

Old Man Rodda: Short on cash and long on offspring

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Left to Right: Josie Walberg Parfitt, Young Ed Rodda, Mrs Walberg, Ed Rodda, Mary Hoyt Rodda, Arlene Rodda, May Bentz, Vernus Bentz, Al Rupp and James Rodda (circa 1930)

John Rodda Senior (1842-1916) became foreman of the Granite Mine in 1881. His son John Jr., born in Redruth, England on May 10, 1870, joined his father in 1886 and also worked at Granite. Mrs. Rodda and other family members came to Montana territory in about 1887. In 1889, they lived on the “Granite Companies Ranch” located about ½ mile west of Philipsburg. During this time, John Jr. homesteaded a ranch on lower Rock Creek.

John Senior, born in Cornwall, England, became a coal miner and married in about 1868. He immigrate to Canada in 1870 and spent several years in the gold camps in Canada and the United States. The story is John would return to England every few years only to father another child and see the one born after his last visit. Mrs. (Cecilia Emma Phillips) Rodda finally packed up the children and came to Montana. One of the stories long told is that Mrs. Rodda ran out of money on her trip and telling her misfortune to another traveler, learned he was a friend of John. The traveler loaned her enough money to continue on to Philipsburg.

John Senior died at the ranch after an illness of several months. The obituary stated “He found pleasure on his ranch and there lived in perfect contentment and came to town on only rare occasions.” Survivors were: wife Cecilia; sons: John, James, Sidney and Edward all living in Granite County; and three daughters: Mrs. Wm. (Annie) Wills (1873-1967) of Bonita, Mrs. Wm. (Heddie) Davey (Kinsman) (unknown B and D) and Mrs. H. (Cereta) Richards (Hickey, Applegate) (1878-1967) both living in California, and many grandchildren.

Cecilia Emma (Phillips) Rodda,(1845-1934), married John Rodda Senior, in England in 1868 and bore seven of their eight children there. One daughter died at the age of two in England. Sidney Rodda 1880-1929 died of pneumonia in Missoula. Sidney was to marry Miss Bernie Rice, in the near future. Celia died at the ranch on lower Rock Creek. Survivors were three sons and three daughters. Internment was beside her husband John.

Annie Rodda (1873-1967) married William K. Wills, June 9.1884 at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Rodda. They had: William, Ernest Roy and Lauretta (Tingley). Rodda taxes for the year 1912 were "Rodda, John and son \$203.46" on their 16 section homesteads.

John Senior had also homesteaded on Rock Creek, when Granite was closed. Edward was born on the lower Rodda homestead in 1889 and married Martha Hoyt, on September 23, 1912. They lived on the "Old Man Rodda's" ranch where they raised three children: Edward, Arlene and Miles. Schooling the children in the rural area was difficult causing Edward to buy the home of Mrs. Nasslin, on the south side of Philipsburg "so they could make their home in the city during the winter" (October 27, 1916 Mail). Edward and Martha died in 1974 and 1978 in San Diego and are buried there.

Young Ed (1913- 1973) married Miss Francis Smith in Butte, Montana on May 24, 1940. He joined the Army Air Force in 1942 and was discharged July 12, 1944. Edward married Ruth Irvine (1918-1979) in 1948.. After their marriage the couple moved to the John Rodda ranch. They had a son David and daughter Susan (Larner) and grandson Jody Larner.

Arlene married Elmer Lueck on November 30, 1938. The couple lived in Philipsburg and he worked at the Jenkins Garage. Research fails to disclose their history.

Miles (1930-2015) married Janet Dingman (2014) October 4, 1952. They lived for twelve years on the lower ranch before electricity was brought to the ranch and had six children: Juanita Kay (1953-1955), Terri (Kreps), Carol, Peggy (Orr), Brenda Costillo, and twins Ken and Russ. After selling the ranch they moved to Arizona then Ronan, Montana where they lived their last years in a care facility. Their headstones are in the Philipsburg Cemetery.

In the August 2, 1918 *Mail*: "Married in Butte on July 22, John Rodda (1870-1944) of Philipsburg, to Miss Annie Lyons of Albany, New York. The newly wedded couple arrived here last week after a very pleasant honeymoon spent at the coast. Research fails to disclose the fate of Annie.

James P. Rodda (1874-1938) married Miss Edith Dowe of Butte, in Butte, September 1, 1920. The newlyweds were to live on the Rock Creek ranch according to the wedding announcement. In 1928 James P. Rodda ran independently as a write in against G.L. Atwater for Alderman of the second ward. He lost by a majority of two votes..

The Rodda family ranches were sold in 1960 to Matilda Wyman. This property was then passed into the hands of Bob Neal. Ed and Ruth remained on Rock Creek until 1965 when they moved into Philipsburg.