Edward's portable tripod camera – in the J.A.V. David Museum



Ruby Stilwell worked for P.C. Edwards for a time - likely prior to her marriage in 1916. She was active in drama productions and Mr. Edwards took several photos of such productions over the years. She is seen here about 1914.