

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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



**Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Tunnacliffe
1913**

The Tunnacliffe Family purchased the George Bennett home and moved with their children, Marvin and Marion, to Invermere and the 'Flat'. They continued their lifestyle founded and enjoyed in Wilmer. They continued their memberships in organizations, their friendships, their energy and enthusiasm and support of community projects. They shared their talents of music- fiddle, violin and piano. They contributed to all community affairs- socially and hospitality. Mr. Tunnacliffe continued his work. A loyal Liberal. At the time when Conservatives were in power he was welcomed by the businesses of Invermere. He enjoyed gardening and all sports, especially curling. In 1947 he was honored with a lifelong membership in the Masonic Lodge. Mr. Tunnacliffe was a life member of the Farmer's Institute and in 1947 was

awarded his name on the Honour Roll by the Fall Fair Board.

Mrs. Tunnacliffe also carried on all her good works....Church, Hospital, Red Cross, School, youth activities, C.G.I.T., teas, meetings, and Women's Institute along with much hospitality in her home. She gave great care to their daughter, Marion, who was a diabetic. The District shared her loss when Mr. Tunnacliffe died on February 8, 1949.

Mrs. Tunnacliffe carried on. She offered room and board to a grateful series of women school teachers. She gave them a comfortable home and each and every one of them became her lifelong friend. Her home was always open for gatherings, musicals, teas, and meetings. She just became "Mrs. Tunny". She was always at home until a trip of a lifetime occurred in 1955 when she and Ethel Cleland boarded a freighter in Vancouver. They traveled through the Panama Canal to Denmark (where they were caught in strikes) and were away for six months! They visited ports in the U.S.A. Caracas Venezuela, St. Thomas, Dublin Ireland, England, France, Holland and Germany. Stopping long enough for side trips to Amsterdam, The Hague, Delft and Paris. They arrived home again July 26, 1955.

Mrs. Tunnacliffe and Mrs. Cleland were friends with a friendship that began in 1911.

Mrs. Tunny died on December 8, 1970. Son Marvin married Ethel Thornton in 1935 in St. Andrews Church, Wilmer, B.C. On Marvin's return from service in the

R.C.A.F. in 1946, the young Tunnys and their children Don and Lynn lived in the grey cottage across from the senior Tunnacliffe's for two years. In 1948 Marvin and Ethel built a new home on the same side of the road beside the Sr. Tunny's. Marvin seemed to step right into his father's shoes. He too, was an excellent musician, formed a dance orchestra, (Tunny's), shared his music at church and other gatherings, was a member of the Masonic Lodge # 38 AFAM, Invermere, Past Master, Past District Deputy and a Grand Master of Grand Masonic Lodge of B.C. He was well known for his humor and his love of curling and all sports. The young Tunny's home was always open for fun and meetings. Marvin was Mayor of Invermere from 1968 to 1970.

I believe it was in the years 1940-50 that the Flats became known as "Tunnacliffe Flats".

The old Tunnacliffe home was purchased by Jim and Fran Warne in the 60's and they lived there for a long time, bringing up 5 children.

When Marvin Tunnacliffe died in April 1980, there was great sadness. Ethel continued to live in their home and carry on their good works. Both of their children were married. Don had built another home on Tunnacliffe Flat- and later built yet another home for his family.

THE CHANGING TIMES

The Village of Invermere was founded by Edmund T. Johnston in 1890 by pre-emption of Lot 216 G 1. He had the property surveyed and it was crown-granted to him in 1899. Mr. Johnston had a dwelling erected and lived there from 1890-1899. This was Copper City. In August 1899, E.T. Johnston transferred the title of the property to L.R. Garnett who in

June 1900 transferred 2.55 acres of it to Mr. John Taynton. In March 1900, Mr. Garnett and partner conveyed 105 acres of Lot 216 G 1 to Canterbury Townsite Co. and re-named it 'Canterbury'.

Canterbury continued to grow and when it was purchased by the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruitlands Co. (Wilmer) in 1911, it had a hotel, bank and general store.

R.R. Bruce renamed the townsite Invermere, and from 1911-1914 the townsite had a rapid growth period. The C.V.I.Co. Ltd. donated land for the school, hospital, Anglican and United Churches and installed water works. In 1912 businessmen relocated from Wilmer and Windermere. Mr. Frank Stockdale and Mr. George Bennett built and opened the 'Invermere Construction and Supplies' (the first Hardware Store) on Bruce Ave. (7th Ave.)

Mr. and Mrs. Bennett built a spacious home on the flat piece of land above and east of the stores..... later known as Tunnacliffe Flats. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett had been residing in Wilmer (1908) at one time on R.R. Bruce's Munn Lake property. Mr. Bennett was a civil engineer. Sometime during the next few years, Bennett was bought out by Frank Stockdale and Alex Ritchie but Mr. and Mrs. Bennett continued to live in the house on 'The Flats' until 1929. The Bennetts had enjoyed their home on the Flats, serviced in 1912 by the Invermere Waterworks.

There was a little grey cottage opposite their home, probably built by the C.V.I. Co. Ltd, rented and at one time occupied by the school teacher- Miss Brooks. George Bennett's son Paul, attended the first Invermere School.

1912-1928- During these years, and for a while after, the 'Flat was indeed a dusty,

treeless area. There was a wagon road that branched off from Athalmer at the top of the hill (now old DTSS) to nearly the George Bennett property- then down the present hill road to Bruce Ave. (now 7th). The Flat was crisscrossed by trails. One of the wagon roads passed Bennetts , now 5th Ave. , and down to the Frater and Ericksons (Caspells) homes (now 14th st.) The other trail linked up the C.P.R Section House to Bruce Ave., across the Flats.

Place Names and Changes

1914- Some time later, the remaining shares in the C.V.I. Co. Ltd. were transferred to the Invermere Contracting Ltd.

With the incorporation of the Village of Invermere in 1951, Tunnacliffe Flat was re-surveyed and opened up for the sale of lots. Realtors took advantage and now in (1999) there are only one or two lots left. In the early days of the Village, streets roads and creeks were named after residents. Areas were designated by buildings- Invermere heights, Hospital, schools, Fort Point, and Taynton's Bay.

Accomplishments- Pipe Line Road , (Waterway Drive), (13th Ave.) , Wing Lee Road. (13th St.), Peters Hill (the Benches), Rotten Row (after a fashionable London address), where the Hamilton's, Fishers, and Miss Boedecker lived (now 5th St.) . After 1951 all streets and avenues were numbered and many of the original names were lost and not remembered.

(From: *The Jessie Lockhart Files*).



At the Wilmer Hospital (as told by Jean McMartin Weir)

When I left Scotland to come to Canada, I knew I'd be able for any emergency in the nursing profession, but it was a great surprise when a sudden emergency made me decide to manage a hospital. That happened in Wilmer, August 1913 until March 2, 1914. Dr. Hannington was ready to go to Edinburgh to take his F.R.C.S. The two nurses whom he had engaged to run the hospital, wired they could not come. When he asked me to fill in till he might get someone else, I did it gladly. It was a great adventure and I learned a lot during those six months.

The railway being put through the valley and the lumber camps were the chief sources of patients. Of course there were babies arriving and the hotels did their bit quite steadily- or, I might add, unsteadily! I had an eager little Irishwoman, Mrs. Green, as cook for six weeks. She was not an expert, but she made delicious currant scones.

No running water- we got two barrels of it twice weekly. No indoor plumbing. No bath. The slop pails had to be emptied in the dump. I had one outside a backdoor from the male ward. When frozen I thawed it out with boiling water, then took it out. That was a change of occupation, but I did it.

Dr. Shaw was taking the place of Dr. Hannington and boarded in the hospital. He was always out when emergencies came. First Sunday in September, a man was brought in suffering a shattered elbow caused by a hunting friend tripping behind him . That patient was with us for 14 weeks. I got to know some Indians and loved them. I did what I could to help them and the doctor called to see them later. One young boy with a bullet shot through a

hand was kept in the hospital till he was alright again. When he was allowed out of bed, he went singing around the hospital outside.

In another hunting accident, the patients neck and shoulders were riddled with shot. That case let me know how kindly the people in the valley were. A man phoned from Athalmer that evening and asked, “ How is Chris Rawlas?” I told him the doctor was quite pleased with how he was after the shock. The man said that there was to be a dance in Athalmer that night but if Chris had been in serious state, the dance would be postponed.

We had 11 patients, counting babies, and all beds filled, when a woman came to have a baby. I gave her my bed and slept a few nights anywhere, till a patient went away. The cook got a bed in a friend’s house in the village when a patient got her bed. It was a gay time! No electric light then- only coal oil lamps, wood stoves and heaters. I found how courteous and kind the men were who came from the “ Wild West” camps to visit their friends who were patients. They were keen to help keep the fires fed. Nobody ever complained of being cold.

Policemen were surprised that they did not need to stay with the DT cases that they brought in. They were like lambs in my care. One returned in a shaky state one Sunday morning and the doctor was out. I asked what I could do for him and he said he had the jimjams coming on and could I give him some brandy to stop it ? I said I had no brandy. He said, “ No brandy in a hospital?” I told him I ran the hospital without brandy, but told him I’d give him something else. I went and mixed a good dose of Epsom Salts and a lemon drink. I returned and said “Sit and drink this ”. He drank it. Next morning he went into the store where my husband was working and

reported he was all right. He ended by saying, “ No other woman in Canada could have made me drink that stuff”. That is a medal in my memory.

Before Dr. Hannington left, he said if light diets were needed specially, a chicken could be killed as there were 10 in the yard. So, when one was needed, my husband went out to the yard and shot one. When Dr. Hannington returned in March, he was surprised to see the chickens still there. All the chickens killed had belonged to a neighbour!!

(From The Valley Echo)

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Thank you

to all the members that so graciously renew their memberships year after year. A special thank-you to the members that add an additional donation! We are very grateful for your support and interest.

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DAVID THOMPSON STATUE UPDATE

We are nearing the \$100,000.00 mark in our fundraising. We are still hoping to get more pioneer names on the Memorial plaque. Will your family name be there?

Some families have pooled their donations to meet the \$ 500.00 required to place a name on the plaque. Could you consider this?

For more information, please contact the Museum.

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Compiled by : Sandy McKay . 2001