

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 NOVEMBER, 1997

OLDTIMERS:
TOM CAMERON
by George James

They say it pays to advertise, that is if you have the goods. My appeal for old timers who have drifted away seems to have borne fruit. Tom Cameron is one of the first to be heard from, although he hasn't drifted any further than the Windermere country.

I haven't seen him or any of the family since 1909 when we all worked together at the Rock Creek Lumber Co. at Mayook, B.C. Now comes this letter from Tom with a little story, which all oldtimers will enjoy reading, I'm sure.

Tom Cameron was born on May 7th, 1881, at Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland, where he was educated and being in a rural district he, after leaving school at a very tender age, went to work on a farm, for which according to his story he has no regrets even if the wages were 75 cents or a dollar per week. He was alert even at that age as you will see.

After about seven years of this --- we will call it apprenticeship on the land --- he thought he could do better in Canada with its vast farming facilities. So Tom sailed from Glasgow June 8, 1901, on one of the old Allan line steamers, arriving in Montreal the same month. He didn't stay long with the bright lights but hightailed it out to the West, destination --- Brandon, Manitoba.

From there he went out to a place called Chater, where he followed his old occupation, that of the farmer's boy until December of 1901, when he came farther west, this time to Field, B.C., where he worked on construction of the seven miles of railroad that cut off the big hill west of the town.

Tom worked near a place called Natural Bridge. He worked here for a year and in March, 1902 went prospecting for farm land. He scouted around Vernon, Lumby and Kelowna for three months with no success.

Then in August of the same year he headed for Fort Steele by way of the main line to Golden then by the steam boat "North Star" to Windermere expecting to travel by horse stage to Fort Steele. He found out there was no stage for a week so decided to hoof it.

He left Windermere after lunch on a Sunday and made Thunder Hill Ranch that night, made it to Wolf Creek the next night. The next day he ate lunch at Fort Steele.

That night he had supper at Arthur Fenwick's ranch. He says, "I was made to feel right at home with these hospitable people of Fort Steele. I then decided to take up land somewhere near, which I found at Mayook." (Mayook was so named for Indian Chief Mayook who also resided there.)

Tom purchased this land in the fall of 1902. His brother Colin joined him in the spring of 1903 and his father, mother, two sisters and little Neil joined him in June of that year. (It will be remembered that Neil was game warden for many years in East Kootenay.)

Colin branched out into the lumbering industry and I may be mistaken but it seems to me that one of the sisters was married to Norman Moore who worked for Pete Lund at Matthew Creek around 1910, and later went to Lumberton.

Tom goes on to say that he worked in the woods in the winter and on the farm in the summer raising grade shorthorn cattle, later going in for registered shorthorns and getting some of the top-notch sires. He bought one from the Prince of Wales at the E.P. Ranch, and another year, 1926, bought the reserve champion bull from the Fall show at Calgary. (Tom knew all about cattle from his experience as a farmer's boy in Scotland.)

He also found time to do a little prospecting while his cattle were waxing fat on the pastures, abundant around Mayook at that time. Mayook is a flag station between Cranbrook and Wardner, I recall the C.P.R. ran what they called the local at the time I worked there. This train used to pass through Mayook about 10 p.m. going West, and I recall in order to stop the train one had to hold out a burning newspaper. This station was called Fort Steele Junction.

Tom then goes on to say he located the Mayook Bypsum, and sold two claims to Canada Cement in the spring of 1927, holding four claims for three years, then selling them to Western Gypsum of Winnipeg. Colin, Neil, Harry Herchmer and E.A. Hill were in partnership. "In 1947," Tom writes, "I was lucky enough to get in as a partner with E.E.

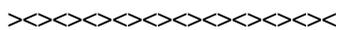
Bryan on the Gypsum on Windermere Creek, and sold out in 1948.

That same year, I sold the ranch and moved to Windermere, where I have 2 1/2 acres. I grow a garden, keep a few chickens, and do a little prospecting on the side. On June 9, 1948, I walked up the aisle at Medicine Hat and said, "I do."

I still have four mineral claims (Lucky Group) six miles south of Windermere and only one mile east of the highway. This claim has outcroppings of barite, also lead and silver.

"I forget I'm growing old by keeping busy in the garden."

(Unfortunately, this newsclip is undated and the Newspaper it was taken from is unknown. If you clip articles from newspapers, please date them. Many are of no use when the date is unknown!!)



A Commercial Club of Invermere was inaugurated January 14, 1914.

It was re-organized to become the **Community Club**, November 1923.

On the agenda:

1. cleaning up of yards in Invermere to be done May 1 and November 1 every year.

2. the establishment of a dump next to the slaughter house, and that people stop indiscriminate dumping.

3. the painting of the exterior of buildings. It was suggested that colors not showing the dust be used.

4. the possible hope of abating the dust nuisance which was considered both disagreeable and unhealthy.

5. all person present were in favor of the establishment of a pound.

6. the planting of shade trees as in tehpast and for the future within the townsite--- Russian Laurels; Rowand trees; Carolina Poplars were suggested.

7. to approach provincial government for extension of sidewalks throughout the townsite.

8. to encourage citizens to keep down noxious weeds.

9. street lighting. The C.V.I. offered to maintain 2 street lights near their office.

10. the important subject of a possible community hall was discussed. The hope was to co-operate with the Invermere Golf Club and erect a club house and community hall in one building.

11. the question of a public campground.

12. desirability of citizens supporting the local creamery.

13. the need for a higher grade, two-room school for the district. A citizens committee was agreed upon to pursue these topics to find favorable solutions. The committee was to be 5 Invermere rate-payers elected by citizens and the one with highest number of votes would be chairman.

14. the last subject was the question of golf, tennis and similar amusements and athletic attractions.

Election, December 19, 1923:

Gus Erickson, Chairman, A. G. Cuthbert, John McCoskrie, Dr. F.E. Coy, Mrs. A.M. Hamilton.

1939---Rental of the David Thompson Fort for badminton was \$1 per night for evening clubs and 25 cents per afternoon for daylight clubs.

1939---Membership to the skating rink for the season was:

\$5 per family

\$2 per adult

\$1 per student.

NEWSCLIPS FDROM THE PAST:

GOLDEN STAR JAN. 4, 1929:

The members of Columbia Lodge No. 38 celebrated St. John's Night in good form also incidentally the 25th year since the Lodge was instituted. It was interesting to note that two of the charter members were present at this quarter of a century event.

GOLDEN STAR JULY 12, 1929:

Winners of prizes in the intermediate grades at the Invermere School:

Writing: Elsie Johnson

Project Work Grade 3 & 4: Mary Frater

Geography: Mary McLean Ralph Johnston

Nature Projects: Nellie Burton Rose Doyle

Writing Certificates: Lucy Pennington, Mabel Doyle, Frances Ashworth, Kathleen

McGuinness, Nellie Burton, Mary Frater, Elsie Johnston, Ralph Johnston, David Larmour, Mary McLean, Edith McLean,

Winners in Contests: Frances Ashworth, James Ashworth, Dominica Sandwell, Ernest Stilling.

Honour Rolls: Edith McLean for proficiency, Frances Ashworth for deportment, Gertrude Lehmann for regularity and punctuality.

GOLDEN STAR, OCT. 26, 1928:

USED CARS

1927 Chev Coupe	\$650.00
1926 Chev Touring	450.00
1926 Ford Tudor	400.00
1926 Chev Sedan	650.00

Russell Hotel Dining Room, Golden

Sunday Dinner 75 cents

Baked Chicken & Oyster Pie

GOLDEN STAR, JULY 5, 1929:

George Hope Johnston of the staff of the Calgary Daily Herald is a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Rufus A. Kimpton at the White House, Windermere. Mr. Johnston is busy renewing old time acquaintances. he ranks high amongst the very old timers of East Kootenay. It was he as Justice of the Peace who read the Riot Act at the request of Major Steel in 1883 when trouble was threatened west of Golden on the construction of the C.P.R. He was also the leader of a posse who captured the alleged thief of some of Him Kane's horses and was chased up what is now known as Horse Thief Creek, brought to Wild Horse Creek some 100 miles distant from the point of capture, and then acquitted.

It was George Hope Johnston also who was one of the first owners of one of the portions of land that is fast being created into one of the interesting spots of this district as the Dominion Experimental Station.. (1997 it is the *Elkhorn Ranch and the Windermere Golf Course.*)

GOLDEN STAR, MAY 25, 1928:

Dominion National Parks Ranger S. Hope Brewer accompanied by his wife and child came into town from Mr. Brewer's depot at Marble Canyon on the Banff Windermere Highway. This is Mr. Brewer's first trip into civilization since he went in for the winter last fall, a period of nine months. Mrs. Brewer and child were shut in for six months. The station is just at Marble Canyon. Mr. Brewer reports the snowfall from October to May, inclusive, last winter to have been 13'8" of which the heaviest fall took place in the month of November when 40.50" came down. The snow has practically all gone by now. The lowest temperature was registered in December when the thermometer touched 50 degrees F. below zero.

DID YOU KNOW?

That the Village of Invermere, incorporated in 1951, had an area of 54 acres--- a population of 670 people--- a school population of 439.