

# VALLEY HISTORY

## AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 250-342-9769 August 2013



### GORDON AND LILLIAN RAD

Gordon and Lillian Rad, in 1946, bought property from Mr. and Mrs. Norman Marples at Lake Lillian and moved out to Invermere without ever seeing the property before their arrival. With sons, Nolan and Darryl, they arrived at the Athalmer Station at midnight August 22, 1946.

Vancouver to Golden was a long journey then and the trip from Golden to Invermere took 12 hours! The passenger car had wicker seats and coal-oil lights. Everything happened on that trip..... except the fact that the 'James Boys' didn't rob it!

The next day, after staying with the Marples in town, Norm took us and what little gear we had, up to Lake Lillian.... That was another experience! The road from Toby Creek Bridge to the lake was basically 'one-way'. Especially the Toby Hill. If you met someone on the hill, the vehicle going up had to back down till he

found a wide spot to pull over for passing! Norman Marples' car was a Model A touring car and it walked right up that hill in high gear.... A real feat in those days!

Gordon, Lillian and the boys soon made a small fishing camp at the lake. We had a small log cabin and six wooden row boats. Our house was great; wood heat, kerosene lamps and we pumped water to the house from the spring using a hand pump. Gordon wasn't long improving on all these things as he was a very ingenious man in his own right.

Our first two weeks in the house was a real camping trip! We had a trunk with us that had a few blankets, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, and a few clothes. Lillian cooked in the fireplace and we all slept on the front room floor. Our furniture and everything else we owned arrived two weeks later! For an eleven year old city kid this was heaven, or at least the next best place. Everything in the world a person could want. Fresh air, good water, hunting, fishing, skating, skiing, horse riding and trapping!

The boys attended school and Gordon applied for and received a small hunting and trapping area. Darryl and Nolan trapped all of their younger years. Gordon, being of Norwegian descent, built our boats for fishing, skis for skiing, and snowshoes for walking and for trapping. Nolan says he used these homemade skis and snowshoes until he was 18 years old.

Now.... Building a pair of skis at home is a story in its own.... From the steaming of the tips, to the centre rise to the long thong harness.

One time , when we were young, Darryl and I decided to set up our own trap line across Lake Lillian from our house for muskrats. The line had to be checked every day ! One morning we observed 7 bull moose in the bay nibbling on the poplar trees. The trap line had to be checked ! Off we went. Dad was our protector and teacher. Everything had to be done properly. So Dad came out with his gun to protect us should one of those huge moose make a move in our direction ! We had a peaceful, good morning.

Some of the happiest days of my life were spent on the trap line where you can learn something new every day. Knowledge of wildlife, the natural balance of nature, the recreational beauty, and the enjoyment of being together as a family.

Gordon was a painter by trade . Guiding and trapping came second. Gordon and Lillian retired and moved to Cranbrook. They had many interests. Gordon died in 1999 and Lillian came back to Invermere to be close to Nolan and his family. Lillian died in 2002. Gordon and Lillian were married for 68 years.

( by Nolan Rad 2002 )

(Photo courtesy of Darla Rad Spiry)

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**Calgary Daily Herald  
August 9th ,1911  
Windermere  
The Land of Promise  
British Columbia's last great undeveloped  
Fruit District  
Lake Windermere  
The most advantageously situated summer resort for Calgary's population. Motor boating, sailing, fishing, hunting, and unrestricted playgrounds. The Windermere Town site is now on the market....  
New York, Toronto, Montreal and other eastern capital is investing.**

**This is your chance: Investigate**

## **Steamboat Firm Once Issued own Postage**

It is probably not generally known that a local postage stamp was issued by a steamboat company in British Columbia some 50 years ago and was used for the conveyance of mail.

Of these stamps, some 10,000 of which were said to have been printed, only two or three are known to be in existence today.

The company, known as the "Upper Columbia Tramway and Navigation Company Ltd.", was incorporated in 1891. It operated between Golden, on the CPR main line, and at the confluence of the Columbia and Kicking Horse Rivers, and Fort Steele, on the Kootenay River, and sometimes on to Jennings, Montana.

The company operated steamboats carrying freight and passengers as far back as 1887. For some time it held the contract for conveyance of mails between Golden and Fort Steele. This contract terminated in 1897 and mail was carried supposedly by the stagecoaches.

But the country was sparsely settled, and the few settlers and prospectors often found the stage service for mail did not suit their convenience. Many continued to expect the officers and crews of the steamboats to post letters for them. As there were no post offices where postage stamps could be purchased, very rarely did these letters bear stamps when they were handed to the purser of captain for posting. So that in addition to looking after the mail, the officers were obliged to pay the postage out of their own pockets.

To overcome this, the local postage stamp was printed and sold to residents for letters posted on the boat. Face value of the stamp was five cents, which included the cost of the Federal government postage when the letter reached a post office. The steamboat stamp was attached to the letter and the gov-

ernment stamp was later placed beside it.

The official and much faster stagecoach route carried mail for three cents, so presumably the idea of the company stamp was to discourage use of the unofficial mail route.

When the matter came to the attention of the Federal government the company was notified that the privilege of issuing postage stamps was one enjoyed solely by Her Majesty's government. The sale of the local stamp came to an abrupt end.

As far as is known only one envelope bearing the steamboat stamp is in existence. This also bears the Queen Victoria stamp with the Golden cancellation mark dated August 22, 1899. Incidentally, the Queen Victoria stamp is a red three-cent stamp reduced to two-cent value.

For many years the late Charlie Parsons, postmaster at Golden, possessed a number of the original issue. Some years ago these were all destroyed by fire.

Pressure from the Windermere District Board of Trade to obtain mail services daily both north and south through the Columbia Valley has born fruit with the co-operation of Murray L. McFarlane, MP for Kootenay East.

Announcement was made at the November meeting of the Trade Board that service would be stepped up early in December to provide daily service in both directions. This has been requested for a long time by valley businesses and will prove a valuable service to the local hospital when blood is required for emergence cases.

In February 1913, the Windermere District Board of Trade reported at the annual meeting that " a marked improvement has been made in our mail service between here and Golden. The dominion government has granted our often repeated request that a semi-weekly mail service be established for the winter. Now is the time to get busy and

ask for the usual summer privilege of having additional mail brought by boat. "

The improvement mentioned was in force October 14, 1912.

Mail was carried by mail stage. In 1938 mail service was inaugurated daily ( except Sundays ) between Golden and Cranbrook with trips from Cranbrook to Golden on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from Golden to Cranbrook Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. This service was operated by Reginald Bavin of Athalmer until 1941 when he sold out to Jack Shibley of Cranbrook who has had the contract since. It continued as a combined mail-freight service until 1955 when it became a closed mail contract.

( Winn Weir Files )

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## **Hiram Wesley Tegart**

This old-timer of the Brisco area was better known as Buster Tegart. Our children called him "Uncle Buckeye". He was born on the Alpine Ranch near Windermere on May 4th, 1908. He was a trapper, guide, bronc buster and story teller.

Around 1933, Buster was the first person to arrange a stampede at Brisco using Morrison Flats for the arena area. ( Siegfried Trescher now has this area in hay fields). Many Indians came from Morley Alberta to participate in it as well as our local Indians.

Buster was a fair bronc rider as well. From 1929 to 1931 he won money at the Calgary Stampede. Through the years he packed for Kennecott Copper Mining in Northern B.C. and in the Slocan area . Buster had a trap line on Francis Creek and one on the Ranch where he lived across the river at Brisco. These kept him busy during the winter months as well as making a fair living, as fur was at that time a good price.

In 1978, Buster was interviewed on the film " The Columbia. Voices of the river". The film was a production of KCTS Seattle,

and was made possible in part by a grant from the Washington Commission for Humanities. The film used no narration. It depended on the words of the people.  
 ( Quote) “ Buster Tegart has lived along the Columbia most of his life and can remember in 1927 when the salmon in the river were so thick you could not see the bottom of the creeks.” He thinks the Columbia should be left as it is. Buster married Myra Hanson and they raised five boys. Howard, Jimmy, Norman, John and Peter.  
 Buster passed away on the old home ranch in 1980 where he had spent so many years of his life .

( By Doreen Tegart )

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### **Mining in the Findlay Creek Area**

( By Harry Richardson )

Near the end of April 1888, the stern-wheeler, Marion, arrived at Sam’s Landing at the head of Lake Windermere on the west side as she completed her second trip up the Columbia river from Golden. A number of passengers, plus freight and mail were unloaded at this point. Two of the passengers arriving on that trip included my father, H.B. Richardson and his chum, Jack Barton, who had just arrived from the Isle of Wight to work for Lieut. Thomas B.H.Cochrane on the Findlay Creek placer operations.  
 From Sam’s Landing the passengers, freight and mail were carried by stagecoach to the placer operations on Findlay Creek. Father and his companion walked most of the way over that early day stage road. Thunder Hill Ranch was in operation at that time and Jack Taynton, one of the Columbia Valley’s earliest pioneers was working there at that time. On this trip from Sam’s Landing to Findlay Creek the two newly arrived English men had their first experience with the Columbia river mosquitoes which Father reported were in abundance along this area and which they did not enjoy. The stage and passengers arrived at the Findlay Creek campsite late in

the evening.

Upon arriving at the campsite, Father presented his letter of introduction to the camp foreman, an old Californian by the name of Redshaw and reported for work the next morning. There were eight men working at the mine site at that time, five in the mine, the foreman, a teamster and a man by the name of Niece who operated the little water powered sawmill.

Father’s first job was working in the nearby forest, cutting logs for the water powered sawmill. They would cut logs for one day as the teamster hauled them into the mill site. Next day they would operate the sawmill, cutting the logs into lumber as required for the construction at the time. Fathers’ job was to build sluice boxes as required and flumes for the water ditch, which brought the water to the hydraulic workings. A number of Chinese took care of the ditch, which carried the water into the area.

During that summer, while working at Findlay Creek, Father, his chum and a number of others walked down to see what was taking place at Canal Flat as many men and horses struggled to construct the Canal to join the Kootenay River into the Upper Columbia Lake. Baillie-Grohaman, the constructor of the Canal, returned their visit to Findlay Creek.

The Chinese living and working on Findlay Creek prior to 1886 built very substantial living quarters and experienced very tough times during that period.

**Patrick Findlay**– About the fall of 1863, he discovered gold on Findlay Creek and after spending the next winter in Montana, he returned to B.C. and started the big gold excitement and the creek was named after him. He was a Metis and was born somewhere in the N.W.T.( now Alberta ) and was an employee of the Hudson Bay Co. as a hunter. He had a large family in Montana on the Flathead Reservation.

( compiled by Sandy McKay )