

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 250-342-9769 February 2016



Lucy Lim and Lim Man You 1921

Maybe Mrs. Lim Man You of Invermere has never read "Cheaper by the Dozen", but she has a lot in common with the author of that well-known book. Mrs. Lim knows the angles, too, as she has had twelve children, six boys and six girls.

Just washing, ironing, mending, cleaning and cooking for eleven children (one died in infancy) can be a lot of work and Mrs. Lim spent most of her time at home. There is a real family in that household; they did the things a family does; they teased and squabbled and laughed; had their off days and their good days and the days when two or three had measles or mumps or chicken pox. They went to church and to Sunday School and to school parties and community parties and had their own parties on their birthdays and at Christmas.

Mrs. Lim used to make twelve loaves of bread a week in those days; now she only makes six a week because the older members of the family have been gone for some years.

The family started out with three girls: Lillian, who is now Mrs. Gee and is on the staff of the Windermere District Hospital; Frances, who is doing office work at New Westminster; and Jessie, who is a Flying Officer (Nursing Sister) with the RCAF and is now stationed in Saskatchewan.

Then came three boys: Henry, who is a truck driver for Simon Ronacher and Son Ltd., and a keen member of the Invermere Volunteer Fire Brigade; Dick, who works for Western Gypsum, and Stanley, who is with the CPR in Golden and is married and has a child.

Then came Betty who is an office worker in Calgary, and the next child was Robert David, who died of pneumonia when only a toddler. Margaret is also doing office work in Calgary and the final trio is Douglas, finishing his grade 12, Terry and Pat, both in High School. Incidentally, I wonder if any Valley family could claim the accumulated school attendance days of the Lims.

Lucy Lim was born on Lulu Island. Mr. Lim Man You was born in Canton, China, July 31, 1885. As a young boy of 14 he came to live in Vancouver. He came to the Valley in 1912. He had a store and restaurant in Athalmer. While on a visit back to Vancouver, he met his bride and brought her back to Athalmer in 1921. In 1953 they left Athalmer and purchased a house in Invermere. Mr. Lim Man You spent many years as a cook in various locations in the valley. He loved his garden and even at the age of 90, he was able to enjoy his hobby. Mr. Lim Man You passed away April 7, 1981.

I asked Mrs. Lim what her recipe was for keeping peace and discipline in the family. You don't hear of members of their family getting into trouble and there is a reason for everything.

Her reply was, “We keep them at home.” It sounds so simple. She explained, “When they go out they tell me where they are going and I tell them when they have to be home. If they aren’t home when I say, next time they don’t go.”

As a housewife, I was interested in her meal planning for such a large family. She said she used to can quarts and quarts of fruit and vegetables. Now she freezes them instead. “It is much easier,” she explained.

The Lims have two freezers, a 12 cu. ft. one for fruits and vegetables and a 15 cu. ft. freezer for meat. There are four hunters in the family but this year there is still no game in the freezer. The boys are still hopeful, though.

I asked Mrs. Lim if there was some highlight in their family life. She thought the day the piano they had won in a raffle arrived was a real highlight. It is said to be one of the best pianos in the district and a good many scales and exercises have been thumped out on it during the years. It is still a proud possession.

Mrs. Lim used to do a lot of knitting and crocheting but she says she doesn’t do much now. What does she do in the evenings? “Well,” she replied, “I sit around and listen to the radio.”

Mrs. and Mr. Lim Man You had twelve children and there are now three grandchildren; there will doubtless be many more grandchildren. I can’t think of anyone who has a better right to sit around in the evenings and listen to the radio.

Twelve children have had a heap of mothering.



Athalmer Meat Market

J.L.Snook was the proprietor in 1902.

J.L.McKay owned the company at one time. In 1909 Wes Dawson worked there before starting his livery business.

J.L.McKay built a new building in 1911 at the rivers edge. J.McCroskie was the manager.

1932-1937- J. Pietrosky Sr. opened and operated the Athalmer Meat Market.

1938– Wing Sung from Wilmer took over. He also sold groceries.

1940– The building was destroyed.

Kwong Chung Lung Co.

A restaurant opened in August 1911 on Laurier St. in Athalmer, across from the Coronation Hotel. It was open all day and all night selling wares such as fresh fruit, candy, bakery goods and Chinese goods.

Wong Sam Laundry

Opened 1911 in Athalmer on Laurier St. beside the Coronation Hotel.

Billy McNeill

(continued from November 2015 news)

Billy McNeill was appointed a special constable to accompany the Indians returning to their reservation. The other deputy accompanying him was George M. Willard (a brother of Francis A. Willard.) They bought two tons of grub at Joe Lake’s store and said “Here’s the grub, now let’s get going.” But the Indians said they didn’t want the grub.

Nevertheless the Indians, who occupied about 30 tipis, were rounded up with their 150 head of horses and escorted back by Billy McNeill and George Willard. At least they took them as far as the Alberta boundary where they were met by four Mounties who took over the escort duties from there.

**Dear Mr. Gibbon- Enderby, B.C.
December 9, 1923**

In looking over some old papers the other day, I ran across the enclosed "Certificate of Leave of Absence", dated August 21, 1884, from my mineral claim on Quartz Creek—Signed A.W. Vowell, Gold Commissioner, and initialed by Sheriff Redgrave; as you now have your summer home there in the Columbia Valley, I thought you might like to know how we spent our time 40 years ago in the Valley.

In May I left the end of track at Laggan (Lake Louise), with saddle and pack horse and rode to Wild Horse (Ft. Steele) to get my miners licenses from Kelly, the gold Commissioner there (Vowell and Redgrave had not then reached Golden), then back to Laggan for supplies and outfit; passed Ed Johnston just starting his first Ranch 20 miles south of Golden (Hog Ranch); also passed on the trail, Kicking Horse Kate and one of the Oliver boys travelling light and fast. Kate sang out, "You never saw us Tom", and I told her I was snow blind. Back from Laggan and up the Valley to Fred Aylmer's Ranch, raining all the time. Prospected up Sheep Creek for two weeks and then back. Swam the Columbia at Jubilee Landing and up the north fork to Bald Mountain for awhile. Still raining. Back and down the River to Quartz Creek. Swam the Columbia just above the mouth of the Beaver River. Cut a trail up the nose of the mountain above timber line and followed the ridge between Quartz and Beaver River 15 miles to the head of the Creek and prospected there and on Grizzly Creek for a month and staked some Copper claims at the head of the east fork then back to Golden to record out claims. In the meantime, Judge Vowell and Sheriff Redgrave had arrived at Golden and opened up the office. Still raining. Back to end of track for supplies. Prospected up the Ottertail and Boulder Creek, then up the Beaverfoot and Ice Rivers, then back to Golden. Still raining. I thought I would get a leave of absence from my claims on

Quartz Creek, until the end of track reached the Beavermouth. The Sheriff said I did not need it for a Quartz Claim, but I insisted and asked him down to my tent on the banks of the Kicking Horse and we talked some more . We went back to his office and he wrote it out for me. A lot of the boys had come in from the hills for supplies and to record claims and it was getting late and the 21st of August was my birthday, so we went back down to the tent and put another log on the fire. Jock and Cham McKay joined us and we put more logs on the fire. Then the Sheriff told us about his favorite saddle horse that had learned to retrieve for him. When he shot any ducks or geese on the river or slough, the horse would go in and bring them out to him. Same with the fool hens or grouse on the trail. Cham looked sorry for awhile and then he said he believed him. Then Cham told the Sheriff about a marten he had trained up on the Middle Fork to lead other marten to his traps. Said he got the idea from their having a trained steer at the Chicago Stock Yards to lead the wild ones into the slaughter house. The Sheriff said he believed him..... about the trained steer. Just then, Archie McMurdo and Dutch Charlie joined the fire and we put another log on. Archie said he was having a lot of hard work picking the bits of rock out of the gold on his claim up in Caribou Basin. Dutch Charlie said he was going to buy the CPR, fire Ross and finish building it himself. Then one-eyed Jim Kane and Tom Wright joined the fire and we put on another log.... Still raining. Jim Kane said he was only going to bring in a small sack of gold at a time from his claim on Canyon Creek. Didn't want to hurt the market. Ben Phew and Tom Haggerty joined in. Ben said he had not struck anything but indications of a darn hard winter. Baptiste Morigeau and Fred Aylmer came over from the store to see if it had stopped raining. With best wishes,

Tom Wilson.

P.S. That summer I travelled between seven and eight hundred miles on the Valley trails.

Richard S. Grant Thorold

**Dutch Creek, Wilmer, B.C.
September 22, 1909.**

“I arrived here about five years ago, coming over on a hunting trip from Banff, and while descending from the Vermillion Pass thought this valley the most beautiful country I had ever seen. This was in the summer. I determined then to come back in the winter and hunt, which I did. Finally I put in the rest of the winter up Dutch Creek and as I had an outfit of ponies and found they wintered well, decided to buy some land there. This I have never regretted. I consider the country an ideal place for any Englishman with a small income who is fond of sport. There is capital bear hunting in the spring, and the season opens again on September 1st for deer, sheep, goats etc. The only slack time is in the summer months, and if we only had a few more men we could play polo, as here it would be quite an inexpensive game and well within the reach of those with only modest means.

Personally I am engaged in raising horses and having a good thoroughbred stallion, which I got from Australia last year. I hope to breed polo ponies from the native mares of this country.

In this way I expect to make my ranch self-supporting and having no occupation at home it gives me great interest and is at the same time a very healthy pursuit and a good change from England, which country one enjoys a great deal more from having been away. I may add that I have put in two winters here very pleasantly, and there is plenty of occupation for any active-minded person. He will not find the winters long nor be afraid of suffering any hardship from the cold.”

(Museum Files)

(Compiled by Sandy McKay)



Dot Smith

Dot became a Life Member of the Windermere District Historical Society in May 2001. In the early 1980's she volunteered at the Windermere Valley Museum and offered to set up the Museum Library. She also became a director on the Executive. With her sense of humor she became a vital member. Dot became the treasurer for many years and when it came to numbers, she had her husband Roger to help her. Dot came to the valley to teach school. She was Miss Worsley. In Invermere she met Roger and they were married July 31, 1966. Roger was a Chartered Accountant. She left teaching to raise her two sons, Graeme and Doug. The boys now live in Vancouver. Dot and Roger travelled extensively, enjoying something new every time. Dot passed away in Invermere on November 20, 2015 .

Movie Night at the Museum

This spring's Sunday evening movies are scheduled for 7:00 pm.

March 20– Buster Keaton-1920's

Five non-talkie shorts cover Buster's various jobs (and not getting the girl) to him and his new wife building a house together. Years later his family of four take a boat, built in the basement, out on a lake like ours for its first voyage.

April 24– the Edge-1997

Stranded in the Alaskan wilderness, three people struggle to get out but are hampered just as much by their inability to band together as by bears. As it was filmed 90% on location in Kananaskis Country in 1995, additional stories will be related by Brian Patton, our own Rocky Mountain film historian.