

**MOUNTAIN RESIDENT JACQUELINE FORTUNE**  
**The Role of Canadian History in Her Life**  
By Robert Williamson

In October 2021 the legacy of the Mountain's Adam Inch family was recounted here. As with any family story, the matriarch's role is also important. In 1890 Jacqueline Fortune married the prominent Fennell Avenue dairy farmer, Adam Inch (1857-1933). Her side of the family tree was involved in a significant part of Canadian heritage. She was born in 1859, a year after her Scottish immigrant father, Robert Fortune, settled in the Carluke farming community near the present day airport. She had a famous cousin in Scotland also named Robert Fortune. He was an eminent horticulturist sent to China in the 1850s by the Royal Horticultural Society to collect foreign plant species for colonial botanical enrichment. Avid gardeners can thank the Fortune family for Chrysanthemum, Rhododendron, Bleeding Heart, Hosta and other blooms in their flower beds.

Jacqueline, an ardent student, earned her teacher's license in 1881 and was hired by Adam Inch of the Barton Township Board to teach at "The Mission", a multi-purpose hall serving as a school and church on Concession Street across from the present-day library. She taught all eight grades. Some of her best-behaved students were the children of former slaves who had settled in the area.

While Jacqueline was growing up, her older brothers, Mark and John, helped their father clear the land on their Carluke farm. But with the dawn of Confederation in the 1870s there were many opportunities for young men in a country expanding westward. With the coming of Sir John A. Macdonald's transcontinental railway, farmers and builders needed hardware, and the ambitious Fortune brothers became very prosperous hardware and real estate entrepreneurs. In 1874, Mark settled in Winnipeg, the gateway to the west and married Mary McDougald from Portage la Prairie. They raised six children in a large downtown Winnipeg mansion.

By 1912, trans Atlantic holidays by ocean liner had become very glamorous for the wealthy "nouveau riche". Mark and Mary Fortune planned to take a family holiday to Britain, Europe and Egypt with four of their younger children, one son Charles and three daughters. Ethel, the eldest of the four had recently been engaged to a Toronto banker, Crawford Gordon. She intended to order her trousseau in London. Curiously, her 24-year old sister, Alice, enjoying the mysteries of ancient Egypt had a palm reading. It prophesied a perilous water crossing. This was a common prognosis for soothsayers during the heyday of steamship travel. However, while returning to Southampton, perhaps as a precaution, the family changed their

reservations from R.M.S. Mauretania to the new, unsinkable R.M.S. Titanic. It was truly a misfortune. Following the tradition of the sea, Mary and her daughters got into a life boat. Sixty-four year old Mark Fortune and his eighteen year old son, Charles, went down with the ship as musicians played, "Nearer My God to Thee".



*Jacqueline Fortune (inset) with brother Mark Fortune's family, ca. 1900. L-R: Alice, Robert, Mabel, Charles, Mary (mother), Mark (father), Ethel, and Clara. Photo credits: Jackie (Inch) Carson and the Manitoba Historical Society.*

So Ethel Fortune survived the Titanic sinking to marry Crawford Gordon. The trousseau apparently lies at the bottom of the Atlantic. Their son and namesake, Crawford Gordon Jr. grew up to become president of A.V. Roe, builders of the Avro Arrow Aircraft when the "Diefenbaker Fiasco" cancelled production. It too was a "misfortune" but unequal to the Titanic tragedy which was seldom mentioned in the Fortune or Gordon family. Jacqueline, ever-after, would cry when hearing the Titanic's final hymn, while attending services at Chalmers Church on Mountain Park Avenue.

Jacqueline (Fortune) Inch lived a very productive life in her church and Mountain community. She turned over what was left of the dairy farm after the Depression to her family in 1939 and spent the last eight years of her life living alternatively with family members. She died on April 25, 1947 and is buried in the Carluke cemetery next to her childhood school site where she began her service as an apprentice teacher.

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