

# VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

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**Walter Stoddart**  
Windermere

An uncle who helped put the rail-way through, then pioneered Columbia River Transportation by poling boats, and a mother who found help in the hot springs had a lot to do with Walter Stoddart coming to this country.

He first accompanied his mother when she came for the treatments, so liked what he saw that he returned while still a boy to grow up with the mountain west.

Walter Stoddart has contributed his share to development of the Windermere Valley, both as an early rancher and later as operator of the Windermere Lake Resort at Windermere Beach, which grew into a subdivision so popular with Kimberley and Calgary people, that it is known as Calberly.

In the process, Mr. Stoddart was touched by another man's tragedy, a tragedy which took two lives and cost Mr. Stoddart an arm and almost his life.

One of those men who have gray hair but retain a youthful appearance through

black brows and a quick, rather shy grin, Mr. Stoddart has seen the Windermere Valley go through three economic stages, from mining to ranching to resorts.

Some of it, particularly such mining as gypsum, he figures was 50 years too soon so today he looks for continued development and sees greater hopes for the area if a highway was put through the Jumbo Pass to the Kootenay Lake country to the West.

Stoddart owes his allegiance to the Windermere Valley to an uncle, James A. Stoddart, who left construction of the CPR at Golden and drifted into the Valley in the 1880's. He moved freight over the Columbia. He poled boats from Golden to headwaters of the Columbia then made a portage with oxen to the Kootenay River. In time he developed a ranch on Stoddart Creek.

In 1897, Stoddart's mother, Mrs. David A. Stoddart (sister of Rose Stoddart, wife of James Stoddart) (two sisters married brothers), was induced by a sister to visit the Radium Hot Springs because of ill health. She brought her young son, Walter, with her. It was a rough trip, two and a half days by wagon from Golden, but the treatments were valuable, said Mr. Stoddart, because his mother lived to be 83.

During that visit, Stoddart acquired 'a couple of cayuses.' He wanted to return. Two years later, in 1899, he did return..... As a boy of 14. Six years later, in 1905, he started the K2 Ranch on the west side of the lake, handling beef cattle and horses. At market time, the cattle, with several ranchers grouping together for the drive, were trailed the 90 miles to Cranbrook. The trip took six days. There would be up to 1000 head of cattle on the trail.

Cranbrook then was just beginning , after construction of the Crowsnest Pass railway. It was in 1914 that the Kootenay Central was built from Cranbrook to Golden to eliminate the long drives. In later years, Mr. Stoddart went to the Williams Lake country of British Columbia where he managed a ranch for a man who had made a fortune in theatricals in Australia.

The Ranch covered 40,000 acres and ran 5000 head of cattle. In 1929, with the start of the depression, the owner lost his Australian investments. A worried man, he was out one day with his two friends and employees, Stoddart and the bookkeeper, when he shot and killed the bookkeeper, shot Stoddart, who lost his left arm, and then jumped to his death in a river.

Stoddart returned to Calgary where he worked for 10 years. He then returned to the Windermere Valley to start his resort.

He developed his beach into one of the best known in the area between 1939 and 1954 and purely through word of mouth advertising.

In 1945 he developed the subdivision which has become known as Calberly, a place where there are 50 summer homes, about half of them occupied by Calgarians, and the rest by people from Kimberley.

From Ken Liddell's  
"Furrows and Foothills"

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**Bernice Stoddart Hathaway  
June 12, 2004**

Several years ago my family was given information sheets on the early ranches in the Valley, and I happened across them recently. I believe we received copies since my father, Walter Holton Stoddart, was a nephew of both James Stoddart (who died in 1908) and J.E.Edgar Stoddart, who died in the 1930's. Walter and the late Charles Dallas Ellis, whose diaries were given to the museum, homesteaded the Ellenvale Ranch (now K2 Ranch 2018) in 1905, living there until it was sold to Capt. McCarthy in 1921.

I noticed a few discrepancies in the account of the early days of Ellenvale, and I'm

returning herewith a copy with some questions noted thereon.

Although James M. Stoddart's name may have been on the original purchase deed from Tom Jones (1905) , my father, although only 20 at the time, was Charles Ellis' partner. His uncle (James M. Stoddart) may have loaned him money for the purchase of perhaps since he was under 21 at the time someone with more capital was required. My father had come west from Ohio and was living with his uncle and aunt at the original Windermere Hotel.

As a child in the Valley around 1941, I clearly remember that Henry Richard (Dick) Harrison of Calgary, a friend of my father, Walter Stoddart, had purchased the (then) K2 Ranch from Capt. McCarthy and lived there at least two years before selling to the Curtis'. My father helped negotiate the sale for Mr. Harrison, and his name might also appear on the new deed at that time. I also recall that the two Wilder boys, Lloyd and Earl, were living on the K2 when Mr. Harrison was there and they were logging.

I know these may seem like trivial details, but I'm sure you would like to ensure your records are as accurate as possible.

**Walter Stoddart  
"Blood and Money on the Chilco  
Ranch"  
The Islander Nov. 29,1987**

This story can be found in the August 1998 issue of the Newsletters.

( Museum Files )

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**1882-1896**

This was the era of a mining boom in B.C. when many small towns were settled overnight. By foot, pony, pack train and stern wheeler on the Columbia, miners were arriving. They came from Eastern Canada, U.S.A. or from Wild Horse Creek where the gold had petered out.

## 1899 Peterborough Town site

Peterborough had a population of 100 and a survey was completed for a town site. The first store opened. It was housed in a building erected by Mr. Peter McIvor. It was a one story log building on the NE corner of Lot 1 Block 27 Plan 692. The building was 18' by 24' with a frame loft. The store offered fancy goods, dry goods and was a book store.

A subscription list was begun for a new hospital. 37 people offered donations of cash, lumber and labour.

A building committee was formed and the Peterborough Town site Co. donated a lot. The name Windermere District Hospital was adopted. The building opened June 1900. A grand ball was held and \$57 was realized in aid of the hospital. Later a kitchen addition extended the one room hospital.

April 15, 1901, Dr. Robert Elliott, MD was given free use of the hospital so long as he continued to live in it but if he left off residence for a period of 7 days then the agreement would lapse. Dr. Elliott remained until the Fall of 1909. Dr. Darrell Hannington replaced him in December 1909. Under Dr. Hannington's direction, in June 1910 the hospital was rejuvenated.

In October 1910, the Ladies Hospital Aid was formed. By 1911, the facilities were inadequate and the hospital was moved across a little to the NW of its original location, into the building known as the "Old Union Hotel" or the "Green Hotel", where it remained until September 1911.

In February 1911, Ethel Wood arrived as the first nurse in the District. She nursed until her marriage to W.H. Cleland in November 1912. Mrs. Jean McMartin Weir succeeded her as nurse. The old hospital was rented as a residence to Allan Crichton.

In May 1911 a meeting was held to start planning a new hospital. The old hospital was sold to Dr. Hannington who leased it as a hospital until the new one opened in Invermere in 1914.

Dr Hannington left for the war as a sur-

geon in 1915. He was one of the best baseball players and one of the best rifle shots in B.C. In 1915 Dr. Hetherington succeeded Hannington.

The 1911 hospital had one large ward with 6 beds and 3 private rooms, a doctor's office and a small operating room. Water was hauled from a well in the village. The community provided meat and garden produce to the hospital. The Ladies Aid sewed the sheets and other linens.

## 1902

After years of confusion with Peterborough Ontario, the community was re-named Wilmer after Wilmer C. Wells. W.C. Wells was first elected to the B.C. Legislature in 1898 to represent the Kootenay riding. He did this until 1903 when he represented the Columbia riding. He was Minister of Lands and Public Works. When he was asked approval of the name, he suggested they call the town Wellsmere. The residents obviously didn't agree !

(Museum Files)

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## Early days on the Toby Benches

By Phyllis Falconer

Captain and Mrs. Young had four children : Clement, George, Phyllis and Helen who was born later in 1914. Father came to Canada in March 1912 and took land one mile from Marples'. It had a beautiful view all over the Valley. It was still under snow. The house was supposed to be built by the time Mother came at the end of April 1912, with us children. The house wasn't ready until the next November and so that is how we came to live in the barn. How Mother managed I will never know. I was only 9 months old. My brother, George, got pneumonia as soon as they arrived and was in the Wilmer Hospital, very ill. They had men working on the house. Some land was cleared and put under crop.... Hay, oats etc. and one acre of corn which all froze in June and was a total loss. Trees were cut and the logs peeled for building barns, root and ice houses. Father himself built a hen house of lumber and to this day it is still in use.

That first year there was no water on the land and the CVI had it hauled in barrels for household use. In the winter it froze on the kitchen floor as they carried it in pails. Ice was cut in blocks 20x20 inches and packed in sawdust in the ice houses for summer use. One not so bright neighbor cut off the block he was standing on and so got an icy dip ! Life was very hard, especially for these women who had come out from homes run by servants, but Mother was a true pioneer and loved the country always and never minded the hardships. That first summer, a bull chased her while she had me in her arms. She ran round and round a wheelbarrow until the men drove the bull off. Bulls can't turn sharp and Mother knew this. Jack Lundy and Donald McLeod built the log part of our barn. Jack was a broad-axe man. (Many years later in the 1940's, Jack was murdered by the Indians.) One of the men who worked on the place in those early days of 1912-13 was Albert von Metzsch. He returned from Germany over 60 years later, July 1977, to see once again the places he loved and I met him by chance on the road. In November 1913, there was a terrible drowning accident. My two brothers and Vivian Marples all went through the ice on the pond below our place. Ken Marples, the eldest went for help and Mother tried to save them and was in the icy water for ages and was very ill after. That December we went back to England and didn't return to the Ranch until after the war in 1919.

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### The Ice House

In 2015, Tim George phoned the Museum, offering the Ice House that sat on his property on 6th Ave in Invermere as he was going to tear it down if no one wanted it. Since the time of having to store blocks of ice for iceboxes in the homes came to an end when electricity arrived and fridges became popular, this small building became a storage shed for coal, then a tool shed, then a play house. As the Museum had no displays focusing on the Ice Industry in the early 1900's it was decided that it could be part of the history of the Valley.

With assistance in lifting, Home Hardware and Rona Hardware offered their truck and time to lift the small building onto a trailer which was used to move the building to Christensen's property then to the Museum. The small building was stabilized and re-roofed by Wolfgang Jarche and Fred Christensen. At the Museum, volunteers painted the exterior and Kristine Soeliner painted a mural inside.

(Museum Files)

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### Windermere District Historical Society Update

The next Executive meeting is September 4, 2018, 10 am at the Museum. The September Gathering will be Thursday September 20, at 2pm at the Museum. The program will be a membership favourite, show and tell. Refreshments will be served. The Museum has had a good summer with a grant for two summer students. One in June and one in July and August. Sandi Jones, an executive member, has acquired a grant from Columbia Basin Trust to digitize the Museum artifacts. The photographer is Jerry McLeod and her assistants are many members of the executive. It's like taking an inventory. She is making very good progress. Thankyou Sandi !

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### Movie Night at the Museum

**Sept.23– Citizen Kane-1941–** Often called the greatest picture of all time. A Mercury Production by Orson Welles. Fake news and more from 1868 to 1923.

**Oct.21– An American in Paris-1951.** Gene Kelly, producer Freed, director Minnelli and songs by the Gershwins produce a musical picture that picked up six Academy Awards.

**Nov. 18– The Grey Fox– 1983-**Shot in southern B.C. including Fort Steele.

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### Happy Birthday

**Joy Bond and Ray Crook.  
Two of our Life Members who are celebrating their 100th birthday this summer.**