

LAKE COUNTRY MUSEUM

LAKE COUNTRY HERITAGE AND CULTURAL SOCIETY



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Bugs

This last month the Museum has been dealing with our insect collection and in the process I have learned a good deal about certain members of our community, past and present.

Rehabilitating and exhibiting our entomological exhibits has been on the Museum's agenda for some time. The Board was concerned because Ward Strong, an entomologist with the provincial forestry research station in Vernon, had advised that the collection may have been destroyed over time by other bugs eating the dead insects. Dr. Strong and curator Dan Bruce examined the collection and found it to be in excellent shape and they reported that the collection is professionally presented with each insect labeled and named, and with a catalogue number attached. We thought that if we could find the catalogue, the collection would have enhanced research value. The search began.

Archivist Sonja MacCrimmon reported that Patti Wentworth had presented the collection to the Museum and a phone call to Patti confirmed this. Her entomologist father, Ed Harvey, had professionally prepared a collection for the federal government and while doing that had made a duplicate, personal collection. Patti remembers sitting on her father's shoulders shaking trees to dislodge bugs that were then collected from a tarp placed under the tree. Her uncle, Jim Harvey, also an entomologist, still lives in Vernon and she invited him to the Museum to view the exhibits and provide more information. I learned a great deal about the Harvey family from that meeting. Jim's entomological work involved collecting and identifying larvae. He would collect a number of larvae from a species at an early stage in development and prepare one of them for exhibit.

This involved slitting the larvae at the anus, extruding the innards, staining these with India ink, and sending the sample to the research station in Ottawa. He then incubated the remaining larvae until they shed their skin and emerged looking somewhat different. He repeated this process four or five times until the insect metamorphosed into a recognizable insect. He got to know these larvae inside and out; now he recognized these insects in each stage of development.

Ed Harvey's collection of moths and butterflies from Canada and Australia is not as comprehensive but it is visually impressive, especially the brightly coloured specimens from Australia. Jim explained how he and Ed made the wings of the butterflies extend out exactly horizontally, by inserting cougar whiskers in the veins of the wing to stiffen them for presentation. This seemed to me a little improbable so I asked Jim how long it took a cougar to grow whiskers after they had been plucked. He ignored this question but later coyly explained that he had a game warden friend who provided him with cougar whiskers. I have this residual feeling that old Jim Harvey was playing me. How many cougar whiskers would an entomologist need to support a large collection of butterfly wings? Is there a market for cougar whiskers?

Duane Thomson
President

Inside this issue:

Bugs	1
Hose Blind	2
AGM Steel	4

Horse Blind

In 1858, the Victoria merchant Frank Sylvester, about to set out from Cayoosh Flats (Lillooet) accompanying a pack train, described some of what he saw. "All mules, and horses also, must be blinded when packed so they will not move. For this purpose each packer carries what is called a blind on his right hand. It is simply a flat piece of leather, about 4 inches wide and 2 feet long, doubled over in the centre, with a cat of nine tails at one end and a hoop for the finger at the other end."

Later I found out that in Spanish it is called a "tapujo" or blind and John Keast Lord in "At Home in the Wilderness" describes it as "made of leather, its length is about fifteen or eighteen inches, its width about six inches in the centre, then tapering gradually away at its ends to sharp points, which are fastened together; from each of the points dangle sundry small twisted leather thongs, like a cat of eighteen tails instead of nine. Exactly in the centre of the tapujo a loop is sewn, through which the packer passes his fingers, and when thus armed, woe betide the unlucky mule which is guilty of any transgression. This is one of the tapujos uses, but it is principally employed to blind the mules whilst anything is done to them. Simply by dropping it behind the animals ears, and allowing the wider part to fall over the eyes, it at once and most easily prevents the mule from seeing what the packers are up to; and when this dreaded affair is fairly on, you might as well attempt to make a log move as induce a blinded mule to shift its position."

The writer has perhaps indulged in the description of a "tapujo" at inordinate length for an object of its significance. However there is an interesting story behind it. When first encountering Frank Sylvester's description of the combination blind and quirt, this writer was confounded as to exactly what Sylvester was describing. All the artist's renditions of pack trains in British Columbia observed by the writer showed the mules being blinded by cloths tied over their eyes. The first hint of what a tapujo might be was observed in a Charles Russell painting. This painting shows Mexican packers leaving a post in what could only be the American southwest or Mexico. The lead packer is clearly wielding a blind/quirt and using it as a whip to goad his mules into action.

It was during a visit to an out-of-the-way antique store off the Trans-Canada Highway near Pritchard, B.C. that the mystery was partially resolved. The proprietors of Country Antiques recognized the writer from his previous book on the outlaw Bill Miner and the time he spent in Canada. As the writer completed his purchase of a set of oxen shoes and a Hudson's Bay Company trading knife, the proprietor brought out a piece of leather rigging from a hidden cupboard clearly marked, "Not For Sale." He asked the writer if he knew what the item was, as he had unsuccessfully queried the numerous horse aficionados in the Kamloops area to no avail. The writer, upon having a close look at the hand-made leather object, quickly realized he was looking at an example of the blind/quirt that Sylvester had described the Mexican packers as using.

It was some time after this chance confrontation with the combination blind and quirt at the antique store in Pritchard that the writer obtained an inter-library loan of John Lord's original 1876 edition of "At Home in the Wilderness." There, as plain as one could wish, were two skillfully rendered sketches of tapujos, confirming the Charles Russell painting and the Pritchard blind/quirt. Since that time, another illustration has surfaced. It is a large oil painting, now in the author's possession, of an

Continued from page 2

American mountain man returning to civilization with his furs. There, in his right hand, and being used as a quilt, is another artist's rendition of a tapujo.



Horse Blind



Pritchard Antiques

*Peter Grauer
Author and Historian*

AGM STEEL INDUSTRIES LIMITED

AGM Steel Industries Limited is a wholly Canadian owned and is incorporated in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. They have over 45 years of experience in providing a variety of manufactured products in a wide cross section of industries including custom light and heavy metal fabrications, tanks, cabs, bus and truck bodies. AGM's main product line is a mix of Transport, Storage, Distribution and Collection Tank systems in both Certified for the transportation of dangerous goods and non-Certified configurations. They also provide a design service to a wide array of clients with diverse requirements such as the new hand railing that they made and installed at the Museum.

AGM (Agricultural Growers Machinery Limited) started out in the 1950s although that name was not adopted until 1965. At first, it was Eli Swanson doing repairs on sprayers and fork lifts for local Orchardists. Then he started making sprayers in a very small shop at the present day location (11850 Oceola Road). The paint shop was a two car garage located at the north end of the property with the office in a small building that is used today for the coffee room and parts bin. The Shop was a Quonset building 38' x 24' that is the present day paint facility.

In 1959, Eli Swanson formed a company with partners Fred and Harold Armeneau and Len Michalkow. The original Swanson Sprayers company became the sales division for AGM with Eli Swanson handling sales. Sprayers were originally pieced together with no consistency in the models, with very few drawings and details. By 1963, when Dwayne Armeneau joined the company, orders were starting to flow in and there was a sales network beginning. Dwayne started by redesigning and doing drawings to smooth out the details of manufacture. They were building several different models by this time.

In 1965, the other partners bought out Eli Swanson who moved to eastern Ontario to pursue other ventures. The company, Agricultural Growers Machinery Limited, was formed. They continued to produce several models of Swanson Sprayers and added new ones adapted to suit the changing orchard and vineyard markets. AGM also purchased a line of tractor adapted forklifts from Monashee Manufacturing (Lightning Loaders) and began producing them to go along with the other agricultural equipment.

By 1968, the company had a dealer network of 60 plus companies spread across Canada and the U.S.A. from Florida to Mexico and up both the East and West Coasts. They had branched into sprayers and loaders geared to nut groves, vineyards, orange and lemon plantings.

Around 1969, with agricultural markets falling and sales decreasing, the company, caught with a large inventory here and an extended dealer network, was forced into receivership. The appointed receiver, Touche Ross, saw the potential of the company and asked Dwayne Armeneau to manage the company for the receiver. By the end of the year, he had sold most of the inventory and closed down the dealership network. They started producing components for the fledgling truck manufacturer Western Star Trucks as well as doing general welding and manufacturing. By 1975, AGM had paid off all the suppliers and was in the black at the bank. The old partners, with the exception of Fred Armeneau, Dwayne's father has left the company and the receiver was ready to turn the company over to a viable purchaser. Touche Ross found a 'silent partner' to help Dwayne Armeneau to buy the company in January 1975.

With the economy moving ahead, AGM diversified more and began doing heavier constructions. They continued to produce more loaders and some sprayers along with the truck parts. They purchased a small machine shop (Sakaloff Manufacturing) in North Vancouver to product parts for both AGM and other

Continued from page 4

markets. They ran this shop until 1980 and then shut it down. During this same time, AGM continued to grow and produce many different items including 1500 roll over protection kits for Caterpillars, graders and bucket loaders.

In 1981, Dwayne discovered that Gulp Canada as well as other oil companies was looking for a method of transporting bulk products to the large customers. He designed a bulk tank (MOD-CON—modular container) for testing. By 1982, AGM was ready to market their tank. They produced 20 or so units for Gulf and Shell. In 1983, Beau Drill, a subsidiary of Gulf Resources Canada wanted 240 tanks. Dwayne cleaned up the design, did testing with Beau Drill's technical staff and started production. Currently, their tanks vary in size from 200 to 13000 liters in rectangular, oval and cylindrical designs in both vertical and horizontal orientations with single or double walls. The manufacture and refurbishing of these tanks is the current mainstay of the business.

The property that AGM currently occupies is slated for the construction of new retail businesses but AGM will continue to operate in a new location, somewhere in Lake Country.

Sonja MacCrimmon
Archivist



Mayor James Baker is a lifetime member of the Lake Country Museum. James has given many volunteer hours and the Board would like to recognize his contribution, thanks James.

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