



Everyone has a Story to tell.

When Rod Gott pulls out his watercolours, brushes and canvas to bring images from his memory to life, he's really plotting out B.C.'s natural history.

At 92, Gott had a front row seat to some of the most important years of this province's growth, and watched and painted as Vancouver went from a small logging town to the burgeoning metropolitan city it is today. And, from his room at Kamloops Seniors Village, he's happy to share his view of those years in all the colourful details made available by his paintbox.

Inspired to pursue his dreams by his father, who was an accountant by trade and later a purchaser for Capilano Timber Company, as a child Rod knew he wanted to do what his father did. At around six years old, he told his father he wanted to be an accountant and that he really liked to paint. To help his son on his way, Rod's father immediately bought a set of paints, which included little squares of porcelain paint.

Excited by his new treasures, he took his paints to Capilano School, the four room school house in North Vancouver, but his teacher suggested to Rod that he not bring those paints to school as they were too good for use on school projects. And with that, Rod started to take his paints outside, in his spare time illustrating the countryside. Among his favourite places to paint was the banks of the Seymour River in North Vancouver near the Second Narrows Bridge.

He spent so much time there, that he could look at a scene and not even sketch it but could reproduce the image in great detail on canvas by memory. It was a skill he honed throughout his life, although there was other business to attend to.

Years passed and Rod eventually enrolled in Kitlano Junior High School. It was a far cry from the four-room school house he was once in and, overwhelmed by its size, he'd often skip school to go fishing, making his own flies for Dollie Varton Trout and became good friends with the warden.

His fondest memories from that time, are the monthly trips with his dad on the logging train, where they'd watch the giant logs on skids.

Once high school was behind him, Rod stuck to his childhood word and decided to follow in his father's footsteps and apprentice to be an accountant. Under his father's tutelage he became an accountant and took over the family business, Standard Accounting, when his father was ready to retire. The shop is no longer in business today, but it had a healthy run.

While Rod was busy painting, reaching his life aspirations and working he also was building the foundation on which he stood for many more years. At 19, Rod purchased a plot of land on Riverside Drive in North Vancouver. It was \$1,500, which is cheap by today's standards, but at the time he only had \$900 to his name. He realized, however, it was worth every penny to buy the property of his dreams. Set on the banks of Seymour River the property came with sandy beaches, trees and a stream filled with trout running through. And with his first wife, who later died of cancer, he built a home from the ground up.

Rod was lucky to find love twice in his life, and while checking on an account at Lipsitts boat company, he met his current wife Jean and his family expanded.

When Jean and her children moved in they renovated the property and doubled the size of the original house to accommodate their blended family, again all of the work done by hand.

Rod lived there for 45 years, and about 25 years ago he and Jean decided to move to Kamloops. He was retired by 52, so the spare time he had allowed him to delve back into the hobby that's helped define his life experience. With a whole new source of inspiration, Rod took to painting every lake in the Kamloops area and he's never stopped.

In the year since he's moved to Kamloops Seniors Village, Rod has completed 80 painting and continues to put his brushes to canvas for more than an hour a day. From his suite at Kamloops Seniors Village, he's able to find lots of inspiration and the peace needed to keep his creative juices flowing.