

VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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**Kootenay Sam
William Taynton**

“A good day hunt.”

Kootenay Sam is pictured here with William Taynton. Early 1900's.

No one contacted could positively identify Kootenay Sam, however, Pat McBryan from Golden says it's possible that this could be Samuel, who was married to Catherine. They had the following children: Pierre Sam who married Catherine Abel, Sophia Sam who married Dominic Nicholas, Mathias, Simon, and Marie. 1881 census show Sam 39, Catherine 33, Marie Sam 13, Pierre Sam 4, and Louis Sam age 2.

Pierre and Catherine (Abel) had the following children: Marti Pierre Sam married Rosie Moore. Louie Paul Sam married Gertrude Gonzago and a woman named Madeline. Dominic Nicholas married Sophia Theresa Catherine Sam. Their children were: Alice, married Alban White, Josephine married ??, Louis, Phyllis Felicity, Elizabeth, Toby married to Angelica (Gonzago?), Amelia and Sarah.

Sarah was 1 year old in the 1921 census.

William Walter Taynton is the pioneer who can claim the longest residency in the Windermere area.

May 1887 brought him his first glimpse of the Valley and since then he has been interested in or associated with many of the enterprises which have made the district what it is today.

Early days gave him a variety of activities. He worked on the survey of the CPR through the Valley; he saw boating on the Columbia, for the two Taynton brothers, Jack and William, built their own bateau for freighting from Golden to the head of the lake. He prospected and at one time owned claims above present Mineral King Mine but let them revert to the government. With his brother he farmed in the Valley, concentrating on cattle; he was in the hotel business with Hugh Gordon, an early hotel man of the district and he was foreman for the government experimental farm at Invermere and later at Windermere before his retirement.

Of all these activities, Billy Taynton thinks he enjoyed the prospecting most, particularly placer mining.

There isn't much in this valley Billy Taynton is not aware of. Many of the latest enterprises are old stuff to him. Take the Jumbo Pass for instance. He went over the Jumbo in July 1886 with Dave Larmour, nine other men and thirteen horses. Ed Woods was foreman of the group and Taynton and Larmour went ahead to pick up Fred Wells trail as well as they could. Wells had gone over about 1895. They found two of Wells' camps and in one camp they found skin of a slab of bacon.

Mr. Taynton remembers Sam Brewer and his wife, Helen, and son Hope arriving in the Valley in 1888.

He saw them approaching on horseback, the little boy sitting up in front of his mother on the horse.

William Taynton was born in Ross, or Herefordshire, England and came to Canada in 1883 at about age 13. With his parents he came to Winnipeg, then to Caron, near Moose Jaw. He returned to Winnipeg during the Riel Rebellion in 1885 and stayed there until 1887.

In the meantime, his elder brother, John Hopkins Taynton, well known in this Valley as "Jack" through many years, until he moved to Kimberley. He was packing for the construction of the CPR through Roger's Pass. Jack wrote his younger brother suggesting that he come west to join him.

William took up the suggestion and the two brothers came to Windermere. 'What a lovely valley', Billy Taynton thought then, and the passing years have given him no reason to change his mind. Watching the years place their mark on the Valley has been a fascinating pastime for him.

The two brothers had a shack on the Upper Lake, "Taynton's Hillahee" Ranch on what was once the Bellamy Ranch. (Now McKersie Ranch or Thunderhill Ranch.) Jack went to Winnipeg in 1888 to see his parents and Billy stayed alone. His nearest neighbor was George Geary at his stopping place at the end of the lake. (Fairmont.) Jack married while in Winnipeg and brought his wife back to the Windermere Valley.

When Jack returned, Billy decided to strike out on his own and worked with the Columbia River Lumber Co. at Brisco. There he got word that Jack had sold the Ranch to Jim Brownrigg. So the brothers joined forces again and went to Sinclair Hot Springs (East Firlands) where they partnered with Charlie Lewis, ranching for a time. Here Sinclair Taynton, Jacks son, was born in 1890. The first white child born in the Windermere District.

They located to Brisco after that and then Jack and his family went to the West Kootenay and Billy came back to Windermere where he took up a lease on property at Windermere from R.L.T. Galbraith and farmed it.

William Taynton was married in Fort Steele in 1899 to Miss Edith Wilks, whom he met in Winnipeg when she was a little girl. When he returned to Winnipeg ten years later, she was a young lady and in spite of her gentleness and charm, a young lady of sufficient strength and forcefulness to withstand the rigors of western pioneer life. They farmed at Windermere.

In 1912 Mr. Taynton was supervisor of plotwork at the Experimental Farm at Invermere and they lived there moving with the farm to Windermere in 1929 and remaining there until he retired in 1932.

They then built their lakeshore home at Invermere where they resided until Mrs. Tayntons death in July 1940. For the past few years Mr. Taynton has lived next door with his only son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Taynton.

Billy Taynton has not lost many of the interests of his younger years. His great delight in wild flowers persists and he is still an ardent gardener. His lakeside flower and vegetable garden would be a credit to many a younger man.

In earlier years he was keen about amateur dramatics and performed in many a play for the Red Cross, church organizations and other community endeavors.

One of his interesting mementos of the early days in the Valley is the original mail pouch carrier in the Windermere in 1887.

(Museum Files)

Photo: Avy (Taynton) Nicholson Files

Sanford Fleming

was the CPR's first engineer-in-chief. Born in Kircaldy, Scotland in 1827, he proposed a workable plan for the CPR. To survey possible routes, he and a small party including a Scottish Presbyterian Minister travelled over 5000 miles in three months, often on foot.

Editors note:

In our May 2022 news there was an article about Joe Hanna being the “Walking Boss.” We had a few inquiries as to what a walking boss was. We contacted John Ronacher and his friend Chuck Burns wrote:

“The Walking Boss was the foreman on the job. He may not have always been the most liked but he would be responsible for getting the tasks for the day done. He was responsible for making sure everything ran smoothly, from saws being sharp to crews being assigned and working. Haulers were getting the wood out and probably the most important, insuring the kitchen had food prepared at the end of the day. He was constantly walking from one place to another. Yes, there were horses to ride between sites, but the name came from walking.”

(Thanks John Ronacher)

June 1948

A near tragedy occurred in the Columbia River at Athalmer when Earl Hansen, the eight year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Hansen of Athalmer, was caught in the river current while bathing. The child, with another boy, was playing in the flooded area near his home when he got out of his depth and was swept by the current into the river stream.

A sister, Mrs. Clowers, jumped in fully clothed and swam to the boy but he was too heavy for her to assist him. Fortunately, John Kroepfl was tying up his speed boat and saw the incident and was able to start up the boat and rescue the two in the river.

Hot weather has aggravated flood conditions in Athalmer where several houses are isolated and are being reached by catwalks. One family has had to move from their home. The Columbia measures 8 feet. Toby Creek left its channel and flooded behind Ronacher’s mill. Wilmer high school students have been unable to reach Invermere and Horsethief Creek bridge is being threatened.

Lautrup Family

(By Berta Moore)

In the fall of 1928, Wally and Jens Lautrup came to Edgewater to see what it was like. They were promised work in the mill in winter and lumber to build with, if they bought land. They bought 48A and had a house on it before the snow was flying. The next year they cleared land, put up a barn, and got some farm implements and stock and were doing really well. Then the Depression came. The mill closed down. There was no market for farm produce. To keep from starving and get a little cash, Wally got a job in the Park.

In the spring of 1933, he met Dagny in Calgary where she was working. They were married in November. By that time the Depression really had hold. Wally was laid off in the Park. They were told by a Danish Minister that New Brunswick had lots of nice inexpensive farms. They tried that, but found it was worse there and they didn’t like the climate. Back to Edgewater, but Jens had married and taken over the farm. So they bought another one with a house on it and in 1948 built the first Tourist Cabins on it and have been in that business ever since.

Steady employment and a steady payroll made for a stable community.

Edgewater was a lively community through the years the mill ran, but in 1966 Edgewater Sawmills was forced to sell the mill and timber. Big business had come into the Valley and all the small mills were gone. Only Edgewater and Athalmer Ronachers were still operating. Impossible to operate on the quota, both these mills sold out one after the other. It was a sad day for Harry Moore, after 42 years lumbering. Sad for the town too. Steady workers moved to get work elsewhere and the loss of a healthy payroll was evident.

Houses are in demand. Seniors and young people with families needing homes. The Improvement District Board is working on water problems, hopefully to have a solution shortly. The town will survive.

Game Wardens

As settlement increased, crimes on the open range were a concern. In 1917-1918, Const. R.F. Mills was the first Provincial Police Officer who worked with the Game Wardens. Game Wardens and Police Officers, together, continued to enforce the Laws/ rules of the traplines, big game guiding, hunting and fishing and licensing.

1906- Jack Taynton was the first official Game Warden in the Windermere District.

1912- Everet Bogardus

1918-1930- Walter Nixon

1930-1940- Alex Sinclair

1940-1950- Butch Tyler

1950-1960- Jack McKill

In **1956** the Game Dept. branch became part of the newly formed Dept. of Recreation and Conservation.

1960-1970- Buzz Harmsworth was the Game Warden/Conservation Officer.

The area patrolled by the Wardens was north of Radium, south to White Swan Lake, east to Alberta border and west to the Purcell Wilderness.

There were also National Park Game Wardens after the completion of the Banff Windermere Highway in '1922. These were appointed:

1925-1936-Dudley Harrison

1928-1936-Hope Brewer.

Other rangers in the park were Gordon McKay, Jim Dilworth, and J. Meredith.

(Museum Files)

Did you know that marmalade was invented by a Scot?

A shipment of oranges from Seville, Spain was so bitter that nobody would buy them. A family named Keiler bought them and made marmalade after adapting the family jam recipe. They sold it from a grocer's shop. James Keiler set up the world's first marmalade factory using his mother's recipe.

Did you know that a Scot began the Canadian Bible Society?

James McGregor was born in Comrie Parish, Scotland in 1759. He was sent to Nova Scotia as an unpaid missionary. He was the founder of the Canadian Bible Society.

Museum Update

Good News: We will start gatherings in September.

First Guest Speaker-

September 22,2022, 2p.m. at the Museum. Sherry Dewey will share with the membership her trip on the St. Lawrence River.

The first Old Movie will be Sunday September 25 at 7 p.m. at the Museum.

Sorry that the Museum has been closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We did not get a summer student. But even though the Museum is closed, the grounds are open.

J.D. Jeffery, our curator has the Museum open Thursday through to Monday with special activities for any children that are travelling with their families. She has reported an average of 25 people a day with a high of 43 people on July 21st. She hosted students from Eileen Madson Primary School in June and now she has appointments for the Little Beaver Daycare.

Thankyou to all of the people that have offered to have their names on a volunteer work bee list. Volunteers are important to the Museum!

Our Opening Tea in June was very successful. The morning rain stopped and the sun came out in time for tea at 2p.m. on the grounds. Everyone enjoyed music by Greg Scott. The tea opened with God Save the Queen in honour of Queen Elizabeth's 70th year of being our Queen.

Thankyou to our faithful members who have been supporting our Society for many years and welcome to the new members that joined up during the tea.