

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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Dorothy Blake Cameron
(on left) Spring 1933

The years speed by. As we get older they seem to speed faster. Looking back we realize the span covered.

I first saw this week's 'Neighbour' when she was a little girl of six or seven. With her family she moved across the way and she wore a bright red cape-coat and hat. "Little Red riding Hood" I used to call her, watching the independent swing of her shoulders and the determined little tilt of her head.

I watched her through her school days showing the same independence and the same determination; the youngest of a family of four children, who always bore her share of family chores and responsibilities.

There was no more respected family in the village than the Blakes. They were regular church-goers. Mrs. Blake taught Sunday School and belonged to the Church Aid and the hospital aid and Mr. Blake showed a genuine interest in community affairs, and all the children led routine busy lives with school, church, friends and finally jobs and marriage. Just a normal family story, but is there anything finer, more heart-warming, more reassuring in these chaotic days than a normal happy family?

So Dorothy's Easter Sunday wedding in

1947 was just part of the pattern. She and Don Cameron met in the pool at Radium and became close friends and no one was surprised and everyone was pleased when they started their own happy family unit.

That unit now consists of Charles, 9; Sandra, 7; and Gwen, 5. While the children were small, Dorothy's community interests were of necessity close to home. She started the Edgewater Hospital Aid and the first meeting was held in her home. The organization has been a thriving group which has contributed generously to the local hospital in addition to building and furnishing the Edgewater Clinic.

Now Dorothy's chief project outside of her family, which is the inner circle, is the Edgewater Credit Union.

It might not be exaggerating to say that because of her determination the Edgewater Credit Union has forged ahead fed by her enthusiasm which inspired others to the same indefatigable effort.

The union now has 500 members. A proud record for such a young group. The youngest member was enrolled when a few days old and there are several past 80. The group has helped people 420 times with loans, including endowment insurance, amounting to \$192,500. These included loans to build homes, buy cars, pay medical bills and consolidate debts. Credit Union accounts are all government inspected.

The area covered includes Brisco and Radium and children from these points also contribute to the Junior Credit Union Savings Plan.

Dorothy laughingly says her children have absorbed Credit Union saving along with their orange juice and cod-liver oil. They save first and spend later, she explained. She praised the efforts of Edgewater school teachers who have co-operated in the school children's savings plan.

Nourishing the Edgewater Credit Union has been less difficult for Dorothy than it would be for some of us. After she graduated from High School she worked in the Imperial Bank at Invermere for three and one-half years. The training received there has been valuable.

Dorothy doesn't just work for the Credit Union. She believes in the Credit Union. That is the secret of her success with it.

I remarked on the independence of her children as they scurried around getting ready for a treat. They were going to Invermere to see "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." They washed, changed their clothes and were into their outdoor things in record time.

"It's the Credit Union again," Dorothy explained, "I just don't have time to wait on them since I have been treasurer. They have learned to be independent."

I looked again at this compact family unit. There is a heartening quality about it. These children have a wonderful start in life. I could go on. They are lucky to have these particular parents. Edgewater is lucky to have these particular citizens.

(Winn Weir Files)

In November 1932 we, the Blakes – Alex and Mary, Jean, Jack, Lillian and Dorothy arrived in Invermere and rented the Experimental Farm house. I was 7 years old and that huge house complete with a wide, smooth stair bannister– was such fun ! There was even a bathroom upstairs !!

We played in the hay loft in the old barn until Mother caught us ! The kitchen had (as I recall with child's eyes) a big room for the maid to bake and prepare meals. There was a wood stove in the kitchen. In the living room was a huge fireplace.

Memories..... Memories.....

Dorothy Cameron

Photo: "Off to Church"
Dorothy, Lillian, Jack, Jean Cameron
1933

History of Washing Machines

1797– The scrub board was invented

1851– First washing machine in a drum. Hand powered.

1858– Rotary Washing Machine. (Invented by Hamilton Smith) Hand-powered.

1874– William Blackstone presented his wife with a machine that removed and washed away dirt from the clothes. (Hand powered)

1908– First electric-powered machine. Invented by Alva J. Fisher. (galvanized tub)

1911– Whirlpool Corporation founded and produced an electric motor driven wringer washer.

Mt. Sally Serena

(from a letter from T. Starbird, March 14, 1913.)

" It was in the year 1901 that I was engaged in building Horsethief Wagon Road. In July or August I was visited by Hon. W.C. Wells, Minister of Public Works and E.J.Scovil, government representative at Wilmer. We took lunch at the roadside where Seven Mile Creek crosses the road. Mrs. Farnham, wife of Paulding Farnham of New York who was one of the owners of the Ptarmigan Mine, a most attractive woman was one of the party. As a mark of honour, the Hon. W.C. Wells told Mrs. Farnham in an offhand manner that he would have named after her any physical feature which she might select. He asked her the name by which she had been known to her school-mates and she said it was "Sally the Serene". Sally being her Christian name and serene she said she thought had been added on because she was proud. "Very well," said Mr. Wells jokingly, "Make your selection and as the representative of government I will do my best to make the name stick." Mrs. Farnham then made as her selection the mountain on the east side of Horsethief Creek. It was at this junction that we turned off McDonald Creek to reach the Ptarmigan Mine and she was quite familiar with the sight of it. Sure enough, Mr. Wells made his promise stick and in due time the name Mt. Sally Serena appeared on the maps of the district."

Columbia Valley Times **November 31, 1912**

“A well attended regular meeting of the Farmers Institute was held on Thursday afternoon at 3 o’clock in Frank Richardson’s dining room. S. Brewer J.P., vice-president presiding. Among those present were Capt. and Mrs. Phillips, Messrs. Alex Ritchie, Frank Richardson, C.D. Ellis, G.C.H. Coleman, Charles Johnston, J. Lake, E. Tunnacliffe, G.F. Stalker, H.H. Peters, B.G. Hamilton, J.N. Dunn, Walter Stoddart, A.G. Cuthbert, Alfred Mitchell and T.W. Turner.

January 25, 1913

Second Annual Wilmer Bonspiel

“In replying to the toast to the Golden visitors, Charles A. Warren caused great amusement by his reference to the ‘difficulties and hardships of the way’ incurred in getting to Wilmer. The first hardship, he said was 27 below; the second was two bottles of Scotch, and the third was two more bottles of Scotch. The last and greatest of all was two more bottles of Scotch. But in spite of these hardships, he would certainly come again next year.”

January 11, 1929

“ The transformation commenced last week of one more of the ancient landmarks of the district when under the direction of James W. Morland men razed the large log building situated on Laurier Avenue, Athalmer, preparatory to its removal and re-erection as a dwelling on Invermere Heights. For a number of years the building has remained unoccupied, its last use being that of a dwelling and store by Mr. and Mrs. Corby. It was possibly the second commercial structure ever erected in Athalmer having been put up in the early part of 1899 by Frank Dargis as the Athalmer Hotel. Later it was acquired by Charlie Cartwright. It was the scene of much jollity in its day.”

Mrs. F.B. Young

My husband, Major Young, came out from England a month before I came with the three children. We had bought land on the C.V.I. settlement, four miles west of Invermere. The house was to have been ready when I arrived, but owing to a shortage of carpenters it was only just started. The carpenters went from one house to another doing a bit for each !

We arrived in April, and finally got into the house in November. All that first summer of 1912 we lived in our barn, camp style. We let the late Mr.N.M. Marples have the horse box stall for a room for some weeks, while his house was being built ! All the settlers, twenty families up here on the Benches, were waiting for their homes to be built. Capt. and Mrs. Phillips had the rain pouring in on them one night while in bed, I remember.

Life was hard but everyone was very kind. I had never done much cooking and a cook from a work camp nearby showed me how to make bread. We bought a pair of horses and went everywhere in a democrat or cutter. No cars in those days except one that Mr. Bruce owned, which he kindly sent to Golden to fetch the children and me on arrival there.

Athalmer was the town then as all goods came by boat during the season. By spring many things ran short, and I remember Dr. Hannington lending us a little sugar to carry on with. Athalmer had two hotels, stores, a blacksmith shop, and a paper was printed there, too, also there was a bank. The mail came once a week by horse stage and was greatly looked forward to. Mr. Bruce lived at that time in Wilmer and he had a beautiful garden. Later he built what is now Pynelogs Rest Home. I knew his first wife, Lady Elizabeth Northcotte, in England, before she was married.

One lived and learned in those days. Our first crop of corn, a beautiful crop, was frozen in June! In those days big tanks were

filled with water in October before the supply was shut off for the winter. Our tank had an outlet pipe for cleaning, and somehow our cows tramping around knocked the plug out, and all our winter water supply drained out! A disaster but for the kind help of our good neighbours. They all came with teams and wagons and barrels and filled our tank again.

A monthly Church Service was held at our house, owing to there being no Church or Clergyman in the neighbourhood. The Rev. E.G. Thatcher came from Spillimacheen to conduct this.

We returned to England in December 1913 owing to the drowning accident of our two boys and a playmate, Vivian Marples, when they went through the ice on a pond nearby. But we loved the valley and returned to it in 1919 after the First Great War, which broke out while we were in England, and I have lived here ever since.

(Museum Files)

**Malcolm Cameron
Invermere, B.C.
November 23, 1923**

I had a conversation with Mr. Malcolm Cameron this morning, who for many years has lived in the district of East Kootenay and who is at present residing on the western bank of the Columbia River just near the mouth of the Spillimacheen. Mr. Cameron told me that he was born in the Province of Ontario; that he came to Winnipeg in the year 1880; that he spent some time in Golden City in the year 1883. He went on to say he had spent some time freighting on the Columbia River, taking potatoes by row boat from the Windermere District where they were grown to the station at Donald on the main line of the C.P. Railway and taking back freight from there; he said they could convey 2500 lbs. in a boat load. In regard to Sinclair Hot Springs, Mr. Cameron said that he together with Chas. Copeland and Jim Fowler had in the fall of 1888, built the first log cabin at Sinclair Springs which was the first ever put up there. Also that that winter he had

spent two months in the cabin with his partners. He said he had heard of the Hot Springs in Sinclair Pass in the year 1884.

(B.G. Hamilton 1923)

May 17, 1929

“The first pair of twins on record to be born in the Windermere district Hospital were recorded last month to the honor and glory of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Tegart of Windermere. A son and daughter were presented to the proud father and mother.”

Update

**Windermere District Historical Society
and the Windermere Valley Museum**

The next Society Meeting will be September 15, 2016 , 2pm at the Museum. Next movie night will be Sept. 18.that 7p.m.

The Society is looking for a vice-president. Someone willing to attend the executive meetings as well as ‘chair’ meetings when needed.

The Museum summer Tea is June 11th, 2p.m. at the Museum. Theme of the Summer is “The Historical use of the Lake.” The afternoon will start with speeches and the grand opening of the “Little Ice House.” Refreshments will be served.

We will be receiving a grant from “Canada Summer Jobs” to hire a student for July and August to assist the Curator, J.D. Jeffery.

The children’s program will once again be popular on Tuesday mornings during July and August.

The Regional District East Kootenay (RDEK) area F and G have voted to match the Canada 150 Grant for the painting of the Station Building. Thankyou Gerry Wilke and Wendy Booth.

(compiled by Sandy McKay)