

# VALLEY HISTORY

## AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 FEBRUARY 2007



WILLIAM



JACK

### TAYNTON FAMILY

John Hopkins Griffiths “ Jack” Taynton was born at Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire, England and came to Canada with his parents and brother Billy in the spring of 1882. Jack arrived in Winnipeg and worked at his trade— plastering and bricklaying until December when he departed for Moose Jaw.

During 1883 and part of 1884 he worked on the railway as a brakeman. In the summer of 1884 he accompanied Fred Barnes ( who later became prominent in mining circles of B.C. ) and headed north and west and , crossing the Rocky Mountains, followed the Canoe River and the Columbia to the railway construction camps in the Selkirks. He remained there until late in the fall then started south via the Crow’s Nest Pass to take part in the Riel Rebellion. When part way through the Pass, he learned the rebellion was over. When returning to the railway camps, he met Bert Low and Manuel Dainard who had discovered gold in the canyon of Toby Creek. Jack Taynton spent the summer of 1885 with them panning gold .

He spent the winters of 1885 and ’86

with Bill Hardy on Columbia Lake. He took up the Thunder Hill Ranch in the spring of 1886. ( Now owned by the McKersie Family— 2007 ) During the summer of 1886 he looked after the store and ranch of Captain F.P. Armstrong located on the east side of Columbia Lake. Armstrong was operating boats on the lake and made his ranch one of the ports of call.

Jack was joined by his brother Billy in 1887 and they homesteaded the Thunder Hill Ranch which they called “ Tayntons Hillahee.” During 1887 and 1888 they packed supplies for James Brady and the Royal North West Mounted Police and also for contractors on the Baillie-Grohman Canal. In 1889 they operated a pack train of 6 oxen and 6 horses carrying supplies south from where they were dropped by Capt. Armstrong’s boats to Wildhorse Creek and to Captain Baker who had bought out Galbraith’s store on St. Joseph’s Prairie. ( Now Cranbrook )

They went to Sinclair ( Radium ) in the fall of 1889 with Charlie Lewis ( the discoverer of coal in the Crow’s Nest Pass.) They took up the East Firlands Ranch . He later sold the ranch to Horace Cannon. In the spring of 1890 the two brothers and Jack’s family moved to Brisco and built a house on the island there for Charlie Lewis.

Later in the same year they moved to Golden and helped build the bridge over the Kicking Horse River. In 1891 they helped build the Golden smelter. In 1892 Jack and his family moved to Pilot Bay, near Nelson and assisted with the construction of the smelter there. From there he went to Kaslo until Christmas of 1899 when he returned to

Windermere. The brothers leased the Galbraith Ranch which is now part of the present town site of Windermere.

In 1902 Jack moved to Canterbury ( Invermere ) and built his home on the lakeshore and started a brick and lime yard there.

Billy Taynton also had a home built there.

Jack was married to Lydia Ellen Masters in Manitoba and their only son, born in 1889 was the first white child to be born in the Windermere Mining Division. They named him William Sinclair Taynton.

In 1899, at Fort Steele, Billy, ( or William Walter, ) married Edith Annie Wilks, who he had known since childhood. Gilbert Griffiths Taynton was born the following year.( Gilbert and his wife Ethel had a son Griffiths and a daughter, Avryol. ( Avy )

Billy Taynton recalled Christmases of those early years in the Valley. The group of settlers would visit from settlement to settlement-Baptiste Morigeau's, Sam Brewer's, Ed Johnston's and on. The visit would last a day or two at each place, wining ,dining and dancing until the refreshments ran out or the spirit moved them on. These trips were done by horse and sleigh in winter and the lake was used as a road.

He remembered trips from Cranbrook to Invermere in the early days of motoring that took 12 hours. There would be numerous stops to build up mud holes with brush so the car could get through. Bill Taynton, in the early days, was a prospector, rancher and hotel keeper. He was one of the original finders of the Mineral King Mine. Later he was foreman for the Windermere Experimental Farm, both in Windermere and Invermere and did this until his retirement. He was a kind, gentle man and had a great love for people, music and flowers. His flower beds were exceptional as was his singing voice.

The area on the lake where the brothers lived was known as " Tayntons Bay" ( Kins-

man Beach area ) Also named after the Taynton brothers is Taynton Mountain and Taynton Creek. ( Near Panorama Resort )

Jack was involved with masonry work in the valley until his death in 1954 at the age of 95. Billy died in 1968 at the age of 98.

Surviving members of Billy Taynton's family include Avryol ( Avy) Nicholson, ( granddaughter) of Invermere and her brother Griffiths Taynton, ( grandson) of Kamloops. Billy Taynton's great grandchildren are Dean Nicholson of Cranbrook, B. C. , Dale Nicholson of Wilmer, B.C., Kelci Reid of Kamloops and Nancy Stocker of Kelowna. There are six surviving great-great grandchildren.

Some of the brick-making equipment is at the museum. It is in need of a frame to show how the equipment worked. If you are interested in such a project, please be in touch with museum staff.

( from an interview with W.H.Cleland )

Jaryl McIsaac Files

And from the Avryol Nicholson Files

### Bottle, Document found in Building

( from the Lake Windermere Valley Echo.  
Aug.23,1973)

One of the few remaining old time buildings left in Invermere was felled by wreckers hammers last week.

The stucco covered building on the east side of Bruce Avenue adjacent to the Curtis Building, was erected by the late B.G. Hamilton in 1925 and served as his real estate and insurance office until his death.

Much of the history of the valley until the late 1930's was recorded by Mr. Hamilton in this building as he was meticulous about recording historical detail and wrote profusely about the Valley.

During the wrecking procedure a bottle was found encased in a hollow tile and within the bottle was the following document:

**TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME:**

hollow tile stucco covered one story building of which this forms a part was originally built on Lot Three, Block Y in the town-site of Invermere B.C. Plan number 1013.

That the owner of said lot at the time of erection the building was Anna Maud Mary Hamilton, wife of Basil George Hamilton of the said town-site of Invermere.

That the foundation of concrete and the piers were well and truly laid by John Hopkins Griffiths Taynton, an Englishman by birth. Assisted by his son William Sinclair Taynton and Percy G. Docking, a veteran of several of the Empire's wars, an Englishman of Bath.

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### **Mabel Barbour**

Mabel was born in North Dakota in 1908. In 1911 she moved to Golden with her parents, the McLaughlin's. Mabel came to Windermere in 1926 to work at the Windermere Hotel. There she met James Albert Barbour known as Bert. Bert was the son of Jack and Marguerite Barbour who homesteaded on Toby Creek in 1900 close to Barbour's Rock. They had 4 boys: Ed, Bert, Harry and George. The Barbour children attended the Sparkling Creek School on the Benches. Bert and Mabel had a family of six- Dorothy, Harold, Annie, Ellen, Edna and Earl.

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### **Columbia Valley Times ( March 15, 1915 )**

“ The Aladdin mantle lamp is one of the greatest and most practical inventions of the age. It is the highest achievement of science in connection with artificial lighting. It has solved the lighting problem for rural homes, giving them a brilliant white light superior to the gas or electricity used in big cities. A light that makes evenings reading, writing or sewing a pleasure. It's as far ahead of the ordinary oil lamp as the ordinary lamp is

ahead of the candles used by our forefathers. These can be seen in the Athalmer Pool room. V. Houghton, Athalmer, is the sole agent for the district.”

### **Early Canal Flat Businesses**

**1889-** A small settlement called “ Grohman” sprang up around the sawmill built by William Adolph Baillie-Grohman to provide timbers to build the locks to connect the Columbia River to the Kootenay River.

Grohman built a store with a post office and the Grohman Hotel where he lived and entertained many distinguished guests. He provided bunk houses and tents for the work force. Mr. and Mrs. Grohman returned to England in 1893. The lock was destroyed and there was little activity in Grohman for many years.

**1927-28-** Don Roberts built a general store and was the first postmaster in Canal Flat.

**1928-29-** Frank Nemrava and Joe Pietrosky Sr. built a hotel on the east side of Main St. and served meals. After a short time they turned the building into a Meat Market. It burned down the winter of 1931.

**1928-** A general store was built by Ben Weston. It burned down in 1930. Two more stores were built in 1928 by Albin Johnson and Paul Nodgren.

**1929-** A popular General Store was built by Mrs. Harrison from Yahk and her nephew Archie McLeod. They operated this store for many years. They sold out.

**1950-** Mr. Simpson owned the Harrison store at this time. He sold to Percy Lake who operated it until 1956. Shortly after, it was demolished.

**1956-** A grocery store operated by J. Doherty sold to Charles Churchill who ran the Canal Flat Mercantile.

**1959-** J.A. Doherty owned J&E Dry

## Two old timers in lively mix-up

“ Just to illustrate,” said Mr. Ericson, “ the pride these old-timers ( and I am proud if I am called one) , have in their age, endurance and long resistance, I recall a funny scene between old Sam Brewer and Ed Johnston some years ago. Ed heard somehow that Sam was dying and , of course, hell and high water would not prevent his going to his bedside. Basil Hamilton and myself went along , for we too loved Sam. When we got there, there was old Sam and his boy pulling a crosscut through a mighty log. Sam’s stroke was fuller and freer than the lad’s.

“ Darn your old hide ,” said Ed. “We heard you were ready to croak and came over here to hold your hand and find you pullin’ a saw when you ought to be in bed.”

“ Me dying ? ” said Sam, giving Ed’s patriarchal chest warmer ( beard ) a nasty tug. “ Does this feel like I’m dying ? And giving Johnston a jab in the ribs, he asked “ Can you hold your breath after that ? ”

Johnston did and the two old gladiators shook hands after a mix-up that made me the umpire, doubtful whether to laugh or cry.

Arm in arm, we three old men ( me the baby ) had our picture taken but with the wind blowing , Ed’s big beard blew across the group and ruined the picture for which I would have given any money as it could never be taken again.

( Museum Files )

## Museum Update

### The 2007 Executive is :

**President-** Marg Christensen

**Vice-President-** Eileen Fiell

**Secretary-** Joan George

**Treasurer-** Dot Smith

**Directors-** Joy Bond, Audrey Mantyka, Sandy McKay, Anne Keely and Louise Frame. Arnor Larson continues to be our photographer , Jaryl McIsaac is our archivist and Dorothy Blunden our curator.

Thank-you to all those members that have renewed their membership and to all those for their generous donations.

Our summer theme will be “ David Thompson ” as it is the David Thompson bicentennial. Dorothy Blunden is organizing a David Thompson Fair in co-operation with the local schools.

Our ongoing projects are the completion of the wagon shed, The Lord’s cabin and the Doll case. In the spring the Notary Building will be painted. It looks like a busy year.

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## Nemrava’s Meats & Groceries

**Frank Nemrava, Prop.**

**Canal Flats, B.C.**

**Fresh meats—sporting goods  
Eleven years service to the Residents of Canal Flats.**

( compiled by Sandy McKay )