



# **Memories of Aveley Ranch**

**by**

**John K. Moilliet, Theodore K. Moilliet  
and Madeline J. Rendell**

© 2006 - This history is copywrited. No reproduction or use of quotations is permitted  
without the expressed permission of the editor.



## Prologue

**“A few notes by John Keir Moilliet regarding Aveley Ranch and its beginnings.**

**To my children ... “**

Jan. 1985.

Your grandfather came from England in 1899 at the age of sixteen, to a farm near Orillia, Ontario. He was the youngest son with four brothers: Hubert, a Captain in the merchant navy; Bernard, a Church of England minister; Alex, a Doctor; and Jack, a Schoolmaster. His one sister, Madeline was never married.

He knew nothing of farming, but was not studious except in the few things that he was particularly interested in. He was, however, a great reader and never ceased to improve himself in both mind and body.

On this farm, amongst his many other duties, he was soon put in charge of their small flock of about forty ewes. This was his first experience with and interest in sheep. His salary was eight dollars a month, but he was given an additional ten cents for each lamb that survived.

In the fall of 1901, his feet became itchy and he started west, threshing his way across the prairies. In those days, they threshed most of the winter, whenever it was not too cold. Most of the sheaves had been stacked in round stacks at harvesting.

The spring of 1902 found him in B.C., where he found work at several ranches: Bostock's and Duck's at Monte Creek; and the Coldstream Ranch at Vernon. He also worked on a power project for B.C. Electric. In Vancouver, he joined forces with his uncle, Hyde Finley, who was later to become his partner.

They both went to Trail where he worked in the smelter until he found himself nearly dead from lead poisoning. After being hospitalized in Vancouver, he came back to the dry 'interior' (Kamloops) partly for his health's sake. As he recovered and became stronger, he joined several survey and timber cruising parties in Kamloops as 'axe man'. He had done a great deal of wood cutting and was already quite good with an axe, which helped him get and hold the jobs with these parties and he became a very good man with an axe. To be an axe man and a horseman were the two prime requisites for the life he was going to lead.

On survey trips up the North Thompson, he fell in love with the valley and soon pre-empted land on the south side, opposite Peavine Flats (later Vavenby). He and his uncle began clearing land and soon had a few cows and hogs on the place, which they called "Aveley

Ranch". They were about the third settlers to live in this upper area about 1905. This was after a spell with his uncle on another pre-emption, near Allingham's, which they named "Abberley". They also worked periodically for Allingham. It was after this, on finding the land to be too dry to work without irrigation, that they moved to the south side, next to Jones'.

During this early development trapping and logging, the latter largely a by-product of land clearing, were done for added income. The logs were 'decked' on the river bank for the spring log drive to the Kamloops mills.

Sometime during 1907, he briefly returned to England upon the death of his father. It was at this time that he and your grandmother became engaged. He had known her since boyhood as she was secretary and companion to his great aunt Lou. Amazingly, she was ten years his senior.

Two things had to happen before their marriage: He had to build a log house and at least have a semblance of a farm but she could not leave Aunt Lou while she lived. They finally met and were married in Kamloops at the end of March 1909. Your grand mother bought a good team of horses and a brand-new Studebaker wagon for their trip up the valley by that time the road had reached Raft River, about ten miles from Aveley Ranch.

'Aveley' was the name of the village near London where the Rev. John Finley, Great Uncle's and my grandmother's father from Scotland, was vicar for many years and where Granny and Unky were brought up. Granny was the only one of the Finley's daughters to have issue and the greatest of the family. One sister was a nurse, another sister a schoolmistress but they never married.

There was also Aunt Constance, who married late in life. Their other brother Reginald, the lawyer, had two children, a daughter Joyce and a son Jack who died in his teen years. When her parents lived in Vancouver Joyce spend quite a lot of time at Aveley during school holidays. This would be the late 'teens and early thirties. Cousin Joyce became a champion tennis player, later marrying Norman MacNeil and lived in West Vancouver and raised a family.

They probably would have named the ranch Abberley, but had already used the name for property near Allingham's. Abberley was the little town, near Malvern, in Worcestershire, where two generations of Moilliets had lived.

Most of the area was good open range country at that time, particularly the south slopes, and he again thought of sheep. The first Grazing Commissioner, T.P. McKenzie (a great character) encouraged him greatly. The first flock of about sixty were bought in 1913, at Louis Creek, and trailed up the valley. They came partly on the right-of-way of the new Canadian Northern Railway.

These ewes were of mixed breeding, but were crossed to Oxford rams, the main blackfaced mutton or dual purpose breed of that day in this area. All went extremely well, in fact, so encouraging that two carloads of about four hundred ewes were imported from Alberta in the fall of 1916. These ewes were Rambouillets and were poor sheep, mostly too old. He was "took"! Also, they were bred to lamb in February and 1917 was about the worst winter of the early part of the century. (Only 1907 was worse.) Anyway, lambing was a disaster and predators started that season.

Luckily, a good shepherd, Riley Munro Ladow, (French/Irish/Scottish born in Pennsylvania) got things straightened out and the predators under control by 1918, and successfully started range grazing, a 4,000 foot mountain being the first high range. This was deteriorating rapidly because of a new crop of tree growth, so, in 1923, they opened up and tried the alpine country, which had been described to them by a prospector friend, Tom Montgomery, and soon investigated. They became one of the first flocks to use alpine range in B.C.

The first shipment of lambs from this range, sent by rail to Burns in Vancouver, averaged 114 pounds off car after two nights and two days shrinkage. Pat Burns himself and his notably famous buyer, Blake Wilson, were both at the plant and said they were the best lambs they had ever received. Very encouraging!

Before live rail shipments were made to Vancouver, the few earlier lambs were dressed at home and sent to (Ernie) Dee's father's butcher shop in Kamloops. Riley knew how to dress lambs. Oxford rams were used mainly during those years and were very good for producing a big lamb which finished at a heavier weight which the market liked. Too bad the Oxford is now almost extinct. By the late twenties, a smaller lamb averaging about 80 pounds was wanted. I don't know whether this was partly the reason that they started

breeding to border cheviots. Grandfather thought that, in a country of hills, he should have hill sheep! Why did Riley let him? Actually Riley was not with the sheep from 1922 to 1924, old Mac was with us. Mac came from border cheviot country, Perthshire, and loved them. Mac was probably the cause of this blunder. They wouldn't climb or herd, but liked to run straight to the bottom. This proved a disaster. In the first place, the herding qualities vanished, and, in the second, the lambs were too light about seventy pounds though of very high quality. We often got a bonus on their high dressing percentage!

The next breeding rams, during the early thirties, were Rambouillets (pronounced Ramboolay). Unfortunately the Rambouillets, at least in B.C., were a poor type, wrinkly, with greasy, short wool definitely a desert sheep. They did not thrive, but took care of the herding problems. However, the Rambouillet/Cheviot cross, which we called 'Chevrolets'!, did, in some ways, prove to be a wonderful ewe, when I look back. They were tough and efficient. We considered three pounds of hay was a good feed for sheep and a half pound of grain a big feed at lambing, and they produced, perhaps with the help of the high range. A family made a living with five hundred ewes.

The 'high' of lamb prices was 13 cents a pound in 1929. Wool was 50 cents during the twenties. In the Great Depression, the lowest price for lambs was 5+ cents for No. 1's and 4+ cents for No. 2's. (This was the Vancouver price, which was always well above the Alberta price, and about equal to Winnipeg, but below Toronto price.) The grade difference was based on dressing percentage. Wool did get down to 5 cents once, but remember getting 17 cents in 1935. Beef actually got down to one cent a pound! How the sheep numbers increased!

During the thirties, Alistair Cameron, of Kelowna had carried on the remnant of the famous Harvey Cross Flock. The next breeding change was in the late thirties when this remnant, a Romney/Rambouillet cross, called 'Romnolet', was introduced. This breed was not recognized by the government and was, unfortunately, never registered and came to an end. Scandalous! They proved superior to the Rambouillet and with Hampshire rams for crossing, produced excellent lambs.

During these years, twenties to early fifties, the sheep population of the B.C. Interior really zoomed and Vancouver absorbed it all, as well as a portion of the Southern Alberta lambs. The later usually caused a drop in prices in early September.

The operating plants in Vancouver were: Burns,

Swift, Gainers, Alberta Meat and the public plant at the Vancouver Stockyards. In the depression, Jack Diamond bought this plant for \$20,000 and it was called 'Pacific Meat', now Intercontinental. Pacific Meat, and, later, Intercontinental Packers, were a very good outfit.

Canada Packers also started a branch in Vancouver in the late thirties; so there were at least six packers which killed about 1,200 lambs per week from mid August until late in the fall. If and when a surplus developed, and the price dropped a few cents, they would start freezing some of them, so those frozen carcasses were the 'spring' and Easter lamb supply at that time.

To go back to our own operation, the next breeding change was an American Corriedale imported from DuBoise, Idaho in 1941. Through corresponding with Julius Nordby, the chief there, it appeared that their slightly changed Corriedale was vastly out producing their Rambouillet and Columbia flocks hence the decision. Incidentally, this amazing breed was discontinued at the Station, but was absorbed into the 'Targee'. They were ordered by the American Government to work only on "a truly American breed!"

The Corrie, Julius, really did things and left his mark as no other ram had. We used his ram progeny for the next ten years. Unfortunately, Julius was passed on, after two years, to another sheepman who later sold out of sheep and his later progeny were lost!

During this ten years, other Corries imported were very disappointing, with the exception of one from Freland Wilford's flock at Stavely, Alberta, the highest priced ram in the 1951 Calgary sale. Unfortunately, he died of tetanus on the tenth day of bucking. Such a disaster! This ram left ten outstanding ram lambs and also left his mark. Of course, it should be noted that, with this 'new' Corrie blood, we were experiencing a boost from highbred vigor plus the fact that the high range was good and still in peak production. Also, our home farm headquarters had been increased by buying out the property of our adjoining neighbour a previous oldtime operation with clean ground and, perhaps, a good supply of vitamin B12 in the soil from 30 years of Jone's cattle.

The most recent breeding changes and, hopefully improvements, have been the addition of a Corriedale of unusual type from Wyoming, and a Targee from Du Boise, Idaho. The results look promising. We have also added a Romney ram to mate with a few ewes to give us some fleeces more desirable for the craft trade. Generally speaking our wool quality has improved again greatly in the past few years and it is perhaps back to the

general quality that it held during the late forties and through the fifties, after which it seemed to deteriorate somewhat, for a time. (Could this have been partly from too much inbreeding?)

Remember, that it is most fortunate for wool that general quality and fineness is closely correlated to herding qualities and general handling ability of sheep. This is the reason that we and most larger flocks are very wool conscious.

July 1988 ...

Well, nearly four years have passed. Here I am again, with time (though perhaps for not too long) to write. All is well with the family, but my hearing is 'on the hummer'. Miraculously, it does not matter. My 'beloved' has gone on before me. My family is self sufficient. I have four grandsons and three granddaughters. On top of all this, the future for the sheep flock, the range situation, and the Ranch in general, look much brighter than three years ago.

The 'clearcut' logging, followed by fire, particularly at the higher elevations, is going to solve the high range situation, without which, B.C. is not good sheep country. Our original Foghorn range is having its first complete rest in sixty six years. Lately, we have been forced to over graze, through the shrinkage of its open areas and dimensions through in some cases, first growth of scrub trees and, in other cases, re-growth of trees. In the latter case, it is in the part which was made by fire, probably about one hundred years ago. In the former case, it is in areas that formerly appeared to be true alpine, where trees have not grown before or, rather, not since the ice age, after which, for hundreds of years, the alpine areas would have been enormous.

Perhaps the climate optimum, as recently as a thousand years ago, vastly affected the B.C. tree line. Again, there seems to have been an improvement in the growth of trees in the last forty years. Also we do not know how much affect wildfire has had in keeping the tree line at bay. This may also apply to some of our lower, dry (desert), open range country and also to the northern edge of our Canadian prairie.

From observations here, it seems that trees help each other first an encroaching thicket of scrub trees, then a seed producing tree and so, it marches on. Gradually, wind is lessened and, perhaps, even winter temperatures rise slightly. Again, from my lifetime observations here, it seems that grazing helps germination of conifer seeds and encourages young tree growth. This after about thirty years of constant use, when the

forage gradually changes from a high, dense growth of varied, very leafy species, to more of a shorter, grassy, more sodded type of cover

The forgoing, I think, even applies to some areas of low, dry bunch grass range. I have observed that, within a quarter of a mile radius of some old sheep camp sites, 'bedgrounds', obviously overgrazed, the growth of new generation Douglas fir took place much sooner, and is much denser, than beyond. In some cases, the grazing may have impeded the growth of deciduous brush and aspen, which, again, would have slowed the takeover by conifers. Oh, the amazing laws of nature. Man must try to work with it rather than against it. The clearcut logging followed by fire is a great step forward, replacing nature's need for wild fire. Nature's wild fire was the means of preventing the formation of stagnating, useless, inflammable and ugly jungles in many areas. Sometimes, nature waits too long or acts too soon and destroys the good.

At the present time, a start has been made on the clearcut logging, or, rather, salvaging the timber on various parts of the old Fog Horn Range. Unfortunately, this is taking place rather slowly owing to having to be put to private bids. Also, the mills can only handle so much low quality wood in a given season.

What will really count is how good a burn can be achieved on both logged and intervening areas. It is not every season that fire will burn well at six to seven thousand feet. We also don't know how many years it will take for the feed to become re-established, or know yet whether there are domestic grasses somewhere in the world that could be sown and which would be more productive, or mix better with the native forage. The range is above the elevation at which domestic legumes will grow. The only native legume is lupine.

Other problems that will develop are, firstly, to convince the timber industry and the 'powers that be' not to replant to trees in those areas which have proved themselves, over the past seventy-five years, to be top range. This particular area has been the means of producing (finishing), over the past hundred years, about ten million dollars worth of lambs and wool and should be capable of doing the same again. I believe that this is of greater value to the country than one crop of low quality wood.

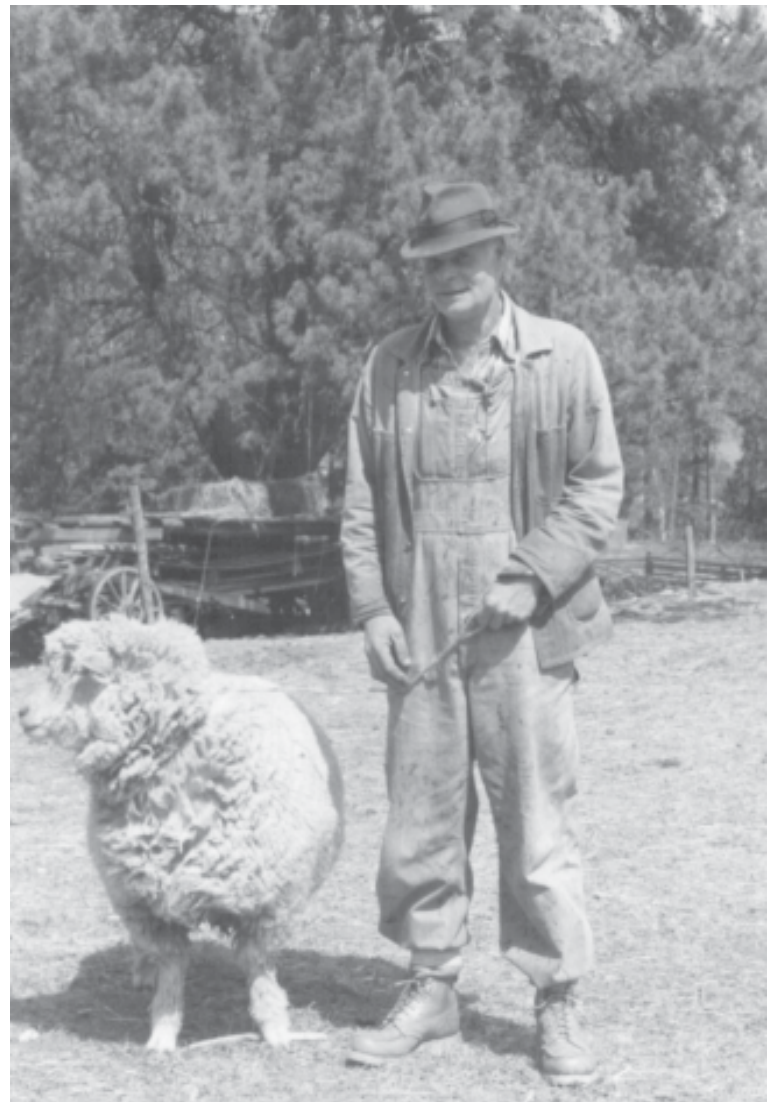
Secondly, there will be the problem of

controlling natural re-growth of useless scrub from again taking over. This will require experimentation and cooperation from all concerned. In this day and age, a solution that is economically feasible may be found.

Again, the foregoing is a personal and, perhaps, limited view. However, it does come from a lifetime, in fact almost two lifetimes, of observation, experience and thinking.

August 1988 ...

Being still laid low from the after effects of a heart attack, with time on my hands at last, I feel the urge and duty to commit to paper a few words regarding personal experiences and thoughts of both myself and others during the past, of this rapidly changing world most particularly, of course, as our own lives and sheep operations have been affected.



## Biographical notes on

**THEODORE ALBERT MOILLIET, 1883-1935**  
by Theodore Keir Moilliet, his eldest son, in 1988.

TAM, as he was always called, attended Felsted School in England until age 16. He hated school life, being more interested in nature and especially animal life. In this, he was probably influenced strongly by the pioneering work of his cousin Charles Darwin (Human and Animal Evolution) and Francis Galton (Genetics and Eugenics).

Although slight in build, TAM was athletic and excelled at swimming and running. His mother had arranged for him to go to the Drinkwater Farm near Orillia, Ontario, to learn farming. This period (October 24, 1899 to March 25, 1901) is covered in a biography which TAM started in 1930, but discontinued after eight and one half pages. Several items were significant: He received a letter from Miss (Molly) Dix- Stephens, who was, at the time, lady-companion and secretary to his aunt, Louisa Joyce (Townsend) Moilliet, the widow of his uncle Theodore, and whom he had known most of his life. He married her in March 1909 when she was freed by aunt Lou's death.

While at Drinkwater's, TAM had been given charge of the lambing of their small farm flock of sheep. He was to receive ten cents per lamb saved in addition to his wages of eight dollars per month.

Drinkwaters had two daughters, fourteen and sixteen years old, besides younger children. TAM became strongly attached to the elder daughter, but she died early in 1901.

TAM soon left the farm.

He revisited his family in England in 1907, when his father died. It was at this time that he and Molly Stephens arranged that, when she was freed by Aunt Lou's death, she would come to Canada and marry him. Early in 1909, Lou died leaving Molly much of her furniture, including the piano she had played for her for nearly twenty years, as well as a small legacy.

She must have come partly through Maine, which seemed an extremely desolate and featureless landscape. By comparison, the B.C. interior must have been a welcome improvement.

By this time, after he returned from England, TAM's elder brother, Alec, was enrolled at college in Halifax, Nova Scotia, so TAM joined him there. In order to help finance his education, Alec had undertaken the care of a lunatic, so this became TAM's responsibility. Alec was studying medicine and went to

Baltimore for post-graduate training. TAM headed for Western Canada and worked on a grain farm for a few months at Sintaluta, Saskatchewan, about ninety miles east of Regina.

His maternal uncle, Hyde (Harry) Finley, was already living at the coast in B.C. and was somewhat involved in fishing, so TAM joined him there.

At this time, Vancouver was developing its water system and they worked at this for a few months.<sup>1</sup>

They then moved to Trail, which was probably expanding the smelter.<sup>2</sup> TAM got a job in the section where the metal was recovered in electrolytic tanks. Unfortunately, at that time, no provision existed to protect workers from lead, mercury and other metal poisoning. TAM soon required an operation to drain his lungs. The only doctor in Trail capable of doing the operation had to be half drunk before his hands got steady enough for the job. He told TAM he could only expect to survive if he moved to the 'dry belt'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I believe it was a B.C. Electric Hydro Project. He told me of it and said that this pipe started on a mountain. It was many feet in diameter at the source and then slowly reduced to 'inches' where it entered a turbine or large Pelton Wheel.)

<sup>2</sup> While waiting for this job, he looked in vain for work and did a lot of looking and walking, finally finding a job as a "Cookie" on a railway extra gang. To clean tables, he and the cook grabbed a huge tub and, with the same broom as used for the floor, swept metal dishes and all into the wash tub. There were some very low specimens of humanity in the gang fortunately it did not last long, he did not enjoy it!

It was after he recovered his health that he got his uncle to join him for the valley trips, knowing that uncle needed to be got away from towns and temptations.

Another thing TAM suffered torture from toothache during his trapping and pioneer days. He soon lost or had them pulled. We only remembered him with false teeth. Of course, the poisoning at Trail was mainly responsible.

<sup>3</sup> I always understood that TAM ended up in hospital in Vancouver and that it was a Vancouver doctor who told him to get back to the dry interior Kamloops. He reached Kamloops having sneaked into a CPR passenger train where he stuffed himself into the top berth of an old 'Colonist' car. He was found, given a tongue lashing by the irate conductor and told to disappear at Cherry Creek, the first stop west of Kamloops. He must have had friends in Kamloops to stay with.

That was how they came to Kamloops.

Even at that time the Kamloops area was becoming famous as a last refuge for those threatened with tuberculosis. Fortunately, his family has shown an unusually strong resistance to this disease for several generations. As he recovered his health, TAM did a lot of walking. One day, he found himself on the hillside south of town, looking across the junction of the North and South Thompson Rivers. He told me that, at that moment, he determined to explore the North Thompson.

At that time, American timber companies were sending survey parties to determine the timber resources of B.C. TAM and Harry joined several of these parties before 1907. They went as far east as Yellowhead, Tete Jaune. About the only settlements above Barriere in this period were: George Fennell (Chu Chua, 189X); Archie McCorvie and Daubney Pridgeon (Peavine, 189X); and Frank Allingham (Bella Vista Farm, Vavenby, 1886).<sup>4</sup>

TAM first staked land at Cottonwood, a large natural wet meadow just, east of Avola, probably about 1906. The first fall, he put up a stack of hay. It rained so much that the river reached high water level and his haystack floated away down the river. Frank Allingham invited him to file on the land adjacent to him, up river, in the turn of the valley. This was named 'Abberley'.

About 1907, TAM, his uncle, Hyde Finley, and his brother, Jack, at the invitation of William Henry Jones, each staked a quarter section east of Jones', on the south side of the river. This became 'Aveley Ranch'.

Jones had realized that the only way to get a ferry was to have more settlers on that side. The ferry came and Jones ran it for several years. It consisted of a covered box about three feet deep, ten or twelve feet wide and long enough to carry a team and wagon. The floor was heavy plank with a secure fence of planks fore and aft, with sturdy gates at each end. Strong ropes, attached to the upstream corners of the box came down from pulleys at each end of a 'spreader' which hung from a cable stretched across the river. This cable was anchored to huge cedar stumps in Jones' bottom field. From there it went over a very high 'A-frame', across to the north side and over a pulley at the top of a fourpole frame. It was stretched by the weight of a large, square

box filled with rocks, whose weight could be adjusted by adding to or removing rocks to adjust the tension on the cable. This was called a 'reaction ferry' because it was powered by the current of the river. By altering the length of the ropes tied to the corners of the box, it could be steered into the current so that it was forced to move across the river.

This particular ferry lasted for many years. It had a rather dramatic demise, circa 1915, I think it was. On a Sunday morning, we heard a terrific "BANG". Almost at once, we heard a man shouting to us from the north side of the river, about a third of a mile above the ferry site. It was Harper, from half way to Birch Island. He told us that the cable had broken. He had spurred his saddle horse off the ferry just as it had momentarily touched the north landing, but the ferry had gone down the river with Jones and his hired man, Harbin, aboard.

They had started out for the north side of the river to cross a new settler and all his stock and equipment to our side of the river. I think his name was Miller.<sup>5</sup> He settled for a few years at Skookum Chuck Creek.

For some reason, the rowboat, which was always supposed to be attached to the ferry wasn't. My father, though he had a sprained ankle at the time, managed to get to his boat. (An excellent clinker built made by Nord of Lost Creek.) He found Jones and Harbin on an island about opposite the mouth of Harper Creek (later Cedar Creek, now renamed something else - JKM). At that time, the road to Birch Island from Lost Creek went around the edge of the large river flat east of the high cut bank between there and the Birch Island river flat.

Jones and Harbin then had to walk home and bring back a team and wagon to haul TAM and his boat home.

There was arable land as well as good timber on both sides of the river, but the North Thompson, when high, was a formidable barrier to transport. Its speed, at Peavine, was about fifteen miles per hour during high water. Through the winter, it would usually freeze. Most winters, thin ice would form, mainly in the calm area between Wire Cache and Cottonwood. Due to the speed, this ice would then break up into small pieces which would form into small 'rafts' which would jam together in sharp corners along the stream if the weather were cold enough.

---

<sup>4</sup> There was a settler at Louis Creek, one John Fremont "Nigger" Smith who claimed to be the first white man up the valley. Allingham did not agree!

---

<sup>5</sup> I thought it was Baker, who took the place west of Jones, later Kindle's, then Dinnin's, now Roger de Vogt.

At the west margin of the Jones place, there was a right angle where the river crossed the valley to the south side. This is where the ice would jam and pile up. If the weather stayed cold enough, the broken shore ice and slush ice would fill the river to high water levels for several miles. On the other hand, if a strong thaw occurred before the ice hardened, it could form a huge and very destructive ice jam, which could move down the river. Several ferries and boats were lost this way.

The land TAM acquired beyond Allingham's, which he named 'Abberley', was later traded to Chester Garten for his 160 acres in the middle of the bunchgrass side hill across the river from Aveley Ranch. Because most of the other ranchers had cattle on the bunchgrass range, they were opposed to sheep grazing it. Fortunately, the lower reaches of the range had all been surveyed as potential farms. At the time of the survey, nothing was known about the rainfall, except what could be inferred from the presence of bunchgrass, which is limited to areas of low rainfall. All of this land was preempted by whoever got to the land office first. Titles were given to those who either cleared five acres and built a shack, or served in the war. (World War I) Through the next several years TAM acquired all the land he needed at the base of the bunchgrass range between Galena Creek and the Lime Bluff at Vavenby.

In 1911, TAM, Jack, his brother (an Oxford educated schoolmaster) and their maternal uncle Hyde Finley, who had banking experience in India, started a general store in a log cabin at Aveley Ranch. The business operated under the name 'Moilliet Bros. and Finley'. By this time, a steamboat, the "Distributor" was providing good transportation to and from Kamloops for heavy freight. For practical purposes, Peavine was the head of navigation, though it made at least one trip to Lost Creek. Once, 100 tons of blasting powder had to be unloaded on the north side of the river when the current was too strong for the steamer. A safe powder house had to be built around it, for a stray bullet could have caused an explosion.

By that time he had acquired a huge dugout cottonwood canoe which could carry a ton. This could be poled or towed, along the river bank, up from Kamloops,<sup>6</sup> a distance of about a hundred miles. It was

---

<sup>6</sup> (JKM) I think Fennell's store was at end of road from Kamloops prior to 1908. By 1909 a road of sorts had reached Raft River via Dunn Lake and the Mile 71 ferry just above the Clearwater River from Chu Chua about 50 miles.

possible to reach Kamloops from Peavine in one long day by boat or small raft, but it must have taken several days to bring a load back. I think there must have been a road to Chu Chua (from Kamloops) where George Fennell established a farm and trading post probably in the 1890's.

It was about 1913 that TAM decided to get into sheep raising. He bought a flock of fifty Oxford ewes from Tom Noble of Louis Creek which he drove up by himself over the newly cleared right-of-way<sup>7</sup> of the Canadian Northern Railway.

The Oxford sheep is perhaps one of the most profitable breeds of sheep ever developed. After the age of two they almost invariably bear and raise twins to a weight of over 100 pounds apiece. (However, they seem to have been allowed to reach near extinction. This is to conform to the principle of eliminating all dark hair from sheep's fleeces.)

In 1916, TAM decided to increase his flock in order to be able to take advantage of the excellent bunchgrass range which existed between Birch Island and Vavenby. He bought a flock of 400 ewes in southern Alberta.<sup>8</sup>

Whoever owned them neglected to reveal that they were already bred and would lamb in February. As it turned out, subzero weather resulted in only about 100 lambs surviving. The shepherd he hired turned out to be totally incompetent. In early spring, the sheep were taken to the bunchgrass range, a southfacing slope between Galena Creek and the Lime Bluff, which had burned off in 1892. Almost at once, in about a week, wood ticks (*dermacentor andersonii*) began to paralyze the sheep by the dozen a here to fore almost unknown hazard.

Later, a settler's son, young Jim McLennan, nearly died of tick paralysis, but was saved by the tick being found, almost fully engorged, and removed from the back of his neck. At this stage, large quantities of the poison, which has an anaesthetic effect, are injected into the victim to liquefy the blood and facilitate the tick's feeding. Female ticks increase their size by several hundred times, while the males become only two or three times thicker. Copulation occurs on the host, sometimes in patches up to two inches in diameter along the spine, mainly between the skull and the middle

---

<sup>7</sup> (JKM) Probably from Chu Chua to Birch Island or partly via Dunn Lake.

<sup>8</sup> (JKM) I thought from near Lacombe, Alberta.

of the back.

No discussion of TAM's life would be complete without reference to Riley Monro Ladow. After the winter of 1917 - 18, TAM realized that he had to find the best range shepherd available. He discovered that another sheepman, Henry Cornwall, of Cherry Creek, south of Kamloops had the man he needed. So, he offered Riley a partnership which was accepted. Riley was not only an experienced sheepman in Wyoming and B.C., but was also a crack shot with his 30 US rifle. At that time, protecting the sheep from coyotes and black bears was the greatest problem of all.

Riley was also an able butcher. The partnership ended about 1921 or 22 when Riley and his friend, Ernie Dee, got into the timber business as well as starting to develop a farm at Blackpool on the Mann Creek fan. It was the first summer that Riley herded that the sheep were grazed on the plateau of what we called McCorvie Mountain, after Archie McCorvie and Daubney Pridgeon, who started running cattle on its southern slope.

Riley said the the first summer on McCorvie Mountain was the pleasantest he ever experienced. No predatory animals migrated there from the the low range. One of the most important rules in sheep herding is the immediate disposal of dead sheep, preferably by burning. Coyotes will not usually start killing mature sheep unless they first enjoy eating a dead one, though they will probably take young lambs at the first opportunity. Their natural prey is mainly grouse and rodents, and cleaning up cougar or wolf-killed deer, etc.<sup>9</sup>

It was sometime in the mid-twenties that TAM became convinced he should eliminate black wool from the flock. Unfortunately, he chose Cheviot rams for this purpose. While they soon accomplished this goal, it was at the expense of smaller body and fleece weight, and, worst of all, a total lack of herding instinct. One benefit was a "brightness" of the wool, which was perceptible for many years.

In 1930, all the best Cheviot ewes were sold to R.A. Ingram, a farmer on North Galliano Island.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> (JKM) We now know that bear, coyotes, wolves, cougars and lynx will simply kill at the drop of a hat, particularly if population is high and/or natural food scarce.

<sup>10</sup>(JKM) Also Riley bought or again owned fifty head which he took to his place at Blackpool, where "Old Mac", Alex MacDonald, looked after them for a number of years.

After this, the remaining ewes were bred to Rambouillet rams.

TAM was a great believer and participated in, community organizations. First came the Farmers' Institute in 1916 which later became the Upper North Thompson Livestock Association. Table officers were Scott of Avola, Alec Miller of Blackpool, with TAM as Secretary/Treasurer. This Association is still operating in the Valley and is still consulted by the Forest Service on livestock range use and development.

TAM had several brushes with death. One of the first occurred in Ontario, at Orillia. He was swimming with a few young Canadians in a lake (possibly Lake Simcoe). As the only Englishman, he was the butt of every practical joke they could think of. They bet him that he could not swim across the arm of the lake and back, three miles there and back. Of course he had to take them up on it. He swam across all right and part of the way back. Then, a wind came up, sending waves into his face. He told me he nearly drownd as he was only accustomed to the back stroke.

He also had a some close encounters during the first few winters in the Peavine area. He trapped fur bearing animals both in the Saddle Mountain area and in Raft River Valley as a way of improving his income. Once, on Saddle Mountain, he bedded down beside his campfire on six feet of snow. In the middle of the night he was rudely awakened by his descent into the remains of his fire, which had melted itself almost to the ground. Though this was not life threatening, it must have been quite a shock.

One winter, while trapping in Raft River Valley, he decided to follow the river down for a visit with his friend, Fred Cross, who lived by the Thompson trail near the junction of Raft River with the Thompson. Raft River was well frozen and the best travelling was on the ice. When he came to the box canyon through which it reaches the Thompson Valley, he slid down several water falls, but, when the canyon deepened, there was no more ice. Since he couldn't retrace his steps without an axe to cut steps in the ice falls he had descended, he had to climb up the rock wall of the canyon. This must have been an especially frightening experience for him as he was more affected by vertigo than anyone else I have known.

The Canadian Northern Railroad was built through the valley in the mid 'teens. Since Peavine was exactly halfway between Birch Island and Irvine, it was expected that the railway station would be located there. However McCorvie was too grasping and Chamberlain chose a spot two and a half miles east. He did accept the

name of the Post Office, Vavenby. Pridgeon had suggested 'Navenby', the village in Lincolnshire, England, where he was born. The first stroke of the 'N' was invisible, so the authorities, realizing it was unique, were happy to accept it.

[JKM note: Another story of TAM's close calls is when, on a trip to Kamloops, probably about June 1907, he encountered the whirlpool which forms at certain times at the confluence of the Clearwater and North Thompson rivers. (Usually, I believe, this is when the Thompson is dropping in volume after a peak and the Clearwater is rising. A delayed action from all the lakes on the Clearwater causes this.)

Once in its clutches, with a small raft to handle, he could see where he was going, especially when he saw his pot of 'cold beans and sow belly', his lunch, go down ahead of him. So, he took off his shoes and pants ready to swim. He hung onto the raft and down they went. The raft did not surface, so he let go and swam upwards underwater in a strong undercurrent. About the time his lungs were ready to burst, he surfaced nearly a quarter mile up the Clearwater!

He had some damp matches, which he was able to dry somehow so as to start a fire. After drying out, he walked on towards Kamloops, pantless and shoeless. At the first habitation, he had to hide behind a tree and shout for the lady of the house to please throw him out a pair of pants!

A sequel to the story is that, when he got to Kamloops to pick up a small grinding mill that he had ordered from England, he found that he did not have the enough funds to pay duty and freight so, he took a job for two weeks to get it out of 'hock'.

Meanwhile, a young Indian, Joe Saul, on a trip up the valley spotted TAM's raft in a log jam near the trail. (It would seem that people must have made their own, original style of raft for quick, one-way journeys down the river.) Anyway, Joe reported to TAM's uncle that TAM was undoubtedly drowned. Well, as TAM did not come back for some time, there must have been a very worried uncle, who was not particularly self sufficient anyway.

There was also the time when he was travelling on the river ice on snowshoes, one or two miles from home, when he dropped through a hidden, snowed over, air hole. Fortunately, as, both from example and experience, he never ventured onto ice that was previously unexplored, tested and marked out without carrying a good stout pole. However, in this instance, he still could not pull himself out. The temperature was about 40

degrees. He said that was the only time the North Thompson ever felt warm to him ... though only temporarily, by contrast. (Under those conditions, the water is at or slightly below freezing temperature. I have dipped a pail out of the river when the air temperature was about 20 degrees. The pail was almost half ice crystals in two minutes! - Noel Montagnon)

The pole was securely lodged across the hole, but the mush ice flowing under the ice grabbed his snowshoes and threatened to drag him under. He finally managed to push himself vertically down, finding bottom at about four feet whereupon, he managed to get his knife out of his pocket and cut his snowshoes loose. He then pulled himself out quite easily, but, Oh, the cold! He barely made it back to the cabin in his freezing 'armorplated' clothes.

Another, much later, river ice episode occurred when, for some presumable emergency, a foot crossing was required perhaps to make a telephone call or to visit the sheep camp. Anyway, the floe ice had jammed during the night. It was cold, with the ice appearing to be settled for the winter, so he started carefully prospecting his way across, keeping to the most solid areas of chunks of redeposited ice, some areas between not being very well congealed yet.

Under these conditions, one carried two poles, one to walk on when necessary and the other to test with or to pull oneself out with in case of misadventure. When he was about half way across, the ice began making strange noises, together with a roaring sound from upriver. On looking up, he first thought that the trees on the bank were moving. The rest can be imagined together with the danger of not reaching shore, ice can pile up, go to pieces or leave stretches of openwater. Somehow, he made it.

One could go on and on about the many hazards of being alone in the wilderness. I think particularly of axe cuts, misadventures with horses, such as runaways with wagons or implements.

Horses put me in mind of him telling me of going to sleep in the saddle somewhere on the trail between here and Chu Chua. The horse he was riding suddenly jumped a windfall. Out of the saddle came TAM, but with one foot caught in the stirrup and the horse spooked and galloping down the trail. By a miracle the horse met someone coming in the opposite direction who stopped the it or it could have ended very differently, as it did so often to so many of the pioneers of our land. (It was miraculous that he met someone there were so few to meet)

May I conclude this interjection with a quote

from Shelford's book, "We Pioneered":

When asked why he came and settled in such absolute wilderness he replied, "We pioneers must have had something in common with The Greatest Man in history, that we were led by the Spirit into the wilderness, but not to be tempted by the Devil (as our Lord was), for I think nowhere is that less likely."

September 26, 1989 - Some eighty years later and we are here, by the grace of God.



Madeline, Ted, Jack and TAM in October 1935  
TAM passed away unexpectedly after minor surgery in December 1935.

**A letter from Molly (TAM's wife) to her sister May in England.**

(an account of her trip to Kamloops to await the birth of Ted.)

421 Post Office Kamloops, B.C.  
Dec<sup>r</sup>. 1st. 1909

My dear May

It seems to me it must be about a month since I last wrote to you, but I asked Aunt Annie to send you on a few lines I wrote to her immediately after T's return from town & of course the week before I left home I was more than busy & we took nearly a week coming down, & I have been here about a week but have been resting a good deal. Now I must try & make up for lost time & send you a budget of news. I have so many things to thank you for I think I must begin with them. Tam's sweater is delightful - he says he never had a more comfortable garment in his life, & when our first snow came it looked grand & so warm. He fortunately got the parcel while he was in town with the waggon for our winter stores in October & the duty was only 2 bits (1/1)\*, then the Dictionary was a great joy. Thank you so much for it - I left it on the writing table at home as I knew it would be greatly in request. You would have been amused if you had seen me storing away all our pretty things & leaving the place ready for "batching" again. Of course Jack being there & having three men to do for made me very busy before setting out. Poor Tam had an awful trip up from town, the road was so bad - so Jack walked on and left T. to get another team to help with the load - Jack arrived on the 5<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>. We were so glad to see him & he fitted in so well, & was so jolly & kind. Tam didn't come till Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup>. He found the road was impracticable for sleighing as only the biggest trees seemed to be moved from the track! So we arranged a plan to canoe down while the river was open. Then a cold spell came for a few days & it was out of the question as mush ice was running - so they fixed up doors and windows for the middle of the house & made all snug & fixed up a still bigger stove & so on. Then it rained all one day - & all the ice went away & the snow & it was arranged we should start on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup>. You can imagine how busy I was - made a huge chicken pie & a brawn (we had just killed a young pig) & bread & packed up tea - a tin of your lovely coffee brought by Jack (by the way we thought we were paying for that) if it was a present - many, many thanks. That coffee was the saving of us during some of our experiences. Well Friday morning - off we set in our lovely big canoe - tent, blankets, camp stove, holdall, bags, trunk, I sitting in state in the middle most comfortably with the Hecla bottle for my feet & we had the Thermos flask full of boiling water. Jack was in the bows & T. in the stern, polling and paddling, by turns according to the river. It was a dream, especially the rapids. To our horror, we soon began to get into icy places with only just room to run through & 12 miles from home alas the river was quite blocked though it was still thawing. Tam just managed to turn the canoe in time or we should have been capsized. And as it was she was too long & sort of hung on the ice at each end with the running ice banging against her every moment. This was close to an island & log jam just above Raft River. Tam made me get out at once & it was not until I was stopping to pick up the lantern which had overturned in the scrimmage & he sternly said "get out at once" - so then I knew it was dangerous. Out we all got on a log jam - so slippery & difficult to move without the ice between the logs giving way - poor Jack went into the icy water up to his middle. Well everything was safely hauled out on to the top of the logs & then a lovely big fire made on the shore & the tent fixed up & everything shipshape for a meal and camping. I remained there and had a good roast while Jack and Tam went to see how far the ice extended. That block was rapidly disappearing but alas another, lower down, quenched all our hopes so we reluctantly had

\* 1/1 = one shilling and a penny

to abandon our lovely plan. You would have enjoyed the real strenuous camping out with snow & ice all around, glorious fire, things hung out to dry & everything just as old campaigners know how to fix it. We left our huge fire & made a small one at the tent opening. We hoped the big fir tree was out but the wretched tree wouldn't go out & at 12 o'clock at night Tam had to emerge & cut it down. The huge thing fell just between my mink hat & umbrella (still on the logs) & the canoe. So Tam had to prowl around to see nothing was injured. It was all right. We had quite a good night, & next morning started off for the waggon road up a lonely blazed trail, Tam carrying about 40 lbs of blankets packed on his back & wearing your sweater which looked so picturesque in the snow, Jack with a pack of grub, & I with just my short tweed skirt, your green sweater, green felt hat & the Jaeger cape in case of being cold. Oh my dear that walk on the road was awful & I really was a weeny bit frightened. We had about 3 and a half m. to go to Fred Cross' shack. The snow was frozen on the top but gave way at every step with a jerk. It seemed like 15 miles. Tam carried first all the things across Raft River - then he carried Jack, & then me across, having to rush up and down the bank between to get life into his feet the water was so icy. It is just where the Clearwater & Raft River come into the Thompson that there is a pass to the N. & that is why the ice had accumulated there. No one had ever known the river frozen over so early. Wasn't it maddening owing to that one place our lovely trip had to be abandoned. Well we finally reached Fred Cross'. He was out, but T. quickly made a fire & the first thing we did was to make some punch with some Hudson Bay rum and a lemon we had brought with us. Then we got a delicious meal of your coffee and bacon and other good things. Tam had a lovely fire going also in Fred Cross' other shack where the Jones' beds & stove still were, made up the bed for me with our blankets & I retired & had a glorious rest. Fred Cross was so good to us. Wasn't it wonderful that just before T. had bought his winter grubstake for him for his logging as he was short of cash & paid \$100 for it to be repaid in the spring. So we couldn't have put up at a better place. Well next day, Fred Cross, T. & Jack went back to the scene of the disasters & hauled the canoe up on to the island which took hours as it weighed a ton. Then they packed our remaining stuff back - Tam bringing my trunk which weighed at least 60 lbs strapped on his back. The next day, Monday, he went off to a neighbour, Marti by name, who was wishing to get his horses out for the winter & found after talking for half an hour, that Marti began to understand that Tam wanted to get me out too - his ancient horses are his gods - "Well, says Tam, what are your horses worth anyway? \$300? I think a woman is worth more than that." "Oh said Marti, you want to get someone out too! Well, we had better go all together." So then they fixed up a sleigh which was used for logging, with hay & my luggage & wraps etc. I made bread and did cooking all that afternoon & Tuesday at 7 a.m. we pulled out. My goodness, in spite of the deep snow, the road was rough. When we got to the scow at the Crossing though they had been down & cut out all the ice the day before, yet it took the six men three hours to get the thing to work properly it was so icy. Then they had to cut down trees & brush to get the horses & sleigh on. I sat like a queen in the sleigh it was so funny, only we were a little anxious. Then began the long weary road of Mosquito Flat - all snowy and desolate and no stopping place for about 25 miles. We crawled along. About four miles from the Crossing we met young Hartley & Larke in a rig going to Raft River to his shack for the Voting on Thursday & he had our letters yours enclosing the boots among them, also another from you, so I have about four long lovely letters to thank you for. The boots are sweet & I love them - such a pretty pattern. Well we crawled along & came to a logging camp where we went in to a warmed log house & made hot cocoa & the men filled my bottle & were such dears. Then on again getting dark, all along the edge of Dunn Lake, where, though the moon wasn't up, the reflections of the hills in the water were too wonderful to describe & weird to a degree. Finally just before eleven, beginning to pour with rain, we reached

the MacTaggart's stopping place & store close to Fennell's. Mrs. MacTaggart & her husband of course had long gone to bed, but were up in moment - huge heater going & in about ten minutes, a lovely meal of hot tea & delicious bread & butter, buns & cold meat & no end of good things. All our wet things hung round to dry & a nice room ready for us. Oh how we enjoyed it all after the dreadful snow & ice & rain. I can never tell how resourceful & wonderful Tam was to me.



Thursday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1909

I couldn't finish this yesterday as so many people kept coming in. This is a most popular house & Mrs. Cornwall knows everybody worth knowing. Well, to get ourselves here & continue our travels - Mrs. MacTaggart gave me a delicious breakfast in bed & then to my great amusement a long discussion took place on the other side of the partition as to whether it would be safe for me to continue to town in an empty waggon with a good team which a man, Blane by name, was taking back to town starting that morning. Tam thought it would be better for me than a "rig" which he had thought of getting from the Chief at the Upper Reserve which was close by. Finally it was settled - great arrangements made, the seat of the waggon put in the middle & sacks of hay all around. Mr. Blane, an old married man with great experiences, took a deep interest & said he was in no hurry & would drive slowly - so off we set. Tam kept all the jar off me when the road was too awful & got his arm & elbow quite rubbed raw poor man. First I thought I couldn't bear the roughness, but gradually got used to it and the road getting better. We did 18 miles to Lewis Creek that day, put up there. Quite a nice room to which I retired & had all my meals. It was so funny coming in for the voting there - such excitement. Next day we started early and got to the 14 mile house for lunch & telephoned to Mrs. Cornwall to say we were coming that evening (Thursday). I sat in the voting room there & no one would believe that I had come from 100 miles up - they seem to think it impossible for a lady to live up there, but it isn't until you try to get out that you realize how far off it is. We were so thankful to get in - Mrs. Cornwall is charming. She is about 60, has this nice house, hates being alone - when she settled to have me, she thought she should be alone for the winter, but a Miss Ridley, a nice English girl who has been in Canada for a year, is staying on. She is a sort of cousin, well off and having a great time with the skating and dances. It is very nice for me her being here. She is very smart & pretty looking - her home is in Essex. Tam & Jack went to the Canadian Pacific Hotel, but came to & fro.

It is nice getting to know all the people too - & everyone who is anyone has been to call & are so kind & nice. On Monday before Tam went off, which he and Jack did, walking, on Tuesday, Dr. Burris came to see me & as Tam was anxious to know all was right, he examined me, which was not very pleasing, & says as far as he can tell I am quite all right - very muscular - & none the worse for all the knocking about & probably shall only need to be in the Hospital a fortnight. We have the telephone here & when the time comes - probably early in January, we shall just telephone to the Hospital & an ambulance will be sent for me. We have engaged a private ward, I couldn't bear the idea of a semi-private one! Everyone goes into the Hospital for these events here as nurses are not dependable.

I like Dr. Burris very much, he was most kind & considerate - he was much younger than I expected. He seemed to think I was wonderfully well & that all the house work was the best thing for me. I don't feel nearly so well here. I don't think I have rested enough yet. Mrs. Cornwall is so kind and motherly she will bring me a lovely breakfast in bed every morning. She also has a little 4 months old granddaughter here which she manages herself night & day - & only has a boy to bring in coal & wood etc. This house is a sort of bungalow, very prettily furnished - with large centre living room, nice kitchen & bathroom & three bedrooms, and a nice little garden. It has already doubled in value since Mr. Cornwall built it and bought the land. Mrs. Richardson came to see me on Saturday. When she was at the Okanagan with her husband she saw the Seddons. I hear Mrs. Seddon doesn't like it much. Yesterday Miss Hutchison - the Mackenzies & Ponsonby's Aunt - she is very charming - she knows Miss Constance Maynard & is hoping she will stay with her when in B.C. next year. She said she should have been so pleased to have me with her the next 3 months but she lives at Fruitlands - 2 miles out near the Richardsons. The Akehursts called on Tuesday and were most kind - in fact Tam & I were quite overwhelmed by the goodness of everybody. Yesterday, Dec<sup>r</sup>. 1<sup>st</sup>, Miss Ridley went to the P.O. & brought me your letter of Nov<sup>r</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>, it was lovely to hear so quickly. It is very good of you to tell me all the interesting things about your visit to town - I love your letters.

I must end up now for if I spend all day writing I do not get any needlework done & have so much on hand. Little jackets are most acceptable - how very kind of Miss Ballachey. Mrs. Cornwall's grandchild is nearly always in woolly things or flannels. Mrs. Jones has made me two little dresses. Of course I am paying her for all the work she does. She is making some nighties now. You ask about our finances - this winter we hope to get about \$500 with our horses, logging. That is what Tam has gone back to do. He is going in with a neighbour, Baker, as we are not cutting any of our own timber. Farming & ranching can't pay for a few years as a wilderness must be developed by more or less capital first - which we are doing by degrees. I do want my house finished badly too - so far we have spent very little on it. I hope Annie will come out next year - in Sept. would be best - all being well. We haven't heard from nurse Johnson yet. I should just love to have her for a few months, but it is not likely, though Jack says she was always saying at Abberley how much she wished to come. Jack was a host in himself and a great comfort. He has not yet got all his letters and papers in order for work here, so has tramped up country again with Tam. He hopes to get some hunting, deer, etc., with Pete Christiansen. Miss Ridley goes to a Cotillon every fortnight and to a Canadian Mounted Rifle Dance every-other week. She love the life out here - we get on very well together.

I love what you say about All Saints Day - all the departed saints were especially in my mind this year, being far away makes one think even more than at home. It's my favourite Saints Day.

We must have had our cold snap just when you had in England. Today it is icy - I went out to put some clothes on the line and they froze before I could hang them out.

Your kittens sound charming. They are nice for Aunt Kate too, now she can go out so little.

We had such trouble with our letters we have indulged in a box 421 at the Post Office here. The Postmaster says if addressed to Chu Chua they must go up there & come down again, but he can forward them up country. I actually got a "Weekly Times" yesterday - Nov<sup>r</sup>.19<sup>th</sup>.

I do not go out much here, it tires me so walking in the town & one feels so oppressed. I did go to see Mrs. Jones a day or two ago. Can't tell you how homesick I am feeling & long to be at home to look after Tam in spite of all the comforts and kindness.

We are having trouble about Abberley as old Allingham has been writing to Victoria to say we are not living there so the crown grant is being withheld, but Mr. Morley, T's lawyer says it will be all right. Land is going up every day - McClennan could have sold his place at Raft River for \$4,000 - that is more than \$40 an acre as the Crown Grant of these Provincial lands is only \$1 an acre. Dominion Land is Free. Of course there is the surveying & other expenses too. Tam is going to settle Abberley on me. It will be quite a property & we can sell it either in pieces or the whole place. It is good land. The Survey people are making permanent construction surveys this winter.

Heaps of love to you all. I don't know how to thank you for all your thought & kindness.

Your affectionate sister,

Molly.

Tam doesn't say much but he feels all your care & thought very much. Thanks for the trouble about Aunt C's things. I shall write to Mr. L to enquire about that more.

(Transcribed from a copy of the original letter)





### The Stock Trains

One thing that should not be forgotten is the role of the railways, in our case, the Canadian National. The construction of this railway was completed and it was in operation just before World War I. In fact, the certainty of the railway, by 1913, probably had an effect on my father's decision to raise sheep. By the late teens and early twenties, we were shipping lambs to Vancouver by the carload. It should be noted, of course, that the Canadian Pacific Railway handled many times more livestock than the C.N.

During those early years, it was a long, slow and rough trip for livestock. There was a daily, through freight, No. 403, sometimes called the Seaboard Limited, and supposed to be fast, but, oh the hold-ups and delays! From my father's description of those early trips, there was nearly always a washout and/or a slide or derailment somewhere. I remember he told me of one trip when there was a very sudden stop, so sudden that he feared lambs might have piled up. He hurriedly walked from the caboose to the head-end of the train on this dark and stormy night, to see how things were. Well, everything was alright, but he had no sooner inspected the lambs than the train started, rapidly gaining momentum. There was nothing else to do but climb on or be left behind. So, it was over the top for him and walk back along the tops of the cars. He was not experienced at this, but, with due caution, he made out quite well. Unfortunately, when he reached the tailend of the train, he found that there was a passenger car in front of the caboose, the roof of which almost touched the end of the last box car. He stopped and considered awhile. At unpredictable moments, the two cars came almost together and then would open up, giving room to

climb down the end ladder to the platform of the coach.

He, for which his descendents should be very thankful, was of a careful, cautious nature and did not take unnecessary risks, so he thought better of trying to climb down. He wend his way back to the middle of the train, where there was a flat car which was partly loaded with old rails and other scrap iron, which vibrated and jumped up and down at high speed and rough places. It was an uncomfortable last half of the night, but better than the windy, swaying top of a box car. Much later in time, we used to open the little end door,

or man hole, of a stock car, nail a slat over the opening and securely tie a claw hammer to the outside, so that one could easily get in or out of the top deck alone so that if one were caught in a similar predicament, he could join the lambs. The top deck was quite a comfortable place, at least to the next stop.

I remember purposely riding there once, on a cold fall night. We had used damp shavings or sawdust for bedding, the top deck had not been sanded and the surface turned to ice. Luckily, in the few minutes between completion of loading and the 'pickup', we realized that the lambs were losing footing, getting panicky, with danger of a pile-up. Someone ran back to the caboose with my grip and told the conductor where I was, and why. So, away we went. It was Ted that rode the top deck to Kamloops that night.

If I had not been with the lambs for that first hundred miles there would have been a severe loss of life from suffocation, etc. It should be noted that, particularly on some occasions, range lambs did not travel too well. The contrast from the peace and quiet of the range, compared to the sorting, the fast, seven mile trailing down to the valley, then the loading followed by the noise, crashing and banging of the train, was a bit too much. However, after the first few hours, they settled down very well mostly lying down and chewing the cud. It is interesting that sheep seem to take up less room lying down than standing up.

On looking back, I realize that we probably let them graze and water too much before loading. This was tempting, as we were paid on the 'off-car' weight and always, at least, hoped for a quick trip! On the other hand, on some occasions, when they were really full, we had very good and trouble-free trips so I never really knew the answer.

By the mid-thirties, the railway had a biweekly, much faster, stock train running between Edmonton and Vancouver. This train took only six hours longer than the Trans-Continental passenger train between those points about thirty hours. This time improvement also saved the delay caused by having to stop at Kamloops for hours to feed and water the stock from Edmonton. There was still a thirty-six hour limit between loading and delivery of livestock.

My first trip on the stock train was in the fall of 1936, my father having passed away the previous year and my brother, Ted, not yet being back on the ranch. This was a great adventure and an exciting trip for a seventeen-year-old. I was most fortunate in the fact that most of the train crews knew me as my father's son and set out to make the trip as enjoyable and interesting as possible. They taught me many of the "do's and don'ts" of railroading and told me many stories of the past narrow escapes and the art and mystery of it all! Unusual and mostly great characters, those oldtime railroaders. I think of some of their nicknames: "Sharky" Shaw, "Speedy" Fields, Art McCulloch, "Windy" Miller, "Babbling" Brooks, and so on. These were conductors and engineers. There was also "Whistling" Rufus. He had once killed a patrolman because he hadn't whistled on a corner which he made up for later!

Of course, there were some fiends, too. Remember that the conductor was the head of the train and the caboose was his little palace, home away from home. His caboose went out to the end of his division, where he and his brakeman cooked and slept until their return trip. Some resented sharing this with a stranger and who could blame them. Later, there was often an old 'Colonist' coach put on to accommodate the many so called stockmen and others who used that train for a free trip to Vancouver. This got to be a racket. Almost anyone with a little 'pull' could get his name put on a waybill as caretaker of a carload, or loads, of cattle or hogs being shipped from dealer to dealer or packer, in Vancouver. A few railroaders with passes also used this means of transportation.

I well remember a young man from an extra gang catching our caboose 'on the fly'. He appeared and walked in the front door of the caboose. The conductor leapt to his feet, grabbed the fellow by the scruff of his neck, held him at arms length and gave him the talking to of his life! I guess he had taken a fifty percent chance of being killed by catching the front end, where one either made it or went under the wheels. The back end is designed for this and is safe. If you don't succeed, you just get left behind with a few bruises and some skin!

There would occasionally be a few stockmen with loads of their own cattle. These would be from northern and western branch lines. West from here, there would be a few pick-ups of lambs or cattle enroute to the coast. Some lasting friendships were made, both on these trips and at the terminal packing house, which, in our case, was usually P. Burns & Co., where sheepmen were greeted with open arms and as old friends by all.

It was common to arrive there on a Sunday morning. After the lambs and other incoming stock were weighed and the lambs taken to the spacious sheep pens, which were situated on a loft with one side open to the Pacific Ocean (actually, Burrard Inlet!) with the cool sea breeze blowing over them. Sheep handling went like clockwork there because the layout was right and they always had a bell-wether for leading purposes. Anyway, after this, someone was always available to drive you to your hotel, not forgetting to remind you to be sure to come to the Company Cafeteria for breakfast next morning, where, if three eggs weren't enough for you, to ask for six, together with a platter of their best "Shamrock" brand ham.

On Monday morning, it was common to find the nicest carload of lambs grazing the half-acre of lawn in front of the office, a pretty sight to a sheepman, and also for the office staff. The butchers always claimed to enjoy working with the Alpine lambs which came in directly from the mountains claimed they could smell the alpine flowers on the wool and in the fat.

When business was completed, with a tour of the plant, and a visit with the butchers, it was common for oneself and one or two other shippers to be taken out to dinner by the manager or his assistant and so ended another trip. One could not help but shed a tear and feel a pang of sadness when leaving his lambs behind for slaughter. My philosophy was, "Better to have lived and lost than never to have lived at all". Their short life was a happy one and their sacrifice was necessary so that most of their sisters could live and carry on. It was a sad day when Burns closed their operation in Vancouver in the early fifties. The personnel seemed like a happy family of cooperation, with few changes in personnel, year after year. One reason that Burns and several other packers stopped or slowed their butchering in Vancouver was that, after the completion of the Rogers' Pass Highway, dressed, chilled meat was brought to our coast from Calgary, by refrigerated trucks.

The foregoing was planned to be brief, but, in that I have failed and already realize how much I have left out. One of these is the role and, I think, heroic effort

of the railways during World War II. The traffic on our line must have more than doubled and yet, they managed to speed things up, particularly the so called stock train, which became the fast freight to carry important "hot" cargo to the west coast.

First, remember the engines were all steam and had to stop for water every 40 to 80 miles, and coal (by that time most of the engines were converted to oil burners). Engines were changed and serviced at every division. Bearings, 'journal boxes', had to be inspected for heat and grease, by two or more 'car knockers', who proceeded, one on each side, to give each wheel a vigorous wallop with their hammers. This was to check for cracks developing in the wheels.

Secondly, there was no radio communication between the head end and tail end crews or between crews, operators and dispatchers, and, of course, no CTC, Centralized Train Control, or automatic switches. All orders were picked up by both crews on the fly from the few stations which had 24 hour telegraph operators, who were in constant communication with the dispatchers.

Here, may I describe one particular trip of this train, which, by then, was known as Extra 419 or Special 419. We were fortunate in having a 24 hour operator at Birch Island, our shipping point, so that we usually knew within minutes of the arrival time and so, loaded accordingly. We gave ourselves 45 minutes per car, though it was usually accomplished in 20 minutes, even with only two people. Three was, however, most efficient, particularly if two or three cars were being loaded or if the weather was warm.

This particular day, the train was running late and came into Birch Island just before 6 PM. (Or, I should say, 1800!) Taking on water together with picking up the two cars of lambs took about 15 minutes and we were away. The orders gave us a clear track and nonstop to Kamloops, with the Trans-Canada passenger train forty minutes behind us. Two eastbound freights were to be in sidings ("in the hole".)

We did it. By the mile posts, I estimated that, on the longer straight stretches of track, we did just a shade under 60 miles per hour. I have been told that the bearings and wheels of freight cars of that time had been designed and guaranteed for a maximum of 20 m.p.h.! Nailo (Noel Montagnon) remembered seeing this laid down in one of his fathers "rule books", that freight trains "should proceed at a maximum of no more than 25 miles per hour".

We came into Kamloops yard and were switched onto a long, straight track, three tracks over from the

main line. There was a freight on track two, ready to go east the moment the passenger came in, ten minutes after us. A yard engine was already waiting at each end of our train. Almost instantly, our caboose was picked up, the crew and I were left off opposite the station and yard office. The caboose was then taken to the line where incoming cabooses were kept and the outgoing caboose brought out and placed on the line that our train would leave from.

Meanwhile, the livestock had been taken off the front end of our train and placed on a quiet, angling spur, away from some of the noise and shunting. Next, the 'Reefers', (refrigerator cars), were taken off to the ice house for checking and re-icing. Another job that had to be done if the train was stopped for long at a division point on a hot day, was to spray the carloads of hogs with cold water.

While this was being done, I would check the lambs. Sometimes it would be necessary to find out from the yardmaster where they were, what track, that is, and also find the number and whereabouts of the outgoing caboose. I usually managed to find a car knocker or switchman to help me look through the four decks of lambs. This needed two people. One would climb up opposite the top deck while the other opened the door just wide enough to squeeze through, and then close it. One slowly circled the deck and, if all was well, squeezed out of the door and down to the lower deck. If there was a lamb dead it had to be got out or others might pile up on the carcass then you might have three or four at the next stop.

I remember once the helper had to leave me locked in the car while he did a job of throwing a switch or took the brakes off a car or something. Meanwhile, the cars had to be moved. I was worried for a while, but all ended well.

One time, I found a lamb almost dead, which I dragged out. Says the helper, "Do you think it would be fit to eat?". I said, "You can but try!", and while he held a light, I hogdressed the lamb, propped the carcass open and threw it on a pile of ties where he could pick it up later.

Another sheepman told me of having a beautiful 100 pound lamb jump out of the lower deck when he was getting in the top. It looked pretty hopeless, but, with two helpers and the glare of an engine headlight, they caught it.

To carry on ... next one would rush to the yard office, picked up his grip, and headed for the outgoing caboose, which by then was usually just in the process of being hooked onto the reassembled train, now prob-

ably on track four and almost ready to go. The caboose had a homey atmosphere. The coal oil lamps and running lights had been filled and cleaned and lit, the coal heater burning brightly. Soon, a quiver would run through the train and one would know that the outgoing engine had coupled on. A glance at the air pressure gauge would show the pressure going up and one could hear the brakes releasing. Next, the outgoing 'tailend' brakeman would appear and we would slowly start moving west through the yard.

From memory, this whole operation would have taken about 40 minutes. While this was going on, another eastbound freight had come into the yard, the passenger train had come in, made its 20 minute stop, and pulled out west ahead of us. As we came opposite the yard office, Mr. Conductor, with his briefcase of waybills, etc. and orders, would grab the caboose on the fly, about 10 m.p.h., the brakeman would signal the Engineer, known as the "Hogger", with the air valve, to 'High Ball', and, so, we were away, about ten minutes behind the passenger.

If you were a stranger to the conductor, his first words were probably, "Well, who the Hell are you?", whereupon one would produce your copy of the waybill and contract to prove yourself a legitimate traveller. During those war years, it was not uncommon to be accosted by a railway policeman or military men to whom you had to prove your reason for being in the yard, or climbing on a freight. Sometime these people would help me look through the lambs. Also, any young man not in uniform was often stopped and asked for credentials and reason as to why he was not in the forces. I had already received an exemption certificate on the proviso of producing wool and meat. I was "Bound to the ranch for the duration of the war!"

On leaving an important divisional point and junction, like Kamloops, where cars had been both taken off and added, the conductor had more than an hour of office work to do. All waybills were put in order and all car numbers written down in sequence, and, I believe, in their sequence or position on the train. All waybills also had to be filed in sequence with the car numbers.

While this was being done, I was usually invited to ride in the cupola, with the brakeman, where you had view of the whole train and all around it, an unforgettable experience on a moonlit night, down the edge of Kamloops Lake and the through the lower Thompson valley. Later, the conductor would climb up, suggesting that you go down and have your supper, brought with you, and using his boiling kettle to make tea or coffee,

followed by a snooze on his bed, but take your shoes off! Most of them were so good. The secret was to take nothing for granted wait to be invited or ask permission. The crew would usually cook themselves a good meal, either a late supper or an early breakfast, as they neared the end of their run, if they had time.

That night, we didn't have too much time. We had one passenger train 20 minutes in front of us and another fast passenger train 40 minutes behind us and we were to travel between these two for the 130 miles to Boston Bar, the next divisional point. We would stop for water once only and 'go in the hole' twice, for two fast eastbound passenger trains, which were also travelling an hour apart.

I don't know how many times we picked up new orders, but do know that time was pretty tight on some of those passes. To enter a siding in those days, the train slowed down and allowed the head end brakeman to run ahead, unlock and throw the switch, and then catch the engine as it went into the siding. As the caboose cleared the switch, the tailend brakeman would throw the switch back to the mainline position, lock it and run to catch the train. After the 'pass' the headend brakeman would throw the switch at the other end of the siding, to let us back onto the main line and the tailend brakeman would again have to put the switch back and run to catch the caboose. There was certainly some amazing, and sometimes worrying, split-minute timing involved, with very little time wasted.

I have a vivid memory of us approaching or slowly going into a siding - the conductor standing out on the back end of the caboose, watch in one hand, fusey in the other - really a tense moment. Would we make it in? Should he throw the fusey? He didn't. We made it in with one minute to spare. It was a troop train behind us. I think a fusey would burn for 10 minutes and thus protect the tail end of the train.

All went well and we came into 'the Bar' a few minutes ahead of that passenger that had been right on our tail. While it made its 15 or 20 minute stop, our train was inspected, caboose, engine and crews changed, ready to go out right on its tail. We followed that train nonstop to Port Mann yard which is really the terminus of the C.N.R. eighteen miles out from Vancouver station, which is actually on the Great Northern tracks.

At Port Mann, the train is all broken up for its various destinations, some to New Westminster and Swift's, some to the B.C. Electric, and most of the remainder going on into Vancouver with much of that being picked up by the Harbour Board Railway for delivery to the waterfront and the C.P.R. tracks. So

ended a fast, wartime trip.

After the war, things seemed to slow up and not run so smoothly. Many of the old-timers retiring, probably the unions becoming stronger, with crews tending to 'work to rule' rather than with a spirit of cooperation and efficiency. Finally, with the passing of steam, the addition of CTC and radio communication, followed by trucking, a large segment of the romance of shipping and selling livestock has gone for ever.

One thing that I have not mentioned was the great discord that developed between the crews at the tailend and headend of a train on some trips. This was before the days of radio communication. In those days communication was by hand signals, in daylight or by waving and wagging lanterns, at night. These were mostly used when the train was stopped, starting or moving slowly, with the brakeman, (or brakemen, sometimes they used two on long trains, especially when it was wound around a curve) on the ground or on top of the cars. On moving trains, the tailend could signal by briefly opening the air valve at the back of the caboose. This operated a whistle in the cab of the engine, to alert the headend crew and to pass coded messages.

The Tension would build up for the whole division. Nothing the Hogger did was right, too slow, too fast, too jerky, you name it! I've seen conductors get so mad they'd finally pull the air brake and stop the whole train dead! Then it would take 10 to 20 minutes to get the brakes off again!

I think perhaps I witnessed a case of the Hogger's playing a trick of retaliation on a conductor. This must have been pre-planned by the whole crew. We pulled out of Kamloops one dark, rainy night, and that Hogger opened his throttle wide, going out of the yard so fast that Mr. Conductor, realizing that they planned to leave him behind, had to jump the middle of the train, on the fly. Of course, the brakeman could have pulled the air, but he didn't. I asked the 'brakey' where the conductor was and he looked at me a bit oddly saying he expected that he'd turn up! Well sir, it was a long time before that soaked, angry man climbed down the ladder into the caboose. I think he even went through the Battle Bluff tunnel (1,000 feet long) on top of the cars, can't be sure. It is a wonder he survived it, particularly, as I realized later, he was soaked in another way that wasn't from the rain!

I remember one trip in the thirties, with Noel (Nailo) Montagnon. We were picked up on the regular through freight, No. 403, which was late. We got away from Birch Island about dark and, for some reason, rode the tender, on top of the water tank, into Kamloops. It

was dirty, even though the engine burned oil, there was still a lot of ash and dust blowing. Later, the water under us began to get uncomfortably hot. We had to sit on our bags!

The trip from Birch Island to Kamloops was fast. The train was late and the crew wanted to get home. On one stretch, I think it was from Louis Creek in, that we estimated the speed at nearly 70 m.p.h.!

That was the fast part. We were held up in Kamloops for about six hours, waiting for some cars which had to get to the coast. These cars, half a dozen empty tankers finally arrived and we got under way in the morning. About seventy miles out, we came to an unscheduled stop, somewhere near Ashcroft, because one of these cars had developed a 'hot box'. It was really hot, with flames licking up around the tank. When the crew discovered that this "empty" was actually full of some 20,000 gallons of gasoline, they hastily uncoupled the whole lot and left them, with the journal still flaming, on the siding. They didn't seem to carry fire extinguishers. During this stop, the caboose crew climbed over the fence with several large pails and shortly reappeared with bushels of huge tomatoes from the adjacent field.

There was another terrible trip, made by Gerry Constable, in '58. There was a C.N. or union inspector aboard. He took over the caboose and made everyone work to rule. Gerry was told to "Sit in a chair and stay there!" He wasn't allowed up in the cupola. At Boston Bar, the outgoing crew had not been called, so had to be given one hour for breakfast. Then it was found that they hadn't had enough rest, so a fresh crew was sent by taxi from Kamloops to take the train out. Poor lambs! Poor Gerry! On top of all this, the lambs were delivered to the wrong packing house through an error.

Swift, at Sapperton, had to close owing to the construction of the Port Mann bridge and were using another plant. Anyway, the lambs were delivered to the wrong plant and had to trucked to the right one!

I will always remember some of the Stock car numbers, ones that were kept in Kamloops that we used so often, such as a very old car, No. 170509, which was dated 1914 or earlier and had "Grand Trunk" painted over with "Canadian National". Then there were 171199 and 170450, and so it went until the larger cars were brought into use. These were 40 feet by 8 foot 6 inches and held 250 lambs, while the old ones were 36 by 8 feet and held 200 to 210.

Of course the trip as caretaker with livestock was free, however one had to sign a contract absolving the railway from all responsibility of life and limb! There

could only be one caretaker with up to two cars, with three and more cars two people could legally travel. Though in those (beginning to be long ago days) we seldom shipped more than one or two cars at a time. Nailo (Noel) and I were still able to make many unforgettable trips together as Nailo (Noel) had a rail pass, his father being a railroad man. Now on looking back it is surprising that the freight conductor honoured a pass or took ones word so readily on a freight train, however we are looking back to those days when almost everyone seemed to know of or aware of everyone. This was toward the end of the great depression which I believe had tended to create a time of trust and cooperation. Perhaps one tends to only remember the best in both people and circumstances.

On returning homeward one obtained a half-fare ticket by presenting the stamped weigh bill of the shipment to the ticket agent. I remember the cost was \$6.60 from Vancouver to Birch Island, about the value of one lamb. If fares had gone up as other things have we would be looking at nearly \$100 for a lamb today, so there is one of the best buys in history! If one felt rich enough to take a top berth it could be obtained for \$1.50. We never did.

On one return trip I had a little adventure. Owing to a street car delay at Main and Hastings I missed the train by a few minutes. A waiting taxi told me that I could catch it at New Westminster for a \$3.00 fare. For some reason I felt that I had to get home that night. I had exactly \$3.00 plus one .07 street car ticket in my wallet.

Well that was a wild rough trip, in the late '30s there was not a very good or direct route. Anyway on approaching the station at New West'lo and behold the train was just slowly pulling out. We zoomed over the crossing behind the train, onto a road that paralleled the track, caught up to the train on the 'off' side where upon I grabbed the outside railing. The taxi man assured me that he could signal to someone on the train that I was on the outside, which I guess he luckily did however it was an endurance test.

I thought that if necessary I could stand it until Port Mann, three miles east of the bridge. What with holding my valise, which was quite heavy, I realized that my arms would soon play out however I managed

to get up in between the cars with a foot on each bracket. This gave me a short break and rested my arms until the train went into the curve on the bridge when the two cars started to rapidly come together on the inside of the corner. I had to get out of there in a hurry so again I found myself hanging on the outside of the door with the bridge girders not far from my back and the Fraser River flowing beneath. Well about the time that it seemed I could stand it now longer the door suddenly opened and I was helped in by a relieved trainman who had been looking for me, having opened half the car doors on the train and was about to give up. Again a guardian angel must have been watching over me.

“For ye shall go out with joy  
and be led forth with peace!  
The mountains and the hills shall break forth  
before you with singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their  
hands.”

Isaiah, 55:12

### **Trailing to the Mountain**

Ewes and lambs were trailed to the high country on the old, narrow, steep, uneven, rocky, and, in places,



wet and boggy trails. During the past few years, this has suddenly become history, thanks to the network of logging roads which has penetrated to and connected with most of the B.C. mountain livestock ranges. Again, the following is only from my experience, or has been

passed on to me from earlier times.

As can be imagined, it seems that it was quite a battle of perseverance to get some of the flocks on to a mountain for the first time. The ewes just did not have the faith in their shepherd to believe that there could be anything worth going to at the end of such a long, steep, narrow trail. However, it all became worthwhile to both man and beast when that first break-over was reached, where the jungle, almost devoid of anything to eat, suddenly began to change to a paradise of early spring feed at midsummer. Although both the ewes and their lambs were tired, hot and thirsty, the whole sound and attitude of the flock would change to that of peace and contentment. One could imagine from the changed and varied tones of their bleating that there was and is a language of communication between them.

Beginning during the early twenties, and for many ensuing years, there were several community bands formed for the summer months in the high country, most of which were very successful. I think particularly, of the Black Pines Band, of which Cahoon was shepherd. There was also the Upper Louis Creek Band on Louis Creek Baldy Mountain, now known as Todd Mountain. They were herded by "King", a Chinaman, who owned one of the flocks. Riley herded there in 1923, the first year "Old Mac" was with our flock, also our first year on the Foghorn.

During the mid-twenties, we had several flocks from the upper part of this valley grazing with ours on the Foghorn Range. I think of such names as Sanborn of Darfield, the Prices and Robert Alexander of Blackpool, Hawksworth Norris of Birch Island, and Allingham of Vavenby. Have often been told that it worked out most satisfactorily on the trail if the smaller flocks were trailed separately, a few hours, or a day behind the main bunch. Sheep always know when others have gone before. Community bands, especially of mixed breeding, are not easy to handle and will not band together, and, therefore, required a good, fairly open mountain with definite natural boundaries.

To get back to a one unit flock, the trailing was very easy, once the ewes knew the way. One person could manage a flock of 300 to 500 ewes, however, when the size increased to 800, 1,000 or 1,200, it was a different matter, requiring three people who knew what they were doing. One controlled the speed of the lead. One, together with his dogs, kept up pressure on the tail end, while the third kept working his way forward, off the trail, and back, through the column of sheep, in order to boost and keep pressure on the rear third of the line of moving sheep.

Twenty-five hundred ewes and lambs on a trail four to ten feet wide, with alternating steep and almost level places, combined with sharp corners, can become a mile long. The lead has to be completely stopped at times in order that the tail end can move at a fairly leisurely pace while still keeping up. A break in the line can be disastrous in losing lambs which drop off the lead and graze off the trail before the tail end comes along to pick them up. (This happened more than once. One group of about 30 disappeared and was never found. Another time Nailo, on his way down the trail, found a bunch of twenty or so in the timber and managed to get them onto the trail and up to the camp.) We developed a method of communication with rifle shots and bugle calls, mainly to be able to stop the lead in an emergency, such as a break, or to let the lead know when the tail end had passed certain known points on the trail.

There were also prearranged gathering and resting places. I have known the lead to be stopped at a resting place for an hour and a quarter before the tail end came in. This gives an idea of the length of time it took for the entire band to pass any given point or restriction. Every hundred sheep added to the size of the band increased the time required to reach one's destination. The average rate of progress was generally about one mile per hour, at the tail end half that on very long, steep stretches. (The lead, of course, would have made three or four times that speed, if it had been let out.) The trip from the valley to the mountain took about eight hours, from daylight to noon, when all went well.

I remember one trip, in 1948, to a different mountain, on a new trail. My brother, Ted, was in the lead. Suddenly, the lead broke and then ran back, where they stood in panic as a stream of ground hornets issued forth from the centre of the trail. Now Ted was very allergic to wasp stings, but nothing would induce that lead to go near, or by, that spot. However, Ted could nearly always figure out a way of circumventing a problem. He found a long tree limb with a forked end. On the fork, he carefully designed, laid and lit a fire.

Meanwhile, the hornets had calmed down and re-entered their nest in the ground. He then proceeded, lying on his tummy, to worm his way forward toward the nest, with the fire preceding him by about twelve feet. When the fire was exactly over the entrance to the nest, he quickly laid it down and then froze! The result was almost a one hundred percent kill, with no stings ... We proceeded!

On another trip, a ewe lambled in the early morning on our bed-ground at the foot of the trail. Of course, she simply stayed behind with the young lamb. The

following morning, on our return from the sheep camp, we met the ewe and her lamb, already on the top of the mountain. Some lamb! Some mother! They had climbed 5,000 feet with the lamb only one day old!

Another interesting incident: We had moved the flock home to the ranch from the spring range, crossing the river by ferry at Vavenby. Our count had shown three sheep missing and unaccounted for. A few days later, we trailed to Birch Island, spending part of the day there and then, as usual, bedding at the foot of the trail, preparatory to heading up the next morning.

Brother Ted came part way up and then returned to Birch Island. On approaching the railway crossing, what should he see but a ewe and her twins, soaking wet, trotting down the road. He opened the gate to the trail and away she went. I spotted her the next day, coming into camp. We heard later that she had been seen on the river bank, under the railway bridge, on the far side of the river, on the day that the sheep were in Birch Island. She must have heard the flock from somewhere the morning we trailed down the road, realized that it was “mountain time” and that she was left behind, and made a beeline, though missing us by a day at each stop. The big question is, how did she make herself, together with both lambs, jump into that river, which was at peak high water. Also, having done so, it was something of a miracle that all three were able to land safely amid the jungle of “sweeps” on the other side! The North Thompson River is 300 to 400 feet wide and flows at speeds of eight to fifteen miles per hour.

Trailing lambs off the mountain for shipment in the early fall was usually very easily accomplished, if one knew how and had a good leader. The usual procedure was to start out about mid-afternoon, after sorting and marking the lambs, often trailing the last two miles in the dark, making the trip in just over four hours. How well lambs trailed in the evening and right on into the dark was unbelievable. We carried a coal oil lantern in the lead and the person behind had a flashlight.

The largest bunch of shipping lambs that two of us ever trailed down was 620, three carloads, or six decks at 105 head per deck. These were the old original stock cars, 8 by 36 feet, in some of which, the railway allowed the “shipper’s decks” to stay. So, there was a group of C.N. cars kept in the Kamloops area for local lamb shipments.

These cars became like old friends as they were used over and over again. After all these years, I can still remember many of the car num-

bers, such as: 170509, 171199, 170450, and so on. The freight on a temporary, “shipper’s”, deck was much less than on a company deck. Much later, the railway brought in larger cars measuring 8½ by 40 feet. These cars held 250 lambs each. About this time we were forced to develop our own ‘portable’ decks. We made the railway return the empty cars to Birch Island, where we removed the deck, storing it until the next shipment. In the earlier days, we had to build a deck for every car we shipped, as the decks were ripped out and destroyed at the terminus. Such a waste of good lumber! (Hopefully, a few needy folk got themselves some kindling!)

Trailing the ewes down and home in the late fall was usually very simple, particularly if the day before, during, or the day after a snow storm. The feelings and urges of a band of sheep are magnified by numbers. In that case it’s “Down. Down, and we can’t do it fast enough!” We have brought sheep off the mountain alone (with one person?) several times starting out in fifteen inches of blowing, drifting snow. One would take the last of his rolled oats from the camp, walk through the flock several times, or until the best and greediest leaders were with him, and then start walking ahead, hoping and presuming that his faithful dog would follow the tailend. After about half a mile, one would check on this and then, on again. Usually after a mile, with the snow decreasing in depth, you would let the lead go and start back to the tailend. There’d be about a mile of moving, trotting sheep, mostly single file. You would not see the lead again until you reached the bottom.

### Shepherd Experiences

From our experience, in more than seventy years of sheep camps, I can only recollect two occasions of



camp robbing bears.

In the mid-sixties, two of us, with four horses, packed our camp supplies up to our 'first' camp on the Foghorn Range, reaching this old cabin at dark. We found everything in a shambles: stove upside down; kettle, pots and water pails with tooth holes and every other movable thing on the dirt floor. The bear had entered through a window broken four panes of glass out of a six-pane window frame not a very big aperture for what we assumed to be a grizzly bear. We hoped that he had passed through and then left the country. We tidied, cleaned, repaired, and generally fixed things up before returning to the valley next morning.

A few days later, on arriving with the sheep, the whole episode had been repeated and we had to fix everything up all over again. Fortunately, some food supplies had been stored high up under the roof and the bedding hung up, so we were not desperate.

Bill and the sheep stayed at this camp for about a week no troubles, but grizzly signs around. There is always a lantern on the sheep bed-ground, but, on this occasion, Bill kept his coal-oil lamp burning at night in the cabin window. On my next campending trip, we re-established and moved to another site. On Bill's suggestion, I had procured the 'insides' of a switch lamp from the railway. These amazing little lamps will burn 24 hours a day for more than a week on one fill of coal oil. We left this light burning in the cabin for the next two or three weeks no bear!

About this time, Bill shot a small grizzly bear about a quarter mile from the cabin and was so sure that this was the culprit that he didn't replenish the oil. Meanwhile, he moved to our third campsite, but left the tent, stove, some food, etc. at the second camp.

Another week went by and I made another campending trip. Again, when I reached the cabin, about dark, I found the same thing all over again, but with more stuff to scatter and spoil! One very odd thing. Two wool bed quilts had been very carefully, and untorn, carried outside, through the same broken window which he always used (we had only put some cardboard over his original hole), and spread rather carefully on the ground. One appeared to have been lain on. Perhaps Mr. Bear had plans for a warmer, more comfortable winter bed? So, I had to do it all over again for the third time.

Next morning, I went on with the horses to the other camps. The next sequence of events must be told by Bill Gabry: (Bill is now over eighty years of age. He has been here on the ranch most of the time since 1949, spending close to twenty-five seasons with the sheep. I

have just been over to his cabin in the hope that he would write this down. In this I failed, but he related the events again.)

A few days after moving to the far camp (Twin Lake), he had occasion to ride around by Second Camp to pick up a few things that he needed, including some honey. He dismounted a few yards from the tent, luckily taking his rifle from the scabbard. His dog, "Cap II", a great bear dog and sheep dog combined, approached the tent, sniffed, barked, and dashed into the tent, where Mr. Bear was just in process of looking things over! He had upset the stove and only just smelt the carton of honey.

Out of the tent came the bear, with Cap just about on top of him, not a grizzly, but medium sized, extra long, slim, male black bear. The tent was pitched against a thicket of short trees nothing suitable for a bear to climb. With Cap in chase, that bear went around that tent, through the thicket, about three times. There were a couple of chances for a shot, but not without the possibility of hitting Cap. Suddenly, the bear lunged straight for Bill. He had the rifle raised and ready, pulling the trigger with the bear's chest actually touching the barrel. As Bill pulled the trigger, he threw himself backward, with a rolling motion, landing face down, minus his coat, shirt and underwear, but without a mark on his body! It was a killing shot, with the bear dead, almost on top of him. A close shave!

It was the next day that I came along, looking for Bill, but all I found was a dead bear and a vacant tent. While I was considering what to do next, along comes Bill from the other camp. It seems he had forgotten to pick up the honey the previous day!

The camp robber was dead. No more trouble. Strange that a black bear should be so nocturnal as to be kept out of the cabin so long by a small light, then going right back in when the light was out. Incidentally, the muzzle of Bill's rifle had expanded from the close shot. Being a gunsmith, he knew how to cut the end off. He always had tools.

Our other peculiar episode took place in 1958, on McCorvie Mountain, our June range. It was Gerry and I with the sheep. The previous evening, we had found a very sick ewe (blue bag). After treating her, we tethered her about 20 feet behind the tent in an open spot. We did not want to risk losing her in the jungles next day, with the possibility of starting bear killing if she were left out or died.

Next morning, out we go with the sheep at daylight. I was the first one back to camp for breakfast, about six. Even though the tent flaps were not tied, the

front corner of the tent had a large hole in it. Strange to say, there was not much disorder inside. Mr. Black (or Brown) Bear had found everything he needed very easily. It appeared that first it was the 5 pound pail of honey, followed by the 4 pound can of peanut butter from our table. Next to the grub box about half a side of bacon, then a few loaves of bread and, finally, best of all, about 3 pounds of extra strong Cheddar cheese!

It seemed that this was all a little too much for even a bear's stomach to handle. It appeared that violent pain and nausea seized him. He left the tent, and, about where the poor ewe was tethered, he lost everything he had eaten in one great pile, whereupon, what does he do but eat the whole of the sick ewe nothing left but hooves, skin, and a few scattered bones.

We stayed at that camp for another ten days, but we never saw that bear again and there was no killing. It would seem that he never forgot that tummy ache!

A few more episodes are perhaps worth relating. First, let us go back to the twenties and thirties, to the 'reign' of Riley Munro LaDow Irish, Scottish and French born in Pennsylvania with the combined traits of all those peoples rolled into one. He was our shepherd from 1918 to 1933.

One cold, late fall day on our low range, a steep, rough, side-hill country, he spotted an unusual looking semi-natural cave on the side of a rocky draw. Now Riley was always curious, liking to prove all possibilities, and had been forced to declare war on all bears in our locality, as there had been so much killing.

As he described it, down on his hands and knees he goes in. Things get a little dark and there's a corner and a rock in the way. "Well, sir. I was kinda lookin' down and up and through and in and under, then there was the sound of breathin'. Lookin' up, there this huge yellow head just above my head. I backed out, followed by the bear."

Well, he killed the bear and skinned it. That was the most unusual looking, yellow-brown bear that he or anyone else had ever seen. We had the hide around for years.

Back to the high country in the early years.

I remember a notable Indian, Leo Denis, grandson of a Kinbasket (after whom the Kinbasket Glacier is named), telling Riley, "You have established your camp right in the path of the Grizzly Bear." "Well", says Riley, "that is just too bad for the grizzlies." And it was.

On looking back, Riley did have to kill a few bad ones. However, there were often a few around or passing through for the next twenty-five years or so, but we had little trouble.

One of Riley's episodes took place at first camp, which is in a burnt piece of country with many windfalls. We had a wood fence corral not far from the cabin.

One night, Riley heard the sheep make a run. Out he went, in his underwear, loose shoes, rifle in one hand, flashlight in the other. There was a huge mother grizzly, with two cubs, in the process of climbing over the corral fence. As soon as he put the light on her, she turned toward him, on her hind legs. When he turned the light off, he couldn't see, but, when he turned it on, she was closer. He started backing up, but she kept coming on. This kept on for a short time, until Riley realized that he had backed into a jungle of windfalls and could not retreat any further without climbing over them, with his back to the bear. She was still coming towards him and getting pretty close, so he says to himself, "It's she or me!" He waited until she was about three yards off and, with the aid of his flashlight, put a paralyzing shot into her lower neck with the old 30 US rifle which he always used. Later he also killed the two cubs.

Another time, at the old Second Camp, Riley, taking his two pails, went to the spring, more than two hundred yards down a fairly steep hill. There was a grizzly at the spring. The two dogs went after it while he debated, "Should I go back for the rifle or go ahead and get the water?" He decided that the bear wouldn't be coming back and went and dipped his pails full, just as Mr. Bear returned, with the dogs on his tail, and ran right past him.

Well, at 6,500 feet, with two full pails of water, you don't climb very fast and, before he had reached camp and his rifle, here comes the bear and the dogs for the second time. When Riley still didn't shoot, one of the dogs gave him the most extraordinary, mystified, disdainful look, as if to say, "Well, I've brought him by you twice and you still don't kill him for me. You must be crazy!" At that, the dog literally jumped on the bear's back and rode him out of sight.

That dog, "Buster", a black and tan Collie, very fast, survived many bear adventures and always came in unscathed. He and many dogs preceding and succeeding him, became an amazing combination of good sheepdog with hunting and tracking abilities, treeing many killer cats and black bears.

I remember one June we were grazing a low river flat, good feed, but well treed. The second day, and close to camp, the dogs treed a whole family of bears in a cluster of very large, leafy cottonwood (black poplar) trees. Though Riley was a crack shot, he used a whole box of ammunition to annihilate them. Their home was too close to the bed-ground that we would be using for

the next two weeks to risk sparing them.

Back to the high range again with Bill Gabry. He was riding his little mare, Cameo, some distance beyond the sheep. Rounding a blind corner, he rode right into a large grizzly. One moment he was riding, the next he was on the ground in a heap, right in front of Mr. Bear, with his rifle half buried underneath! Well, they stared at each other for a few moments, when the bear suddenly took off as fast as he could go. Miraculous! Bill was none the worse and soon spotted his mount, peacefully grazing a short distance away. One reason that he became unseated so easily and completely was that he always used a very smooth, flat US Army saddle.

Another time, we had just reached the first mountain camp with the sheep. Bill decided to take a quick look around the hill where the sheep were well settled. He was very tired, and, instead of taking his rifle, he put his little .22 pistol in his pocket, perhaps thinking of a blue grouse for supper. On or near the hill top, fortunately with his dog, Scot the First, (a beardie, which is the name used for the cross between a collie and English sheep dog), in the lead, they came around the corner of a blind thicket and there was a grizzly in the process of devouring a nice, big, freshly-killed ewe. Scot bounded right to the bear which reared back on his haunches and batted Scot right up in the air and over the top of the thicket. Bill just stepped back behind a bushy tree and froze. The bear had not even seen him. It sniffed at the carcass and then simply wandered off. Scot had saved Bill's life by getting there first!

He found Scot in a sad state. He carefully carried him back to the cabin, made a soft nest on a spare bunk for him, and there he stayed for two weeks. His chest was just caved in, many broken ribs, etc. Well, Bill finally nursed that dog back to health. He lived many more years to follow and tree many more bears, cougars and lynxes and also one wolverine, all killers.

### **A Little Story of a Trespass.**

I was most fortunate, during my younger days with the sheep, to spend quite a lot of time with "Owd Bob". He was an elderly bachelor who had spent his younger years herding sheep below the Canada-U.S. line. We often bought hay and rented grazing from him and, at such times, we lived together. He taught me a great deal about 'batching' and also about sheep and their handling plus many related experiences. I must relate one of the experiences he told me of an occurrence before 1900.

At this period of time it seems that it was quite

common for livestock to trespass into Canada, which Bob and his flock had been doing. Late one fall, he found such a beautiful, perfect bed ground and campsite, which happened to be a few miles on the wrong side of the line. It was so perfect that he had to move over. Well, it seems that somebody squealed and, about dusk, one evening, two RCMP officers rode into camp, saying, "Well, this is it! The sheep and the camp are confiscated. We'll take over in the morning."

So Bob did some thinking and planning. The first thing was to cook the fellows a really good supper. They were tired and hungry. Next, move his bedroll outside, under the wagon, and fix up two very comfortable beds inside. Then, while they were finishing supper, he managed to sneak out among the sheep, catch his only bellwether, muffle the bell with some rags, and then he was set for his plan.

What was left of the moon would rise about midnight, his dog was quiet and gentle and there were no lambs left in the band and he knew sheep. Well, he kept those fellows talking until quite late, he told them the sheep didn't move very early in the morning and never pulled out at night. So, they all went to bed and to sleep, except for Bob! Sure enough, a little after midnight, the moon appeared and the police were snoring. Oh so carefully did Bob get those sheep on their feet and get them stirred up a bit. It took patience, know-how and care to get those sheep moving, without a sound and away.

If they are close to good feed and there is a moon, it is not uncommon for sheep to graze out, particularly from a new bed ground, around midnight. This fact was considered and taken advantage of. Once the sheep were some distance away, he, and they, really hightailed it for the far side of the international line, where he and the sheep, long before daylight, were happily on an old bed ground. He saved the band for the owner, but lost the camp.

### **Owd Bob, the "Old Codger"**

I believe the first time that I remember Bob was early October 1930. I was eleven years old. We had trailed the sheep to his place for fall grazing and also for dipping, as Bob had a dipping tank, but had recently gone out of sheep. I caught up with the sheep there on a Saturday morning, by bicycle, my first long bicycle trip (about 25 miles). I had left Vavenby after school on Friday afternoon, spent the night at Norris' and then, on to Blackpool next morning. All strange road and country, very exciting.

Well, we got the sheep dipped. The old tank leaked and I pumped water from the well until I was dead beat. We were all tired and hungry, Riley, brother Ted, sister Mada, and our friend, June Tryon, and, of course, Owd Bob.

Riley went to a neighbour and procured a bucket of buttermilk, from which he produced a huge pile of hot cakes “the best we ever did eat”. Suddenly, we are full, the hotcakes are nearly gone, and Riley, who has been cooking, hasn’t had time to eat yet! How thoughtless and selfish can young, hungry people be! No more buttermilk. Poor Riley had to make himself some poor ‘dough goet’ flapjacks from water and baking powder!

Well, after supper, everyone kind of started acting the fool. Riley had his mouth organ, sang and danced a bit. Riley and Bob told some stories. Then, suddenly, Bob says, “Riley, strike up ‘Turkey in the Straw’!” Bob leaps to his feet, starts to step dance and sing,

“There was an old codger and he had a wooden leg.  
He had no tobacco, no tobacco could he beg.  
Now there was another old codger  
who was cunning as a fox  
And he always had tobacco in his old tobacco box.  
Says the first old codger, ‘Will you give me chew?’  
Says the second old codger, ‘I’ll be danged if I do.  
Just save up your money and be cunning as a fox,  
And you’ll always have tobacco  
in your own tobacco box!’”

Well, Bob had a face just like a fox, was never short of funds, and always had tobacco so, it was very apt. As a young boy I never forgot.

### **A few little jottings**

Speaking of Heron Brothers and the Cherry Creek Ranch, which was originally the Roper place, reminds me of a little story I heard years ago: It seems there was a young man hit Kamloops, looking for work. Someone suggested that he walk out to “Lying Bill” Roper’s place where help was needed. So the young man did. He walked for miles and miles, finally coming to a place where a man was resetting a fence post by the side of the narrow road. Says the young fellow, “Can you tell me where I can find Lying Bill Roper’s place?” Bill Roper looks up for a minute and says, “Yes. He lives way over beyond that mountain”, and then continues to tamp his post. I never heard whether he got a job!

One fall, after Auld Alec (McKenzie) had been

with us for some time, and left, my sidekick, Noel Montagnon, and I being in the sheep camp one fall evening, composed the following limerick:

“There was an old herder named Alec  
Whose voice was extremely metallic.  
While cursing and swearing  
And always declaring  
Using words sounding better in Ga’lic.”

### **Trials, Troubles, Tribulations and Setbacks Through the Years.**

As previously mentioned, the first little flock of 1913 thrived and all was very encouraging, no predators or other problems. Not so, however, with the import of the prairie Rambouillet ewes in the fall of 1916. I believe that, in the next ensuing years, about everything that could go wrong, did.

About that time a neighbour, Old ‘Bighorn’ Campbell, had moved into the area from the Big Horn Mountain, Montana. He had come in with a string of rather unusual, high-spirited horses of various types, more of which will be mentioned later. Amongst many other things, he posed as an experienced sheep-man and sheep herder. My father did not know enough about a larger flock of sheep to realize that Campbell knew practically nothing of handling, feeding or lambing. Possibly unknown to Father, the ewes had been bred to lamb in February. We were not ready for lambing, the weather was terrible, together with a shortage of feed and milk. Lambing was a disaster! On top of everything else, sore mouth developed in the ewes.

I can picture now exactly what happened. The prairie sheep had had sore mouth, but were immune. The few carriers, however, were able to infect the BC sheep which had probably never been exposed to the virus. That really kept it going possibly changing form sufficiently to re-infect the prairie sheep.

The following spring and summer were equally disastrous because predator problems developed both from bear and coyote killings. This probably was started and caused by the casualties from tick paralysis which affected both ewes and lambs on the spring range. This tick is the Rocky Mountain “*dermacenta andersonii*” wood tick, which played havoc with both sheep and cattle in those days and for many years to come and still does in certain areas at certain dates.

During those and ensuing years it did seem that newly imported livestock were more prone to the problem that those which had been in the tick infested areas

for several generations. Why, for instance, were McCorvie's and Pridgeon's two to four hundred cattle, which were practically running wild on that range, not affected? They had operated here since the mid-nineties. I do not know where their first cattle came from, probably from a tick area near Kamloops.

To get back to the sheep: They first thought that the problem was some kind of poisoning from herbage and it was quite some time before the problem was pinpointed, though not solved for many years to come. There are still many mysteries re ticks, such as: Why do they cause more paralysis some years than others? Why does one tick cause paralysis while others appear not to? I have, during shearing, found ewes with a half-dozen fully engorged ticks, right down the neck and spine, with no ill effects; then later that evening found a ewe paralysed and, on inspection, found one small, half engorged tick on her brisket! On removal of the tick, in a short while, she gets to her feet and walks happily off with no ill effects.

In the spring of 1918, Father procured the services of Riley M. LaDow, an experienced sheep herder from the USA, who had been south of Kamloops for a number of years, where he had looked after both Muir Watson's and Henry Cornwall's sheep and had also become a very good hunter and trapper. He was able to look after the predator problems and many others. But, there were more surprises ahead. During the early winter of '18, sore mouth broke out again while on the early winter range (December).

The ewes were grazing steep side-hills in snow, eating a mixture of wormwood, Oregon grape, some bunch grass, together with other browse. Is it possible that the prickly Oregon grape lacerated their lips, or did the weather condition chap them? Anyway, some combination of circumstances produced the worst epidemic of sore mouth anyone ever dreamt of, nearly the whole flock being infected. Of course, they were promptly moved onto hay, which they could hardly eat. Their lips swelled up and looked like beef steaks when the scabs were rubbed off, even their tongues swole up. They also appeared to have a fever as they were incubating it.

The only known treatment was to rub the scabs off and swab with a strong solution of permanganate of potash. Dad and Riley worked for days and nights on this treatment. I now realize that it is a miracle that they didn't get infected themselves, working with bare hands and no precautions. I also wonder now if the treatment really did much good. It may have helped or speeded up the healing, but the disease just had to run its course. There are probably antibiotics that would work now,

but, in the milder epidemics which have occurred in more recent years, the best solution seems to be just to change ground, feed good hay, and let it take its course. However, in the last forty or fifty years, we have never seen anything like what they had to deal with in the teens and twenties. It now seems to me that one is likely to have at least a mild epidemic about once every generation or every ten or so years as though a ewe is immune for life, with, also, a small amount of inherited resistance. Perhaps only an isolated flock that has been completely unexposed for many generations would be the only one to experience a really serious outbreak of the disease.

The foregoing perhaps contradicts the thought that the prairie sheep brought it here. As they came from Lacombe, they perhaps had been relatively isolated from the Alberta range country of the south, where it was always present. It may have come here through an imported ram or some other means. Or, is it nearly always present in a flock, so that, when immunity is lost and conditions become exactly right, then a bad epidemic will occur? It is fortunate that it usually occurs in early winter and is cleared up long before lambing. However, I have heard instances of it developing just before lambing, with the young lambs developing symptoms and, in turn, infecting their mother's udders! In some cases, the ewes get so sore that they will not let the lambs nurse.

There were more problems just around the corner. During one or two late winters of the very late teens or early twenties, there appeared the symptoms of a very strange, presumed infectious disease diagnosed by Dr. Bruce, the Provincial Vet, to be a form of meningitis though, I believe, it remained a great mystery to all those who observed it or were consulted at a distance. It would be another thirty years before this mysterious ailment would be diagnosed and named Pregnancy Toxemia or "Twin Lamb Disease". It is caused by an acute shortage of Vitamin A, developing during the last month or two before lambing and affecting either the very fat or, more commonly, thin ewes carrying twins or triplets. Long before it was diagnosed, it dawned on us that it was precipitated by a combination of many factors during the winter: Poor unbalanced feed, lack of exercise, lack of water, together with anything that causes undue stress.

The problem developed again during the winter of 1930, after we had trailed the sheep to Black Pool, where they were on a straight diet of bottom land hay consisting of red top and slough grass with very little clover and with very little exercise except the 25 mile

trip to get there. Ewe losses were quite severe on all these occasions, but the exact numbers now are unknown. After the mid-thirties, after I started looking after the flock during the winters, I came to the conclusion that one can feed the most terribly bad hay, including mould and rot, to sheep, provided one can feed one feed of good quality hay first thing in the morning, followed by the bad feed later in the day. I also discovered the value of conifer browse from felled trees, both Douglas fir and Jackpine. Both the needles and, better still, the moss on the older trees seemed to make up for many feed deficiencies. I think that this may have supplied some of the missing vitamins and, possibly, have controlled parasites to some extent.

It is interesting that, to our knowledge, we did not have any problems with parasites during the early years. The first hint of a problem developed during the winter of 1936. Ted and I decided to import a carload of yearling Rambouillet ewes from Pitchers at Cardston, Alberta. We had too many old ewes that fall, it having been impossible to afford to save very many ewe lambs for ourselves throughout the Great Depression, particularly as we had entered the Depression with very low numbers. In 1936 we could sell our very old ewes in Vancouver for about \$3.50 per head and could buy, what we thought were beautiful yearling ewes, in Alberta, for \$4.50 per head. We bred these ewes to Harvey Cross "Romnolet" rams, procured from Alastair Cameron of Kelowna.

All went well during the fall, but, by early winter, we realized that the yearlings were not thriving. By January, they were scoured and starting to die. We had never seen worm symptoms before! However, the cause of the problem soon dawned on us. The only treatment then was a drench of a mild solution of copper sulphate combined with "Black Leaf 40", Nicotine Sulphate. By this time it was too close to lambing. It would have caused abortion, so we ended up treating later. The result was apparently satisfactory, but we had lost 25 percent of the lot before lambing and their lambing was also a bit of a disaster lamb and milk-wise!

Now this all brings out an interesting point. We had had sheep here for 24 years and did not know what an internal parasite was. The sheep from the Southern Alberta range could not have been carrying parasites. Our sheep must have been carrying a moderate load, but were living quite happily and doing very well in spite of this. However, because at that time we were spending a fairly large proportion of the time on dry range in spring and fall, and the summer range was fresh and good; and the breeding was strongly Oxford and Cheviot (prob-

ably very resistant); added to the fact that no deworming treatment was known or had ever been used, it would seem that the old flock had developed a very high resistance or immunity. It now seems obvious that the new imports were just wide open to infection and immediately succumbed to it.

Strangely, we were not conscious of a worm infection again until the early 50's, when, one winter, the ewe lambs suddenly started showing symptoms with several deaths. We treated them with the best known thing (at that time), Pentothiazene. It worked. From then on, we routinely treated all the keeper ewe lambs for years to come. It is only comparatively recently that we have had to routinely treat the whole flock with the current, modern methods. It seems that our natural immunity is gone combined with the fact that more time is spent on tame pasture and less on the dry and other ranges.

Major killings from predators took their toll at various times throughout the years, even in both Riley's and Bill's (Bill Gabry) long spells with the flock. One of these times was on McCorvie Mountain range, which had not been used for eight years. It had been our first semi-high range until 1923, when we opened up the Foghorn area. Anyway, we decided to try McCorvie again, as a June range for, even though it had become so brushy, the feed was great. However, partly owing to the Cheviot breeding since the mid-twenties, combined with the brush, and having very poor dogs, the herding instinct of the flock had vanished.

On top of this, the cold June rains, combined with fog, set in. Riley was alone, which was, perhaps, a mistake under those conditions. Trouble started almost immediately with both black and brown bears killing. Previously, we had developed a distress signal system, by lighting a fire on Singleton's Butte a smoky fire in the day or a hot, bright fire at night. There was a perfect fireplace on a ledge, with a rock behind it. I used it a few times ten or twenty years later. Well, this time, the fog hung on the prow of the mountain so heavily that it was not seen from home. After several days, Riley was able to send a message down by a forestry trail cutter. I wish I still had that letter. It started, "Dear TAM. Hell broke out in the corral a few mornings ago. Sheep are scattered. Have only got one bear, but looks to be a dozen more killing. Come. We'll have to move out with what we've got."

They did. It took many days to find the surviving strays. Do not know exactly what the final loss was, but think between 50 and 100 head of both lambs and ewes. With the flock already too small and with lamb prices down to 7 cents that fall (a contrast to the 12 and 13 cents

through the mid and late twenties) this was a severe loss.

On top of this, the dry summer of 1930, following a snowless winter, caused a frightful hay shortage everywhere. The Allingham place produced ten tons even though it had not been grazed after the end of April. This was the reason we had to buy 45 tons of hay at Blackpool. The wet, low areas there produced well in that dry year. I think the ewe count was nearer 400 than 500 by the spring of '31 with the Great Depression setting in! Yet the fall ewe count of 1935, when my father died, was 750! Oh how did we live and increase, with top lamb at 5+ cents and 4+ cents for #2's and I'm telling you, a #1 lamb had to be good. Also the market did not want a lamb much over 80 pounds.

Added to these problems, Dad, in 1928, had agreed to a five year lease with Allingham, at \$500 a year. Allingham was 80 years old, had just had a stroke and appeared to be dying, so Dad could not bring himself to drive a hard bargain, but he did get a clause put in whereby we would get it for half the figure if and when he (Allingham?) died. You guessed it! Allingham recovered immediately and lived for another 15 years! We did end up, later, paying him half as much, as money had virtually left the face of the earth after 1930. In consequence of the half payment, Allingham, in his sarcastic way, once said, "Well, as I'm dead, you had better pay the taxes!" Incidentally, it was Riley, being camped near him with the sheep, who nursed Allingham back to life after his stroke. Riley cutting his wood, lighting his fire, washing his clothes, feeding him, etc. during the time of his helplessness. They were good friends, but, disappointingly and strangely, after this, Allingham turned against Riley and had no use for him. Oh human nature! (Allingham was an atheist.)

Coyote problems developed again through the forties and became quite serious until the compound 1080 "Sodium Triacetate" was used for the control of predators in the early fifties. Being something new, odourless, tasteless and colourless, it cleaned up all the bad, cunning coyotes that had, for several generations, become wise to every known form of control. Even the very experienced Government Hunter, Charlie Shuttleworth, failed to get the worst ones, except for some by shooting. Many times he spent a week with me on the Foghorn. Several times we had success by both going out with the sheep and, when they were pretty well settled and spread, Charlie would disappear and literally, become one of the sheep. I would then, very jauntily, walk around, showing myself in the open places and then walk back to camp for a late breakfast. (Charlie had his breakfast in his pocket.) Sure enough,

in about half an hour, I would hear a shot. After another half hour, Charlie would come in, "Well, I got one!" His second breakfast was well earned!

Very soon after 1080, with the coyote problem solved, we had our first cougar problem. The sheep had been here for forty years with never a cougar killing. Two reasons: the deer were plentiful, so plentiful in fact that they were almost a menace, in spite of the fact that almost everyone lived on venison year 'round, throughout the Depression. It wasn't hunting, you just went out and got a deer. We could barely afford to eat mutton. Why, a mutton was worth \$3.00 in Vancouver! Also, there was a \$40 bounty on cougars throughout the twenties, thirties and early forties. Believe me, if a cougar moved anywhere, someone was on it and usually trapped. Why, a man could winter his family if he were fortunate enough to get even a couple of cats. A great form of relief!

The killing started the same day, at home, when two rams were killed, and on the mountain, where Bill had a night killing at Axel's bed ground. It took Bill a while to tumble to it, or how many, because the kills were hidden under limby trees and thickets and the sheep were not spooked. Soon we were having day killings, with also a lynx killing problem, usually lambs, their heads always missing. (Real 'head hunters'.) Later, we also had two wolverine killers which Bill finally got.

The following spring, we were fortunate in having an abundance of 'wild' house cats around the ranch. Bill had two young pups and, every time he saw a cat, he put the pups on it and, when treed, he shot it out of the tree! Those happy pups! By season's end, he had "cat dogs". Too bad for the cougar, lynx and even wolverine. Through the ensuing years, in this way, Bill trained many top sheep-cat dogs, some of which would put any hound to shame, even to knowing which way a scent was leading. The problem was at least partly taken care of, but losses had been quite great and new cougars kept materializing from somewhere. The deer population had dropped and the cougar were hungry so we had many serious killings in spite of Bill and his dogs either thwarting it or nipping it in the bud. One bad killing at Allingham's in May happened when a cat killed 16 lambs and wounded 10 others during the night, quite near the camp. Bill's dogs knew nothing of it until the morning. (In later years, Bill had one dog which would wake him if a cat was near the bed ground.) His dog was on the scent, but the cat wouldn't 'tree'. Bill got Mrs. Pease, a near neighbour, often known as "Pistol Packin' Mama". Well, they followed that cat all day before finally getting a killing shot into it. It was missing one

front foot which was why it wouldn't 'tree', or couldn't. Mrs. Pease still has the hide where she now lives at Barriere.

The next devastating surprise around the corner was wolves in the high country. Again, they were getting hungry through an increase in numbers together with a shortage of game. They were migrating into our area for the first time in about 60 years. Reports indicate that wolves were plentiful, even in the valley, around 1905. There was also a complete absence of game, thanks to the wolves, so they rapidly disappeared about the time of the settlement increase here. It seems they may have even killed off all the fabulous population of caribou that roamed our high country a hundred years ago they who left horns and trails as evidence of their previous presence and numbers.

Bill managed to shoot some and always left baits behind him on leaving the area of killing. Also, the Government took some action, but the problem, to a lesser degree, is still with us. One particular season, Bill had wolves, grizzly and black bear killing all at the same time on Granite Mountain. Grizzly on the south slope, black bear on the north slope, and wolves on the high, open ridges. The latter appeared to cut off a group of a few lambs and slaughter them. The wonderful old Scott kept the bear off at night, with bear eventually taken care of but the wolves, no. We had to get out and move home early. One of those years, our predator loss tally approached 300 head! Another disastrous season.

It was during the thirties, starting early in the decade, that we had our first foot problems. The Scots shepherds called it foot rot, however, we now know that it was 'pussy foot' (pus-filled), 'big foot' and all its many other names. It was not serious and never epidemic. It was just a nuisance. The only known treatments were a mixture of pine tar and ground bluestone (copper sulphate), held on the foot with a bandage, or butter of antimony. I do not think that either did much good!

It is very interesting to note that, after the foot problem developed, we had no more outbreaks of 'sore mouth'. I cannot help but believe that there is a correlation between the two and that either one immunizes the flock against the other. Have not had this point corroborated by others or vets, but still believe it. It was also interesting that, in 1937, when Ted was herding on the mountain and we again, after an absence of seven years, mixed with us Hawkey Norris's flock of about 150 ewes. Within a few weeks about 25 percent of the Norris ewes were very lame, much worse than ours had ever been. This did pose a problem, particularly as being part

Suffolk they were quite happy to trot their way off alone. Ted called them Hawkey's Trotters because of their strange lame gait! Even a lame foot didn't slow those Suffolk-Oxfords down! They also didn't mind being left behind and staying out for days alone.

Another interesting thing: The previous fall, 1936, we had had quite a bad epidemic of pink eye, which had completely cleared up during the winter, with no known cases left. Ten days after mixing, the Norris sheep came down with it, so a mixture of blind and lame sheep really posed a problem. It looked like our flock were immunized but still had carriers. Believe me, we have not, and will never mix with an outside flock again.

During all the years we have only had one serious loss from lightning. This occurred at the end of August, 1947. Martin Sand was herding. He was not experienced in handling a large flock of sheep.

At the Axel Cabin camp, we had several different bed grounds, but only had a salt trough on the open, lower one, which was usually a fair weather bed ground. If the flock chose the higher one, they usually passed the lower one and salted on their way up the hill. On this particular stormy afternoon of rain and wind and fog, they came in on their high route, spread widely, and would have bedded well spread, all in shelter. Old Martin, however, foolishly had other plans for them! He had already put the salt out and, even though he saw and heard a thunderstorm coming, he dogged those sheep together into a tight little knot and tried to bring them down the open hill to the low bed ground by the cabin.

The sheep did not want to come. He got them about halfway down when the storm struck, where he walked off and left them. Well, those sheep started back up the hill and wrapped themselves in and around the first sheltered spot they came to. This consisted of three half-grown trees, spaced about fifteen feet apart. These trees had long limbs which touched the surrounding small trees, which as many sheep as possible had squeezed into. The lightning struck the tallest centre tree, but never reached the ground. It spread to the two other trees and out through all the limbs which, again, were touching the circle of smaller trees, thus connecting with the sheep that were under and among them together with all the sheep that were touching each other. It was almost a perfect circle, with every one killed instantly, some still standing up, rigid, some rigid and fallen sideways, some just slumped like they'd been shot. All had their eyes closed tightly. There were no marks or burns on any. The only evidence of the strike being a groove near the top of the one tree. The only way that I could count the death tally was to mark each with

a marking pencil as I counted. 111 in total, mostly ewes, seemed like the pick of the flock, including many characters and pets nearly 10 percent of the flock. It was fortunate that we had just made a large shipment of lambs to Vancouver a few days before. Question: Did the tree or the tightly bunched sheep attract the charge? There were other, much taller, trees close by.

Another problem, the carcasses. Tried to burn them. Failed. Tried to fence them with woven wire. That may have kept a few coyotes away, but not Mr. Grizzly! We had a trap, but, even though it had teeth, he pulled out of it three times. He must have been a big one because I had previously trapped a grizzly and other large bears. Martin finally rigged up a snare of half-inch cable, moored to a growing tree, six inches in diameter. He got him, but we never saw the tree, cable or bear again! He must have gone miles down into some jungle before getting hung up and perishing. Probably many other bears and some coyotes tasted mutton for the first time from that pile, which, in turn, caused problems later. Only twice since have we lost 3 and 6 head by lightning once in the valley and once on the mountain.

Lightning reminds me of an experience Ted had in '38. Both he and a number of sheep had taken shelter under a large, spreading tree in a violent thunderstorm. Suddenly, all the sheep ran out from under the tree. Says he to himself, "Perhaps I should get out too." He did. A few moments later, the tree was struck! Again, much of the foregoing illustrates the telepathy and feelings which are magnified by numbers in a flock unit of sheep.

### **Foot Rot**

As has been previously mentioned, we thought we had foot rot during the thirties. We certainly didn't. About the end of April 1964, there were suddenly a number of lame ewes, mostly yearlings that had lambed. We soon realized that this was something we had never seen before, Foot Rot! It seems we had imported, via De Kolver, from Hayward's, a carrier Suffolk ram that was not even lame at the time of purchase. This would be in November of '63. The disease was running rampant in the B.C. interior at this time. It was being aggravated and spread by the fact that Hayward's and Whispering Pines and others had commenced trucking their flocks to and from high range, etc. Seemingly, the trucks were, in many cases, not properly cleaned and disinfected. I believe that this disease really accelerated the decline and sealed the doom of the B.C. Interior range sheep business. A range sheep operation could not live with it, either it had to be licked, or go out of business. Well, it

was not easy to lick it on a large operation, and few did.

On looking back, in our case, it is surprising how long it took to get a real hold on the flock. We knew nothing about treatment, etc., at the start, actually thought antibiotics would help. We did some treatments, together with hoof trimming throughout the early summer and, on the high range it was not yet an impossible situation. Fortunately, however, it was fall before the real epidemic got going. I was looking after the flock in October at Allingham's. On that firm old sod, together with fairly dry weather, it suddenly, really took off.

Jacqueline was home that fall, having finished school. She and I started treating. We ran the sheep through a cut gate every morning, cutting out all the lame sheep, treating, trimming and marking them. It spread faster than we could treat, even by working long into the dark with a gas lantern. That fall and winter was a nightmare. We still did not know how to deal with it. During early winter, the Provincial Vet came to show us how to trim feet and how to treat. He did not show us much except how not to trim feet. Eight of our best ewes bled to death after our first afternoon of trimming! Jacqueline cried with grief! He also quarantined us, very helpful! We were naturally isolated anyway, together with the fact, found out later, that sheep could not infect cattle. Cattle foot rot is more like pussy foot rot and is curable with antibiotics. The Vet did not seem to know the difference!

Well, we worked all through that fall, winter and spring, keeping it reasonably under control. In February, the B.C. Sheep Breeders brought in an expert from the US to speak on foot rot at the Sheepbreeder's Conference. We all learned a lot from him. He was a range man, a Vet, who had licked foot rot in his flocks. We ourselves started foot bathing in copper sulphate. We trimmed everything during the March tagging, with each ewe standing in bluestone (copper sulphate) afterwards for at least a minute, and segregated all infected individuals, there were many.

We could not, however, have two bunches for lambing. There was not room, together with too many losses due to neglect. So, I decided to treat and foot-soak every ewe as she and her lambs were turned out of the pens and then segregate all active infections. It was killing work and did not achieve our hope.

So the spring went. Everything that could walk went to the Mountain, where, again, it spread rampantly. There was a time when Bill had three flocks of sheep: The lead, who were not lame, the middle, who were lame, and the tail end who could not walk at all and

who never got far from the bed-ground, but, remarkably, made a living. How Bill kept track of them all and kept the killing down, I will never know. Somehow, we got most of the flock home in the fall. By this time, some of the lambs were becoming infected. It was at this time that we finally, really, went at it, fully realizing that we had to beat it or go out of business.

The best few fat lambs and old ewes were instantly sold to the packers. All the feeders were shipped out to Phillip Hope's feed lot at Fort Langley. Phillip had so much foot rot from Hayward's and Whispering Pines that he did not care how much more came in. Amazingly, it did not bother the lambs too much in his huge, dry feeding barn, even though, at that time, he had not yet constructed his slatted floors.

From then until the following lambing, we ran three bunches of ewes, even through lambing. There was a sound bunch, and an infected bunch, together with a presumed cured lot, which were held for at least thirty days before being allowed back into the sound bunch. The incurables were killed or muttoned.

All these three bunches had to be worked over every week, with complete inspection, trimming and foot-bathing in bluestone solution or formaldehyde. We used both as each had its good points. We bought hundreds and hundreds of pounds of copper sulphate and gallons and gallons of formaldehyde. On one occasion, the formalin solution gave me a bad attack of asthma from the fumes, the only asthma attack that I ever had. It was fortunate that Ted was not here! Often got an eyeful of bluestone from a splash, when I would have to come to the house and get Alice to wash my eyes out. About the only time I got to the house!

Well I trimmed and treated and foot-soaked all that fall and winter, both day and night. At night, with the light of a gas lantern, went through many mantles and globes! Again, we checked, trimmed and soaked everything at tagging time, more thoroughly than ever. MacDougal, from McClure, came and helped me. He had already been put out of business by foot rot. He and I managed to trim, inspect and soak every sheep as fast as Len Harvey could tag. (We were not yet vaccinating for intertoxemia, which helped.) Joe Moore had turned up to help us also. I think Alfred Sam and Bill were doing the hay hauling and feeding during tagging. Jacqueline was away in England that year, but June and Ian were very helpful when out of school.

So the battle raged. Lambing again. Still foot rot. Again I trimmed and treated everything as it went out. That was a fast lambing. For a few days, I was still turning out the day's drop at 3 AM, and still only 20 pens

ahead of Bill, who was the night man. They were coming in nearly as fast as I could treat and turn them out.

I went to bed. By daylight it was snowing hard, about seven inches. Bill had no pens left. Joe Moore had four sets of twins in the bunk house together with the chicken house full. Bill had about twenty lambed ewes on the ground, with others in the night corral and no place to isolate them.

Bill met me in the pens. "Jack", he said, "don't try and feed grain this morning. Open all the gates and start spreading the morning feed of hay. The drop bunch will slowly start drifting through to the day ground. The ewes with lambs will stay behind and I'll watch and try to keep the lambs from getting mixed." It worked out. Bill was so wise! Meanwhile, young June was suckling, moving and segregating twins into every conceivable, isolated, sheltered place.

Meanwhile, I managed to clear one little field of older lambs, so turned out every possible single ewe and lamb without checking, earmarking or foot treatment about forty ewes. We slowly got them all penned. Did not lose a lamb, this mainly thanks to June, who never stopped suckling and keeping twins all in order, thus preventing mix-ups with consequent 'bumming'. It was some lambing rush for more than a hundred lambed in that 24 hours! It was days before I got that field of forty singles checked over. How fortunate that the storm was snow, with no wind. If it had been a heavy, cold rain with wind, our losses would have been great. Strangely, Jacqueline was helping lamb a flock of Swaledales in England at that same date, April 14th. They also had seven inches of snow on their peak lambing day.

By the end of lambing, foot rot seemed to be on the wane, had only about a half dozen active cases in isolation, with scarcely a new case throughout the spring and early summer. We went to the high range without a lame sheep. Joy and glee like a Thanksgiving possessed us all!

On my second camptending trip to Bill and the sheep, about the end of July, Lo and behold! Lame sheep only about twenty-five head. Next morning, I followed the band with all my equipment and managed to catch most of them. It was foot rot, though not quite typical or as severe as we had seen. I came home in the depths of despair, with a vague plan developing in my mind to pack up sufficient picket fencing and material for a foot bath, etc., on a clean, hard meadow near the head of Steele Creek.

Soon after reaching home, we had a visit from our old friend, George Manning, who also had a friend

with him from the Okanagan, an amazing old lady, very devout and close to the Lord. During the evening, visiting and conversing, the conversation including our grave problem, she said, "Let us all pray about it. I do not believe the Lord wants to see sick and suffering animals, or that He wants you all to go out of the sheep business." So she led us in prayer that evening. The most forceful, meaningful and amazing prayer that I had ever witnessed. Thus another day ended.

On the next camptending trip a miracle! No lame sheep! Bill in great spirits and all well with the flock. We had one more case that fall, whom I kept isolated for ages. She turned into the old character, "Greedy Gob", by the time she was well! Greedy became the matriarch of the flock, a self-made pet and leader, though never naughty! Her only known daughter, "Greedy the Second", was killed by a wolf last summer. However, we hope there is a granddaughter among the ewe lambs this year. Also, we did keep a ram from Greedy the First or Second, so the line will carry on.

So ended the three year battle. Believe that I aged ten years during each of those years and cannot boast that I won the battle. It was just a miracle, with some aid from myself, the family, and many others.

After thoughts were, at the time, "everything is so easy now. Simple. No problems, etc., etc." Anything can be achieved and accomplished without "Foot Rot". Afflictions, setbacks, tribulations, together with the many extremes of life are what help one to appreciate the present and be thankful. We are, as almost always, still a happy family, and still in the sheep business, however, we must not allow ourselves to become complacent.

### **Living With the River**



During the early years, prior to bridges over the North Thompson (Birch Island, 1937; Vavenby, 1949), we had many hazardous river crossings both by ice and by ferry. It seemed that, in many cases, it became imperative to cross the sheep over the river at the most inauspicious times as far as the river was concerned. March, coming home for lambing when the ice was so rotten you could almost push a pole through it. When, if you brought the empty feeding sleigh across, you parted the team, attaching one horse to the end of the sleigh tongue with a "Tom Fool" knot, so you could yank it free instantly if the horse started to break through. June, coming home enroute to the high country, with the river in peak high water with drift wood running so thick you could hardly dodge it between or outside the pontoons with the ferry sailing like a ship in a tide rip in Seymour Narrows with the road under water on our side so the sheep had to jump and wade to the shore. There was a basket with three or more tons of rock in the top of the tower which held the cable in tension and cushioned the strain. In November or December with mush ice running so thick you wondered if you could keep it moving between the pontoons, or whether ice buildup both on the ferry and the shore would be too great to enable it to land. How we worked, chopping, shovelling, polling, or pulling on the rope which was strung across the river above the prows of the pontoons for this purpose for speeding the progress of the ferry during low water, when there was insufficient current to propel the ferry across at a decent speed, the motive power being only the speed of the current combined with the angle of the pontoons.

Speaking of speed, I remember my father, alone with the ferryman, crossing 1400 head in just 50 minutes. This was in June 1934. The river was high, but had dropped for a day; no driftwood, but a fast current; about 150 head to the trip, including lambs. Later, I remember putting 125 sheared, dry yearlings on. We nearly sank it!

Once, in the early thirties, we did sink it during a fall crossing, partly due to overload and partly to a leaking pontoon. The weight put one pontoon down below a seam

where the caulking had fallen out during the dry summer so it took water fast. Got the sheep over and off, however, it sank on the return trip, just as it landed. So, we had half the flock on one side and the other half on the far side. It took two or three days to get it floating again. At least on our side there was room to work on it which would be another story in itself. Everyone in the community had a different opinion as to how to do it! Most fortunate that it was fall, with no young lambs parted from their mothers.

Ferrymen were an unusual breed of men, some notable, some notorious, with nearly all having a great weakness for liquor! Some were very daring when under the influence, some very cautious. Whether the job drove them to drink or other circumstances, who knows. Anyway, one never knew for sure who would be running the ferry on a particular day. If someone of the community crossed and realized that the ferryman was rapidly going out of commission he would stay and operate it for the balance of the day, or until someone else, with more time to spare could take over. If no one could stay, the last one to leave would make sure that the rowboat was left on one side of the river and the ferry on the other so no one would be stuck for an emergency crossing. This would particularly, or more likely, happen during or after holidays or someone's birthday!

Sometimes the road foreman, who in some cases, had the same weakness, would plan to be in Vavenby with part of his crew to celebrate a long weekend at the Ferry House (nearly all ferrymen were bachelors). The result could be imagined!

I remember one fall evening, Riley was taking our first horned Rambouillet rams across to the ewes which were at Allingham's. Well, Hughey, who "could handle any amount", navigated the ferry, the rams rushed off and up the grade on the run. Hughey's half-brother, Dan, the road foreman, happened to choose that moment to weave his way out of the ferry house to relieve himself. Suddenly, he was surrounded in the dark and knocked over by about twenty ghastly looking horned monsters. He shrieked, "Hughey, Hughey. It's the beasties. It's the beasties, and they're all after me!" Poor Dan, he was in a bad way. The ferryhouse was often known as "The Den of Iniquity". You know it had a rather good effect on many of the younger generation. We were shown the consequences of liquor at a young and impressionable age!

My father told me of once in early times, crossing the sheep over presumably good thick solid ice in cold weather. There was a loud cracking sound which bunched the sheep on a ridge. Then, suddenly, a circle of about

fifty sheep dropped down out of sight. On inspection, they were found to be down about four feet, floating on a partly submerged raft of ice. They were able to lift them all out with no loss. Ice ridges can be dangerous, particularly in very cold weather when the ice is brittle, because some are not touching the water and so are, in a sense, hollow, with no support. A similar thing happened when Madeline's little horse, Mickey, with a light cutter behind him, suddenly dropped out of sight and was successfully lifted out.

Once, in very early times, father was travelling the river on snow shoes. He suddenly dropped through. Luckily (or I would not be here now, writing this!), he was carrying a pole, which was a rule when on ice, travelling an unmarked trail. The swift current, combined with the flowing mush ice grabbed his snow shoes and nearly pulled him under, however, the pole saved him, but, even in an upright position, he was not strong enough to pull himself up. He stayed calm as he always did and considered awhile as to where he was and what to do. The water might not be too deep at that spot, so, he pushed himself straight down. Sure enough, his snow shoes struck bottom and held. He then took out his pocket knife, reached down under the water and cut off his snow shoes. He could then easily lift himself out. The temperature was -40. He often said that when he first dropped in it was the first time the North Thompson had ever felt warm! He was about two miles from home, but made it back before freezing, minus his snow shoes, of course!

During the days before the bridge, it was often imperative to cross the river, "Come Hell or High Water", or ice jams, or thick mush ice, in a boat. We lived on the 'wrong' side of the river; the Store, phone, Post Office, railway, and, often, sheep on the far side, so we crossed, by our own boat, in extreme high water or thick mush ice, running in the late fall; or on ice, often shortly after the jammed ice had stopped moving. Most of my generation learned to be proficient with pole and paddle together with how safely to cross treacherous ice; how to make a marked foot path or an ice road over the frozen, rough, jammed ice of the river.

Once, father was in process of slowly exploring his way across, working his way from one solid ice cake to another. He had heard a little crackling and groaning. On looking up, suddenly the shore was moving to all appearances! He, himself, and the ice were away! Obviously, he made it to shore, but it was a close shave, a crevasse of open water could have appeared under him at any moment.

On looking back, I realize the same thing could

have happened to myself on several occasions, but it never did. One such occasion was on the 28th of December, 1942. I had spent Christmas with Alice and her family in Vancouver. We came home by early morning train to Vavenby, hoping to find an ice crossing between home and Peavine. There was ice, but it was bad. I found two poles and two boards. It took more than an hour to work our way across, each moving one at a time and always on a board, tossing her suitcase to one another, weaving this way and that, looking for firmer ice, but there was none. Fortunately, she was not scared and kept calm, with (I hope, justified) complete trust in my carefulness and judgement. Oh! The nerve, the thrill of adventure; determination, together with the optimism to life unfolding ahead, when nothing seems impossible or too hard. Youth has flown and now things have nearly all changed. Only the first and final half life of the second generation here will know the real challenge of survival, leadership and accomplishment, together with the excitement of just living and doing.

While I was enjoying Christmas with Alice in Vancouver, Ted was alone at home with the sheep to care for. He ran out of grazing here and no way of crossing the sheep over the river, no ferry, no ice. So, alone, he had to trail the sheep the 17 miles around by the Birch Island road bridge to Allingham's, where some grazing was left and where we would start feeding hay sometime in early January. He had to leave Dora and their young family alone, also Mother and Unky home alone at the old place. He did not get home for days, even at night no crossing. After Alice left for her course in paediatrics at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital, I took over the sheep again. It was along, dreary winter. We were, as it turned out, not able to be together again for two years, as she went directly from Toronto to join the Grenfell Mission on the northern coast of Newfoundland.

There have been, unbelievably, only two human casualties to the river right here at Vavenby. First, a young man, Bob Graham, crossing in the dead of night, in 1930, in the ferry boat. It leaked and he jumped out to save the others and was never seen again. Must have hit his head on a rock as they had got far downstream to the beginning of a rapid. None of them were skilled boatmen. The second was young Frank Garten, who was helping us during March 1941. Frank was a most unusual person both notable and notorious! If he needed something, he would steal it, yet he would have given you his last shirt off his own back. Had his own

strange code of honesty. During the many times he had helped us, he had proved reliable. He weighed barely over 100 pounds, but could carry twice his own weight was a fabulous axeman and walker. He helped me several times with the spring herding. He could talk through his hat, yet the most fantastic tale or experience might turn out to be true! He had tried to join the army, but was turned down for lack of weight and general physique. What a Commando he would have made! He was as quick as lightning, knew no fear and was a crack shot.

On this particular day in late March, Frank had taken our team and wagon across on the ice road at the ferry crossing to deliver a cow to a neighbour. The ice was fine in the forenoon after a cold night. Frank was delayed on the far side and also had to pick up some freight, a drum of coal oil and several hundred pounds of salt, a fair load. By mid-afternoon, with sun and a Chinook wind, the crossing was bad. The ferryman and several others told him it was not safe, or rather, impossible, for a team to cross. Well, Frank had spent his life doing the impossible and the very fact that he was told he couldn't, spurred him on. It was impossible. Team, wagon and Frank went down. The last that was seen of him was on the ice in front of the horses, trying to help them up onto more solid ice. There was none. He soon was pulled down under the horses and never seen again.

It looked hopeless for the team, who were still attached to the loaded wagon. One bystander left to look for a gun to kill the poor horses who were suffering. Fortunately, no gun was found. Another bystander, lying on a board, managed to reach over and cut the top hame straps of the harness, which eventually freed the horses. However, it still looked hopeless, yet, once they were free of harness and wagon, the horses, by breaking rotten ice ahead of them, were able to work their way a hundred yards downstream to where the water was shallower and where they were able, presumably, to jump up onto more solid ice and reach the shore. I met them on the road some hours later, galloping homeward. We had, by then, got wind of the tragedy.

Some sequels: Frank had recently taken out a small life insurance policy a month before! His mother eventually received it. We retrieved the wagon and harness some days later and the drum rolled up on our own beach a few weeks later! It had rolled down the bottom of the river for three miles, finally landing at its destination.



### **An After Thought on ... the river.**

It happened on my birthday, February 4th, 1946. The sheep were over at Peavine on hay. Ted decided that I should have a day off from looking after the sheep. I thoroughly enjoyed that day at home with Allie.

After Ted had fed the noon feed, Bob Metcalfe, who was then partner with Alfred Graffunder (Bob and Hilda were living in Aunty's cabin) borrowed our feeding team to haul himself some firewood during the early afternoon. Meanwhile, Alfred and his brothers and, I think, Tommy Tressing, had just completed some logging on our side of the river and were taking their big team back across to Peavine. Alfred got delayed and the others with the team forgot that they were supposed to part the horses and lead them separately over the crossing, as Alfred did not trust the ice. Well, both big horses went through in the middle of the river. Just then, Bob comes along the road on the far side with our team, with his load of wood. He unhitches the team and doubletrees, grabs a chain and heads onto the ice to pull the horses out. The result four horses in the river and four people wondering what to do. Alfred, mean while, arrives on the scene, takes in the situation at a glance, runs up to the Jones house where Ted is living, gets Ted and our bigger team which was fortunately nearby.

They also quickly found our haying cable, etc., and rig things so that our team could be on the shore to pull the drowning horses out of the river. Buck and Baldy, were unable to sweat during the following summer. The hours in the cold water must have done something to their hide, sweat glands and pores.

All went well and as planned, except that one of our team, "Spike", died of hypothermia a few minutes after being pulled out. He was a quite well-bred, younger horse, with very short hair, so it was all too much for him. The others had no ill effects. Our old Star the First, part cayuse, who must have been at least twenty, seemed better for the winter swim. So, we inherited Thoma from Alfred. Star and Thoma were our feeding team for years to come. It was fortunate that both Ted and Alfred were available for they are both calm and clear thinking rocks in any emergency.

### **Our Own Little Range Wars.**

To go back in time to our early days of sheep here, there was a great deal of opposition from the few cattle owners in the immediate area. This would be in the late teens and early twenties. On looking back, I

cannot say that I altogether blame them for this.

There was quite a vast area of, at that time, very good low range, extending from Raft River to Vavenby, about ten miles of very steep, open, bunch grass side-hills together with many verdant benches, semi-open country. Now, as can be imagined, the few cattle still grazing the area, McCorvie's and Pridgeon's cattle rapidly diminishing, and Jones's numbers not being very great as yet, were not utilizing the steep country to any advantage. When T.P. McKenzie, our first grazing commissioner, first looked at it, he said, "Much better for sheep than cattle. It will have an important place and be good for a sheep operation."

To go back to the cattle, the main breed at that time was Shorthorn. I am told that they are not the best climbers, though it seems that at McCorvie's and Pridgeon's they had acclimatized to it and had actually gone partly wild during early times, even wintering out possibly reaching a number of 400 or more head. We have been told that, when Pat Burns established his small slaughtering places at Peavine and Raft River, during railway construction, he planned on 100 head, but ended up rounding up 400. And there must have been many left as it is mentioned in one of my father's mid-twenties diaries that he was very busy shipping out McCorvie's cattle, presumably almost the last of them. Poor McCorvie, he, by then had had to be taken away to the asylum at Essondale, where he soon died. Old Mrs. McCorvie and Pridgeon were penniless and helpless without Archie McCorvie. They were losing most of their land through various previous foreclosing mortgages, had no winter feed put up, so there was nothing else for it! (McCorvie must have been quite elderly by this time. He had been a very hard worker. Pridgeon was older and had, I believe, never taken much responsibility, worry, or worked very hard. Pridgeon and Mrs. McCorvie were also the spenders, I think.)

To go back again, there were a number of years when McCorvie, Pridgeon, Jones and W.E. Noble, our first Forest Ranger, who became known at that time by our family, as "the Big Four", decided to put us out of the sheep business by many devious means, including putting us off the low range. The latter did not succeed, partly for two reasons: First, The grazing department favoured the sheep together with the fact that cattle numbers were down, so the range was not being fully utilized. Second, Dad had, during this time, been able to get title to four and a half quarter sections of land on this area, which gave us a good foothold, together with our own spots for sheep camps. We were also going to the higher levels during summer, where cattle had

never, or seldom, been. Thus the cattle would still have sufficient low summer range.

There was also a great deal of controversy over fencing until it was proved, at that time (which surprises me now), that it was the responsibility of land owners to fence the sheep out. Jones even succeeded in getting the government to supply him with nearly a mile of good, high, woven wire to fence the long lane that led from the old ferry landing up to the new road its present location. Some of the wire is still in use on the place today.

However, there was obviously a great deal of bad feelings, some of which were justified. We know now that the sheep were very hard on patches of that piece of range and shortened its useful life. Dad did not know, or was slow to realize, that some areas should not be used between the first thaw in February and the first of June, if bunch grass was to seed and maintain itself on those steep side-hills. One good thing the sheep did was to eat off the old growth of bunch grass during the fall and early winter; also, they had the effect of terracing the side-hills, as sheep graze and make their trails along almost perfect contour lines. I well remember at one time seeing high, healthy bunch grass in contour lines between the narrow trails. I believe this terracing effect also helped gather and conserve the limited moisture of the dryland areas.

It should also be mentioned that this range also had quite a number of semi-wild horses the year around. Everybody and his brother who owned a horse or horses, when not in use, turned them out on the range until needed, when, usually a large portion of them could not be caught. We (Madeline) caught the last "Old Campbell" mare, Flip, during the early thirties and Alfred Graffunder caught the last McCorvie horse, "Tipperary" in the mid-thirties. There were many more. Anyway, it seems that particularly horse, and cattle to a lesser degree, are more inclined to graze up and down a hillside, rather than laterally as sheep do.

Regarding the several privately owned quarters on this area during the land boom of about 1913, almost every quarter section was filed on by someone. The most impossible places for farming, some even with no domestic water, let alone irrigation. (I believe the requirements for a 'homestead' were 160 acres, a quarter section or half a mile square, with at least four acres of reasonably flat and arable land included!)

When many of these people enlisted for World War I, they received their "Crown Grant", as they would not be present to do the necessary improvements. Some of these properties belonged to friends, some were taken in lieu of old store bills, and one was a trade. The

Garten place, Lot 3865, was traded by Chester Garten for father's first pre-emption, "Abberley", just north of Allingham's. The Garten family made a very good place of this, later taking over other adjacent lands during the ensuing twenty years. Still later, the Pease family took over this land, sight unseen, in May 1939.

### **Friends and Neighbours Through the Years**

There were bad feelings at times and neighbours being 'at outs', with some not on speaking terms: Both my father and mother and great uncle Finley just refused to be at outs with anyone. They were so good and helpful to everyone around them. Father was responsible for organizing the Upper North Thompson Livestock Association in 1916, together with the first school, in 1917. Uncle practically never refused anyone credit at the store. Mother and father visited and helped anyone who was sick or hurt. Mother had some first aid training and father was a rock that people came to for help and advice in times of need. It was father who took, and accompanied, several old timers, by early trains, on what often proved to be their last, one-way, trip to Kamloops for medical attention. How they made time for this one will never know. They just did, as so many did in pioneering communities. (It must here be added that, at a later time, both brother Ted and my Alice carried on this tradition of selfless help to others. Ted had Dora, he had myself, with the sheep, Alice had myself (not always available) and she had great encouragement and help from Ted, many times.

Many things helped father at that time. He had some great neighbours. He had taken a course in "Pelmanism", by correspondence a course in mind and memory training. He had an unbelievably marvellous helpmate in our mother. He had his uncle looking after the store and also after all the accounts and bookkeeping, etc., for the ranch operation. I think he was also a good financial adviser at times and also definitely had a bearing on the firm of Moilliet and Finley establishing a very good and reliable business name. (Uncle had worked in banks during his early years.) They also had strong Christian faith, together with a background of strong character, with an almost perfect sense of right and wrong. Uncle, though wonderful in his way, would not have amounted to much without my father's help and influence during the last half of his life. Anyway, the three made a great team. Lastly, he had Riley with the sheep, year round, through most of this time.

Speaking of Riley again reminds me of the little

stories he told me - first, regarding Dad and Jones. Jones had not spoken to my father for some time. They met on the road, both afoot, so could not avoid meeting. They stood facing each other for a few moments. Dad said, "Henry, I don't know about you, but I am just not man enough to carry on like this." Jones said, "TAM, I'm not either." They shook hands and so ended another falling out.

Secondly, Riley told of a time when some sheep had split off on the low range. He found them grazing beside Mrs. McCorvie's house. Mrs. McCorvie still had two cows which grazed near at hand. She burst out the door, lit into Riley, and gave him a real talking to about how the sheep were starving her cattle (no fences left). "Well now, say," says Riley, "Mrs. McCorvie, what do you expect when you're dealing with a damned son of a B. like TAM?" Mrs. McCorvie burst into tears and headed into her house. She never again said a word to Riley when ever he collected strays near her house ever after, in fact, would invite him in for a cup of tea! You see, the McCorvies owed us about \$300 on an ancient store bill, which had been written off. That's about \$6,000 today!

To get back to Jones once more. Some time in the early twenties, he became very ill at home, in fact was near death. Father rigged up a stretcher from an old single bed, loaded him in the sleigh, and took him across the ice to the railway. The trains were still stopping at Peavine, Old Vavenby, at that time. It was a night train expected. As usual, it was late. The temperature was 30 below (Fahrenheit). Jones had to be got into shelter, so, into McCorvie's they had to go, but the stretcher was too wide for the door. Now Jones weighed about 250 pounds, the whole 6 feet 4 inches of him and was immobile. By taking the door jamb off, they squeezed him through and all got warmed up while someone stayed on the railway track to flag the train, which finally came about 3 AM. Jones was carried out and thrust into the baggage car together with TAM, who accompanied him and got him to the Kamloops Hospital. The baggage cars were fairly comfortable, with hot coal heaters and several arm chairs. Jones recovered and lived until January 1933, when, at age 78, TAM again took him to Kamloops on his last trip.

Again, this was rather a nerve racking trip. Cold weather, and it was late afternoon before TAM and Mrs. Jones were able to convince and talk Jones into going into the hospital. There were several unexpected delays, so it would be a close shave to catch the 7 o'clock passenger train at Birch Island, seven miles on a rather poor sleigh road. Also Jones's man, Jack Klassen, had

gone to Birch Island earlier in the day to pick up a load of freight and had not yet returned, so there was a possibility of meeting him on the Big Hill, where even two sleighs could not pass. So, sister Madeline rode ahead, firstly, to stop Jack from starting down the hill and, secondly, to try to hold the train at Birch Island if they were late. They were late. Fortunately, by galloping the team unmercifully, they just managed to get over the east crossing ahead of the train, which they pursued for the mile to the station. Ours was not normally a fast team, particularly when going away from home late in the day. The train waited and, again TAM and his patient got safely away.

A little sequel to this trip. Our team was looked after that night by a friend, Nester Johnson, in his warm stable at Birch Island. He brought them home for us the next day, a Sunday. About a mile from home, the shoeing on one runner ripped off, peeling back and making a solid roughlock! How providence looks after those who are trying and helping!

It should also be mentioned that many sick or injured people were taken to Kamloops in the cabooses of freight trains, a rough, slow trip, though, in some ways, a comfortable one. If I remember rightly, this required a first class ticket for both patient and attendant, together with the signing of a contract absolving the railway from all responsibility of safety, etc.

The last little conflict developed in 1938, when Ted and I decided to take the flock into Mad River valley for the early summer grazing at the invitation of Harbin, the only farmer there, who also had a small flock. We gave little thought of needing permission from the Forestry or the Stock Association so we simply trailed in finding good feed on the way.

Well, we had a few good days there in the valley, but not long enough to prove it. Ted came out to get horses and supplies one day and found a letter from Noble nailed to a tree at the trail entrance, telling us that every day that we and the sheep remained in that valley was a separate trespass, with dire consequences! It seems that Mad River Valley had, overnight, become a designated cattle range, and sheep would be the end of it! No cattle, with the exception of Harbin's milk cows, had ever been in there! We trailed back out.

This all caused a lot of bad feeling on both sides. We did, with

a great deal of difficulty, get permission, with many stipulations, to go there the following year. Upon which, we found it was not really worth going to anyway, particularly as the hoped for high range beyond proved to be not worth opening up, after a great deal of exploration. We did, however, go in there a few more times after Harbin stopped farming. We grazed his place, about sixty acres of good sod, which made a good centre for early June grazing. Our new helper, Roger de Vogt, bought the Harbin place during the early fifties. After that, we grazed our way up the North Thompson Valley as far as Wire Cache for a few years, mainly following the oil pipeline right of way. There was no traffic on the road and the feed was very good in places. We also rented a few old, abandoned fields. This all filled our needs for a few years with little or no opposition.

The next and only other real problem has been when Harp Mountain was taken from us in 1962, just as we were needing it most. We fought it and failed. The failure in this has turned out to be a blessing, as now all is working out well, summer-range-wise.

It should also be remembered that we grazed our way up the Clearwater Valley during the springs of 1928 and '29. This was three years after the big fire. This received a great deal of opposition at the time. The feed was good, no livestock there, so it was being wasted. Our plan was to open up the high range on Trophy or Battle Mountain. Perhaps if we had not had Allingham's Oxfords or Norris's Suffolks, combined with our Cheviots, we would have succeeded. Ted, Riley, and others tried to cut trail and herd sheep at the same time. It didn't work out! Years later, Heron Brothers planned to use that high range, but never quite made it.



## Allingham's Legacy - Our Sheep Graze

Frank Allingham was born in England on Christmas Day 1848. After being educated for the Priesthood, realizing he had not sufficient belief, he immigrated to Canada.

Rumour has it that he took up land in the N.W. Territory (now Saskatchewan). During a notorious winter, he ran out of heating fuel. Leaving his wife and baby with sufficient heat for a day or two, he set out with the team and sleigh and became lost in a blizzard for three days. On returning home with some wood, he found his wife and child frozen to death. He then headed east, intending to return to England. He missed his boat, however, and in great anger, and probably out loud, he said, "Dammit, I won't go!" So, he boarded one of the first C.P.R. through trains heading for Kamloops, B.C.

Soon, thereafter, with a horse and pack, he headed north on the trail up the North Thompson Valley, partly because of a rumour of a rich ore showing in Mad River Valley, about 110 miles north. However, he found something that excited him more. At one of his night camps, about two miles northeast of where Vavenby is today, he found himself to be in a little paradise, situated on a gently sloping glacial bench of some semi-open park land, with a small creek running through it. He grabbed his shovel and, after some exploring, discovered it had "damn fine soil". And so began the development of Bella Vista Farm.

The terrain slopes slightly to the south and east, with rolling light slopes in other directions. The tree cover, consisting of solitary large Douglas-fir, tall, slender jack pine with a cluster of limbs at their crest and deciduous; light aspen, Saskatoon, chokecherry, thorn apple and hazelnut. I expect there would have been Peavine and vetch, with many other thorbies. The soil of the central eighty acres is mostly very dark on top of white-ish to very yellow clay. The soil of the more distant outreaches becomes gradually lighter with very fine sand mixed in. Outreaches still contain some dry land plants; bergamot and wormwood. There are absolutely no rocks, except on the glacial ridges.

Precipitation at Vavenby, from 1913 to 1933 averaged 14 inches. Now the eighty year average has climbed to 16 inches. However, we believe there were wetter periods during the 1890's. Winter snow depth, on long average, is about 12 inches, but can

vary from 15 inches to nil. Irrigation is limited to the month of May. All irrigation is accomplished by small ditches, mostly on contour. Still smaller ditches are put in with a tractor and a two-way mounted plow. One picks up on escaping seepage, or a little stream which has done its work and contours it, (the water sets the needed fall), to another hump or light slope. One drives slowly along, setting the grade as the water follows, being careful not to back up on sod that is already moist, as you may drop through. That sod will stand one pass only, even though four inches thick. Some of this sod has not been disturbed in one hundred years and some has never been broken. Irrigation is really mainly sub and seepage; moisture moving up to 150 yards in a week.

As with many naturally open areas, one can picture that the initial land clearing was comparatively fairly easily accomplished with axe, fire and horse with a small walking plow. Allingham probably had help from Indians, particularly on his two miles (at least) of poplar and jack pine snake rail fences, as well as many cross fences surrounding square and oblong fields, many of the fences turning into hedges. The remains of the rails have now long joined the soil. The larger, older trees are dying, or have blown down.

It would seem that Allingham sowed about every seed that he knew about or could obtain and thankfully nothing that he should not have; old varieties of orchard, rye grass, blue grasses timothy, red top, fescue, of course brome and couch grass and a few clovers, which probably brought black medic (trefoil). It is very noticeable that brome and couch grass stay well in the minority where you do no cultivation, however, with excessive manure on the surface of an old sod it does encourage them. There was also a strange little plant of the plantain family (I believe known as rat tail in England) which sheep have a great liking for. Also, there was rhubarb and asparagus, together with a few apple trees and a giant dandelion designed for spinach and salad for man or beast. His livestock consisted of a few horses, cows, chickens and Belgian hares. His main early production being hay, oats and rye; the latter straw was used for thatching. Hay was all cut with a scythe and oats were thrashed with a flail. His oats became famous. He sold a great deal of feed to passing pack trains and did some trading. (He would not have obtained his small horse drawn mower, 8 foot rake etc. until 1911 with the first steam boat,

however, this may have taken place in the mid-90's when a steamer is reported to have made a trip.)

Allingham's had no facilities for overnight stays and did not particularly welcome people too close, unless they were desperate. One such case was when the notorious starving "Pickle Survey" reached his farm, from away up the valley, sometime around 1900. These men having run out of food supplies were existing on flour and pickles and were in desperate need of food when they arrived at Allingham's door. Allingham made a large stew from several of his rabbits but cautioned them to only take a little of the broth, because of the condition they were in. Sadly, they didn't all heed his advice and one man actually died and some others became seriously ill from overeating.

During the very early 1920's, Allingham obtained one hundred Oxford ewes, shipped in by railway. They thrived on his rougher slashed and burned pastures, thinning and keeping at bay, deciduous growth. Soon, in his seventies, he became unable to cope with the farm duties. He sold his sheep and invited my father to put the hay up on shares and rent spring and fall grazing for our flock of five hundred ewes.

Our tenure was often precarious. Amongst other things, he accused our sheep of "mortaring" up his soil and wished them to be fed and bedded away from his best hay land. There was some merit in this, perhaps, as there often was too much manure in one place for too long. In 1928 Allingham suffered a stroke and we obtained a five year lease for \$500 per year; the price of lamb being 13 cents a pound. My father, however, could not make himself drive a hard bargain with what seemed to be a dying man and fortunately put a clause in, saying that if he succumbed, we would pay half as much to the estate. Following this he immediately began to improve in health.

Prices dropped to seven cents in 1930 and then five cents in 1931, together with the drought beginning in 1930, when the whole place only produced ten tons of hay, but always a little spring and fall grazing. Meanwhile, our flock had also declined to four hundred head through a few destructive losses. With quick response to a small amount of moisture, it was at this time that my brother Ted panned some of the soil and sods and found it to contain quantities of viable clover and even grass seeds, just waiting for conditions to improve, which they periodically always do. This

remains true in present times. One would think that some areas had suddenly been cultivated and re-seeded; blocks of alsike and dutch clover here and there and a crooked section of new plants of short grasses with black medic, etc.

We finally made an advantageous deal for the purchase of the property in 1937. However, Allingham went back on his word and proposed a much less attractive alternative. Fortunately, he was never able to sign this and the first deal eventually went through as originally planned.

After my father's early death in 1935, at age 52, my elder brother Ted returned to the ranch headquarters and I, at age 17, decided to take over most of the shepherding year round. I had not had much formal schooling, but had been taught by example to read, think, have enthusiasm and to look ahead. Ted, nine years my senior, instilled the thoughts of genes, improvements through selection and the acclimatization of both animals and plants. So, we carried on as a team. Of course, in my early times as a shepherd, I thought that I knew it all. It takes ten years to realize that you don't really know, then you begin to learn. I did take advantage of some of the still existing cross fences to facilitate rotational grazing. However, we soon gave this up and treated the area more as a small range, particularly as the flock increased to 700-800-1000 and last to 1250 ewes at present.

Allingham's was really replacing our low range, which was rapidly disappearing through conifer tree growth, as little spring burning was allowed to keep it in the aspen/thorbe/grass balance. We soon almost discontinued making hay on the area and just made hay on the home place; purchasing what extra we needed. Not mowing was somewhat detrimental, as there was an increase of foxtail, thistles and sedges. Some clipping helped and yet sometimes the problem would disappear on its own, when least expected. Fall sowing of white blossom sweet clover, which sheep have a natural love for, or the changing of soil condition, seems to discourage foxtail.

Hay, on our set-up, is really a by-product of our grazing which comes first in priority, particularly on the home place, where nearly everything is grazed in spring, fall and even winter, if there is sod that can be cleaned up with the aid of just a few inches of snow. Sheep can be disgusted with an old sod, meadow or pasture, then when two inches of snow falls, they go at it with renewed gusto and vigour,

particularly if they are fed a pound of good hay first or while on it.

The average present grazing pattern has become: Trail the first 500 ewes with singles and 100 drys to the pasture about April 20th for a minimum of two weeks, regardless of feed growth. Sometimes it is quite short, but in an average spring, it holds them well. Then, home again for shearing; giving the area ten or more days rest. Then back again, with the whole flock; 400 or more with twins and younger singles all joined now, totaling over 2500. We set and commence irrigation just before the first bunch leave to come home for shearing, hoping to have the wetter areas finished and drying by the time the larger flock returns. Irrigation continues for as long as there is water available. On their return they will be grazing all the outreaches of the dryer feed, with some browse.

They need room to travel and they need variety. The further they travel, the fuller they become; i.e. so many bites to so many steps. However, it is after a travel graze that they slowly return to that central eighty acres and do they ever settle down and fill up then! Sometimes we bed out on the dryer, less inviting areas, in order to graze them shorter. Flock sheep, after four or five p.m., will eat the medium and poor, which they will hardly touch in the morning when they are more hungry and particular. This graze will last about 21 days when we can change back to home pasture for about ten days rest for the pasture. The count now may be closer to 3000. The feed holds them until the high range is ready at the end of June or early July. It now has its long earned rest. Once, on the third grazing, with something over 2000, the feed got away on them. We didn't leave until the sixth of July and on August 15th, cut an average of one ton to the acre on the best 60 acres and still had good fall grazing! We had planned to vigorously harrow it that spring, but fortunately did not have time, or we might have thought it had helped.

We really spend very little time or monetary values on this grass; a few fascinating hours with the irrigation and the ditch cleaning, which hopefully the shepherd does most of. An old proverb goes, "The best fertilizer is the master's footsteps in the field". I would also add the shepherd's footsteps. He really is, or should be, the chief and counsellor. Another optimum year, sometime ago, Allingham's had grown a hay crop during the late summer, which could not be harvested. We waited to graze with

1050 ewes until December first, when it snowed ten inches. I then grazed a small, separated area and bedded there. In the morning, I sneaked surreptitiously to the gate. They slowly started out settling and pawing; finally covering about eight acres by afternoon. Later I put the salt out on the bedground and called them. They came in slowly, never bunching up. They didn't see me or a dog all day. The first part of the next day, they grazed again, covering about five or six more acres. The snow was light and powdery with a dropping temperature which finally got down to -20 F. Then the disturbed snow hardened and they needed a new acreage every day. By the twelfth day, they had pawed over the whole of the best part of the pasture, but were still filling up adequately. Then a chinook came on the thirteenth day and the moment the ice grip released, the sheep spread, pawing everything all over again. This action, combined with some inedible pieces of grass and December sun and wind, slowly took all the snow and ice away until the grazed part was bare, making it possible for the grand clean up. We got 34 days of top grazing with quite sufficient nourishment, for that date (35,700 sheep days). In the spring, it looked as though the area had been mowed and hayed, followed by clean fall grazing. This does give an idea of the extraordinary food value in a mixture of predominantly matured grasses with a percentage of legumes etc. from an old, old sod which has periodic rests through droughts and winter killings. This area takes care of up to 100 days of the 230 day annual grazing period.

Apart from one experimental plot and broadcast of 100 lbs. of nitrogen/acre on a larger area, commercial fertilizer has never been used on Allingham's. It has not been needed, nor has it been worthwhile except to make a poor hay crop just worth cutting on dry seasons. There has been no sprinkler irrigation and no harrowing. Latterly, there has been some aeration with the spike machine on spring bed grounds and winter hay feed grounds to help germination of the seeds already stored. Early spring burning is used sparingly, as necessary. In the past, some of the medium and good ground has been broken, but after a few hay crops, the total long term production declined. However, it has come back with time. About the only new seed introduced has been the white blossom sweet clover, hand sown in November-December, on the snow. Some of it waits a year to germinate.

During the mid 1920's, the first tractor (a 1917 International with a three bottom stubble plow) tried to plow an oblong field. The operator told Allingham that it would just make a mess, but Allingham insisted. As the job was being finished, they had a row. The washboard field, with its furrows still showing, is and has proven to be one of the most productive on the area for both grazing and hay. Fortunately it was plowed in the right direction of up and down the slope. Plowing a slope on contour reduces flow and impedes seepage and sub-irrigation. It is impossible to irrigate across even an old plowing on any soil with live water, even after many years. It is like trying to irrigate through a good shake roof. Those furrows are always there; you cannot see them, but the water feels them.

When I took over shepherding in 1936, I started what I called "bedding out". First I would use a portable wire corral at night until the sheep were used to the idea, then sleeping out with them in a bed roll. This was done to get the manure to go where most needed; no manure is ever moved. Earth worms are quite well distributed wherever the soil retains sufficient moisture.

Typical bloat has been a small problem during both spring and fall. However, we do have an unusual type; more of an over eating. It occurs at 4 or 5 p.m. after they've been on an area all day and is most prominent in a large flock on a day before a storm, with the humidity rising. Urges, multiplied by numbers, tells them to eat; eat, for tomorrow it storms. This can happen in spring, after shearing, or fall of a wetter season. On post-mortem, there is little foam or gas, but rather they are just too full of a mixture of short rich grasses and Dutch clover. An isolated few find a certain spot they know about and stop too long on it before following the main flock. We have even had a few cases of grass tetany on the home place where we have disked into many winter bed grounds, even in light soil.

Frank Allingham lived for 52 years, alone in his little 10 by 12 foot cabin. He had a large log storehouse with an earth floor and earth roof. He never got moved into the larger, board house, which remained the bunkhouse or sheep camp. Most years there was no water in the creek during summer and fall and he had no well. He existed on accumulated rainwater stored in heavily tarred wooden barrels. The water looked like strong tea!

In his later years, he would greet you by saying, "I was born in '48. How old am I?" One

would reply, "You're 82". And Allingham would retort, "I am, and damn tired of it!"

His pile of tin cans was about 15 feet by 4 feet high, consisting mostly of Campbell's soup and Chiver's marmalade. In early years, when travelling, he carried a sack of flour pre-mixed with beef suet etc., for making duff, which he boiled in a cloth. This he ate with meat, as a savoury, or as a pudding, with sugar, dried fruit or raisins cooked in it; a great meal which I have often made use of. During his spells in Kamloops, he was on the early city council, becoming known as "the man with the iron jaw". His estate was left to King George's Memorial Workshop in London, for blind and disabled W.W. I soldiers. We were grateful, earlier on, to learn from our mutual lawyer, that he was never in want, financially. Sometime, during the 1940's, I received a parcel in the mail containing his ashes. I very much enjoyed spreading them across his fields and green pastures.

So ends a tale that hopefully will not end.

### Foghorn

It should be noted that in those early grazing days that the true alpine centre of the mountain, namely Fog Horn Hill, McDougal Hill and Lookout Hills were almost entirely surrounded by the vast burned areas of varying dates. We believe that the Axel cabin area, basin, Saddle Hill, Husband Hill, Red Creek Slope, Triangle, Windfall Hills and West Slope burned during the late 1880's or early '90's. If this is so the Twin Lake area and Steel Creek and back under Lookout Hill burned possibly 50 years earlier. This observation was made from the greater degeneration of the wind falls with only one 'flag pole camp' tree standing left to fall (Ted's reign - 1937 and 38). Also there was a sparse number of new growth trees which appeared older. Strange, why did the trees come in more sparsely with little or no small ones? The south slope and slightly lower elevation might have a bearing on this, also the soil. Then also, we did not start grazing the Twin Lake area extensively until 1935 when we established the camp there. Could it be that it was not grazed heavily at the crucial times in its new life after the fire so as a result a few trees started and the second generation did not get going until after nearly 20 years of grazing? Interestingly I think those first sparse trees to come in were spruce. I may be wrong there. Well the forgoing is just full of questions but perhaps food for thought.

To go on with the burn dates. The open area under



the west end of Granite and down to and along MacDonald Creek, "Montgomery-Shire" is perhaps between the two afore mentioned dates. Tom's camp was established by Ted in 1938.

Then we have the burn on Dobson Hill where timber is now being cut. This burn extended from the east end of Granite across to the fringes of McDougal Hill. The windfalls remained a long time even after the trees were quite tall. It was luck if one found a route to take horses through to the east end of Granite during the 40's. This area was always useless for grazing with the exception of McDougal Hill and under Jungle Hill below the McDougal cabin. This burn could be 200 years old.

The burn on what was later known as Jungle Hill, near the east end of McDougal Hill, took place in August of the dry year of 1936. Twenty years later it would seem that it might have been better for the range were many natural routes, including the old Lydia Trail, with feed most of the way. til a massive growth of young trees took place including what had been the natural meadows at the same time the fire killed trees commenced to fall. Why did these trees fall so much more quickly than those from the old burn? The very rapid growth of the new seedling trees was undoubtedly helped by the fact that it was heavily grazed continuously from the year it burned and onward. Hence the name Jungle Hill.

The burn on the old sheep trail between the first meadow and June Lake, known as the Burnt Hill, took place during the very dry summer of 1926. This area never produced any feed. There was no soil and scrub tree re-growth was very rapid.

A very ancient burn, perhaps 150 to 200 years old, lays below Husband Hill and the Red Creek slope between the Burnt Hill and Red Creek. This area became an important source of late fall feed, particularly during the Bill Gabry 'reign' of 1949 - 1974. The drawing card was a growth of lupine which remain very green and retained its pods until very late in the season. That particular lupine seemed to thrive in the shade of the quite large trees and enjoy the humus from the degeneration of the disintegrating old windfalls and around the open areas of the swamps. I believe the lupine at this level could be a slightly different variety than grows in the very high alpine areas as it is even more attractive. s the Burnt Hill and intersecting the trail below June Lake. Then moving around June Lake, swooping down behind and east of Burnt Hill, through a natural little gap to the northeast slope of Saddle Hill and finally coming in over Saddle Hill, through the basin in the late afternoon and up to the cabin bed ground. They would be 'full as ticks' after the five mile circle. Of course some of the tailend and stragglers would take various short cuts and sometimes would be in and happily grazing and finishing the day on Foghorn Hill. They sometimes made this circle for as long as two weeks without a break, depending upon weather conditions.

During the last decade of our 63 years on the mountain this rather strange area noticeably changed with less feed and more small trees growing among the larger ones. Was this from the 25 years of grazing this route or a natural sequence?

Regarding the feed, the lupine disappeared quite suddenly. We think mainly on account of an infestation

of aphids, the same as hit Granite at about the same time. Or was it the grazing? I doubt this because surely the sheep did not eat all the pods, many of which had already opened and dropped their seed before it was grazed late in the season. Perhaps the grazing may have been injurious to the seedling plants. The aphid infestation took place during the mid to late 60's and the early 70's. It also struck the lupin on Harp Mountain. We lost the grazing on Harp in 1961 and at that time the lupine was as healthy and good as ever.

### **Shepherds of the Foghorn**

Alex MacDonald was the first on the mountain with the sheep from 1923 to 1925. From my memory he was always known as old Mac. Born in Perthshire, Scotland, in about 1867, he was the son of a crofter in the hills.

I remember when I was complaining of having to walk three miles to school and Mac saying, "I had to walk four miles to school and it was uphill both ways, and I had to carry a 'peat' too". Little me could not quite figure out just how a route could be uphill both ways or what a peat was. Later of course it dawned on me that he had to walk over a hill to the school and that each child had to bring a dried square of peat for the school stove or hearths, as the weather dictated.

He must have had quite a good basic elementary education and was quite intelligent, being quite a reader and deep thinker and being particularly good with figures. He was able to add, subtract and multiply, etc. almost instantly all in his head, remember sheep tallies all day without writing anything down and, of course, was an accurate sheep counter.

While still a young man he was apprenticed to the stone cutting trade which he followed until his lungs were in bad shape with what is now known as silicosis. The doctors said that he might possibly live if he changed his occupation and move to a dry climate. Live he did! He somehow got himself enlisted in the South African war where he excelled as a scout, for the duration, under the most appalling conditions. Being a scout he became an excellent horseman and was able to lead a somewhat lone and independent life. Though many of the troops were almost starving it seems that Mac nearly always had sufficient oat meal and cocoa with the occasional can of bully beef, the latter he never used again.

One rather amusing story he told was of others who were continually begging some of his porridge from him when he had prepared his simple supper, until

one night he accidentally spilled some of his cocoa into the pot of porridge. Apparently the 'beggars' took one look at the seemingly dirty porridge and thereafter left him alone to enjoy it all to himself.

Well Mac survived the war with many close calls, as he used to say, "It's a wonder that I didn't leave my carcass there". Miraculously he not only came through unscathed but also with a healed and sound pair of lungs.

I do not know exactly when he drifted into Vavenby but I do know that he worked for the Lydia Mine, the one up Canyon Creek beyond the smuggler south of Birch Island, doing their camp tending with a team of horses and a narrow gauge wagon making one round trip of 10 miles each day with supplies, etc. This would have been 1917. (The Lydia never produced anything.) Mac's name is also mentioned quite often in my father's old diaries as often helping on the ranch, both with general farm work and also with the sheep. Anyway Mac became our full time shepherd for at least the three years that Riley was absent.

I believe our ewe count was down to about 300 at this time as Riley had sold his half of the flock and dissolved the temporary partnership he had with Tam.

Mac's descriptions of those first early years on the Fog Horn are quite unbelievable. Riley had, of course, broken the sheep to handling very well. There was still plenty of the 1916 ramboulet blood mixed with oxford and there was also a good dog, 'Tom', son of Shep our first sheep dog. Anyway those sheep just settled and scarcely moved. Mac told me that he had to go out to them and round them up just to make sure that what he saw has not rocks or white windfalls and really was the sheep. They slowly ate their way into the feed and gradually got the country exposed.

Mac's first camp was on the ridge about 100 yards below Axel's cabin, just north and little below what later became the corral, later establishing a camp in the Foghorn valley around the corner beyond the mine.

Mac's camps, from all accounts, apparently had much to be desired as far as comfort, food and cleanliness were concerned. He never put anything away, nothing had a place and never made a comfortable bed. It was common to find a chunk of bacon between the blankets and have a table fork stick into you during the night and so on. Louis Enfield, who did much of the camp tending during those years, had a favourite cup which he cleaned whenever he visited the camp. However, invariably he would find Mac's teeth soaking in it which did not lend to harmony between them. Food

wise if Mac had rolled oats, mouldy cheese, mouldy bread and some bannock he was quite happy. He was however clean inside, he neither smoked or drank and no profanity ever passed his lips. As years later (Riley wrote to my mother after Mac's death in April 1945) he was a good soldier and good company, how I will miss him.

Absolutely amazing how Riley and Mac, the two opposites could live together in their older years for so long, each appreciating the others strong points and ignoring the others. Perhaps there is lesson here

Much has already been written of Riley, his character and adventures so little is needed here except that I know he succeeded Mac on the Foghorn from 1926 to 33 - 38 years.

I believe that Mac was having some predator problems on the range toward the end of this period. Though a crack shot Mac was not a



### **Riley LaDow with work dogs**

hunter and also was not particularly observant. He had previously had predator problems on McCorvie Mountain during 1917 and 1918 when Riley had first come to the rescue. So Riley took care of the predator problem.

However there were numerous other problems

arising as well. We were breeding strongly to border cheviots and increasing the size of the flock. On top of this the wonderful dog, Tom who was son of Shep and who Riley had trained earlier, came to his end of life. Riley never had a really good sheep dog again. How everyone concerned could have been so ignorant and thoughtless to continue in operation without good dogs now seems unbelievable.

Riley established old second camp in the centre of the range. He pretty well gave up trying to keep any banding alive. Ninety per cent of the season was spent radiating from the camp. There were still natural boundaries and this worked out surprisingly well and in many ways it was probably easy on the flora of the range.

The sheep must have behaved somewhat as cheviots on a Scottish hill except that they mostly came home at night from many directions. The evening roundup must have been in many respects a daily nightmare, though interesting, provided ones legs, eyes and ears stood up to it and also depending upon the weather. Fortunately the cheviots did have a great homing instinct. And so it went for many years.

The lambs did well. Though being mainly border cheviots and as a result on the light side it was fortunate that was just what the market wanted at the time. Almost every lamb being ready for the market right from the range. It was during this time that we commenced cutting out the first shipment right on the range in mid August and early September. Also we were grazing several flocks of other people's sheep with ours for the summer. All of which was very detrimental to the handling.

I think it was the fall of 1929 that Tam and Riley finally realized that we had to swing back to the ramboulet, so rams were found. The only immediate improvement noticeable was the sudden ease of trailing with the lambs keeping right up with their mothers. The contrast with cheviot was unbelievable. Even the ewes were surprised. They kept coming back to the tail looking for the lambs thus leaving the lambs in the lead.

The herding did not improve. Riley left in May 1934. He was nearly 60 years old and could not face another season.

Donald MacKenzie arrived for the summer of 1933. Probably in his late 40's or early 50's and a veteran of W.W. I, he was a strange character. He was very proud of having been with the famous Scottish Regiment 'The Black Watch'. We were not favourably

impressed on his arrival. He seemed dower, slow-witted and quite deaf. I now realize this was all probably due to the after effect of the war. On top of everything we soon found that he could not count accurately. Neither could my father and as a result Riley had done most of the counting for the many previous years of herding.

But Donald had his own amazing little 'Bonnie Chean'. She was a real herding dog, silent and wide running. Donald handled the dog and the sheep entirely by whistles and could he whistle! It was a piercing shriek as you could ever believe a human could make with the fingers and tongue. 'Chean' was the first good herding dog that the sheep or ourselves had seen for many years.

So Donald and the sheep went to the Foghorn and by mid-season the sheep were like a different bunch and they were a flock once again. This I believe was a combination of the ramboulet breeding together along with Donald and the right dog at the right time and of course the 'whistle'.

Donald finished out the season and was with us during the fall, winter and spring. We were not impressed with him during lambing however much later we realized that he taught us a great deal, such as, a new way of grafting and a new technique for leading a ewe with her lamb.

It was 1934 that my father, Tam, decided to be with Donald for the spring herding on the side-hills. Living with and trying to work with Donald, and for other reasons, father decided that Donald should go.

When Tam decided to be rid of Donald, he went down to old Mrs. McCorvie's to use one of the two existing phones in the area, and phone Miss Louder, secretary of the Sheep Breeders Association in Kamloops. He asked her to send up a herder with a dog. She said the man we wanted was right there this morning and would find him and sent him up on the next train. However she said the dog may be a problem.

So Percie Hill arrives. He was a delightful young Englishman of 22 who had been herding for a year in southern Alberta. He came from Cheshire, England.

My first sight of Percie was thus. Madeline and I were in Birch Island at noon when the local train came in. We were there to do some shopping at McCracken's store and to pick up our weekly shipment of Kamloops bread. You see the river was in flood, no ferrys were operating, so on such occasions we would come to Birch Island and waylay anything we knew was on the train for us.

In the baggage car was a whining dog which Madeline proceeded to try to comfort. Says the baggage

man, "this bitch belongs to a young man who in on his way to herd sheep and here he is." So we had a few minutes conversation, directing him to go over to Vavenby, find his own way to the sheep camp taking with him several loaves of bread. Regarding the dog, says Percie, "I've a dog of sorts. She was given to me yesterday and the fellow said she was a sheep dog! We'll see".

When the river dropped and Tam moved the sheep home, Percie stayed on the range for a few days to try and pick up some of the many strays. About June 20th we were away to the Foghorn where the feed was already very good even up at the old second camp. All went well for a few beautiful days. Then the storm hit a real blizzard, snowing for two days and two nights 'til there was a total of 18 inches. The second day the sheep split and Percie managed to get half of them corraled at the Axel's cabin and the other half corraled at second camp. He then headed down the trail, on snow shoes, to Birch Island where he phoned a message to Vavenby via the railway phone to tell that he was in trouble and needed help. He then headed back up to the sheep. Looking back now it seems unbelievable that we in the valley did not realize what might be happening on the mountain. Anyway, Grant Steel and I went up the next day. Snow was still down to the top of the first pitch above 2 Mile Creek. However it was thawing fast on top. Percie already had the two bunches together and they were grazing on the exposed wind blown ridges on Windfall Hill and they were finding something to eat after two days of nothing. All was well and Percie was as happy and buoyant as ever.

Such a happy cheerful young man as I ever saw. Evidently the dog, 'Queenie', proved almost useless. Her only redeeming feature was that she didn't need to be fed. She caught all the gophers she required for food. Fortunately the sheep handled and behaved quite well that summer but we sure missed Donald's 'Chean'!

That year (1934) on the spring range there were so many stray sheep still unaccounted for after the flock had left for the Foghorn that we made a late drive in early July. Madeline, Alfred and I spent several Saturdays collecting them and getting them home, the last of which was a rather ludicrous experience. We found about 6 or 7 ewes and lambs near Mrs. McCorvie's. Madeline decided that we should catch them and load them into the old 'Star' flat deck truck rather than drive them all the six miles home. We managed to drive them into Mrs. McCorvie's very un-sheep proof lane by the railway tracks.

A crew of railway workers was camped in a very

large tent in the lane. They were replacing all the old wooden culverts with concrete pipes. These fellows were real characters, mostly middle aged Scandinavians. Anyway they volunteered to help us corner the sheep.

On the first try the sheep got away, ran over the tent ropes and partially collapsing the tent. The next try we did alright. I caught one, Alfred caught two and Madeline caught four even though she sailed down a bank she still held on. We had them all on one go, as we knew we had to. The railway crew were laughing so much they could scarcely help us. So we got them home and a few days later Madeline, Noel and I made a second little sheep drive to Foghorn, including Madeline's little flock of purebred ramboulets known by us as the BPs, also including some late born lambs.

We three had a close shave after we got to the camp. We were so tired and it was cold we lit a 50 foot snag and all went to sleep. Some time later we were rudely awakened when the snag, all on fire, fell with a flaming crash very close to us.

The PBs posed some problems on the range. They stayed together and kept getting left behind. They literally had to be taught to jump logs, go through the bush and cross over creeks, etc.

I spent many happy days with Percie on the mountain, perhaps my first initiation to herding and being close to the sheep and also the terrain.

It was a cold stormy summer in 1934 and I don't think the feed was particularly good especially being crushed down by the previous heavy snow. And still with the lack of a good dog, all went well until late August.

Percie got a letter that brought tears and he had to leave immediately. As a result 'Ren' Rendell, who had been staying with us for the summer and I had to look after the sheep until Ted, who was living in Kamloops at that time, could find a herder.

We had quite a time, bad weather, Percie's dog Queenie, who wouldn't work for me and Jigs our old dog who fortunately attached himself to Ren wasn't much good either. However the main problem under the circumstances was that I knew nothing but thought that I did. So in three or four days we were very glad when Ted arrived together with a very silent, dower Scot - one Donald Beaton. He had, however, quite a good dog 'Chief', a black and tan collie who had been here before with Archie Nickelson. Archie had spent a summer, fall and winter with use previously as camp tender and farm hand. Archie was a jolly young Scot from the Isle of Sky. Donald, who came from the central highlands, would always, in a scathing voice, refer to Archie and

other young Scots from the coast as 'Yon Fishers'.

There was quite a lot of dog trading among the Kamloops centred herders in those days. One never knew what dog would appear with someone. "Oh! so and so owed me money so you know I took his dog." Yes there was quite a lot of dog pawning when they were broke in town. I often wondered how the cheap westend Victoria St. rooming houses dealt with all the sheep dogs together with their unemployed or revelling masters. There must have been some great fights amongst dogs and masters.

Enter Alexander MacKenzie, September 1934, the 'Boomer' as our mother soon named him. One early September afternoon Ted arrived from Kamloops bringing Alex, a large rather handsome Scot with a strong and pleasant Scottish tone and voice, though it was often a bit loud and forceful depending upon the circumstances. He was probably in his early fifties at the time. He seemed in good health, however he had a large tummy.

Grant Steel, who was with us that summer, was elected to guide him to the Foghorn on foot. (I was trying to attend school reasonably regular that fall.) Grant shook his head and whispered that he would be carrying both pack sacks before long and that it would be a slow trip. Well 'auld' Alex nearly walked Grant off his feet. He talked and smoked his pipe all the way up the trail. We were all surprised at his strength and ability to walk fast and climb. He did at times sound like a broken, winded horse.

Alex had two very good dogs, Toss and Dan, so Chief was brought home. Beaton no longer needed a dog as he was going to a job in a brewery. We never saw or heard of Beaton again.

### **Shearers and Crews, Notables and Notorious**

The Gilbert Genier family were old timers at Barriere from about the turn of the century and, I believe, always had a flock of a few hundred sheep. The two boys, Wilfred and Zan (Alexander), would have learned the art of shearing with their own sheep and were custom shearing by the mid-twenties. They sheared for us the first time in 1926. By 1929, Wilfred had been shearing in the States where he had acquired the art of machine shearing plus a two-man machine shearing outfit. This was a big 'one-lunger', water-cooled gas engine, with large, heavy balance wheels on each side, on which the two flat belts ran up to the power clutches for the two shearing arms.

The governor system on these amazing old en-

gines was controlled by the spark. When idling, it would fire just sufficiently often to stay in motion, and, as the shearing units clutched in, the firing frequency increased as necessary.

During the early days of blade shearing, Wilfred and Zan travelled by train, on foot, or whatever. With the advent of the machine, they used an old Chev. pickup. Wilfred told me later that it was driving in this old truck, with no side curtains, after a long, hard day's shearing, that gave him rheumatic problems in his left arm and shoulder, which bothered him in his later years. Fortunate that they didn't have an older, right-hand-drive model, or it would have been his right shoulder affected!

Later, Zan discontinued shearing, having married and taken over the old family farm. Wilfred continued shearing, expanding to a four-man crew, plus fleece tyer. I believe his son, Wallace, was their first tyer. He made quite a name for himself at Heron Brothers, where he tied for twelve machine shearers at age fifteen! Wally became a top shearer and was with the outfit for fourteen years. Heron's had their own outfit, but Geniers joined forces with them for their 4,000 plus mature ewes.

During the ensuing years, Wilfred had many notable top shearers pass through his crew. I think of such names as Charlie and Gerald Cahoon of Blackpines, Len Harvey and also Dan Clearwater of Westside. Dan, later, in 1965, took over the business when Wilfred 'semiretired' at age 67. Still later, Duncan McAlpine Jr.

took over. However, the days of large crews were disappearing with the diminishing of many of the larger flocks. Dunc built a mobile, three-unit, shearing shed as he became disgusted with the poor or lack of proper shearing facilities encountered at many places. However, distances were too great and with the continuing decline of numbers, this too, came to an end.

Faithful Charlie Cahoon sheared for us until the year he died. Wilfred continued to do some shearing. He came back and helped here in the early seventies when there was a great scarcity of shearers. He passed away in 1975 at the age of 77. Great shearers, like great sheepherders, will always be remembered. Few who have not done it will realize the willpower, perseverance, and strength of mind required to attain these skills.

To go back to the heyday of the old crew. They were able to put in a surprisingly long season of about five months. They began the pre-lambing tagging on the larger flocks early in March. Doing this, they divided into two crews of two units each. By April first, they would be shearing in the Kelowna area. Late April and May took care of the remainder of the BC Interior. By June, they were into Southern Alberta, then Saskatchewan, and finally north. Sometimes they did not get home to BC until early August. As to the numbers sheared, Wilfred's son Wally, told me that, in one particular year, he remembers his father's own private tally was over 13,000 for the season! As he sheared for nearly fifty years it looks like his life time tally could have been close to the half million mark.



**Jack dunking lambs**

## Memories of the early years by Madeline (Moilliet) Rendell

### School Days 1917-

The first school in Vavenby was built in 1917 entirely by volunteer labour, on a piece of land donated by either Christianson or Blair (we don't know which) midway between Lost Creek and the Jones place. It was built of lumber from Kanute Skohl's water powered mill, and as far as we know only the windows, desks, heater, and water bucket complete with dipper was bought. The roof, was covered by shingles, the first we had ever seen. Both the Jones and ourselves built a small barn each - to stable our steeds. There was no water nearer than Blair's spring so one of the elder boys filled the bucket each morning. When the spring got too low we brought water from home in demi johns, of which we seemed to have many.

Our first teacher, Miss Melish, boarded with us and was a real farm girl from Armstrong who drove our horse expertly, and was a good teacher too. I think there were about twelve pupils - 2 Jones, Ted and I, several Skohls, and 3 or more Jenkins. I remember Ted and I were so shy of these other pupils, all sitting in a row on the school steps as we drove up, that we both burst into tears - poor Miss Mellish!

There were no homes near and our mother insisted on supplying us with a camp cot, with pillow and warm quilt in case someone were ill or hurt. On the first visit by the Inspector he said in a most withering voice, "What on earth is THAT, doing in a school?" I guess Mother was ahead of the times! Anyway it stayed there and often proved a great comfort. I think Marten Jenkins was the first janitor. He had to get there early to light the big old stove and after school he swept the floor and cleaned the black board. For this work he received \$5 a month.

My Mother also sent a large double boiler of milk, in winter, and this was put on the stove at recess, with cocoa and sugar added, and oh how delicious that cocoa tasted at noon! We all had our own mugs and had to wash them ourselves - a good lesson at an early age.

Miss also insisted we bring the horses bridles inside in zero weather - her motto, "If you must put an icy bit in a warm mouth, put it in your own". I never remember us being short of wood, so presumably some volunteers kept us supplied.

Miss Mellish only stayed one year, as did Miss

Smith, Miss Lelly, Miss Lawrence, Miss Carter, and Miss James who all boarded at our place.

In winter, Dad and Kanute Skohl kept the road open with a home-made v-shaped plow pulled by a team of horses. After each snowfall one of them would plough the road to the other's place, leave the plough and return on skies - often going at a great rate when the horses neared home, and no way to hold them.

The winters were colder then, and the rule was no school if -30 degrees below zero. But it was mighty cold below that and took us an hour. Lucy Jones (after her brother Henry left home in 1919) rode her wonderful horse Buck in a sort of felt snow suit her mother made that covered her completely (no zippers then, but she managed to button herself in). We were lucky - tucked into the cutter with warmed robes and a charcoal foot warmer, and the Hechla hot water bottle on our knees to warm our hands on. We still had cold hands, as I well remember warming our hands up under our horses hind legs before we could unhitch him. Going along Albert Skohl's open meadow (this is the west end of Bernard Johnston's now Shooks on the old top road now out of use) was always the coldest part of the trip - there was always a icy wind there.

None of the afore mentioned teachers married in the Valley; Miss Lawrence, Miss Carter, and Miss James were all Methodists and would not attend dances. They also would not ski or skate on Sundays which really annoyed my parents. Dad always tried to make up a good skating rink and our Scandinavian neighbours made us dandy skiis of Birch or Pine. Dad and these neighbours made a nice ski hill to which we roared down completely out of control, none of us got hurt! Mother reasoned that as there was no church to go to, why ever not enjoy sports? But no way - this had a dampening effect on the men's efforts!

We did have church when Mr. Akehurst appeared for a service, often held at Mrs. McCorvie's on in the school, but I think it was seldom on a Sunday. This same Mr. Akehurst, later Conon Akehurst, had married my parents in Kamloops in 1909 and later in 1934 married Ren and me - he baptized us all too. He was highly respected in early times as he was an excellent horseman and also a boatman - I'm sure there was some

tale of heroically rescuing someone from drowning somewhere in the North Thompson River. His early visits were by horse and buggy, then by train.

Another example of mother's foresight was when she suggested, because of the often terribly unmusical singing at church, that she buy some records of well known hymns and bring a gramophone to church with which we could sing-a-long. Mr Akehurst was completely scandalized at such a thought! He did have a good voice himself, which did help.

I should not leave the subjects of early school days without a short account of Christmas Concerts. The teachers went all out to make this a most memorable evening with little skits, recitations, and carols by the pupils - then any of the audience who would bravely sing or recite, which they often did. Then came Santa, and presents for all the children from the tree. Then a huge feed, of many good things, and then the drive home with our parents through the frosty night, sleigh bells tinkling merrily. The teacher often had an admirer, who helped decorate the school with boughs and erect the tree. I well remember Miss Carter and her friend Jean Blakely (Mrs. Johnston's daughter) getting up to sing "I want to be in Tennessee in my Dixie paradise" and the music they held shook so violently they almost dropped it!

I also remember Wilford Johnston's poem about "The colt astraddle of the barbed wire fence" and he stopped in the half way through and with a blank expression said, "I've forgot the rest!" Everyone roared with laughter and he got a big hand anyway.

Brother Jack was born in 1919 during Miss Lawrence's 'reign' and a few years later mother asked Mrs. Bernard Johnston if she would board the teachers, which she did with the first Miss Sleighthouse.

We were getting short of pupils by this time, and there was the threat of the school being closed. So our Dad, who was Secretary Treasurer of the Vavenby School since its beginning, advertised for a teacher with children and Mrs. Shea came with Pat and Jack. Dad found them a house at Skookumchuck, about a mile away, and Mrs. Shea stayed about 6 years. Nearly everyone liked her very much, we pupils especially. She was originally from Prince Edward Island and read us all the "Ann of Green Gables" set on firday afternoons while we drew and painted.

We also sang a lot with Mrs. Shea. After she had settled in, Mr. Shea arrived - I don't think anyone knew he existed. He had poor health and never seemed to do much - but was a likable chap. He had the first radio that I can remember in Vavenby which at that

time was a marvel to us all. He nearly always seemed to have indigestion and I remember him calling a square dance in our house, holding a glass of baking soda in one hand and keeping time with the music with the other.

Mrs. Shea did many extra things - like teaching me my first year of High School, mainly after school - I wonder if my parents paid her? Ted was already at Kamloops Hi and I stayed home that year in order to take Jack to school. Actually I didn't pass the exams and repeated that year at Parksville where my parents arranged that I should stay with Moilliet cousins and attend school.

Mrs. Shea sent in her resignation in January as she felt many people wanted a change. She said, "At this dismissal time of the year, many will be cheered up to know I will not be returning after the June term". The Sheas moved to Victoria and we kept with them for years. Poor Pat, who trained for a nurse, died of TB.

Next came Maimee McMurray who boarded at Mrs. Johnston's. She later married Jack Wanless of Birch Island.

Then the first man teacher was Mr. Bulman, who also stayed at Mrs. Johnston's. Jack really liked him, as did Noel (Nailo) Montagnon and Alfred Graffunder. He organized card parties and competitions for the boys and was a super community person. I believe he received \$67 per month for this was the "dirty thirties". Mrs. Johnston charged him \$25 for board (I think that is correct). He sent all the rest home to his family in Vancouver who were having a tough time.

Jack had never liked school but did well under Mr. Bulman and completed his grade 7. He says he started grade 8 under the next teacher Mr. Wilson, but very soon decided he could be so very useful at home and was allowed to discontinue.

Our dad died that December and that was it for Jack - re: schooling - he refused to go on back. However he was well read over the years and we feel he is the best educated of all of us! He says he hasn't had his mind cluttered up with a lot of learning! He certainly has the most wonderful memory for dates, etc of past happenings.

One thing I forgot to mention was the many runaways we had, as many of the teachers were from Vancouver and hadn't a clue how to drive a horse - and Ted and I were too young. Also it was hard to come by a suitable horse. For some reason we never got badly hurt, but would be scattered all over the road and of course harness and shafts would frequently be broken. We often returned home on foot, leading the horse whose

harness hung in pieces. Our Dad became very expert at patching and repairing harness and broken shafts - poor Dad! Men were hacking ties on part of our route, and a falling tree or the glean of a broad axe were enough to set off the horse!

We quite often had dances at various peoples homes. The whole family went by sleigh and super music was often provided by a pick up band from a "bridge gang" or "extra gang" on the CNR. If they were not available our mother chorded on the piano while our shepherd Riley played his fiddle and Riley's nephew Earle played his mandolin. Ted, even as a small boy, joined in with his fiddle which he had bought from an Eatons' catalogue for \$3.75! It was Riley and Clarence who inspired Ted to learn to play.

At these parties babies were stashed under benches or on shelves. At one surprise party, I remember in our old house, babies were laid out on Dad's bed. After Dad had settled the various teams in the stable and sheds, he rushed in to change his clothes - sat on his bed to pull on clean pants. There were shrieks from babies, the door burst open and in flew the mothers only to back out hastily on seeing Dad staring in horror at his bed!

Another time we had planned a New Year's Eve party at our house but when the temperature dropped to -40 below zero we were sure no one would come. However they fooled us and about 25-30 people turned up! I do remember Pat Shea froze her nose. The party was a huge success though I'm sure it was freezing and then some, in our big room with its eleven foot ceiling.

June Tryon was with us and June and I had made special little cakes and put them in mothers best dishes to cool. The McGuiness' dog ate every one but mother was so please he did not break her dishes that she once forgave him!

We often had a sing song for a while after the midnight supper as my Dad loved to sing and nearly every teacher who boarded with us did too. That old piano brought much joy over the years. Mother played it beautifully, from chording at a dance to hymns on Sunday.

I finished my schooling at a boarding school at Shannigan Lake, Vancouver Island. called Strathcona Lodge. Granny Moilliet in England felt sure I was turning into a terrible teenager and paid for my schooling there for two years. I absolutely loved it, especially when June Tryon joined me there in my second year. The school was in its hay day in 1928 - then came the depression and it dropped in numbers badly.

## **Pack Horse Tales of the North Thompson**

What wonderful animals the pack horses and mules of the pioneer days were, almost always short of feed, many with saddle sores and often bad feet. Of course it was up to the packer in charge of the string to keep them in as good shape as possible, but I feel sure this was not always managed.

Except for survey parties up from Kamloops before the C.N.R. was constructed, I believe the first main big project was packing the wire to Cache Creek on to Edmonton for a telegraph line to the coast about 1875. Jack tells me the BX took the contract to do this and when the scheme finally was given up there was a long law suit that went on for years. He can not remember if it ever was settled.

Anyway, tons of this galvanized wire was packed up to a place 6 miles south of Avola, where the terrain was so boggy it was impossible to continue. So there the wire was cached and a cabin built over it. It was there for years and indians and settlers alike helped themselves to it. A man preempted the land the wire was on - he was called 'Wire Cache Smith'. He was tragically killed when he went down his well to escape a raging forest fire.

One of Dad's pack horses was called 'Cumtux'. He was blind in one eye and when crossing any narrow bridge, probably made of poles, he would edge over on his blind side and fall off the bridge. Dad soon learned to deal with this, but it certainly caused some problems on the trail.

Tom Montgomery had told Dad of the wonderful high range above Birch Island, called 'Fog Horn'. Ted and I were allowed to go with Dad on his first trip to explore this beautiful open range land. We drove the team to Birch Island and put two packs on the team horses, camped at the bottom of the Lydia Trail and setoff early the next day. This being 70 years ago I don't remember much about it, except Dad let us hold on the horses tails to pull us up the steepest pitches. We slept in the old Axel Cabin and went out each day exploring the country side.

This trip began our many, many trips with the pack horses to the sheep camps up there. Ted was soon old enough to go on his own. You would drive the democrat to Birch Island, buy the groceries for the sheep camp at McCrachen's Store, put on the packs, carefully hoisting each box or sack for even weight, 'threw' the diamond hitch and away you went, one horse tied on to the leading horse's tail. A lot of salt had to be

packed up for the sheep, usually a 50 lb sack in the centre of the pack and a canvas over it all. Ted would sometimes take 3 to 4 horses up, all tied head to tail. He became an excellent packer.

In about 1923 Louis Enfield came to work for us. He was a young Swiss and had learned how to make raw cow hide panniers for packing. He covered a neatly made pack box (usually a coal oil box) with a green cow hide, cut to fit snugly with a lid. While 'green' he sewed on two loops to fit over the pack saddle, straps and buckles to close the panniers and a cinch that buckled under the horse. When bone dry these panniers kept their shape and made the job much easier. June and I always used panniers, I think everyone did - 50 lb on each side and a 50 lb sack of salt in the middle. I don't believe we used a diamond hitch with them. Our horses were small cayuses, so we seldom put more than 150 lbs on each. Also the 'Raw Hide Trail' was extremely steep. This name came from ore being hauled down in raw cow hides.

I remember one time Ted and June and I decided to go up via the Lydia Trail - a bit longer but a better grade except for the one bad shale slide which the skinny little trail switch backed up - about 6 of these I believe. We were told by Dad to shout and yell before starting up this very scary place in case someone else was coming down (very rare, we seldom if ever met another pack train). However right in the middle of these switch backs and around a corner, appeared a man leading a pack horse down. No way could either of us turn around - we just had to get by. Lucky for all of us he only had one horse and not two or three as we had. If I remember rightly, the man unpacked his horse and made it stand on the lower side of the trail as we inched each of our horses past him. What a relief, with packs sticking out a good foot each side of a horse. It takes a bit of a manoeuvre on such a narrow trail.

One time Ted was moving the shepherd's camp from Harp Mountain to Fog Horn. He had 3 or 4 horses. He had to cross a very swampy place, with no way around it. As so often happens 3 horses crossed safely, though mired down to their hocks, the 4th horse was not so lucky and broke through right down to its belly and could not move. Ted somehow got the pack off and tried every way he could think of to get the poor beast out. Finally he gave up and headed on to the camp with the other 3 horses and started back packing a rifle to put the old 'Buck' out of his misery. Imagine his surprise and joy to meet old Buck a couple of hours later, heading for the camp at a good clip. Seeing the other 3 horses leave without him must have made Buck

really fight for his life. Ted could not imagine how he could possibly have struggled free of that bog but he did and was none the worse.

Our shepherd, Riley LaDow, had an idea that aluminum pots were a 'no no' and ordered a huge set of enamel pots and pans from Eaton's to have in his camp. He insisted he would not trust Ted or anyone else to pack these on the pack horses so he put them in a back pack and said he would carry them up himself - an enormous bulky pack but not very heavy.

We were taking sheep up at the same time as 3 or 4 pack horses with Ted handling these. Poor Riley, trying to handle dogs and sheep and crashing about with this great bulky pack was too much for Ted. He just implored Riley to let him carry the pack - "Nothing can possibly happen to them", says Ted and finally Riley agreed. All went well, 4 horses joined head to tail - peacefully going up with Ted and pack behind. But there was a tall stump in the middle of the trail. At the steepest part one of the horses went one side of the stump and one horse the other side and began pulling back. In packers lingo "All hell broke loose". The rope tied to the tail should have come loose with one mighty pull, which Ted attempted to do in order to separate the horses. But on the last heave "Mickey's" tail broke (the hair on it) and Ted went flying backwards and landed right on all of poor Riley's pots (also says he nearly broke his back, but he was too concerned over the pots to think of his back).

Well you can imagine those poor enamel pots! Ted said he could hear them cracking and popping all the rest of the way to the camp - not one escaped without ablemish. Good old Riley did not make too much fuss, just shrugged and tried to laugh. Jack remembers that I tried to cook rice in one that evening and we all thought there were pieces of egg shell in the rice 'till we realized it was enamel.

Dad did a packing job for Tom Montgomery up to Tom's mine, going by way of the Lydia Trail. He got everything packed on 2 horses, then all that was left for the their horse was two cases of dynamite and crate of 12 dozen eggs. He thought the eggs would surely be safe on top of the dynamite. I guess when he got to that bad switch-back he separated each horse in case one should slip off. Sure enough one did, the one carrying the dynamite and eggs. Actually no horse would fall off a trail, however narrow and steep. I think Dad must have been leading one horse ahead, choosing the safest route, when on switch back above one of the other horse probably started a rock slide, scaring the 'dynamite horse' so much it shied violently and lost

it's footing. It rolled over and over 'til it got hung up in a tree. The powder did not explode, but the eggs! Tom, who was with Dad, rushed down after the horse but Tom's partner took off his hat and raced back down the trail in terror. Dad meanwhile rescued the horse and found no broken legs - just broken eggs.

When we made a trip up to the sheep camp we usually stayed over a day or so. The pack horses were tethered in good feed. Flies were bad and we would put axel grease around their eyes and under their back legs and bellies. Riley would have cut dry trees down for firewood and we would use a horse to drag these poles in. Then corrals had to be repaired with rails. These had all been built by 'snaking' rails in with horses. Some wooden snow fencing was also used for corrals and these heavy rolls had all been packed up from Birch Island, no helicopters in those days. I believe about a foot was sawn off each roll for easier packing and to make them lighter. Corrals at Axel's cabin were used for cutting out the lambs for shipping. We could cut out in the a.m., head for Birch Island and load in railway cars that same evening. About 200 lambs to a car load. With luck they reached Vancouver the next day.

A string of our pack horses, just heading out by the Raw Hide Trail, got badly spooked crossing Squibb's field. I believe a gate was not properly open and one of the horses got caught in it. That set the lot off and they bucked and squealed and made about three circles around this field. Packs came loose, canned goods flew in every direction. As Riley would have said, "Stuff was scattered from Hell to breakfast!" A camp stove was on one horse, all in parts, and I don't believe we ever did find all those pieces. Jack says the Squibb kids kept finding bits and pieces of this and that all summer returned them to us as we went by.

Jack has pointed out that in Eastern Canada the rivers were used for transporting everything, whereas in our mountainous country we could never have got by without that faithful beast of burden, the pack horses. Needless to say the man handling them was all important to their comfort and welfare - an ignorant, inexpe-

rienced person could make their lives a terrible drudgery and misery.

I forgot to say that Louis' panniers, as well as being so handy and easy to use, looked so nice with the hair on the outside. If made from an Ayrshire or Holstein they were so colourful and really pretty. A string of horses with these panniers on was quite a sight as just the top of the pack was covered with a piece of canvas.

Ted packed camp outfits into forest fire crews, often over extremely rough country. He would be gone for days but always came home safely with, what in those days seemed, a nice fat cheque. He always looked after the horses well and was highly thought of as a packer. On one occasion his horse got loose when tethered at night, possibly spooked by a bear he thought. He back tracked them for about 5 or 6 miles and found them where he had unloaded them from his truck. He was quite surprised they had not headed directly for home, but they were in country they did not know and they did know where the truck was. He had to ride one and lead the others back to the camp to get the saddles and panniers, etc, then back to the truck and home.

### **The North Thompson River** (and how our lives were involved with it)



Mother and Dad's adventures of going to Kamloops by canoe in 1909 before Ted was born, have already been accounted in this booklet. They set out again in May 1911 to be safely in Kamloops for my birth in June. All went well on this trip in a long slender canoe that had to have side logs for stability. Jack thinks they probably sold it in Kamloops to save the

job of poling it back home. Mother told us of the stench from dead cattle on the river banks around McClure - animals that had drowned trying to get to water on icy banks in winter and spring. It was unusually hot, which made matters worse. Also poor mother, who had a very fair skin, got terribly sun burned from the sun on the water.

We think we remember hearing that they took 3 days, or possibly 2 and a half days to paddle the 100 miles. Mother said they pulled up on the beach in Kamloops on a Sunday afternoon and many people were out enjoying the sunshine. Mother, who was usually so active and spry, said she felt she was a terrible sight - trying to get out of the canoe - scarlet face from the sun and clumsy because of my imminent arrival (I was a 10 lb baby) and no pretty maternity clothes in those days. Anyway she was showered with kindness and always had a soft spot in her heart for Kamloops people. We wonder how Dad got home - walked probably.

When I was 3 weeks old, mother and I set off for home on the stern wheel steamer "Distributor". It was early July and mosquitoes swarmed on board at every stop and poor mother suffered terribly from them. It took 3 days, with so many stops and mother and baby me were wrecks when we arrived. Mother from the mosquitoes and me from leaping with fright each time the boat's whistle blared.

We were put off opposite the ranch and Dad crossed us in his boat or canoe. I was so pale and done in they gave me a few drops of brandy. Aunt Annie was at the ranch looking after Ted and she and mother soon got organized and peace restored. Mother also brought young Manitoba Maples and Lilacs from Kamloops to be planted here and many are still growing well today.

An early remembrance is when Mrs. McCorvie's hound chased a deer on to the ice and it could not stop and it slipped into a channel of open water. It swam around and around and the baying of the hound attracted the men folk. They decided to shoot the deer from away over on our cut bank. Great target practice, but the poor deer! No one hit it, but scared it so much it managed to scramble out and the poor hound went in and was at once swept under the ice. It made a great impression on Ted and me.

We were brought up to really respect the river. Mother would say, "It will take its' toll some day if we get careless". Ted and I were not supposed to go near it on our own, but I know we sometimes did.

I seem to remember Ted pulling me out by my hair when we were playing on a log. Logs were dumped in all up and down the river to be caught in a boom at

Kamloops. I think it must have been just before or after high water that a "river drive" came past and we were luckily out on the bank and saw it go past. I well remember this big raft set up as a camp, with a large tent and stove pipe smoking. The cook waved to us (big thrill). It must have had a motor of some sort as I'm sure such a cumbersome raft could not be handled manually.

The crew, 3 or 4 men in boats, kept prying logs loose that were caught up on shore and on islands. The cook house would be landed on shore to await the men for meals and sleeping. I also think they used dynamite to break up log jams. Can anyone remember what the cook house was called? The name "Hawnigan" seems to ring a bell. Ted says it was "Wanigan".

Jack recalls that Dad and Canute Skahl decided that the easiest way to transport a load of lumber or slabs from Canute's water powered mill to our ranch was to make a huge raft of it and pile it up well and sail down the river. They lashed it with ropes and set off, one man to each side paddling and steering. All went fairly well until they went over a rocky rapid. The rocks cut the ropes underneath and the whole pile began to fall apart. They tried desperately to hold it together with their legs but it completely disintegrated and they had to "abandon ship" and struggle for shore.

Then I'm sure there was a story of trying to bring a huge load of tree moss down the river on a raft. This was used with "mudding" for chinking between logs in buildings. The moss acted like a giant sponge and before going very far sank. Again the men got to shore safely. One more lesson learned the hard and wet way!

Before getting on to the river crossings I should mention Jack's homecoming from hospital in 1919. Ted came by wagon in the spring of 1910, and I came by steamer in July 1911 and Jack by train to Vavenby. The train came in about 3 a.m. and it was 250 below zero and no crossing here. So Dad took a horse and cutter to our river bank, walked across the ice on a fairly safe foot path. He had arranged to borrow Barne's team to drive to the railway stop at Mrs. McCorvie's crossing to fetch Mother and baby Jack who was snugly wrapped in a clothes basket. Mother had to walk across on the ice with Dad carrying the baby. They got to the freezing cutter and drove up to the house. At that time we had a Chinese cook - "Sing". He was up, fires going, and kettle boiling and no one was any the worse for their frigid experience.

Jack tells the most hair raising tales of crossing the river on the ice which they had to do frequently. This was partly because they bought hay across at

Peavine and it was easier to bring the sheep to the hay than the hay to the sheep. Once a good safe crossing was established it was fine and the sheep crossed easily in single file. We took the team and sleigh back and forth most winters. Toward spring when the ice began to get rotten one never crossed without a good stout pole to test the ice and also to hang on to if one should go through.

Jack says when crossing a team and sleigh toward spring time he fixed up a safety devise. The "king pin" which held the double trees to the tongue of the sleigh had a ring to which he attached a rope, one jerk on this rope from the driver and the team would be free from the sleigh and hopefully struggle on if they should go through. Another trick to distribute weight was to hitch a single horse to the front end of the tongue of the sleigh tied with a "Tom fool Knot" you could jerk loose to free the horse immediately should he begin to go through.

A very scary crossing Jack remembers in March of 1949 was when Dora's brother Art Cameron arrived driving a team and sleigh with his wife Ruth desperately ill on a stretcher and no way to cross the river at Vavenby or getting to Birch Island. He just had to get Ruth to the night train to get to Kamloops hospital. There was a very rotten shaky crossing down below the Jones place to which they could drive in Art's team and wagon.

It was pitch dark and Ted led the way with a gas lantern. Jack and Art carried Ruth on the stretcher. Jack says he could push a pole through the ice in places and it was a wonder they made it across. Jack had an old model A Ford, with a rumble seat, over on the other side of the river. Art somehow managed to sit with the stretcher across his knees for the bumpy rough ride to the Vavenby station. Once there the section foreman, Olie Johnson, rushed up the tracks to put torpedoes out to have the train make an emergency stop. Thankfully they got Ruth on board safely and headed for the hospital.

What a life with no phones, no reliable cars and no bridges to cross the river, just really brave, reliable and caring neighbours.

Quite a number of people lost livestock trying to water when the ice was unsafe or a long towards spring when the cattle were less fearful of the ice. We were lucky and lost only one beautiful Jersey heifer, probably pushed in by the other cattle when watering at a hole in the ice.

We did almost lose our favourite horse Mickey, who dropped through when pulling our cutter across.

Luckily Dad was there and while he was deciding how best to rescue the horse I rushed around to get any available men to help, there were several handy. I seem to remember they got an old door under Mickey after pulling up his hindquarters by his tail and front by his halter. Dad said Mickey seemed to know he was being helped and struggled valiantly. It was a wonder to me that the whole rescue party didn't go into the water as well, but mercifully the ice held and Mickey was none the worse.

When we were older, in our teens, we forded the horses over quite often when the river was low. The water rushing and gurgling around the horses legs made us feel dizzy. Mrs Jones told us to always have a smooth stick, like a bit in our mouths, to bite on. Sure enough it worked and we always used one.

Dad impressed upon us, if you ever get into any kind of mix-up in water with a horse slide down and hang on to the horses tail. You will never get hurt and the horse will eventually pull you to shore. If you hang on to the reins his front feet could badly injure you. June and I had some scary crossings, once when mush ice was running and we got below the ford and into deeper water. Right now I do wonder why we had to cross that day. June remembers that the sheep were grazing at Peavine. The weather changed and it was time to begin feeding hay. The wagon and harnesses were over there but the team was on this side of the river. It was so hard on the horses legs.

I remember once June and I were invited to a party at the Noble's place. We packed our best dresses and shoes, etc. and tied them on our saddles. Forging the river (an easy crossing this time) we rode the 7 or 8 miles to Noble's, changed our duds and had a lovely time. We rode back in darkness to Aunt Annie's place where we slept in her barn. When it was light we forded the river and came home. Quite a night alright.

One day Dad was setting off to cross the river by fording with the team and wagon when the river was pretty low. This was to save an 8 mile trip around by ferry. Somehow he hooked the team too long and just as he was well started and into the deepest place the tongue came out of the neck yoke and dropped. The water would have been up to his waist and very swift. Remembering that river stones get placed like shingles from the flow of the current he headed the team on the down stream angle. They slowly bumped along and the team kept on each side of the tongue and they managed to reach shallow water. He was then able to get down and hook them up.

Ferries were a great invention when they worked properly. They were made of two big scows or pon-

toons, decked across with heavy planks and a landing deck hinged on either side. This apron, as it was called, would be either steep in low water or fairly flat in high water. Many a fancy car got hung up on those big hinges when the water was low. The whole affair was attached to a cable stretched across the river and the current pulled the ferry back and forth. There was a good railing around it which we fortified with woven wire when crossing the sheep. We could cross 125 ewes and lambs in one trip so we were able to get 1000 head over fairly quickly. This was always done in early morning before regular traffic began. I remember one sheep escaping off the ferry but she swam safely to shore.

When mush ice was running thickly and before the ferry was taken out for the winter we would sometimes help the ferry man by standing out on a pontoon smashing the ice loose as it collected between the pontoons. Had we slipped and fallen in we would surely have drowned, even though there was always a row boat tied behind. There would have been no way to be rescued from that icy rushing torrent. June and I did this several times. At my present age it curdles my blood just thinking of the risk we took.

Once when Ted, Jack, June and I drove the team up and shouted for the ferry man he was always away and we could not make anyone hear. Ted decided to try and cross on the cable with a rope looped over the cable and tied to a sack to sit on. The idea was to fetch the ferry himself. As the river is at least 110 yards across and 30 feet from the cable to the water he wisely gave up the idea and climbed down safely before he had gone too far.

We all became quite expert boatmen in our teens. Our boat was usually a heavy old home made tub and our oars were semi-dry poles with a hole drilled though for a steel pin to fit into the oar lock hole and 2 foot board nailed on to make it into an oar. We often used broken rake teeth for the pin but in high water when there were sweeps along the shore these crazy oar locks caught and often almost upset us when trying to land. This was during the depression and when oars or oar locks were lost we could not afford to buy new ones. Mostly though we poled up the shore line a good distance and then paddled furiously, going with the current and landing far below on the other side of the river. Then to return you poled along that side and paddle hard to return home.

We always had a boat of sorts. Aunt Annie would whistle with her police whistle when she wanted someone to come over and any shouting or yelling we heard would mean someone wanted to come over.

Once, the first year Mother was out here, she said they suddenly heard a flute being played across the river. Such an astonishing sound! They ran down to the boat and went over and found a young man sitting on the porch of Mrs. McCorvie's "Stopping House" playing his flute.

Quite a thrill in an era for no radio or t.v. and no noisy mill as today. We did have a beloved old Edison phonograph and many cylinder records which we just loved. Mother's lovely square grand piano brought great joy over the years. When it was shipped from England it was well packed in a zinc lined case. It came up from Kamloops in the steamer and was put off across the river. Dad had no way of getting it over until the river froze and he had a good safe crossing. Then he put a logging chain around it and dragged it across the ice and up the house with his team and horses. It did get a bit out of tune from this treatment, but Mother had tuning forks and key and between them they were able to crank it up into fair shape.

When we began school in 1917 there were no pupils on the far side of the river. However when the Graffunder family came, and various others, the river played a big part in their being able to attend school. High water and rotten ice made for dangerous conditions. A basket, which held 4 adults or 6 children, was made which was hung from the ferry cable and the ferryman would pull it across by rope. Jack does not think it was used much in very high water in case it hung too low and dipped in the rushing torrent.

A group attending a dance in Birch Island had used a basket to cross the river. When it was time to go home the ferryman put too many people in and when it reached the middle of the river it dipped into the freezing cold water right up to the poor peoples knees. I believe they were stuck there for some time, but had gradually managed to pull it to safety. Very likely the ferryman, Dave Melville, had entrusted the basket to this group as it is unlikely he would have overloaded it.

Several times over the years the cable broke and the ferry went sailing down the river to catch up on some island or shore line. When this happened there was no way that it could be brought back up the river in one piece. It had to be dismantled and hauled back to the ferry site and put together again.

Once the cable snapped just as the ferry landed to pick up school children. 'Unky' and the ferryman were on it and managed to jump to shore. Then all had to walk down to our ranch where Dad crossed them in his old boat and they walked back to Vavenby.

To me at 79 years, I realize all the dangers that

we encountered and thought nothing of it. We were brought up I think to be very confident and self-assured, perhaps a little cocky!

We used river water for our household for many years until Dad got his pipeline in. Some one had to pack it, two buckets at a time, up a steep pitch and across the flat - a tough job. Mother had two little barrels at the house and the boiler on her cook stove that had to be filled each day. This began about mid August when our creek dried up and continued through the winter. Jack remembers some lambings, before the creek came on, when water had to be packed for the ewes. The water was hauled in a large wooden barrel on a "go devil" pulled by a horse.

Another use of the river was for cutting ice in winter and storing it for summer in an ice house, insulated with saw dust. The ice was cut in two foot blocks, heaved out by hand, loaded on a sleigh and hauled to the ice house. This was rather dangerous with the swift river current running.

At last Birch Island got a bridge in 1937 and the one at Vavenby was built in 1949. A safe crossing in any season.

Another incident that concerned the river was when I was about 20 and was really 'tickled' when Bernard Johnston asked me to help with a small cattle drive. It was probably Jone's and his cattle as the Jone's hired man, Jack Klassen was one of the cowboys. We had to ford the cows and calves and had a very hard time to start them across. Finally Bernard roped a calf and dragged it into the river and its' mother followed as he had hoped. With Jack and I yelling and crowding the cattle in the rear we got them all started across. I was used to fording, as was my horse, but when we were about half way across Jack's horse stumbled badly and Jack fell off. He was a 'prairie chicken', as he later called himself, and could not swim. I think water in his boots held him upright and as he flapped his arms the current miraculously took him into shallow water and he got safely to shore. It gave us all a most terrible fright. I can still see him shouting with fright and flapping his way down and across the river. We did finally catch the horse and I guess he rode in soaking wet clothes the short distance over the railway and up to the range. I think Bernard snubbed Jack's horse up to his own and insisted Jack be led across, his eyes shut and holding on like a leech. I really can't remember our return crossing.

After the railway went through, about 1913, there was one sure way of crossing the river, but it required a lot of nerve and spunk. This was to walk over the big

C.N.R. bridge near Birch Island. Not only was it very long and high above the water, but when you got out over the main current it shook and vibrated horribly, the water below roaring and you were convinced a train was coming. Should such a terrifying thing happen, the escape was to rush to a water barrel (these were about 50 or more feet apart) and either get in or cling to the side of it hoping you would not be shaken off or pass out with fright and fall into the torrent below. There was no board walk, just the stringers and bridge timbers between the rails to walk on.

(The Birch Island railway bridge is not very high, only about 30 feet, but in peak high water one did fear and feel the vibration of the current. Originally it was very long as it was all trestle across the big island and at the east end. - JKM.)

Jack and Nailo (Noel) crossed it twice pushing their bikes. Once was when they were determined to ride their bikes the 90 odd miles to Kamloops to see their first circus. Jack tells me he and I went once but I have no recollection of it. (We were heading to the sheep camp and I doubt if Madeline would have made it if she had not firmly believed there was a train coming behind us. JKM.) He said I was so sure a train was coming that we took hands and ran from barrel to barrel. It was rather tricky to keep one's feet on the timbers safely. Having always hated heights I can't believe I ever started across.

One of our pack horses, "White Buck", got loose on the Fog Horn range, came down the trail to B.I. and headed for home by the railway tracks. I guess he missed the road that crosses the tracks and kept right on about a mile until he came to the bridge. Apparently White Buck was approaching the crossing after dark and a freight train came along and he galloped ahead of the train and missed the crossing. He would have made it over the bridge but went through where the timber spacing changed about a quarter of the way over. The train just had to stop because it may have derailed if it had gone over him. The train backed up to Birch Island and got the section crew out to lift him out. The section crew came along and recognized our horse and decided to try to rescue him. He would weigh a good 1000 pounds or more. Some how the men got him up and onto a push car and safely off the bridge. He was none the worse except for badly scraped legs and bruises. I presume they took him to the crossing and turned him loose to come home on his own. We felt most railway crews would have shot him and dumped him over into the river. Caring, kind people again.

Another time the section crew helped Jack out

was when a new shepherd arrived at Birch Island with a very pregnant wife and a huge pile of luggage and belongings. The crew loaded all the goods on a push car, with poor wife poised on top, and over the bridge they all went. Jack's sheep camp was not far off, but what to do with the wife? Jack at once thought of his dear friend and neighbour, Mrs. Montagnon and she kindly took in the wife and looked after her. Twin babies arrived later on.

1936 was a flood year and there was no other crossing but the railway bridge for about a month. The road from our place to Birch Island was always under water, of course. The C.N.R. decided to do some work on the main big trestle and so changed the course of the water somewhat, sending more water through the smaller channel. Its odd they did not expect this to wash away the foundation at each end of the smaller section of the bridge. This it did and could have caused many fatalities. A transcontinental passenger train went over safely but the next, a freight loaded with prairie wheat was not so lucky. The middle of this train, where most of the weight was, crashed through, leaving the engine and several cars across the river and piled upon the west side and the caboose and more cars on the other side. Several fully loaded cars landed right in the river and were not salvaged.

The "moccasin telegraph" soon spread the word that there was wheat lying on the ice and pushed into huge piles. It didn't take long before every settler around with a team and sleigh to arrive and help themselves. Mostly they used scoop shovels and buckets but I remember Dad telling us that Albin Nord greatly speeded up the operation by smashing a hole in one of the box cars and the wheat spouted out into the sacks and pails. The claims agent, known as the "Bloke with the derby" soon put a stop to this and charged 50 cents a sack as it was found that a bran sack held 240 pounds of wheat. It was still a good buy. This was also stopped when rumour got back to him that we were filling wool sacks. Entirely untrue, of course. Dad did haul many loads home, about 6 to 7 miles - probably one load per day. It was the best quality wheat and we ground it for both porridge and flour with the old mill we happened to have. We also fed the sheep on it. The men really enjoyed all getting together and this change from winter chores, not to mention getting the free wheat. Best of all no one was killed in this wreck.

But a sequel to this tale may have led to poor old Bill Hayworth's murder. In changing the course of the river a good slice of Bill's land was washed away. He decided to sue the C.N.R. and put in a claim and was

evidently sent a sum of money in payment. Word soon spread around that Bill had received the money. It was the 30's and many transients around. Poor old Bill was shot and his home completely ransacked. Ernie Dee used to drop in and see Bill but this winter Ernie and Bill were out of sorts so he did not stop when he saw no smoke on the farm. It was Frank Dennin that found Bill dead and frozen. This murder was never solved.

One final little story of crossing the river. John Larson, a scandinavian and excellent skier, ran out of snuff and 'come hell or high water' nothing was going to prevent him from getting across to the store for more snuff. No boat crossing, no fording in safety, so Larson found a place where the mush ice was jamming and just skied across. The mush ice had stopped moving and had a frozen crust on it. Larson skied down the east ferry hill at a good speed and the momentum carried him across. The skis would distribute his weight and he likely carried a long strong pole. But anyhow he made it over and back safely and boasted of his feat!

Like fire the river was a good friend but a terrible enemy. We needed it for water but a number of narrow escapes we all had.

One important fact worth mentioning was that the river, before the C.N.R. went through in 1913, was the quickest possible way to get out for medical help. Riding a horse down the trail would take two very long days, more likely three. Jack and I recall being told that our Dad once made the trip down by canoe, or maybe even a slim raft, when the river was high by paddling hard all the way. A raft was preferable as one did not have to bring it back up but just scrap it on arrival in Kamloops. Dad suffered terribly from tooth ache so very likely he was headed to the dentist.

The more Jack and I talk about the old river the more things we remember. To "give the Devil his due", we had some wonderful picnics, many at Sandham's beach where it was quite pleasant to swim if one didn't mind the cold water. Some amazing looking bathing suits appeared! Mother's was rather severe, navy with white trim, sleeve to the elbow and pantalettes to the knee. But Mrs. Monty's was quite daring - bright mauve with cretonne trim, a square neck and puff sleeves. Neither of these good ladies would swim with us, but when we had visitors with no swim suits there was a great competition for these gala outfits.

Usually we swam in the slough, a low spot in the field next to the river. Dad cleaned and dug it out with a team and scraper and made a diving board. We all learned to swim there, as did many neighbours. The water got lovely and warm and was a favourite for frog

and toads, who laid strings of eggs which we got hung up in. The mosquitoes were so thick we had to keep submerged as much as possible. Dad was an excellent swimmer and encouraged us to swim. At least once, probably more, he swam across the river to get the ferry when no one was available to bring it over. How cold!

Another fun thing we did was set out night lines and catch the odd Dollivarden trout. Some anglers swore by gopher legs for bait, but we found a chicken's heart would very often catch one. You set your line in an eddy of the river and it was so exciting to rush down the next morning and hopefully find a nice fish. We knew this was highly illegal but were allowed to break this one law. Mother would say the North Thompson is not classed as a fishing river.

When all water for the house in late August had to be hauled from the river we would load all the washing and tubs on wheel barrows and head for our beach. We had a good fireplace in a bank and heated water easily. We used home made soap, awful stuff, but if



slivered up and boiled in a can it worked really well. We would have our boat tied near and rinse the freshly washed clothes right in the river. There was great excitement if a sheet got loose and had to be retrieved. Jack was only about 12 years then. His job was to collect wood, rinse smaller things and keep our \$10 Eaton gramophone wound up and playing loudly. June was usually with us on these occasions and what fun we all had. We had clothes lines between the trees and would spend the day down there, busy and happy. Then pack everything up and home to some of Mother's new bread, jam and Devonshire cream.

Jack tells of the time that Pridgeon, the ferryman, decided to wash his blankets by towing them behind the ferry. They picked up so much silt it took about 10 men to pull them out. Then the problem of getting out the silt. I guess Pridgeon left them "washing" too long.

(p.s. Valerie is the only one of us who has canoed to Kamloops since the old days. This, of course, was in a modern fibre glass canoe and not in the hand hewn dugout. She and a friend did it in two days.)

## The Importance of Good Friends

How our old friend Ernie Dee saved my life.

It was thanksgiving Sunday, October 1952. I was all alone at home. Alice was in Vancouver with a very sick baby (June). They were staying with Alice's mother. Ted and family were living at Johnston's, now Shook's. The Pye family, our help at the Jones house, were away for the day and luckily they had not borrowed my car. I think they had their own at the time. Saturday I had gone to Vavenby Store and I was really supposed to have made a camp tending trip to Foghorn that day.

At the store cheerful Irene took one look at me and said, "Jack, what is wrong with you. You look terrible". I replied that I felt alright but figured I had better not go to the mountain. I had a fair sleep that night but did not feel right.

Shortly in the afternoon I began to have my old hernia symptoms which I had for years and finally recognized by the doctor as a hernia and I had arranged for an operation in November. These attacks usually started as a buildup a painful gas but always passed off in an hour or so. This one didn't. I couldn't move the lower body it was all drawn up and tight. Of course we had no telephone at the time.

Ernie Dee had been working in a fish cannery on Prince Rupert that summer and was coming home to Vancouver by coming down the valley on the C.N.R. That evening he got to thinking about us and on the spur of the moment decided to stop off and visit us. Fortunately Disk Boulton, for some extraordinary reason, was at the station so Ernie asked him if he would drive him to Aveley Ranch, and he did. The joy felt on hearing the sound of the back door opening and a long familiar shout, "Is anyone home?". There he found me.

Well the passenger train had long gone. We thought about us getting on the caboose of the #403 freight train and wondered about a car trip. Well the freight was late but found Doug Masterton, the hotel keeper, who had just got a brand new car to use as a taxi and was making trips to Kamloops. Ernie got busy on the phone talking with the doctor and hospital and had them all alerted and so we set out.

Masterton figured that was the fastest trip he ever made on the old, old road. Two and a quarter hours right to the hospital.

Two torturous I remember - all the bumps on the road, then shaving my abdomen with a dry safety razor. By 3:00 a.m. Dr. Wallace and Dr. Cameron were operating. I don't remember how long it took but I do

remember the anaesthetic was very slow to take hold for some reason. I was conscious and kept telling them to stop. It felt like I was being gutted alive.

Anyway I was soon unconscious and all went well. It was only just in time as gangrene had already started and a large section of my intestine had to be taken out.

Soon after the operation or some hours later there came the ordeal of putting the stomach pump, with its two big tube, down my throat via my nose. Three R.N.s tried in turn and gave up. My reactions and nausea were so intense and there was the possibility of me vomiting and choking. About this time my first of several special nurses arrived on the scene (no intensive care at that time). Well that lady was a marvel, I think she hypnotized me. I remember looking into her eyes as she, oh so slowly, eased the tube down. We seemed to hold each others eye contact. Finally success. But oh, the discomfort of those next ensuing days.

I laid on my side with my back crooked to try to get the pump in the right spot and keep it there. I think some kind of portable x-ray unit was brought around periodically to make sure the pump was in the right position. After many days of this I was able to almost enjoy the slow recovery.

There was a radio in the private ward and I was able to read a little. My enjoyment was rudely interrupted when they moved me out into a very large men's ward, no radio, no privacy.

I received a message my brother Ted would be coming to visit me at the hospital, however he never did come. I expected him every day for days. That is the worse thing for even a younger patient. I was 33 that year. Now that I am older similar things are torturous, to wait expecting. If someone says they are coming, come or keep quiet.

Alice could not leave sick little June with her mother because Grandma was too busy looking after her old invalid ladies in her home. However sister-in-law Jean was fortunately in Kamloops to keep an eye on me.

Jacqueline was 6 years old and was living with Ted and Dora and had started her first year at school. Ian at one year was being looked after by Mrs. Pye. I forget how long I was in the hospital, about two and a half weeks I think. Sister Madeline and June Osborne came over from Vernon and took me back to Madeline's to recuperate and get some strength back. Madeline had already become a widow but was able to drive me home a day or two before Alice and little June arrived home from Vancouver. A great home coming.

Bill Gabry and Roger DeVogt had recently brought the sheep home from Foghorn. It was a beautiful fall. I was home in time to help Ted and Tom Pye wrangled for 'bucking' and all I could do is watch. Pye and I had marked a great number of ewes special for

lambing and we wanted to do another observation.

I can not remember when we started using tags. Soon I felt to good that just before 'busking' I cut out all the ewes and ewe lambs.

### More Random Memories of Sheep and husbandry



In the mid 1920s when I was about 6 or 7 years and older sister Madeline was about 14 or 15 we were trailing small groups of quite young lambs and their mothers around by the ferry to Peavine which we often had been able to rent at that time because it had very early grazing.

This was a long slow trip for the ewes would have been held in the Shack Field, our most easterly field then. Border Cheviot lambs were fiends to trail. Riley would have commenced the trip alone about daylight. Madeline and I after breakfast would leave home with a horse and buggy, along with lunch and several large boxes to place tired out lambs in later, to catch up to Riley and the sheep. If all had gone well he might have reached Aveley Creek, so on we would go towards the ferry making about 1/2 mile an hour. Some times we would gain 100 yards with the tail end and then lose 50 yards of what we had gained when a surge of lambs would come back followed by a surge of ewes which, if they did not spot their lambs would try and go further back to where we had lost time. The lambs also had the same tendency or instinct.

Huey McKay, the ferryman, would be waiting

with all the gates in place. Riley and Huey would drive the first load onto the ferry and away to the other shore. Well on this particular trip a ewe looked back and blatted to her lamb which was left on the landing. He hearing her promptly dived into the river and valiantly started swimming after the ferry which had about a 40 foot start. Of course the current swept him down stream somewhat, however he kept angling towards and below the landing on the other side. When only 25 feet from the shore he turns around and swims back to the shore he

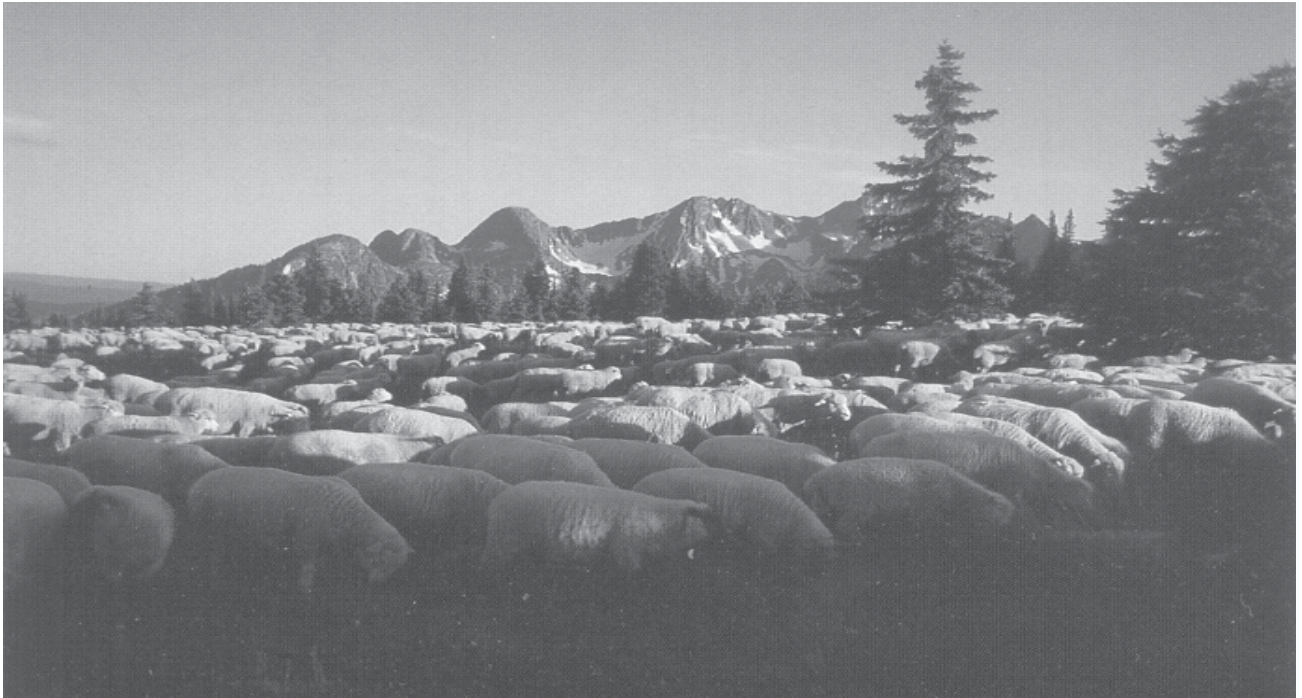
had previously left, presumably having lost direct visual and sound contact with his mother and decided to go back to where he had seen her the last time.

Madeline pushed back up the narrow side grade and was beyond him when he floundered out of the river and quickly climbed the bank and quite a jungle to the road. With a little persuasion he rejoined the flock.

A lamb of that age, probably only 10 days old, could be an amazing fast swimmer, staying high in the water. He would have swam about 800 feet in the very cold water. The fact that the wool would be short but floats would be an advantage.

Well we witness the same occurrence several times on these occasions later in the season with a lamb about 2 1/2 months old with the river about high water of about 10 mile an hour current 300 feet wide and rough. Again the lamb would cross to within 20 feet of the other shore and start coming back.

Another occasion after crossing with these younger lambs we were slowly trailing on and turned west along the narrow road to the Peavine filed where the road paralleled the railway track. There was a poor, as railway fencing was in those days, fence between



and then about 60 feet to the railway grade, which would be about 10 feet higher than the road. A freight train came by from the east behind us. Suddenly a lamb took off along the fence, soon he was through the fence and angling up to the train. Talk about fast, but the train was faster. Soon he was running right beside the wheels as though he was being sucked under it.

This was all observed by someone at the lead of the flock as we were about to stop and have our lunch. Well the last car of the train passed by and it seemed just in time. The lamb soon stopped, stood a while then turned and came back through the fence to the flock.

After our rest and lunch we would proceed the 2 miles on to Peavine. It often became quite hot, even in early or mid April. That's when we needed the boxes to put tired lambs in the buggy for a rest. It would be mid-afternoon that we reached our destination and I still remember how I suffered from the heat, at 7 or 6 years old, or thought I did.

Having heard the sheep out opposite my father would come across the river in our boat to take Riley and me straight home. Madeline would take the horse and buggy back around the 6 miles via the ferry, collecting the mail and other things on her way home. Riley would come back to the sheep at dark to corral them for the night and arranged for old Pridgeon to let them out to graze in the morning.

Pridgeon did know something of sheep. He had herded a band of sheep somewhere near Spences Bridge in the early 1890s before he and McCorvie came up the valley and started their cattle enterprise (an isolated

cattle kingdom).

Years later when we grazed the low range access to the valley during May and early June we often had quite a number of unaccounted strays when we moved home enroute to the mountain. Several times a ewe lamb, soaking wet, would appear at home having crossed the railway track through 2 fences, the big Peavine field and swam home with the river at full high water and very few good landing place to climb out. The river is a minimum of 300 feet with a current of about 12 m.p.h.

Years later, at the end of June 1942 to be exact, is another little swimming story.

We had been across the valley at our most westerly camp, at the old White place west of slate creek. On leaving and working our way east and home via the ferry we were found to be exactly 3 head unaccounted for. After spending a week in home pasture brother Ted and I trailed the flock west down the road to Birch Island, which is where our trail leaves the valley to the Foghorn range. On this route we passed opposite to the camp across the valley that we had left 10 days previously. We spent the day in the Birch Island on the railway wye to head up the trail the next morning. Ted would come part of the way but I would take the sheep on alone to a skeleton camp at Axel's cabin on top.

Back down at Birch Island Ted was told that a ewe and 2 lambs had been seen under the railway bridge on the far side of the river. Two days later Ted sent the pack horses up the mountain with friends that were coming up to visit me. He packed them up and went a

mile up the trail to make sure the horses and packs are behaving. He then went back to Birch Island where at the railway crossing comes a ewe and 2 lambs soaking wet trailing along apparently unconscious of anything else except reaching the foot of the trail and heading on up the mountain.

That afternoon I came part way down to meet the pack horses. We met, stopped a few minutes rest when from behind comes the ewe and her lambs still trotting along, as Riley would have said. We never did catch up to them.

Well she was one or two days late in her rendezvous with the flock but made it. How is it that all 3 could jump into the river at the same time, stay together, climb out through a maze of 'sweeps' and river side jungle and find the trail to the mountain.

It should be noted that in the late 1930s and 40s we had a flock that was changing rapidly. With careful selection the Avey Corridale was forming rapidly together with surprisingly changed behaviour patterns.

Ted and I, doing our own herding in turn, were able to make continuous observations of tendencies and changes. During this period the Foghorn was probably at its best in field and terrain.

During the 1930s we were still trailing the flock all the way from home to the Foghorn range almost nonstop, about 15 miles, with only a brief lunch stop at 2-mile Creek. Whether the lead stopped for long I do not remember.

One time a strong lamb jumped off a ten foot bank onto the hard earth road, breaking his front leg, possibly at what is called the "lamb break" when butchering. He lifted his leg for a while but later started walking on it bent like a short ski pointing forward. He made out fine and did not start to tire until half way up the 5,000 foot climb on the rocky, narrow, rough trail. He made it over the steepest to where the grade got easier then started to lay down and hide. However we kept him going until we were within a mile of the camp and bedground when he hid on us. We could not find him.

The flock must have then grazed and done some blatting during the night and also when they pulled out to graze early on the following morning, but no lamb. Between 2 weeks or a month later a nice clean sleek lamb appeared at home, not even lame. The break had healed perfectly. I have often noticed the first swelling can make a temporary splint but how did the ski leg or ankle straighten out after walking 15 miles on it. Several camp tending trips had been made up the trail and we had not seen him on the trail or road. However later a boy at Birch Island told us that he saw it at the rail-

way crossing and had opened the gates for him, the only sighting.

Another in incident near the same time period a ewe played out on the trail in the steep country. She was a 'lunger' breathing and coughing badly. We left her behind to die. We did not see her on the way home the next day. She was never see on the trail or the road however about a month later we found her laying down and quite peacefully dead at her home gateway. It would seem that she just had to get home to die.

An american sheep herder once told me of a similar case were a ewe was left behind who actually had to have passed by or through several other bands of sheep and yet came home. This seems even more extraordinary.

Several times after we commenced bedding for the night at the foot of the trail at Birch Island we would have a late lamb, usually a strong single. We would find the just born lamb and simply leave them behind. On coming homeward bound the next afternoon we would pass the ewe and her lamb coming gayly along and nearly at the top. Quite a walk of a 4,000 to 5,000 feet climb for a 36 hour lamb. Several times they were seen joining the flock just before dark.

I remember well the evening I was checking behind the sheep as they were grazing their way in around Foghorn Hill from the Triangle. Well just a little way behind the tail end can a ewe with what looked like a new born lamb. This was mid July 1942. As soon as I reached her she looked at me, turned around, blatted and looked back. When I walked toward her she and the lamb started walking back the way she had come. When I stopped walking she stopped and turned to me. She led me back about 300 yards where she stopped, put her head down, blatted and looked at me.

Up to her I came and there from out of a little burned out level hollow stump appear the ears and head of a little twin lamb. He was like an egg in a cup. I soon got him out and he had a good suck. The ewe and her lamb soon rejoined the flock. I was really touched by that ewe guiding me back to where her lamb was in deserted. I suppose if it had been a single she would have stayed beside it till it died. But when the flock passe on and one lamb followed joining the flock was the strongest urge.

Back in the 1920s I remember the black ewe that our great uncle named the Murderess. As soon as she gave birth she set out to kill her lamb and would have if the lamb were not taken from her. This went for several seasons until we finally butchered her. I wonder if we had a black lamb to give her if she would have ac-

cepted it?

Then there was the unusual thing in the 1940s when 2 crossbred yearlings lambed right together. These two ewes were almost identical, the closest thing to identical twins in sheep that I have ever seen. Anyway the 2 single lambs were absolutely interchangeable as far as the mothers were concerned. Did the twins bred during the same hour, lamb during the same hour and produce lambs with identical smells?

Then there was the case of old Blackie who lived to be 19 and a half years and was then killed by a coyote. She produced twins every year during the first half of her life, followed by singles, then much later lambed every other year. This of course prolonged her life. Well in the spring of her last year she 'grannied' a twin whose mother had little milk. Blackie was pretty thin that spring and had no trace of a bag so we bottled the lamb thinking it would be nice to raise an orphan that had a mother to love.

Well Blackie and lamb got into the wrong bunch and were trailed to Allingham's, our other pasture east of Vavenby. It was 3 days before I got over there to bring her home when low and behold the lamb did not look hungry at all. On catching her I found she had a fair bag of milk. So she raised that lamb. It would seem that the mothering, together with the nursing of the lamb combined with the early spring grass brought on her milk. I know goats will start milking again in spring-time without kidding.

Again there was a ewe that grannied a twin from the mother who had no milk and so let her keep it as she had plenty of milk. Well that granny did not have her own lamb for 2 or 3 weeks and to our surprise accepted them both, training them to each have their own side otherwise the older lamb would have starved the younger.

One day in the month of June I was observing the flock, ewes were calling their lambs up for a suck when right in front of me came a lamb on the run and on from the other side came a yearling. They both dived under the ewe at the same time. It was several seconds before the mother realized that something wasn't quite right, kicked and moved off. The yearling, undoubtedly her last year's lamb whose mind went back when he heard her call, just stood there looking rather 'sheep-ish'.

There were new and old bedgrounds on the range. Sometimes the flock would graze out in the night in the near full moon. Usually the last grazing out is at midnight. If we allowed this and brought them slowly back onto an old bedground they would be there to

daybreak.

We had some old bedgrounds, really old, say 20 years and used for several generations. They may have been well chosen locations for a place chosen by the flock at the beginning.

I the days of my herding 1939 to 45 and Ted's, 1937 and 38 when the black flies were so bad during the day we often let the flock graze for several hours at night, particularly on Foghorn Hill.

In the mid 1920 when we had a lot of Border Cheviots the sheep would not 'flock'. They were seldom all together and became very spooky. They seemed on edge at night and also at other times. Riley came to the conclusion that this coincided with times when he was burning carcasses. Later he even stopped cooking with mutton fat. Riley lived out of a frying pan.

The Cheviots had a strong homing instinct, both for bedgrounds and home-ground. Unfortunately they did not all decide in which bedground. When I was very young and gong to the mountain with the camp-tender I have memories of Riley arriving in camp after dark with a portion of the band which he had half expected to find at another camp.

By 1929 we had quite enough dose of Cheviots and were fortunate in being able to sell 200 young ewes at a very good price, the largest lot going to a sheepman named Ingram Galiano Island. That fall we replaced most of our rams with Ramboulets, all horned, ugly and wrinkly. The ewes thought them very ugly and all took off to the other end of the pasture with the rams in hot pursuit. It was sometime plus a great deal of courting on the part of the rams before things settled down to normal.

I witnessed a extreme opposite thing the fall of 1935. The ewes were spread out at the far end of a long narrow pasture on a bench above the ranch site, the 'Eustache Bench'. I took the rams up to the ewes at this end, the rams stood for a while, sniffed the air a bit and finally realizes where the ewes were and started in their direction. It was then that I saw the ewes all bunched up and coming in a wild stampede to meet the rams.. It was quite a collision as the met. I have never witnessed such eagerness before or since. Spring 1936 was the fastest and best percentage of lambing we had ever experienced up to that date. We made 2 shipments of lambs direct from the mountain range, one in late August and another in early September.

That year we also stayed in the mountain until October 10th. We had noticed in previous years the later it was to leave the high range the better the breeding and the following lambing. This was Bob Gibson's first

year herding and we had established a new camp at Twin Lake where we had spent most of the summer until shipping time.

One other case of strange behaviour, this time in a particular ewe which we had observed since she was a lamb of exceptional growth. She was born a single from a ewe that was probably an Oxford-Ramboulet cross and sired by a Hampshire ram. She weighed 74 lbs. at 2 months old. We named her 'Blackie' because we did not have any black ewes at the time and she would have been the only black faced one in the flock.

We once named she became quite a character. When she was several years old I particularly noticed that when breeding time came she picked out or decided which ram she wanted. Together with 'Ditto' the ram no other rams came near. Blackie and that particular ram would never leave each other. For 3 days and nights they grazed side by side and slept side by side on the bedground, in the same place every night. They became inseparable for those 3 days, neither of them take any interest in others.

Another trait Blackie had was that she maintained a certain position in the flock. She was usually at the right hand side of the tail end when grazing along on the range. Yet another trait that she displayed when she became older was periodically very lame in one leg or foot (not from and infection). At these times she would disengage herself from the flock and simply stay on

some preferred spot, usually on a hill. She wore a large round bell. One could hear that bell a mile or more but could seldom pin point its direction. Sooner or later she would rejoin the flock but not until she was good and ready. She was never a leader and no other ewe stayed out with her.

I wonder if sheep have a sense of direction, a telepathy with the flock and a language in bleating. They seem to have a unique ability to go almost straight to a desired point, whether for a grazing area, a bedground or home. If a particular route is prevented by too much jungle, heavy terrain or by the herder they will reach their desired destination in a most round about route or even a half circle. Typical of this would be a day before storm when the whole flock have a common urge to go to a favourite, may be very old, but a more sheltered bedground. Sometimes when the herder tried to prevent something like this taking place half the flock make there way to where they want to go anyway. Then one has a split bunch. Spitting off is quite common depending upon the terrain and geography of the range.

After taking a great deal of trouble to direct the offshoot group one later finds that if he had done nothing to influence them they would have dome together perfectly all on their own. Perhaps they have a built in compass in their brain they have not lost through domestication.



## Post Script

by Jacqueline Murray, eldest of Jack and Alice's children

In reading back over Dad's writing it brings back to me some observations of his life, and how it affected us all. Dad was very attached to his sheep and to Aveley Ranch. I don't think he ever thought of it as work but as a way of life. He had a real love and passion for his sheep and for Aveley Ranch.

When he first started his writings he intended them to be a history of the family and of Aveley Ranch for his children. However as one can see, he would get side tracked to the sheep and at times, he revealed to me, that he would keep forgetting whether he writing for the sheep history book or his family. It just happened that Grant MacEwan was putting together a book on Sheep History in the Canadian West at the same time Dad was starting his own writings. Grant McEwan had visited Dad, and asked him to contribute his part. The book was dedicated to him.

Dad started school in 1925, about the time that his brother Ted went off to high school in Kamloops. Soon after his sister Madeline went off to a private girls school on Vancouver Island. I was told that her Grandmother in England was very concerned that she was running 'wild', not as we speak of wild today, and that she was not getting a proper education. So it was at Grandmothers suggestion that she be sent off to a private school. Auntie Mada thinks that her grandmother probably sent money to help with the cost.

Uncle Ted went to UBC for one year after high school and then got a job with the Entomological Lab in Kamloops. The Moilliet family had been always well educated (they came from a long line of educated people.) So I expect it was thought it should continue.

Dad was not much interested in school and would only attend now and then. However he gained a wealth of knowledge from his home and his parents who were both well read and very knowledgeable. Much vital discussion took place in their home and fascinating people such as bishops and ministers frequently came to visit.

When Dad was about fifteen, he suddenly became very eager in school and was attending more regularly. He had a good teacher and education was more interesting, and he loved to read. There was always an abundance of books and scientific journals coming to the home.

When Dad's father suddenly died in 1935, it was

a terrible shock for them all. It is fascinating to read from Granny's journals how they just seemed to pick up their lives and carry on. Dad was only sixteen and he just picked up the reins and carried on. An old family friend, Winnie Dee once told me how after his fathers death it appeared he wanted to be just like his Dad. She said he dressed like him, talked, walked and thought like him. I imagine he missed his father so much that maybe this was the way he handled his grieving. He just wanted to be like his father in every way, trying to be his shadow. And I don't think he ever changed from that image.

Dad managed well and the big responsibility was probably great therapy in overcoming his grief. He had good help at this time and with his mother, they were a pillar of strength to each other.

Uncle Ted was away working at the lab in Kamloops at this time. Auntie Mada had married Ernest Rendell the previous year and was living in Vernon. She told me she came over to Kamloops to be with her father when he was in hospital but he only lived about a week from the onset of his complications following surgery. She then came up to the Ranch to be with her mother for awhile afterwards.

One year later Ted came home to the Ranch which was supposed to be for only one year, it turned into 30 years. He married Dora Cameron in 1943. Uncle Ted and Dad were partners on the ranch until he left again about 1960 when he returned to work in entomology. In later years he settled and retired in Summerland.

Dad married in 1945. He and mum had been writing each other for several years, and were definitely falling in love. We came across their old letters that mum had stored away in her old trunk They wrote to each other between 1942 until 1945. It must have been a big decision for mum to make as she certainly enjoyed her nursing career. I know she had inquired as to the possibility of doing some public health nursing around Vavenby. However it wasn't long before she was called on to perform her nursing skills as there was no hospital or nursing station in the area.

She also started the Vavenby Sunday school in 1955. Mum's life and history can be read in another account, it makes for a very interesting read. Mum died in 1984 after a along battle with Leukaemia.

It wasn't long until mum and Dad's family started to arrive, as well as Ted and Dora's. Dad and mum had four children, myself, June, Ian and Valerie. And there were cousins Joyce, Eric, Linda, Mary, Jeanne and Madeline. Mada and Ren had one daughter, Molly.

In 1949, Uncle Ted and Auntie Dora bought a farm nearer to Vavenby and Auntie Dora started a dairy know as Hill Top Dairy. Years later, about 1959, the family moved to Vernon and finally to Summerland.

Most of Dad's writings were of the early years in his father's time and his own life with the sheep before he was married. He did touch on some events after that, but in all his memories, his love of the sheep, and his life on the ranch really shows through. I had hoped he would have written a little more about us as a family growing up. Maybe he might have with our prodding had his health been better. It was after his heart attack when he had some time on his hands that he first decided to start writing.

His health improved somewhat for a few years and he was back to many of his old duties, like irrigating a little and mowing hay with his old side mount mower which he was reluctant to give up. He became quite deaf from the effects of Mennier's disease, and he also developed diabetes, along with his breathing difficulties from several bouts of congestive heart failure. This no doubt was further complicated by many years of smoking a pipe, which he stopped in the later years.

With all this his heart got weaker and he began to fail. Through all this he continued to write little bits whenever he thought of something, even if it was on scraps of paper he found while in the hospital. Sometimes on paper towelling!! The last of his writing was

snippets on sheep behaviour.

Because Dad's writing just seemed to come to an end, I thought it needed a kind of epilogue. So I have tried to pull things together with a few thoughts of Dad's life and of his writings.

I always thought of Dad as one who was very contented. Maybe that's why he enjoyed his pipe so much. While he had a good smoke he was probably contemplating life more than we ever thought. Dad's reason for fulfilment, I think, is the fact that he had no great expectations beyond just living and carving out a particular lifestyle with his sheep and doing his best to make Aveley Ranch continue. He did not wish to travel the world or climb the highest mountain peak. His success was in being satisfied with his life and the life that had been handed to him. He did make one trip to England to visit his roots: aunts, uncles and cousins. He made a few trips to eastern Canada mostly on sheep business. His other travelling was mainly to the coast or to the Okanagan. He was always happy just to come home and live in what was his comfort zone.

Before Dad died he expressed that he was at peace with himself. He felt he had fulfilled all he had desired and wished to accomplish. He said how different it was for his father who was snatched away so quickly in the prime of his life, without seeing his endeavours on the ranch achieved. But maybe his father's endeavours were really achieved through Dad. I am sure that Grandfather would have been very proud.

