

VALLEY HISTORY
AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM
BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 AUGUST 2005



THE COOPER FAMILY
(HENRY MORLEY COOPER—1920)
(BY ELSIE RYTER)

Harry Cooper was born on November 18, 1869 in Stanport, England. He was 12 years old when he left England by cattle boat to live with people in New York. The people in New York did not arrive to pick him up so he joined a cattle drive that was coming to Canada. They simply took him along as a flunky.

From 1882 to 1885 he attended schools and worked on farms around Winnipeg. He then started working his way west. In 1885 he got caught up in the Riel Rebellion in Saskatchewan. Mr. Cooper was a veteran of the Rebellion.

In 1887, he was in Donald B.C. where he trapped, prospected and was employed as a C.P.R. mountain climber and surveyor. Mr. Cooper was the first white man to climb Mt. Sir Donald. This feat he accomplished on July 26, 1890 with Emil

Huber of Zurich Switzerland and Carl Sulzer of Winterthur , Switzerland. On reaching the top the two Swiss said, “Wonderful, three cheers for Switzerland!”

Harry Cooper said “Beautiful, where’s me bagpipes?”

(Mt. Sir Donald is 10,752 ft. high)

In 1910, while working on the Connaught Tunnel in the Rogers Pass for the C.P.R., a big snow slide had come down and a crew of men were clearing it away. Mr. Cooper was sent to the cook -house to bring the hot lunch for the men. When he arrived back at the slide with the lunch, he found that another slide had come down and buried 64 men in 50 feet of snow.

In 1911, Mr. Cooper bought a homestead in Moberly, B.C. From 1912 to 1918 , Mr. Cooper had a pack horse/ guide outfit and during the summer packed mail and groceries from Donald , B.C. To Tete Jaune Cache, B.C. through the valley where the McNaughton Lake is. This was a distance of over 200 miles and it would take around 10 days.

In 1922, Mr. Cooper married Hilda Mattson who had come to Canada from Sweden the year before to visit her uncle who lived at Moberly. They had 6 children . Henry, Albert, Victor, Elsie, Celia and Mae.

The Cooper boys have two heavy medals their Dad received in 1912 and 1913 for the best draft horses in B.C.

In 1937, the Cooper Family moved to the Windermere District. Mr. Cooper purchased the Old Burnais Ranch and

he farmed there until his health failed in 1948. The ranch is now owned by Fred Becker. (2005)

Special Addition:

I would like to add a page to your history of the “Elkhorn Ranch”.

It was on October 4, 1882 that Edmund T. Johnston arrived with his pack string from Montana and pitched his tent and staked a homestead on what is now the Elkhorn Ranch.

The local Indians objected to Ed’s intrusion. They put on their war paint and with threatening gestures, rode around his tent, pulling up his stakes and throwing them at his feet.

Not being easily intimidated, Ed calmly replaced the stakes and then sat in front of his tent, rifle across his knees and dared them to pull the stakes out again.

After more circling and threatening, the Indians finally rode off and he was allowed to stay.

In 1884, Ed sold his homestead to the Hon. Fred Aylmer, moving on to establish the Hog Ranch at Parsons, just outside the 20 mile prohibition limit from the C.P.R. construction approaching Golden. This started another chapter in the life of the Valley.

(by Joy Bond 2005)

Windermere Stage

R.A.Kimpton, Proprietor – July 1911
Leaves Windermere for Golden-Tues.7 am.
Leaves Golden for Windermere-Wed. 8 am.
Leaves Windermere for Cranbrook-Fri.7am.
Leaves Cranbrook for Windermere-Sat.
9:30am.

Baggage limited to 15 pounds.

George Bramell

“ My full Christian names are George Alexander. My surname is Bramell. I was born at the village of Branstone about three miles from Burton-on Trent in Staffordshire ,England. My father was a Church of England minister at Branstone. At thirteen years of age, in the year 1881, I left home and went to Kansas, U.S.A. with Bertram Henry Buxton, eldest son of Sir Fowell Buxton of Cobham, Surrey, England who had a ranch on the Arkansas River about 20 miles west of Wichita, Kansas. I stayed there working for 5 years.

I left there in 1866 going straight through to McLeod Alberta in Canada. I was working on different stock ranches and for 4 years I worked for the I. G. Baker Trading Co. In 1897 I went with my own packhorse outfit through the Rockies by the Crow’s Nest Pass into B.C. I left Alberta in September and there was 12 inches of snow in the Pincher Creek district. The C.P.R. had just started to construct the railway going through the Crows Nest Pass. When I got through the pass I built a log shack on the Elk River, close to where Elko is now. There was fine fishing and plenty of big game. Elk, deer, sheep , bear and cougar were aplenty. I stayed there trapping and hunting for about two years making trips through Tobacco Plains to Kalispell, Montana , to Fort Steele, to Pilot Bay in the West Kootenay and back to Fort Steele . I worked my way northnorth to the

North where I met some Shuswap Indians.

I went from Canal Flat up the Kootenay River hunting with them. I stayed with these Indians and went with them to their reserve about 7 miles north of Windermere. (Near the head-waters of the Columbia River.) As the winter was coming on, I stayed with these Shuswaps whom I found to be a very hospitable people, good hunters and good workers. They assisted many of the early settlers in the Columbia Valley. They gave them food- meat, vegetables, flour and sugar. They fed the settler's stock until hay could be put up. Some of the early trappers and hunters would have starved or died from injuries and exposure if it had not been for the Shuswap Indians.

The Shuswaps went to trade in Calgary and also south as far as Colville, Washington. They used pack horses to travel with or dug out canoes. They would hunt moose on the Ice River and Beaverfoot River and pack all the meat on their backs over one range of the Rocky Mountains to their home on the Columbia River. Chief Charles Kinbasket, who has been dead for 6 years, traveled a moose down on snowshoes. When he caught up with it, the moose was dead. It had got so heated traveling through the deep snow, the meat was not fit to eat.

I married Cecile, the eldest daughter of Chief Charles Kinbasket, head of the Kinbasket Tribe of the Shuswap Indians. I went to live on a ranch I had rented. After nine years on that ranch, I went to the

St. Eugene Catholic Mission where I was farm instructor to the school boys. After two years there, I bought 256 acres of land across the Columbia River from the Shuswap Reserve.

This place I am now living would make a grand fur farm as there are beaver, muskrat and mink everywhere. There is a good sized lake on the property as well as sloughs. There are white swans and sometimes black ones. There are also many fish in the lake.

I cut about 35 loads of wild hay for the cattle. I am hoping some day to be able to fence in part of this water with wire netting and sheet metal so that I can raise muskrats and beaver. This kind of fencing is very expensive. This is also a good place to raise cattle.

This fully describes my life since leaving England. ”

**George Bramell
Wilmer, B.C.
May 1st, 1926**

(Jaryl McIsaac Files)

**Valley News-Sept. 1945
Indian News
By-Dominic Nicholas**

We regret to inform Pierre Sylvester that his grandmother, Mrs. Moses Kinbasket, died on the 7th of September at Brisco. Apparently the family of Baptiste Paul was going out to work some place across the river. Some part of the harness broke while going down a hill and the horses became frightened and bolted. In trying to jump off the

wagon, some object struck her on her forehead and she was severely injured. She was rushed to the Lady Elizabeth Bruce Memorial Hospital at Invermere and died shortly after. Her daughter, Mrs. John Sylvester, was badly bruised about the face and Baptiste Paul sustained a broken wrist and collar bone. The young girl, Mary Paul, was the only one not injured. She jumped off when the horses started to run.

You will be interested to learn that the engagement of Mary Theresa Francis to Leonard Stanley of Windermere has been announced. The marriage will take place at the St. Eugene Mission on Thursday, Sept. 28, 1945. To Ben Francis, somewhere in France, we are informing you of your sister's marriage.

Valley News-March 1943

The Farewell Party given in the hall on March 10 th, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gaddes was a great success. There were over sixty people there and Mr. and Mrs. Peatfield kindly assisted with the games. Fee Hellman played his violin for most of the dancing which certainly added much to the success of the party. During the evening Mr. and Mrs. Gaddes were presented with a purse of fifty dollars from the community with a few appropriate well chosen words from Mr. Peatfield, who made the presentation, and from Mr. Wm. Thompson as the oldest citizen in the district. Mr. Gaddes thanked everyone and on behalf of Mrs. Gaddes and Irene he expressed his

deep regret at having to leave Edgewater. He also thanked everyone for the help and co-operation that they had given him in the years in which he had been Manager here. Mr. and Mrs. Gaddes have rented an apartment in Cranbrook, but are , as yet, uncertain as to what their plans will be.

Timetable- Str. Nowitka

Leaves Spillimacheen -Sun. and Wed.

Arrives Spillimacheen- 5 p.m.

As an inducement to shippers to forward freight while conditions are favorable, a flat through rate of 40 cents per 100 lbs. is made effective during high water or until further notice. No cartages on C.P.R. freight. Hay- \$5. per ton. Lumber \$5. per M.

F.P. Armstrong, Manager.

July 15, 1911.

Historical Society Field Trip

(Submitted)

On the evening of July 21st 2005, 27 members gathered at the David Thompson Kootenae House Site for a very informative talk by Archaeologist Rod Heitzmann, on the present excavation of the site, followed by a tour of the site.

The site is located between Invermere and Wilmer. It was the first fur trading post on the Columbia River built in 1807 by David Thompson, the fur trader and explorer .

The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council and Parks Canada have formed a working partnership in the archaeological excavation of the Kootenae House Site.

(Compiled- by Sandy McKay)