

Arthur Vandeleur Despard – Anglican Priest and Golfer

Arthur Vandeleur (he went by his initials, “A.V.”) Despard was born at London, England, December 11, 1861. According to an article written by Sven Arnstrom in September 2000, member of the Swedish Society of Golf Historians, A.V. Despard was educated at Merchant Taylor’s School in London, and later at St. John’s College, Oxford. He chose to follow in his father’s footsteps, and in 1884 (Oxford) he was ordained a deacon. The following year Despard was ordained a Church of England priest.

On June 19, 1890 at Stroud (near Bristol) the Rev. A.V. Despard married Edith Annie Sheldon. She was born September 16, 1864. According to his obituary (*The Kelowna Courier, Thursday, August 28, 1947*), the Rev. Despard and family lived in Sweden between 1890 and 1895. There, he served as chaplain to the British consulate in Gothenburg. Apparently, he was a well-known figure locally, not only as a priest, but also as a golfer. Sven Arnstrom credits A.V. Despard with introducing the game of golf to Sweden.

In 1900 A.V. Despard and family left Scotland, and he was assigned to a church at Bath, Somerset. At that time A.V. Despard was the vicar of the church at Norton St. Philip, south of Bath. Finances in that parish were not sound, resulting in a visit in August 1909 by the Bishop of Bath and Wales. While there, the Bishop, sharing the sentiment of the parishioners, expressed his regret that A.V. Despard was soon to leave the parish, having accepted a curacy in far distant British Columbia.

The Despard family arrived in British Columbia in October of 1909 and they immediately headed west to British Columbia, where A.V. Despard served as vicar of All Saints Church, Vernon. According to *A Historical Sketch of the Anglican Parish of Vernon with Lumby and Assorted Mission Stations* (author unknown), the Rev. Despard conducted his first service at All Saints, September 12, 1909. Despard chaired the Vestry Meeting, held at Vernon in March 1910. He remained at that post for two years and concluded his incumbency on March 26, 1911. He was succeeded by the Rev. Owen Bulkeley. In 1911 the Despard family moved south to Oyama, where they purchased property at Jade Bay, on the east side of Lake Kalamalka. They also owned property on the east side of Wood Lake. From 1917 to 1928 (according to his obituary), A.V. Despard

was vicar of the Woodsdale Parish. In an article (page 63) in the *53rd Report of the Okanagan Historical Society*, it states, “He [Despard] took services at Oyama, Ellison, Okanagan Centre and Winfield...Mr. Despard’s service was voluntary.” This same article mentions that Despard was a retired minister. Services were held in the Oyama School as there was no church building. In 1927 the Rev. Despard donated the alter frontal to be later installed in the new church. St. Mary’s Anglican Church was constructed, beside Oyama Road, in 1929 (*O.H.S. Report #53, page 64*). By that time, A.V. Despard was no longer serving as Vicar of Woodsdale, having been succeeded by the Rev. Humphrey Pearson.

A.V. and Edith Despard remained in Oyama, where they were well-known citizens. In 1943 they donated one acre of land to St. Mary’s Church to be used as a cemetery. The deed for this property was initially held by the Diocese of Kootenay, but was later transferred to the Oyama Community Club.

Edith Despard was one of the first people buried in the Oyama Cemetery. She died April 7, 1944, aged seventy-nine years. Arthur Vandeleur Despard survived her by three years, and he died at Oyama on August 23, 1947, aged eighty-five years. A fine stone marks their final resting place.

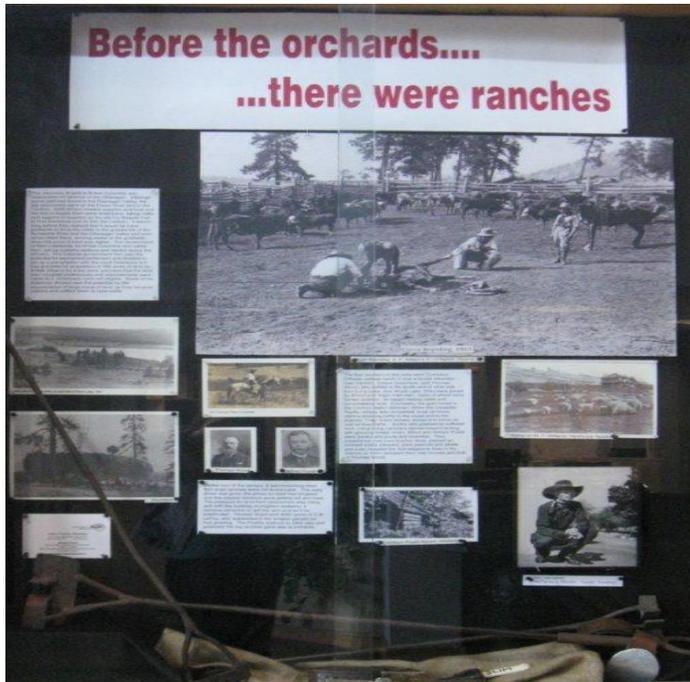
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← On display at the District of Lake Country

It was the discovery of gold in British Columbia that was responsible for ranches in the Okanagan. Although there was gold found in the Okanagan Valley, the big discoveries were on the Fraser River and in the Cariboo. Gold miners needed supplies and food and the first to supply them were Americans, taking cattle and wagons of supplies up the old Fur Brigade trail to Fort Kamloops and on into the Cariboo. It wasn't long before they realized that it would be easier and more economic to drive the cattle to the grasslands of the Bonaparte River and the Okanagan Valley and over-winter them there, arriving earlier in the goldfields when the price of beef was higher. The Government of New Caledonia as British Columbia was then, was not slow to set up customs stations and start taxing the drovers. The Colonial government then saw the potential for permanent settlement and decided to set up a pre-emption with the Land Ordinance Act that provided for the acquisition of 160 acres of land by British citizens for a low price provided that the land was occupied continuously and improvements were made to it. Americans were not eligible. Some of the American drovers saw the potential for the accumulation of large tracts of land, so they became citizens and settled down to raise cattle. They were joined by British and Anglo-Irish men, many of whom were former soldiers. All began raising cattle and consolidating land. As one gold mining area declined, others were discovered and when the Canadian Pacific railway was completed, the ranchers started shipping cattle to the coast and to the prairies. They raised horses, sheep

and swine as well as beef cattle. The bunch grass was showing the effects of overgrazing and ranchers started experimenting with growing forage crops. Alfred and William Postill were particularly acute and inventive. They established their own butcher shop, planted an orchard and a vineyard, grew peanuts and alfalfa and even installed the first telephone lines in the Interior in 1891. It ran between their own houses and that of Thomas Wood. By the turn of the century, it was becoming clear that large ranches were not sustainable. The easy grass was gone, the prices for beef had dropped and the original ranchers were getting old and tired. The pressure for land from newcomers was rising and with the building of irrigation systems, it became attractive to sell the land and let it be subdivided. Thomas Wood sold 4000 acres to C.B LeFoy, who subdivided it into smaller parcels for fruit growing. The Postills sold out in 1903 also and gradually the big ranches gave way to orchards.

Sonja McCrimmon, Archivist

Road Report – Whiskey Cove Road

Whiskey Cove is located in Carr's Landing, and was first established in January 1972. Whiskey Cove begins at Carr's Landing Road, just north of Kopje Park. The road up to the boat launch and beach is public, the remaining part to the north is private. Whiskey Cove is steeped not only in First Nations history, but was given its name by one of the Okanagan's early pioneers, Joseph Cools, who in 1935 was left a large amount of money after the death of his father Charles. This windfall of money allowed Mr Cools to buy Sunnywold Ranch and also a large parcel of land to the north of Carr's Landing, as well Okanagan House which came with 20 acres on the lakeshore. The island which is located just offshore from Whiskey Cove was also known as Whiskey Island. However, the island's original name was Nahun Weenox, so named by the early First Nations settlers, the name translated into English means "Mother and Child." There is an old First Nations tale that says the island was filled with air and as a result floated away and grounded where it sits today. The tale said the island would have fit into a spot at Nahun on the other side of the lake, which has the same rock formations as those on the island. Another first Nations legend said that the Interior Salish who lived in the Whiskey Cove area used to store their food on the island to protect it from the bears. Another legend has it that at times the Shuswap First Nations would come to the Whiskey Cove area and abduct the Interior Salish women, who were left in charge whilst their men-folk were away for days hunting.

The actual name Whiskey Cove is said to have originated during the late 1900's when Mr Joseph Cools was living at Okanagan House, and was said to have bought the island for the measly price of two bottles of whiskey, hence the name Whiskey Island Cove. The island was once owned by Clement Fisher Costerton, past Mayor of Vernon, who

many say bought it as the result of back taxes from previous owner prominent Oyama resident Dr Irvine, who had believed the island was Crown Land; therefore, taxes didn't apply. Dr Irvine had traded 450 acres of his land which was located west of Wood Lake, to buy the island from a Sydney Plummer who had acquired a Crown Grant to the Island on April 10 1908, hence Irvine's misunderstanding regarding the non payment of taxes.

In the mid 1980's the island was bought by the North Okanagan Naturalist Foundation who declared it as a bird sanctuary as it is home to many rare types of gulls. The island was in turn granted provincial status and re-named Grant Island after James Grant who was a well known and highly respected naturalist and teacher of natural history. Grant was a resident of Lavington, BC and passed away in 1986. Today Whiskey Cove is the location of some very beautiful million dollar homes, and is home to many long-time residents.

(ref: A History of the Commonage Dr D Price, History of Carr's Landing Penny Baughen, The Calendar Jun26th 2002 Joan Shaw, Lake Country Museum Archives)

Margaret Carruthers

Events

Museum Opening—March 1, 2010
Monday & Wednesday, 1:00 pm—4:00 pm
Seven days a week in May

Okanagan Patio Café opens—May 1, 2010

Anniversary—May 14, 2010

Historical Walks—June 2nd and June 9th
Register with the District of Lake Country

Centre Piece—August 29, 2010

We are on the web !
www.lakecountrymuseum.com

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