

Kamloops Museum and Archives



Guy Cecil Whitaker fonds

1979.009, 0.2829, 0.2885

Compiled by
Jaimie Fedorak, December 2017
Revised by
Jaimie Fedorak, July 2019

KAMLOOPS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

1979.009, etc.

Access: Some records restricted

Guy Cecil Whitaker Fonds

Textual

1877-1932

0.32 meters

Title: Guy Cecil Whitaker fonds

Dates of Creation: 1877-1932

Physical Description: 32 cm of textual records

Biographical Sketch:

Guy Cecil Whitaker was a rancher at Grande Prairie (Westwold) near Kamloops. His ranch was known as the Pylewell Ranch. He also owned the Pylewell Hotel, the Homfray Ranch, the Guernsay Ranch, and numerous other properties in the Westwold area. He married Olga Tunstall in 1912, and moved to Vancouver, BC, in 1918.

Scope and Content:

Fonds consists of correspondence, account books, agreements, employee timesheets, and assessment notices relating to the Pylewell Ranch, and an impress book of letters from A.P. Forster and F.G. Gordon relating to the Pylewell Hotel and Whitaker's various properties.

Custodial History:

Fonds was originally comprised of accessions 1979.009 and 0.2885, which were donated to the Kamloops Museum and Archives on February 20, 1979 by Mrs. Janice Redford (nee McLeod) and in February 1960 by Evander McLeod, respectively. Evander McLeod was a rancher in Westwold, and Janice Redford was his daughter, but it is unknown how they came into possession of these records. Accession 0.2829 was accrued to this collection during reprocessing in 2019, after being formerly placed in the Vertical Files Collection. It has no donor information available.

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Notes:

Source of supplied title: Title based on contents of fonds.

Arrangement: Order that fonds arrived in was maintained by the archivist, with some rearrangement of loose papers in 1979.009 accession into logical groupings in 1979.

Access restrictions: Records in file 1979.009.008 Agreements are restricted until 2030 on the basis that they contain Personal Information. The remainder of the records in this collection are open. The archivist reserves the right to restrict access to any fragile material for preservation purposes.

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Finding aids: File list is available for this collection.

Accruals: No further accruals expected.

Treatment Note: Items 1979.009.001-004 were removed from poor quality Shannon files in December 2017.

Condition Note: Items 1979.009.002 and 003 are very damaged and fragile due to water and mold damage. Handle with care.

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Accession	Description	Dates	Location
0.2885.001	Account Book for Pylewell Hotel – File includes a bound guest registry and letters from Arthur P. Forster and Frank G. Gordon, relating to Pylewell Hotel. See Appendix 1 for details. – 6.5 cm of textual records	1912-1932	1/1
0.2885.002	Letter from A.P. Forster – File includes a letter from A.P. Forster. – 1 textual record	1912	1/2
1979.009.001	Volume 1: Correspondence – File includes letters regarding the purchase of Herbert Guernsey's land, the Adelphi Hotel, and proposed property acquisitions, to manager A.P. Forster about various properties, and to fellow ranchers in the area. – 6 cm of textual records	1908-1912	1/3
1979.009.002	Volume 2: 1912 Accounts – File contains financial records. – 4.5 cm of textual records	1912	1/4
1979.009.003	Volume 3: 1912-1915 Accounts – File contains financial records. – 5 cm of textual records	1912-1915	1/5
1979.009.004	Volume 4: Letters – File includes letters regarding business ventures, management of the Monte Creek Hotel, financial dealings, expansion of telegraph, Okanagan railway, and CNR services, proposed property expansions, Fish Lake property purchase, and to fellow ranchers in the area. – 6 cm of textual records	1912-1913	1/6
1979.009.005	Bank of Montreal Statements of Account and Cheques – File contains financial records. – 2 cm of textual records	1922-1923	1/7
1979.009.006	Race Program and Results – File contains a bound ledger with race results. – 0.5 cm of textual records	1905	1/8
1979.009.007	Agreements – File includes agreements with W.L. Lawrence, Frank Martin, A.J. Pringle, W.G. Brown, L.H. Davidson, E.W. Houle, R.H. Bell, R.L. Burgess, G. Gordon, L. Miller, and a water agreement with Joseph Bulman, R.W. Butler, H.E. Talbot, and James Allan. – 0.5 cm of textual records – <i>Records are restricted until 2030.</i>	1911-1930	1/9

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1979.009.008	Receipt for Sale of Herbert Guernsey Land – File contains a receipt for the sale of land owned by Herbert Guernsey. – 1 textual record	1911	1/10
1979.009.009	Water Records on Ingram Creek – File contains water records related to Ingram Creek. – 0.25 cm of textual records	1877-1908	1/11
1979.009.010	Letter re: Donald McKenzie's Debt – File contains a letter regarding Donald McKenzie's Debt to the Pylewell Hotel. – 1 textual record	1913	1/12
1979.009.011	Timesheets for Employees – File contains timesheets for employees. – 0.5 cm of textual records	1912	1/13
1979.009.012	Inventories of Pylewell Ranch – File includes inventories of farm implements, hay, livestock, etc. – 1 cm of textual records	1919-1932	1/14
1979.009.013	Accounts – Misc. – File contains financial records. – 1 cm of textual records	1923-1924	1/15
1979.009.014	Letter re: Bolean Creek Inspection – File contains a letter regarding an inspection of Bolean Creek. – 1 textual record	1923	1/16
1979.009.015	Hay Record for Blais Place – File contains an inventory of hay for Blais Place. – 1 textual record	1924	1/17
1979.009.016	Trial Balance – File contains a trial balance for the Pylewell Hotel. – 1 textual record	1927	1/18
1979.009.017	Assessment Notices for Land – File contains tax records. – 0.5 cm of textual records	1927-1928	1/19
0.2829	Pylewell Ranche letterhead – File contains a blank copy of letterhead from the Pylewell Ranch. – 1 textual record	[ca. 1800s-1900s]	1/20

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Appendix 1:

Arthur P. Forster letters to Guy Cecil Whitaker	
December 22, 1912	Mrs. Cannon of Adelphi supplies geese.
January 1913	Weaver imported from island of Lewis started work Nov 1912. Donald McLean (3 grown daughters) and D. McKenzie (4 small children). Loom, spinning wheel, etc. imported, and weaving house built. Planned as a business to provide winter work.
January 31, 1913	Walter U. Homfray estate bought by Whitaker Nov 1911 – also Guernsey land already owned.
February 8, 1913	Plans for good water supply with engine to pump same.
March 7, 1913	Polo ground discussed.
March 17, 1913	Large seed order – wide range of vegetables.
March 18, 1913	Mr. and Mrs. Thompson living in house – housekeeper and gardener.
March 19, 1913	“Townsite” lots sold to Whiting, Burgess, Hoole (2), and Cotton (2). Railway planned “at once.”
March 28, 1913	C. Wentworth Sarel agent for homespun tweed in Vancouver – other agents in Kamloops and Vernon. But very few sales. Greenhouse built and in use.
April 25, 1913	Contract for building hotel signed - \$15,000.
May 6, 1913	Fred King breaks back, but still alive.
August 5, 1913	A.J. Pringle supplies lumber for new hotel. Old one still in use.
August 6, 1913	Lists many fancy ornaments, pictures, champagne, etc. brought out by Whitaker.
September 18, 1913	Inventory of farm equipment. McLean demonstrated weaving at Vancouver exhibition – leading to a few sales by B.C. Handicrafts Guild. McKenzie had absconded earlier, still owing much to ranch.
[page 215, n.d]	Details of property. Total acreage 2047. Grande Prairie – 1547 acres, all fenced, 770 under crops and well irrigated. House of 17 rooms, another 6, and a small one. Good haymeadows in mountains – 320 acres. Blais property at 6 mile creek – 180 acres, with good log house, stables, and plenty of water.
December 5, 1913	Part of Guernsey land and Watson field, together with many implements and stock, sold to Hood Investment Co. (manager Bennet Hood). Part of Homfray land is rented to “old” G. Butter.
December 8, 1913 – May 7, 1914	No letters, as Forster holidays in England. Frank Gordon in charge during his absence.
May 10, 1914	Hotel let for 2 years at \$100 per month to Cotton.
June 30, 1914	Forster gives notice – to become manager of Eden’s companies at Wasa in Columbia Valley. To leave September 1; suggest Gordon takes over at \$50 per month. Poor trade at hotel – just drinks.
September 1, 1914	Forster leaves.
Frank G. Gordon letters to Guy Cecil Whitaker	
January 1915	All well, but quiet. McLean working with pigs. Letters to C. Broadbent at Whitaker’s Sussex estate.
August 1915	Hazelhurst, foreman on Clais land, leaves – joins army.
February 19, 1916	Many unsuccessful attempts to rent hotel – Gordon takes over himself in desperation.
July 17, 1916	Whitaker now Captain – at front with Coldstreams – Broadbent agent. Pigs are paying proposition – other items not.
August 25, 1916	McLean discharged for stealing – later joins army.

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September 18, 1916	Licence for hotel will not be renewed in January – prohibition now expected July 1, 1917.
April 12, 1917	Forster now in France.
May 2, 1917	Hood sells out to Joseph Bulman.
September 10, 1917	Prohibition effective October 1. Hotel to continue as stopping house.
April 18, 1918	Still trying to sell hotel – no prospects however.
December 8, 1918	Many cattle stolen locally recently.
December 22, 1918	Six deaths from flu in Grande Prairie.
January 12, 1919	More deaths, but flu now abating.
February 16, 1919	A.P. Forster now dead – probably war casualty?
[page 547 n.d.]	Sketch map of Whitaker property on Salmon R. Cotton, Hood, the hotel, and Whiting along road, with Bulman and Clemes on either side of Whitiaker's area.
March 30, 1919	McLean claims \$1200 from ranch – has not returned to Grande Prairie.
April 20, 1919	Railway to start in June. Hotel rented for 2 years at \$60 per month to Whiting. Whitaker now Major.
July 18, 1919	Mountain meadows sold to W.H. Jones.
December 7, 1919	Very bad winter – railway work stopped.
December 28, 1919	52 degrees below zero for 3 days! Prices and wages doubled since war.
January 23, 1920	Whiting gives up hotel – now transferred to “old girl” Mrs. Barrett for 3 years. Whitaker to visit in September.
March 23, 1920	Hotel very quiet, and Mrs. Barrett very discontented.
April 3, 1920	New liquor act – but no beer to be sold in hotels, so no help. Mrs. Barrett very sick; possibly Chinaman (cook) could take it?
May 1, 1920	Mrs. Barrett died April 19. Praeger made “a rare mess” of her affairs. Hotel running with Chinese cook and 2 girls.
June 17, 1920	Railway work almost shut down. Trade very bad.
July 20, 1920	Pig prices a little better; cattle very low indeed. Polo is resumed in Kamloops – Gordon plays.
September 9, 1920	Outbreak of swine plague – many dead or ordered shot. No sale at all for cattle. Kamloops polo stable burned with 2 Whitaker ponies. Excellent pea crop – about 40 tons.
October 15, 1920	Hotel closed for winter – too expensive to run.
November 4, 1920	Railways resumes – but very slow.
December 4, 1920	Threshing peas with horses – machines split them. Slow work!
January 12, 1922	Very deep snow, and very cold.
May 7, 1922	Fire at hotel in high wind – roof damaged, but put out by Gordon's and help. Mrs. Gordon has brief nervous breakdown in consequence.
July 30, 1922	Real depression, especially for small ranchers. Very dry too, and bad forest fire. Will winter Vancouver polo ponies.
January 5, 1923	Ship cattle – but poor price.
May 20, 1923	Very dry, but prices better. Railway incentive. Gordon wants a brief holiday – none whatsoever since he took the job!
February 3, 1924	Hope to start railway again in spring. Poisonous vetch (new to the area) paralyses and kills local cattle. Ranches unsaleable – none are sold in past 3 years.
August 18, 1924	Starts polo team in Grande Prairie.
October 27, 1924	Blais of Falkland sells his ranch and cattle.
November 9, 1924	Railway starts.

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May 25, 1925	Railways starts to reach Falkland. Homfray again opens real estate office in Kamloops – poor reputation. Grande Prairie beats Kamloops 6-2 at polo. Mrs. Gordon sick, at cost. Gordon now paid \$75 per month.
July 3, 1925	Grande Prairie (and Douglas Lake) win B.C. polo cup in Vancouver.
July 17, 1925	Railway now reaches Vernon, but no trains.
November 8, 1925	Many Chinamen rent Grande Prairie property.
January 19, 1926	Two trains per week now, but no passenger service. Stock good and pig prices better. Sawmill starts at Grande Prairie – no more people. Trouble with irrigation rights. Gordon has had no salary for past 3 years. Epidemic of pink-eye in the village.
March 14, 1926	Rents hotel to Riddell for 1 year at \$50 per month. Now another sawmill, and daily freight and passenger service. Winter very mild – never down to zero. Took Vancouver ponies to winter again.
April 11, 1926	Chinamen have rented Butter's ranch for past year – doing well.
July 12, 1926	Hotel thriving – on strong Okanagan cider!
August 8, 1926	Whitaker's plan to visit in October – and do so. Still called "Major."
December 10, 1926	Now "Westwold" – Gordon runs petition to revert to "Grande Prairie." Hotel needs painting.
February 14, 1927	A record dry spring – water worries.
March 17, 1927	Riddell's leaving hotel. Bulman wants to sell ranch – "broke."
March 27, 1927	Rents hotel to White on same terms.
June 25, 1927	Hotel painted by Gordon – also old one, where he still lives. Very proud of attractive flower garden.
April 15, 1928	Rents Blais property for \$500 per annum for 3 years to Clemitson. Mounsey employed by ranch all year; otherwise only casual labour for haying, etc. Gordon works hard.
January 27, 1929	All cattle are sold November 1927 by Whitaker's orders. Now have none – no place for wintering without Blais place.
April 15, 1929	Still many water problems. White renews hotel lease.
April 26, 1929	Whitaker owes Gordon \$2469 accumulated wages at \$75 per month.
May 24, 1929	Rents ranch to 3 Elliott brothers, who share old hotel with the Gordons. Lease 5 years at \$1550 per annum – plan dairy farming mainly. Also bought all horses and some pigs.
June 2, 1929	Saw mills leave Westwold.
August 25, 1929	Gordon politely points out he has been overworked and underpaid for years – and that the job was only undertaken temporarily.
November 10, 1929	Hotel trade has again dwindled to practically nothing.
February 4, 1930	Elliotts quit ranch. Blais place dry (never before) – hard on Clemitson.
April 15, 1930	General depression – even railway barely used now.
June 1, 1930	Bostock died recently.
May 13, 1931	New hotel tenant very sick. McLean now in Armstrong, but McKenzie unknown – presumed back in Scotland.
July 15, 1931	Interior of hotel redecorated by Gordon.
February 7, 1932	Very cold winter. Very severe depression by now – no rent coming in, and no sales.
May 8, 1932	Now grows alfalfa.