

VALLEY HISTORY
AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM
BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 250-342-9769 May 2011



Ernest and Martha Cobb

“Ernest Robert Cobb was a Yorkshire man living near London , England and working in an office as a Clerk , as they were called . He decided to emigrate to Canada between the wars of 1902-1904.

He stopped off at Smith Falls, Ontario where he worked briefly for the C.P.R. There he met a fellow Englishman , Stanley Wolfenden by name, who was going out west to carve a homestead out of the wilderness near Brisco, B.C. So Ernest went along with him and came to Brisco. He took on any kind of work he could find.

In 1906 he sent back to London for Martha Neate to come out to Canada and marry him. They were married in Golden, coming up to Brisco to reside.

By 1909 Ernest Cobb had filed papers for 160 acres of homestead land in Brisco.

Martha and Ernest had three children : Leonard , Margaret and Norah.

How fancy that sounds ! It was lonely and cold..... Ah, but they were young ! And so was the country ! ”

(Josephine Cobb Files)

**A Wardens Life in Kootenay
National Park**

In 1937 my husband of nearly a year, Leonard Cobb and I were living in Radium Hot Springs, B. C. up above what is now the big parking lot housing campers and trailers visiting the pool today. Len worked at the Government Garage as a mechanic, and was seasonally a truck driver. We were housed in two tents set up five hundred yards from the Garage. One tent was for kitchen and utility work, the other a bed sitting room. It had a board floor and boards four feet up the sides and end over which a tent was fastened. A piece of canvas called a ‘fly’ made a second roof, keeping snow off the tent in winter and making the place cooler in summer. We were quite comfortable and warm there, as long as we tended the airtight heater. If too much wood was put in at one time it had a tendency to overheat and blow the lid up and down in an alarming fashion.

The position of Warden at Kay’s Cabin was advertised that spring by the Federal Civil Service on a notice in the Radium Hot Springs office. Len applied for the job and was accepted. Late April saw us moving our few belongings five miles up the road from the Park Gate. Kay’s Cabin was a frame building with a kitchen, living room with fireplace, and two bedrooms. There was a sink in the kitchen and cold running water rom

from a tap, piped from Sinclair Creek. A rain barrel outside caught precious soft water. An outhouse was partially hidden among the trees. Laundry was done in a galvanized tub with woman power (me) rubbing clothes on a corrugated glass washboard. A larger tub served us for the Saturday night bath, whether we needed it or not. (This function was never neglected.) Water was heated in a large galvanized copper-bottomed boiler which sat on the kitchen stove along with the ever cheerful kettle. The cabin was an improvement over our tent home.

Len had several trips out to McLeod Meadow where bears were upsetting the tourists. In one instance he had to look for a bear that made off with a cake that two ladies were trying to bake in a cracker box on one of the stoves in the shelters. The improvised oven was a larger tin over the cracker tin. Oh , the joys of being a warden.

Len used a government Model A light delivery truck for those trips the first summer. He serviced it and was glad that it had lots of power. On one outing we came across a small lake within the country that was within Len's patrol area. After he had reported its whereabouts, the superintendent had Len and Frank Foyston carry some trout fingerlings into the lake in cans of water strapped to their backs. There was no trail. They traveled in hot weather over windfalls and rough country to get to it. Those transplants grew into large trout eventually. Years later we were surprised and pleased to learn that the tarn we first saw had been given the name "Cobb Lake".

In preparation for winter patrols outlying cabins had to be checked, cleaned, stocked with dry food (in tins to protect it from mice) and firewood. Some of these cabins were windowless remains of a homesteaders shack. The Kootenay River Valley had attracted, and lost, about a dozen homesteaders before the area was claimed as a National

Park. Some cabins had to have a small stove taken in for heating during emergency winter stopovers. Pack rats and their nests had to be ousted as far as possible. A warden patrolling for illegal trappers or downed telephone lines had to have shelter after walking or snow shoeing 8-10 miles. These duties, as all others, were recorded in the warden's diary. This daily report had to be turned in at the Gateway office at the end of each month.

Early in the summer of 1938 a new cabin was built at Nixon Creek, just off the highway. This project was supervised by Oswald Young, warden at Kootenay Crossing, with Len Cobb and Stanley Wolfenden assisting him. The sturdy cabin, built of logs cut in the area, was much needed to serve as an overnight stopping place for winter patrolers. Late in the season Oswald Young unexpectedly left the Kootenay Crossing Station. Len and I were instructed to move to Kootenay Crossing for the winter. There was to be no replacement at Kay's Cabin so Len faced patrols from Vermillion Crossing to the Gate, a distance of 38 miles with Sinclair summit being a proven obstacle on the roadway.

The Crook family were very hospitable to us. Mrs. Crook's baked brown beans and brown bread tasted like manna from the Gods, especially to snowshoers who had been out for hours in the crisp sunshine. Best of all was the companionship. Charlie would sing and play the banjo, Len played the mouth organ and Dinty, our dog, put on his show for us. These neighbours brightened up the winter for us. Roads became passable on the valley floor but it was not until the 2nd of May 1939 that we traveled in the Chevy truck over a slushy Sinclair Summit to Radium.

We left Kootenay National Park at the end of October 1939 to undertake new challenges, but rich in memories and cautiously optimistic about changing occupation in a community a few miles away.

Assiniboine (B.C. Forestry) Patrol Cabin

The cabin was originally owned by the British Columbia Forest Service (Invermere) and it was used during the summer months by the Assiniboine Patrol.

It was built in 1950 by Alex (Jigger) Johnston and Graham Tyler from Invermere. The roof and floor were completed in 1951 by Graham Tyler and Dawson Wallin. Lumber for the project was free dropped from the F.S.Beaver (This plane was a single engine aircraft-FHB). The Leroy cook stove was packed into the Assiniboine by a packhorse from the old Richter Place on the Kootenay in 1951. This was a distance of 40 miles. The trail went from the Kootenay River, up the Cross River and up the Mitchell River to the Assiniboine.

I was the patrolman until 1955. It continued to be used by the B.C. Forest Service until the late 50's or early 60's.

It was then taken over by the B.C. Parks. Later this cabin was moved to the Naiset Cabin area and called Jones' Cabin. Ken Jones was hired in 1967 to become the first Park Warden of the Assiniboine Provincial Park.

**(By Dawson Wallin - 2010)
Windermere, B.C.**



Richardson Recollections (by Harry Richardson)

In the fall of 1912, Edgar Stoddart built a small stone constructed building immediately below Sinclair Craig's blacksmith shop. This building is still standing and I visited it while the Windermere Hotel auction was taking place recently. My father and Jack Taynton worked on the construction of this building. In this building, Edgar Stoddart had installed the first electric light plant in Windermere to supply electrical energy to the Windermere Hotel.

In addition to supplying energy to his hotel, he also supplied service to the J.C.Pitt's store and post office. This electrical plant had storage batteries of sufficient capacity to carry the normal day time energy requirements of the hotel in those early years. Edward Parry was the operator and minor repair man for this plant for a great number of years.

In the winter of 1922 and 1923 , Edgar Stoddart prepared for a new addition to the Windermere Hotel in preparation for the opening of the Banff-Windermere road. The lumber and other requirements for this addition were shipped in from the Cranbrook area in a boxcar which was spotted on the side track, just north of Salter Creek. This carload of lumber and other supplies was transported across Lake Windermere by team and sleigh driven by Jack Bridger. Others assisting in the unloading of this car and the transportation of it to the building site in Windermere, included A.S.Cochrane, Charles Pickard, Jack Bridger, Tom Richardson and Harry Richardson. This last addition to the historical Windermere Hotel was constructed under the supervision of Nat Bavin and my father assisting.

In the late spring of 1923, Mr. J.E.Stoddart, proprietor of the Windermere Hotel had just completed a new (and the

in Windermere) Golf course which was rated as the finest in the province. This new golf course was officially opened by Mr. Stoddart's sister, Miss Ella Stoddart.

The new golf course was built on Mr. Stoddart's property which was on the west side of the East Kootenay Wagon Road (Golden-Windermere road), just north of Ed Clarke's house (once occupied by Charles Van Fleck)

(Museum Files)

Valley News– 1944

September-

- The Old Pitts home has been sold to Mr. W. Fenton Smith of Kimberley. It is indeed a landmark and one of the finest homes in the Valley. The original part which has in recent years been added to, came up from Donald on the same barge that brought up the “ Stolen Church”. Miss Gladys Pitts, the former owner found that for business reasons, she could not conveniently make her home here. We are sorry that changes in the old order are sometimes necessary.

November–

There is a certain fascination in ancestry and history when the future seems solid to the individual, community or state. Whether it be by social prestige, glowing achievement or piling up filthy lucre no matter how. Our Valley has few authentic landmarks and dates. We hang on to those we have and polish them up against the day when we too shall be old and benign.

The old buildings at Windermere, the ex-NWMP barracks, the old log Windermere Hotel, the tenantless Kimpton & Pitts Store, 1886..... are growing old.



Margaret Tegart

Margaret came to Brisco from Vancouver in 1920. She met Bob Tegart and they were married in Calgary in 1921. They settled on the back part of the Alpine Ranch which was owned by Bob's parents, Arthur and Mary Tegart. Arthur, his brother Walker and his mother Ann had arrived in Windermere in 1880 from Ontario to homestead. Walker and his mother homesteaded along Windermere Creek. Arthur homesteaded the Alpine Ranch. Arthur then left Windermere to follow the gold rush. He met Mary at Barkerville. They married and returned to the Alpine Ranch. They had 12 children—Lloyd, Bob, Hazel, Emily, George, Buster, Ivy, Marjorie, Jim, Albert, Alice and Monty.

Jemima Kimm

Jack Kimm arrived in Invermere from Scotland to work as a linesman for the telephone company. In 1925 Jemima joined him. They had five children. Jack, Jean, Doug, Isabel and Robert.

(Museum Files)

Museum Updates

Opening for the Season—Saturday
June 4, 2011

Tea and Tour at 2 PM. Come and enjoy the many new displays including Toys Alive.

Arts at the Museum-August 13, 14, 2011
We will participate in the Columbia Basin Culture Tour by having special exhibits and demonstrations. Check website for more details.

Website-

See the new page on the website called “volunteers”

<http://windermerevalleymuseum.ca/volunteers.aspx>