

People of Faith: Edith (Nohels) Ritchie

The youngest daughter of Elizabeth Luella (Palmer) (known as Bette) and Vincent Nohels, Edith Lorraine was born in Fernie and is thus a lifelong member of Christ Church Anglican. Before she was born, the Nohels family lived in Elkford where her father and his father Clarence Nohels ran a logging camp. When her eldest sister Barb was 6, the family moved into the Fernie Annex, and later they moved to “south end” of Main town where she still lives today. She is the proprietor of Fernie Stationers and one of her daughters, Elizabeth (Ritchie) Bailey, helps her in running the store. Edith is seen here with her grandson Cole at the inaugural Blessing of the Animals service initiated by Reverend Andrea Brennan in October 2016...and Sparky the donkey.



In the winter or spring of 1959, Edith was baptized at Christ Church (known then Fernie-Michel Parish) along with her older sisters Barbara Elaine and Eleanor Maureen. Although both her sisters, Barb and Eleanor, were married in Christ Church, Edith was not. Instead she followed in her parents' footsteps, getting married in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho to Stuart Ritchie. She has two daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline, and three grandchildren -- Cole (Bailey), Bo and Ethan (Reay).



Here the three sisters are seen at Christ Church at Edith's nephew's baptism; at the left, Eleanor is holding Skeet, Barb and her husband Verne Podrasky, and then Edith on the right. The family celebrated with lunch on the home lawn afterward, Rev'd Garwood Russell attending.



Childhood Memories

- I remember the Christmas Pageants and the fact that I always had to wear the itchy Shepherd's costume. I couldn't sing so I couldn't be an angel, I wasn't tall enough to be a wise man, so I got stuck with being a shepherd.
- I attended Camp Beatty, an Anglican church camp on Edwards Lake. Here's a song I remember, sung to the tune of "They say that in the army...."

*They say that at Camp Beatty
The priests are mighty fine
But they give us all the bread
And they drink all the wine.*

- I remember so much snow one year that we used to walk home from school along the snow banks and touch the telephone wires!
- At age 12 I (finally) got a horse for my birthday. I used to keep it at the old barn up on Coal Creek Road. Peppy Star was a handful!

Edith's contributions to Christ Church include playing the piano (and sometimes the organ) for some of the Sunday worship services and periodically for the monthly Rocky Mountain Village service. Garage sales of recent years have been organized by Edith, and she is one of the people on the day of the Harvest Tea you may see delivering "lunches to go." In 2018 she joined the Church Committee.

(Information collected by Catherine Ripley, 19 August 2018)

Family Facts and Heritage

- **(Edith's great grandmother) Elizabeth (Lizzy) Palmer** (Excerpted from the Ben Palmer and Anne (Letcher) entry in *A Valley Remembered, South Country History Book*, 2006): "My family moved to the Elk Valley [from Vancouver Island] where my grandmother ran a boarding house for coal miners. Then to Krag where she bought the Krag Hotel from Mr. McKool, in 1907.... When my grandmother bought the hotel, she ran the business while my Uncle Bill ran the bar. He was killed by Martin Haller in 1910. On page 227 of this book is a poem by Jack Sandberg titled "Murder in the Krag Hotel," which provides further details about this tragedy. The Krag Hotel is also described as being "renowned for its pleasant, jovial service."
- **(Edith's maternal grandparents) Ben and Annie Maud (Letcher) Palmer** had five children: Lorraine, Joey (who died of scarlet fever at age 13), Elizabeth Luella (Edith's mother), Benjamin, and Herbert. Annie Maud was sister to Lulu who was the mother of Audrey (Markland) Fetzko, another Christ Church member and Edith's godmother.
- **(Edith's mother) "Bette" (Palmer) Nohels**. In the aforementioned book (page 134), Bette writes: "Our family lived in Dorr prior to 1937 ...[and then] we moved to Baynes Lake to a big house that had belonged to the Peter Backs family.... My grandfather had died in 1932 leaving Grandma Lizzie to run the Krag Hotel alone. I stayed with her frequently and helped to make soap, clean house, wash clothes, and iron lots of aprons."

Grandma slept with a pistol under her pillow every night -- I sometimes shared her bed, covered with the big feather quilt.”

- Edith primarily remembers her mother caring for the altar linens at Christ Church. She also believes her mother would be horrified that tea is no longer served in a silver teapot!
- **Edith’s eldest sister Barbara Nohels** now lives in Morrissey; **her middle sister Eleanor (Cook)** died in 2017 due to cancer with the funeral being held at Christ Church. A champion figure skater as a youth and coach as an adult, Eleanor was an excellent seamstress, running the Cotton Tree Quilting Store for a number of years; several of her “runners” can be seen in the church.

- The next generation of the Ritchie, Nohels and Palmer family. Here is a picture of Edith’s daughter Elizabeth (Ritchie) Bailey and her son Cole Bailey.

