

## Foxcrowle Percival Cook By Diane Sterne

Given my advanced age, I have been fortunate to have had but a few owners. The first was Reverend Edward Wilson Cook in Bedfordshire, England. He cared for me well and then gifted me to his son, Foxcrowle Percival Cook. FP (as many called him) was good to me. We were companions and he protected me throughout his life. He even saved me from a fire - but I am getting ahead of myself.

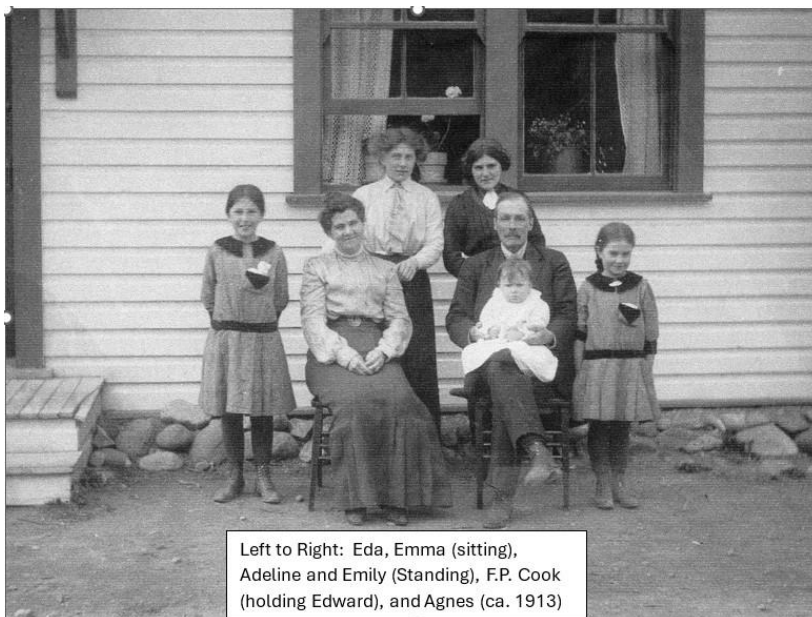
Born on January 26, 1861, Foxcrowle would become an important man. He was the son of Rev. Cook and Adeline Fox. FP's unusual name was a combination of his mother's maiden name and his paternal great-grandmother's maiden name, Crowle. It was a unique and fitting name for such a prominent figure.

On July 2, 1882, Foxcrowle (some called him Foxy – behind his back) arrived at Montreal, Quebec on the ship, Peruvian. He was a long way from his home back in England, but he had an adventurous and ambitious spirit. He gradually worked his way west across the vast Canadian landscape and, in 1885 he arrived at the new gold rush town of Granite Creek. Carrying his blankets, he shouldered his way through the streets, crowded with excited prospectors, and arrived at the business of Blair and Allen. It was here that the seeds of Foxcrowle's legacy were planted. Rather than grabbing pick and shovel, FP baked pies and bread for the hungry miners. He was wise and realized that more money could be made supplying the men than staking claims.

Foxcrowle soon bought out Blair and Allen and expanded his store to include mining supplies, food, clothing, boots and every essential needed by the prospectors. He would eventually open two additional stores. One in the town of Coalmont and the other in Princeton. FP was a successful businessman who not only held many mining interests but also owned half of a ranch at one time.

On June 15, 1892, in Lower Nicola, FP wed Emma Woodward. Emma was the half sister of

Eleanor Woodward, wife of Archibald Irwin. Archibald was a Granite Creek prospector and mining recorder from 1887-1890. Eleanor was the first white woman at Granite Creek. Foxcrowle's wife, Emma bore him 7 children. One was stillborn and one (Frances Mary) died at the age of 3 as the result of an accident. The 5 remaining children were: Adeline Eleanor, Emily Cecilia Tarzwell, Eda Elizabeth, Agnes Olive June, and Edward Henry Lumley. FP was so thrilled to finally have a son, he gave the



Left to Right: Eda, Emma (sitting),  
Adeline and Emily (Standing), F.P. Cook  
(holding Edward), and Agnes (ca. 1913)

doctor \$100 as a thank you. Our log house was the only one at Granite Creek with modern furniture. We lived very comfortable lives thanks to Foxcrowle's business savvy.

Granite Creek was a wild town without a church or school. The Cooks sent their eldest daughters to England for their education. Everything went well until that dreaded day in 1907. There was a faulty stovepipe in our kitchen. A fire started and spread quickly to the neighbouring wooden buildings that were packed closely together. I will always be grateful to Foxcrowle for rescuing me that day. There were no human casualties, but most of the town was gone. The Chinese section survived, as did the Cariboo House, Thomas Murphy's cabin and the jail. FP had insurance, but it wasn't enough, and he suffered a terrible financial loss. Foxcrowle loved Granite Creek and vowed to rebuild. The population of Granite was much smaller, but our new house was beautiful, and the new store was located behind it. Even the Granite Creek Hotel was reconstructed. In 1913, FP bought that hotel at a public auction. He was also the town's Postmaster. Gold had petered out. No longer could a prospector reach down into the river and pull out gold nuggets. Expensive hydraulics and dredging were needed to extract the elusive mineral, so many moved to cheaper ventures.

In 1911, the town of Coalmont was born and FP had great expectations for it. He built a beautiful store there and not only did this new store prosper, but he was also the owner of the Coalmont Courier newspaper. Foxcrowle never hesitated to support the communities he was associated with. He donated generously to the machine gun fund in WWI and was on the committee responsible for building the All Saints' Anglican Church in Coalmont. He was once described as an "active citizen and was prominent in all movements for the advancement of the district." That was my Foxy – I mean that was Foxcrowle.

Foxcrowle was a great horseman. We will never know if it was a freak fall from a horse that triggered his health issues or something unrelated. In July, 1918 he was admitted to Vancouver General Hospital requiring surgery for a brain abscess. On July 31, with his daughter Adeline by his side, FP passed away in the hospital. Foxcrowle was only 57 years old. He was brought home to Granite Creek and buried in the cemetery overlooking the town he loved so much. Sadly, when Foxcrowle died, so did the town of Granite Creek. The post office closed and some of the few remaining buildings were sold for firewood. The other two F.P. Cook stores in Coalmont and Princeton were managed by family and became the F.P. Cook Estate stores until they closed decades later.

**F. P. Cook**

**GENERAL  
MERCHANT  
Miners' Outfitter**

**Oldest Established Trading Post in  
Similkameen District**

**STORES AT**

**Princeton,  
Granite Creek  
and Coalmont, B. C.**

You may wonder what happened to me. Foxcrowle thought of me even in death. There I was on the second page of his Will: "I will and bequeath to Edward H.L. Cook, my son, my little folding desk (formerly his grandfather's) to be handed over to his control after he has attained his eighteenth birthday." I had a new owner. I would support him as he shared his letters and business transactions with me. After Ed passed away, I was given to his son, Barrie. Barrie called me FP's laptop. Sadly, he is also gone, and now I live with his son, Tony. Across an ocean and through Cook generations, each owner has cared for me well. When opened, one can still find the cherished memories placed here by Foxcrowle many years ago. I am just a small, wooden travelling desk. I have experienced many lifetimes of adventure with more yet to come but my favourite years are those spent with my dearest companion, Foxcrowle Percival Cook.



Foxcrowle Percival Cook Desk