

# VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 May 2009



## The Bartmans ( 1924)

Rueben Walter Bartman was born in Hamilton Ontario in 1884. His wife Hattie Elizabeth Hagey was born in 1891 in the same city. They were married in Hamilton in 1912 and lived in Lyndock Ontario where Bartman was manager for the Niagara and Erie Land Co. Later they bought a business property in Port Burwell and moved to that location.

They had three daughters, Elizabeth ( Betty ) born in 1914, Barbara in 1916 and Anna in 1919. A son Peter was born in 1930 but the family was living in B.C. by that time.

Mr. Bartman was hired in 1921 by Mr. William Heap Holland to manage his properties in the Windermere Valley at Fairmont

Hot Springs, and a farm property on the north side of Swansea Rd. near Windermere known as the Hammond Ranch. Mr. Holland owned woolen mills in Manchester England.

The Fairmont property was two sections of land including the resort and ranch. The Resort property had a lodge, swimming pool, tent cabins and a dining room. This operated only during the summer from late May to Labour Day week-end and employed extra staff. At the main road in the Valley there was the Manager's house, a store and post office, tennis court, and a summer house for the Holland's and their maid when they came to visit. The working ranch consisted of the large barn, bunk houses, corrals and out buildings, dairy and beef cattle, horses, and chickens etc. This operation required a foreman and crew as well as a Chinese cook and store keeper. Fairmont had a station house on the railroad which was called Radium but the government took that name for their operation at Sinclair Canyon in the early 1920's.

In the spring of 1922 Hattie and their youngest daughter Anna came west while Betty and Barbara remained with family in Hamilton to attend school.

During 1922 and 1923 Bartman oversaw the moving of the original lodge to a new location and the building of a much larger one on a new site. This was the building that burned in April of 1943. Electrical power was provided by a water turbine and this was expanded and produced 110 volt DC. Power. As well, new cabins were built to replace the old tent cabins and the hot baths were expanded.

In 1939 Mr. Bartman entered into negoti-

beginning of World War Two froze all British assets and so nothing further could be done. During the war, Mr. W.H. Holland passed away and his son William became owner of Fairmont Hot Springs. In 1957 Mr. Holland put the property up for sale and it was then sold to Mr. Lloyd Wilder and a group of local business people.

The Bartmans were members of the Invermere United Church and active in the social life of the Valley. Mr. Bartman was a member of the Masonic Lodge and a keen fisherman who enjoyed the solitude of lakes and rivers.

In 1955 the Bartmans built a house on their property near the Columbia River on what is now Spruce Grove RV Park. In September of 1959 Mr. Bartman passed away and Mrs. Bartman moved to Lethbridge to live with her daughter Betty. When a few years later Betty passed away, Mrs. Bartman moved to Summerland to be near her married daughters Barbara and Anna. Son Peter had been living in the Toronto area since 1951 where he was a pilot for Trans Canada Airlines/Air Canada. When he retired in 1990 he bought property in Columbia Ridge Estates and built a home there.

( Peter Bartman Files 2009 )

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### **Golden Star– May 1912**

J.E. Cornwall, manager of the Bank of Montreal at Athalmer, is building a nice residence in that town. The football ground at Athalmer, located on land donated by J. L. McKay, is kept in splendid condition. B.G. Hamilton of Wilmer, secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands, was in Golden during the week. Mr. Hamilton states that the offices of his company will be moved from Wilmer to Invermere before the end of the present month. This is the first important move in the development of the new town site in which , it is expected, there will be considerable building this sea-

son. The waterworks will be completed in about ten days and many other projects are under consideration.

( Museum Files )

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### **From the Winn Weir Files-**

Accompanying Samuel Brewer into the Windermere Valley in 1883 was Tenas Bob, so called because of his short, stocky stature and more formally known as Robert Jackson. Brewer himself knew little about his companion. There was an unwritten law among the early settlers, that they were accepted at face value, with few questions asked about where they came from or where they were going. .

Tenas Bob went on with Sam Brewer to the St. Eugene Mission , where Brewer introduced himself and made arrangements to stay. The authorities naturally asked the name of his companion, a little detail that had apparently not concerned Sam. However, he went out to his pal and asked him his name whereupon he received the reply, “Just call me Bob.” Sam pressed the question explaining that it was necessary to give a formal appellation but for all his insistence the only answer he could get was “ Just call me Bob.” Sam, not to be outdone, returned to the enquirers and described his companion as Robert Jackson, and Robert Jackson he remained until the end of his days in the Windermere Valley.

With Paddy Ryan, who had arrived in the Valley at the same time, Tenas Bob owned what was later known as the Hammond Ranch. When they sold out Tenas Bob remained in the Valley. He did not interest himself in any particular venture but was always around. An amusing anecdote is told of him in later years.

It was the custom for those who had no other form of entertainment to gather in the evenings at the “ Tin House” , Athalmer,

known as the Coronation Hotel. Occasionally as the evening waxed merry it was quite a sport when Tenas Bob was getting talkative to stand him on the desk and let him orate on whatever subject happened to occur to him. Treated to a few extra glasses of beer, he would soon become immersed in his subject while the onlookers would encourage him. One evening while his mind was strongly occupied in a harangue which had worked him up to a certain pitch of oratory, a few merry fellows proceeded to stuff his pockets with paper. Tenas Bob was too worked up with his subject to pay them any attention until smoke and an unpleasant warmth in regions of his person put a quick stop to his oration. The merrymakers had finished their task with a lighted match applied to the paper stuffed in his pocket.

Tenas Bob took the joke as well as anyone and with the genial spirit of generosity that was one of the attributes of the rough and ready old-timers, the perpetrators of the joke took him down the road to Lake's store and fitted him out in a brand new suit of clothes.

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### The Benches—1958

Visitors coming to the Windermere Valley for the first time keep to the highways and find plenty to attract them as they follow the course of the Columbia River and the two long lovely lakes.

But visitors who know the Valley soon find that the by-ways are far more intriguing and delight in finding their own favorite lakes and fishing streams and in seeking new views of the mountain peaks and valleys.

They appreciate getting away from the maddening crowd on quiet back roads where a picnic spot is available around every turn and where every twist of the road unveils a new vista of mountain scenery.

Such is the road to the Benches, the low-lying ridge of rolling hills, foothills to the Purcell Range, which lies above the settlements of Wilmer and Invermere to the west. The Benches abounds in small lakes, tumbling streams and mountain meadows, many of which are under cultivation.

From Lake Lillian there is a magnificent view of Mount Nelson, one of the loveliest of the peaks of the Purcell Range. This 10,772 foot peak was named by David Thompson. Thompson was in the Windermere Valley when he heard of the death of Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar two years before and he named the peak as a memorial to the man whose explorations he so admired.

Snuggled close to Mount Nelson is the famous Paradise Mine, now closed, lying 7,800 ft. above sea level. In the same vicinity is the Mineral King silver-lead mine, operated by Sheep Creek Mines Ltd. A leading factor in Windermere District economy.

And for the traveler who really wants to get away from it all in the far reaches of the forests there is nothing to compare with the wonderful country in the upper valleys of Toby Creek and Jumbo Creek where there are mountains untouched by the footprint of men, forest animals who know man only as a strange and unaccustomed creature and fish that have no notion of the temptations on a fish line.

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### Captain Robinson and Mr. Norring

Captain Robinson and Mr. Norring were partners and had a small place on the banks of Toby Creek. In 1912, Norring was drowned in Lake Lillian and Robinson went back to Britain for the 1914 war and never came back. The place was sold to Arthur Newton then Graham and George Watt and now belongs to Nolan and Fran Rad.

Dear Girls,

Really appreciated your most recent 'Valley History'- particularly the "Experimental Farm, it brought back many good memories.

In November 1932, we, The Blake's - Alex, 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 banister was such fun ! There was even a bathroom upstairs !

We played in the hayloft in the old barn ( until Mother caught us ).

The kitchen had ( as I recall with child's eyes ) a big room with a wood cook stove for the maid to bake and prepare meals. The living room had a huge fireplace. Memories....

Memories.....Keep up the good work ! With thanks,

Dorothy Cameron.  
2008

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### **Golden Star- July 6,1928**

"Perfect weather with green fields and fir covered mountains make automobile a very great delight at this time of the year. Saturday and Sunday were banner days in this respect. The extension of the Banff-California highway as it passes through Windermere was marked by an almost constant succession of touring automobiles. The garages and stopping places were crowded to capacity."

**The first store** in the district was owned and operated by Baptiste Morigeau about 1883 on what is now Lyndell Farm, Windermere.

The first store at Windermere was run by Jim Brady, close to Windermere Creek. Rufus Kimpton of Donald bought out Grady and had Dan Kimpton run the store for him. This was around 1880 .

In 1890 Joe Lake also had a store in Windermere.

At Wilmer one of the first stores was owned by Harold Foster and operated by Shan Ruttan. Harry Parsons had a store at Wilmer run by Jack McLeod. At Invermere the first store was opened by W.S. Santo soon after 1900. Invermere was then called Canterbury .

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### **Conrad Kain**

The Museum's 2009 Summer Theme is Conrad Kain, as 2009 marks the 100th anniversary of this mountain Guide's arrival in Canada.

An Austrian by birth, Kain's long-ing to travel led him to become the first professional mountain guide hired by the Alpine Club of Canada in 1909.

In 1917 Kain married Hetta Ferreira and settled in Wilmer, B. C.

Kain's accomplishments as a mountain guide and a big game guide became well known as indicated in his autobiography " Where the Clouds Can Go " .

Kain's clients arrived by rail for the hunting and climbing. Equipment would then be transported by pack horses. Climbs were made using the most primitive boots, ropes and no safety anchors.

Our opening tea- June 6th at 2pm at the Museum will feature Kain displays. On July 11,2009 a cairn will be unveiled in Wilmer to honor **Conrad Kain**.

( compiled by Sandy McKay )