

VALLEY HISTORY

AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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Carlo and Leonora Svendsen

Carlo Svendsen lived for just over 97 years and for a great portion of that time was a citizen of, and contributed to, the life of the Windermere District. He was born in Denmark on February 11, 1897. He apprenticed in his native land as a Butter Maker and worked for some years at his trade. In the mid-1920's, Denmark was deluged with propaganda of the good life available in the Windermere Valley, and Carlo decided to leave his homeland to make a new life for himself.

He arrived in Quebec City on April 26, 1927, after sailing aboard the White Star Liner, "Doria". In preparation for his new life, he had studied English for three months, but when he landed in Quebec he could not understand a word that was being said. He finally realized that Canada was a bilingual country and that here in Quebec nearly everyone spoke only French, and he was relieved to find that his English would serve him in good stead in the rest of Canada.

Carlo arrived in Golden on May 6, 1927 and he arrived in Edgewater, his destina-

tion, by train late that night.

His first job was in Kootenay National Park, and when that closed down for the season, he went to Gleichen, Alberta, for the harvest. Three feet of snow ended the harvesting and Carlo made his way back to Edgewater where he had purchased land. He commenced building a house and it was livable by December 5, except it still did not have windows. A financial deal was struck with a carpenter, the windows were placed, and Carlo moved into the new home.

He decided to try farming, but farming was an economically hazardous occupation during the depression and Carlo suffered several setbacks. However, he maintained his sense of humor and liked to recall, with a chuckle, some of his financial upsets.

He cleared land and started a poultry farm but had to sell off all his chickens as he could not get credit to buy feed. Finally, his first grain crop was harvested and he tried chickens again, but after shipping 25 chickens to Calgary and realizing a net loss of \$6.00, he decided to grow potatoes. However, this venture didn't succeed very well either. He shipped a half-carload of his produce to Calgary, and after calculating his profits and losses, he owed \$14.00 dollars to the C.P.R.!

In April 1933, Carlo took a job as Butter Maker at the Peace River Academy. While he was there, because of the deep depression, his wages were cut from \$60.00 to \$40.00 monthly, and the end result was that he returned to Edgewater \$17.00 poorer than when he left. That was the last time he left Edgewater to take a job elsewhere!

Carlo was a frugal man and even though these were hard times, he always made a go of it. He liked to tell the story of how one year he made only \$75.00 laboring away from his farm, but out of that he managed to pay \$50.00 off the debt on his land.

His life became a seasonal series of farming, saw-milling and Christmas tree cutting, with the odd card game for recreation. Carlo came from a land in which a man did not take a wife until he had a furnished home to share with her, so he spent a great deal of time fixing up and furnishing his home.

Finally the house was ready Carlo met his lady, and in July, 1943, he and Leonora McCuaig were married in the United Church in Edgewater, and they spent their honeymoon in Banff and Lake Louise, the first time Carlo had been away from Edgewater in 10 years. Leonora brought two children, John and Leonora, from a previous marriage, into the union and the youngsters went to school in Edgewater.

In 1947, Carlo and Leonora traded their farm in Edgewater for a building in Invermere, which housed a coffee shop. After a year of long hours operating a losing proposition, they decided to try a different tact. They were the first in Invermere to open a shop that sold music and art supplies, magazines, books and newspapers, all school materials and toys and novelties. They also had a good stock of comic books and during the years they had the business, they knew and loved every youngster in Invermere, and, I might add, were loved in return. The going was not always easy as they faced stiff competition, and for four years Carlo had to take other work to subsidize the business. The hours were long, but in the later years they were able to take day trips into the country where they nourished their love of photography. Perhaps it should be mentioned that they were the first business in Invermere to put a cement sidewalk in front of their store, and they were also the first to have a

lighted sign.

In 1980, Carlo and Leonora sold their store in Invermere and moved to Windermere to enjoy retirement . A few years ago, Leonora passed away and since then Carlo has lived for his Church, his garden and his multitude of friends.

Although Carlo was a man of strong convictions, he was a kind and gentle man. It would be difficult to find anyone who he considered an enemy and it would be equally difficult to find anyone who would say an unkind word about him. For 97 years he blessed this world with love and kindness.

Carlo Ludvig Svendsen died March 29, 1994 at the age of 97 .



By Ron Ede
(Ron Ede Files)

Golden Star-February 1, 1929

The members of the St. Andrew's Society of the Columbia Valley and their friends made gay on last Friday night at Hotel Invermere in honor of Scotland's premier poet. There was the usual entertaining rounds of reels, strathspeys and schottishes. Color and brilliancy was given the ball room by a goodly display of kilts and tartans.

A winter on the Trapline

(By Doreen Tegart)

During the Hungry or Dirty Thirties , as those years were named, Jim was offered a partnership on a trapline of about forty miles of creeks on the Forester and Francis area from his brother Buster.

One sunny day, Jim, Dennis and myself moved our belongings out in our Model T Ford just before snow fall. Dennis and I were left alone for two weeks while Jim took the car back to Windermere to store it and sharp shoe his horses as he had been offered a job rounding up some very wild cattle for two dollars a day. He found that after sharp shoeing the horses that there was very little money left over.

Foystons had let us live in a small log cabin on their property. They grew hay there that they would haul by team and sleigh to the cattle that wintered on the Wilmer sloughs some twenty miles to the south.

The cabin had a lot to be desired but beggars can't be choosers. We were thankful to have a roof over our heads. " The winter was cold and the snow was deep. "

There were two small windows facing north and south, barely large enough to let the winter sun in. The old wood burning range had a sag in the center and the food ran to the sides of the pots and was either burnt or not cooked but despite all of this after a cardboard job on the walls and the cracks chinked, it was warm and cozy.

Jim arrived home with our two horses. These horses were very important to us as they were our only means of travel in case of an emergency. There was a warm log barn and plenty of hay. We had a dog that was broke to harness. Many a mile he pulled our young son wrapped warmly in a blanket and sitting in a box as we made the rounds by snowshoes on the trapline. A few days before Christmas, Jim had to go to Wilmer to round up some more wild cattle

and I was left to prepare for the holidays. First I must find a tree so one sunny afternoon while Dennis was napping, I strapped on my snowshoes and headed for the tree line some distance away. Becoming very tired and worried about my son I took the first tree that I came upon. It was a spruce and not very fancy but would have to do. After a decoration job of silver paper that I had been saving and popcorn on a string, it looked good to us.

Jim arrived home on Christmas Eve. He had called on his sister Hazel and she had given him a nice fat chicken for our dinner. He had bought a few goodies with his hard earned money, so we had a happy and great day.

Our food consisted mostly of mule deer meat, rice and dried beans. Molasses was cheap as well as lard, so I made lots of gingerbread cookies. For fruit there was always dried prunes. When we craved a change we would take along a fishing pole on a day checking traps. The creeks and beaver dams were barely touched by man, so were full of trout.

Once we caught a wolverine. That was exciting! They are a very mean and dangerous animal. When you are snow shoeing on a narrow trail and meet one you would be wise to turn off and let him have his own way. The one that we had in our trap was very much alive so after leaving it for dead, we went on our way to check more traps, planning on picking it up on the way back. To our surprise, the trap was sprung and the wolverine was gone.

One day we brought in an exceptionally good catch. The little animals were all dead, or so we thought. We took them in the cabin to be thawed out for skinning and upon opening the pack bag, a very live martin jumped out. Our dog was on hand to watch what we were doing and of course he grabbed the martin but it got him by the

nose. I tried to capture it and in return it got me by the finger. With a lot of yipping and yelling we let it go. I had visions of making a pet out of it but changed my mind. The pelt would look better on some rich ladies coat!

(Tegart Files)

Valley Echo-October 13,1960

At the annual installation ceremony of the Invermere Kinsmen Club, Donald Campbell of Invermere was installed as president by visiting District Governor Harvey McLeod of Penticton. Vice-president is Dick Lim. The secretary is Carl Jones and the treasurer Peter Shukin of Canal Flats. Lester Goodwin is registrar and directors are Roy Broadfoot, Donald Tunnacliffe and Edward Woolston. Ron Collieu is in charge of publicity.

New members welcomed into the club were David Bowen, Dale Osterlund, Curtis Wilder, Reno Goodwin and Pat Follick.

The same evening the newly formed Kinnette Club of Invermere was presented with its charter by Mr. McLeod. The first president of the organization is Mrs. Wayne Lacey. The vice-president is Mrs. Stanley (Anita) Frater, Mrs. Donald Cameron is secretary and Mrs. Donald Tunnacliffe is treasurer. Directors are Mrs. Joe Conroy (Donna), Mrs. Roy Broadfoot and Mrs. Ed Woolston.

Other charter members are Mrs. Carl Jones (Marion), Mrs. Reno Goodwin (Mary), Mrs. Curtis Wilder (Myrtle) Mrs. Alan Tegart (Eileen), Mrs. Clarence Degerness (Marg), and Mrs. Jim Chabot (Grace). The chairman of the skating rink project is Joe Conroy and Curtis Wilder is in charge of entertainment which includes the annual Halloween party sponsored by the Kinsmen for district children.

Golden Star-August 24, 1928

The friends and relatives of Rosie Kinbasket of the Shuswap Reserve were greatly shocked and grieved when they learned that she had been instantly killed by being thrown from her horse while engaged in racing at the Vancouver Exhibition. Rosie is one of the large family of Kinbaskets who formed practically the whole branch of the Shuswaps living on the local reserve. Her father was Pierre Kinbasket, one of the last local chiefs of this branch. Her mother Marianne came from the Shuswap Lake country. She is survived by her two sisters Mrs. William Palmer and Mrs. Eugene Joe. She was 48 at the time of her death. Rosie was an indefatigable worker, carrying on quite extensive ranching operations, performing all the work with her own hands. She was brought home and buried in the Indian Cemetery.

(Museum Files)

Museum Update

Dorothy Blunden has resigned as Curator of the Windermere Valley Museum but she is willing to stay involved as a volunteer. This gives her time to travel.

Dorothy has been curator since September 1996 .

The Museum has benefitted from her outgoing personality, her interest in history, her skills in creating displays and her general interest in the well-being of the Museum . The new curator is J.D.Jeffery. Introduction in next newsletter.

Margaret Christensen
(President)

(compiled by Sandy McKay)