

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 NOVEMBER 2002



The Thompsons

William Thompson was born in Newcastle England in 1865. He emigrated to Canada by cattle boat in 1905. In Calgary he worked for the Burns Co. Packing Plant. From there he went to Canmore and cooked for 100 men in a mining camp. In 1907 his wife Jane came from Newcastle to join him. Bob, their first born, was 18 months old. They all came to Golden B.C. and William worked in a sawmill and from there he went south on one of the stern wheelers. They settled on the banks of the Columbia River west of Edgewater. In 1908 they were living in a tent and they endured a very cold winter. (-40 F). William worked mainly on trap lines and logging. He made the last log river drive on the Columbia. At that time, the stern wheelers were the only way of getting supplies to the communities along the Columbia River. As the years went on, the family increased to nine children. A rough house was erected and the children went to Edgewater for school by boat. In 1932 the family moved into Edgewater and lived in a house that was owned by the Columbia Valley Ranches Ltd. In 1934 they built a beautiful log house that is still standing today. As the family grew older, they all trapped and logged and Lioel started guiding hunters when he was 16 years old. The hunting parties came mostly from Switzerland.

In 1936 the depression hit and they had to

find jobs somewhere . In the summer of 1940 the boys went thrashing wheat in Saskatchewan. Jack joined the army in 1940 and Lioel joined in 1941. They went to England in 1941. Lioel met Franky in November 1943 and they were married in June 1944. Franky sailed from England on June 4, 1945. The trip took 10 days on a troopship but was blacked out at night and had to zigzag across the Atlantic because of sea mines still in the ocean.

Franky stayed in Edgewater and worked at the Radium Hotel for 6 months until Lioel came home in December 1945. Bob was the only one at home taking care of his father William who was still active at age 80.

(*Frances Thompson Files*)

The Children of William and Jane Thompson were:

Bob— was raised in Edgewater and he married Evelyne Nielson. They lived in Radium, Waterton , Lethbridge, and Salmon Arm. They had 2 children— Roberta and Glen.

Willie— married Edna and lived in Calgary, Vancouver, and Edgewater. Their children were Alan and Betty-Jane.

Catherine (Girle)- married Maurice Calcutt and had 4 children. Betty, Bob, Patsy and Amy. In her second marriage to William Carlson she had a son, Robin.

Jim— married Diana Mitchell, Jim was a barber and a guide \ outfitter. They had no children.

Ellen— married Roger Barrault and had 4 sons: Russell, Wayne , Larry and Jack.

Jack— lived in Edgewater and never married.

Lioel— married Frances (Franky) in England during the war. They built a home in Edgewater then moved to Spillimacheen. They had 2 sons, David and Roy.

Dolly– married William Barth. Their children Pam and Gary were raised in Spokane.

Barbie– married Bob Jewett and they raised their family in Spokane also. Their children were Randy, Chrissy and Robert.

(David Thompson\ Sue McDonald files)

Willie Thompson- “ It was just getting to the hungry thirties then. Times was tough. There wasn’t much doin on the west side of the River, most people had moved away. In about 1938 I worked at a portable mill at the Ward Ranch. Bill Harrison and I heaved skids and everything with broad axes. They started to run that mill with an old wheeled farm tractor. It was a Case. An old coal-oil burner.”

Sinclair School on the McKay Property

(by Jim Thompson)

“ To my knowledge, it was built around 1916 and it was located near highway 95. It closed in 1929. When I started school there was Bob, Willie and Catherine Thompson from Edgewater and Beth, Winnie and Harry Chaimberlin from Radium. Frank and Gladys Larmour came from the North. For a time, Gordon Susan and Amy Nixon went there as well. The teachers were Miss Mary Smith, Miss Butler, and Miss Johnson. Miss Emily Tegart taught with a permit and her sister Marjorie went to school there. There was a desk for the teacher, childrens’ desks, a pot-bellied stove, a wood-box and a blackboard. ”

Edgewater

1886- This marks the Beginning of Edgewater when at the time of the completion of the main line of the C.P.R., James L. McKay came into the Valley from Golden. McKay bought 15000 acres of Government land and established “McKay Estates”.

1900- James McKay married and seven years later, built a large white “Eaton House”.

1909-The Crown granted homestead lots to John W. McNeil. Dave and Fred Larmour had the D.L.Ranch, later owned by Eric Smith as the U-5 Ranch. The Larmour home was built on the land in 1915 and was another “Eaton House”.

1911– Columbia Valley Syndicate bought the McKay property.

1912– Columbia Valley Orchards and the Kelowna Irrigation Co. moved 15 men and 10 teams into the area. They plowed roads and built a sawmill to produce lumber for the irrigation flume. This was the beginning of Edgewater. This same year the town site was surveyed.

1915– Columbia Valley Orchards goes into bankruptcy.

1918– The population is 30.

1922– Dr. Gaddes bought the land from the executor of the defunct Dominion Trust.

1928-Population 200. School built in town.

1946-Dr. Gaddes sold out and retired. The remaining town lots and some acreages were bought by H. Moore.

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Where the Rockies Touch the Stars

(by Jack Thompson—1945)

Now that this war has ended
And I’m homeward bound
I’ll be leaving some buddies behind me
Some boys who’ll never be found.
Away from the fierceness of fighting
Away from those battle scars
Back to my home in the mountains
Where the Rockies touch the stars.
Back to that peaceful Valley
The one that I once knew
Back to that peaceful Valley
Where ill winds never blew.
Where the Canada geese are calling
Along the Columbia River’s bars
Back to my home in the mountains
Where the Rockies touch the stars.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

BY SHELAGH DEHART

At Noglihen which means Birch Forest in Shuswap (Stoddart Creek), my mother would start the Christmas preparations early by making the puddings, “spotted dogs”. This was a white pudding with dark raisins, prunes and dried red currants. Into each round ball she put a piece of sugar, It was steamed in the stock pot. When cooked and cooled, it was stored in the attic.

Then Mother made sauce for the puddings from burnt brown sugar, butter and some of my father’s favorite rum.

Aunt Rosalee came and helped Mother make taffy. We all stood around to watch them pull the taffy, waiting for the first bite.

Christmas Eve, the cows were milked early and all the animals were fed. Then we heard sleigh bells and it was my Grandparents and Aunt Rosalee coming to pick us up on their way to the Shuswap Village Church for midnight service. We were bundled up, put in the back of the big sleigh piled high with hay and blankets for the horses. There were fur robes for us and bags of food and groceries. It was fun for us to tunnel in the hay. Aunt Rosalee would be singing Christmas hymns in Latin. I asked my Grandfather if the Star of Bethlehem was one of them up there. He said, “No, it has never been seen again.” We stopped at the house where Aunt Maras (Mrs. Eugene Joseph) had gone earlier to light the fires. The Elders unloaded the sleigh and we all went into the house. The horses were unharnessed, fed and covered with blankets for the night. Grandmother went upstairs with a lighted coal oil lamp and brought out their Sunday clothes from a big trunk and they changed their clothes in a hurry.

The first bell for Church was rung. People were hurrying from all directions. The air was crisp and cold and there was a feeling of excitement everywhere. Even the dogs were barking! The church had been scrubbed, dusted and decorated by the “Society of the Children of Mary”.

Mother and Aunt Rosalee belonged to it.

The Church was warm. There was a drum heater in the center. An oil lamp hung from the ceiling and fresh boughs of cedar covered the walls and windows. In the left hand corner was the crèche– the Baby Jesus in a manger with his Mother and Father kneeling beside him. There were also several lambs and the Star of Bethlehem. The Church was lit up by many candles. They all sat on the floor– there were no benches then. A hush came over the whole room, my Grandfather, Chief Pierre Kinbasket, stood at the front and told the story of the birth and life of Jesus. The prayer began in the Shuswap language and hymns were sung- the Christmas ones in Latin. When the service ended, everyone filed out shaking hands and wishing each other Merry Christmas. Some people followed us to the house, chatting along.

On entering the house, Aunt Maras had a big pot of coffee ready. The table was all set up with huge piles of home made bread, butter and jam and jugs of milk. Everyone stayed overnight. In the morning we awakened to happy voices saying “Merry Christmas” and some said “Mary Kriesmis”. There was a lot of laughing and talking. The Louis Paul Family were there and some relatives of Louis Capilo from Kenanook (Fairmont). After washing in cold water and a good breakfast, it was time for Church with hymns and prayers. My Mother, Amelia Palmer, had arrived and after the service, exchanged greetings with friends. The children were put into the one horse sleigh and taken home. My parents (Mr. and Mrs. W. Palmer (Billy and Amelia) did not attend the Christmas Eve service because they had a lot of company.

Chief Pierre and Marianne Kinbasket knew the Bible very well. Aunt Angelique had read and translated it to them.

The organ in the church belonged to Aunt Angelique. She had taken music lessons from Sister Justinian. The Priest from St. Eugene Mission didn’t come in the winter.

Parade was the Best in Years

(Valley Echo—September 2, 1955)

One of the most impressive parades here in years heralded the opening of activity on the Fair Grounds last Saturday.

Led by Parade Marshall Allan Tegart, who was riding Frisky, the parade left the Invermere Community Center for the Athalmer Fair grounds shortly after 1 p.m.

High stepping band music was supplied by the Cranbrook City band, dressed in snappy maroon and gray uniforms, who followed close after the Parade Marshall. Attractive Invermere High School Majorettes accompanying the band were Barbara Laird and Sharon Pietrosky.

The Queens entourage, rode in a 1926 Lincoln driven by Joe Peters and owned by the Invermere Contracting Company.

Representing the Spirit of Learning in the Invermere High School float was Miss Catherine Lake.

Making more noise than Captain Kidds Crew ever did were a group of junior pirates from Windermere Beach in the Jolly Roger, a 14 ft. row boat in a trailer towed by a car.

George Annis of the Echo Poultry Farm drew a good round of laughs as he wheeled chickens in a wheel-barrow through-out the parade.

Best decorated bicycles- Linda Lloyd, Jimmy Gibb and Marion Erickson.

Best dressed Native Male- Alphonse Capilo, Alec Stevens and Lazarus Stevens.

Best dressed Native Woman- Mrs. Margaret Teneese, Mrs. Dominick Nicholas and Mrs. Mary Jimmy.

Best dressed children- Mildred Joseph, Florian Stanley and Linda Sam.

(Compiled by : Sandy McKay 2002)

Darlene Rotvold Crowned Fair Queen

(Columbia Valley Echo—Sept.2, 1955)

Highlighting opening ceremonies was the crowning of the Fall Fair Queen, pretty Darlene Rotvold of Canal Flat. Her pale green gown was a delightful foil for the crimson velvet robes worn by the Queen and her immediate predecessor. Runner up was Olga Hendrickson of Invermere. The other attractive Queen attendants were Betty Erikson, Spillimacheen, Minnie Kamikawaji, Athalmer, Dianne Bravener, Radium, Shirley Kelly, Windermere, and Donna Zwiers, Edgewater. Sally Kamakawaji was retiring Queen.

All memberships are now due. Please clip the form below to re-new your membership. Thank you.

**Windermere District Historical Society
Box 2315 Invermere, B.C. V0A1K0
Telephone— 250-342-6892**

NAME-.....

ADDRESS-.....

TELEPHONE-.....

DATE-.....

Museum Annual Membership- \$20.00

I would like to make a gift to the museum:

\$25.00 _____
\$50.00 _____ **\$100.00** _____ **Other-**

Income tax receipts will be issued. Thank you.

Do you wish to be phoned for:

Business Meetings- Y N
General Meetings- Y N