

# VALLEY HISTORY AND THE WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

BOX 2315, INVERMERE, V0A IK0 May 2019 250-342-9769



## Tracie Williams

Mrs. Amelia Palmer was a daughter of Chief Pierre Kinbasket and a granddaughter of the original Chief Kinbasket who brought the Shuswap Indians to the Windermere Valley in 1850.

Mr. and Mrs. Palmer had seven daughters: Shelagh Dehart, Angel Armstrong, Tracie Williams, Maryanne Stanley, Flora Holdt, Kate McIntosh, and Marguerita, who died when she was twelve years old.

It was Tracie Williams we went to for this story because as a child she lived with her grandmother who told her enthralling stories of the very early days in the Valley and she, herself, remembers incidents in her childhood that are very close to the life of the native inhabitants.

We saw the peace-pipe that Mrs. Kinbasket had left in her will to her granddaughter. It had belonged to Chief Pierre, and Tracie can remember seeing her grandfather smoke it at a council meeting. She says hundreds of Indians attended the council and the Chief and his advisors sat around the council rug.

The meeting, as always, opened in silence while the peace-pipe was filled with dried kinickinick. It was passed from mouth to mouth among those entitled to use it. Each Indian took three or four puffs. At last the issue to be decided was broached.

Tracie speaks, too, of the inherent fear of her people for an owl. An owl represents evil and she says there are times when an owl has seemed to speak to her in the Shuswap dialect warning her of trouble to come and that trouble has materialized. She remembers it most strongly before her Aunt Rose died.

When Rose Kinbasket died in a horse race at Vancouver it was another death in the family that seemed to bear out an old curse imposed by a Stoney Indian, "Uchm'clooys", many years ago.

It was in the days when the Stoneys came through the Sinclair Pass to trade horses for wives, daughters of local Indians, or for other horses. Tracie's great uncle, so her tale goes, had a fine Palomino which Uchm'clooy's coveted. But the Kinbasket would not trade. It was not just the value of the horse, although apparently it was an outstanding animal. The Kinbaskets were resenting the fact that the Stoneys took so much. It was an assertion of independence as it were. The Stoneys were not going to have the Palomino.

The argument waxed long and loud but the Kinbasket was adamant. The Stoney finally departed but not before he laid a curse on the Kinbasket family. From then on, he said, the Kinbasket band would be cursed by horses. Horses would be their death. The Palomino, he vowed, would be dead in two months, and the great uncle would be dead in two years. In two months the Palomino was dead and the great uncle too. From then on, Tracie recounts, sudden deaths in their family have been caused by horse accidents.

Alec Kinbasket died from the kick of a horse. Rose was riding a race horse when it stumbled and threw her to her death. There have been others.

Tracie herself, was thrown from a wagon as an infant and suffered crippling injuries. She believes she owes her life to the concentrated care her grandmother gave her through years of pain and difficulty.

Tracie believes her grandmother had the intuitive powers of the ancient Indians. She thinks that white people lack this power because they lost the communion with nature centuries ago that the Indians retained. The prophetic powers of her grandmother made a deep impression on the little crippled girl who lived with her. She has seen and heard things that are beyond explanation.

Tracy has many fine mementos and objects of Indian art in a collection. Among them is a buckskin skirt of Mrs. Pierre Kinbasket and the buckskin is as soft as velvet. She has the headdress of a Stoney Indian, a heavily beaded Indian dress, a necklace of elks teeth and another made of the hooves of wild animals.

(Museum Files)

## **The Thief and Chief Pierre's Peace Pipe**

**(By Shelagh Dehart)**

We believe Chief Pierre's Peace Pipe came from his father Chief Paul Ignatious. It had a long wood stem and the bowl was made from a special kind of stone. The silver parts of it I believe were lead. I think the lead came from old Nabob tins because they would use that for decoration because it was so pliable. The pipe was handed down to my sister Tracie from my Grandmother after Chief Pierre had died. Tracie sold it to the Edmonton Provincial Museum so that it would be preserved and safe forever. The bowl of the Peace Pipe was stolen from the Museum by a man many know around here. We know he stole it because he told us he took it and he showed it to us. He was so proud he had stolen it. Then he sold it. We

are sure he sold it. The Edmonton Museum was supposed to broadcast around the world that it was stolen and they were to show the picture of it around the world. And there is a big reward for the person that finds it.

The thief said he'd stolen Grandfather's Peace Pipe back for us so I asked him for it many times. He would always give excuses and would not give it to me. Finally I took a male relative of mine with me and I asked him to ask for the pipe. The thief said " Yes, of course. I was just waiting for an Indian man to ask for it." But he did not give it to us then either.

Awhile later he came to my relatives home with the pipe and my sisters and I sat on the floor in a circle and passed the pipe around. He came at night, in the dark and we could not see it clearly. We could only feel it. It felt like the right one only it was very heavy and I do not remember it being so heavy. My Grandfather's pipe was very light. It was just the bottom part of the pipe that the thief brought. I believe the museum still has the long wood stem. My sisters and I used to wonder how they made that hole for the stem because it was so long and the hole was so little. I was told that the pipe maker would start a little hole, then put coals in the hole and let it keep burning.

We knew it was not the real pipe because my nephew, Alfred Larson borrowed it one time from my sister Tracie for a school play. The bowl part of it came back broken. He tried to mend it but it was not a very good job and it's rough on one side with a big crack in it. The one the thief brought to us was not cracked, it was not even rough and it could never be cracked as it was made out of a very heavy thick metal like the pipes under houses. I know the one he gave us is a fake. It's the wrong one because the one he brought was not made from stone, it was made from metal.

Today, somebody in the world has my Grandfather's Peace Pipe and we know they paid a big price for it.

## Dr. Levi Toby

Dr. Levi L. Toby was a physician employed by the U.S. Government at Ft. Colville after the establishment of a garrison of troops there in the early 1860's. This garrison of the Fort was located at what was then known as Pinkneyville, a few miles from the present city of Colville, Washington and was fifteen or twenty miles interior from the site of the Hudson Bay Co. post named Fort Colville on the Columbia River above Kettle Falls. Dr. Toby was not a regular army surgeon but was what was known as a contract doctor. That is a civilian from the medical profession employed by the Quartermaster to reside at the Fort and do the duties of a regular surgeon. He is supposed to have come from California.

A half-breed named Manuel Felix or Felice was the real discoverer of gold in the Kootenay country. Fort Colville of the Hudson Bay Co. was at the time the real wintering place for these half-breed trappers and prospectors and their outfitting point and the army post had been established in that vicinity to protect the settlers who were in the Colville Valley and the miners who were becoming numerous in the country and liable to have troubles with the Indians. With the discovery of gold in the Clearwater country in 1860 and the rush of mining men from the Cariboo country into the interior after the diggings there began to fail, there were a great many wandering prospectors going into all the mountain districts and everyone was talking about and excited about gold. This man Felix, reported what he had found and Dr. Toby organized a party in the early summer of 1862 and hired Felix as guide and proceeded to the Kootenay Country, and this was one of, if not the original party, to find gold on Stud Horse (Wild Horse) Creek near Ft. Steele. The party penetrated into the country around Lake Windermere and returned to the Colville country in the fall. I have records of them at Tobacco Plains in the latter part of September 1862 on the way back.

In the summer of 1863, Dr. Toby was elected a member of the territorial legislature of the Territory of Washington and served in that capacity during the winter of 1863-64 at Olympia. Whether he prospected during the summer of 1863 I do not know as yet but evidently he was prominent in the settlement then centering in the Colville Valley. That was prior to the setting off and organization of any Spokane County or any settlement where the city of Spokane now is. He represented the entire region north of Snake River and Wenatchee River east of the Cascade Range to the line of Idaho. He was prominent in the passing of what was known as the Chinese Poll Tax Law, which affected Chinese in the mining districts. Because of his affiliation with miners and mines in the Columbia Valley, Toby Creek was named for him.

T.C.Elliott

Walla Walla Public Library to B.G.H.  
September 25, 1912

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### **The Legion Building Windermere Valley Museum**

By 1971, the little Crook's Cabin had grown too small for all the numerous artifacts that were collected in just a few years. The former Little Legion building became available. When the Legion built their new Club House on 13th St., they offered the old club house and the property to the School District which was used as an extra classroom. With the construction of a new High School, the building was no longer needed so it was offered to the WDHS for a nominal fee and moved off of the property by the Old Library to the south rim of the Pot Hole Park beside the Crook's Cabin. By 1977, the Legion building became known as the Lake Windermere District Historical Society Museum shortened to the Windermere District Museum and the Cabin became a Pioneer Cottage. By 1979, the name became "The Windermere Valley Museum" as the museum complex materialized. `

## Windermere Hospital Aid

The Windermere Hospital Aid was inaugurated in 1951.

The Windermere Ladies Aid disbanded and in a written statement signed by Mrs. Lloyd Tegart, turned over their funds of \$47.12 to the new organization. During the 1950's the Hospital Aid worked at a very ambitious project producing and publishing a cookbook called "Windermere Cookery." It was launched in 1954 and published in 1956.

The first big project for the hospital was the purchase of an x-ray machine, with the help of all the auxiliaries and the Lion's Club. Also in the 1950's the following items were purchased: spot film device, landscaping new hospital grounds, wheel chairs, chesterfield and chair for the Nurses Quarters, hyperextension frame, furnishings for the Nurses Residence, 4 new bed lamps and cushions for the solarium.

The new hospital was opened in 1956 and the Aid helped with the refreshments served and the President Joan Henderson served tea.

During the 1950's the Windermere Hospital Aid raised their funds by holding bazaars, raffles, dances and a Hospital Ball, Fall Fair Queen Contests, Fall Fair Booth sales, African Night Movie, catering, bean suppers and rummage sales.

In 1959 the Windermere Hospital Aid became a member of the Auxiliary Division of the B.C. Hospital Association.

In the 1960's the Windermere Hospital Aid's priority at the hospital was supplying funds for further landscaping projects. Other items purchased were a ride on lawn mower, lawn furniture, fence for hospital grounds, 24 stainless steel jugs, 3 pairs of drapes, 3 over bed tables and 3 chairs, Stryker turning frame, fracture frame, pelvic traction belt, x-ray attachments, humidifier, sitz bath, stretcher table, children's' books and magazine subscriptions. Also purchased were ECG attachment for cardioverter, incubator, blue jet humidifier, a second baby incubator, x-ray grid, and a water distiller.

In the 1970's the Windermere Hospital Aid purchased an overhead table, a T.V. pole, more wheel chairs, a 16mm movie projector, and overhead projector, a refrigerated drinking water fountain and \$3,200.00 worth of television sets, as well as a hair dryer, 2 electric blankets, a blood bank and patio furniture.

Life Members are: Mary Smith , Alice Geiger,

Phyl Luyendyk, Helen Bavin and Eleanor Stoddart. Alice Geiger was the Regional Representative in 1967-68. Tray favours are made every Christmas for the hospital patients. A scrap book has been compiled to record the activities over the years.

(Museum Files)

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## Museum Summer Opening and New Display

### "Capturing History Through the Camera Lens."

On display you will see many devices which make use of photographic film; from an Edison Projecting Kinetoscope (1897-1900), a finely made 4x5 inch folding field camera, to a microfilm camera and reader used in many libraries etc. to keep a lot of printed material without taking up much room. While these are of particular interest, there are numerous other cameras and projectors for both still photos and movies.

**The Museum Opening Tea is June 15, 2019 at 2pm on the Museum lawn. A surprise awaits you !**

On April 5, 2019, a long-time Windermere District Historical Society member passed away.

### **John Ronacher.**

The Family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to

The Windermere Valley Museum  
and Archives.

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(Compiled by Sandy McKay)