

**VALLEY HISTORY**  
**AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM**  
**BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 250-342-9769 August 2009**



**Hubert Alexander Statham**  
**Wilmer , B.C.**

Hube was born in a makeshift hospital in the small farming community of Vidora Saskatchewan on February 10, 1918. His grandparents lived in Cheltham, Glosshire England where his parents were married in 1916. His parents, Archibald William George ( Alec ) and Gladys Emily ( Fry ) Statham came to Saskatchewan in 1917.

Hube remembers being busy as a kid growing up on the prairies. He went to a country school in Bellfield that had only 22 students. Old Bellybean, a big bay horse, would take him in a cart to school every day. Miss Kirk is a teacher that he remembers as a favorite.

“ She was strict but nice and good at her job. ” Snaring gophers was a great past-time. He says with a chuckle that him and his friends would brand the gophers and turn them loose. He remembers getting very sick

one time from eating too many cucumbers from a neighbors garden. He also got a good ‘licken’ and he hasn’t touched a cucumber since.

He started work on the “Wylie Ranch” in Saskatchewan when he was nine years old. His job was raking hay with an old dump rake. For this he got paid \$1.50 per day. Rather than move to Regina after grade 8, Hube finished school and went to work.

Hube was the oldest of four children. Tony was born in 1920, Jim in 1922 and Betty in 1926.

In 1936, when Hube was 18, he headed west with his friend Tony Staberg. He said that Tony wanted to see some country and he wanted to go with him. ( Tony was Andy Stabergs brother.) They brought with them a team of horses, some machinery and some spuds to use for seed.

When they got to the Columbia Valley they leased the Hurst Ranch north of Wilmer. ( Now known as the Hidden Valley Ranch. ) They farmed and grew hay on this property for two or three years. They always brought a third of the hay into Wilmer on hay wagons for Mrs. Knudson. This was a two day trip but this is what covered the rent.

Hubes parents and the rest of his family moved to the Columbia Valley from Saskatchewan in 1937. They brought with them household goods, more machinery and cattle. They spent some time on the Hurst Ranch with Hube before buying the Rayson Place in Wilmer.

In 1940, Hube signed up for WWII and went overseas. When he came home in 1945 he bought the property next to his parents property known as the Beaver Turnor place.

Tony Staberg was now working with his brother Andy hacking ties at the Johnston Ranch.

Hube met Eleanor M. Ede from Windermere through his sister Betty. They were married on October 26, 1946 in the Stolen Church in Windermere. They honeymooned in Spokane for a week and when they returned to the valley, they lived in the old McKay house in Athalmer until the house on their property could be re-built and added onto. They moved back to their property in 1948 and began a lifetime of ranching in Wilmer. Here they raised their two sons David (1948 ) and Wayne (1951 ).

As well as being a full-time cattle rancher, Hube worked with his father-in-law Dapper Ede, on Christmas trees. They treed on Hube's permit on the Benches and they also worked for the Hoffert Christmas Tree company.

In 1960 he leased the Upper Ranch just north of Radium with his brother Jim. Jim and his family lived on the Ranch. Together they ran cattle there as well as in Wilmer.

Hube was a member of the Wilmer Water Works for many years and was also president of the Farmers Institute.

In the early days there were a lot of house parties and dances and silent picture shows at the Wilmer Hall. There were Christmas concerts and card games and badminton was just 75 cents a month.

Hube and Eleanor raised Hereford and Hereford Cross cattle in the Columbia Valley for 60 years. Still in partnership with his brother Jim, they ran a herd of 300 cows. Most of the haying was done on the Wilmer Ranch but some hay was bought out of Creston. Round and square bales were used. Hube and Eleanor had a large garden and continued to be active in their ranching operation until they retired in 2003.

( Sandy McKay files )

## Windermere District Cemetery

R.L.T. Galbraith, owner of the town-site of Windermere, donated 5 1/2 acres on Windermere point to be used as a cemetery for the people of the Valley. The first burial took place in 1886 when a double tragedy occurred. James Mahon Rogers was killed when a wagon load of lumber fell on him. Robert Thornbury was digging the grave and on his way home afterward, was thrown from his horse and suffered a broken neck. A double funeral was held. The cemetery was managed from the town-site office.

August 23, 1911, T. Laidlaw, a surveyor authorized by the Provincial government made a survey of the Windermere Town site. On the map he prepared he showed the boundary fence of the cemetery containing 4.39 acres; 1.78 were designated for Protestants, 1.04 for Roman Catholics and 1.57 for other denominations. The area marked as 'other' is known as the Legion area. This map is held at the Museum.

In 1924, the District Cemetery Co. was formed to maintain the cemetery. Shares were sold at \$10.00 each and this entitled the shareholder to a plot in the cemetery. The Windermere Orchards Co., which had purchased the Windermere town site from Galbraith, had control of the cemetery property. It appears that in either 1919 or 1923 when both Mr. W.H. Cleland and Mr. W. Weir were substantial shareholders in the Windermere Orchards Co. and the Invermere Contracting Co. that the management of the cemetery was transferred to the Invermere Contracting Co. The Windermere District Cemetery property was then owned by the Invermere contracting Co. The company also stocked coffins and at the time of a funeral, supplied a truck for a hearse and transportation for the mourners when necessary.

In 1971 the Invermere Garage closed and the building was sold. The cemetery was

transferred to the Corporation of the Village of Invermere, the closest official town. The agreement was signed at 10:00 am, April 24, 1972.

In 1980-81 the Windermere District Historical Society became interested in restoring the cemetery as an historical point of interest in the Valley. A Cemetery Restoration Committee was formed. Margaret Christensen, Phyllis Falconer, Jessie Lockhart and Winnifred Weir were members of the committee which officially declared the cemetery as an historical site on December 14, 1984 under the Heritage Conservation Act. This was accomplished with the support and help of Jim Chabot, MLA. The committee was greatly assisted by H.E. Richardson, an old timer of Windermere then living in Victoria. He spent much time lobbying the various divisions of government.

The problem of early graves being unmarked led to the closing of the cemetery to further burials in 1996, except for those people with existing plots. The cemetery is currently owned by the District of Invermere. The RDEK contracts the clean-up to the Windermere Community Association.

In 1996-97 the Windermere District Historical Society and the rotary Club worked together to have the cemetery reopened but for cremation only.

The Rotary Club did fund raising for the Memorial Wall and the Society did fund raising for the first columbarium. The cemetery is now operated and maintained by the District of Invermere. ( 2009 )

*( Jessie Lockhart files )*

## **Bob Pritchard**

In the early 1930's there was only one policeman in the valley. He was Bob Pritchard and he was easy going and not overly busy as the valley was virtually crime-free in those days. Alberta had not yet found us as a holiday haven . Tourists were few and the local populace was peaceful.

Bob had joined the police about 1912. He came to Invermere in 1929 from Chase, B.C. and spent the next five years in the valley.

Bob , with his wife Carrie and their son Vic, took up residence in the police barracks on 14th street. The interior of the barracks included an office, a jail cell, a court room and living quarters for the family. ( The building stands today as a private residence. 2009 )

“ When we were married, ( Winnifred and Tom Weir ), Tommy had a green Model A Ford. One night it was stolen from in front of our house. When it was reported to Bob he was solicitous. Each day for a week he would drop in at the contracting Company to ask Tommy if we had found our car yet. It was found a week later upside down in the ditch on the West Road and hauled back to town. Bob dropped in to say he was glad it was found. He didn't seem too concerned to find out who had stolen it.”

Bob had been transferred but when he retired from the Provincial Police force in 1939, he returned to the valley and him and his wife purchased the area that is now the Radium Hot Springs Golf Resort. He started a small nine hole golf course and they lived in a cabin on the course.

Carrie died in 1944 at the age of 51. Bob moved back to Invermere, purchasing property on 13th Ave. They had one son, Vic. (Carrie was Avriel Taynton's Godmother. )

Bob Pritchard had one claim to fame. He was of Welsh ancestry and he had a theory that Welshmen had been early day explorers in this valley. And he based the theory on the facts that the Kootenay Indians had many words in their language similar to Welsh words. His theory stems from the tradition that Prince Madoc of Wales crossed the Atlantic about 1170 and established a colony in America near the Mississippi. His people intermarried with the Indians and prospered. Through the centuries they gradually spread into the center of America and north to Canada. Later still some of their decedents migrated westward to the Kootenay River drainage area.

Adding credence to the theory is the fact that the origin of the Kootenays is veiled in mystery. There is the coincidence of the similarity of the Welsh and Kootenay languages. This first alerted Bob Pritchard to seek corroboration of the Prince Madoc theory.

( Winn Weir Files )

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### Mrs. Lillian Graham

It's a long, long way from a small town in Minnesota to a recently refurbished home on the Benches above Wilmer. It's a distance that can best be measured in years— 90 years, in fact and Mrs. Lillian Graham remembers every one of them and all the living that went along with them.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Lillian was the youngest of four girls. Her father died when she was very young, and her uncle, Congressman Landeen of Minnesota leant a helping hand in raising these children. It was under his influence that Lillian took her schooling in Nelson, Minnesota and entered the teaching profession.

She first taught in Ashley, North Dakota and from there she went to Shelby, Montana where she taught and also took a homestead.

She immigrated to Canada and taught

near Senlac, Saskatchewan. Her final teaching position was in Endiang, Alberta where she met and married Jack Graham. She retired from teaching after her marriage.

Lillian and Jack Graham moved to the Windermere Valley in the 1930's and shortly thereafter purchased the K1 Ranch on the Benches from A. H. McCarthy.

They had sheep herds and engaged in logging and Christmas treeing. Mr. Graham died in 1963.

Mrs. Graham has many friends in the Valley. Over the years many high school boys have happy memories of visiting Mrs. Graham and helping her with the chores..... packing water and splitting wood.

For the past few years Mrs. Graham's niece and nephew, Elsie and Bruce Elliott, have lived with her and looked after her.

*Wynn Weir Files— 1981*

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### Conrad Kain Day

The day in Wilmer, B.C. on July 11th was a great success thanks to the hard working Conrad Kain Committee, Wilmer Community Club and the wonderful turnout of the Windermere Valley residences and mountaineers from far and wide.

The speeches , stage play , music, food and weather created a wonderful afternoon.

A visit ( for those who were unable to attend ) to Conrad Kain Park and Cairn in Wilmer is well worthwhile.

( compiled by-Sandy McKay )