

VALLEY HISTORY
AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM
BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A 1K0 342-9769 February 2003



Gilbert H. Cartwright
A Pioneer Carpenter-1917
By Sue Campbell
(photo- Jean Cartwright Files)

Valley old-timers tell about exotic advertisements for land that lured settlers to the mountains of B.C.

It was just such stories of 'farmland for sale', back in 1918, that brought Gilbert Hugh Cartwright to the Columbia Valley. But it was a car, not the land, that kept him here.

His new Hudson had taken himself and a partner(about to become a brother-in-law) from Prince Rupert, down the coast of B.C. on a passport through Northern Washington and back into Canada, without any trouble. Then on arrival in the Columbia Valley, an axel broke. It was six months before a replacement arrived and by that time he had decided to stay.

Gilbert was the youngest of six children born to Joseph and Annie Cartwright at Bulby, Lincolnshire, England.

For seven years he had apprenticed under a Master of the old Country trades of building and cabinet-making called "Fitters, Joiners and Undertakers".

He knew there was no future for him in England. He hoped to make a new beginning on another shore of this ocean. But which shore? Canada or Australia? He made his decision on

the basis of two factors: heads or tails. By the flip of a coin he found himself in the middle of the Canadian prairies.

It was the spring of 1918 when Gilbert H. Cartwright landed in the Columbia Valley, his Hudson broke an axel and he found his first job at the hardware store under Manager George Bennett.

Gilbert started out in the building trade in Invermere with his partner Bert Collins but Collins soon moved to Spokane, Washington.

They didn't lose touch though. Gil had met Mrs. Collins sister, Marion MacLean and had convinced the young widow that Invermere would be a perfect setting to raise her two daughters, Mary and Edith.

They were married April 2nd, 1924 in Calgary. The family would later joke that "mother caught father on April Fools day".

The newlyweds took up residence in the first building in Invermere, the Ed Johnson homestead.

Both Gil and Marion decided that they had farmed long enough. Marion had also lived on a prairie homestead with her family, the Maxwell's, who had emigrated from Glasgow, Scotland. She farmed also with her first husband, Gordon MacLean who died in the 1918 flu epidemic that swept Canada and the U.S.

Cartwright decided to turn his full attention to his trade. Gil was soon in popular demand as a builder. Often he joined forces with Alex Dobbie who had first come to Canada from Scotland in 1912 with Willy Weir.

The Invermere Contracting building, Fisher's store, the first school in Edgewater, the Lodge (old dining room) at Fairmont, Dr. Tripp's home (now the Jaryl and Peter McIsaac residence) , the first bath houses at Radium and countless other buildings up and down the Valley can trace their roots to the fine workmanship of Gil Cartwright and Alex Dobbie.

In 1927 Gil and Marion Cartwright built their home on Westside Road (13th Ave), known then as the Pipeline Road, on four acres of land purchased from Dr. F.E. Coy.

The family expanded from three children, (Mary , Edith, and Gilbert Maxwell) on the Sunday they moved into their new home, to four children on the following Sunday when Baby Marion arrived.

Not only the family was doing well but the building trade was also doing well. In 1928 Gil purchased a brand new Chevrolet car.

But one year later the new car was up on blocks, 1929. Nearly all building had ceased and the depression had started.

That didn't stump this enterprising family. They sold the car and bought a cow. They raised calves, some 300 chickens and sold eggs and fresh produce from their huge gardens. There were also plenty of apples.

Their only regret was not being able to afford postage to send apples to their relatives on the prairies who were much worse off than they were.

Occasionally Gil would find work out of town. Building a house in Kimberley , perhaps. Or working on the big Bend Highway bridges. It was on this particular project that Gil wasn't able to get home for Christmas. Some times are hard to forget.

But the good times were full of memories of family and community fun. The family was faithful in attendance at the Anglican Church. Gil was a long time member of the Masonic lodge and Past Master of Columbia Lodge no. 38 A.F. and A.M.

He was an active member of the Golf club, playing the course which is now Wilder Subdivision and Fort Point. He was also a Curling Club participant on the great natural rinks at Athalmer.

Gilbert Hugh Cartwright was indeed a vital contributor to the community he lived in and loved. He died at the Windermere District Hospital on October 24,1977 at age 94.

BASEBALL SEASON OPENS Pynelogs Park Ready

(Lake Windermere Valley Echo June 18, 1964)

The official opening of Pynelogs Little League Ball Park, Sunday at 1:00 p.m., will see Bill "Red" Hay, great center star of the Chicago Black Hawks as a special guest. Mr. Hay will speak to the local boys on sportsmanship, coaching and education.

The Lake Windermere Majorettes , under their leader, Penny Dorman, will perform and will lead the boys' entrance to the field. The first game of boys aged eight to ten, is the Invermere Red Caps vs. the Invermere Black Caps.

The ball park has been made possible through the generosity of a large number of people. Among these are Mrs. K. M. Marples for 300 lbs. of grass seed ; Dr. George Duthie, water hose and sprinklers ; Robert Tegart, lumber for fence; Tegart and Larson, fence posts and timbers for backstop; John Ronacher, lumber for dugouts; Roy Maundrell, paint for fences; H.B. Nelson for power pole; Bill Tegart for leveling the field; Syd Warner for edging the lumber; Wally Winsler for 2x4s ; Gordon Rad for painting the fences and Frank Hackler for countless hours of work with Andy Anderson.

AVAILABLE AT J.C. PITTS STORE Windermere- 1913

Tan " Yukon Blankets" - 8 lbs. Fine all wool at \$ 6.50 per pair.

Flannelette Shirts in gray—\$1.35 per pair

White cotton shirts- \$ 2.25 per pair

A snap in Men's Heavy Underclothing, plain gray union suits \$1.50, plain gray wool, heavy rib, \$1.75.

Mackinaw Coats- \$5.00

Sheep Lined Canvas Coats- \$5.50

Bath Towels- linen, fancy and white up to \$1.00

Pillow Slips in plain and hemstitched— 35 cents

WINDERMERE AMATEUR DRAMA CLUB 1903

St. Patrick's Night "The Character of Silas Green" was presented at the Windermere Hall. Cast- J.J. Hewetson, Mrs. R.A. Kimpton and others.

During the intermission, Mr. and Mrs. Troyer entertained with a musical interlude. Mr. Troyer played the violin and Mrs. Troyer the organ.

WILMER DRAMATIC CLUB 1912

October 12, 1912

Concert in St. Andrews Church

The program was 2 hours long

Mr. W.W. Weir was accompanist

Cast :

Miss Hughes, singing	Mr. Pope
P.M. Stoddart, singing	Rev. Gillam
Miss Rivington	Miss Turnor
Sandy Gordon	Mr. Powell
C.A. Davidson	Mr. Butterfield
Mr. Larrabee, Recitation	Master McKay
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Macdonald
The School Children	Brothers Grovito

1913-1915- The Dramatic group was active in Wilmer.

One play presented was "Browne With an E". Cast: Mrs. Arthur Taylor, Mrs. Sandilands, W.W. Taynton and others.

DRAMA— 1920's-1930's

Miss W. Beale directed a play let entitled "The Boisterous Buccaneers" in costume. The proceeds, which amounted to over eleven dollars, were handed over by the group to the District Hospital. The play let was performed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. Cleland.

The Cast: Audrey Cleland, Elizabeth Coy, Frances Ashworth, Margaret Ashworth, Helen Staples and Marion Staples.

Miss Jessie Frater assisted Miss Beale as accompanist.

JUNIOR WA AND THE GIRLS CLUB OF CHRIST CHURCH, ANGLICAN

May 26, 1933 gave a presentation at the Legion Hall, Athalmer.

"Alice in Wonderland"

Cast- Alice - Frances Ashworth
Fairy Queen-Dorothy Gregson
Mock Turtle-Lucy Pennington
Mad Hatter -Margery Saunders
Duchess-Betty Pennington
Cook- Violet Pietrosky
Griffin-Edith McLean
Dormouse-Margery Foyston

"PIGS AND PEPPER"

Songs, recitations and dances

The Gavotte- "Shrimps"- Ruth Saunders, Doreen Johnston, Marion Cleland and Rita James.

"Lobsters"- Allison Cleland, Lillian, Frances and Jessie Lim.

"Oysters"- Sheila Wilton, Petrina Stanford, Florence McGuinness, Ruth Palmer and Marion Cartwright.

Two tiny Oysters, Sheila Wilton and Petrina Stanford danced the Irish Jig and the Fairy Queen sang "Fairy Moon".

MIDWIFERY ON THE RANCH

(BY RON EDE SR.)

Ah, yes! What a sight on that moonlit night,
In the snow and the bitter weather,
The heifer and Jim, with the newborn calf,
trudging up through the field together.

It was calving time on Jimmy's Ranch
And he was having troubles,
A few of the babies had to be pulled,
And some cows were having doubles;
The weather was bad - - his old thermometer
showed it was 10 below,
And the calving corral and the nearby fields
Were inches deep in snow.

Jim had spent an exhausting day,
But he finally got to bed,
He hit the pillow like a rock
And was sleeping the sleep of the dead,
When the damndest bawling started up - -
A heifer was having a calf,
Her first-time baby, and Jim could tell
She felt she was torn in half.

Jim jumped up and pulled on his boots,
And put on his cowboy hat
And went outside in long underwear - -
He had nothing over that;
He opened the gate to the calving pen
And surveyed the noisy din,
And there was the heifer with her calf,
Halfway out and halfway in.

So Jim prepared to be midwife,
He picked up a length of rope,
And he got it on the half-born calf
And started to pull..... And hope,
But the frightened heifer had had enough;
She jumped to her feet and ran
Straight out the gate and down the field,
With Jim a-hanging on.

No moonlit night ever saw such a sight,

As that cow bawled down the field,
The half born calf dangling from her rear - -
It just didn't want to yield.
And there, on the end of a 40 foot rope,
Was Jim being pulled in full stride,
In his cowboy hat and long underwear
With the tailgate flapping wide!

A sudden pull and the calf was born
And fell to the ground with a plop.....
The pain was over, the heifer looked 'round
Then came to a sudden stop;
Jim braked, too, but he fell on his face
And skidded along in the snow,
And he hollered and cursed and wished his herd
In that hot place down below.

The heifer completed her mothering bit
Out there in the snow and cold,
Then Jim gathered up the newborn calf
And carried it back to the fold.
His ears were frozen, his body was cold,
And his feet felt like chunks of lead,
But he held in his arms a bit of life that,
But for him, would now be dead.

Ah, Yes! What a sight on that moonlit night,
In the snow and the bitter weather,
The heifer, and Jim, with the newborn calf,
Trudging up through the field together.

(compiled by- Sandy McKay 2003)