

## The Lucas Family at Victoria High School

In 1913 the Lucas family arrived in Canada from Ireland – mother, father and seven children. Five of the children attended Victoria High School: Evelylin, Edwin, Edith, Mary and Tilley. Adjusting to life in Victoria was hard for both generations. The Lucas family lived at 3230 Glasgow Avenue in Saanich

### Evelylin Lucas (1899 – 1994)

Evelylin wrote a detailed memoir of her life, including some accounts of her time at Victoria High School. She started her Canadian schooling at Vic High's old Rattenbury building at Fort and Yates streets. She was placed in the "D" Class with the understanding that if her grades were not high enough in the Christmas exams, she would be demoted to elementary school.

"In my first year of school I was devastated by fear and loneliness when I found myself in a class of 35 boys and girls, all strangers to me, all better dressed than I was. In the sophisticated atmosphere of this school, with its strange new culture and way of life, I felt I was an outcast."

VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL  
Session 1916...-1917

Name of Student (in full) *Evelylin Caroline Lucas*  
(Christian names) (Surname)

Date of birth *12<sup>th</sup> March 1900* Age *16* years *5* months

Address *3230 Glasgow Ave., Maplewood P.O.* Phone No. ....

Name of parent (or guardian) *J. S. Lucas*

Grade and Division *Senior Matriculation*

When did you pass High School Entrance... *Victoria 1916*  
*when and where did you pass Junior Matriculation?*

Date of Registration *29<sup>th</sup> August 1916* Attendance ..... days

*Evelylin Lucas's original Vic High registration card from 1916 – in her own handwriting.*

"The next year (1914) I was delighted to find myself in the "A" class of Grade 10 – a friendly group of very bright students in whose company I felt more at ease. It was a worthwhile experience for me to be in a class that was so alert and so ready for fun. The new high school had lovely lunchrooms, the boys' on one side and the girls' at the other. Pie, cake, sandwiches, milk etc could be purchased for a few nickels.

"In that Grade 10 class I became acquainted with my first real friend in Canada. Victoria Chung, born in Victoria of Chinese parents, sat across the aisle from me. She was a top student who, while she sometimes had trouble with her English essays, always made 100% in mathematics. I would sometimes help her with her English and she would sometimes help me with a geometry

problem. We used to walk home together as far as her house on Princess Avenue nearby. She always had to hurry because she was due at Chinese school at 4 pm. Some years later she graduated from medical school at the University of Toronto, specializing in tropical diseases. She moved to Kongmoon in southern China to take charge of a missionary hospital. In 1948 she visited me in Vancouver when she was on her way to London, England, to take refresher courses there. After the 1948 Chinese Revolution I stopped hearing from her.



*Dance group at Victoria High School 1916 – taken on the outside steps of the Girls' Entrance. Back row second from left is Evelylin Lucas. Back row far right is Victoria Chung.*

“World War I hung like a dark pall over all else. My English teacher at Victoria High School showed her concern for the boys overseas by spending the first part of her lesson each day on the progress, or lack of it, that was being made at the Front. In the spring of 1916 over half the students at the school disobeyed orders by going down to the Inner Harbour, ‘to see the boys off’ – a whole boatload of them – on what for many of them would be their last journey. The detentions these students were given by the school principal for this ‘misdemeanour’ were bitterly resented.



*Junior Matric Class of 1916. Front row second from left – Evelylin Lucas. Front row fifth from right –Victoria Chung. Back row fifth from left – Herbert Davey who became Chief Justice of British Columbia. Back row fourth from right – Harry Cross who is featured in the book From Classroom to Battlefield by Barry Gough.*

Evelylin continued her schooling at the University of British Columbia to become a high school teacher. Her write-up in the 1916 Yearbook:

**Evelylin Lucas** – One of Ireland’s “colleens” from County Wicklow 1900. Pupil of Hughes Academy, Belfast.

“A modern Atalanta.” Keen interest in English and history

“She’s the sweetest bit of blarney

E’er came from old Killarney.”

### **Edwin Lucas (1897-1996)**

Since his father, Andrew Lucas, was crippled with rheumatoid arthritis, Edwin and his mother became the breadwinners for the family. At the age of sixteen he was hired by the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (which later became BC Rail) to work as a chain-man on a survey crew in the Lillooet area. When this job ended in 1916 he enrolled in some Grade 12 subjects along with

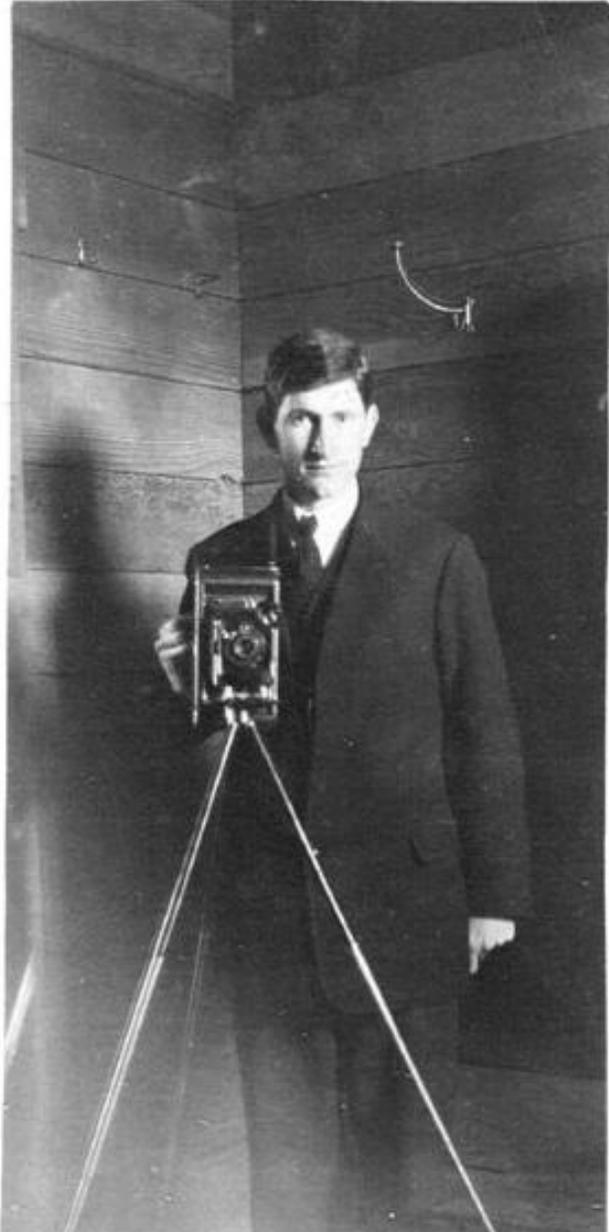
two years of business studies at Victoria High School. He said it was very awkward being a nineteen-year-old going to high school.

“I was bent on learning all I could. I studied quite hard and managed to pass all examinations. Thus equipped, I was ready to take my place in the world as the family finances would permit.

“I did not have to wait long, for thanks to my classroom teacher at Victoria High School, I secured a job as a bookkeeper and store assistant for the Clayoquot Sound Canning Company at Kennedy Falls.”

On his return to Victoria, Edwin volunteered for service in WWI. Because of rather flat feet, he was placed in a low category but fully expected to be called up before the war was over. In 1918 Edwin accepted the offer of a position with the Royal Bank of Canada at the Cook and Fort Street branch. Thus began his career in banking and accounting. It was the policy of the bank at that time to transfer staff to various locations throughout the province. Edwin spent time in Port Alberni, Hazelton and Coalmont before settling in the

Vancouver area. These placements allowed him to pursue his outdoor interests in hiking and mountain climbing. He documented these experiences in photographs. His interest in photography began in Ireland and continued throughout his life. Even while working on the PGE railway survey, he was taking photographs and developing the film in an old root cellar. These photographs will be in the B.C. Archives along with his three-volume memoir entitled *In the Footsteps of an Irish Immigrant*.



*Edwin Lucas with his camera, age 19*

### **Edith Lucas (1904 – 1996)**

Edith Lucas graduated from Victoria High School in 1920 with the highest marks in her class. She went on to study for two years at the Provincial Normal School (now Camosun College) and two years at UBC, receiving the Governor General's Gold Medal. She completed her doctoral studies in French literature at the Sorbonne in Paris.

She became principal of Prince Rupert High School, one of only a few women to reach this position at that time. Later she was head of the Correspondence Branch of the Provincial Education Department in Victoria.

Her write-up in the 1920 yearbook:

**Edith Lucas** – is inclined to studious habits.

“All my mind was set serious to learn and know.”



*Junior Matric Class of 1920. Front row third from left – Edith Lucas*

This information was put together by Anne Clark, the daughter of Edwin Lucas  
January 2015

While Anne did not go to Vic High both her sons did:

Alan Clark – Class of 1989

Eric Clark – Class of 1992