

VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 February 2019 250-342-9769



**Ray Crook and Joy Bond
Lifetime Members
Windermere District Historical Society**

Ray Crook has been an active member of the Windermere District Historical Society since its inception. He has been the President, on the building committee and on the display committee.

During his early days a Museum became a reality.

It was Ray and his family that donated the Crooks Cabin from K.N.P and had it moved to Invermere's Pot Hole Park , at the southern edge. That building became the first Museum, governed by the Windermere District Historical Society. That cabin is now part of the Windermere Valley Museum Complex and it is known as the Pioneer Cabin.

Ray received his life membership in June 1987.

Joy Bond has worked endlessly for the Windermere District Historical Society. She has served on many committees, she has been the treasurer and she now serves as a director. She is one of the first ones to sign up for refreshments, cleaning or volunteering as a receptionist. Joy attends every meeting and she works with the Tuesday night work bees. She has a good memory and she is very valuable when it comes to

documenting historical facts. Joy is our plant lady in the spring, planting the huge planters by the step. Joy received her life membership in 1999 and it was presented to her by Ray Crook.

This photo was taken of Ray and Joy on their 100th birthday in September 2018.
(Museum Files)

General Information

Prior to 1900 there was little development between Golden and Ft. Steele. J.L.McKay at Sinclair Creek; H.Forster at Forster Creek and the Big House Ranch (Elkhorn) at Windermere; the Tegart's Alpine Ranch at Windermere and others largely raised cattle and horses. They grew crops to feed the animals and gardened to provide for their families. The McKay's grew strawberries in such abundance that they made jam which they shipped as far as Winnipeg.

1886– the first wagon road was built from Ft. Steele to Canal Flats. Previous to this, Indian trails had been used by riders on horseback.

1887– the wagon road was extended from Canal Flats to Windermere. The first bridge was built over the Kootenay River at Canal Flats.

1888– the road was extended again from Windermere to Golden.

1893– There was regular stage coach travel and freight service between Golden and Fort Steele.

As each community developed, among its highest priorities were schools and churches. Before the churches, missionaries would travel through the valley and hold services in family homes in each community.

Arthur Murray Chisholm

Bob Chisholm was born on the 23 of July 1871 at Hamilton Ontario. He married Ethel May Stoddart in September 1904 at Lake George, Ontario. They had no children.

Bob Chisholm attended Albert College in Bellevue, Ontario and graduated from Toronto University in the Class of 1895. He graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1898.

He practiced law in Ottawa until 1906 when he went to Regina to manage the Western Branch of a Trust Company.

Some years later he took up writing as a career and moved to Windermere in 1907. He was the author of several novels:

“The Land of Big Rivers”

“When Stuart Came to Sitkum”

“The Red Headed Kids”

“McPike Backslider”

“Precious Waters”

“Black Powder Dan”

“Yellow Horse”

“Prospecting Fools”

He also wrote several published short stories.

Among them were:

“Shores of Refuge”

“The Winning Game”

“Below the Jam”

Mr. Chisholm was for many years the District Magistrate; Government Agent. He served as President of the Rod and Gun Club, the Hospital Association and the Board of Trade.

Ken Liddell's “Furrows and Foothills” 1957

Windermere— She was seated in a big chair before the window, the light coming over one shoulder to illuminate her book, and he was seated before the big table, busy with his papers, and it was obvious they had been together in this parlor for a long time.

“Neither of us is very well,” she said, and as an afterthought added, “and I don't suppose we'll ever be better.”

“Oh,” said he, more in chiding than in annoyance, “do cheer up.”

If he had tidied the table a little the scene would have been like a Darby and Joan, but then Arthur M. Chisholm scatters his papers around, as do most writers and anyway, he is not as nimble as he was so it is better to have things at hand.

They came to this picturesque Columbia Lake country in 1907 via boat from Golden, planning to visit Mrs. Chisholm's brothers, Jim and Edgar Stoddart who ran the hotel, and then continue to the coast for vacation, but they never did get away.

The place appealed to Chisholm because there was plenty of shooting and, as he said, in those days he was a “shootin' fool.” But after he got talking with a few of the citizens who had been stage coach drivers and one even a buffalo hunter, he decided he'd do something he'd always wanted to do.

He became a writing man and stayed in Windermere because Windermere looked like a good place to be a writing man. And in staying he threw up a law career he had started in Ontario around 1900. Was graduated from Osgoode Hall but forgot the actual date, although he remembered a classmate was a fellow named Mackenzie King. Never did like King but had to admit he got along.

So for nigh on 50 years Chisholm has been a writing man in Windermere and he's done fairly well for himself, too, for in the bookcase in the parlor were half a dozen books he's had published in England and the United States and he couldn't guess his output in words for magazine stories.

“Got up to where they were paying me nine cents a word,” he said, and for the uninitiated in the writing game that's like a fellow being considered top brass in his business.

Because he had had no training as a writer he had to train himself and that was hard. He had to figure things out for himself and he adopted a trick that many keen to write still find is useful.

He did what Stevenson did. He picked out writers whose work he liked and then dissected it and from that developed his own style.

“I've imitated them all,” he said.

Of course if a fellow is going to be a writing man he has to have something to write about. So Chisholm visited with the boys playing poker at the hotel and he listened to the men who had been stage coach drivers and the fellow who had hunted buffalo and they told him stories and from the stories he got ideas.

Then he picked up a lot of ideas from reading, too, and he figured his best came from the reading of the Bible, for there are many good ideas in the Bible and one of them led him to write *Yellow Horse*, which was a story of a man being put to a test by his friends.

But it's hard work thinking up ideas and often Chisholm would wonder just when the well would run dry, but it never seemed to. Just when he wouldn't have an idea in his head one would pop there from nowhere.

So he'd sit down for a spell and get to work with two of his favorite characters, Skookum Bill and Old Sam Dobbs, a couple of prospectors, although fictional, of course.

"They were around me so long," he smiled, "they just about ran me into the earth."

For more than 30 years he lived his free and easy way by writing. The well never did run dry, but the country did. In the depression years the markets, (he never sold to a Canadian market because pay was so poor) simply dried up.

After that it became a bit of a struggle, so Chisholm reverted to his early legal training and became a B.C. Government Agent, serving as magistrate and coroner, jobs he still holds.

But his heart is still in writing. While Mrs. Chisholm reads before the window he sits at the big table mulling over ideas that come to mind in the same old way for he has never had a system and doubts if he ever will.

He's 85 years of age now and still sees much to be done. So the other day he bought a new portable typewriter.

Bob Chisholm died in Nelson B.C. in 1960.

Fond Memories of September 1953 Leo Richer-Windermere, B.C.

The excellent account of the 1953 Jumbo Pass epic trek, of which I was a participant, brought to mind some amusing aspects of the trip.

Jim McKay had unloaded his pack horses and it seemed we had a veritable mountain of sleeping equipment, food, utensils and extra gear etc.

With Bud Coy leading the way, we divided all this into fourteen separate piles, for fourteen waiting pack sacs.

I don't know who made up the grocery list, but they must have loved potatoes. Perhaps Bev Harris or Bud Coy, both potato farmers at the time, were asked to donate them for the trip.

I seem to recall ten or twelve huge potatoes in my pile alone! Multiply that fourteen times and you come up with a lot of spuds.

Anyway, we fought our way up and over slides, alders, windfalls, you name it, faithfully carrying the potatoes to their last resting place.

George Thornton and Hal Bavin led most of the way, to the most heavenly place for a campsite you'd ever want to see. Cool, clear water, magnificent vistas everywhere, alpine flowers and level places to stretch out on to rest our tired and aching bodies.

We all admired Boyd Affleck for his determination and endurance that first day, and the rest of the journey. He was pretty well on in years, but being a tough old mountain man, he kept right on a going.

Gordie Lake and I did some of the cooking, and I don't think we cooked any spuds. But we did have fun playing ball with them and when we packed up next morning to continue on our way, not one potato saw the inside of a pack sac.

In later years we laughingly wondered if some had maybe taken root at that altitude or maybe some old grizzly got to them before bedding down for winter.

The electrical storm at the summit was thrilling and spectacular. Some of us huddled in the lee of a huge boulder, big as a house. Later on we saw a giant of a mountain goat— quite indifferent to our presence as he disdainfully trotted away over the ridge.

I must say the trip down the western slope of Jumbo Mountain was much easier than the climb up the other side.

And it was certainly a new experience for us Valley locals to see such huge trees, mostly cedar, lush undergrowth, due to a wetter and milder climate and the Devil's Club! I assure you that plant is rightly named! I know! I grabbed at one for a hand hold!

We were near a cold creek at our lunch stop that second day. Alfie Laird took off his boots and socks to bathe his feet and we were horrified at the size and angry look of his blisters. Apparently, the downhill braking action was harder on the soles of his feet than the ascent was. But the tough old bird that he was, he just booted up again and hiked right along with us to the eagerly anticipated trucks.

Bud Coy had on a pair of well worn boots with crepe soles, separated at the seams from the upper parts. His feet and wool socks were plainly to be seen in these large apertures, as he squished along, oblivious to rocks, water, Devil's Club, come what may. When I questioned him at our lunch break about this disregard as to proper footwear for such a rugged trip, he snidely answered with that sly grin of his, "But I don't have any blisters!"

He taught me a lesson. Never try to fill someone else's boots!!

We were treated royally by the people of the Lardeau district.

We walked off the ferry at Grey Creek, happy to see our transportation home waiting for us.

We threw our packs in the half ton trucks. Ian Weir and I opted to ride with Rudy Hecker.

About ten minutes down the road, our genial host suggested that Ian should investigate the glove compartment. Lo and be-

hold, out popped a 26er of Canadian Club.

As Rudy was driving, it fell to Ian and my thirsty self to consume this pleasant surprise. What a fitting end to a glorious and unforgettable experience.

The members of the Invermere-Lardeau trek were Ian Weir, Bud Coy, Jack Mackill, Alfie Laird, George Thornton, Alex Jacobs, Hal Bavin, Bev Harris, Reg Murfitt, Boyd Affleck, Gordie Lake, Leo Richer and Hank Newcomen. Mr. Affleck was the president of the Nelson Board of Trade while Mr. Jacobs was a member of the Lardeau Board of Trade. The remainder of the men were from the Windermere District Board of Trade, which sponsored the trek.

(Museum Files)

Museum Highlights

1. The B.C. Provincial Heritage Week is February 18th to 24th. The theme is "Ties That Bind". That week the Windermere Valley Museum will be open two days. Tuesday, February 19, from 10am to 4pm. (On Thursday there will be three short Historical Films with refreshments served.)
2. The 2019 Summer Theme at the Museum is "Projectors, Cameras and Film". The Historic Legacy of Photographic Pictures, still and moving.
3. A thank you to all the members that have renewed their memberships. You are very important to the functioning of the Museum.
4. We have applied for a Summer Student. If successful, the job will start the early part of June.

Upcoming Old Time Movies Spring 2019

March 24- Samson and Delilah 1949

An epic tale of strength and seduction! An Oscar-winning masterpiece from Cecil B. DeMille starring Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr.

April 28- Maytime-1937

From the court of Louis Napoleon 111 to the theatres of Paris and Maytime festivals, it could be called a romantic costume drama. Among the best films of 1937, it is a supreme masterpiece of it's genre.

(Compiled by Sandy McKay)