

Sam Weston- Creating the BC Power Commission



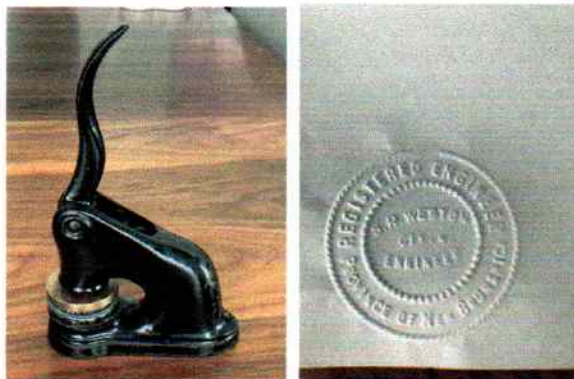
Sam Weston is one of the commanding figures of the history of power in BC. He may have been the first to clearly envision a high-voltage grid based on big central stations—the current shape of BC's power services.

Born in 1889, Weston was a highly experienced civil engineer who came from his native New Brunswick to the West Coast in 1943 to work for the BC Public Utilities Commission. There, he did a study of BC Electric's rate structure and of rural electrification in BC. He showed where private enterprise did and didn't work and then drafted the Electric Power Act of 1945 which created the BC Power Commission.

Weston headed the Commission for its first nine years, building an effective, province-wide organization from a hodgepodge of tiny power facilities and new power developments. The other two commissioners were F.L. Shaw and W.W. Foster.

Sam Weston passed away in 1974.

Article from Gaslights to Gigawatts



Sam Weston's stamp (thank you to Lynn Cross)



The Weston family today: Megan, John and young Sam Weston the Second

Sam Weston the First

THE WESTON LEGACY LIVES... ...ENERGY EFFICIENTLY

The only home that Samuel Weston the Second has ever known, right from his unexpected homebirth on November 28, 2009, is an energy-efficient one—a condo in the Docksider Green sustainable development in Victoria that BC Hydro Power Smart helped build.

As he grows up, the family history he'll learn about is one of province-defining hydroelectric history.

First-time mother and father, Megan and John, both have BC Hydro families that they take pride in, so they were happy to name Sam after his great great-grandfather. According to *Gaslights to Gigawatts*, Sam Weston the First may have been the first person to clearly envision a high-voltage grid based on big central stations—the current shape of BC Hydro. Born in 1889, Weston studied the BC Electric rate structure and rural electrification in B.C., showing where private enterprise did and didn't work. He drafted the Electric Power Act of 1945, creating the BC Power Commission, which he led for its first nine years.

John was born in 1977, the year after his great-grandfather passed away. "I heard stories that he was a steely cold mathematician and a great scientist with a real populist outlook on power—he was dedicated to making sure electricity was available to the entire province," says John.

John's wife Megan had a firsthand impression of BC Hydro thanks to her father, Dennis Cross, who retired as the North Vancouver Island area service and design manager and is now a member of the Upper Island Branch.

"Growing up, we went to company picnics and Easter egg hunts. At Christmas parties, Santa would give out presents," she recalls. "Back then, I thought my dad turned the lights back on when the power went out."

Do Megan and John think their little tyke will carry on the BC Hydro legacy in their family? Well, they don't yet know if he'll end up sporting orange coveralls, but he is already well positioned at Docksider Green to become one of the growing number of energy efficiency ambassadors in the province.



Editor's note: The interview with the Weston family was conducted entirely within the natural light sources strategically designed into their dwelling. Now that's Power Smart.

Thanks to Michelle Martin, *Plugged In* for this article.
[See powerpioneers.com for full BC Hydro Plugged In issue]