

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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



THE LAKES

Joseph, Margaret and Percival 1893

Joseph John Lake was born at Hereford, England, in 1856 and was brought to Canada as an infant. His parents settled at Kingston, Ont. His father was a locomotive engineer. Joe started to earn his own living at age 15. He went to Winnipeg in 1873 and some years later with oxen and a string of his own Red River carts, he came across the plains to the present site of Edmonton. Here he took up land then sold out and returned to Winnipeg at the time of the Riel Rebellion. He married Margaret Sutherland of Kildonan Manitoba.

Margaret was born in Kildonan, near the site of the battle of Seven Oaks, just at the northern outskirts of the present city of Winnipeg. She was a descendent of the good old highland settlers brought to that country by the Earl of Selkirk back in the years 1812-1814.

It was on a summer day in August 1883 when she married Joseph Lake. In the way that would now smack of romance, Mr. Lake and his bride started from Fort Garry on their long trek to Edmonton, with ten Red River carts drawn by special oxen. From that time on Mrs. Lake was a constant companion of her husband first during his life in Edmonton, then as a sub-contractor on the Macleod to Edmonton branches of the C.P.R. Mr. and Mrs. Lake lived for a long time in Golden where he was one of the pioneer merchants. In 1898 they came to reside in Windermere where Joe was a manager of a general store. Five years later he operated a store at the Salmon Beds, now Athalmer, under the name of Lake and Co. Owing to the prevailing mining boom, buildings were at a premium and the store opened in a large tent.

Mr. Lake was actively interested in several mining properties in the district. In 1900 he acquired the Brady Creek Ranch, south of Invermere, and when he later discontinued his store, they lived entirely at the ranch. Joseph and Margaret had one son, Percival.

Percy was born in Winnipeg in 1890 and came to Golden with his parents in 1893. He began driving a stagecoach at age 15 and became well know in the Valley for his skills with horses. Mainly being a jockey. In 1911 he married Miss Linnie Newell from Wisconsin. They had 5 children all born in Invermere:

Roy- 1912
Ellen- 1914
Myrtle- 1916
Gordon- 1919
Kelvin- 1924

**GET YOUR
SUPPLIES
AT
LAKE & SON
ATHALMER, B.C.**

FRESH SUPPLY OF GROCERIES
EGGS, HAMS AND BACON, FRESH BISCUITS
AND CANDIES, APPLES AND ORANGES, ALSO
COAL OIL
ALL KINDS OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

BEDS , MATTRESSES AND FURNITURE

**LAKE & SON
ATHALMER, B.C. 1905**

Museum Files - October 18, 1929

“ A splendid sample of the excellent quality of Creston Valley fruit is on display at the Invermere Hardware Store. This is a box of McIntosh Red apples of the extra fancy grade. It's a donation to the ladies' aid of Trinity United Church, Invermere and is to be raffled in aid of the organ fund. This timely donation is from C.F. Hayes of Creston, who it will be recalled, was here about the middle of September on his official visit to the Masonic Lodge and who takes this practical way of showing his appreciation of the hospitality extended him during a 3 day stay.

Swansea

Once Windermere Mountain

In 1891, the mountain now known as Swansea was known as Windermere Mountain. During that year, the Windermere Mountain Trail was constructed from the Windermere Prairie to the summit of Windermere Mountain to reach the copper mines of Messrs. Brown, McVittie and Brewer. During that year some fifty tons of copper

ore were packed down over that new trail with pack horses which carried ordinary pack loads.

In 1879, the Swansea claims were owned by Messrs. S. Brewer, W. Abel, Joe Lake, and G.S. Carter. Mr. S. Brewer held a two-fifth interest while Messrs. A Abel, Lake and Carter each held a fifth interest.

On the 6th of October 1898, Mr. Brewer, W. Abel, Joe Lake and George Carter , each holding a free miners certificate, applied to the mining recorders office for a certificate of improvements for the purpose of obtaining a crown grant on their claims. During October, a large force of men were employed in developing the property under the management of Mr. Mulholland of Rossland. At that time a tunnel had already been driven in a distance of 140 ft. and management was in the process of sinking a shaft in the ledge which had a reported width of four to six feet.

In December 1898, Mr. W.B. Abel was appointed as President of the miner's association of Windermere assisted by Mr. O. A. Brown as secretary. Mr. W.B. Abel and Peter McIvor also owned and operated a copper claim below the Swansea properties which was known as the Reindeer. Mr. R. W. Gregor had a copper claim north of the Swansea properties. Mr. Abel and Mr. McIvor made a deal with Mr. H. E. Neave, for the Reindeer property. Mr. Abel also had a copper sulphide property on Dutch Creek which he called Dutchy.

Museum Files

Did you know that St. John Harmsworth of England owned the Radium Hot Springs about 1914? He began the first development of the pools. His family were of the Perrier Water fame.

“LOCOED”

This is a letter from an old-timer about his experiences at the Radium pool before the turn of the century.

**To the Manager of Radium Hot Springs.
Ottawa, November 18, 1952.**

I have just received a newspaper clipping reporting the number of persons utilizing the two Govt. owned hotels at Radium Hot Springs and note that the conditions at the Springs are a far cry from when I used to bathe in them in 1895.

The drunks from the small towns south used to utilize the hot springs where they could sober up, and I might say it worked too. For your information I might tell you that smokers have no desire to smoke after staying and bathing in the springs for a few days.

One poor devil came with a friend and failed to bring whiskey to sober up on, resulting in him getting “Locoed” and threatening the life of his partner who ran down to the McKay Ranch to tell us. I jumped on my horse and went to the springs where I tied up in some brush and cautiously crossed the log bridge and peeped around the log house only to see feet sticking out. I moved quickly and seized the rifle next to him. He looked up to me and called me by name, but I did not know him. He said he shot himself.

In a short time others came and we sent for a Doctor and he found that the bullet went through his lung. I made a stretcher out of poles and a blanket and we carried him to the road and then to the hospital where he lived a couple of weeks.

Bathing at the Springs at that time we were assured of privacy for very few people went there. There is another Hot Spring about 12 miles south, but very small.

I remain, Yours Truly
A. Wortey.

MARIA MORIGEAU

Maria Mathias was born on the Columbia Lake Reserve in 1887. She attended the St. Eugene Mission School near Cranbrook until 1901. She was later married in the little chapel on the Mission to Edward Stanley. Mr. Stanley died in Invermere in the 1920's. Of their seven children, only four of them are alive today, (1960): Mary (Mrs. Stewart Jimmy), Lucy (Mrs. Birdstone), Mary Justine (Mrs. Camille Joseph) and Leonard Stanley. Two of her grandchildren are Violet Birdstone and Mildred Joseph who attend David Thompson High School in Invermere.

In 1930 Mrs. Stanley married Martin Morigeau, a well known local farmer and cougar hunter.

Both of Mrs. Morigeau's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mathias Augustine, were born in the Columbia Valley. She remembers her father used to walk from this Valley to Rocky Mountain House. She said her father always wore his hair in braids until the day he died. She knows little of her mother's people. Her mother's name was Monica Simon.

Mrs. Morigeau could remember seeing little children tied behind their mothers on the saddle when they were very tiny and often the mother had another smaller child on the saddle in front of her. The children rode alone as soon as they were old enough. Many things she was able to recall clearly. She said her life was good.

(Valley Echo- March 1960)(Museum Files)

Invermere Hotel– 1900

The Hotel was originally known as the Canterbury Hotel and was built by Hugh Gordon. This Hotel operated only two years then closed. The Canterbury Town site Co. had gone bankrupt and the village remained almost uninhabited.

In 1908, the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruitland's Ltd. purchased the property which had belonged to the Canterbury Town site Co. and the purchase included the hotel.

R.R. Bruce leased the hotel in 1910 and with George Starke as manager, they proceeded to enlarge and modernize the hotel. The plan was to turn it into a ' first class' hotel to accommodate the influx of new settlers to the Valley and the anticipated tourists as the valley was opened up.

For many years the hotel was the focal point of the community and the dining room was well patronized by the local people.

The C.V.I. Owned the hotel for many years with many managers operating the business. The hotel burned in the summer of 1973.

The Caledonian Society

In 1899 the first Caledonian Society was formed in the Valley by R.R. Bruce who was residing in Wilmer. In 1903 Alex Ritchie was a resident also. In 1912 there was an influx of settlers. The Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruitland's brought many Scottish and British families who transplanted their culture to the Valley. In 1914, Mr. Arthur Newton had agreed to look after the land belonging to Captain and Mrs. Phillips when they returned to England for World War 1. The Newtons eventually bought the property. Mr. Newton also looked after the Houlgrave Ranch. At one of the St. Andrew's Night celebrations, Mr. Newton decided to teach Scottish Dancing to the District children.

In 1915 the Caledonian Society celebrated St. Andrew's night in November and Robbie Burns night in January with dinner, singing and dancing. The first celebration was held upstairs in the building that housed Mrs. E.M. Taylor's Store in Wilmer. (Later the Kirsch residence).

In the 1920's, the celebrations were held in the large dining room at the Invermere Hotel. Mr. R.R. Bruce, for years, bought 2 Haggis from James-Inglis & Reid in Vancouver. Mr. W. Weir always addressed the Haggis which was piped in by James McNaughton Scott, in full Highland Dress. Most of the men present wore Highland Dress. Mr. Scott also played the pipes for the Grand March that opened the dancing. The Grand March was led by Mr. A. Newton. Music for the dancing was provided by Ed Tunnacliffe, Pat Kelly and Bill Armstrong all playing violins. In later years, the piano or gramophone provided the music.

The Caledonian nights were held every year until 1970. The last one was held at Fairmont. The piper that night was James McNaughton Scott's great-grandson, Raymond Kimm, in full Highland Dress and playing the family bagpipes. Music for singing was provided by W. Weir's granddaughter, Nancy Weir. Address to the Haggis was given by Scotty Falconer. Music was played by Jean Jacques. The dances were very energetically performed– spurred on by the Scottish ' whoops'.

For many years a group would get together to practice the dances. These were great nights– held sometimes at Ian and Lucy Weir's or at Bud Clelands.

(Museum Files)

(Compiled by—Sandy McKay)