

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 250-342-9769 November 2009



The Ashworths

My parents, Florence and Arthur Ashworth moved to Invermere in October 1923 when Dad was transferred from the Imperial Bank of Canada in Cranbrook. His family had emigrated from Rochdale England to Moose Jaw Saskatchewan in 1904 when dad was 13. He met Mother in Cranbrook in 1913.

Mother was born in Toronto in 1889 and came west with her aunt in 1911. Both she and dad were musical and played in the church band. They were soon engaged but couldn't marry because the bank head office did not allow it. Dad was a young teller and "might be tempted to steal." They were married after the war, in 1918.

The three children, Jim, Frances and Margaret, were born in Cranbrook and the following summer, 1924 in Invermere, Evelyn arrived.

Our home, until March 1949, is now the (Doug) Trask residence on 8th Ave in Invermere. It was rectangular, with two bed-

rooms. Over the years, another two were added. There were four houses in a row on our street and in the 1920's our neighbours were the Walter Nixons, the Diehl family and the Alec Dobbies. (Mr. Diehl had a garage in Athalmer. Their two children were Dorothy and Gordon.)

Dad worked in the old bank building with one teller, Annie Frater. In the new building a clerk was added but they still worked five and a half days a week making sure everything balanced.

For the first few years in the Valley, Dad walked to Athalmer two days a week to open the branch for an hour or so. The building still stands. It's the last one on the left near the bridge. The Walter Jones family lived in it later on. Mr. Jones filled our ice house every winter. We shared the ice house with Arthur Taylor. (Lake Auto is now on that site. 2009)

I think that there were only around 250 people living in Invermere in the 20's and 30's. There were several clubs and organizations. Dad told us of attending the Masonic Lodge in Windermere and Jim Johnston was there. He had walked from his home near Castle Rock (Comfort Ranch) over the ice to Windermere. Curling was in full swing too. I remember Walter Nixon's rocks. They had his brand 2N on them.

The local branch of the Legion was formed in 1926 and Dad was a founding member. The club house was on the museum grounds.

In 1929 the United Church was built. Howard Cleland, J.C.Pitts, Ed Tunnacliff and many others including Dad were involved. Natt Bavin was the contractor and

J. A. Rowland who lived in the Wilmer manse. He often visited us on Monday evenings and told us about his years as a missionary in Ceylon.

Mother was trained as a ladies tailor and if she had any time on her hands, she made clothes for her three daughters. Often from hand-me-downs. But she left time for getting together with her friends at the Ladies Church Aid and Hospital Aid. There was always food involved at the gatherings! Jimmy Dunne delivered 5 lbs. of butter each week from the Creamery and a lot of it went into cakes.

Mother played the piano and Dad the violin. I recall musical evenings in our home and at the hall in Athalmer. Dances were held there too. William Raven Sr. was a wonderful violinist and before coming here was a concert master with the San Francisco Symphony. He was Madge Young's father. Mother was psychic and told fortunes by cards or tea leaves. As a fundraiser for the Church she served tea and charged \$.25. Apparently the church thought this was o.k.!

On Sunday evenings we listened to the "Ford Evening Hour" with the Detroit Symphony. Radio came in loud and clear from K.O.A. Denver, K.S.L. Salt lake City and CFCN Calgary. Especially in the winter.

Arthur Newton from Wilmer taught us Scottish dancing and we celebrated St. Andrews night and Bobby Burns night. Mr. William Weir and Billy Armstrong supplying the music.

Mother and Dad loved playing bridge along with the Clelands, Coys, Dobbies, Taylors, Merediths, Bartmans, Fishers, Olivers, Chisholms, Peters and Marples. Nellie Taylor organized costume parties. She enjoyed comedy.

Christmas Day dinner was a wonderful family event in the Invermere Hotel for many years. The men played cards and the women entertained the children. Kitty Fisher was great with party games.

Family outings were often picnics— to McLeod Meadows or Fairmont in our Model T or Model A Ford. There were visits to friends Harold Forster and Commander Powles who lived a few miles beyond the Forsters (Firlands Ranch 2009) He had a mink ranch before the depression. He had two Springer Spaniels and a German Shepherd. His Chinese cook made supper for us. They moved in 1930 to Wilmer and three years later to Invermere. The commander won some money on the Irish Sweepstakes so he moved a miners house from the mining town of Bankhead, near Banff, to Lake Minnewanka. It became a vacation home for our family and friends to use. Visitors included the four Hornbey girls, Lucy, Georgie, Wilma and Mary. Fishing was excellent and there was a launch called " Lady of the Lake" for sight-seeing.

During the depression and war years, the bank limited transferring staff and Dad felt he was fortunate to have stayed in Invermere until he chose retirement in 1949. He and Mother moved to Victoria. Dad died in December 1973 and Mother in March 1991.

(By Fran (Ashworth) Jeffery —2009)

Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth given Farewell Party

A large gathering of friends at the Lake Windermere Memorial Community Centre Tuesday evening honored Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ashworth whose departure from the valley after twenty-five years residence is much regretted.

Mr. Vaughan Kimpton acting as Master of Ceremonies spoke briefly in appreciation of the guests of honor and was followed by Mr. Kenneth Marples who voiced the regret of the gathering at the loss the district would sustain in the departure of the Ashworths.

Mr. Marples said Mr. Ashworth had never spared himself in working for the community in any capacity. During the war he had been chairman of Victory Loan campaigns for which he had worked ceaselessly. His efforts had been tireless when pushing the construction of the Lake Windermere Memorial Community Centre and he had also been chairman of the building committee for the new Masonic Temple. He was a member of the local branch of the Canadian Legion, the school board, hospital board, community hall board of management, and the Trinity Church. All profited by Mr. Ashworth's efforts and experience.

Mrs. Ashworth has also been an energetic worker for the Church and the Hospital and the large number of friends present at their farewell gathering was a tribute to the esteem in which both she and Mr. Ashworth are held.

A handsome silver tray was presented to the guests of honor on behalf of the community.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ashworth left Friday for Vancouver where they will spend a day of two visiting their son F/O James Ashworth before continuing to Victoria where they intend making their home. Miss Margaret Ashworth will remain in Invermere for a time where she is on the nursing staff of the Lady Elizabeth Bruce Memorial Hospital.

(from the Windermere Valley Echo— 1949)

Museum Archives— December 1944

Our good townsman, Dapper Ede, makes it a point each fall to go deer hunting in the Kootenay. Last week Dapper and son, Gordon, went out, returning in a few days. No deer. While they were away a band of deer, including some big bucks, invaded his garden at night and uncovered his carrot

pile and helped themselves generously. But for Mrs. Ede and her broom, there would have been no vegetables.

As I Saw It

(by Mrs. F.B.Young)

My husband, Major Young, came out from England a month before I came with the three children. We had bought land on the C.V.I. Settlement, four miles west of Invermere. The house was to have been ready when I arrived, but owing to a shortage of carpenters it was only just started. The carpenters went from one house to another doing a bit for each!

We arrived in April (1912) and finally got into the house in November. All that first summer we lived in our barn, camp style. We let the late Mr. N. Marples have the horse box stall for a room for some weeks, while his house was being built! All the settlers, twenty families up here on the Benches, were waiting for their homes to be built. Capt. and Mrs. Phillips had the rain pouring in on them at night while in bed, I remember.

Life was hard but everyone was very kind. I had never done much cooking and a cook from a work camp nearby showed me how to make bread. We bought a pair of horses and went everywhere in a democrat or cutter. No cars in those days except one that Mr. Bruce owned, which he kindly sent to Golden to fetch the children and me on arrival there.

Athalmer was the town then as all goods came by boat during the season. By spring many things ran short, and I remember Dr. Hannington lending us a little sugar to carry on with. Athalmer had two hotels, stores, a blacksmith shop and a paper was printed there, too. There was a bank also. The mail came once a week by horse stage and was greatly looked forward to. Mr. Bruce lived at that time in Wilmer and he had a beauti-

-ful garden. Later he built what is now Pynelogs. I knew his first wife, Lady Elizabeth Northcott in England, before she was married.

One lived and learned in those days. Our first crop of corn, a beautiful crop, was frozen in June ! In those days big tanks were filled with water in October before the supply was shut off for the winter. Our tank had an outlet pipe for cleaning, and somehow our cows tramped around and knocked the plug out and all our winter water supply drained out ! A disaster but for the kind help of our good neighbors. They all came with teams and wagons and barrels and filled our tank again.

We returned to England in December 1913 owing to the drowning accident of our two boys and a playmate, Vivian Marples, when they went through the ice on a pond nearby. But we loved the valley and returned to it in 1919 after the First Great War which broke out while we were in England.

Christmas In Kootenay National Park 1937

(by Ray Crook)

It will only be the older residents who will remember when the Banff-Windermere highway was closed during the winter season. There was no set date for closure, the weather dictated that.

The winter of 1937-38 I was living at my parents place, 21 miles east of Radium Hot Springs. Our nearest neighbors were Leonard and Josephine Cobb, five miles away at Kootenay Crossing, where Len was the Park Warden.

By mid December we had not received very much snow and we were still able to drive over to Radium, but we knew it would not be too long before we would be snowed in for the rest of the winter. In an effort to keep the road open as long as we could, Len

and I decided to build a snowplow and attach it to an old 1927 Chev 1 ton truck belonging to my father. The main part of the snowplow consisted of two 3x12 planks braced in a V shape and shod with old grader blades. The front end of this contraption was placed under and chained to the front axle of the truck. Each wing was chained to the frame of the truck. This worked surprisingly well and we plowed out the road between my parent's place and Kootenay Crossing. We then decided to plow a track over the Sinclair Summit. This took us two days as we got to 12 miles east of Radium the first day, then the next day to Kaye's cabin, 5 miles east of Radium. This was December 23 and on Christmas Eve my brother Charles and his fiancée Ferne Nicholson were able to drive out from Invermere and spend Christmas. The following day we went up to Kootenay Crossing and had Christmas dinner with the Cobbs. Afterwards Charlie and Ferne drove back to Invermere and their car was the last vehicle over the summit that winter as there were several heavy snowfalls after that. Thus ended our 1937 Christmas. At this time there were two other people in the Park more isolated that we were. Connie and Bert Rutherford were at Marble Canyon where Bert was the park warden. They had been snowed in since November and did not get out by car until May 7, 1938.

Summer 2009 Update

The Windermere Valley Museum had a very busy summer. We were open seven days a week from June to September. Our staff, Tania Baertschi, Lisa Martin and Janice Klarke greeted over 2500 visitors. Tania and Lisa supervised a children's program every Wednesday morning with historical themes, entertaining 150 children throughout the summer. The Conrad Kain displays, set up by our curator Dorothy Blunden, were very well received.

(compiled by-Sandy McKay)