

Glimpses Into the Past

Written not as a monument to history,
but in hopes that these tales will bring
back a few happy memories.

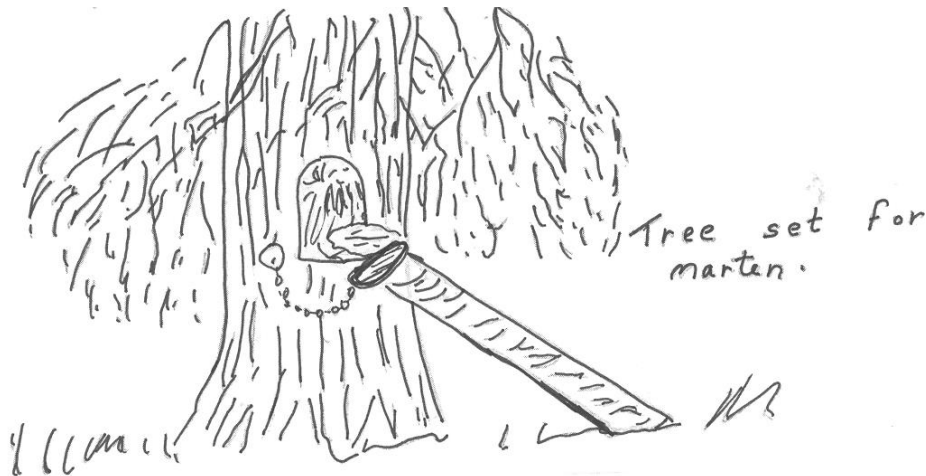
C. W. Shook, 1972

To my relatives, friends, and neighbours in the
Clearwater Valley.

To the Valley that was home from 1934 to 1971

Sincerely,

Charlie



A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST

As spacecraft carry men and materials to the moon and shiny aircraft fly at the speed of sound, let's relax for a few moments and try to imagine the more leisurely pace of a mere sixty years ago. There were no super jets, no shiny automobiles, no frozen food plants or pulp mills to clutter up the landscape; there were mountains, forests and wildlife, lakes and streams, all as created, and there were men who fitted into this rugged environment.

The first human element in the Clearwater Valley were the Indians, who used our valley, not so much as a place to live, but spent considerable time here in search of food. There were two camps that would indicate winter habitation. One small encampment of two house pits is on the south side of Hemp Creek about one half mile upstream from its junction with the Clearwater River. A few arrowheads have been found on the small lookout point nearby. A larger camp of up to ten winter houses is to be found along the Clearwater River near White Horse Bluffs. On an island a short distance downstream are about one hundred storage pits where the dried salmon were stored for winter use. Here the spring salmon were easily harvested as they came up the river to their spawning grounds. Summertime camps were at C. Ludtke's place and at the Frenchy place, used as the Indians trapped beaver and fished the river for salmon. Hunting camps were on Raft, Trophy and Battle Mountains, and in Indian Valley near Stevens Lakes, where a semi-permanent hunting camp indicates use during the late fall or even during the winter months. These encampments were used while the Indians hunted deer, ground squirrels, marmots, goats and caribou.

When we think of the Indians, we have a tendency to think only of the Shuswap band at Chu Chua. The Canim Lake band were friendly with the Chu Chuas and mingled quite freely with them. During the fall caribou hunts, these bands often worked together as they hunted the Battle Mountain plateau.

At one time vast herds of caribou, migrating from east to west, passed through the Clearwater Valley. Coming from the east, they would cross the North Thompson River

near Wire Cache, move into our valley near Stevens Lakes, pass to either side of Clearwater Lake, then out to the west by going up Lickskillet Creek and out past Horsefly Lake. Pack trains moving over the old C.P.R. survey trail in the 1880's were sometimes obliged to stop and wait for the caribou to pass as they came upon large numbers of the animals crossing the river near Avola. This movement took place during the early summer when the caribou were shedding their winter coats. An early settler at Birch Island, Mr. Hawkey Norris, told me that although he had never seen the migrating caribou, the shed hair that lined the river banks as far downstream as his ranch, plus a few drowned animals carried by the stream, would indicate that a goodly number of caribou had crossed over. During the fall and winter, an easterly movement took place, but it was not so spectacular as that of spring, with the animals moving in small scattered bands, usually farther to the north. Only a few used the same trail in the spring.

This migration was used in part by the Chilcotin Indians as a trail to the plains where they traded with the Blackfeet and, also, by the Blackfeet in their raid and trade into the interior of this province.

As the caribou herds began to decrease in the last half of the 1800's, the Chilcotin Indians dominated portions of this old migration route and dealt very cruelly with any other tribe that they met. One of their encampments was near Stevens Lake. The rings of dirt that had been banked up against their teepees are still visible and would indicate occupation during the late fall and early winter. At several of the smaller lakes on the floor of Indian Valley, they built long wing fences leading to a narrow opening on the shore of the lakes. As the caribou were chased through the V-shaped traps and into the water, they were quite easy to spear as they swam around in the small lake. Eddy Fortier of Chu Chua trapped in Indian Valley in 1914 and he told me that at that time there was still evidence of the hunting traps. The area has since burned over so that little remains.

It was near this camp that the Shuswap hunting party was so badly treated by the more powerful and war-like Chilcotins. The fight took place on the caribou hunting grounds used by both tribes, possibly as the declining caribou population made hunting less successful. The battle probably involved no more than 50 or 60 warriors, but little is known of the location or the reasons why. In the 1880's, Benjamin McNeil, then a lad of ten accompanied his father on a prospecting trip to Battle Mountain. The dead of the battle had not been buried, but along with their weapons had been thrown in a pile. At the time of the discovery, the bones were somewhat scattered and, to the McNeils, it appeared as though the battle had taken place about 5 years previous. Thirty to thirty-five bodies were at this site. Herman Ortchig found remains of human dead, a spear point stuck in a tree, and other evidence of the struggle. His location, as the one given by the McNeils, indicates that the battle took place in the lower end of Bull Valley, on the south side of Battle Mountain. Indian Valley, Fight Mountain, Fight Creek and Lake are the only remembrances we have of the occasion.

Lickskillet Creek was also a favoured caribou hunting area and was the scene of a similar battle, but on a smaller scale. A band of Canim Lake Indians was camped on the south

side of the creek while hunting for caribou. A band of Chilcotin warriors, also hunting along the north side of the creek made their appearance. Arrows flew thick and fast; the deep narrow canyon of Lickskillet Creek separated the two groups. The Chilcotins, possibly because of their greater numbers, or maybe their more war-like nature, deployed a few of their warriors opposite their enemy, ducking in and out among the trees to appear as though they were in great number, the balance of the braves moved upstream to where the canyon began. By tying a few saplings together with vines, they pushed this long string of poles out into the current and soon had it lodged on the far shore. By hanging onto the poles the war party crossed the swift stream and was on the same side as their enemy. The exchange of war-whoops and arrows died down at sunset and life in the Shuswap camp returned to normal.

After the Canims were asleep, the enemy slipped quietly into camp. The luckless Canims had no chance to defend themselves. There were killed outright, while the women and children were taken prisoner. One squaw escaped, the only survivor to make her way back to Canim Lake. She crossed the Mica Mountains alone and brought the word of the defeat to her people.

During the 1880's, two Blackfoot warriors were killed at Mahood Lake by the father of the late Tommy Archie. As the Canim Indian paddled his dugout canoe close to the bluffs on the south shore of Mahood Lake, the two Blackfoot braves dived into the water beside the startled Archie. The object was to get the canoe and maybe a prisoner or scalp, too. They did neither. The quick thinking Canim promptly dispatched them with his paddle. Tommy, then only a lad, was at their camp on the west end of Mahood Lake when his father brought in the scalps.

The small band of Indians that inhabited the winter camp near White Horse Bluffs were most likely a close part of the Canim Lake group. If more work were done, I have no doubts that other similar winter houses would be found along the Clearwater River near the Horseshoe. The seven or eight graves near the Ray farm are of quite recent origin, but could be near a traditional fishing ground. Easy access to caribou hunting, along with good goat and bear areas would make the Horseshoe a favoured area.

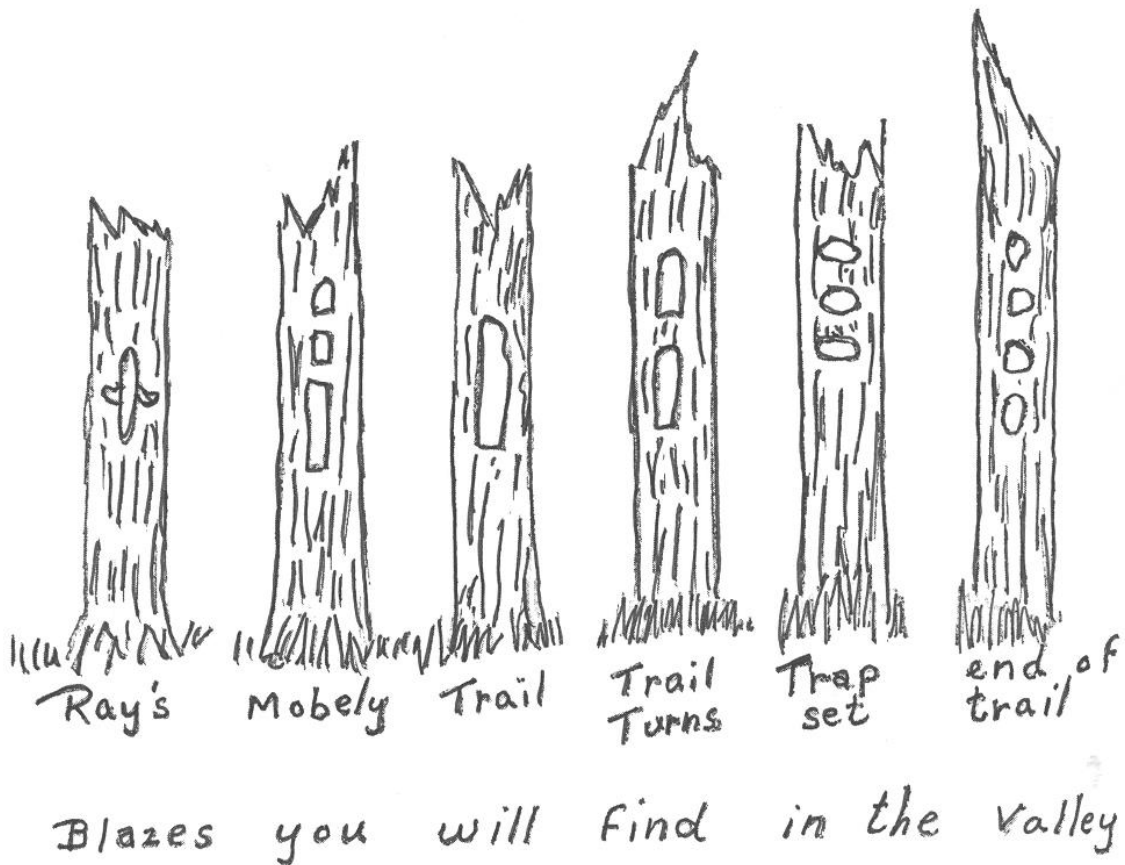
The Okelk Oklutens or the Superior Ones occupied the choice fishing grounds on the North Thompson River. A large permanent camp was established where the Clearwater River joins the North Thompson. The tremendous runs of spring salmon supplied their needs yearly, while the good deer and caribou hunting on the nearby mountains added to their wealth. Berries of many kinds were abundant. A sister camp was at the mouth of Raft River, where the excellent fish runs supplied the bulk of the band's needs.

The basalt used in making of arrow and spear heads must have been readily available when one considers the volume of some of the piles of chips remaining from sites where the points were made. A large quantity of chips was found at Charlie Ludtke's place as it is near a lookout point on Assinaboine Bluffs. A large pile of chips remain there from the fashioning of projectile points by the scouts while standing watch over the river for possible enemy canoe-borne raiding parties. One beach at Myrtle Lake has produced

several broken or unfinished points plus some chunks of basalt that had been rejected for the purpose. Good quality points have been recovered from the summer camp at the Frenchy place. John Ray told me that the main supply for the Canim Lake band was to the north and west of Clearwater Lake and it is most likely that there were other sources nearby.

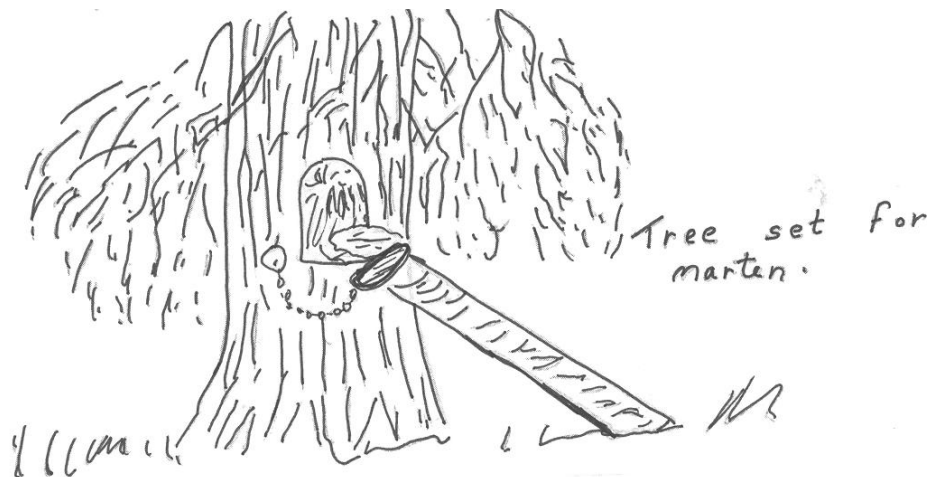
Red ochre, used by the Indians for their painting, is readily available throughout the valley. Trout Creek valley below the Defosses place could have been one place it was collected, the big iron deposit west of Battle Mountain another.

The only known Indian paintings are on the bluffs of Mahood Lake. On the south a dozen or more stick men have been painted on the rock walls and on the north shore a few otter or bear tracks no doubt mark a favoured fishing spot. Many such paintings have no doubt been missed, having faded with time.



One story or legend that has survived the ages is the one which involves the North Thompson Indians and an influx of people, reported as being 500 or so in number. These people had followed the migrating caribou herds westward until they reached the North Thompson River near McMurphy. Here they left the caribou and, attracted by the easier river travel, embarked on what rafts they could make up. They were discovered and attacked by a small band of Shuswap warriors near Vavenby in an effort to delay their progress south. The Indians were badly outnumbered and soon retreated downstream to the larger camps at the mouth of Raft and Clearwater Rivers. The much strengthened group of warriors once more attacked the people, the battle taking place around the shores of Harby's Lake (Dutch Lake). The Indians were again outnumbered and out fought so again retreated to the areas where Kamloops now stands. With the combined strength of the North Thompson, Shuswap, Thompson, and Nicola tribes the influx of unknown people were completely destroyed at very heavy cost in death to the Indians. These people were not Indians and are believed by some of the older Indians of today to have been Eskimos who were following the large caribou migrations. Could it be that the paintings on the rock walls at McMurphy were made by these people?

Had these people not left the chase at the North Thompson River they would have in a few more miles entered our valley.



Mr .
Herman Ortchig
Raft River P.O., B.C.

Although he was not the first one to take up land in the valley, Herman was the first to build a cabin, clear land and put up hay. 'Erman was a fairly old man when he came about the time of the railroad. He left his family at Riley, Alberta and came alone to make his way in the backwoods, trapping his main activity. He was a giant of a man, in later years walking with the aid of one or two sticks, yet to the very end he kept to the hills and lived the tough life. His flame red whiskers had long turned white, but wherever he went, his trademark, the pack board was always on his back.

His first homestead was just north of Camp creek, later owned by Alex Fage. Being the first habitation on the long trail in from the Thompson, Herman's naturally became the stopping over place as the few settlers move in and out over the trail. He kept no horses, but did put up hay for use of the traveling packers.

In 1918, Alex Fage, or Frenchy as he was called, was an archenemy of old Herman, and in order to get rid of the old man, he offered to buy his place. The price was \$1800, a lot of money at that time, but to Frenchy it was worth every penny of it to move Herman out. Upon selling, Herman filed application on the lot adjoining to the north, at a cost of \$2.00, and built a cabin there, almost in the shade of his old home.

He later moved some eight miles farther north to Trout Creek, where he built and maintained a neat cabin, a base camp for his Battle Mountain trap line. This home site was destroyed after Herman's death, by the fire of 1926.

Prior to 1927 there were no registered trap lines. The law was that anyone may trap anywhere they wished, provided that the lines be well blazed and not come within a mile of the lines of other trappers. Tom Sundt had trapped Indian Valley during the winter of 1921, did not come back in 1922, so Herman took over that line in 1923. Sundt returned however and ordered Herman off. What actually took place, no one knows, but at the Christmas time, the usual time for trappers to come in off the lines, old Herman failed to show up. A search was made in January, and the old man was found dead in a cabin at Stevens Lake. Late that spring he was buried where he died.

Everyone called him old Herman. Many like myself, heard many tales of the old timer, but did not know that Herman was not his surname. Herman Ortchig was the right handle, but that only confuses the issue. Old Herman he remains.

Herman did a lot of prospecting as he roamed the hills. He found the coal on Hemp Creek and also that to the north at Sand's. The silver-lead-zinc of Discovery Hill at the

top end of Grouse Creek and later explored by Ormsby Mining Co. in 1955-56 was first brought to light by Ortchig. He was reported to have brought some high-grade silver ore from upper Bear Creek, possibly from the same source as that brought out by the Indians at an earlier date, and which has been searched for many times since, but found by none. He found a good deposit of iron and related ores on the west side of Battle Mountain, and the gold showings in Garter Creek below Sock Lake.

A well-known prospector, Angus Horne, told me he had heard that this man Herman had found tungsten ore and crystals of gem quality on the Trophy Mountain area, but to date none, including Horne, has produced a clue to where they may be.

“Ol’ Erman ‘e know, ‘E are dere,” Maybe if we should meet Herman Ortchig in the great hereafter, he will tell us some of the secrets of our valley, the secrets that lie buried with him at Stevens Lake.



MR. J. B. RAY
HORSESHOE, CLEARWATER, B. C.

Along the Fraser River west of McBride, a string of freight barges are tied to the shore, being loaded for the return trip to Prince George. Down the river in a canoe comes John Ray, a husky young man of 25, and a trapping partner, a young fellow who’s name was lost as was his life a few moments later. This is 1909 and the men are returning from a winter of trapping on the Fox River, a tributary of the McGregor.

The two trappers were warned of treacherous waters ahead and offered a ride on the slower, but reasonably safe, barges. The invitation was not accepted, however, and the partners paddle off down stream.

The barges were soon shoved off and before long reach the foot of the rapids. Here they find Ray clinging to a large boulder in mid-stream and no sign of the other man, their furs or canoe. John was taken aboard and a search was mad for the missing outfit. The canoe was later found, but no sign of the man or cargo. John was taken to Prince George. Ten days later with a complete new outfit, he set off downstream and it is that same fall that he first came to this valley.

Of all the old timers, John Ray was the most colourful an individual, his mountain ways and backwoods ideas stayed with him through life, lending at times a sharp contrast to the ways and thoughts of others.

John's first winter was spent with the Canim Lake Indians. During the winter smallpox and measles spread throughout the Indian encampment. John did good work among his sick friends and saved many who otherwise would have died. As a reward for his help, Chief Sam gave John a large tract of land to be his trap-line. This land lay to the east of the Clearwater River.

John and his brother Sam trapped this new trapping area during the winter of 1910-11. Their headquarters was a cave on the shore of Azure Lake and the only shelters out on the lines were brush lean-tos. Sam left the next spring, but John stayed on in his domain trapping bears along the Clearwater River. There had been no land survey at that time, so John built a small log cabin on the shore of Lily Pad Lake (Alice), and here he made his headquarters for many years.

At that time the nearest supply point, to which there was any sort of trail, was 100 Mile House and Clinton. This route involved the trail from 100 Mile House to Canim Lake, down Canim by raft, by trail from Canim to Mahood Lake, again by raft along this waterway, then 15 miles by trail to the Horseshoe of the Clearwater River where John made his home. Luxuries would be few as can be imagined, when you consider all the food thus moved was on the back of the trapper and maybe a couple of dogs.

During the fall of 1911, Holly North came to the Horseshoe and built a cabin across the river from Ray. They trapped together that winter, with North trapping to the west of Clearwater Lake.

In 1914, John Ray got a call from the United States Government to report for military duty, so he returned for the last time to his native Washington state. He was not accepted by the army. With his brother, Jack, he returned to the Horseshoe. Jack did not stay more than the one winter so John was once more alone.

It was about this time that the trail leading from the North Thompson River was cleared out past Ray's cabin and on to Clearwater Lake. This was a round about route. Leaving

the Little Clearwater River at the old Forestry cabin, the trail went northerly past Smith Lake, west of McLeod Mountain, across the Murtle River at Guage Hill then back to the south end of Clearwater Lake by way of Five Finger Lake.

John used this trail for the first time in 1914. The only store on the upper North Thompson was Fennell's at Chu Chua. Even with the coming of the railroad at that time, the supply line was still a long one.

The coming of the railroad brought other troubles for Ray though. More and more trappers appeared on the scene, lured by the high fur prices and the persistent Hounding of Conscription Officers. There were no registered trap-lines at that time and the laws, if heeded, stated that a trapper may lay out his trap-line wherever he wished so long as it was well blazed and did not come closer than one mile from the line of another trapper. It was imperative that John's gift from Chief Sam would be encroached upon and trouble would soon develop.

Austin Cook trapped one winter with Ray. His line ran from the Horseshoe of the Clearwater River easterly to the north of Mud Lake (Kostal) to the pass east of Frances Lake, so named after his wife. This lake was later renamed McDougal. The Cooks lived in the cabin built by Holly North.

After being here for 15 years, John took out citizenship papers and filed on the land he had waited so long to own. He built a new and better house up by the mineral spring and near a good water supply. Over the years that followed he cleared off about 20 acres of land. His first beasts of burden, other than pack dogs were mules. These animals were brought in during early spring but played out on the trail some five miles from home. The jawbone of one still lies beside the trail where the two mules died.

John, in later years, got some milk goats; had previously got horses now that a trail existed between his home and the North Thompson Valley.

In 1933 John married a local girl, Alice Ludtke, and took her back to the Horseshoe to live. In the late fall of 1934 their daughter was born. In early January, with the help of her brother Fred, the four made the fifteen mile trip by horseback from the end of the road at Dave Anderson's to the Horseshoe. The snow lay two feet deep on the trail, the small brush was bent down by the heavy snow and had to be chopped to clear the way. Two tough days of travel, the horses were played out, but the mother and infant daughter, Nancy, were safely taken home. When heard of the next spring, no serious after effects had been suffered.

About this time John acquired a flock of 30 sheep. These were taken to the Horseshoe and supplied the family with wool and meat. A few cows also were brought in and the goats were eaten for meat.

I recall being camped at the old Forestry Service cabin at the Horseshoe, a half-mile or so from Ray's place. I was guiding a group of fishermen, which included a man from Wako, Texas and his 16 year old daughter. One afternoon John came padding down the

trail in his bare feet for a visit. After he had returned home, the girl asked, “Doesn’t that man wear shoes?” “Sure he does,” I replied, “He puts on his snowshoes in the winter.” “He does?” came her innocent reply.

Every time I think of this I feel a little guilty. The girl had never seen snow in her lifetime and probably had no inkling what a snowshoe was.

John had his own brand of religion. It was based on many of the old mountain customs of his homeland plus his own interpretation of the Bible. His version held great hopes for Joseph Stalin, the King of the North, but this hope was all knocked into a cocked hat later, by a Mr. Kruschew in his denunciation of Stalin.

I well remember the first time John Ray drove his team and lumber wagon into our yard in the fall of 1934. Although we had never seen him before, the recognition of a small blue mare that Dad had sold to John had introduced him to us. There he slouched on the seat of the wagon, his floppy, wide-brimmed hat was pulled down over many months growth of curly grey hair. His skin was well tanned, his rather prominent nose had taken the full brunt of the summer’s sun and his pale blue eyes were clear and bright, but slow in their movement that took in everything as they surveyed the homestead. He wore faded blue denim bib overalls and heavy denim shirt, but his feet were bare.

The thousand and one stories we had been told or had overheard about old John raced through our young brains, and here before us was the old pirate we had so longed to see. Had he been rowing a boat rather than driving a team, the picture would have been complete.

Great was our joy when John accepted my father’s invitation to feed and rest his horses and to come share our mid-day meal. His slow and easy way of talking seemed to fit his outward appearance, but little by little the image of the swash-buckling pirate began to fade. Pirates didn’t talk this way nor did they talk of the home things such as family, horses, goats and sheep. We wanted to hear the blood chilling accounts of the scraps he had had with other trappers, the kind we had heard and believed from others. Here before our eyes, the renegade we had hope to get to know and idolize, began to become a very mild mannered common man who had far more intelligence and self control of his speech and emotions than the other trappers we had known. We kids were a bit bitter that our big hopes of a real live pirate had been shattered. We were even mad at John.

However, nothing is all bad. This tragic letdown did bring things into greater perspective and we were able to sort the wheat from the chaff when listening to the exaggerated tales of other men.

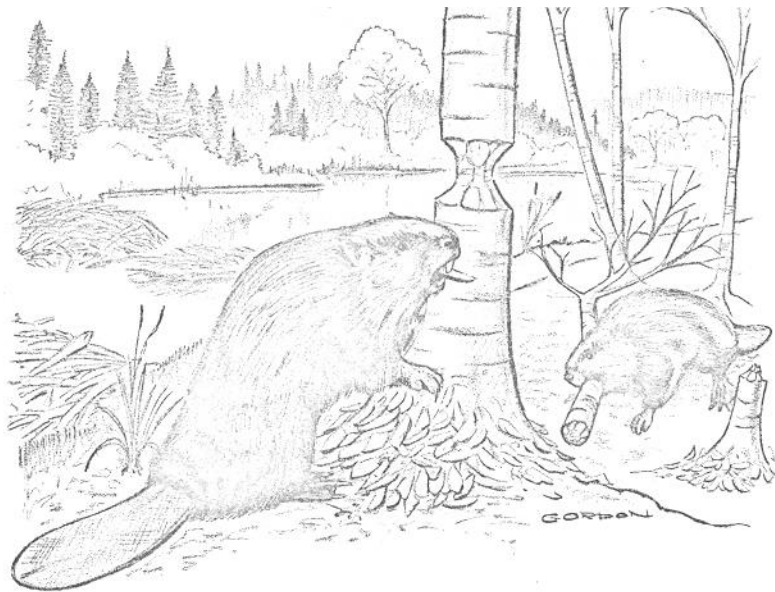
John’s age was always a good topic of conversation. He gave his age at various times, but no two were ever the same. To me his age remained the same, from the first meeting until his death 14 years later.

Later two boys were added to the Ray family. Douglas and Robert arrived and were taken to the Horseshoe home. Not too often the Ray family did come out together. On one occasion, I met them coming down the old trail by the Murtle River. John was in the lead on a small buckskin coloured horse, the two boys then about four and two years old, sound asleep, one on each side of Baby Blue's pack saddle, curled up in the bottom of burlap feed bags, then Nancy and her mother bringing up the rear, riding together, Nancy on her mother's lap.

I visited the Rays a few times, usually during the long winters, when near Christmas time, I would take their mail and maybe a present for the children. In spite of their isolation, the children were never shy and were the best mannered kids I have ever seen. Whether the credit should have gone to John or Alice I do not know, but they did do a good job.

The Ray family stayed on at the Horseshoe until 1946 when the family moved out to Blackpool. John stayed on in his domain until the fall of 1947. He had decided to sell his Horseshoe home and buy a small home closer to Kamloops so he could be with his family again. Shortly before Christmas that year he returned to his old home. As he was going out one morning to catch his horses and pack up some of his belongings to come out, he died on the trail leading to the barn.

Here on the land he loved and had ruled so long he died. He was buried under some birch trees along the small stream that ran past his house. No place could have suited him better.



1911 brought Mike Majerus to our valley. During the summers of 1911 and 1912, the land throughout the valley was being surveyed by a Mr. Archibald and Mr. Lee. Mike worked on this survey in 1911 and again in 1912. Mike quit the survey in a burst of temper and went to the Murtle River where he built a cabin, one mile above Dawson Falls and about ½ mile south of the river. He trapped south from this cabin to White Horse Bluffs and over Green Mountain.

In March of that year, 1913, Mike left the valley and headed south to Seattle where, with his old friend Pete McDougal, he promptly got into trouble. These unpredictable two took part in an I. W. W. strike. The authorities caught the leaders of the strike, hung them from the trusses of a railroad bridge, then loaded the rest of the strikers onto flatcars, and took them out to the bridge to view their leaders. Mike and Pete headed for Canada.

Mike was born in Luxembourg, that small country between Germany, France and Belgium. He must have been a fairly young man when he first came to our valley in 1911. He was an impulsive little fellow, doing things in a burst of action, always the show-off if an audience was available. However he did keep a watch over his friend Pete and made sure there was grub on Pete's table.

During the construction of the railroad up the North Thompson, Mike spent some of the summer months working there, and winters trapping on his line that now ran north from the Pyramid Mountains, west of the Kilpil, to Mud Lake (Kostal), then north over the west of the Goat Peaks. Mike nearly always trapped alone and did very well at it, too.

In 1914, as Mike worked on the railroad grade near the old ferry one mile west of Clearwater, a Conscription Officer came into camp signing up men for military duty. Many were caught, but little Mike made for the river. The ice was too thin for walking on so wiggling along on his belly, make made the far shore and safety. A few days later, while sitting in a hotel dining room at Birch Island, the same head hunter came in. Mike, as quick as a wink as out the back door and on his way up the valley to his cabin on the Murtle River.

Mike stayed on at his home near the Murtle, his years much the same from then on, trapping in the winter months, a trip or two to Kamloops to sell furs, a real bash for a few days with his trapper friends, Pete McDougal, Dave Anderson and, no doubt, a few free loaders along the way. If any money remained in their possession, they outfitted with food and traps for another year and returned to their isolated homes.

Mike's story is well mixed with the story of Pete, neither one quite complete without the other. About 1936, Mike pre-empted another quarter section of land north of his original homestead. Here he built a better cabin, hayshed and small barn and cleared a few acres of land for hay, winter feed for his usual one or two horses. Mike had no other animals, not even a dog that I ever remember.

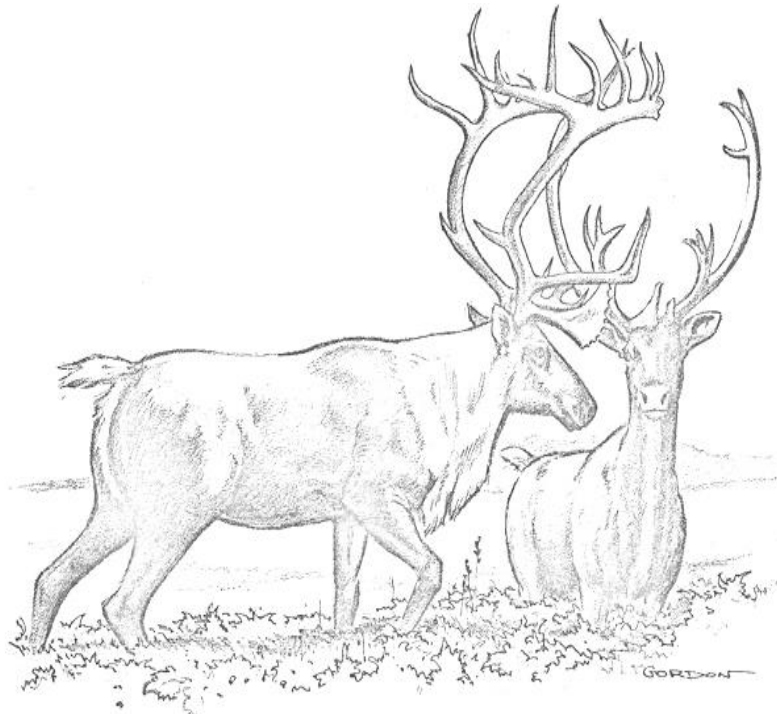
In 1946, Mike sold his trap-line and homestead to Mr. Ted Helset and myself. He moved to his cabin at Clearwater where he lived out his remaining days, free from the worries of poaching trappers and other imaginary evils.

With his old friend Dave Anderson, who had also moved to the village, their poker games and other activities were well attended by the influx of sawmill men who had recently come to Clearwater with Swanson's sawmill enterprise. Mike died in 1958, one of the first to build a cabin and call Clearwater Valley his home.

Pete McDougal, the harmonica playing little Scotsman, could really make your toes tap out the beat of his native Scottish music. A rather comical little cuss, his wizened features reminded you of a devilish little pixie, his pale blue eyes not functioning together, but with one looking upwards while the other looked downwards. His ears were nearly always bent down, held there by the too large hat that Pete usually wore. His shirts and overalls were also too large most of the time, as if the makers made one full fitting size and Pete just didn't seem to come into their classes. However, Pete had an agile brain, and as he often said, "Fine feathers do not make fine birds." We can overlook the outward appearances and accept the little prankster from within.

The Conscription officer that missed Mike Majerus, caught Pete and signed him up for military training. The army couldn't keep Pete long though and he was discharged in a few months.

Pete took up land in the valley in 1918, filing on Lot 3035. He did not do any building there, but stayed in the cabin of Charlie Moul, near the present Trophies Lodge. That winter he trapped Green Mountain. The next summer he filed on, and homesteaded the



land not held by Helmcken Falls Lodge. Here he built a small log cabin in which he lived until 1936 when he sold his trap-line to Howard Mobley and his homestead to the Hogue Bros. the following year.

Pete's trap-line ran from Stillwater on the Murtle River to Murtle Lake, the north past McDougal (Frances) Lake. He usually had a trapping partner, but on years when he did not, he and Dave Anderson trapped from the same headquarters cabin at the west end of Murtle Lake.

One prank Pete would pull successfully, on falls of heavy snow, as the trappers were returning from Murtle Lake. Pete's cabin at Stillwater was at the end of the broken out snowshoe trail and 14 miles of deep snow lay between there and home. On the morning of departure from Stillwater, Pete would be off long before the rest of the party, the snow flying from his snowshoes as he sped homeward. A mile or so from the cabin, the rest of the trappers would come upon Peter sitting on the stump, a sick man. "Don't worry about me boys, I'll be ok in a few minutes and catch up." He would catch up, but only after the others had the trail tramped out all the way home and dinner would soon be ready.

Pete bought the Cknute Anderson place, Lot 3061, at the mouth of Hemp Creek. Anderson and a one-armed man lived there a few years intending to raise sheep. They raised no sheep, but did make goodly quantities of home brew. About 1933, Peter traded this place to Mr. Lestander for a bottle of whiskey.

As the road was being built through the valley and had reached L. Rupell's place, Pete became foreman, this too a result of one of his pranks. Alex Gage was foreman, but he wanted to get his team on the payroll. In order to do this, he had to relinquish the foremanship. This he turned over to Pete after firing the previous team and teamster. Pete's first official function as foreman was to fire Frenchy and his team and to re-hire the other man. Pete held down the post until the road reached its destination at Dave Anderson's.

Pete's own explanation as to why the road climbed one hill just to go down the other side was, "One of my eyes looks up, and the other looks down", which they did, "and they just won't work on the level."

At times when Pete was a little short on cash, and he knew Mike Majerus had just sold some furs, Pete would ask for a grubstake of a couple hundred dollars. He had asked for and received many such grubstakes in the past, but for some reason never quite got around to paying Mike, not that he ever intended to do such a foolish thing. He might hurt Mike's feelings. Mike would fly into a rage and refuse to give the mooching Pete a single dime. Mike couldn't resist showing off his money, a weakness Pete well knew. "The only reason you won't give me any money, Mike, is because you haven't any." "Haven't any" was well stressed. "Haven't any, eh" and as Mike pulled out a fat roll of bills, Pete was sure of food for another year.

On selling his trap-line and later his homestead, Pete moved down to Clearwater. Mike had a cabin on property owned by a Mr. Yeoward, the town's Justice of the Peace. The cabin was suitable to Pete's needs so he moved in without the formality of asking permission. Mike was soon reconciled to Pete's living in his cabin rent free, but the local J. P. in several ways gave Pete to understand that the cabin was on his land, was his, and that a little rent would be a nice gesture of goodwill on Pete's part.

One dark night as the Honourable J. P. slept, and with the aid of a hand-powered winch, temporarily borrowed from the Dept. of Highways' bridge across the North Thompson, the friends of Pete moved the cabin onto land owned by Mr. Webber, then returned the winch before it became obvious it was missing. Surprised of course at what had taken place, Pete met the irate Mr. J.P. at the door the next morning. Of course the cabin was moved as a joke on himself, Pete explained, but his friends saw no need to surprise Pete any more by moving the shack back south. Pete could dream up things to stir up a little controversy to the end.

Pete McDougal died in late 1937 or early 1938 and lies buried in Pleasant Street Cemetery in Kamloops.

During the winter of 1912-13, Holly North and Alfred K. Mann packed in from the Cariboo to North's cabin at the Horseshoe. They trapped to the west of the Clearwater river and lake. In early March, the two were running low on grub so decided to head out for Chu Chua for more. With only a few pounds of beans to see them through their six-day trip, they headed down the Clearwater River on the shore ice.

Below Deer Creek, they were forced to leave the river. The two men breaking trail on snowshoes and the four-dog team pulling the light sled followed. They hit the Murtle River north of the Pyramids at dark. The temperature was 30° below zero, so knowing Mike Majerus had a cabin somewhere downstream, they decided to travel by the light of the moon rather than camp out.

A half-mile on their way, they were somewhat perplexed to realise that they were being followed by seven or eight wolves. The dogs, as soon as they discovered the wolves, ran away, the two men jumping aboard the small sled as they raced off downstream. On the jumbled ice a mile farther on the sled overturned, men and beans scattered on the rough ice.

The dogs were caught and tied, and as the wolves sat round in a semicircle howling and the whining, the bearded trappers set to work picking up those precious beans. At 30° below, picking beans by moonlight would not be fun, not to mention the real or imagined threat the wolves presented. The only real weapon at hand was a small camp axe.

The harvest over, the travellers started off down the river, the wolf pack staying some 200 yards behind keeping up a steady howl. Near where Helset's cabin now stands, they found Mike's snowshoe trail leading to his cabin a half-mile away. The wolves did not

leave the river, and once the fun was over, went down the ice minding their own business.

At the cabin they found that Mike had let only a few days earlier for Seattle. In the cabin were a few beans, some flour, and most important of all, a side of salt pork. On pork and beans and bannock, they came to the North Thompson River three days later, and on down to Mann's cabin at Blackpool.



COUGAR
*Stealthy predator
of the bush*

THE CLEARWATER DONKEY

A little steam donkey sits by the Clearwater shore,
Rusting away a half century or more,
Once proud of her rigging and with a full head of steam,
Brought the big cedar logs to the bank of the stream.

She came in from Ashcroft along the Cariboo Road,
Through 100 Mile, to Canim Lake by Forest Grove,
Down Canim Lake ice, winter travel was good,
By early spring they had reached the Mahood.

Down Mahood Lake by raft the donkey moved on,
To the foot of the lake where the grading was done.
On the talus rock slopes and the boulder strewn ground,
The donkey inched forward as the big gears turned round.

Wood for the fire was cut 'long the trail,
Water for the boiler from stream, lake or swale,
New skids were installed as the old ones wore thin,
The crew certainly laboured bringing the steam donkey in.

Past Jonah Lake, Flourmill, 'cross the slopes of Old Squaw,
To the Horseshoe of Clearwater, through Teepee Lake draw,
North along the Clearwater, across the flat lands,
To the last setting of the donkey in the big cedar stands.
Coast-like, on springboards, loggers cut the large trees,
With mainline and haul-back, they skidded with ease,
As the little steam engine turned the big gears,
And tooted the signals for the setter to hear.

All fall and all winter the logging went on;
By spring's rising waters the work was all done
For the little steam donkey, some logger's dream,
Piled a million feet of timber on the bank of the stream.

Just think of the problems if the donkey broke down,
Eighty miles inland from the nearest town,
It would take a full week to bring in the parts,
And tax to the limit the strongest of hearts.

Old timers remember, some say 'twas "fourteen",
The river was flooding, the grass turning green,
When the logs were turned loose on the Clearwater drive,
But there would be many a heartache before those logs arrived.

They jammed in the canyons and had to be blown loose;
They split on the rocks as they raced through a sluice;
They piled up on the islands, in the shallows were beached;
The crew was discouraged before Kamloops was reached.

The drive was a failure, no more logging was done,
The donkey was abandoned, the loggers' finances gone,
No more sound of her whistle or the puffings she made,
She sits silent and rusting in a small brushy glade.

Her whistle is missing, the cables all gone,
Made into bear snares by Indians, and so one by one
The pieces are plundered as white men invade,
The last setting of the donkey in the small forest glade.

Hunters' bullets pierce her boiler, but nobody cares
If her cables were unravelled to make the cruel snares
If her whistle was taken, or the fittings all gone.
She's just another relic whose work is all done.

Modern man sees the trees and the riches galore.
They don't see the proud donkey by the Clearwater shore
Or the work that she did to try to fulfill a dream,
Or some venturesome logger in the era of steam.

David Miku was born in Finland eighty and some years ago. His explanation of his nationality is that his mother was Swedish, his father Russian, so that makes him a Finlander. He was in the Finnish army for a spell before skipping out and coming to Canada. Once in Canada, he became David Anderson, and that is how we knew him.

Dave spent a few years in Ontario before coming to B.C. and to the Clearwater Valley. In 1918, he took up land at Hemp Creek. He never lived on the land he pre-empted, but with a Jack Zellars who owned and had a cabin on land adjoining. Dave was a trapper. His trap-line centered on Murtle, where he and a trapping partner, or with Pete McDougal, spent several months each winter. In later years Dave had a small tourist business built up, taking fishermen to Murtle Lake, and a few hunters kept him busy in the fall.

As Dave looked after the traps and tourists, Jack Zellars cleared a few acres of land and looked after a few cows, and the pride of his life, half-dozen old hens. Jack's feelings for his animals were profound. The most hell of a dandy good yearly steer, which Jack was so proud of, would often be four or five years old, but still a little yearling to Jack. Whether he missed the passing of time or whether the keeping of the animals young prolonged the day of execution, I do not know.

One time Dave asked my father to come help him butcher a pig. My dad walked the nine miles to Anderson's place. The water was heated and the then two year old pig was soon to die. "Poor piggy. Dave, you're not going to kill poor piggy are you?" Poor Dave, not wanting to hurt Jack's feelings called off the butchering. Dad walked the nine miles home again. They did finally get the hog butchered that fall.

Jack was a friend of we kids. He never tired of telling us stories, some of them of doubtful quality. One night as we sat on his screened veranda, swatting the mosquitoes that came in through the many holes in the screen, "Cracky doodle, hell yes, them's the bitenest mosquitoes, holy ol' my goodness how they stick that long stinger of theirs through your skin." He went on to explain how in dry years we get a certain kind of mosquito while in years of heavy rains we get "these little furry devils that crawl on the grass."

One evening as I was passing Jack's place, I called in to see how the old man was getting along. "Holy ol' my goodness, how it was hot sleeping last night. Didn't get much no real sleep, one of them horses of Helset's sat up there on the road and howled all night." One thing about Jack, he explained a situation so most anyone could understand.

Once or twice a year, Dave and Jack's place became a beehive of activity. With Mike Majerus as the chief supplier of the ingredients, Dave as brew master, Jack as chief advisor, and of course, Pete McDougal, associate and fellow drinker, much superior brew resulted from the combined efforts of the Big 4. When the kegs of good cheer were due to be tapped, the four co-owners and a few accidental visitors, who made sure of their timing by the odd scouting trip, made the little log cabin bulge with merrymaking. For several days the singing and shouting, a few sodden fights, and much arguing went on. On one such occasion Pete went to sleep under the table. On into the night the howling, singing and crying went on. Old Pete was dead, and a dead man needs to be buried. What a commotion as the remaining three set about to do the honours. Luckily, before they, in their handicapped condition could find a shovel, dig a hole and cover him over, Pete woke up and joined the party.

Dave was fond of telling tales of his exploits as a big game guide, but was so hard to understand in his monotonous monotone that very few people got the drift of his stories.

First time I ever saw Dave, he was sitting in our house talking to mother. The story he told will be remembered the rest of my life. It seems the local Forest Officer had found a fire that Pete McDougal had left still burning near the old trail on Grouse Hill.

"Now dat Cot tam see 'Arby tell dat Cot tam see Bete, 'Why in devein you leave dat Cot tam see fire on 'rouse hill?"

"Well, dat Cot tam see Pete tell dat Cot tam see 'Arby, what in develin you expose? I can not take me with it." To a ten year old this was a dandy.

A FOREST IS BURNED

During most of the summer of 1926 a small lightning strike smouldered away on a rockslide to the west of the Clearwater River, near the mouth of Bear Creek. A five or six mile trail was cut from the road near the Clearwater River bridge to the top of the bluffs above the fire. The fire was watched from across the river, but no control of the fire itself was undertaken. For weeks the weather was scorching hot and the little fire stayed on its rockslide.

On July 16, 1926, the little fire was picked by a vagrant wind, and soon all hell broke loose. The tiny blaze was built up to gigantic proportions that summer afternoon. It raced northward on the wind, the tinder dry ground cover of the steep slope adding fury to the flames. In but a few moments, sparks and flames had crossed the Clearwater River, the jack pine slopes in the canyon adding more tinder to the flames. The narrow valley and the tremendous heat generated by the fast moving fire created a draft, not unlike that which goes on in a chimney, only multiplied by millions of times. The wind so created was estimated at 80 miles per hour, and soon not only sparks, but whole tops of the flaming trees were carried on ahead of the main fire to start and advance the burning at an alarming rate. All afternoon the fire advanced, the smoke billowing to 15,000 feet, and by nightfall and the cooling off of the atmosphere which slowed the holocaust, the fire had raced some 35 miles, stopping at the edge of an alpine slope on the Kilpil and the swamps to the west.

The fire reached the settlement at suppertime and without warning. The Ludtke family of seven were eating their evening meal when they heard the roar of the wind and advancing flames. Having only time to grab a few blankets, they ran to the nearby creek for protection. By keeping almost submerged in the water and keeping wet blankets over their heads to protect themselves from the heat and smoke, they waited out five long hours. Their total possessions were gone except one pup that followed them to the creek and one horse, one cow and calf that went to the water for safety. The house was gone as was everything else they owned.

Henry Desfosses and Louis Rupell, living a half mile farther south, also heard the fire coming and decided that a run for the creek was their only hope. The fire was too close, so they turned back and took refuge in a root cellar at Rupell's place. When the fire cooled so they could come outside, The Desfosses house was gone. Rupell's house was not burned and Ludtkes lived there that winter.

At Hemp Creek, Dave Anderson, on hearing the fire coming, hastily buried some of his equipment in the meadow below the house, then headed north to the Murtle River. The fire passed them to the east, not touching the small patch of timber through which the trail ran.

For weeks the fire burned, enlarging on the original size of the burn and re-burning some of the area passed over lightly on the fateful afternoon.

Here now was a desolate valley, fire blackened trees and stumps where a virgin forest once stood. Windfalls piled up as the winds blew down the weakened and burned trees. To walk through this new jungle of death was to come back black and sooty, smelling of smoke and ash. All seemed to be lost, but was it?

Nature is never idle. Before the ashes were much more than cool, slender green shoots of birch and cottonwood soon started from the unburned roots of the once mature trees. Fireweed found a suitable soil and took root. Within a few years, the burned off land had a good covering of willow, cottonwood, aspen, birch and soopolallie bushes. Raspberry and fireweed plants thrived and spread to every part of the valley, so much so that for many years following the blaze, the whole valley was purple from the blooms of the fireweed. Soopolallie brush matted the land. As the years went on, the piles of windfalls grew higher and higher. This, too, helped shade the burned soil.

The Clearwater Valley was indeed a valley of totem poles, a valley of grey ghosts when the winds howled and moaned through the burned tree trunks, the loose bark torn and tattered, flopping and rattling against the tree skeletons. How well I remember coming home many the night as the wind howled through the trees and the rain poured down. Following the narrow road, as it wound through the windfalls and around the larger stumps, a bare six or seven feet wide in places, was not too easy by the flickering light of a "bug". One thing for sure, to step off the road anywhere was to end up in a tangle of windfall and brush. To a ten or twelve year old, such a walk on a stormy night was not to be feared, but the silly things one's imagination could think up did not help matters much. The yellow light coming from a tiny window of home was at times a very welcome sight. By 1933 the valley, though still a sea of standing snags, had a good ground cover of small deciduous trees and shrubs. There were quite a few deer that now wintered on the young growth and hunting was easy because of the good visibility. Few, if any moose had been seen in the valley. Caribou were plentiful in the high alpine ranges.

During the early 1930's, most of the land that is in use today was taken up, and the population at that time was 72. All of the homesteads taken up at that time were proved up and Crown granted by the end of the decade.

During the later '30's, the moose came to our valley and found in it a place unsurpassed anywhere. The volcanic origin of the land held all the minerals and all except two of the trace elements so necessary for animal growth. The willow, aspen and birch which grew on this land was rich in food value, and the supply of this wonderful feed appeared endless. The moose stayed and multiplied. The deer did well, too, and during the early '40's the hunting in the area was good. With the coming of the moose, the few wolves that had occasion to travel the valley found an abundant food source. They stayed and increased their number. Grouse and rabbits found ample feed and in turn made tasty meals for the fur-bearers, the fisher, marten, wolverine, and lynx.

By the start of the 1950's, a change was beginning to take place. The tiny seedling evergreens, that need shade for the first stage of life, reached the height and passed the

lower growing deciduous trees. The roots of the conifers stretched out in all directions to compete for the available food within the soil. The moose had reached their peak and were browsing a goodly proportion of the annual growth on the deciduous plants, slowly weakening the trees so that with the loss of some of the food in the soil to conifers, the weaker of the plants must die. During the 50's, the amount of new growth that each willow, aspen, or birch could produce was steadily becoming less and less. It would feed less moose each year. Slowly the number of moose declined and today we may have one-half to one-third the number that we once saw wintering in the valley.

The fire of 1926 also affected the caribou herds. Being animals of the mature forests, they lost a great deal of their wintering grounds in the fire. The number of caribou remained high for several years after the fire, but as their reduced wintering area became over browsed in the early 1940's, they suddenly became quite scarce on the ranges they had previously occupied. This small herd, by 1960, had once again showed signs of increasing and today the high lands of most of our surrounding mountains. Limited winter range will keep them at a reasonably low level.

Marten, like the caribou, are at home in the mature forests. Heavy trapping and the big burn reduced them to a very low number during the 1930's, but they made a very strong comeback with the slow-up in trapping in the 1950's, plus the regrowth of thickets of conifers on the burned over land.

Competition from the moose on the winter ranges, plus the hard winters of the late 1940's and to the mid 1950's, caused havoc with the deer herds. To see 200 to 300 anytime you walked the road through the canyon area was commonplace. During the lean years, to see a dozen in a day was extraordinary. The easy winters that followed gave the deer a chance to build up once more to a sizeable number.

The heaps of windfalls, lack of brush, and the hot, dry summers of the early 1930's made our valley an ideal place for blue grouse. Here a dry hatching time, plus scads of bugs and worms from the decaying logs, gave the young birds an ample supply of protein for their early development. Raspberries and huckleberries in the higher ridges fed them well on into the fall. To see several nesting blue grouse at the road's edge was common. During the latter part of July, flock after flock would be seen moving from the valley floor where the young were hatched, to the higher burns and the berry patches. Young blue grouse, fried in butter, graced many a table then.

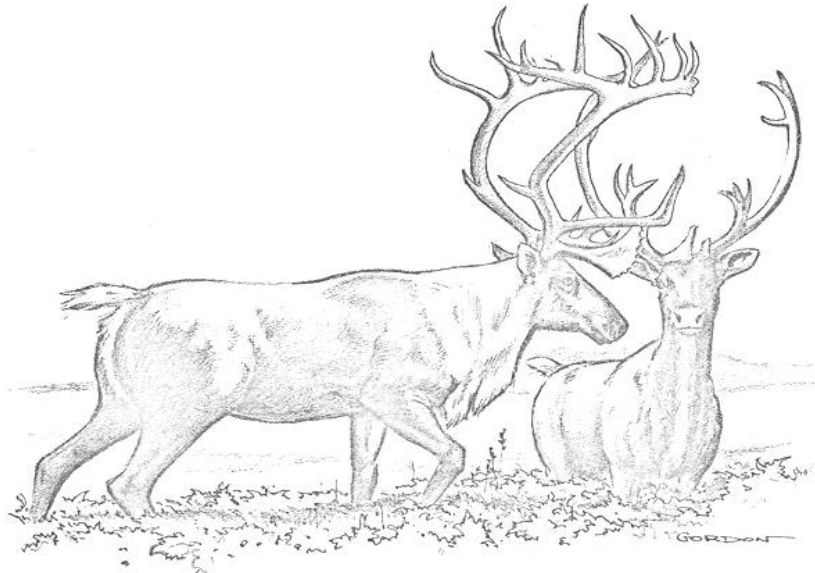
Now, 40 years after the valley burned, the natural change goes on. Fir, cedar, spruce, and pine dominate the land where once willow, birch, and aspen made up the young forest. Year by year the deciduous trees will give way to the more vigorous conifers, and in time, a mature forest like the one that was burned in 1926 will return.

Unless fire once more burns over large areas of the valley, the slow decline of moose and deer will continue. There will always be some feed for these animals, and we will always have a small number with us. As the more plentiful willow and aspen decreases or becomes too high for the moose and deer to feed upon, the small evergreen shrub,

pachistima (false box) will be increasing. A native of the fire, spruce and pine forests, it will continue to spread as the conifers shade the ground more. This is an excellent food plant, and with the animals learning to paw it out of the deeper snows, will see them through the lean winter months. Small cedar, fir, and balsam trees will also be utilized more as the animals learn to eat other things.

In 1934, there were very few wild flowers. Fireweed, tiger lily, wild rose, Oregon grape, pin cherry, and a few purple daisies were about all we had. As the burn reseeded, the flowers came, too, until we now have a very impressive assortment.

Before the fire, 16 persons lived in the valley. By 1935, the population was 72, and now 40 years after the blaze we remain near the 1935 level at 81. A forest was lost, but a thriving community was established.



In August of 1935, John Ray and Jim McGinnis met for the first time, a stormy meeting that preceded an equally stormy relationship. Jim was camped on the north side of Azure Lake. Ray and his party were camped on the beach at Angus Horne Creek on the south side. One night Ray's party saw a campfire across the lake, so they decided to go across and visit with whoever may be there.

They were met at the beach, not by a sociable host, but by a very large and ferocious dog. Not wishing to be dog food, the leader of the party called out to the unseen host. "Who's there?", came the answer from the darkness beyond the firelight and from a projection of rock bluff under which the camp was made. Fishermen, prospectors, trappers, none got a welcoming nod. The unseen host waited in the darkness, his 303 rifle cocked and ready.

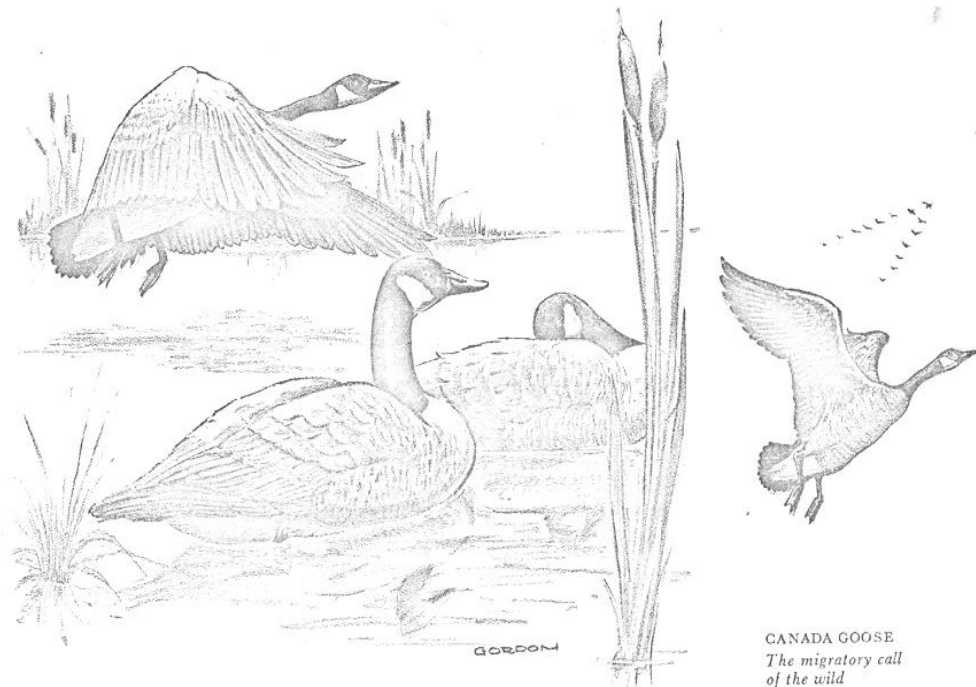
At last, he was assured that the four visitors were not police and no harm was meant by this visit. The dog was called off and a very excited McGinnis stepped into the ring of firelight, laying down his rifle.

For at least 15 minutes, the visitors could not make head or tails of Jim's ravings. They did glean the information that Jim had that day shot a cougar on the portage between Azure and Clearwater Lakes, and had the hide there to show them. They also found the real reason for his fear, the civil war in Spain. He was afraid that these men were police officers coming to get him so he could be shipped off to fight for France.

This was Jim McGinnis, always the very excitable, very suspicious and fear-ridden man. The visit was not a social success, but it did bring John and Jim together in a blustery partnership. Jim stayed at the Horseshoe and trapped with Ray that winter, leaving in the spring.

Jim came down to Tunningley's where he built a small cabin. He stayed here off and on for a couple of years, making mysterious trips by saddle horse to Bridge Lake and other remote places. Jim's excitability brought disaster in the shooting and killing of Mr. Wilson, who had spent several weeks in nursing Jim through a bout of pneumonia. Upon his conviction, Jim was sent to a mental home.

Jim was not too fond of social events, but would for we youngsters, after considerable persuasion, play his Spanish guitar. The speed and dexterity with which his fingers flew, as he played the Spanish Fandango, amazed us no end.



THE YELLOWHEAD ROUTE – 1863

We may complain about the 10 or 12 hours that it not takes us to make the trip from Kamloops to Tete Juane Cache and the hardships we must suffer along the way. In the “good old days,” there were a few problems a traveller might encounter as written by Lord Milton and Doctor Cheadle in their book “Northwest Passage by Land.”

“Left Tete Jaune Cache on July 20, 1863 after being seven weeks on the trail from Fort Edmonton. From an aged Indian woman, we learned that we would be in Kamloops in eight days travel. A small band of Shuswap Indians lived at the Cache.”

“Reached the mouth of the Albread (Albreda) River on the evening of the 26th. Here we found the trail of the Overlanders of the year before. The trail was cut upstream along the North Thompson river toward the Goldfields, but this trail soon ended a mile or so upstream. A search was made down the west bank of the North Thompson River and trails was found leading towards, Kamloops. Andre Cardinal’s name was carved on a tree with information that he had left off guiding the Overlanders and had returned to Edmonton.”

Reached Slaughter Camp on July 30th. Here Overlanders had slaughtered all their oxen for food, and then built rafts and canoes from the large cedars and embarked on the river to Kamloops. We left Slaughter Camp on July 31, 1863. The Assiniboine guide of our party shot a small black bear near camp. Some sign of Cariboo deer along the river. Bear turned out to be the only animal shot on trip down the North Thompson except a few marten and grouse. Crossed Eleanor River on August 7th. Small level flat of about one square mile, some berries and some feed for horses. (Believe this to be Blue River.) Since leaving Slaughter Camp, we had found no sign of human activity. No axe-mark on a tree, no blaze or broken twig, no remains of old campfires had greeted our eyes. Animal life was scarce and the solemn stillness, unbroken by note of bird or sound of living creature, and the deep gloom of the woods...Last of our provisions were eaten that night.”

“August 8th. Assiniboine set out to hunt. Cheadle and boy attempted to hung geese in small lake. No game was taken but one marten. Everyone took a rather gloomy view when we discussed our prospects that evening and Blackie, one of our horses, was unanimously condemned to die at daybreak. The marten, made into a rubaboo with some bilberries, formed our only supper that evening, the stinking and nauseous mess distasteful even to our ravenous appetites, and Mr. B. had not the satisfaction of retaining what had cost him so great an effort to swallow.”

That day the Assiniboine had found the remains of a headless Indian, dead of starvation, a plight that could soon be shared by the English.

“August 9th. Blackie was led out and shot for food. After feasting on the fresh meat and drying the balance for future use, we left this camp on August 10th with about thirty pounds of dry meat resulting from the horse’s body, so lean had he become on the trip.”

Porte D'enfer – named by the Assiniboine, guide for Viscount Milton and Doctor Cheadle on August 14, 1863.

“Passed this spot with a great deal of difficulty taking five days to cover six or seven miles of very steep rock walls of the North Thompson Valley. The Indian, in despair of ever reaching Kamloops was of the belief that they were not following the North Thompson River as they had previously hoped and that the river now flowing southeast was leading them into unknown land to perish by starvation as had the headless Indian, was their final chapter in their extreme hardship.”

On August 16th, the party reached the swamps of Stillwater (Cottonwood) Flats where a second horse was killed for food and the meat dried for carrying on the journey. Leaving here on August 18th they found the first evidence of man, and by the 22nd, struck the more open going, possibly by present Vavenby. The last of the second horse was eaten on the evening of the 23rd. At noon of the 24th, they met the first Indians at the mouth of Wentworth (Raft) River and obtained two rabbits and a few pounds of potatoes. They camped that night on the west shore of the Clearwater River.

The Indians had been plagued by small-pox and the dead were lying unburied along the trail from the mouth of the Clearwater River to where the trail crossed the North Thompson at Mosquito Flats. Assiniboine Bluffs were named for the guide of the English party on August 26th. These bluffs are to the north of present time Little Fort. The original trail had to climb up and over the rocky faces that came right down to the river's edge.

“We reached Kamloops on August 28th and were received by Mr. Martin and Mr. Burgess who were in charge of the fort and trading post during the absence of Chief Trader McKay.”

THE HEADLESS INDIAN

On August 8, 1863, the Assiniboine guide for the English Party found the remains of an Indian under a large pine tree, near Goose Creek (south of the town of Blue River). “ The corpse was in a sitting posture, with legs crossed, and arms clasped over the knees, bending forward over the ashes of a miserable fire of small sticks. The ghastly figure was headless and the cervical vertebrae projected dry and bare. The skin, brown and shrivelled, stretched like parchment tightly over the bony framework so that the ribs showed through distinctly prominent. The cavity of the chest and abdomen were filled with exuvia crystals. And the arms and legs resembled those of a mummy. The clothes, consisting of a woollen shirt and leggings, with a tattered blanket, still hung around the shrunken form. Near the body were a small axe, fire bag, large tin kettle, and two baskets made of birch bark. In the fire bag were flint, steel and tinder, an old knife, and a single charge of shot carefully tied up in a piece of rag. One of the baskets contained a fishing line of cedar bark, not yet finished, and two curious hooks made of pieces of stick and a pointed wire; the other contained a few green onions still green and growing. A heap of bones at the skeleton’s side – the fragments of a horse’s head, told the sad story of his fate. They were chipped into the smallest pieces, showing that the unfortunate man had died of starvation, and prolonged existence as long as possible by sucking every bit of nutrient out of the broken fragments. He probably was a Rocky Mountain Shuswap, who like ourselves was endeavouring to reach Kamloops, perhaps in quest of a wife. He had evidently intended to subsist by fishing, but before his tackle was completed, weakness - perchance illness – overtook him, he made a fire, squatted down before it, and died there. But where was his head? We searched diligently everywhere, but could find no trace of it. If it had fallen off, we should have found it lying near, for an animal that had care to abstract that would have returned to attack the body. It could not have been removed by violence, as the undisturbed position of the body trunk bore witness.”

In comparing their plight with that of the headless Indian, Milton and Cheadle wrote – “the similarities between the attempt of the Indian to penetrate through the pathless forest – his starvation, his killing his horse for food – and our condition was striking. His history had been exhibited before our eyes with unmistakable clearness by the spectacle we had just left; increasing weakness; hopeless starvation; the effort to sustain the waning life by sucking the fragments of bones; the death from want at last. We had also arrived at such extremity that we should be compelled to kill a horse. The Indian has started with one advantage over us; he was in his own country – we were wanderers in a strange land. We were in the final act of the play. Would the final act be the same?”

“The skeleton was discovered, on June 18, 1872, on the spot where we had left it, by Mr. James Dicky, C.E, one of the surveying party R for the Canadian Pacific Railway. The large pine, at the foot of which the skeleton had been originally found, had blown down, displacing the bones, which were partially scattered. A search was made for the missing head and it was discovered about 50 yards from the spot where the trunk had so long laid. Not far from the prostrate tree, some members of the party also found the bones of a horse, which were doubtless those of Blackie, besides other traces of the English party, who had so nearly shared the fate of the skeleton Indian.”

“Mr. Dicky caused the remains, excepting the head, to be decently interred on the spot, to the great satisfaction of the guides of Company R. On the grave he placed the skull, and making a slab from the tree to mark the spot, he wrote the following inscription – “Here lies the remains of the headless Indian, discovered by Lord Milton and Doctor Cheadle, 1863. We found a knife, tin kettle, spoon and fishing line; and fifty yards upstream, near the river, we also found the skull, sought in vain by the travellers.”

In his book, “Ocean to Ocean”, Rev. G. M. Grant describes the occurrence and subsequent removal of the skull by Dr. Moran, another member of the exploring party, at a later visit. “This was the spot the Doctor had been told to examine for the bones of the headless Indian; and therefore, as soon as he had unsaddled his horse, he selected a shingle shaped stick, and, without saying a word, set off on his exploration with all the mystery and deliberation of resurrectionist. In a few minutes, he came to the bit of board. Scratching the ground with his wooden spade, the Doctor was soon in possession of the skull and the rusty scalping knife that had been thrown in beside it, and finding the old kettle nearby, he appropriated that, too, and deposited these with his baggage, as triumphantly as if he had rifled an Egyptian tomb.”

“The skull is now in Dr. Moran’s possession in Halifax, Nova Scotia (1870’s). The discovery of the missing head has not, however thrown any light upon the real mystery – vis: How the skeleton remained sitting headless, before the remains of his burnt-out fire, or by what means the skull was removed without the body being disturbed or upset from its position of unstable equilibrium.”

“This simple fact of the discovery of the skeleton where we had left it nine years before, undisturbed except by the action of the elements, testifies more forcibly than words can do to the intense solitude, to the absence of human and animal life of any kind, which characterizes the dense and lonely forest of the North Thompson. No human being and seemingly, no hungry carnivore of any kind, had passed that way in the long interval since we turned our faces away from the ominous scene on August 8th, 1863.”

WELLS GRAY PARK

In May 1939, the late Ranger W. E. Noble of the B. C. Forest Service recommended that a large tract of land embracing the watershed of the Clearwater River be set aside as a Provincial Park. On November 28th of that same year, 1,164,800 acres of land was reserved and set apart as Wells Gray Park, so named in honour of the Honourable A. Wells Gray, Provincial Minister of Lands and Forests. Since that time more land had been added, so that now it contains 1,823,000 acres.

There are many unique features of the area that, when combined, make this Park one of the most interesting in the Province. The southern half contains remains of one of the most recent volcanic disturbances in British Columbia. Lava flows of many ages have filled the major valleys, while the now inactive volcanoes form the lower hills and ridges within the Park. Three large lava flows have formed since the last ice age, and the warm gases that flow from the depths could lead one to believe that some day, hot lavas will once more flow down the valley floors.

As a direct result of this geological torture, the rivers and streams have carved deep and impressive canyons that display in their walls the story of successive volcanic eruptions. Waterfalls in great numbers add interest to the broken terrain. Dawson and Helmcken Falls on the Murtle are the best known. Dozens of mineral springs bubble up through the lavas. Strong in soda, iron, calcium and carbon dioxide, these springs are sought out by moose and deer as a source of needed minerals.

Six large lake and many smaller ones offer boating, canoeing, fishing, and hunting to the Park visitor. The lakes offer limited access to the interior of the Park and the more rugged northern end. High snow-capped mountains, deep wooded valleys, and miles of active glaciers make the north end of the Park a fine wilderness area – a safe retreat for the mountain goat, grizzly bear and mountain caribou.

A forest fire, an economic disaster in itself, burned the mature forest from hundreds of square miles of the Clearwater Valley. A forest was lost in 1926, but nature in her untiring ways soon healed the scars with the lush growth of deciduous cover and in so doing created a haven for moose and deer, and for the host of smaller animals and birds. The large and healthy populations of moose and deer plus the variety of bird life, were a major factor in the decision to create Wells Gray Park.

One of the most recent additions to the Park was the Battle Mountain Plateau. This large alpine area, a park in itself, includes alp-land meadows of Table, Philips, and Battle Mountains, probably one of the most extensive in the interior of our province, and second to none for its floral displays from late June to the early weeks of September.

A forest ranger fell in love with the Clearwater Valley. Were he alive today, I am sure he would be pleased that his foresight and actions resulted in a fine park that is enjoyed by thousands of visitors each season.

FROM THE PARK OFFICE – C. SHOOK

As one drives north from Highway 5 on the Wells Gray Park road, a marked change in geology is noted.

From the “Lookout”, just north of Bear Creek (Spahats), the Clearwater Valley can be seen as the cradle of quite recent volcanic activity, and with the exception of three small volcanic upheavals near Little Fort, the southern half of Wells Gray Park embraces all known volcanoes.

Azure Peak, nearly 9,000 feet high, is the granddaddy of the Wells Gray volcanoes. This first outpouring of lava, in ages past, dammed up the Clearwater River and formed what we know as Clearwater Lake. Pilpil, Ray’s Mountain, Goat Peaks and Kilpil followed, and the west Little Baldy built up. These higher mountains spawned little mountains and Guage and McLeod Hills, Squaw Mountain, and the Pyramids formed. The southern half of what is now Wells Gray Park was at one time made up of layer upon layer of lava.

The lava cooled and the ice age came and went. At least three new outpourings of lava followed the ice. Less than 4,000 years and maybe not more than a few hundred years ago, the Ray Lake flow and the Kostal Lake Volcano poured out molten lava. Warm gases, from the warm rocks deep down, still rise through the jagged lava. On Spanish Creek, another large flow poured to the west from Little Baldy Mountain. It has been reported, but not confirmed, that this eruption took place not more than 200 years ago.

It could happen again.

The snows came big in January 1935. For 48 hours, the snow came down in large fluffy flakes, and when the warm winds finally blew the clouds away a blanket nearly four feet deep lay on the land.

Great was the concern for my brother George, who was at the camp on Shook Meadows, a couple of miles south of Dawson Falls. He was feeding the numerous horses on the wild hay cut there the summer before. Snowshoes were made ready and soon my brother Ray, and Jack Norman were on their way to the rescue. Two days later, they reached the cabin of Pete McDougal, a mere ten miles from home. Another day saw them at the cabin of Mike Majerus, four miles by trail from their destination. At noon on the fourth day, imagine their chagrin when who should they meet skimming easily over the snow on his skis, but the object of the rescue. While they toiled those four hard days on snowshoes, he had been blithely exploring the country around the horse camp.

There were no snowplows in those days, so soon after returning from the above rescue, they, with another brother, Floyd, set about making the valley’s first snowplow. It was built of split cedar logs, fashioned in the shape of a “V” and left a little winding trail about five feet wide. With the four-horse team for power, the hardy three started off for the settlement of Clearwater sixteen miles away. They were seen off by an escort of two excited kids and a couple of pups. The first few miles went fairly sell, but the drifts on

the narrow grades of the old canyon road caused many a spill. The most spectacular was when all four horses slipped and tumbled into the depths of second canyon. Little harm was done except a few broken harness straps. Three days after leaving home, the small snowplow was abandoned at Silke's road, five miles from Clearwater. Late that night, the weary travellers were welcomed at the warm and snug home of Jack and Dolly Downey on Candle Creek, and the played-out horses found a welcome barn in which to rest a bit. Next day the horses broke out the last four miles of road to Long's Store. Nearly five feet of snow had fallen at Clearwater and the hardy three were the first to arrive at the store since the storm.

What a panic there would be if we ever get that kind of storm again!

During the survey of the railway from Blue River, or possibly from Clearwater, through to Lone Butte during the early part of the century about 1912-13, some far sighted individuals brought in a steam donkey engine complete with winches, haul-back drum and good blacksmith outfit. Where it originated from I do not know, but it did come down Canim Lake by raft, overland by its own power to Mahood Lake where once more it went by water. From Mahood Lake, a graded road was made in advance for the slow moving machine, which was moved by running out the mainline, anchoring it to a solid tree or stump and then the puffing, snorting steam engine would move the outfit ahead as it turned the drums and wound up the cable. From Mahood Lake to Flourmill Creek crossing, the trail was a rough one, ground covered with large boulders, too large to be moved out of the way, so the machine was dragged on its skids across these obstacles.

Wood and water had to be obtained along the way. Wood may not have been so hard to find since the slashing of the road would supply most of the boiler's needs. Water, on the other hand was not too easy to find after the rig passed Flourmill Creek. At this creek, a long flume was built to fill the tank that was horse drawn, and used to keep the boiler supplied. From this point, the water was probably hauled until within a short distance of Teepee Lake, a half-mile from the Horseshoe of the Clearwater River. From here on water and wood would be easy to get as several creeks were crossed and the trail was not very far from the bank of the Clearwater River. Shortly after crossing Donald Creek, the enterprising outfit went to work, coast style, on the large cedars that covered the flats along the river. The trees were cut by the use of springboards, at a stump height of up to 12 feet, thus getting away from the handling of the useless large diameter butt logs that would be left behind. The area logged over was not large, but several thousand feet of timber was brought out to the river's edge.

The object was to get into the area before the start of construction of the railroad that was surveyed through Yellowhead Pass, down the North Thompson to Clearwater, up the Clearwater River to Mahood River, then out past Mahood Lake to join up with the existing P.G.E. at Lone Butte. However the railroad was delayed, and upon the start of the First World War in 1914, the plans for the C. N. R. were changed and it was located on its present location down past Kamloops and the Fraser Canyon.

It was hoped by the operators that they would get the railroad's contract to supply ties and bridge timbers for the construction through this part of the country. Since the railroad did not show up, the large cedar logs were dumped into the Clearwater River in an effort to salvage what they could, and to catch the timber at Kamloops to be utilized by the mill there. This effort was not a success; the river was too rough for the big logs, so they arrived at their destination in a battered, split condition when made most of them next to useless.

One source of information states that the donkey was skidded in by a four-horse team. I do not believe that part of the story, having seen the donkey and examined it thoroughly. The weight of the machine as it sits today, stripped of much of its fittings, cable gone, and bits and pieces scattered about its resting place, would exceed eight tons and be closer to ten tons in working order. With the machine was a complete blacksmith outfit that is still somewhere along the river where it was last used.

The donkey was abandoned when the railroad did not come and when the river drive proved unsuccessful. The cables were unravelled and used as snares to catch bear by the Indians and most of the pipe fittings went to various persons who cared to pack them out.

The old donkey sits in the thick brush along the Clearwater River rusting away, the boiler shot through with hunters' bullets and the once proud snorting little steam donkey is wasting away, as o many of his kind in the logging wood on the coast are doing.

Frank Sands first settled in the Signal Butte area where he built a small cabin and large log barn on Blarneyboard (Sands) Creek. Here he cleared only a small area around his buildings. The barn, a log structure 30x40 feet or larger, is in good condition as yet despite the 30 years of disuse. About ½ mile farther east, he had more land which was cleared and used as his hay supply. A large hayshed was the only building on this lot. In 1910, he moved into our valley taking up the lots now owned by the Petre Bros. Here he cleared off about 20 acres of hay land and proceeded to raise very good quality Angus cattle in partnership with John Heffner of Clearwater. John did not stay up with Sands, Sands raising cattle on a share basis. The calves and yearlings were sought after by men who specialized in feeders and yearly took all Frank had to sell. In 1935 this partnership split up. Heffner took out his share of the herd, leaving Frank with a good start in breeding stock. In 1936, Sands and Jack Tuningley joined forces, Jack having his homestead, no stock, but a good supply of strength and ambition. Sands had the land and the start of a herd, but his failing strength and health limited his farming activities. Together they cleared more land and increased in cattle, running about 50 head of cows and doing quite nicely. In 1943, Jack joined the army, so the cattle were sold off that fall. They shipped 82 head and Sands kept only one or two cows and the horses. Frank was not able to do much more than put up part of the hay. That which was not needed was usually sold locally.

Jack returned in 1945 and resumed his farming. This time he bought out Sands' interests and proceeded to go it alone. Before he had joined the army, he had purchased the land of Mrs. Blake's and now with the four lots had plenty of land for his needs. Joe Tuningley came after the war and took up land north of his brother's home place, brought in some good beef cows and was all set to work in with Jack. Joe, however, did not stay more than two years, so Jack bought his cattle and was again alone.

Shortly after selling out to Tuningley, Frank Sands moved to Valleyview, just east of Kamloops, where he bought a small acreage on which was a small cabin and there has lived quite comfortably since.

Jack worked on alone building up his cattle. In 1942, Jack married Doris McConnelly (?) They worked on, the cattle numbered about 40 head, and though help at haying time was hard to find, they seemed to be getting ahead. In 1953, as his wife was visiting her son in the southern Okanagan, Jack, given at times to being deeply depressed, took his own life.

The stock and land were sold, that at Hemp Creek to T. Helset, and the old Sands place and Jack's homestead to Petre Brothers. Mrs. Tuningley bought a small cabin at Grand Forks and is living there.

One of Dave Anderson's trapping partners was Dan Case. It was probably about 1925 or '26 that he came into the valley. He worked with Dave at least one winter at Murtle Lake, and when the road ended at Bear Creek, the two set to work on the log structure that still stands in the campsite there. Part of it has been cut up for fire wood by campers, otherwise, it stands as they left it, the walls and purlins all in place, but no roof was ever put on. This was to be a hunting lodge at the end of the road and at the start of the good deer hunting country.

Dan Case blazed out and ran the trap-line that goes up Bear Creek. He trapped it one or more years. This line was later trapped by Stanley Silke, and at present, by Ronacher Bros.

One monument to Dan the Builder still stands on the east side of the North Thompson River at Cottonwood Flats. Here he built a house, 20' x 24', two stories, and all the building was made from 4x12 hand hewn cedar planks. The work that went into the structure and the quality of workmanship can only be appreciated by seeing for oneself. A roof was put on this building and it is as sound as the day it was built. For 25 or 30 years it had stood, a monument to an axeman's skill, but not a soul has ever lived in it or benefited from the superb workmanship.

In each case, the time spent on the building of each structure and then being deserted before being finished leads one to wonder if Dan had not a wandering spirit.

During the summer of 1910, John Lafon and a small crew made a survey and cruise of the timber on the west side of the Clearwater River from Grizzly Mountain to the Barella Creek valley. The survey was for a large coast logging outfit, but they did not carry out John's recommendations, so the Clearwater Valley he fell in love with was not subjected to the torments of a high ball, high-lead logging show.

In 1938, John was told by his doctor to get back into the country where he could get clean, fresh air and a bit of rest from city life. He chose the Clearwater River, and if he should die, he wished to do it in a place he had longed to return to. May youngest brother stayed with John that summer. They fished and they went on short hunting trips, and when he returned to Vancouver at the start of the colder weather, the doctor told John he should have stayed twice as long. He returned yearly, staying up to five months. He fished the river from the mouth of Grouse Creek to the Mahood River, being moved from camp to camp by Floyd Shook as he carried out his other guiding activities. "One horse will take all my stuff, Floyd." was his usual greeting as Floyd pulled in with his pack string. One horse plus at two and at times three were needed to move the old gent's camp gear. "One Horse Lafon" was the name he went by for the several years that he spent on the river.

On the 15th of September each fall, John would join the H. R. McMillan hunting party as it headed up onto Fight Lake country in search of caribou. Caribou were quite plentiful, but even so at times it took the whole two or three weeks for everyone to get a reasonably good trophy bull. The last two years this group hunted the trail up onto Table Mountain to get them to better hunting country. Upon the dining on liver taken from the first caribou or large buck, the old standby quotations could be expected. "Good liver, Mac!" this from John. "Deed it is, John, deed it is," McMillan would reply.

As they sat around the campfire during the evening, as regular as clockwork, John would mention his great tiger hunt in India. "I say, Mac, did I ever tell you about the time I shot my tiger?" and the same reply from McMillan, "No, John, I don't think you ever did." This would bring forth the account of the tiger hunt for that day, only to be relived the following day.

One of John's prize possessions, and one that went with him, were a set of two Indian candlesticks brought back from India. They were fancy candlesticks enclosed in coloured glass globes and gave off a very cheering light, especially when a blizzard whistled around the tent.

On one such trip on Table Mountain, my brother Frank and John Lafon had gone up to the top of Table Mt, and hoping to see a caribou on the snow on the north side, they left the horses tied to some scrub balsam near the top. When they returned, the horses were loose and one mare was bleeding from a large gash in one hind leg. She had been hooked by a bull caribou while the mighty hunters searched the other side of the hill.

THE GRAY GHOSTS

If you have never seen an adult bull caribou, with his massive antlers, his snow white main and neck reflecting the beams of a full moon, as he walks along the crest of the alplands, you have missed one of the most thrilling sights a person can ever hope to see. Here you realize why the caribou as a species smacks with mystery and why they are the Gray Ghosts of the Hills.

Wells Gray Park hosts what is now a remnant heard of up to 300 caribou. Caribou are natives of the mature forests and the activities of modern man can and will force this noble animal into extinction. In the past, man has had little effect on caribou, but his intentional and unintentional misuse of fire has caused untold losses to the winter food sources of this animal. Now, as loggers fell and remove an ever-increasing amount of timber products from the spruce/balsam forests of our higher mountains, the caribou are being more and more restricted in movement and in food supply. As industry calls fo and utilizes smaller logs, alpine timber will be removed, and with it the last hope of survival for caribou. New forests will be cropped before reaching maturity and thus supplying none of the lichens required by this animal for winter survival.

The deep, steep-sided valleys of the Park, yet unattractive to the lumber industry, will for a time give shelter to a reduced number of caribou. While, unlike the moose and deer who benefit from the removal of mature forest cover, the caribou cannot adapt to the changes and once his food supply is depleted, he must perish, also.

OKELK OKLUTENS

In times past, there was a large encampment of Indians at the junction of the Clearwater and North Thompson Rivers, and another encampment near the mouth of the Wentworth (Raft) River. These tribes, rich in fishing and hunting grounds, considered themselves superior to their neighbours to the south, the Shuswaps. The were the Okelk-Oklutens, the Superior Ones.

In the early days, as the Spring salmon migrated to the spawning beds of the Clearwater and Upper North Thompson rivers, they were harvested in great numbers by the Indians.

One summer long ago, a war party of Okanagan Indians was seen making their way up the North Thompson River in canoes and were watched as they made camp on the island forming the junction of the Clearwater and North Thompson Rivers. One brave from the Wentworth River camp, once a slave of the Okanagans, overheard the party plot a raid on the Wentworth camp and took word to his settlement. The women and children went into hiding, while during the night, the Okelk braves floated down the river in canoes and attacked the island camp of the Okanagans at daybreak. The Okanagan war party was decimated except for one warrior whose ears were lopped off and he was set free to carry word to his people that any future raid would be dealt with as was this one.

The remains of the old encampment can still be seen along the shore of the North Thompson. It is reported that at one time a hundred kekuli holes could be found. Another large encampment is on Alexander Island near Auldgirth.

BAKER BROTHERS

During the war of 1914-18, two brothers of German descent went into hiding in our valley. They built a cabin on the north side of Fight Creek about three miles west of L. Rupell's place, on the slope of Battle Mountain Plateau. Here they trapped the fur bearers and exchanged the fur for provisions brought in each summer by George Glover. The remains of the old cabin site is still quite visible near the old Battle Mountain trail.

They completely disappeared from 1918 'till 1943 when to Mike Majerus came a letter from Vancouver in which was thirty-five dollars and an unsigned note stating that the money was payment for the trapping cabin on Blackwater Creek that he had accidentally burned down in 1918. Upon leaving our valley in 1918, one of the brothers had come to Mike's cabin on the Murtle River and asked if he could have a bath and clean up before going out to civilization. Mike would not let him in the cabin, but loaned him a washtub and sent him to the cabin on Blackwater creek some six miles away. During the spring cleaning, the cabin caught fire and burned. Twenty-five years later payment came from an honest man.

In his book, "Mountains, Men and Rivers", J. H. Stewart Reid writes of the Overlanders as they were making their way to the Caribou gold fields in 1862. "When they reached the banks of the Clearwater River, they built crude rafts and launched themselves on its swift waters. Progress was now faster, but by no means safer! One incident will serve as an illustration of their dangers. In a particularly vicious rapid, one of the rafts ran up on a rock and stuck fast squarely in the middle of the torrent. For two days, its occupants ere stranded in this frightening position. Then a hardy soul from one of the other rafts tried a desperate gamble. Borrowing an Indian's canoe, he took a line from shore and shot the rapid again, this time steering as close as possible to the stranded raft. As he skimmed by, he was able to throw his rope to the drenched and shivering men aboard. Then, with all available hands pulling from shore, the raft was pulled from its precarious perch and on down through the rapids."

In telling of the Overlanders to one of the old-timers, and aged Indian related the following which does not go along with Dr. Reid:

The Indians were camped along the North Thompson River at Stillwater Flats (Cottonwood Flats) when the starving, ragged group of twenty or more white men, and one white woman, came into their camp. This group was in poor condition so were fed and cared for by the Indians. Next day a canoe was made available to carry Mrs. Shubert and children to Kamloops while rafts were made for the remaining. They were given food for the journey and sent on their way.

The old Indian, then just a boy, was give a candy by Mr. Shubert, and since it was the first one he had ever tasted, maybe he had good reason to remember.

It seems unlikely that these men would leave a navigable stream, cross the mountains, just to descend another that would lead them to the same destination unless they were trying to go out to the gold diggings via Mahood Lake and found the travelling too tough, so turned down the Clearwater River.

Alf and Florence Allison made their very welcome appearance in the valley in 1940. They settled on the land now owned by McDiarmid's of Trophies Lodge, here in a small log cabin built by George Shook on the site of the original Charlie Moul cabin, which burned down during the fire of 1926. He added another room to make the house a bit more usable. Many happy times I spent in this home listening to the tall tales old Alf used to spin.

One of his prime ambitions was to build a good trail along Philips Creek, then stock the small lakes with fish. Allison Falls, seen from the new Battle Mountain trail, is a fine tribute to this enthusiastic hunter and fisherman. For the five years the Allisons were here, Alf spent his summers packing and guiding for Mr. H. R. McMillan, Don Bates and Mr. McLean of Canada Packers. The fishing in the Clearwater River was good, but the hunting of caribou on the alpine country of Battle and Table Mountains was in a very severe decline to be discontinued shortly.

They left in 1946 after selling their property and guiding business to Mr. McDairmid and Mr. Gourley.

Of all the people I have spent time with in the hills, I think Alf Allison was a young at heart as were we kids, equally happy to be with us as with friends his own age. When preparing his bed for the night, he always made it so his head pointed north, even if it meant levelling out a slope to do so.

As we sat around a fire one night while hunting on Table Mountain, I can remember Alf telling us young sprouts how he and a trapping partner at Princeton would be on their bunks in one of their trapping cabins and shoot the flies off the log walls. "How could you tell if you hit them?" Alistair McDairmid once asked him. "Oh, shush! You could see the legs sticking out all around the hole."

Alf was the son of John Falls Allison, early settler in the Similkameen country. He grew up around Princeton and served in the First World War in France. A severe head wound necessitated the installing of a large silver plate on one side of his head. Alf farmed at Princeton for many years after the war. He married Florence Duhammel, a young widow with three children.

Shortly after coming to the valley, he suffered a minor stroke and was told to do no more heavy work. So – what did he do?

He moved to the Charlie Moul place, set to work making the cabin suitable for the needs of his wife and small grandson, Gordon Coupins. When Gordon's brother, Keith, was born, he also took him into his home at the age of six weeks and took on the raising of his grandsons. Hats off to Florence and Alfred Allison.

During his stay in the valley he did a bit of guiding and cleared some land to raise hay for his horses. One thing I remember very clearly; Alf and a few of us would-be helpers were building a fence around the perimeter of his 160-acre farm. The south-east corner was found so with the aid of a carpenter's square, he started on-half mile of fence along the west line. We had never been able to locate the north-west corner until that day. "Oh, Shuah! Missed it by six feet." Sure enough, the crude survey was less than nine seconds out.

I am indebted to Alfred's daughter Gladys Archibald for many of the gems. Here are a few more –

How many remember? At one of the dances at the Upper Clearwater hall, Alf did not have a decent pair of shoes for dancing. So, it so happened that Jack Norman grew weary and fell asleep. Alf borrowed Jack's shoes and wore them until time to go home.

I can remember Florence laughingly telling us one day that she saw Alfred sitting on a log outside the house.. He had a fire going and a billy can of coffee brewing over the coffee cooked over a campfire.

One story of Alf's childhood that Gladys told me – Alfred and one of his sisters were playing on a logjam in the Similkameen River. They had been forbidden to play along the river. One day they heard voices as they played on the logs, so expecting to get caught, they hid among the logs. Also, if they heard or suspected that Indians may be nearby, they always hid, the older kids covering the smaller ones in leaves and brush, then run like hell to try to fool the red men.

Anyway, this day as they hid among the logs, Indians appeared carrying something in canvas. They stuffed the bundle down between some logs in the jam and left. It seemed there had been a quarrel at a local racetrack and a James Steve was killed. Not wanting the white man to know they hid the body.

The kids were so scared at what they saw, they never told their secret. Maybe the mystery is still unsolved.

Florence may shoot me for telling this one, but I bet her sunny nature would prevail. Alf had prepared a new garden spot. In so doing he had removed a large stump and then refilled the hole. He smoothed the ground, planted his garden, then turned on the irrigation water. One day, Florence was hoeing the new garden and, as she backed down the row, she sank up to her middle in the soft mud that now filled the stump hole. I can see her gasping and shouting for Alf to com and pull her out. Poor old Alf, he'd be fit to be tied whenever he told about it later.

Alf loved our valley, but when the boys got old enough to go to school, he moved his family back to Princeton.

ARCHIBALDS

Dave and Gladys arrived first in the fall of 1938. They made a deal with Charlie Byrd for his quarter section, then moved up in the spring of 1939. They arrived at Clearwater by car on March 22, but had to walk the rest of the way. There was three feet of snow through Bear Creek. Dave and Jim moved their sawmill from Princeton that year, first setting up at Blackpool for a few months before moving to Candle Creek. There they operated for a year or so before selling out to Frank Capostinsky and Swanson Lumber Company.

For many years, they also jointly held and trapped a very large line in the Upper Adams River country, going east from Avola to TumTum Lake, then up and down the river valleys.

Dave and Gladys spent their time on their farm and raising beef cattle. They stayed on the farm until 1965 when they sold to Clayton Hicks. Fortunately, they did not leave the valley having bought a house and lot from Herb Green.

We all remember the Jersey cows of Marebrook Farm and the records they made in milk and butterfat production. We also remember the thousand and one visits we made to their home and the welcome we always received no matter how busy the Archibalds' day may have been.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

In January of 1938, our first school was opened in the valley. There were 10 of us students in classes from 1 to 8. Howard and Amos Blake, Mary, Ruby and David Archibald, Ray Johnson, Peggy and Charlie Shook, Isabel Emery, and sometimes, but not very often, Clarke Rupell. Our first teacher was Olive K. Murray of Vanderhoof. Her salary was \$40 per month. Two dollars per child was put up by the parents, and two dollars per child from the Department of Education. Olive stayed with us for 1 ½ years, boarding with us and really became a member of the community. I often wonder where she is now and if she still works for Tuckett Tobacco Company in Vancouver. The last time, we met was while I was a patient in St. Paul's Hospital in 1942. She led me blind and staggering to my train. How we forget.

After Miss Murray left, the teaching was taken over by Ivy Wisemiller. She was paid the same way, but she boarded with Helsets and Johnsons since we Shooks had all graduated from the eighth grade.

Regular school came into being in 1948 with the first school being my old log house by Grouse Creek. Mrs. Adella Douharty was the first teacher, scared of rats and the source of much amusement. I remember the time I had to rescue her from the old outdoor privy across the creek. She locked herself in.

The new school was built by Dave Archibald, and the teacherage by Jim Lehman and Ed White. First teacher was Ann Johnson, followed by George Cone, Mr. Ralston, Mr. Hazzard, Mrs. Carbut, Mrs. Cook, Miss Newfeld, Miss Park, Mrs. Caywood, and Mrs. Money, and various others.

In 1965, the Upper Clearwater school was closed and the twenty children were bussed to Clearwater schools. Ken Moore was our first bus driver. He and Tim lived for a while in the teacherage at the old school, later moving to Roy Helset's house on Hemp Creek. He gave up his bus driving in the spring of 1968 and now operates a taxi in Merritt.

From April to June 1968, the driving was done by Jim McKay, Mousy to the kids. Clayton Hicks started the bus run in the fall of 1968.

MANN

“How could any sane person want to live here?” was Donna Mann's first impression of our valley after a hair-raising trip in over the new canyon road. Had she come in over the old road, we'd probably not been able to get her back out again. Anyway, the road is one of her pet peeves, but I still think she likes it even as is.

This was way back on July 1st, 1956 on the Mann's first visit to Upper Clearwater. Being conditioned to back country travel, the family moved into our valley in November, 1956, living in the small cabin on the Colin Mann place.

The next spring, they moved to the old Shook place where they stayed until they purchased their present home from Jack Norman in 1959. They remodelled the old cabin, added rooms, and made a rather cozy home for their family!

THE STORE

The Store, to we Valley dwellers, has always been Long's General Store, later to become Clearwater General. Many a fine story has been spun across the counters.

Long's Store got its start in quite a humble way. Across the river from its present setting, the store consisted of two tents, one behind the other. The first tent housed the store, the second, Bill and Irene Long. While they worked on the new store building across the river, the tent store was in business. In 1933, the new store opened and served

a wide area. The Longs were not just store keepers, they had the welfare of their customers at heart.

I well remember one dance we had in Rupells' new log house in the fall of 1934. The Longs were invited and they came, arriving about 1 a.m. after having sawed and chopped 32 windfalls from across the road. Once they reached Dad's place, they found the way had been cleared by the Shooks as they went to the party.

Times were hard in the 30's. People grumbled, but the Longs always had a smile and a story to tell to lighten the burden. A lot of food passed over the counter was never paid for.

In the fall of 1934, Bill had parked his car near our house and went hunting for deer. When he returned, he went over to talk to Dad. "Frank, when I got half way up the mountain, I suddenly thought, "What is wrong with Shook's house?" He soon found out there was not a single window in the building. "What are you going to do for window?"

"Not a damn thing until I get a bit of money so I can buy some."

"Tell you what we can do: a cabinet maker owes me \$40.00, and I'll never get paid. I'll buy some glass and have him pay off his debt by making the windows you need and then you pay me when you can."

That is how we blossomed out with brand new windows in the fall of '34.

We were only one of many dozen families the Longs helped out during the hard times. We were all saddened when in 1952, Bill lost his eyesight and had to sell his business and move to Victoria.

I was sad to see the cheerful couple go. No one could take their place. How wrong I was, for with the coming of Polly and Norm Pratt, we found not the drastic change we had expected but a continuation of the Long's tradition.

The name was changed to Clearwater General and many changes were made to the old store. To many, the little country store no longer existed, but it did for me. Many happy memories returned each time I visited the store. Norman Pratt is no longer with us, and in spite of great personal adversity, Polly carried on with the store.

In making the Good Citizen award each year, I feel that the Central North Thompson Chamber of Commerce has committed a very inexcusable oversight. During the Lumberman's strike in 1967-68 no one chose to enquire as to the personal and financial sacrifices this courageous widow was making to help keep the community of Clearwater from falling apart. There will be rewards in heaven.

The store was more than just a place to get the necessities of life. It was a bank, information center, meeting place, post office, consulting office...you name it.

One time in talking about the store to everyone's friend, Constable Murdock of the B.C. Police, we were talking about the lack of successful robberies at Long's Store. "You know, there isn't a safe in the place, and the till couldn't keep out water, he must keep his money in his girdle."

Bill had shown my dad and I his safe on several occasions. In among the 100 pound sacks of flour in the storeroom was probably the best place to hid the day's revenue. Nobody had found the money in spite of several break-ins. When you consider that there may have been upwards of \$60,000 in that cache on payday, it was a very successful cache.

In 1937, and again in 1938, two of my sisters, a friend, and myself decided we were going to pick strawberries for Jack Damon and Jim Ingram. We had no money, so what did we do? We trooped off to Long's Store and asked for help in the form of credit on the food we needed. A month later we were the proudest kids on earth as we walked to the store to repay our debts and cash those cheques for about \$45 each. I can still see the pleased look on the storekeepers' faces and the tears in Irene's eyes as we each cashed our cheque and paid our share of the account. They had not thought that we would stay until the last strawberry was picked, yet we got the food that we needed. Wow! I blew nearly six dollars of my fortune in the next ten minutes – two pairs of overalls, a shirt of the damndest red you ever saw, a jack knife, and a bag of licorice candy that would choke a horse. Come to think of it, I bet Irene never charged me for that candy.

Most of us could go on and on as we recall the reasons why Clearwater General Store has been such an asset to the growing community of Clearwater, yet, we would come up with the very simple conclusion that it was the storeowners' genuine interest in the settlement that made the store what it was.

So, to Bill and Irene Long, we extend our heartfelt thank. To Norm and Polly, you, too, were heaven sent and to Al, we place our trust in you.

We of the Clearwater valley will not forget.

THE HALL

During 1936/37, the local C. C. F. club set about to build a log hall for the use of the community, situated on land owned by a Mr. Hymers. Jack and Melville Hymers, Jack Norman, Jack Tunningley, the Ludtke brothers, Alex Fage, and Mike Majerus all helped, and soon the first dance was held. Many a good time was had under the old hall's roof.

One of the most memorable of dances was on May 23rd, 1940. The weather was hot and the road was rough and dusty, but in spite of all this, the two wooden kegs of Dave Anderson's home-made beer was hauled to the hall on a lumber wagon. I still get the giggles when I recall the spectacle of my brother, George, getting a soaking in the foul smelling brew as he tried to install a bung in the first barrel. Beer flowed freely that night

and it was 7:30 the next morning before the kegs of good cheer ran dry so we could all go home.

Music in the early life of the hall was supplied by Melville Hymers, Charlie, Fred, and Laurence Ludtke, and, in later years, by Mrs. McDiarmid and the Manns. We had lots of fun in the old hall.

JACK HYMERS

Mr. and Mrs. Hymers came to the valley in 1934, accompanied by son, Melville, and daughter, Marion. Mrs. Hymers and Marion left that fall and resided in Vancouver, but Jack and Melville stayed on in the valley.

Mr. Hymers was our first mailman after the rural route was established in the 30's. In his Model A coupe in summer, and with horse and cutter in winter, he brought us our mail each Friday.

We kids liked to go to his cabin just to hear him tell stories of his past. I can imagine we taxed his patience to the limit, but we were always made welcome.

Melville was probably about 18 when he came to the valley. I can remember the time and effort he put into making his first violin. He got the instrument made, the waited several months before he could get the dollar needed to buy the strings. He trapped one winter with Howard Mobley, probably 1936. He worked for the Forest Service at Blue River for awhile and left at the start of World War II to serve with the R. C. A. F.

I don't remember much about Mrs. Hymers or Marion, but can well remember Jack Zellars teasing my brother, Frank, about a certain girl. "Holy ol my goodness, Frankie, you should look at that young Hymer girl. Cracky doodle h... Frankie, she's got most dandy h... of dandy good legs much, and ain't bad looking either." It took a lot to get Frank mad, but this sure mad him pop his buttons.

Mr. Hymers lived a quiet life on his small farm in the valley. He raised a few beef cows, smoked his pipe, argued for hours on political matters, but was a good neighbor.

He sold his home to Colin and Bernice Mann in 1956 and moved to Mission to live out his remaining days.

THE SHOOKS

The old Model T Ford chugged and gasped and on the 13th of July, 1934 brought the rest of the Shook family to Clearwater. The 200 miles from Princeton to Clearwater were long ones, and at the end of five days travel, we arrived at Wes Byrd's cabin on Poverty Flats. Here our load was reduced in respect for the Upper Clearwater road, and in three

trips we were all unloaded at our new home. We were surrounded by zillions of fire-killed snags; the rain came down continually, and the only place I could keep warm was behind the kitchen range. How I longed for the open hill we had left behind, but not for long. The Clearwater Valley was an excellent place for a boy to grow up in.

The tired old Model T made no more trips over the rutted road leading from our place to Clearwater, 16 miles away. The engine was taken out to power the valley's first sawmill, set up in our back yard. That winter we got a floor in the house and I well remember the drafts that came up from below as we all sat around the large air-tight heater, and the 30° below weather made the logs in the walls boom and crack as they split from the cold.

That first winter our house was the gathering place of the valley residents as each Thursday evening they all came to hear the Calgary Oldtimers on the valley's first radio. Honourable Archie and Frank Watanobie thrilled us smaller fry.

In 1934, my father, who was a foreman on the construction of the Hope-Princeton road gave up his job and for the sake of we children moved us to the Clearwater Valley to start a better life. There were eight of us offspring, as well as Jack Norman who had asked my dad if he could come along with us. A family of eleven, starting from scratch in the wilderness during the hungry thirties. We kids never suffered nor went hungry, but I have often wondered how much our parents must have gone through. We could grow good gardens, had lots of wild and domestic meat, had milk cows and chickens, and raised the odd pig, as well.

When asked by someone how he could possibly live in such a remote place, Dad always answered, "Well, I landed here broke, and so far, I haven't raised enough money to move out." Money was not the reason for the way he loved the valley.

Mom and Dad moved to Kamloops in 1951, where mother still lives. Dad died in 1963, the day after his 79th birthday.

Whichever side of the Pearly Gate he may be on, there are a few things I know. If on the wrong side, I bet by now he's nearly got the devil convinced he should convert to oil-fired furnaces. If on the other side, he is probably wading along some small creek catching those "pocket feesh" he so loved to fish for. He has also spent considerable time at creek side trying to figure out a way to make those wings work better.

I think I was sixteen at the time. Anyway, I had been away from home for three or four days on a solitary trip up Table Mountain. How I loved to loaf away the hot summer days in cool alpine glades and watch the multitudes of forest folk that lived in the hills.

This time it was nearly fall and at night the full moon made the alplands the most beautiful place on earth. I had been asleep for a couple of hours and awoke as the chill night air penetrated my light clothing. My fire had burned down to but a few embers and

needed more wood. I sat up to reach for some wood, but what I saw put the fear of the Lord into me – I couldn't move.

Three large bull caribou had passed my camp, grazing on herbs as they moved slowly along. I was struck by the extreme beauty of the scene, when from not more than 25 yards from my dying fire, a giant grizzly mad a lightning fast run at the unsuspecting caribou. Maybe I was lucky he missed, because he went slowly up the grassy slope and started digging for roots.

I built up my fire and got no more sleep that night. Was he watching me as I slept beside my small fire, or was he following the caribou? At any rate, I was glad he liked caribou best. Had he killed a caribou fifty yards from my camp, I doubt if my small camp axe would have made it an equal fight. We stayed on the mountain together for a couple more days, each one respecting the other's territory.

We met again on the same mountain a few years later and near the same spot. Roy, Floyd and I had gone up Table Mountain on a hunting trip. We had travelled the length of the mountain and camped at the east end of the ridge. On the way in, we had jumped a large buck deer, so Roy and I decided that after supper we would see if we could fine him. We went west along the ridge near the edge of the timber. I found him, but couldn't get the smart old fellow to show himself. At any rate, I frittered away all the daylight and was a couple miles from camp when I realized that I was travelling by the light of the moon. I turned back to camp climbing high on the ridge for better visibility. In a small draw was a clump of balsam trees about fifteen feet high and twenty feet in diameter. As I started to cross the draw, just above the clump of trees, I heard the tramping of hooves on the rocky ground and the sound of heavy breathing. I loaded my 22 HP and started to get closer and closer to my buck. The breathing was always audible, but I could see nothing. The critter kept moving so as to keep the trees between himself and me. I moved to the downhill side of the trees, hoping to see my quarry on the slopes above. As I stepped across the small stream in the gully, the hair on the back of my neck started to tickle and I realized what I had done. I ran to higher ground and settled down to shoot it out if need be. Still I saw nothing, but could now recognize the sounds for what they were. Those were long, sharp claws that rattled on the rocks and the heavy breathing was that of the largest bald-faced grizzly that ever walked the woods. We parted as friends. The size of that guy's tracks! When I got back to camp, my brothers, like all brothers, thought I had pulled a rather stupid stunt.

That same night about an hour after I had crawled into bed, the horses, that had been grazing a half mile from camp, came into camp on the dead run. We caught and tied a couple of them. "Come on, I'll show you what happened," my brother Floyd called to me. We went out in the direction from which the horses had come and, sure enough, a large bull caribou had put the run on the horses, had followed for a short distance, then turned up the trail to the pass. Never in my life have I seen a more beautiful animal than this one as he walked in the moonlight along the skyline and was silhouetted against the full moon. If only I could paint!

HOGUE BROTHERS

John and Henry, the inseparable brothers, came to the valley in 1937. They bought the homestead of Pete McDougal at Hemp Creek. That winter they trapped with John Ray and made a deal with him for the purchase of the Azure Lake portion of the line. The following summer, they cleared about twelve acres of land for Ray in payment for the trap-line. However, about the time the deal was completed, they had a disagreement and parted on unfriendly terms. The animosity lasted until Ray's death in 1948.

John was a standard part of most fire fighting crews in the Park. Regardless of how tough the conditions may be, so long as he had a good supply of snooze, he was happy.

I don't know of anyone who was so completely in his element while out in the bush. A good axe man, good hunter and guide, and although he did not like the job too much, he did an excellent job in campfire cooking. Henry, too, could cook up a real meal under primitive conditions.

The Hogues built several boats on Clearwater Lake using split cedar planks. It was uncanny how by bending and prying, they could get the board, sometimes a foot or more wide and about one inch thick to rive out at twenty feet in length. John showed me how it was done several years ago.

The Hogues had several experiences during their trapping days. One fall as the brothers were coming out from Azure Lake shortly before Christmas, they were snowshoeing along on the ice of Clearwater Lake, when, without warning, the ice let go, and Henry, who was behind, fell into the icy water. The heavy clothes, snowshoes, and packs made keeping afloat very difficult. John got out a rope and tried to reach Henry. The thin ice broke again dumping John in, too. He shed his pack and started breaking ice to where it was more solid. Finally, after terrifying minutes, he was able to slide his long lean body out on top of the ice. He got Henry out, too, so they slid along on the thin ice on their stomachs headed for safer ice. They even got their pack of fur, too. It had hooked on the tail of John's snowshoe as it sank. Soaked and weakened, they trudged off to their cabin at Barview, a couple of miles away.

Another time as the time for coming out grew near, Henry became very ill. John left him in the cabin at the west end of Azure Lake and hiked out to Clearwater, then on to Kamloops by train in search of help. He got Harry Bray to fly to Azure Lake to bring Henry out to the hospital. The plane landed on the ice near the cabin and as it taxied to shore, the skis broke through the ice. The plane settled on its wings as the flyers crawled out over the tail section. When Bray failed to return to Kamloops that night, a search was laid on the next morning. He and Henry were flown back to Kamloops by search plane.

In the spring of 1951, John went with me on my trap line. We planned on working together in finding the old trap line of John Ray's that he and Henry had bought from the estate. We found the line ok and followed it for several miles. Where the cabins were

marked on the map, we found not cabins or lean-tos, but a few sheep skins hung up in trees out of reach of animals. These were used in making a home away from home. John did not appreciate this type of luxury, so helped me on my line to Kostal Lake.

The brothers built and operated the Helmcken Falls Lodge. Henry married Cynthia McKort and they looked after the lodge for awhile. Finally, after selling out to Messers Hammel, he and his wife moved to Alexandria. They now reside near Rutland.

John died in northwestern Alberta in w 1971. He had gone to live with his sister, Maime.

I was 13 when I first met the Hogues. It was the next best thing to a circus to watch John at a dance. He loved dancing, and it was a real picnic for us youngsters to watch his good-natured antics once he became a wee bit lubricated within. Always friendly and glowing with goodwill, we called him "The Pixie."

I've never seen anyone I'd rather be on the hill with than with John. If the going got tough he just dug out his box of Copenhagen and carried on.

ALEX FAGE

Alex came to Clearwater to stay in 1918, buying Herman Ortchig's place near Camp Creek. He had operated a sawmill near Clearwater prior to coming to the valley.

We all knew him as Frenchy, the nickname he gave himself. First time I remember him was in the winter of 1934. He was walking down the road past our barn, talking to himself as he went along. "See the sun dogs, Frenchy? Py Colly, it going to be cold."

One of my brothers stopped in to see Frenchy one time and stayed for lunch. "Good rhubarb, Frenchy." "Well it aught to be, I p..... on it every morning." Kind of cut down on people dropping in to lunch.

Alex raised quite a few cattle and lived comfortably on the proceeds. With the help of Bucko and Maggie, his team, they cleared about thirty acres of land. One of Alex's prized accomplishments was the little log dam he made in Camp Creek to irrigate his fields. One day after the works had been in operation for several years, he decided he best get a water licence. The application was processed and an inspection was made. Imagine Frenchy's chagrin after telling all about the way the system had worked for several years, that the only comment the inspector made was "Farmer's dam". He did tell Frenchy later to turn off the water until the licence was finalized. This Frenchy did, but in telling about it later - "You know I turn it back on again soon as he go."

He lived in the old Ortchig cabin for many years before building a better cabin on a much location near the spring that supplied his water. He spent the last few years of his life

working as a bull cook at the various camps set up by Frank Capostinsky's logging operations.

Frenchy was the butt of many practical jokes, many of them more or less instigated by Roy Martin who lived next door on the other property homesteaded by Herman Ortchig.

LUDTKES
Courtesy of C. D. Ludtke (Charlie)

In May of 1923, eight miles north of Minot, North Dakota on our wheat farm in Ward County, due to many crop failures, my dad and two brothers loaded two wagons with household effects, hitched up the horses and headed for greener pastures. Eleven hundred miles and two months later, they arrived in the Clearwater Valley, going as far as Camp Creek with the wagons. This was then the end of the road. The wagons were left there and everything had to be taken a further 5 miles by pack horse.

My mother, sister, younger brother and myself followed by train, arriving in September 1923. We were the first family group to live in the valley. We lived the first winter in a cabin owned by Henry Desfosses, a young bachelor.

The following summer of 1924, we cleared a place for our house out the heavy spruce timber. Our house was built of large spruce logs.

My dad traded his 30-30 Winchester to Frank Caywood for a milk cow. This was the first cow in the valley. Every year we had a 40 mile walk to Clearwater to get her bred. We also had chickens which were the first. Fur bearing animals were very plentiful and we used to trap fisher, etc. right around the chicken house. In 1925, we cleared a bit of land to get feed for our horses and cow. Land was hard to clear. We even cut native saw grass with knives and large scissors.

On July 1, 1926, we were eating supper about six in the evening when we heard a loud roar. On looking out we saw the forest fire about one-half mile south of our place and coming our way. The wind was 50-60 miles per hour and was throwing burning sticks from the top of the timber in front of us while the fire was still one-half mile away. We just had time to grab a few blankets and run to the creek, which was about 200 feet away. The fire was already there.

We stayed in the creek all night. Next morning a strange sight met our eyes. Everything was black and smoking. We could see for miles, where before just to see the sun we had to look up due to the thick tall spruce. There was evidence of many wild animals being burned. We then stayed at Lewis Rupell's house one-half mile to the south, which was one of two that did not burn, due to a previous burn on the south side.

We built again in 1927 and the road was built past our place in 1928. In 1929, the first moose was shot in the valley, there being no moose previous to that. I believe brother Fred shot the first and second.

The forest fire that swept the valley destroyed millions of feet of fine timber, saw logs and cedar poles, but did open the valley for ranching and guiding.

The residents of the valley when we came in 1923 were: Alex Fage, Knut Anderson, Herman Orchig, Henry Desfosses, Lewis Rupell, Tom Sundt, Dave Anderson, Pete McDougal, Mike Majerus, John Ray. Of the original settlers two are still alive.

Ted Helset

LICENSED CLASS "A" GUIDE AND OUTFITTER
R.R.1 – CLEARWATER – B.C.
Phone – 674-3627

June 5, 1972

Dear Charlie,

I am heading for Stillwater tomorrow to spend two weeks with Earl Smith, fishing (and playing Dominoes), so shall try to answer your letter before I go.

We came into the Upper Clearwater in May 1938. That is, the family came then. I had been in, first in March, and then I was in early in May and Floyd Shook plowed up a garden spot for me at the Jim Archibald place. Thanks to the Shook family, we were made to feel "at home" right from the first days of our life in the valley.

And so it goes – As I sit in my humble hut in Nelson, far removed from the Clearwater Valley, it is such letters as this one that bring back a flood of memories, memories of the good old days when we had time to get to know our neighbours, make the odd excursion into the back country unaffected by the modern rat race.

As an Indian friend once told me, "Look at that crazy white man; going down the road to beat the band, just to sit around when he gets there, then get in his car and go to beat the band just to sit around some more." It is the days before this craze that I want to remember.

I have often thought of how apt the Indian's observation was for the majority of people, but such was not the case with the Helsets. Long before most of us were astir, they had long passed on their way to the store or on to Kamloops. How I used to secretly curse Ted as he rooted me out of a nice warm bed at 4:30 a.m. to get ready to head out on some seemingly endless line of traps, or to round up the horses before starting to cook breakfast for a bunch of hunters. Nights were made for sleeping, but someone forgot to tell Ted.

I spent a lot of time at the Helsets' during the 6 years I trapped and guided with Ted, and I have often wondered how many grey hairs he grew on the occasions I took his old Model A coupe down the winding road to Clearwater for supplies or the get home for a day between hunting parties.

I'll never forget the time Ted and I were chugging along on the downhill side of the Mailbox Hill when a rather buxom, I assume female, bear came out onto the road ahead of the car and started to run up the road ahead of us. Ted gave chase. Now this bear had been feeding on gallons of soopalallies, and as the chase began to make her assert a little energy, she began to emit a string of used soopalallies, increasing in volume each time she hit the ground. What a waste.

Well, to get back to the subject, the Helset family arrived in the valley on May 17, 1938 and stayed in the cabin owned by Roy Martin. What a welcome as the snow came down and a taste of winter whistled around the cabin. Can't remember how long they stayed there, but it was not long before the unfinished house, started a year or so earlier by Rev. Woodman, had a new roof and floor and was ready to move into. Clara and Roy were pretty small pumpkins as they played in the six-inch deep dust at road's edge near the house.

Ted bought the trap-line of Howard Mobley and trapped it yearly. He soon bought out the guiding interest and farm of Dave Anderson, and to this day carries on a successful business with his fishermen and hunters, with a little trapping to keep him in shape.

Jim, Ellen, and Harold joined the family later and have all grown up in the valley. It is hard to envision the Clearwater Valley without the Helsets, their numerous horses, a couple of elkhounds, and their white house on the floor of Hemp Creek valley.

Transcribed by Jean Strickland

