

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 342-9769 MAY 2001



MRS. EDWARD RAUCH

Mrs. Rauch was born Effie May Payne on May 15, 1881 in Drayton Ontario. She came to Wilmer in 1902, a young girl lured by the urge to travel, eager to try her luck away from home. Effie spent 19 years in Saskatchewan then came west to Calgary and later to Golden. She traveled from Golden in the stage coach driven by Rufus Kimpton to Wilmer. She came to work for Mr. and Mrs. George Starke at the Delphine Hotel and she cannot say too much of their kindness. She says she did not mean to stay here but “Wilmer struck me as so pretty, so sunny and so sheltered from the wind. And then the mountains got hold of me.”

Something else got hold of her too, because a year later she married Edward Rauch who had a prosperous business hauling freight to the local mines. He was in partnership with John Barbour who did the packing while Mr. Rauch did the hauling.

Effie’s childhood had been remarkable for her love of horses. She began to ride when she was six and her father brought home a little roan pony and said, “If you can ride her, she is yours.” The little girl clambered on the fence to mount and the pony was hers. From that time on, horses were her passion. “I could talk to them,” she says.

Effie married Edward Rauch at the Wilmer (then Peterborough) courthouse in September 1903. Their wedding trip was spent on horseback when they moved 63 head of horses over the Vermillion Pass to Banff, on to Calgary and further to Didsbury. The trip took two weeks.

Four children were born of the marriage. Ferd, the eldest and Anton lived in Wilmer. Bert lived in Golden and Thelma, (Mrs. Bror Carlson), lived nearby in Wilmer. (1955).

Mrs. Rauch smiled when she spoke her son Anton’s name. “ He nearly was called George Wilmer.” Then she told of how the town of Wilmer got its name.

“It was the year Wilmer C. Wells was running as Liberal candidate in the Valley. George Starke brought him to visit me and to solicit my vote. Anton was a baby, not christened yet because there was no resident minister. ”

True to political tradition, Mr. Wells admired the baby and inquired his name. Friendly banter followed in which George Starke said the baby was to be named for him and Wilmer Wells countered by suggesting the boy be named for him. Smilingly, Mrs. Rauch said she couldn’t choose between them but the child could be named “ George Wilmer.” She wasn’t serious though because it was a tradition in the Rauch family that there must be an Antony in every generation and having named her first son Ferd, the second must be Antony.

Later, George Starke teasingly told her she needn’t think of naming the baby after Wilmer Wells because the village was to be named after the successful candidate.

With married life, Mrs. Rauch settled down to much activity. "The children kept me busy and there was a lot to do in the town. St. Andrew's Church was being built in the early 1900's and the women all helped to raise the money. Then Delphine Starke planned Christmas on a grand scale for the children of the village and I used to help her."

During the First World War, Wilmer raised a great deal of money for the Red Cross. Mrs. Rauch told of one sale of work in the Wilmer Hall when every article for sale was made of flour sacks. Proceeds were \$190.00.

"I've done a mans work for many years." she says. Doubtless it is true. Her husband, Edward, died in 1925. For exercise she saws two or three slabs of wood every morning after breakfast. This spring she dug and planted her garden as usual and it is a sizable plot. "I don't think work ever kills a person," she says.

But she has a better recipe for longevity. "My husband and I never argued. When I felt cross I'd say 'Leave me alone till I get over it,' and he did. It's arguing that ages a person."

*From- Columbia Valley Echo
Sept. 1955*

Children of Edward and Effie Rauch

Edward Ferdinand, George Anton,
Thelma Elizabeth, Bertram Michael.

MURDER AT DEAD MANS CREEK

*(Information obtained by B.G. Hamilton
from J.H.Taynton.)*

The two men were murdered in 1884. The story was that they were playing "7 up" with some Indians when the trouble arose which led to their reputed murder. Next season, one body, supposed to be that of Hilton, was found buried nearby. No definite trace of the other was found. While camped at the mouth of the creek in 1886, along with Fred Wells, a prospector discovered a skull which was supposed to be that of the other man. The supposition was that he had been wounded, wandered off, and died and his body eaten by animals. The bones were scattered about. Those who allegedly committed the murder were Kootenay Indians.

The trial took place at Fort Steele with Chief Isadore of the Kootenay Nation defending them. They were tried before Major Sam Steele. They were acquitted.

GOLD IN TOBY CREEK *submitted by Fran Kimpton*

"After reading the article in the Feb. Newsletter about the finding of gold on Toby Creek, Jerry recalled a wonderful story that Ken Marples related to him about 35 years ago. I thought it was worth sharing with everyone.

Ken was a member of a valley pioneer family that settled on the Toby Benches. When Ken was a teenager, early 1920's, he got his first job with a gold mining outfit that was working on Toby Creek. Ken was part of a small crew that built trails and excavated along the creek bank. The excavating was done to make it look as if they were exposing the gold.

The crew had a 12 gauge shotgun that had shells from which the pellets had been removed. The pellets had then been replaced with bits of gold.

A lookout was posted further down the creek and whenever a party of investors (mainly English!) was seen coming along the trail, the lookout would run back to warn the crew.

A crewmember would then take the shotgun and shoot the gold into the face of the newest excavation so investors could be shown that there was indeed gold to be found in Toby Creek!”

ATHALMER- INVERMERE SCHOOL CLUBS 1944-45

Glee Club

President- Dorothy Mosley
Vice-President- Josie Guey
Secretary- Treasurer- Dorothy Guey
Supervisor- Miss Lennie

Drama Club

President- Peggy Gordon
Vice-President- Bernard Gordon
Secretary-Treasurer- Isobel Kimm
Supervisor- Miss Patmore.

Paper Club

Editor-in-chief- Marion Cleland
Assistant Editor- Dorothy Mosley
Supervisor- Miss Curtis

Library Club

President- Douglas Kimm
Vice-President- Graham Tyler
Secretary-Treasurer- Roy Broadfoot
Supervisor- Miss Morrow

Junior Red Cross

President- Marion Cleland
Vice-President- Graham Tyler
Secretary-Treasurer- Kay Dobbie
Supervisors- Miss Curtis, Miss Lennie

Boys Service Committee

Alfred Larson and Bernard Gordon

Girls Service Committee

Audrey Kennings and Gwen Kennings.

Students Council

President- Bernard Gordon

Vice-President- Gordon Ede
Secretary-Treasurer- Dorothy Mosley

Representatives:

Grade 12- Graham Tyler
Grade 11- Gwen Kennings
Grade 10- Alfred Larson
Grade 9- Jim McKay
Grade 8- Gerald Lewis
Supervisor- Miss Curtis.

Airport at Edgewater

(by Berta Moore)

When Harry Moore was 45 years old, he bought a new Fairchild Cornell plane. With Jock Blakley as instructor, Harry Moore and Blair Blakley learned to fly off Vaughan Kimptons Windermere field. This was a training plane, one seat behind the other, the back seat equipped for “blind flying”- to learn to fly by instruments.

Harry and Jock went over to Calgary to get a modification made on it. When they came back, high over the mountains, there was a big crowd down on the ball grounds, the 24 th of May. Suddenly the plane started a steep spiral straight down. Everyone thought it was going to crash. They were just showing what the plane could do, with the modification. (Pull out of a spin.)

In 1947 Harry bought land above town to build an airstrip. Refuse wood, sawdust and gravel filled up a deep coulee across it. A great amount of work went into grading and getting it fit to use. At aviation meetings they talked about a B.C. lumberman who had an airport made out of logs on a mountain - 2,000 feet long and sort of uphill and down.

Having a plane meant he could get parts and repairs in for the mill and equipment much faster, so it soon paid for itself. His plane was very stable in the air but not very fast so when he got the chance to buy a

Bellanca, he did it. It was a tail-dragger and when coming in to set down right on the end of the runway, it was difficult to see just where that spot was.

The next plane was also a Bellanca with retractable landing gear, followed by another just a little better equipped. These planes are all "hand-made" in Alexandria, Minnesota. Great care is taken by the workmen. Wings are of wood and carefully tested. Harry has flown across Canada as far as Montreal, and south into Mexico. So, when he sold the mill it was just natural of course, to buy, for the first time, a new Bellanca. (almost new!!) It has provided many hours of flying to many places he would never have seen otherwise.

ESCAPEE STILL AT LARGE

(Valley Echo- May 17, 1956)

R.C.M.P. are carrying out an intense bush search in the area for an escaped criminal.

Jack Norman Curtis, 33, alias Ferguson, escaped from the Cranbrook jail on Sunday. He was slated to appear in court on Monday.

After breaking out of jail he stole a car in Wardner. On Monday night he replaced this with a car stolen from Harry Erskine of Canal Flat. Early Tuesday morning, Curtis drove through a police road block at Dutch Creek.

Cpl. Ken McHale of Invermere followed Curtis in a 30 mile chase from Dutch Creek to near Radium. Several shots were fired by the police during the chase. The chase was ended when the police car hit a sign post. Erskines car was found abandoned at Drygulch and police believe Curtis headed into the woods on foot.

RADIUM BOYS FIND ESCAPED CRIMINAL FOR BED COMPANION

Two young Radium Hot Springs boys spent a sleepless night in a log cabin while Curtis, the escaped prisoner, lay in a second bed beside them.

Reid Madson, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Madson of Radium and Don Dehart, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dino Dehart had gone to bed between 9-10 p.m. Tuesday in the cabin behind the Dehart farm home, one mile off Highway 95.

They slept until shortly before midnight when they were awakened by the barking of Dons collie pup which was in the cabin with them. In the moonlight they saw a man crawling in the window and guessed instantly that it was Curtis.

He said " Are you awake, sonny?" When they did not reply, he tiptoed to the other bed and spent the night there.

Too frightened to sleep or move, the boys lay until about 5 a.m. when Curtis rose and left the cabin.

From the window they watched him go to the Dehart home, reach through a window and lift Dehart's lunch box from the kitchen table. He then disappeared into the woods and the boys raised the alarm.

Compiled by - Sandy McKay 2001