

Thurlow Gowan

OCTOBER 18, 2012

Thurlow was born in 1912 in Dauphin, Manitoba. He lived there for the first couple of months before “being brought” back to the family homestead near Kelvington, Saskatchewan. His parents were John Gowan (1874-1954) and Ida Thompson (1878-1983).

Thurlow had one sister Orion (1905-1996).

Thurlow’s parents gave him the middle names “John Abbott” named after his mother’s cousin John Abbott, who was Canada’s third Prime Minister and Canada’s first Canadian born Prime Minister.

Growing up Thurlow kept busy on the family farm growing oats, wheat and barley. They also had milk cows, beef cattle, chickens, turkeys and pigs. Thurlow was a “Bee Keeper” in his early 20’s. He sold honey for 10 cents a pound. He also worked in logging before continuing his education to become a teacher.

Thurlow enjoyed playing a variety of musical instruments. At age 12 he began to play the mandolin, at age 14 he began to play the mandolin banjo. In the years that followed he also learned to play the tenor banjo, the E flat saxophone, drums and the bull fiddle. He played in dance bands at country dances held at the various country halls in the Kelvington area. Thurlow always enjoyed entertaining family and friends, playing the banjo and singing.

Thurlow became a school teacher in 1939 and taught school until 1979. His teaching career took him from the one-room school house in Truax, Saskatchewan, to Kelvington, Saskatchewan and later Creighton, Saskatchewan with a short stint



in Abbotsford, BC.

Thurlow also loved to hunt partridge, grouse, ducks and geese. He enjoyed hunting ducks and geese for many years.

Thurlow married Vivian Minge on August 15, 1951 in Saskatoon. In 1952 they moved to Flin Flon, where Thurlow taught school in Creighton and Vivian opened her own beauty salon. They enjoyed fishing and boating in the many lakes around Creighton and Flin Flon.

In the late 1960's, Thurlow and Vivian moved to Abbotsford, BC. Thurlow taught school for a few years in Abbotsford (Godson, North Popular and Peardonville Schools). In the early 1970's they returned to Flin Flon where Thurlow taught school in Creighton until he retired. After Thurlow retired they returned to Abbotsford.

Thurlow and Vivian enjoyed square dancing. Thurlow was also became a caller for square dancers.

Thurlow started writing poetry at a young age. Thurlow said he only wrote poetry when he felt like it. Around 1983, he joined the MSA Poets Potpourri Society ("PPS"). In 2009, two members of the PPS encouraged him to join them in publishing a book of poems entitled "A Trail of Light".

As a tribute to Thurlow turning 100 this year, the PPS published a book entitled "Picking Flowers" which is named after one of Thurlow's poems. Along with the tributes by the members of the PPS, the book includes poems Thurlow wrote about Flin Flon and twenty-five of his poems that were published in "A Trail of Light".

On October 6 at Bevan Lodge several members of the PPS presented Thurlow with the book. Unfortunately, Thurlow was not able to attend the book launch on October 15.

Thurlow and Vivian had no children, but had a Boston Terrier, named Bonnie. Over the years they had more than one Boston Terrier and they were all named Bonnie. They also had a Boston Terrier named Dee, which was a pup of the last Bonnie. For a time, Thurlow and Vivian raised Boston Terriers. Their Boston Terriers were their pride and joy.

On October 18, 2012 Thurlow passed away peacefully at Bevan Lodge with his family at his side.

Thurlow is predeceased by his parents and sister Orion Steele. He is survived by three sisters-in-law Gina Gushel of Regina, Ardiz Enger (Duffy) of Victoria, and Doris Barrett of Abbotsford, nieces, nephews and cousins and many dear friends.

He will be forever loved and remembered by all you knew him.

A Celebration of Thurlow's life will be held on October 23, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. at Bevan Lodge, 33386 Bevan Ave, Abbotsford, British Columbia.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence.

Messages of Condolence

My husband and I Rudy met Thurlow about 6 years at our poetry group. He loved reading his poetry but also loved to give people words of wisdom as they read their poetry. He was always smiling and encouraging and really added to the group. He will be missed alot and remembered forever. Rest in peace dear Thurlow you were a great man and we are so much better since we got to know you. Sorry to all the family for their enormous loss.

— **Ruth-Ann Braun**

Thurlow - oh how I will miss you. Your visits, phone calls and letters over the past 60 years were always such a joy.

My sympathy and prayers to all your relatives and friends.

Rest in Peace my dear.

— **Jean Thompson**

I met Thurlow through the PPS, a poetry group. He came up to me at one of the Blue Moon readings, a glint in his eye and a grin on his face and said, "Shelley, I wish I had met you thirty years ago!" Before I could respond he followed with, "I'd have put you on my basketball team!" What a guy!

I found something he said that I wrote down. I call it a Thurloism: "There was a time I could make a meal out of shingle nails."

Thurlow was a Saggitarian like several others in the group and we would celebrate those birthdays and Christmas with a pot luck dinner. This year we will hold the feast on what would have been Thurlow's 100th Birthday.

Happy trails Thurlow. We will miss you at the open mics, Blue Moons and the Pot Luck dinners.

much love and affection, Shelley

— **Shelley Haggard**

As a young girl I had the good fortune to meet Thurlow on several occasions while I was vacationing at my grandparent's farm. Thurlow was a cousin to my father Russell Van Gowan. Over the years I had very little contact with Thurlow but my father (and aunts) often told me about Thurlow's recent phone call or letter he had sent. About three years ago I started to put together a genealogical book on the "Gowans of Meadow Bank". Thurlow as the last contemporary became my main source of information. We had several enjoyable long telephone conversations and I received many detailed letters full of information on "the good old days". Thurlow would have so enjoyed a 100th birthday celebration. My sympathy goes out to all the family.

— Jeanette (Shirley) Fitzpatrick (nee Gowan)

I will always have my great memories of my uncle of the wisdom he passed on to me . the parties and family get togethers with him playing his banjo. Though I think the best memories was when we shared our birthdays my uncles being on the 28 and mine on the 29 of Nov we shared one big cake with both our names on it and did we have a grand time on our BIRTHDAY S. I will always love and especially on our birthday

— DARCY BARRETT

Uncle Thurlow will live forever in our hearts and minds. He was an inspiration to me. One of my fondest memories was at a wedding celebration many years ago (Uncle Thurlow was in his 80's then) and he was dancing up a storm and suddenly leapt into the air and just about kicked the ceiling and proclaimed "When I was younger, I could kick the ceiling!" and I believed him because he wasn't far off doing it on that evening. He was a vibrant, happy go lucky person that lit up any room when he entered. He will be sadly missed by anyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

— Carol Masecar

So sorry to read about Thurlow's passing. He led a good long life and was admired by all who knew him. May he rest in peace.

— **Marion Wood**

Happy Birthday Uncle Thurlow my birthday won't be the same without sharing our birthday cake together I MISS YOU SO MUCH but i hope your in peace

— **DARCY BARRETT**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/gowan-thurlow>

Printed on June 9, 2026