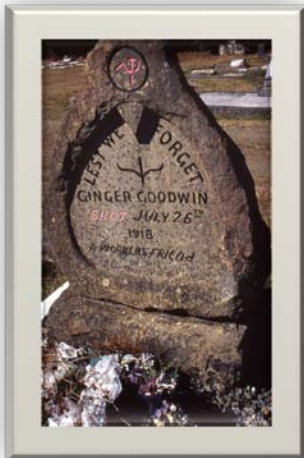# Cumberland: Dodge City

Albert Goodwin was a Cumberland miner and labour activist. Most folks called him Ginger because of his red hair. His shooting - some say murder - in 1918 by a former policeman hunting conscription evaders for the Dominion Police caused a controversy that lasts to this day.

Photo by Rick James

Entering Cumberland is like taking a step back in time. Heritage houses – modest miners' dwellings and a few upscale mine managers' houses – are interspersed with modern homes and, on main street, converted coal carts serve as benches.

But the old-time feeling goes beyond weathered buildings and relics of the past. It has to do with the people, the way they call across the street to one another and take the time to chat.

For decades the village has been known as Dodge City. Some take the name as a slur; others consider it an affectionate term that captures the village's unique charm. Unlike other Comox Valley communities, Cumberland has managed to retain some of its Old West ambiance, and that's a large part of its appeal. And even though you won't see any gunslingers strutting their stuff in the "downtown" core, in the early part of the 21st century it was still easy to make a U-turn on the main drag in the middle of a Saturday afternoon.

Cumberland is full of characters. It was, and still may be, the nickname capital of the island. There's even a list of 575 nicknames, including such oddities as "Flubadub," "Muckle" and "Two and a Juice." And there's a story behind everyone.

William Moncrief moved from the Cumberland District of England to Cumberland, B.C., in 1928 at the age of 14 months. He was just a kid when his pal Harold Waterfield, a.k.a. "Bucket" dubbed him "Bronco Billy" after the cowboy comic strip character that appeared in the weekly Sunday Mirror. He's been called Bronco ever since.

Bronco accomplished many things in his 30-year career as mayor of Cumberland, but the story that's stuck in a lot of people's minds is the time he joined an impromptu posse at age 65.

"I used to spend a lot of time at the village office," he said. "One day I was crossing the street to my truck when Bob Lemay yelled, 'Hey, Bronco, this guy just robbed the bank!'

So I jumped in my truck, did a U-turn around to these apartments where the guy was just starting to back his vehicle out. I boxed him in but he got around me so I chased him all across town until I lost him on the way to Royston. By this time the robbery was big news and someone else caught him."

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