

VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 250-342-9769 May 2014



Rose Cottage Windermere

Christian and Hanna Troyer

In 1898, Christian Troyer arrived in the Columbia Valley. Chris' first wife died in the winter of 1886. From that marriage there were two sons of which the eldest was Roderick. Between 1887– 1898, Christian married for the second time and this couple became the custodians for a fine teen age girl who went to school in that area under the name of Lydia Troyer.

In late April, 1901, Messrs. Blakely and Douglas added a new vessel to the fleet already operating in trade on the Upper Columbia river. This new vessel was named City of Windermere and her trial trip in late April was satisfactory. In early May, 1901, Christian Troyer, Mrs. Troyer and Miss L. Troyer arrived in Windermere at the small place that Mr. Troyer had partly completed the previous year which was known for years as "Rose Cottage".

Old Chris loved to play checkers and cribbage. As a young boy I used to play both games

with him. Later, as a young man, and any time that I was at home, old Chris would be down to give me a beating. He was exceptionally good at checkers. Both Mr. and Mrs. Troyer were very musical. He played the violin and she played the organ.

In December 1902, Chris Troyer acted as chairman for the area Christmas Tree Committee which held meetings in Athalmer. The Windermere Christmas Tree Entertainment Meet was held in the Windermere Hall with John H. Taynton, secretary of the public school board presiding. Athalmer and Wilmer children were present to meet Santa. A number of recitations were given by pupils of the school at that time. Chris Troyer gave a violin solo. The Mermaids Song was given by the trio, Madame's Smyth, Mrs. Troyer and Mrs. Pitts.

In March 1903, the Windermere Amateur Drama Club held its St. Patrick's night in the Windermere Hall. The misfit advertisement, "The Character of Silas Green" was presented by J.J. Hewetson, Mrs. R.A. Kimpton and others. The musical interlude was performed by Mr. and Mrs. Chris Troyer.

In March 1910, the Windermere Dramatic Club held a meeting at which it was decided that the proceeds derived from the Dramatic and Concert entertainment be donated towards the Cemetery Fence Fund. Undoubtedly Mr. and Mrs. Troyer played their part in supporting this fund as Chris was for many years the grave digger and caretaker at the Windermere Cemetery.

The Windermere Rifle Range Association held their first rifle practice on Saturday, May 30, 1903. At that first meeting, there were 24 members present. Members of that association in later years included Christian Troyer, Frederick Kimpton, James Stoddart, J.C. Pitts, Sinclair Craig, H.B. Richardson, and many others from Athalmer, Wilmer and Canterbury.

The Windermere Rifle Association continued operating until late 1914. When the new Ross Rifle first came out, it was used on the Windermere Range and they experienced one minor accident which led them back to the old rifle they had previously used. Christian Troyer held the position as pit man where he watched each shot as it hit the target and raised the signal to indicate whether it was a bulls eye or off to the side. The rifle range was around a thousand yards.

Christian Troyer and his wife operated a small market garden on their property at Windermere for many years. The produce from the garden, which also included various small fruits, was taken each week to areas around Athalmer, Canterbury (Invermere) and locally around Windermere. They always kept a cow and a horse which they pastured in the nearby creek bottom. They also had two sets of harness for the horse. One an older set which was used by Chris when he went to town in his old Red River two wheel cart each week. The newer harness and the very clean four wheel buggy was only used on such occasions when Mrs. Troyer was going to town. On such occasions, Mrs. Troyer was all dressed up in her very best. (We children of the area always referred to her as "Queen Victoria.") She occupied the drivers seat and with her white gloves she handled the reins. Old Chris sat with his legs crossed, and the whip in one hand as he puffed on his old clay pipe. On such occasions, old Chris always arrived home quite sober. This was not always the case when he went to the distant towns in the Red River cart. He was so well known and such a good entertainer that he always had a great many friends, many of whom played practical jokes on him.

For many years, my father, myself and other members of the family assisted this fine old couple, sometimes in the garden and always in getting in his yearly supply of wood for fuel from the nearby woods which was hauled home on the old Red River cart. Each morning and each evening, as milking time came around, one could always find Mrs. Troyer doing the milking as old Chris stood on the opposite side with the rope from the halter in one hand and the cows tail in the other. Over the years in the Windermere area, many old stories were told of

this fine old couple and many fine cartoons over the years have been drawn up symbolizing life with the Troyers at Rose Cottage in Windermere.

When Chris Troyer settled in the Windermere area he required water for his two lots of market gardening. In order to get that water, he hand dug a ditch running along the hillsides for nearly a mile and tapped into a small stream on the opposite side of Windermere Creek by using a wooden flume over the creek. At that time there were no water rights required. In later years, when we purchased the old Geary farm, we also required water. As there was little water in the Windermere Creek, we applied for water rights out of the small stream which Mr. Troyer had (and still did) taken his water. This small stream, we called Troyer Creek. That irrigation ditch, first put in by Chris, in later years served Mr. Troyer, the Richardson's, Jack Hooper, and three or four others in the area where Old Chris had first settled.

Chris was very humorous and witty and one story told of him in that area that at one time he signed his name followed by M.D. After practicing this for some time, (the story goes) he was brought up for questioning as to why he used the letters M.D. Old Chris's reply, "That's easy, M.D. Mighty Dry"

After a lengthy illness Christian Troyer passed away in the general hospital in mid October, 1924. He was buried in the Windermere Cemetery on a Sunday afternoon under the auspices of Columbia Lodge.

(by H.E.Richardson-January 14, 1975)

Photo at Rose Cottage

Mrs. Troyer on far left, Christian Troyer on right and Mr. and Mrs. B.G. Hamilton in the middle with dogs.)

Columbia Valley Times

March 22, 1913

Mr. and Mrs. Kenward, with Governess* and children of Eltham, Kent, England, the first of the new settlers, registered at Invermere Hotel on Sunday March 9, 1913. We understand they have since bought land at the back of Invermere heights.

(* Governess Dorothea Grace Heatherington Bromilow married Jim Johnston in 1916. (This is Joy Bond's mother.)

The Kenward Farm

The Kenward Farm was situated approximately 1/2 a mile south of Invermere and is now within the District boundary.

In 1913, Mr. and Mrs. P.M. Kenward, with their Governess Dorthea and children, arrived from England and bought property from C.V.I. They built the spacious grey farm house, cleared the land, planted crops, stocked the farm and successfully did some mixed farming. Mrs. P.M. Kenward bought more land adjoining Lots K3 and 4 in 1919 from C.V.I.

The Kenwards sold the farm to Mr. and Mrs. George Johnston in 1919 and moved to south Africa. George Johnston married a widow, Mrs. Walter Shibley, whose husband had enlisted for service in W.W.1. He left in August 1914 and was killed in action on May 4, 1915. They had one son, Jack Shibley, aged 2 years. Mr. and Mrs. Johnston had 2 children, Alexander (Alec) and Elsie.

The Johnstons carried on with the farming but added a herd of dairy cattle. They sold milk to customers in Invermere, delivering every morning. Mr. Johnston drove a Model T Ford (Hudson Super 6) and Mrs. Johnston accompanied him delivering the milk, having a short chat with each delivery. The women enjoyed her visits. Mr. Johnston was a patient man !

The farm flourished and the children grew up and moved away. Jack Shibley had the contract and drove the Royal Mail truck from Cranbrook to Golden delivering the mail sacks, and back again the next day. He had the contract for 45 years ! He married Roberta (Birdie) Trethewey. Alec (Jigger) married Elsie (Thornton) McKay and lived up north for many years. Elsie, his sister, was a nurse and

lived in the Okanagan.

The Johnstons sold the farm to C.G. Marshall in 1942 and he sold to Otto and Elsie Powitz in 1957. The Powitz's lived in the original farmhouse and subdivided most of the property. Leo Johnson and Jodi Casey bought the property in 2012 .

(Museum files)

Edgewater Dairy

In 1951, Dal and Phyllis Bower purchased land along Highway 97 overlooking Edgewater. They bought the land from Louis Conzelman. Louis was living in the granary and the Bowers built onto it. Son Doyle was born in 1951. In approximately 1955, the Bowers started a dairy. They bought a herd of dairy cows from Morley Hogan's father in Parson. Henry Kohorst built the barn and Chris Madson poured the cement floor.

They milked from 12-14 cows. Joe Morgan from the Maritimes helped with the milking. They used electric milking machines. One day when the power went off, Phyllis's brother, Mervin Hurst and his friend Spence Baker, milked the cows by hand.

At first they sold bottled raw milk then they purchased a pasteurizer. They heated the pasturizer tank with propane. Later they purchased a homogenizer. This prevented the cream from coming to the top. If they needed extra milk they would buy milk from Winston Wolfenden and Ross Jenkins. Sometimes they bought milk from Cranbrook.

They tried to recycle the bottles by selling tickets or tokens ahead of time. Then the customer would put out the empty bottles with the tickets or tokens in them to indicate how many bottles of milk they wanted that day. They still lost a lot of bottles such as the ones sold in the stores. Soon the stores requested cartons rather than bottles.

Their market was households in Edgewater and Invermere, the Brisco Store, Beamishes store in Radium and the Giant Mascot Mine.

They also sold eggs which they purchased from Alberta but they had to buy an egg-grading machine as they arrived from Alberta un-graded.

They also could order ice-cream from Alberta. It would be delivered on the mail truck from Crystal Dairy and Alpha Dairy with no problems.

One of the Advertisements indicated:

**The All Weather Drink
Edgewater Dairy
Pasteurized Milk and Ice Cream
Phone 1Z Edgewater B.C.**

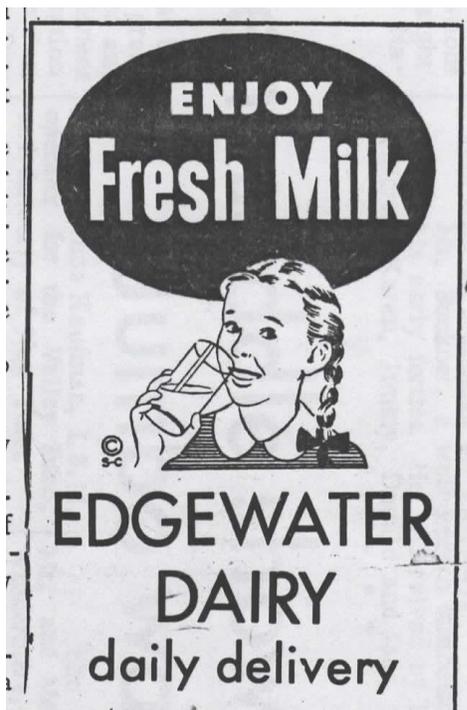
(Another ad in the 1960 Edgewater cookbook)

**Edgewater Dairy
Drink Milk Daily
Dal Bowers.**

The Bowers ran the dairy until the mid sixties. They sold some of their equipment to the Miluns from Golden and some to the Dominion Dairy.

Dal Bower served in the R.A.F. Bomber Command during WW11 and was awarded the D.F.M. His greatest pleasures were collecting and repairing clocks and ham radios. He was a member of the East Kootenay Amateur Radio Club. Rest in Peace VE7 KBY .

(Museum Files)



Windermere Hall

The Windermere Apartment building is one of the oldest in Windermere. It was built on land donated by R.L.T. Galbraith of Ft. Steele who once owned the whole town site. It was used for many years as a Masonic Hall. R.L.T. Galbraith and his brother had the ferry service among other interests at Ft. Steele. He later became Indian Agent for the region.

(Museum Files)

The Great War

As you may be aware, the new year of 2014 marks the centenary of the beginning of the First World War. In commemoration of this event, the Windermere Valley Museum is dedicating its summer display to the contributions made by valley residents to this world-changing event. The stated goal is to explore the conflict in terms of the experiences of the local men who fought in it, as well as to examine the social changes brought to the fledging communities' in the Columbia Valley as a result of the conflict.

The Museum is looking for help from the community to develop this display. Over the past year, staff and volunteers have accumulated information about individuals who participated in the war, however we are looking for further information as well as photos, stories, artifacts and relevant documents to contribute to our display. These could include photos of soldiers, stories about valley life during the war, or artifacts from the period. We are looking to borrow such objects for a period of four months, in return for which the museum will recognize the contribution with your name included on our list of contributors.

If you have any such items you are willing to contribute to this exhibit, or if you are interested in helping to develop this display, please contact the museum by May 15. You can call us Monday thru Wednesday from 12 till 4 or leave a message at 250-342-9769

(JD Jeffery - Curator)

(Compiled by Sandy McKay)