

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 342-9769 NOVEMBER 2005



The Thorntons

(1961)

Charles Albert Thornton was a mild mannered man with strong convictions. He was the second child of eleven, born October 26, 1886 in Four Oaks Common, Sutton Coldfield, England to Charles Thornton Sr. and Jenny Rollinson.

He immigrated to Canada in 1901 at the age of fifteen years and although he was a butcher by trade, he worked his way from Ontario to Alberta, logging, farming and on thrashing crews. While logging in Prince Albert, Sk., he often told stories of sixty below weather when you had to be careful not to over-exert your team or yourself for fear of freezing your lungs. He arrived at Fort MacLeod with a thrashing crew in the early nineteen hundreds.

It was here that he met Maggie Marlow and on her 21st birthday (November 2, 1911) they were married on the Marlow Ranch at Rathwell, Ab. She was born on November 2, 1890. She

was the first white girl born in the Lethbridge Ab. Hospital. Her parents were Edward Marlow and Harriet Braybrook who immigrated to Canada in 1886 from Worksop, Nottinghamshire, England. Maggie and Charlie had three children prior to World War 1, Elsie 1912, Ethel 1913, and Charles Jr. 1915. (drowned at age nine.) Charlie was employed by the Pat Burns Co. as a butcher.

Charlie served overseas in W.W.1 with the Patricia Pats Canadian Light Infantry. He was twice wounded in Passchendaele and once at Vimy. At the end of the war Charlie returned to Fort MacLeod and resumed work for the Pat Burns Co. They added three more children to their family, Sydney 1920, Kathleen 1922 and George 1927. They lived in the Fort MacLeod area where the children attended school until 1927 when they moved to Armstrong, B.C. then on to Princeton, B.C., and finally to Invermere, B.C., where Charlie managed the Pat Burns meat market. During W.W.2 they were posted to Greenwood, B.C. with the Canadian Veterans Guard.

Shortly after W.W. 2 , Charlie retired and they built a home west of Invermere (The Leo Kienitz property – 2005) and they lived the life they loved..... Caring for their vegetable and flower gardens and when possible , a cow and some chickens. They were both ardent gardeners with a knack of making everything grow. Maggie was also a tireless worker, an accomplished seamstress and knitter and she loved to play the organ. Her specialty being hymns.

In 1955, Charlie was made a life time member of Canadian Legion Branch 71 at Invermere. He was an original member of GWVA following W.W. 1 and a charter member of the Canadian Legion at Fort Macleod, Ab.

Maggie was a charter member of the

Ladies Auxiliary. She also received a Federal Government Medal for being seventy-five years in Canada.

They celebrated their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary November 2, 1961.

Maggie passed away at the Invermere hospital following a stroke on October 26, 1971. (Charlie's 85th birthday and a week short of their Sixtieth wedding anniversary.) Charlie passed away the following morning after suffering a heart attack.

(by Yvonne (McKay) Doane)

Golden Star– March 16, 1934

Cougars have been very plentiful round the district from Canal Flat to Wasa, particularly in the Sheep Creek mountains near Premier Lake. Martin Morigeau came into Invermere a few days ago to collect his bounty from the Provincial Government for 6 full grown cougars which he had shot up Sheep Creek. He found several carcasses of deer and mountain sheep which they had killed and from which they had been living, and also found a den where he captured a very fine young cougar which he is willing to sell to some zoo wishing to replenish their stock. When Morigeau went back to his trap line, he could always be located through the provincial police office .

(Jaryl McIsaac Files)

1946- A small mill was built for Charlie Ross and Hoffman's by Harold Krough and Buster Tegart. Revelstoke Sawmills of Calgary financed this operation which was located across the river at Spillimacheen on Captain Edwards Farm. They had a small cookhouse (Josephine Cobb was the cook.), bunkhouse and shop. Charlie Hogan was the blacksmith and handyman. Ten to twelve men were employed. The operation

was not too successful. Ernie Trethewey and his son Lloyd took over and moved the mill to Brisco where it was set up between the main bridge and back channels of the river. Fred Hansen recalls,

“ The boys took long coffee breaks. One day, Ernie went and brought their jackets down from their bunkhouse. When the boys asked what the jackets were for, Ernie said he didn't want them to get cold while they sat around. The boys were not impressed and they all quit !” This mill was later sold to Abe Newfeld.

(Jessie Lockhart Files)

IN MARCH of 1937, five families from Switzerland were coming to a new land, to new opportunity and to a better place to raise their families– they hoped. Depression in Europe was smothering them all and Canada was advertised as the land of opportunity. Mr. Trachsel had visited this part of the world, and it had reminded him of Switzerland, and so on his urging , the families made the decision to leave their native land to try for better fortunes here. These were the Trachsels, the Wengers, the Stollers, the Ryters and Julius Pfister. None of the 37 people who arrived in Halifax could speak English but of course they learned quickly. When they arrived in Golden, they had to live in a box car for the first month and then they began to settle on their new land. They had been told to grow potatoes and Werner Ryter recalls his father's 35 acres of potatoes. When it came time to sell he couldn't sell even one sack. This was the depression and life was no easier than it had been at home. They were milking 75 cows daily to make \$5.00 a month. Taxes had to be paid, payments had to be met and his family had to eat. But these new immigrants persevered.

They made opportunities happen . As the depression lifted and the war years provided more employment, life indeed became easier and they started to prosper. But none of them will forget those early days and their determination to succeed has been reflected in the successes now clearly visible in this valley. Many family members are still living in the area. (2005)

(Museum Files)

The Columbian

Wilmer, B.C. Sept.5,1911

In 1899 Mr. Joseph Lake crossed the Columbia River, at the old ford, in a wagon and opened his first store in a tent. Then moving months later into the building where he now carries on business. At this time there was no wagon road from the crossroads to the River. Nothing but a pack trail. In the same year the first bridge was built and the road put in. Mr. Lake's business has steadily increased so that now it is necessary for him to build a larger and more commodious store to meet the demands of the ever-increasing trade.

At the present time most of the freighting and packing business in the town is in the hands of Mr. Charles Crook of the Columbia Valley Livery Stables. Mr. Crook has a fine, sound breed of horses and plenty of them. He is very busy now packing outfits. Mr. Crook supplied the whole outfit that left Wilmer on the 17 August, 1911, for Argenta , in the West Kootenay.

LAKE & CO.

Dealers in

Dry Goods and Groceries

Hardware

Boots and Shoes

And Gents' Furnishings

Athalmer ,

B.C.

Westlake Ranch

In 1885, Mr. H.E. Neave pre-empted Lots 121,122, and 123 on the Toby Creek Bench-

es. In 1910, Captain Poett (later General Poett) bought the property and named it Westlake. Captain and Mrs.Poett built a three-story house with ten rooms. The house was beautifully furnished. They had their books and music. They entertained at tea parties, dances and Christmas and New Years parties . These parties were for all the neighbors and all the bachelors.

The Poetts were wealthy English but they had also lived in Germany. Mrs. Poett was American. They were a charming family. In 1914, the daughters Phyllis and Evelyn were about to be "presented" at Buckingham Palace. Mrs. Poett, Phyllis, Evelyn and the twins (Nigel and Angela) left in 1914. Capt. Poett and daughter Babs moved into the little log house nearby. They left in 1915.

In 1921, Westlake was put up for sale in Britain and was purchased by A.C.Laird. Mr. and Mrs. Laird, Alfred, Gladys and Alice and a cousin George Watt came to Canada from Scotland in 1923.

A second log house was built in 1929-30 for Alfred and his bride Mollie Marples.

From 1921-1956 Westlake was the scene of many parties- children's birthdays, dancing, teas, picnics and other entertaining of family and friends.

In 1956, Owen and Netta Kelly , from Calgary, bought the Ranch and used it for a summer residence and guest ranch.

Mrs. Kelly sold the original farmhouse in 1997 to Trevor Kinley and Nancy Newhouse. They have done extensive renovations to the farmhouse and are working on the landscaping. (2005)

In 2001, Jennie and Roger Madson bought lot # 122 from Netta Kelly. This lot had the

small house that was once Alfred and Mollie Lairds, built in 1929. In 2003, they bought the adjoining lot # 121 from Peter Kelly. Jennie (Madson) Richardson now owns the property.(2005). Norm Hendricks owns the remaining lots at the south end of the property.

GEORGE GEARY

Each of the early pioneers had some characteristic or interest that made him stand out from the rest. With Captain Armstrong it was boats, with Tom Jones, books, and with George Geary it was horses.

George Geary was well known among the old-timers of 1883 and later. They all knew him, all speak well of him and all say much the same, “ I can’t tell you much about him, although I knew him well. He was a reserved fellow, never said much about himself but he lived for horses, they were his life.”

For a time he owned the property now known as Fairmont Hot Springs, but in 1888 he sold out to Samuel Brewer and as far as can be ascertained from then on he devoted himself largely to interests connected with horses.

In partnership with Al Doyle, he operated the stage from Fort Steele to Windermere but Geary never drove the stage himself. He owned a livery stable at Windermere and at one time had one hundred and fifty horses on the Armstrong Range. It is said of him that he would rarely sell a horse. When he was approached with a view to a sale, the horse would immediately increase in value beyond the financial means of the would-be purchaser. Not because Geary was trying to strike a bargain but because he could not bear to part with his horses.

Horse racing was a popular interest in the Windermere district about this time and it was a pastime after Geary’s heart. Race

horses were brought from all over the country, sometimes from the States and Geary always had his own competing.

It has been said that men who are well liked by horses and dogs are always worth cultivating and so it seems in the case of George Geary for it is evident that he had many friends among his fellow pioneers.

(*Museum Files*)

MUNSON’S LIVERY

MOFFATT AVE.

WILMER,B.C.

NEW RIGS THROUGHOUT

TEAMING AND DRIVING

DONE AT ALL HOURS

GIVE US A CALL

HARRY MUNSON—PROPRIETOR

SEPTEMBER 14, 1911

Sparkling Creek School , the small log building on the Benches, opened in September 1912.(private residence– 2005). The teacher was Miss Winnifred Marples, a sister of Mr. Norman Marples.

School regulations required 8 pupils before a school could be opened. These pupils were: Madeline and Effie Turnor

Kenneth Marples

Keith, Joan and Frank Edgell

Willie Guthrie

Gerald Turnor was conscripted, although too young, to complete the roll.

Museum Update

Good News– The basement extension is completed. Ted Fuller has painted the floor and completed the shelving and pole for hanging clothing. Fred Christensen hung a bank of shelves for the fabric boxes. These shelves were donated by Bob and Peggy Page of Majestic U-Brew. November is our year end. It is time to renew your membership. We thank you all for your continuous support. Our curator, Dorothy Blunden is hard at work on Mondays and the work-bees continue on Tues. nights. (compiled by Sandy McKay)