

Ingeborg Alwina Dohlmann

Eulogy for Ingeborg Alwina given at her Wake by her son Ted Bings in 1999

Ingeborg Alwina was born Dec. 18, 1901 in Hamburg, Germany to Einar and Elisabeth Dohlmann. Father was Danish and mother was German. She was the second child with an older brother Fred and younger brother Erik.

They lived in Copenhagen, Denmark, until 1915 - - Einar was a lieutenant in the Danish Army. Resigning his position in the army he hoped to emigrate before the outbreak of the 1st World War. He made a trip by himself to South Africa, and then considered the Isle of Pines in Cuba before deciding on Alberta, Canada. This new life would be quite a change, as they had maids, tutors and gardeners in Denmark.

They left in 1915, by liner, and dodged V-boats to the Hebrides Islands in Scotland, where the ship was held up for a few days while the English Navy checked everybody's identification. A few German nationals were removed. From there they proceeded to New York, having a rough voyage. From New York they went to Montreal, a few days there before entraining for Calgary. They spent three weeks in and around Calgary looking for a farm before proceeding to Edmonton where they had no more success. Then they stage went by stagecoach to Peace River Crossing. Of course, the piano had to go too, as it went everywhere she went for the rest of her life. At Peace River crossing they bought horses and wagon to head for Peace River country. While they were in the Peace River area mother Elisabeth became very ill and had to be hospitalized in Peace River Crossing. When she had somewhat recovered, they back-tracked to Dickson where they bought a farm, and tried to become farmers.

While in Calgary, she and Fred used to go to movies, at a cost of 5¢ each. When camping along the Peace River, she and Fred rigged a rope to swing themselves out and back over the river. They let little brother Erik try. He fell off and nearly drowned. He claimed for years that they were trying to get rid of him. Sounds like little sibling problems occurred then as now. On the farm, she became quite proficient with a 22 rifle, bringing home rabbits for the pot and popping off gophers. She went to a school in Dickson for grade eight, then as a boarder at St. Joseph Convent until graduating grade 12.

Her parents sold the farm and moved to B. C. She followed, and the following winter entered Normal School in Victoria. By then, her parents had bought a small farm in Metchosin¹. After the year of normal school, she had her teaching certificate. She applied for and was accepted for a school in Burgoyne Bay, Salt Spring Island. She received \$70 per month plus \$2 for being janitor, a one room school, 40 pupils, grades 1 to 8. Teachers complain nowadays at 30 pupils and 1 grade. Sometime in this period she acquired the nickname of Dolie. - - While teaching at Burgoyne Bay, she met Art Bings and later became an engaged couple. This engagement went on for several years. In 1923, during summer holidays, she took a trip on the CPR "Maquinna"² to Kyuquot to visit friends, staying in a tent on the graveyard island of the Indian Reserve. The fishing fleet at that time used the reserve as a base.

In 1924, she took a teaching job at Beaver Point, Salt Spring Island, which she held until she married in 1927. They honeymooned on the fish boat, fishing off Victoria. - In 1928, in January or February they went to Nootka, thence Queens Cove and on to Kyuquot³. In those days fishing went on year-round.

¹ Metchosin: <http://www.vancouverisland.com/regions/towns/?townID=22>

² the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) steamship SS Princess Maquinna

³ Kyuquot, meaning "people of Kayukw" in the Nuu-chah-nulth language, may refer to Kyuquot, B.C., an unincorporated settlement on northwestern Vancouver Island, British Columbia

They made a rough camp for the summer months at the Indian Village, and had a more leisurely summer. Fishing was not as hectic as now. That fall, they fished their way around the top end of Vancouver Island and ended up back in Victoria. Rented a house in Victoria for \$12 a month, tied up the boat in front of the Empress Hotel. Try that now!!

In January, the first child Ted arrived. A couple of months later, with the baby, she boarded the Maquinna for Kyuquot. She and Arthur moved into a rented one room cabin in Walters Cove, one of only 3 or 4 dwellings in the Cove. They bought a couple of lots, cleared land, and built their own one room cabin.

As she was pregnant again, they rented and eventually bought a small house in Fulford Harbour ⁴, S.S. Island. In May, a daughter, Betty, was born. Her parents were with her as Arthur was away fishing up the coast. She took the two children to Kyuquot as soon as she was able to.

That fall Arthur lost the boat to foreclosure, as the "Depression" was in full swing and he couldn't repay the loan.

In the summer, 1932, they took jobs on the Skeena River, at Claxton cannery, he towing sailing gillnetters out to the grounds and she in the cannery. Of course, there had to be a prolonged strike that year, so they didn't make much money.

Back to Fulford Harbour in the fall. A couple of bad years with Arthur unwell, having to go on Relief, an early version of Welfare. Inge started tutoring, took in a boarder and served teas to waiting ferry passengers.

A neighbour, Capt. Maude, bought a fish boat and had Arthur fish it for several years until Arthur had an operation on his stomach and was unable to continue fishing.

Inge continued with her afternoon teas, sold vegetables from their large garden. Another son Erik was born in Sept., 1936, so she had stayed at Fulford that summer. As these had been very difficult years, several different neighbour families helped out immensely also Patterson store who held their acct. for years which Inge and Arthur were very grateful.

She took a teaching position at Isabella Pt. School, S.S. Island, in 1938, at \$80 per month. She held this for 2 years, when Kyuquot offered her a position at \$90 per month, which she accepted and moved with the children in the summer of 1940. Arthur had recovered somewhat and was working in Victoria, carpentering, building Work Pt. barracks. He had taken a correspondence course on carpentry while ill.

They rented a small house in Kyuquot. At Xmas, Arthur came up for a visit and stayed. As the Red Cross hospital was empty and getting damp, they were asked to move in as caretakers, which they did with much appreciation. They were there until the Second World War ended, and the hospital reopened as nurses became available. By then, Arthur and family had rebuilt and added on to their one room cabin. As this was done during the war, lumber was unavailable, also nails, so the whole family would go by fish boat to the whaling station at Cachalot and tear down the deserted houses, and tow this lumber to Walters Cove. Need less to say, we had to salvage the nails also.

To this day, I still have trouble throwing away a bent or rusty nail. This demolition also occurred at Easy Creek and Markale ⁵ (abandoned salteries and canneries). I believe most of the earlier houses in Kyuquot were built of this supply. These demolitions occurred in the winter and weren't too pleasant.

⁴ Fulford Harbour is on the southern end of Salt Spring Island, BC

⁵ Markale is in the Rupert district, situated on an isthmus between the western head of Fair harbour and Pinnacle channel, Kyuquot sound.

In 1941, they bought another small fish boat while Inge kept teaching. In May, 1943, her mother passed away. She went to Alberta to help her father, bringing him back with her to Kyuquot. After living on the prairies, stuck on a small wooded island didn't suit him at all and he soon left. They decided to buy a place in Sooke to use in the winters and have her father care take it. A couple more years of teaching before retiring in 1945. Back teaching again in 1953 as Arthur was quite ill, and he passed away in August. She taught another year there, and then tried a post in Red Deer. That lasted half a year, before deciding to return to the coast. She taught 2 more years in Kyuquot before going to the Queen Charlottes to teach.

During her stay in the Charlottes, she met Ed Stevens and they decided to get married. In 1959 they came back to Kyuquot to be married in the church at the Indian Village. At this time, she had 6 grandchildren.

During the summer holidays in Queen Charlotte Islands, she and several teachers were going on a holiday to Alberta. In Terrace, she bought her first car. She took half an hour driver's training, got a learner's permit, and they took off. Out of the bunch, she was the only one with any driving experience. But somehow, they managed O.K.

At the same period in the Charlottes, during the summer break, she deck-handed on a gillnetter, run by another woman, around the Queen Charlottes and Skeena. She and Ed settled in the Victoria area on McKenzie Ave. where she bought a small house. They bought a small motor-home and spent several winters in Arizona with her brother Fred and his wife Olive.

She and daughter Betty decided to buy a large house on Lochside, so she sold the house on McKenzie. She and Ed were there for several years, still journeying south in the winters or house-sitting on Galiano ⁶. Eventually, she and Ed separated and were divorced.

Now came her travelling stage. A trip to Europe and Denmark, looking for her roots. A cruise on the love boat with schoolteacher buddy, Lil. Another to France, Italy and Spain, with a group. Another cruise, in the Mediterranean, with Lil, to Greece, Turkey and Egypt. Another with Lil to Yugoslavia (which was still intact) and returned on a Yugoslavian freighter. The menu was mostly spicy sausage. Lil was not amused, probably starved.

Still another trip to London and on to Greece with Betty and granddaughter Teresa. Also to Hawaii with her brother, his wife and their family. Finally, even when she couldn't find travelling companions, she went alone for 2 weeks to Costa Rica and 1 week in Guatemala. While still in Kyuquot she climbed the local mountains with little problem. Now, in Tikal, Guatemala, she was most perturbed as she was unable to climb the pyramids, forgetting that she was nearly ninety and with two artificial hips. In this time period, she also made many trips to Alberta and a trip across Canada.

Inge started to have health problems, causing her drivers licence cancellation. Still staying at Lochside Ave. she decided to be independent again, moved to an apartment nearer Victoria. Without a vehicle, she found that lifestyle to be too lonely. She was eventually persuaded to move to Beachwood, where she made many friends, joined the bridge club, played Bingo and went on the bus tours. For mobility, she purchased a scooter, with which she toured around Sidney.

All her life, she kept busy at some job or hobby. Even as she was crippled with arthritis, she managed to get out in every garden she could, to weed and tidy up.

With such an active and diverse life time, it is small wonder, when ill health forced a sedentary lifestyle on her that she had a difficult time reconciling.

⁶ <http://www.galianoisland.com/>

After a year or two, she had a bad attack, was hospitalized, the doctors giving her only a few days to live. We cancelled the apartment, moved the furniture out. A bad mistake, she fooled us again. Inge recovered, rehabilitated at Betty's, and then went back to Beachwood, into a nicer apartment with a nice view.

She recovered fully and continued to enjoy the company of many friends and acquaintances, rejoining the bridge players etc. Still used her scooter in good weather and some not so good. A couple of close friends kept jollyng her along to go down for meals and to keep her moving on her slow days.

She had another good year and a half before she had to go back to the hospital, from which she didn't return.

In reading this address over, it would seem that Inge was a very serious person, no time for fun and games. While life was never easy, she always had time for sports and entertainment.

On Salt Spring, while teaching, she played on the Island basket ball teams against the other islands. Also, basketball at Claxton cannery. - She was interested in square dancing, teaching it at times. If there was a party or dance, they could attend, she was never the first to leave, quite often the last.

This is a very condensed version of her life. If I went into more detail, I would take up all afternoon. There are other people who wish to speak.