

VALLEY HISTORY
AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM
BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 250-342-9769 February 2014



Jessie and Tom Lewis
1932

Jessica Alice Webster (born July 22, 1909) came to Canada from Liverpool England with her parents Charles and Kate Webster and her brother William in 1915. After several years of living and working in the Prairie Provinces, in 1924 they found their way to Invermere where Charles became stockman at the K-2 Ranch for McCarthy's.

Thomas Cletus Lewis was born December 21, 1898 and raised in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Tom came to B.C. to work on the K-2 Ranch and this is where he met Jessie. They married on October 26, 1932. Tom later worked on the Banff / Windermere Highway until he joined the Veterans Home Guard in 1940. Tom served

until his early death in 1946. Jessie was left with three young children to raise , David , Irene and Edith in Invermere.

Jessie later married Lloyd M. Rodningen and moved to Fraser Lake in 1965. She returned to the Valley in 1973 to spend the remainder of her life .

She had many friends in the Valley and was well known for her warmth and kindness.

As a long-time member of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Royal Canadian Legion, she was awarded the Legion's Diamond Jubilee pin.

She was also a long-time member of the Anglican Church Women's Guild and an active member of the Senior Citizen's group. Jessie was in great demand to care for other's children and homes, and was always available to volunteer for weekly hospital visits.

Jessie had five grandchildren. Kent Kebe who lives in Radium, Colin Kebe lives in Edgewater, Tom Lewis lives in Cloverdale, Pam Blom lives in Kamloops and Paige Ukass lives in Invermere. She also had seven great grandchildren, two live in Invermere and the others live in various parts of B.C. the grandchildren and great grandchildren frequently return to the Valley to visit family and friends and of course , just to be in this beautiful place.

(Irene Lewis Kebe)

Ling Lore

(By Ron Ede Sr.)

Around the end of the first week in February some avid fisherman, dangling a line through the ice on the South side of Windermere Point, would catch a couple of Ling. Word would get out and about immediately and the message that “ the Ling are running” would circulate throughout the Valley.

The Ling, technically the Bourbot or somewhat less technically, Fresh Water Cod, commenced spawning at the mouth of Windermere Creek and at other locations around Windermere Lake, about the second week in February. Some said the spawn was triggered by a chinook, or a cold spell, or a warm spell, or the Moon phase, or a dozen or so other reasons.... But, in fact, the Ling spawned about the same time each year triggered, no doubt, by the females’ overwhelming urgency to reproduce and the males’ burning desire to fertilize her eggs. They came by the hundreds to the weed beds at the mouth of Windermere Creek and Goldie Creek, Columbia Lake and Columbia River and tributary waterways..... Wherever there were weed beds.... To do just that.

The unhandsome green Ling, looking as much like an eel as a fish, was a taste-delight. Skinned, filleted and fried its white meat was tastier than that of many of its cousins found in deluxe fish stores. What a delicious break from the usual depression-days menu of wild game served in most homes !

For about three weeks in February each year the ice over the weed beds at the mouth of Windermere Creek took on a Carnival atmosphere. Hundreds of fishermen and women, dressed in their warmest clothing , including blankets in myriads of colours, laid on the ice on a bed of straw, or boards, or gunny sacks..... And anything that would provide insulation from the bare ice..... To try to catch the much-sought-after Ling.

Teams of horses and wagons came with the Natives and the odd car dotted the ice-scape. Dozens of people just wandered from hole to hole to see what was being caught while exchanging good-natured chatter.

Dogs were everywhere and , invariably once or twice each season someone would leave a baited hook on the ice and a dog would pick up the bait and get a hook embedded in its mouth. This would prompt most of the men to gather around and offer advice on the best way to remove the hook, and eventually it would be extracted and everyone would return to the task at hand..... fishing for Ling.

Ron Bradshaw and Dapper Ede for years never missed a day fishing off Windermere Point during the Ling season, and they brought home some large catches and some very big fish. However, according to them, the biggest one got away ! On that particular day, Dapper was fishing just around the corner from the tip of the Point on the South side, and Ron was fishing around the corner on the North side. Linda, Ron’s young daughter, was happily running back and forth between the two fishermen. Suddenly, Ron said, “ Linda, run over and tell Dapper I’ve got a hell of a big Ling gaffed near its tail!” Linda ran over and told Dapper, and he said, “ Tell Ron I’ve got a bloody monster gaffed near its head !”

Then began a lengthy period as each tried to land his fish with Linda, excitedly, running back and forth telling each about the other’s battle with their monsters. Finally, both fishermen tired, and the Ling were winners and swam away with their gaffes.

It wasn’t till later when Ron and Dapper compared notes that they realized they were both hooked to the same fish, one on one end and one on the other. Their story was given credence as several boaters as soon as the ice was off the Lake, claimed to have seen two broomstick –like poles cruising up and down the Lake.

The following September on Duck-season opening day, Ron and Dapper, as they did every year, went hunting at their favorite spot near the end of Lake Windermere, just south of the Columbia Lake Reserve. Early in the morning, Ron crossed over to his favorite spot at Mud Lake while Dapper cruised the pot holes to jump-shoot the early season ducks feeding there. As usual they arranged to meet at a certain place along the bank at noon.

Noon came and Ron excitedly came up to Dapper and said, “ Dap, you’ve got to come out to Mud Lake and see this !! You’ll never believe it ! ” Off they went and when they got out to the lake Ron pointed to the bony remains of a huge Ling lying just about the water’s edge..... And there near its head was Dapper’s gaff, and near the tail was Ron’s gaff ! They assumed the monster fish had beached itself during high water and, even with its tremendous durability it couldn’t withstand the hot summer sun and perished as it tried unsuccessfully to get back into the water.

They picked up their gaffs, and as Dapper retrieved his he said, “ Hey, Ron did you see that bloody fish wiggle his tail when I pulled out my gaff ? ” Ron replied, “The damn thing wiggled all the way down his spine when I picked up mine ! ”

Well, that’s the way Dapper and Ron told the story and many of the townspeople said they found it pretty hard to believe. And yet, who could not believe ? Many early spring boaters had reported seeing their gaffs traveling up and down Lake Windermere....

And the following February during the Ling season, there were Dapper and Ron at their favored locations fishing with the same gaffs people had seen them using for many, many years !

(Museum Files)

Mountain Lions Plus

(From Bunkhouse to Boardroom)

(By Dr. Ken Williams)

My friend Jack Mackill, was a born outdoorsman of the first water, savvy and experienced in wildlife from an early age. He came to the Valley as a provincial game warden. We shared some exciting experiences, not the least being our mutual penchant for cougar hunting. He had a Doberman and a hound dog and I had a Plott hound and a Ridgeback. Lots of less –than-smart things we got into. A Maharaja in India, the Game Department advised, was requesting two live mountain lions for his private zoo . So we decided to go for it . After tracking the cougar and when the dogs had it treed I would then, using my belt and spurs from my high rigging days in logging camps, climb up the tree and snare it. Jack and I had rigged up a snare, a 6 foot sturdy stick with a wire loop at the upper end. I would slip this over the cougar’s head and tighten it until the animal was choked insensible, then push it off the far side of the limb that it was on, and making doubly sure it fell over that far side of the limb, otherwise it would be in you lap. When it quit moving, the snare would be released and the cat would fall to the ground. Jack would pounce on it with a large sack and immediately put it into a box he had ready, and then into the station wagon.

Crazy ? I guess so. We got two small ones. Jack kept them at his place. A couple of week later we learned that the Maharaja had changed his mind and didn’t want mountain lions in his zoo. Walt Disney heard of them and sent an agent to Invermere and bought them. Cougar were in his film, Bear Valley .

(Dr. Ken Williams was in the Valley from 1949 to 1956)

Mrs. Margaret Thornton

Mrs. Margaret Thornton was born in Lethbridge in 1890. Maggie, as she is known to her friends, married Charles Thornton on November 2, 1911 in McLeod and for their honeymoon they went fifteen miles by horse and buggy to Fishburn Alberta.

Shortly after their marriage Charles started work for Burns and Company, and before World War 1, the Thorntons had two little girls. (Elsie and Ethel).

While Charles was overseas during the war Mrs. Thornton stayed in McLeod and knitted for the Red Cross as well as for her daughters.

The Thorntons moved to Armstrong in 1927 and to Princeton in 1928. In 1929 they and their five children moved to Invermere where Charlie took over the meat market. They left briefly during the second World War, but returned to Invermere in 1946 to retire.

Maggie Thornton worked untiringly for the Women's Auxiliary of the Canadian Legion and for many years looked after the old Legion club room.

Maggie is Canadian by birth, and Charlie Canadian by choice and they are both good Canadians and good citizens.

(Museum files)

~ Recent News ~

Invermere resident Elinor Forence, who used to own the Columbia Valley Pioneer, has started her own weekly blog called War-time Wednesdays.

A 'blog' is short for 'web log' and it is just another word for an old-fashioned newspaper column, except that it appears on the internet instead of on paper.

You can read her blog in two ways :

1. Enter her website address in your google search bar : www.elinorflorence.com

and then look at the bar running across the top of the page and click on the word 'blog.'

2. When you are on her blog page, you will see a small bar on the right side asking for your email address. If you enter your address, the blog will arrive in you inbox each Wednesday in the form of an email. War-time Wednesdays will feature local residents who participated in the Second World War, and other wartime topics. Eleanor's first wartime novel called Bird's Eye View has been accepted for publication, but it will not appear in bookstores until next October. If you have any questions or comments for Eleanor, email her at elinor1@telus.net.

Notes from the Executive

We thank all those that have renewed their memberships. Your support is very important to the existence of the Museum. We look forward to a great 2014 !

Watch for the "Curator's Corner " in the Columbia Valley Pioneer. It will appear in the last Fridays' edition of each month.

We are in the process of updating our computer system. A big thank-you to the Columbia Valley Community Foundation (C.V.C.F.)

Keep checking the Museum Website for pictures and news. We are also on Face-book.