

J. M. ROBINSON

E. C. ROBINSON

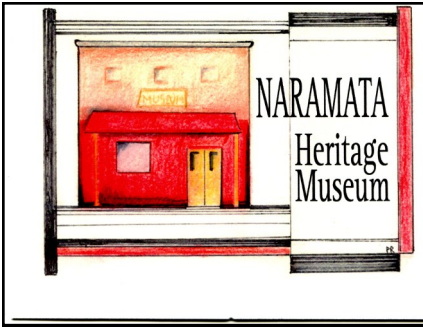
W. A. ROBINSON

J. M. Robinson & Co.

Promoters and Real Estate Agents

John Moore Robinson 1855-1934

A Biography



Naramata Heritage Museum Society

Welcome to the First Edition of the J M Robinson Family History. The first because, there will be errors and omissions which will need to be corrected as this draft gains more readership. While much effort has been made to make this work as correct as possible, we would be pleased if errors or omissions were brought to our attention at museum.naramata@gmail.com.

When I started as a volunteer at the Naramata Museum, I discovered that a history of JM Robinson was non-existent. Information was scattered throughout a plethora of notes, newspaper clippings, photographs and stories written by early settlers and quasi-historians. It was difficult for a newbie to get a grasp of the man when one story emphasized land development, another mining schemes and yet another his spiritualist beliefs. From that frustration, the idea of gathering the information into a coherent flow was born. As it stands, the project remains a work in progress; but progress nonetheless.

We have reached the point where a chronology prevails. Never was it my intention to tell the story of Naramata here, just that of JM Robinson in an effort to add his family's name to the Naramata Museum's Family Histories collection. Some of these histories are available in the museum's website at naramatamuseum.ca.

Not everything that is known about JM Robinson is included here. Far from it. For example, a visit to the depository at the provincial archives was not even contemplated as it would overwhelm this writer. Key to finding out more about the private man would also require access to his personal writing, only a little of which is available at our museum. This story can be a starting point, though, for a more substantial biography of J M Robinson in the future. But that must be left for a more capable person with a bit more time on their hands. I do hope that this effort, at least, offers the Naramata Museum volunteers some insight into the man which they can then impart upon our visitors. If the general public also stumbles upon it, then the story of this dynamic man can be more widely disseminated.

John Verde
Naramata Museum
2023

John Moore Robinson Time Line

- 1852 Parents William Robinson and Mary Moore arrive New York August 5 from Ireland (via Liverpool)
- 1855 Born December 30 at Hustonville, Wellington County, Ontario
Attended local public school in Hustonville, Ontario
- 1870 Family was living in Lockport, New York
Attended High School in Lockport (Union School)
- 1873 Collegiate Institute, St Catherine's, Ontario. (Teacher's college)
- 1875 Taught school in Wellington County, Ontario (four years)
- 1879 Moved to Manitoba in March
Teacher at Woodlands School (possibly 2 years)
Clerk of Woodlands Municipality when it was incorporated (May 3, 1880)
Realty business in Woodlands
- 1882 Moved to Portage la Prairie and opened up a realty business
Married Eliza Catherine Lipsett on June 24 in Meadow Lea, MB
Purchased half interest in *Portage Tribune*
- 1883 Daughter: Alice Moore May 29 (died 1884 at 8 mos)
Purchased *Portage Tribune* in full
- 1884 Formed *Portage Review* (Koroscil.)
- 1885 Son: William Lipsett born April 10, Portage la Prairie, MB (died 1954)
- 1886 Founded *Brandon Times* (Koroscil)
Son: John Othmar, born Sep 11, Brandon, MB (died 1948)
Elected Grand Master of the Orange Association in February
Elected MLA Manitoba Legislature December 9
Secretary Treasurer of Portage la Prairie Town
Secretary Treasurer of County Liberal-Conservative Association
- 1888 Daughter: Florence Gwendoline, born March 11 (died 1976)
Lost provincial election run on July 11
First prospecting trip to the Okanagan/Princeton (Koroscil)
- 1889 Son: Robert 'Cam' Campbell born Nov 27, Portage la Prairie, MB (died 1939)
- 1890 Son: Arthur Moore born Dec 4, Brandon, MB (died 1896)
- 1893? Formed Canadian-American Gold Mining and Development Co Ltd – Rossland, BC
- 1894 Daughter: Gladys Catherine born Jan 11, Portage la Prairie (died 1982)
- 1896 Daughter: Kathleen Marjorie born Dec. 2 in Brandon, MB (died 1956)
- 1897 Daughter: Evangeline Dorothy born Jan 11, Portage la Prairie, MB (died 1979)
- 1897 Final prospecting trip to BC (June to October)
- 1898 Mining the Kathleen Mine & Gladstone mines. Built Glen Robinson (mining town)
- 1899 Peachland Townsite Company formed, W J Robinson, Manager ((Koroscil)
- 1900 Daughter: Marguerite Candace born Aug 7, New West, BC (died 1949)
- 1903 Father died at Peachland.
Formed Summerland Development Co Ltd on June 18 with Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President (OHS Report 36 – Nov, 1972) (Koroscil)
- 1905 Tom Ellis' Southern Okanagan Land Co formed. Robinson buys >1000 acres at Nine Mile Point
- 1906 Summerland incorporated December 1. JM Robinson elected first Reeve by acclamation
- 1907 Summerland Trust Co. formed (changed to Okanagan Trust Co in 1911) (Koroscil)

- 1907 Naramata development gets underway in spring
- 1908 Naramata Hotel built
Summerland Review launched in August. JM has controlling interest
- 1910 Naramata population 250. 3000 acres has been acquired by Summerland (Okanagan) Trust Co
- 1912 Okanagan Securities Brochure printed
- 1914 Son William marries Mary Isabella Firstbrook on April 27 in York, Ontario
- 1925 Mother died at Peachland
- 1934 JM died at Naramata on Feb 23
- 1936 Lily died at Naramata on Oct. 28

Some Important developments for the south Okanagan

- 1885 CPR completed
- 1889 Land is opened up for pre-emption by Commission of Lands and Works, Victoria BC.
- 1890 James Gartrell establishes commercial orchard on Trout Creek Point (Summerland)
- 1892 Shuswap and Okanagan Railroad (S&O) finished
- 1893 *SS Aberdeen* launched on May 3
- 1898 J M Robinson starts land development scheme at Peachland
- 1909 Hon Sydney Fisher, the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, visited Summerland. JM and others urged the Federal Gov't to establish an experimental farm

Companies involving J M Robinson (far from complete):

Algonquin Consolidated Mining and Development Co [JM Vice-President]
 Christina-Cascade Mining and Development Co
 Canadian American Gold Mining and Development Co Ltd [JM President]

Peachland Townsite Co Ltd Dec 28, 1899 [JM President]
 Summerland Development Co Ltd June 18, 1903 [JM is managing director]
 Summerland Hotel
 Summerland Review 1908
 Summerland Fruit Company

South Okanagan Land Co (1905)

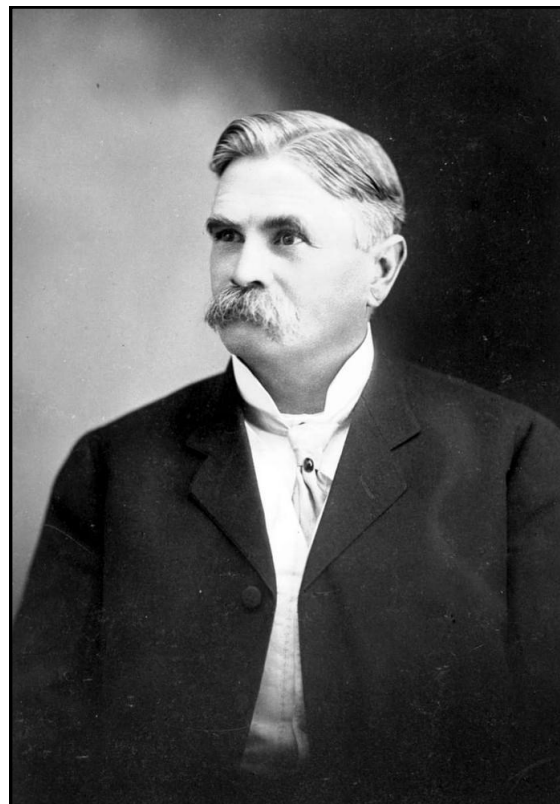
J M Robinson & Co (with Candace and Bill)
 Okanagan Securities Co Ltd
 Summerland Trust Co Ltd Jan 2, 1907 [JM President] (became Okanagan Trust Co. Ltd. in 1911)
 Naramata Hotel
 Naramata Supply Co. 1907?

Okanagan Historical Society Sep 4, 1925 [not a company, but Robinson was a director in Kelowna Branch]

Robinson, John Moore

1855-1934

Compilation from various sources gathered by the Naramata Museum



An historic marker located at the roadside in Summerland overlooking Lake Okanagan alerts the curious to a man who was responsible for how the southern Okanagan has developed. He looked beyond the dry grasslands and saw a future where irrigated orchards produced sweet fruit. His drive to develop the land for fruit growing led to the establishment of Peachland, Summerland and Naramata; all three of these communities are visible from the lookout point

from where the marker is located. Today, the Okanagan is well-known for its fruit but J M Robinson, not as much, and it isn't right that it should be so.

The Early Years

John Moore Robinson, or 'JM' as he preferred to be called, was born on December 30, 1855 in Hustonville, Wellington County, Ontario. He was the son of William Robinson and Maria Moore who fled County Sligo, Ireland in 1852 and arrived in New York on August 5th. They were not alone for "between 1845 and 1855, no fewer than 2.1 million people left Ireland . . . one of the greatest exoduses from a single island in history" [*The Great Famine - Wikipedia.*]

Robinson, John Moore

After a short time in New York State, the couple settled in Canada West (Ontario) where JM was born. By 1867 when Canada became a nation, JM was nearly 12 years old. In the US Census of 1870, however, the family are found again in New York State where JM attended Union School (high school) in Lockport, NY, along with two sisters, Elizabeth and Candace. Eight year old William and one year old Arthur, (who had been born in New York the previous year) were also listed in the 1870 census (below). Another sister, Anne, would be born the following year in Lockport but, when the last of the siblings arrived, the family had returned to Canada as, Zella, was born in Ontario in 1874. From this information, it is estimated that the Robinsons were in Lockport, NY from 1869 to 1873. That fall, JM enrolled in Teacher's College in St Catherine's, Ontario.

After graduating, JM became a teacher in Wellington County and taught there for four years.

24	91	87	Robinson William	47	M	W	Sabbar													24
25			— Maria	33	F	W	Kupung House													25
26			— John	15	M	W	A.H. School													26
27			— Elizabeth	13	F	W	A.H. School													27
28			— Candace	10	F	W	A.H. School													28
29			— William	8	M	W														29
30			— Arthur	1	M	W														30



William Robinson family c. 1885 (based on assumption that the lass front right is Zella who looks about 11 years old. Back row left to right: AT, unknown, WJ, JM. Front row l - r: unknown, Anne?, William, Maria, Zella?, unknown. (Photo Summerland Museum)

Robinson, John Moore

With some teaching experience under his belt, JM went west in 1879 to a teaching job at Woodlands School in rural Manitoba. A year later, in May, 1880, Woodlands was established as a municipality and JM became the municipal clerk. That year, he made his first venture into real estate.

Putting his teaching career behind him, he moved to Portage la Prairie, Manitoba in 1882, where he opened a realty business. That June he married Eliza 'Lily' Catherine Lipsett from Meadow Lea, which is a short distance from Woodlands. Lily's father, Robert Lipsett, was a man of some standing and JM would have known him from his connections in local politics.

Family and Career

The move to Portage provided the opportunity to acquire a half share in the *Portage Tribune* in 1883 (*Bright Sunshine*, p. 56), a career choice that elevated JM into an influential position in Woodlands society. Progress in Manitoba was coming in leaps and bounds for Winnipeg was the big city of the Prairies and gateway to the North West Territory. The Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) was under construction and would pass through these locations. Being the centre of the vast young country, Manitoba was poised to become an area of significance and JM was right in the middle of the action. It would have suited him well too, for he was an energetic man and, being the oldest sibling, must have felt the responsibility to bring prosperity and security to his family. By 1891, his parents and siblings had also relocated to Manitoba and most of them would stay close to JM throughout their lives.

Things were going well for JM as he developed his business acumen and made connections with people of influence. He was strongly involved with the Baptist church, the Orange Order, local and provincial politics, and the business community. As a newspaper man, he was embedded in all the progressive activities in the area.

In 1883, JM and Lily's first child was born but, sadly, died at 8 months old in 1884. Tragic, that must have been but infant mortality was commonplace in those times and, although the couple would ultimately have eight children survive into adulthood, they would lose two others in childhood. That year he purchased the *Portage Tribune* outright.

1884 saw an amalgamation of two newspapers resulting in the formation of the *Portage la Prairie Review* with Robinson its reporter, editor and publisher. The following year, 1885, the couple's oldest child, William Lipsett Robinson, was born on April 10. That was the year that saw the completion of the CPR which stitched Canada from coast to coast. It ran through Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage. It was now very easy to travel without hardship from town to town along the mainline as, indeed, across the country. It appears that JM took advantage of that fact.

In 1886, JM founded the *Brandon Times* and went on to make his family home in that town. Ownership of a second newspaper certainly would have contributed to making him a man of influence. Their second son, John Othmar Robinson, was born in Brandon on September 11. That year JM was elected the Grand Master of the Orange Association of Manitoba (February), became Secretary Treasurer of Portage la Prairie Town and Secretary-Treasurer of the county Liberal-Conservative Association, (then the formal name of the Conservative Party of Canada and in use until 1911).

Finally, on December 9, 1886 John Moore Robinson was elected as the Conservative representative to the



Eliza Catherine Lipsett

Robinson, John Moore

Manitoba Legislature, thus ending a singularly spectacular year.

As all too often happens with historical research, conflicting information muddies the waters but it is thought that in 1886 and certainly in 1888, JM made the first of several trips to British Columbia with an eye toward establishing some gold claims. Again, it would have been relatively easy for a man of means to travel on the railroad to places that were once difficult to reach. Although one historian states that he arrived in Peachland in 1888 'with wife and two children' clearly the family did not stay as is evident by the dates and birthplaces of their subsequent children. Still, there are clues that JM visited BC at different times as he, himself, gives a short description of the rough mining town of Rossland, as he observed it in 1893, after having recently arrived 'from the decorous east'. But for sure, Robinson would eventually move to BC for good in 1898 because, by then, his mining interests had grown and a mining development was being undertaken near Peachland.



J M Robinson family circa 1897. Robinson would be 42 or so. Boy at far right is William who would be eleven and the child on Lily's lap is Kathleen, born 1896.
(Photos on this page are Courtesy of Summerland Museum)

Perhaps a list of the children born to JM and Lily would be useful at this point as their birthplaces specify where the family was living at the time of their birth. The entries in italics indicate the three children who died in childhood.

<i>Alice Moore Robinson</i>	1883 <i>Portage la Prairie, MB</i>
William Lipsett Robinson	1885 Portage la Prairie, MB
John Othmar Robinson	1886 Brandon, MB
Florence Gwendolyn Robinson	1888 Brandon, MB
Robert Campbell Robinson	1889 Portage la Prairie, MB
<i>Arthur Moore Robinson</i>	1890 <i>Brandon, MB</i>
<i>Lillie Robinson</i>	1892 <i>Brandon, MB</i>
Gladys Catherine Robinson	1894 Portage la Prairie, MB
Kathleen Marjorie Robinson	1896 Brandon, MB
Evangeline Dorothy Robinson	1897 Portage la Prairie, MB
Marguerite Candace Robinson	1900 New Westminster, BC

In 1888, JM lost in his run for the provincial legislature. This, perhaps because his voters saw that his interest was more focused on gold prospecting than campaigning. One historian (Koroscil, in *Canadian Papers* p.90) states that 1888 marks JM's first trip to BC to stake mining claims. At any rate, it is clear from our vantage point that BC's mining country held an appeal for him; or at least gold did. It was perhaps in 1893 [citation needed] that JM and partners started the Canadian Ameri-



Robinson, John Moore

can Gold Mining and Development Company based in Rossland. JM had already purchased controlling shares in other exploration enterprises so that by 1897 the company's directors felt that a major expedition needed to be undertaken to BC with an eye toward looking over their claims for possible development and exploration of hitherto un-prospected areas.

Journal of our Trip - 1897

J M Robinson kept a journal of the expedition and later re-wrote it as an allegory for entertainment purposes. He dedicates the work 'to my wife Lilly with tears and a million dollars, if only she would read it.'

That summer, the prospecting party covered a distance of approximately 500 miles through southern BC, much of it through wild country, mostly on bridle paths and a significant portion through unexplored wilderness. At the start, the entourage consisted of JM and his two brothers: William James (WJ) and Arthur Thomas (AT), both of whom were company directors. Lily's brother, Robert Campbell Lipsett, a veterinarian, was also present and also a director in the company. Non-family members included W J Shelton (a mining expert), and a woman named Anna Anderson, who was a spiritualist medium. Her *raison d'être* was to communicate with the spirit world thus gaining the help of the departed souls in discovering gold. Rounding off the entourage was a man named William 'Billy' Wren, who was the camp cook. This is corroborated by a newspaper article written toward the end of the year [unattributed clipping. Seen on page 12].

It was a rare sight in those days to see a woman 'prospector' and Anna Anderson's presence on the expedition was because of her spiritualist abilities. It is possible that Mrs Anderson, a Norwegian-American widow, had previously made the acquaintance of the Robinson family through the Spiritualist Church. In the journal there is a reference to a camping trip with the Robinsons at Shoal Lake, Manitoba in August 1894. Being a follower of that occult practice and believing in Anna's abilities of clairvoyance, clairaudience and mineral psychometrics, JM felt that her peculiar skill would enhance the effectiveness of the prospecting expedition as it traversed the BC wilderness in search of gold.

Mr Shelton, although suspicious of the degree to which mysticism might assist their endeavour, was nevertheless open to its possibilities and, of course, deferred to the president's will to prevail over his pessimism. In JM's defence, though, very little mining science existed at the time, to determine what might lie beneath one's feet. Drilling as we know it, was not yet a thing, so miners of the day essentially went by what lay exposed on the surface for guidance as to what might lie beneath. As spiritualism was in its ascendancy at the time, (perhaps 8 million followers in 1897 mostly from the middle and upper classes. *Wikipedia*), it was only reasonable to assume that this belief should be exploited for any value it may have. More than a century later, it has been marginalized to a great extent but at that time it was practiced in parallel with conventional religion by the likes of JM Robinson who, although a devout Baptist, believed that spiritualism was more in the realm of one who was a critical thinker. It would hold a life-long fascination for him.

The prospecting party left Rossland in July, travelled into Washington State to look over their claims there and then back into Canada where the Christina Lake claims were inspected. They then moved westward as far as Princeton, before turning north and east toward Headwaters Lakes, located close to Okanagan Lake, near present-day Peachland. Throughout the expedition, Mrs. Anderson was in constant contact with the spirit world, the denizens of which assured the prospectors that they were on the right track and that riches would be theirs if they persevered. Around Headwaters Lakes, they discovered some promising sites which were staked. A site was surveyed for a town to service the mines (Glen Robinson) and then the party travelled the rest of the way to Camp Hewitt where Peachland is today. From there, they would cross the lake to Okanagan Landing on the

The Canadian-American Gold Mining and Development

CAPITAL \$1,500,000. TREASURY \$1,000,000.

Shares all Fully Paid Up and Non-Assessable.

GLEN ROBINSON.

Between the mountain ranges upon which the Canadian-American mineral claims are located lie beautiful and fertile valleys, well watered and wooded, and capable of sustaining hundreds of families. The climate of this region is similar to that of the Okanagan Valley, which has been aptly called the 'Italy of Canada.' In one of these valleys 960 acres have been staked for the townsite of Glen Robinson. It is a charming spot, about 12 to 15 miles west from Lake Okanagan. Three pretty little spring lakes, the source of the south fork of Deep Creek, together with a long, grassy valley, make an ideal spot for a town. Keep your eye on Glen Robinson.

Are you seeking a safe and profitable investment for your spare capital? Buy Canadian-American

The Canadian-American
Gold Mining and
Development.

Robinson, John Moore

S S Aberdeen, where they would register their claims at Vernon. Ultimately, the group would return to Rossland. Repeatedly, Okanagan historians tell us how JM was so impressed by the peaches grown in the vicinity of Camp Hewitt that he decided that the environment of the Okanagan Valley was perfect for growing fruit on a large scale. And some also say how Robinson quickly dropped thoughts of going into mining and, instead, went into land development. But let us let J M tell the story of how it happened in his own words:

From: *The Transition of the Okanagan as told by J M Robinson*, a circular, 1926. [*Bright Sunshine* p. 57]

'In the fall of 1897, in pursuit of a mining enterprise, I stayed overnight at the Lambley Ranch on the Okanagan Lake, and the bachelor in charge, Mr Vener, gave us for supper the most delicious peaches I ever ate. I asked him where he got the peaches, assuming, of course, that they were imported, and he replied that they raised them. He said that a few of the acres of the orchard around the house were peaches and they found them a profitable crop. This information was A WONDERFUL REVELATION TO ME.

Immediately it dawned upon me that herein lay the solution of the problem that had been so often anxiously discussed by Manitoba people of my acquaintance who saw many of their best settlers, year after year sell out their belongings and go with their families and capital to California. In most cases these people did not want to leave the country where they were doing so well at wheat farming, but some members of the family COULD NOT STAND THE RIGORS OF THE WINTER, and so a change must be made. How often had the regret been expressed by these Manitobans that we did not have, somewhere in the west, a bit of territory with climatic conditions that might even distantly approach the California climate.

So here in the Okanagan, on the Lambley Ranch I discovered what these people were wishing for and what Canada needed.

A few days later I bought 30 acres of the Lambley Ranch on the beach adjoining the peach orchard, and surveyed a little village which I called Peachland, so the idea that it was a peach raising district would be conveyed wherever the name went.'

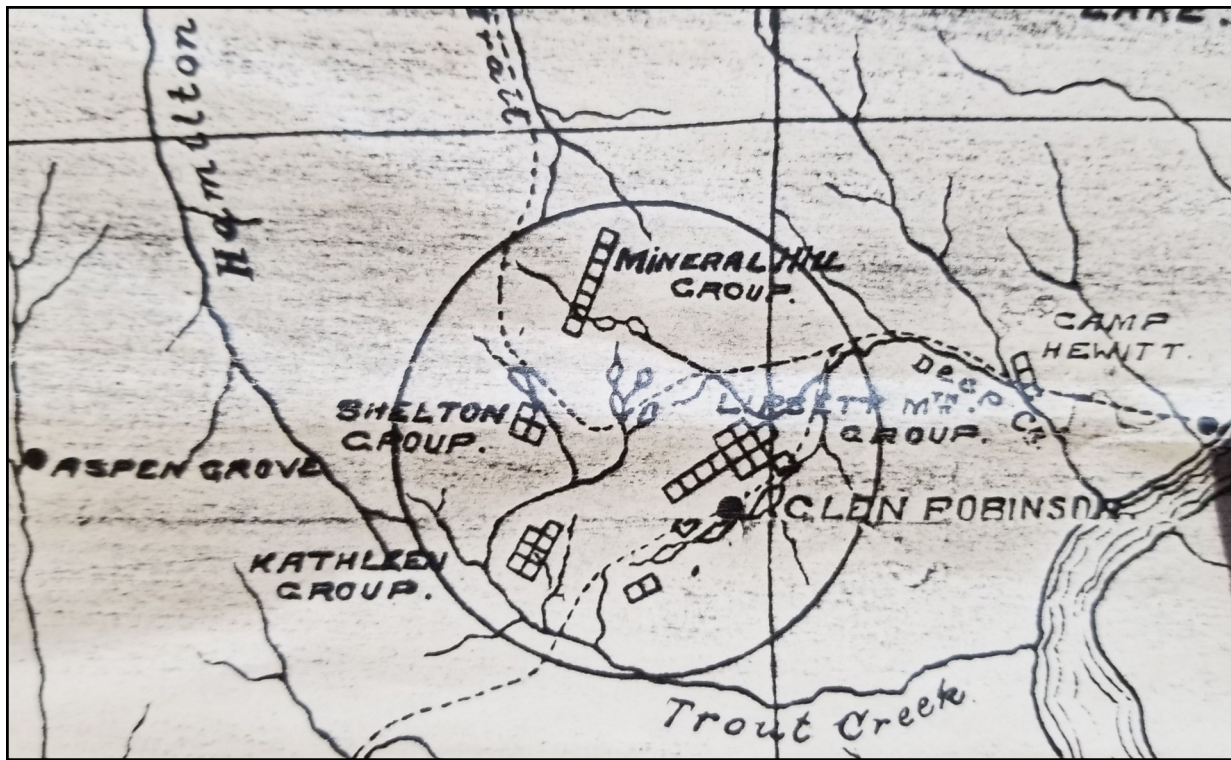
As we see, the seed of an idea was certainly planted that fall but the actual foray into land development was not to take place until 1899 when the Peachland Townsite Company was born with the slogan: "*The Canadian California*".

James Gartrell of Trout Creek had established a commercial orchard in 1890 [*Okanagan Historical Society* [1948] Report 12, p172] and Robert Lambly grew fruit, as JM describes. But early in 1898, the mining venture was going strong with about 30 men working on the Gladstone and Kathleen mines in the area of Glen Robinson near Headwater Lakes. Despite the effort, it was an unsuccessful venture.



Lambley ranchhouse. Photo courtesy of Peachland Museum

Robinson, John Moore



Above: Map showing claims staked by the Canadian American Gold Mining Co in 1897. (Courtesy of Peachland Museum)

Below: 1898. Group working the Gladstone Mine purchased from Augustus (Gus) Hewitt. Standing top right is JM Robinson. Sitting beside him is Harry Hardy, Peachland's first permanent settler. The woman in the photo is likely Anna Anderson, and RC Lipsett sitting behind her. (Courtesy of Peachland Museum and Richard Smith)



NEW DISTRICT FOUND

A Party of Prospectors Make Some Wonderful Finds.

MANY CLAIMS STAKED

The Prospects Include Both Free Milling and Smelting Propositions, and Are Located in the Country to the West of Lake Okanagan.

Those who strike out into new fields and blaze new paths for themselves generally find something to reward them for their courage and enterprise. Those who follow have to take what they leave as the original explorers generally secure their pick of the good things that they find. At least that has been the experience of a party that went out in the interests of the Canadian American Gold Mining and Development company. This party left here on the 28th of July last and have just returned after having made some 24 locations and staked a township. The party was headed by J. M. Robinson, the president and general manager of the company and with him were Dr. Lipsett Carberry, Rev. A. T. Robinson, M. B., W. J. Shelton, a mining expert, Mrs. A. Anderson, the mineral psychometrist and W. Wren, cook.

The party left Northport on July 28 equipped with supplies, pack horses and all the paraphernalia necessary for a successful prospecting trip. From thence they made their way to Christina lake, where they inspected the property of the Algonquin Consolidated Mining and Development company. This company has 19 claims and they are good properties. The Canadian-American company owns a large block of the stock of this company, and it was to learn if the investment was likely to be a good one that the examination was made. The next group of claims examined were those of Christina-Cascade Mining and Development company, and these make an excellent showing. The party then proceeded on and saw many of the mines of the Greenwood district. In turn Camp McKinney was visited and the producing mine of the Camp McKinney Development company was examined and greatly admired. The next prospect was next made of the rich mines in the vicinity of Fairview, and it needed only a cursory examination to see that the mines there have a great future before them. It is a free milling camp and the party say that it is among the best mining sections that they have visited. Then they proceeded up the Similkameen valley in a northwesterly direction to a point within five miles of Princeton.

Then struck out into what was a hitherto unprospected wilderness by following up Five-Mile creek, and crossed over the divide to Trout creek, and it was here that they staked their first claim. From there they went to the Headwater lakes, and it was near these lakes that they found seven smelting propositions, which they staked. Then the party of prospectors crossed over the divide to the source of the South Fork of Deep creek, and in that valley they staked out a township. Of the 24 claims which were staked by the party 17 were free milling. These free milling claims were staked on Trout creek and on Bald mountain and at the head of Deep creek. The veins of free milling ore are from 25 to 50 feet wide, and can be traced for a distance of over two miles. There are practically ten continuous claims in one group. Then there were seven claims taken up on Headwater lakes on what is known as Mineral mountain. These latter claims are smelting propositions, and have large and well defined veins, and an iron capping similar to that which prevails in this camp. Mineral mountain, Mr. Robinson says, is very strongly mineralized, being practically a mineral mountain, as its name indicates. The veins are true contact, and lie between lime and granite. The balance of the claims are scattered along the line that was traversed by them. The country in which all the locations were made, however, is one that has never been prospected before, and it is thought that it will prove a very rich one. So far no assays have been made, but will be in a short time.

All the claims were taken up in the interests of the Canadian American Gold Mining and Development company.

Dr. Lipsett and Mr. Shelton remained at the claims and Mr. Smith is going there this week with four men to build cabins and make preparations for development work, which will be carried on during the winter by four practical miners, to the end that something may be known in the spring as to their worth.

Mr. Robinson and his associates feel that they have accomplished a great deal during the time they were out. Twenty-four claims, 17 of them free-milling propositions and seven smelting propositions, is a wonderful showing when it is considered that the veins are well defined, continuous, wide and rich in mineral. They feel, too, that the country in which they are the pioneers will yet out a considerable figure in the mining world.

Left: Uncited clipping. Possibly from the *Rossland Miner* circa October 1897

Below: Ad in *Winnipeg Tribune*. Jan 18, 1898

Bottom: JM Robinson, back row at far left at the Peachland Boarding House. c 1898. The photo is poor quality but at front left might me Lily Robinson with a daughter

KEEP YOUR EYE ON GLEN ROBINSON

THE NEW FREE GOLD MINING CAMP.

12 Miles West of Okanagan Lake - - - - British Columbia.

The township of 560 acres is owned by the CANADIAN-AMERICAN GOLD MINING AND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY.

The town is to be governed on a semi-co-operative basis. Civic government by commission; civic insurance; the "Gottenberg" system of handling the liquor traffic, etc., are to be tried.

This Company also owns Thirty-Seven mineral claims, or nearly 1,800 acres of mineral land; 35 of these are Free Gold properties, 3 Refractory Ore Gold and 4 Silver Lead. It also owns 620,000 shares of Capital Stock of five other mining companies operating in British Columbia.

IN ADDITION to all this, the Company has Fifteen Thousand Dollars coming to it as part of the proceeds of a sale of mining property made to the British-American Corporation. Water rights have also been secured for mining and milling purposes.

The CANADIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY is capitalized at \$1,500,000, divided into 1,500,000 shares of \$1.00 each, fully paid and non-assessable. Treasury 1,000,000 shares. Full amount of Promoters' stock pooled until a dividend is paid.

Officers: J. M. Robinson, President and General Manager; Dr. R. C. Lipsett, Vice-President; T. J. Smith, Secretary; W. J. Robinson, Treasurer; and W. J. Shelton, Mining Superintendent. The Head Office of the Company is at Rossland, B. C.

The Company is mining continuously, night and day shifts, on the Josie Group and on the Alma Mater Group. On the Josie Group, which is situate 12 miles from Northport, the shaft was down 80 feet on January 1st, and it is expected ore will be shipped to the new Le Roi smelter by February 1st. On the Alma Mater Group, near the Company's township, the tunnel was in 60 feet on the First of January. In his report to the Management, the Foreman says:

"We have the upper tunnel in upwards of 60 feet, we are driving straight on, on ledge matter. From the very start we have had more or less mineral, lots of iron blow holes, etc., streaks of white quartz mixed with grey quartz, or quartzite. At present the face of the tunnel glitters all over with mineral. I am satisfied that a large body of paying ore exists here."

This Company gives every promise of being the wealthiest and most influential mining concern on the American Continent. Its foundations have been securely laid on the strictest of business principles, and it has reached that stage where failure is well nigh impossible. It has good properties, plenty of them, \$20,000 in cash in the Treasury, and upwards of 300,000 shares of unsold Treasury stock, with which to carry on its mining operations.

The investor who buys this stock now will double his money within a year, and his shares will be worth \$5.00 to \$10.00 each inside of five years.

A BLOCK OF TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND SHARES OF TREASURY STOCK is now offered to the Manitoba public at 50 cents per share. When this block is sold no more of the Treasury stock will be offered for sale. Applications for shares will be filled in the order in which they are received. If the investment suits you, wire or write to J. M. Robinson, Box 298, Brandon, Man., or to the Company's official brokers,

J. M. ROBINSON & CO.,
136 Columbia Ave., Rossland, B. C.





Above: Peachland in 1898. J M Robinson standing outside the newly-opened school where Charles Elliott was the first teacher. (Courtesy of Peachland Museum)

Right: *Okanagan Historical Society 15th Report p. 86. Pioneer Days in Peachland* by JP Parrott

The Big Transition

Mining, the reason for people being here in the first place, faded in importance although much later, in 1970, things came full circle with the opening of the Brenda Mines just outside Peachland. This resulted in a new wave of people coming here to work at that mine, just as the very earliest men had come almost a century earlier, drawn by the lure of gold at the Gladstone Mine. The new people coming to Peachland following 1898 came here mostly to become orchardists—and successful ones at that. This was indeed a new era with these people being both men and women and their families. It was no longer just a man's world.

The Story of Peachland. 4th ed. By Don Wigfield. P.2

More than fifty years ago, on February 8, 1898, I came down Okanagan Lake on the old SS Aberdeen and came ashore at Bob Lambly's ranch adjoining what is now Peachland. I walked the plank that was pushed out to the beach. Into the lone little tent set up on the beach, the Aberdeen crew put mining and ranch supplies. When the boat left, I stood there, the loneliest man in the Okanagan.

Soon I heard the creaking of a home-made wagon. "Billy" Dewar and Fenner arrived and took the mining supplies destined for Camp Hewitt and Glen Robinson to Lambly's ranch where they were put on pack horses. We then started for Glen Robinson, back in the mountains. Joe Lipsett said the distance was ten miles with fourteen inches of snow. It turned out to be fourteen miles with four feet of snow on the last five miles. I walked behind the pack train. We covered nine miles before dark. The horses were exhausted, and we camped for the night.

JM Robinson was president of the mining company which operated Glen Robinson and the Kathleen group of mines, ten miles nearer Princeton. The directors of the company were Robinson's two brothers, WJ and AT Robinson, his two brothers-in-law, Robert Lipsett and Dave Watson and a Mr. (sic) Anderson, a clairvoyant. There were many shareholders. Among those I knew were Dan McMillan, Thompson Elliott, Leon McCall, Dan Seaton, Mrs. McDougald (sister of the Robinson brothers), Alex Miller, Charlie Elliott and Jim Elliott. Shelton was the mining engineer. The company did not find ore in paying quantities and later transferred its efforts to land development.

Land Development in Peachland

Before we embark upon a description of Robinson's subsequent activity, it would be useful to describe the infrastructure changes which had recently occurred, that made development of the Okanagan Valley possible. As can be imagined, the Okanagan Valley was one of the most remote parts of Canada and, indeed, of the British Empire. It was promised by the Canadian Government that a railroad would be built if the Colony of British Columbia joined the Confederation of Canada. It was completed in 1885. This brought the new province into closer contact with Central Canada although the Okanagan Valley remained remote. In 1892, a spur line was built from Sicamous to Okanagan Landing, making transportation available to the water's edge. In 1893, the *SS Aberdeen* was launched and now the entire Okanagan Lake was accessible by regularly scheduled transport. This was the Camp Hewitt that J M Robinson arrived at in the fall of 1897 and famously tasted the local ripe peaches.

By 1899, Robinson's mining operations had petered out but, despite the financial losses for the investors, JM's enthusiasm for a new venture was convincing enough to elicit their further participation. The Peachland Townsite Company was formed December 28, 1899. Two large tracts of pre-empted land were purchased from Harry Hardy and Gus Hewitt. These were surveyed, subdivided and water rights were obtained. Friends, family and other acquaintances were enticed to move to Peachland from Manitoba to take up 'fruit ranching'. In addition to JM's brothers, his parents and a sister, Margaret Robinson McDougald, came out as well.

"Of course, when the people up the valley heard what he was going to do, "Oh", they said, "that man is . . ." They'd tell the people on the boats coming down that my dad was crazy, thinking he could cut up the



Photo courtesy of the Peachland Museum

Robinson, John Moore

ranches and run in the orchards. Oh, they just made fun of him and everything. And the next year they were doing the same thing.” (Robinson’s daughter, Gwen Hayman, in *Bright Sunshine* p. 58.)

Robinson’s efforts paid off and the company was very quickly successful in its venture. Robinson was very active in the development of the village by surveying and laying out the town, bringing in water for irrigating the orchards and building structures to house and support the growing population. The reader interested in Peachland history is encouraged to turn to the publications produced by the [Peachland Museum](#) which can add the necessary detail. Robinson, however, would not rest long on his laurels and turned his attention instead to a new land development project.

J. M. ROBINSON, President	∞	M. N. MORRISON, Sec.-Treas. and Manager
The Peachland Townsite Company, Limited		
PEACHLAND, B. C.		
One, Two, Five and Ten-Acre Fruit Lots on Easy Terms of payment. Orchards planted and cared for until bearing.		
An adequate and efficient system of irrigation.		
CLIMATE UNEQUALLED		
☞ THE PEACH BELT OF WESTERN CANADA		



The Outing Club - Standing from L to R: AT Robinson, Miss Gertie Miller, Mrs. Thompson Elliott, Miss Ella Smith, Miss Inga Maestad, Mrs. JM Robinson, Mrs. A W Miller, Mr. Thompson Elliott, Miss AE Elliott, a cousin of Miss Elliott, Mr. A W Miller.

Seated from L to R: JM Robinson, Miss Aggie Miller, Mrs. DH Watson, Miss Mabel Smith, Mr. C. G. Elliott. If the date on the photo is correct, then Lily Robinson would be about 8 months pregnant. Miss Maestad is the daughter of Anna Anderson, the spiritualist medium who accompanied JMs prospecting expedition in 1897. Mr. C. G Elliott was the first teacher in Peachland. Photo Courtesy of Peachland Museum.

Summerland Development

Fifteen miles south of Peachland lay some prime land that caught JM's eye but, for a project of that magnitude, he would need financiers with deep pockets to get it started. His efforts eventually led him to Montreal to the offices of Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, president of the CPR. Together with other investors, they formed the Summerland Development Co Ltd on June 18, 1903 [*Okanagan Historical Society* [1948] Report 12 p.172]. Shaughnessy was president and JM was the Managing Director. Again, this venture was extremely successful as investors, both from Canada and from abroad, were keen to get in on the land boom then taking place. The Okanagan Valley was experiencing a classic case of 'fear of missing out' and a buying frenzy ensued.

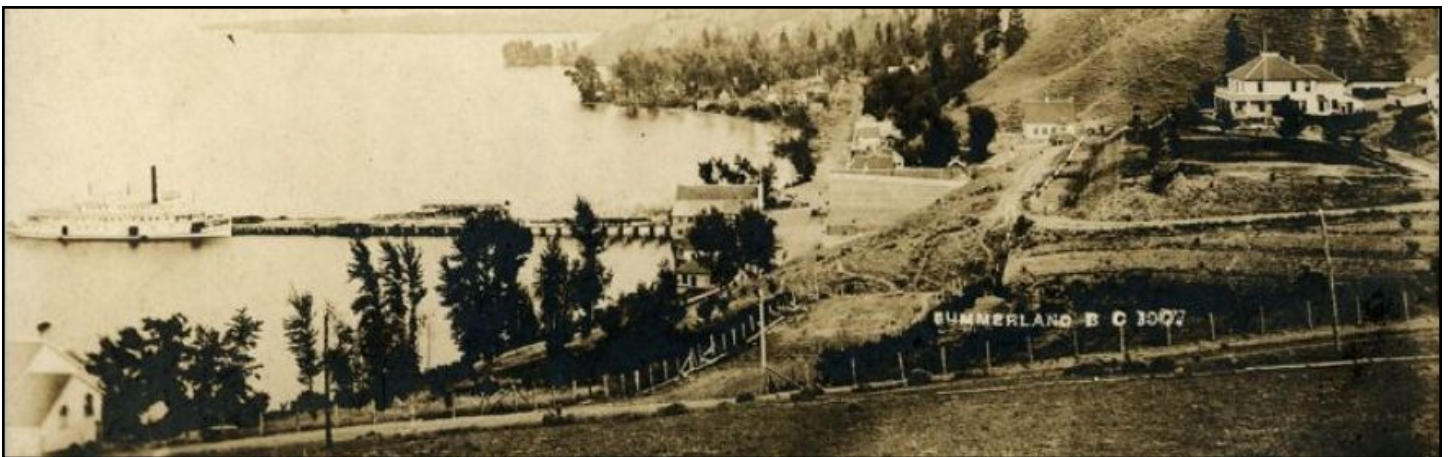
'There was Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, C H Hosmer - two names I remember - and they liked his story. A group of these men put up the money to start Summerland . . . But at the end they were very, very pleased with the deal, because I know the family silverware came from the gift they gave my father in appreciation of his success in Summerland.' [Dorothy Robinson (JM's daughter) in *Bright Sunshine* p. 59].

'After getting four or five outstanding personalities from Montreal, he went back to the Prairies and they just rushed in to buy land. That was the beginning of Summerland.' [Harry Corbitt in *Bright Sunshine* p. 59]

'Among the investors who were known more or less throughout Canada were Sir (afterwards Lord) Thomas Shaughnessy, Sir Edward Osler, Sir Edward Clouston, C R Hosmer, R B Angus, Senator J Kirchhoffer, Count Dentice and the Hon. William Hespeler. Another group came from the vicinity of Brandon, another from the Eastern provinces and others directly from Great Britain but no groups from the USA.'

Okanagan Historical Society 20th Report, p17

By 1906 Summerland was incorporating and JM Robinson was voted in as Reeve (Mayor) by acclamation. The family moved into an elegant new home overlooking the water. Directly below the property was the steamboat landing with all its activity on boat day and the regattas that were popular in those days. From his veranda, JM not only had a commanding view, he would also contemplate what he could do with the dusty hills directly across the lake at Nine Mile Point. Whether sitting in a rocking chair or swinging on a hammock on his veranda, Robinson imagined a verdant oasis of orchards there instead of the cattle that grazed upon the dusty hillsides; cattle belonging to Thomas Ellis of Penticton.



Summerland, 1907. Photo courtesy of Summerland Museum shows Robinson's house at the right.

"All I know is that he used to look across the lake; and in a beautiful valley like this, with such lovely climate, he didn't think that just one man and a lot of cows should live there. He didn't like that idea. He thought that people should be on the land and should enjoy the climate and the beautiful valley. He used to sit on his verandah in Summerland and look across the lake at this beautiful property where just a few cows grazed. So he bought it and started Naramata. Oh it was a terrific little village, lovely village. At least, as far as I'm concerned, it was just wonderful. It used to be all trees, you know; all wooded and beautiful trees." [Dorothy Robinson (a daughter) in *Bright Sunshine* p. 64]



Mayor J M Robinson and the Summerland Band in front of the Summerland Hotel, 1906.
Photo Summerland Museum

Robinson, John Moore



**Robinson Home
Summerland**

Above: Robinson family preparing for an outing on horseback and buggy.

Right: Family poses on front verandah

Below: Verandah of Robinson house. Perfect place for contemplating his next project

Photos Naramata Heritage Museum



Sir Thomas Shaughnessy

There was a fitting tribute paid to the personal ability of the man when Sir Thomas Shaughnessy presented to Mr. J M Robinson a personal cheque for the sum of \$600 as an evidence of his appreciation of the work performed by Mr. Robinson as founder of Summerland, Peachland and Naramata. No man is in a better position to know the obstacles which Mr. Robinson encountered in his early efforts than is Sir Thomas Shaughnessy and his colleagues. It was to Sir Thomas that Mr. Robinson went early in the life of Summerland and procured from him the assistance necessary to secure the land and place the water upon it and since that time the keen eye of Sir Thomas has been upon every movement in the progress of the community. *Summerland Review. Orchard City Record* Nov 3, 1910 p. 1



Sir Thomas Shaughnessy. Public Domain photo Glenbow Museum, Calgary. 1905

Sir Thomas Shaughnessy (later Lord Shaughnessy) was president of the CPR from 1899 to 1918. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Son of Irish immigrants, he joined the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway under Cornelius Van Horne. In November, 1882, he joined the CPR and rose to the level of President. He was 'a perpetually well-dressed perfectionist, obsessed over cleanliness and refused to ride the elevator with anyone. He felt that constant vigilance was essential and everything had to be done according to the many rules he introduced. (From *Wikipedia* citing various sources).

We are all very much gratified by the outcome of this transaction because, through such assistance as we were able to give, you have established a thrifty, growing community on Okanagan Lake and we have got a good return on the investment.

Congratulations and thanks

Yours sincerely,

T. Shaughnessy

Concluding sentence of letter dated August 22, 1911 from Sir Thomas Shaughnessy (photo) to J M Robinson
Courtesy of Summerland Museum

Naramata Development

Robinson had previously approached Ellis to sell some of the land around Nine Mile Point. It is noted in some histories that Ellis, like other cattle ranchers, initially had some reservations about selling their land. It had even been argued that there would never be a future for commercial fruit growing but that argument had been dispelled by the success that places like Summerland and Peachland achieved in attracting people to the sector. This, despite the fact that the newly planted trees were not yet producing. In 1905, Ellis and Robinson formed a company (South Okanagan Land Co.) in order to parcel off the Ellis ranchland to the best advantage and, on January 2, 1907, Robinson formed the Summerland Trust Company. Through it, he would start his new project across the lake from Summerland. He purchased 3000 acres of Ellis lands so he could start the new venture: a cultured enclave for gentleman farmers to retire to for, by then, it was clear that the Okanagan was an appealing choice for retirees and tourists alike, due to its attractive weather.

In 1906, San Francisco had suffered a devastating earthquake and fire. JM had a respected friend living there named Anna Gillespie. She was the Spiritualist Church Minister and her family were now left in difficult circumstances. JM went to San Francisco and convinced her to come to the Okanagan to assist him in his latest development. Anna would become the social coordinator in the new community and provide spiritual 'mediumship' to Robinson. Her responsibility was to meet and greet potential buyers and to generate entertainment in the fledgling community. Mr. Gillespie and Anna's two sons would also find employment; Mr Gillespie was to be the postmaster while Anna's son Fred Manchester, would manage the Hotel Naramata. The Gillespie family arrived in Summerland in 1906 and in 1907 Mr. and Mrs. Gillespie were relocating to Nine Mile Point where they initially lived in a tent house. [citation needed]

During 1907, some of the elite characters that Robinson was seeking did indeed begin to arrive; men like Carroll Aikins (who would go on to build a theatre in Naramata), and Sir Richard McBride who was the Premier of BC at the time. But any type of new venture in agriculture is labour-intensive and 'fruit ranching' was by no means different - despite what the land speculators were saying. Priority had to be given to clear the land, put in irrigation and roads and plant and care for the young orchard. As a result, building a house was of the least priority, as the sooner an orchard came into production, the sooner the orchardist could start earning an income. Certainly not all the newcomers were as wealthy as Robinson's glossy promotional pamphlet suggested. Early settlers, therefore, often endured living in tent houses for one or more years; some of them even through the winter!



Robinson tent house in Naramata was often the site of social gatherings in the embryonic community. Photo Naramata Museum

Robinson, John Moore



More photos depicting social gatherings at Naramata. Above, the group is photographed on the top level of the Robinson houseboat *Lily of the Valley*. Below: another gathering at the Robinson tent house. Photos Naramata Museum



The Robinson tent house (below) was not just the family's home, it was also a social gathering place and site of early church services

Advertisements such as the one at right were published across the west to attract potential buyers. Men of wealth both in Calgary and Winnipeg responded to the lure of retiring among a fruit orchard in the Okanagan Valley

Naramata

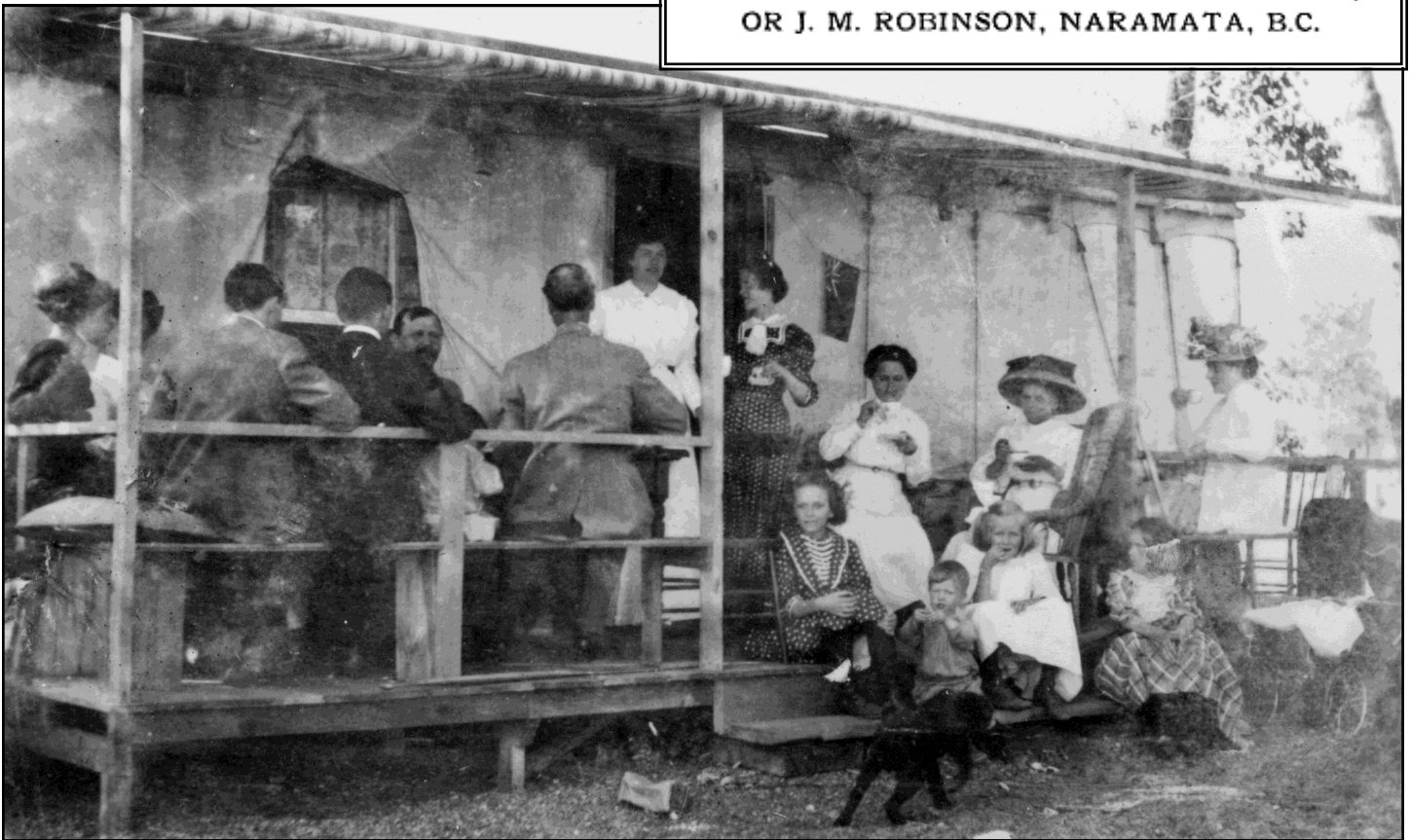
Across Okanagan Lake 3 miles from Summerland. Ferry connection. Similar soil and genial conditions.

**TEN ACRE FRUIT LOTS.
40,000 Fruit Trees Planted
THIS SPRING.**

Lake View 25 Miles. :: Lovely Town Site. The Watering Place of the Okanagan Valley.

Says a Battle Creek (Mich.) Investor: "The good thing in trying to interest people to come to Naramata is that there is no excuse for anyone enlarging on the facts, and the hard thing is to endeavor to conceal one's enthusiasm while telling the truth"

**Write The Summerland Trust Co. Ltd.,
OR J. M. ROBINSON, NARAMATA, B.C.**



Anna Gillespie

Anna Gillespie was a spiritualist medium and played a significant role in the early years of Naramata. When she lived in Naramata from 1907 to 1916, she would meet the boat and welcome prospective buyers. Anna entertained both visitors to Naramata and the residents of the fledgling community. Together with her two sons, Fred and Mark Manchester, and other talented residents, many community concerts were produced.

It was in her tent house one night in 1907 that she held a séance and channeled the spirit of an Indian Chief named Big Moose. The spirit spoke through Anna and told the gathering about his beautiful bride named Nah rah mah tah, 'Smile of Manitou'. JM Robinson was struck by the elegant name and decided to drop the superfluous letters and apply it to his new development. He also named Anna Avenue for Mrs. Gillespie.

Travelling to Battle Creek, Michigan for the annual summer gathering of the Spiritualist Church, Anna enticed several settlers from there to move to Naramata. Her story [link](#) can be found on the Naramata Museum website Pioneers page.

She died in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1926.

Naramata

By Anna Gillespie

*A trailing scarf of red and brown,
The jeweled beaches drifting down,
Kissing the waves that dance and break
On the shore of Okanagan Lake
At Naramata*

*There's a gleam of gold in the tinted skies,
A signal light to the traveler's eyes,
Soft melodies, like birds in June,
Await, with welcome in each tune,
At Naramata*

*Echoes of laughter on the shore
Blend with the dip of falling oar;
And sunlight or starlight has no frown,
As it lovingly rests on the little town
Of Naramata*

*O, the waters blue, and whispering trees,
The blossoming flowers, the humming bees,
And the loyal hearts of the people true
Have just one song - "We welcome you"
To Naramata*



Photo courtesy of Lily Dale Museum, New York

Naramata – Smile of Manitou

by Mrs. W Nuttall

The townsite was laid out and Naramata was started April 22, 1907, when Mr. Robinson and his family came across the lake, approximately three miles, in their houseboat 'Lily of the Valley' towed by their private launch 'The Naramata' [should be the *Maude Moore*].

The same year that the new townsite was laid out, a small school house, dwelling and other buildings were erected and a post office was opened with J S Gilliespie (sic) in charge.

The first of the pioneer families to settle on the new land was that of William Mitchell from Brandon who arrived in 1907. The town was barely out of the planning stage when they and other early day settlers arrived. Others in this new group were Somerset Aikins and his son Carroll, the Manchester brothers, Mr. and Mrs. J S Gillespie, Mr. and Mrs. W Wellband, Mrs. Palmer and family, WJ Robinson, Dan McKay, Guy Brock, Matthew Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. JC Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Turner and Mr. and Mrs. George Wolstencroft.

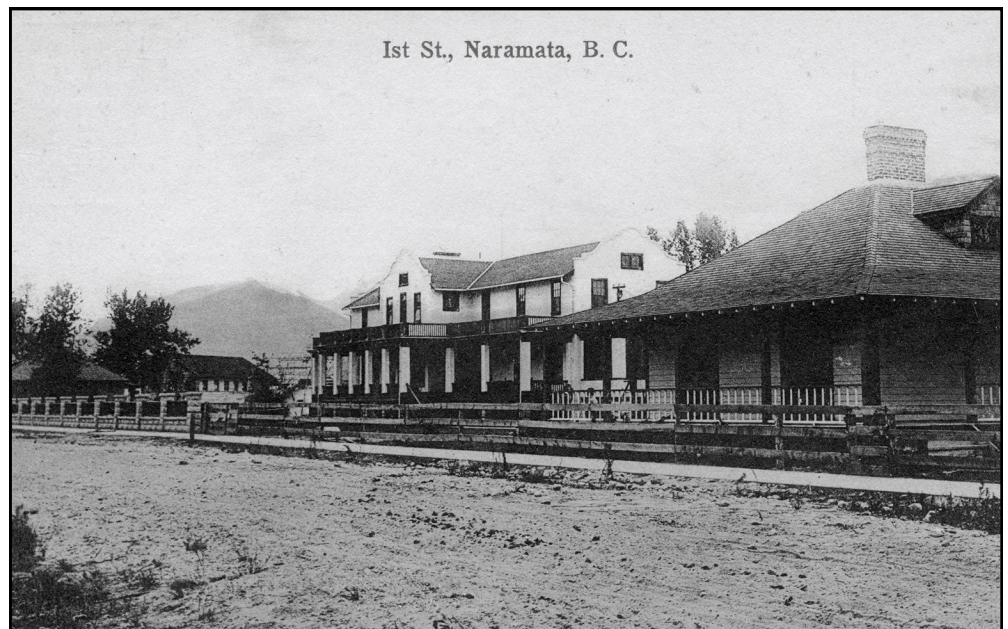
Okanagan Historical Society (1958) 22nd Report

By 1907/08, the Robinsons were building their residence; The Hotel Naramata. It was a California style hotel with additional cabins on the property and located on Robinson Point. The family was affluent and the children were being educated at quality institutions. JM was active in politics and society. What had started off as Nine Mile Point and briefly 'East Summerland' was now a village with an exotic name attracting people to settle there. For a detailed description of Naramata's early days, the reader is encouraged to read "*Smile of Manitou*" by Don Salting. And for more information about the families who settled in Naramata in the early days, another Naramata Museum publication, "*Naramata in Retrospect*" offers an anthology of the early settlers. Additionally, the Naramata Museum website has a collection of family histories often written in the words of the settlers themselves. For that collection, you may follow this [link](#) to the Naramata Museum website (Pioneers).

As the needs of the village grew, JM was constantly there to assist. In 1907 he purchased the gasoline launch "Naramata" for regular transportation across the lake to Summerland and the occasional foray further away. The Okanagan Lake Boat company ensued from this new development and, soon, a scheduled run was in place as well as pleasure outings when required.

As in the other lakeside communities, regattas were organized in Naramata. JM built a grandstand on the shoreline by the hotel, and sponsored the trophies for the big events. Sadly, the grandstand burned down soon after it was built; some of the pilings remain by the shore.

For several reasons, the progress made during the boom years of land development began to ebb after the first decade of the 20th Century - not just in Naramata but in the Valley in general. First, there was some bad publicity spread when buyers realized that they had bought poor quality land that could not meet



The Naramata Hotel. Naramata Museum Photo

Robinson, John Moore

the glowing reports declared by the developers. Secondly, the demand for water far outpaced the supply during the most critical times when the fruit trees badly needed water for the maturing fruit.

The third reason was that American farmers dumped their fruit at reduced prices onto the Prairie market. When the Canadian fruit came available (3-4 weeks later), there was no demand for it.

Finally, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 led to a dearth of labour as young men everywhere joined the military. The fruit industry only slowly recovering after the war ended was again affected negatively by the Great Depression.

Robinson continued to have ideas about where to develop next but these gained no traction in the climate of the time even though his focus was development and growth and not merely lining of his pockets. He was genuinely interested in the development of the country. "There is no question that the land booster mentality produced individuals who wanted to make as much money as possible in the shortest period of time and then depart the area with their fortune. Fortunately for the Okanagan Valley, there were enough boosters who genuinely believed in the worth of the valley to reinvest their profits and devote their lives to its betterment. Certainly the Robinson family has exemplified this faith." [*Canadian Papers in Rural History*, pp 99-100].

A copy of a diary exists at the Naramata Museum of Robinson's later years and the above sentiments are amply revealed by JM's own words and actions. He was certainly focused on amassing wealth, no question; but his family's well-being was always forefront in his mind to say nothing about the idea of building a Canada reflective of British values.

The Robinsons would live out the rest of their lives in Naramata. The Naramata Hotel became a girls' school where two of the daughters taught.

JM Robinson died in Naramata on February 23, 1934 at the age of 78. His wife, Lily, who died in 1936 also at Naramata, paralleled his career in many ways. Not just a 'homemaker' but one of the leading ladies of the Okanagan Valley with an interest in knitting together the social fabric of the growing village of Naramata.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Naramata in 2007, a play was written by Craig Henderson and performed in Naramata. Called *Robinson's Rainbow*, it evoked the life and times of JM Robinson through song and dialogue. One would think that Anna Gillespie would have been pleased that Naramata continues to exhibit a penchant for the arts. Some might argue that her spirit lives on and is well aware of that fact.



"The mildness of and tonic properties of the climate are such that people from all over Canada and the Old World are attracted to it. Many have come already. They are people of means who can afford to pay handsome prices for what suits them. It is not easy to find places where the climate conspires with man and the soil to produce comfort, culture, beauty, health and profit in one combination."

Of the town, he added:

"The kind of neighbours you have and the general tone of the community have much to do with the making of that boy of yours, and your happiness generally. For instance, you would not wish to find yourself surrounded with garlic eating, foreign speaking neighbours, with whom you could have nothing in common socially. The class of people coming to Naramata is not of that type. They are of the very best Canadian stuff."

Okanagan Trust Company Brochure

***Produced by JM Robinson
1912***

Robinson, John Moore



Above: JM Robinson at planting of first fruit tree in Naramata at the orchard of William Mitchell who was the first settler to purchase land in Naramata. He came from Brandon, Manitoba in 1907. Another reference suggests that the farmer in question was named Schreck. Naramata Museum Photo

Below: Family picnic. Naramata Museum Photo



Rev. George Fallis - A Church for Naramata

The Reverend George Oliver Fallis began visiting Naramata in 1909 when his first appointment after ordination located him to Penticton. His 'outside appointment' was Naramata, which he would travel to on horseback each Sunday. In his autobiography, *A Padre's Pilgrimage*, published in 1953, he reflects on meeting JM Robinson and of their joint efforts to build a church in the startup community. Being from 'the east', it is interesting to hear Fallis describe his new surroundings.

'The Okanagan Lake is skirted by mountains and is so placid at times that reflections are almost perfect images. A photograph could be turned upside down and one could not detect the difference between the mountains and their reflections.'

He cites a descriptive poem of Penticton as corresponding with his own impressions.

*How calm thou liest at eventide,
The lakelet laving by thy side;
Thy darksome hills rise grand and high
Like huge cathedrals in the sky;
Along the shore the lovers meet
In rowing boat or shy retreat.
Once on a time thy land was dry,
The cactus grew both sharp and high;
Now through the flume the water flows;
The desert blossoms as the rose.*

'It was to this beauty spot that I spent four happy years "far from the madding crowd".'

Reverend Fallis describes Naramata as 'a hamlet and hinterland with possibly five hundred souls. I doubt if any small group in Canada was so divided religiously. There were Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Church of England, Baptist and Roman Catholics. These were the orthodox groups. But there were also Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Universalists and a pair of Confucianists. On the surface there was unity but underneath there were deep divisions.' From this description of Naramata's spiritual kaleidoscope we can assume that Reverend Fallis saw Naramata as quite a challenge for a young minister. But he was very quickly to discover what the resourceful JM Robinson was capable of:

'In the community however, there was a brilliant man who was developing Naramata. . . he was the most naïve spiritualist I have ever met. He brought a medium to live in the little place and rumour was abroad that he never took any definite step in business without consulting the oracle - the medium.'

'He gave me a royal welcome on my first Sunday. He took me to the company hotel and gave me a key to a room which he said was "the prophet's chamber." He then took me to a very bright dining-room overlooking the Okanagan Lake and said, "There is always a meal for you there." . . . He was generous and kind and above all loyal to one in his first year in the ministry.'

The 1911 Census (taken on June 6), notes that Reverend Fallis was living on Fairview Avenue in Penticton along with his sister, Ethel, who was a nurse. That fall, he would go to Nova Scotia to get married, returning to Penticton in September to a warm welcome by the entire community. He was subsequently called to the church at Kamloops, BC. But prior to that, his biggest undertaking was to build a church in Naramata.

Initially, he met with nothing but intransigence from the members of the community who felt that the project



Rev. George Fallis as a young man. Photo courtesy of the Canadian Memorial Church in Vancouver.

Robinson, John Moore

couldn't be done. Robinson, however, felt that Naramata needed a church and made every effort to assist Fallis.

Robinson gave the Reverend clear title to a lot in the village. Seeing the opposition that developed against taking on the building of the church, JM took the Reverend into his inner office 'and taking down a series of maps he pointed to names written with a blue pencil on orchard plots. These names represented folk mostly of Calgary and Winnipeg who had bought expecting to retire in the sunny Okanagan. Many were very substantial citizens. Mr. Robinson suggested I go to Calgary and Winnipeg and interview these good people, soliciting subscriptions for the new church which would serve them when they came to live permanently in Naramata.'



The Methodist Church with the home of Anna Gillespie in the distance. The scar on the mountainside created by the KVR is still absent. Photo Naramata Museum

By another stroke of luck, Andrew McCulloch was a regular attendant at Fallis' evening service in Penticton and when he heard that the Reverend was going on the trip, he solicited a ticket from the CPR on his behalf. (McCulloch was the chief engineer on the construction of the Kettle Valley Railroad being built at the time). This was a significant contribution and would lessen the burden on the fund-raising efforts. The fruit-lot owners in Calgary and Winnipeg turned out to be generous and the 'pilgrimage was a great success financially'.

Returning to Naramata, Fallis was again met with indifference about the project and decided he would have to take matters into his own hands. He hired a local contractor by the name of King, who drew up plans for the church, which Robinson signed off on. Fallis then hired a man named Robertson in Penticton who came out to Naramata with his team of horses and a scraper. The reverend, dressed in work clothes, donned his clerical collar and set to work. Soon word spread and people began to appear to watch the young parson at work. One man took a turn at the scraper and then another, each insisting on doing a shift. 'Robertson and I felt a bit like Tom Sawyers as we watched the genuine enthusiasm of our helpers.' Then ladies arrived with tea and sandwiches and the event became a picnic. 'A miracle had taken place, for one after another came forward offering subscriptions or labour to help erect a place of worship. Thus the Naramata Church was built.'

What was left to do was pay for the outstanding debt which Fallis hoped to do before the church was dedicated. Fallis describes three events of significance. The first was a community fund-raising event. Mrs. A B Allen 'lined up a well-balanced choir of over twenty voices. Mrs. Languedoc played the organ . . . and Mrs. Williams sang a contralto solo. The music was really fine and pleased everyone.'

The second 'miracle' was the arrival in Naramata of two ladies, daughters of Sir John Colby, who were visiting their nephew, Carroll Aikins. They made a fine contribution of \$100. Lastly, a lunch invite to the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Niblock, humorously resulted in the contribution of the remaining funds. Mrs. Niblock had inserted the money into the serviette which was rolled inside a silver ring. When the Reverend unfolded it, the money fell out and Mrs. Niblock insisted that a fairy had heard of the reverend's disappointment and contributed the money. 'Thus it was that the Naramata church was opened free of debt' ends the reverend.

Robinson, John Moore



Sadly, the Naramata Church that George Fallis built was torn down to build the climate-controlled fruit storage facility which today operates as the Naramata Wine Vault.

One of the pews from the demolished church is part of the Naramata Museum collection.

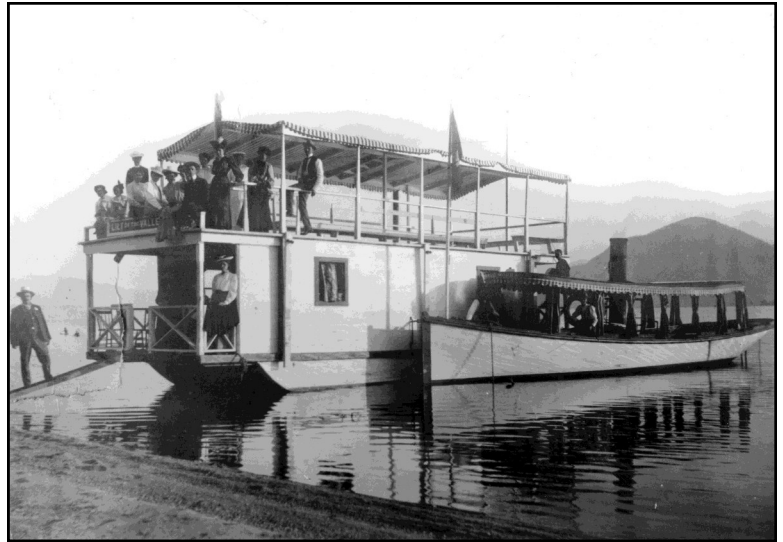
Church photos: Naramata Museum

The portrait of Reverend Fallis is displayed at the Canadian Memorial United Church in Vancouver and used here with their kind permission.



The Okanagan Lake Boat Company

Naramata had no direct link with other towns and was reliant on the water transport that JM Robinson could provide. The initial phase of the land development entailed the use of the steam launch *Maude Moore* and the houseboat *Lily of the Valley*, which was towed by the launch. These were used to ferry people and supplies to the embryonic village as well as to transport people on pleasure outings. Robinson had purchased the *Maude Moore* in 1905 from W J Snodgrass in Okanagan Falls. It was named after the youngest Snodgrass daughter (*OHS Report 28 p. 63*).



The steam launch *Maude Moore* and the houseboat *Lily of the Valley*. (Photo Naramata Museum)

The CPR sternwheeler *SS Okanagan* began to make daily stops at Naramata in 1907, but this only occasioned one stop northbound early in the morning and one southbound in the late afternoon. In the Okanagan Historical Society Report 17, C.

Noel Higgin details the development of the Okanagan Lake Boat Company which was established in 1908 to strengthen the transportation link between Summerland and Naramata. He reports that, in 1907, JM Robinson petitioned the government to finance a ferry service between the two communities. The government put out a call for tenders and Mr. Higgin was awarded the charter. He commissioned a thirty foot cabin launch named the *Mallard* and a scow that could transport both cargo and passengers when towed by the launch. In March 1908, the Summerland-Naramata ferry was inaugurated, making two scheduled trips daily and more if required. ‘The launch *Mallard* could accommodate about a dozen passengers and light freight. To carry live-stock, vehicles and heavy freight we took the scow along too.’ writes Higgin.

Robinson continued to operate the *Maude Moore* as well and toward the end of 1908, the two concerns were consolidated as the Okanagan Lake Boat Company. The chief shareholders were JM Robinson, Ned Bentley and Noel Higgin with the official ferry boat being the *Maude Moore*. When large numbers of passengers needed to be transported on special occasions, benches were placed on the scow to carry the people and, at times, ‘the Summerland Band was brought along for entertainment’ (photo next page).

The company’s second boat was the *Rattlesnake*, which Higgin describes as squat and ugly but powerful enough to tow the big scow when loaded with cement pipe from the factory at Trepanier. The company was sold to Peter Roe in 1911, who saw a boom in business when the KVR was being built. Traffic tapered off after that and when a road was built to Penticton (circa 1918) that spelled the end of the provincial charter.

C.P.R. TIME TABLE.		
The sailing schedule of the S.S. Okanagan during the summer months is as follows.		
Read up	Daily Except Sundays	Read down
10:45	Okanagan Landing	12:45
6:05	Okanagan Centre	2:25
	Short's Point	
	Nahun	
7:15	Kelowna	3:05
6:45	Gellatly	3:40
6:15	Peachland	4:15
	Naramata	
5:25	Summerland	4:52
5:00	Penticton	6:30

The CPR Time Table reflects the daily trip of the *SS Okanagan* in the summer of 1910.

The Okanagan Lake Boat Company existed from 1908 to 1918. After the KVR and the road between Naramata and Penticton were completed the use of watercraft between the communities was no longer required.

Right: Company poster features the *Mallard*

Below: The Company's scow loaded with passengers. Photo: Naramata Museum.

Transportation P. S. ROE, Manager Towing

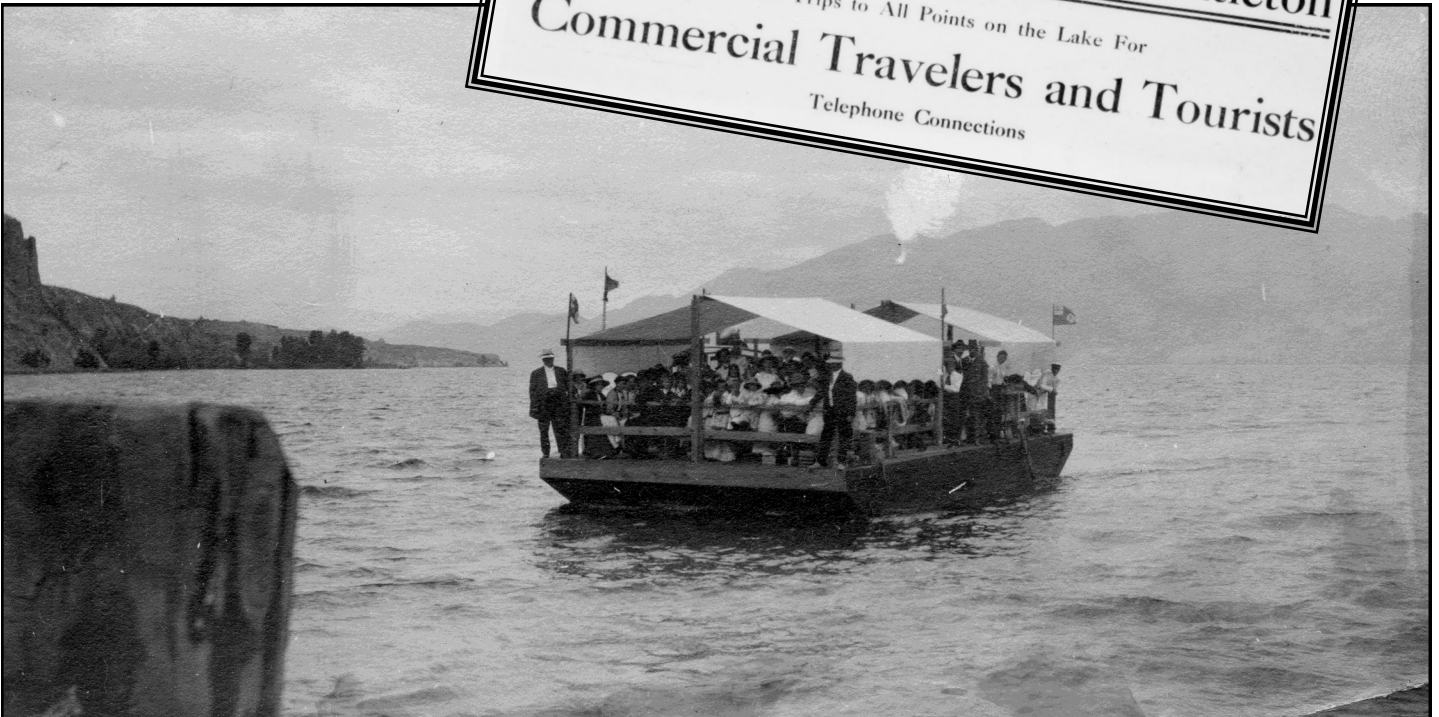
Okanagan Lake Boat Company

Naramata, B. C.

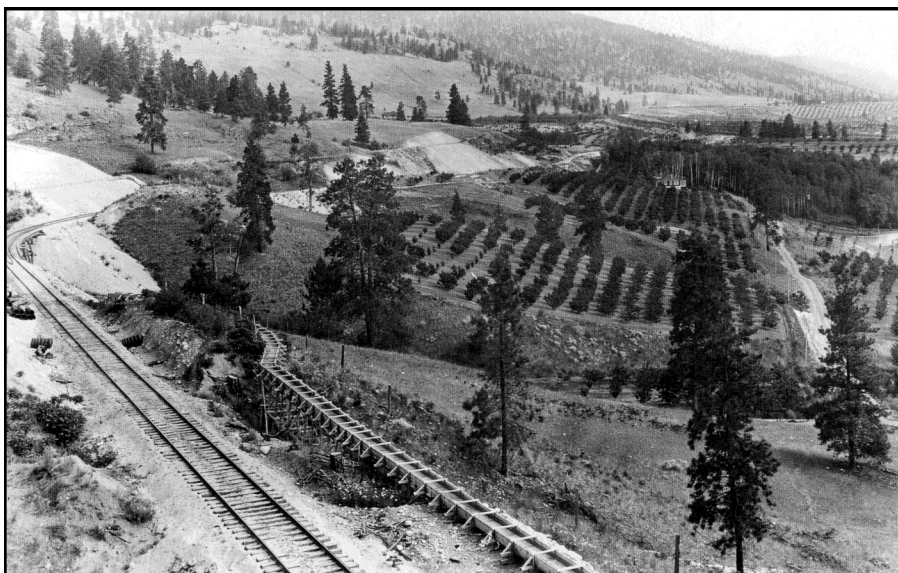


FERRY SERVICE
Summerland—Naramata—Penticton

Special Trips to All Points on the Lake For
Commercial Travelers and Tourists
Telephone Connections



Irrigation



Orchard City Record Nov 3, 1910 p. 1

Mr. J M Robinson much of whose time this fall has been taken up attending lengthy meetings of the water commission expects to leave shortly for Toronto. After a brief visit with his family in Toronto he and Mrs. Robinson start on a proposed trip to Europe. It is probable that one of Mr. Robinson's missions will be to interest Eastern capital in the proposed electric car line down the eastern side of the Okanagan Lake - the idea is to connect Vernon, Kelowna, Naramata and Penticton. *Summerland Review*



Flumes carried water from reservoirs located high up above Naramata. A distribution system was maintained and operated by the Naramata Water Commission.
Photos: Naramata Museum



Robinson, John Moore

Eliza Catherine Lipsett

Eliza Catherine Lipsett was familiarly known as ‘Lily’ and affectionately called ‘Mother’ by JM Robinson. She was born in Chinguacoucy Manitoba on the 23 of July, 1858. Her family were farmers. Lily was the fifth oldest of eight siblings born to Robert Lipsett born in Ireland and Caroline Campbell born in Upper Canada. Our research has not delved into her early years but has been more interested in her contributions to Naramata. What has emerged about her is that she emphasized the knitting together of a community as it was morphing out of the raw wilderness.

Mrs. Robinson’s obituary in the newspaper is brief but contains this passage:

‘She was born in Brampton, Ontario on July 24, 1858, of a pioneer family which came from Pennsylvania as United Empire Loyalists. As a young girl she moved west to Manitoba with her family and in 1882 was married at Meadow Lea to the late J M Robinson. They resided for some time at Portage la Prairie and then at Brandon, removing to Peachland in the Okanagan in 1898.’

Lily Avenue in Naramata is named after her.



2	Lipsett Robert	M	66	✓	Ireland	W. Meth	Irish	Farmer
	" Caroline	F	55	✓	"	"	Scotch	—
	" J Wesley	M	30	✓	"	"	Irish	Veteran, Surg
	" John	M	24	✓	"	"	"	Farmer
	" Eliza C	F	23	✓	"	"	"	—
	" Mary	F	19	✓	"	"	"	—
	" Robert C	M	15	✓	"	"	"	—
	" George A	M	14	✓	"	"	"	—

Lipsett family entry in 1881 Census for Marquette, Manitoba.

Canadian Women in the Public Eye – Saturday Night Magazine, March 11, 1922

Canadian life has ever received an impetus when the spirit that animates women in their own households has been made known in their community. This spirit has revealed itself in many forms of work in various parts of Canada and Mrs. J M Robinson, of Naramata, is one of Canada’s pioneer women who, with a mind steeped in the best things of life, for her home and family, has ever attained far-reaching results in her community by the extension of her influence and energy. Naramata, the sunny centre of the Okanagan Valley, has a distinctly individual atmosphere – an atmosphere redolent of conditions worked out in accord with modern ideas. Human nature prevails in the society of this district. There has been great creative and intellectual activity, distinctive because of the breadth of vision and because of the personal not maintained by the residents in all

Robinson, John Moore



community efforts. In all the developments of the district, Mrs. Robinson has played a large part. She brings to bear upon her problems the fine influence of a kindly temperament, a faith in the essential goodness of human nature and tact and skill in her associations. Every need is an important detail in the scheme of her surroundings and whether as the presiding genius in Women's work, or as the hostess of gracious charm in her home of open hospitality, she has been a strong force in creating the progressive atmosphere.

When Naramata was in the making and the constructive men made a tent town, Mrs. Robinson formed a Ladies' Welfare Society with the object of opening a tent hospital to care for the workmen and their families. Later, realizing that there were many situations that should lend themselves to friendly conference, the ladies increased their scope of work and a society, known as the Unity Club, was formed nine years ago [1913], with Mrs. Robinson as president. The culmination of the efforts of this energetic society was the building of the fine rustic club house on the Lake shore. They have the unique distinction of being the first women's club in British Columbia to own their club house. It is used for all patriotic functions as well as for the meetings of the various organizations such as the Women's Institute and the Farmers' In-

stitute. It was given over to the Red Cross during the war and is a social centre for the district.

The club have interested themselves in many lines of specific action open to such a society. One of the most important of these is its function as a medium of relationship between strangers and local community. Rather aside from the general trend of club work were the efforts of the club in accepting the deed of the cemetery in the town on condition that they fence, develop and beautify it.

Twenty-five years ago when the wonderful possibilities of the West were dimly outlined, it required a spirit of adventure to follow a husband of energy and vision, with a young family, to the Okanagan Valley. However, there has never been a lack of adventure in women – and to Peachland in the Southern Okanagan Mr. and Mrs. Robinson moved with their young family in 1896 [1898?]. They began the empire-building work of transforming the burned, barren hills of the Okanagan Valley into a beautiful homeland. There is nothing more curious than the long journey of an isolated thought, and the development of the Okanagan Valley may be regarded as the maturing of such a thought, - the desire of a resident of Manitoba for a Canadian California. From his newspaper office in Portage la Prairie, away back in 1894, Mr. Robinson watched a family of eight with their savings of ten thousand dollars, leaving for California. That they were seeking a milder climate led him to remark that it was a pity to lose such citizens from Canada and he regretted that there was not a Canadian California.

While prospecting for gold in 1895 [1897], Mr. Robinson came upon the ranch of Mr. Lambly, gold commissioner, near where Peachland is now built. He was given peaches and was amazed to learn that they were grown on the ranch. He immediately realized that he had found that for which he had been searching, a "Canadian California." "You cannot afford to have cattle and sheep on land that will produce such fruit as this and it is the place that thousands of Canadians are looking for," he stated. Immediately a tract was purchased, a townsite surveyed and experiments in irrigation began. A school was built, a store opened, a Union church established for the carload of settlers that Mr. Robinson took from the Prairies, including a teacher and a preacher, as there were twenty-one children in the party. The first church service was held on the veranda of Mr. and Mrs. Robinson's home. In due time one hundred thousand fruit trees ere bearing in Peachland. Having founded Peachland, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson determined to exploit another district and in 1903, with other capitalists, opened up Summerland which had a population of 2500 in 8 years. The last venture in pioneering was at Naramata, across the lake. Here Mr. and Mrs. Robinson have an ideal valley home with its wide verandas, sloping lawns, climbing roses, nestled close to the lake. In keeping with the lovely setting is the euphonious Indian name, "Naramata," "Smile of Manitou," the name of the wife of a Sioux chief. Through these pioneering exploitations, whether at Peachland, Summerland or Naramata, Mrs. Robinson has established, in her home, a social centre with that quality of human interest and noble kindness that has been characteristic of our pioneer Canadian women. Mrs. Robinson is the mother of five daughters and three sons. One

Robinson, John Moore

son, Dr W L Robinson, is well known in Toronto, as head of the Pathological department of the Toronto General Hospital, and Associate Professor in Pathology in the University. Mr. J O Robinson, a graduate of McMaster and Osgoode Hall, is in the legal department of the Bureau of Municipal Research of Toronto, under Dr H L Brittain. In the home circle, Mrs. Robinson has always stimulated an appreciation of good books, loving humanity first and literature its reflection. Her life of absorbing interest has been pleasantly interspersed with periods of travel with her family – sojourns on the continent, seasons in all the choice parts of America, ever with the idea of the educational value of touch with the outside world. Saint-Beuve considered experience a great book, the events of life its chapters. In such experiences as those of Mrs. Robinson, we see a new chapter to be written in Canada's history – the page of the book is the lovely orchard slopes of the Okanagan Valley and the

writers of the page are the men and women of faith and hope, our empire builders.



Unity Club, Naramata, was located on the beach south of the mouth of Camp Creek where a park exists today. Naramata Museum Photo

Lily Robinson and family
Photos: Naramata Museum



Robinson Family

Some time after his move to Manitoba in 1879, Robinson's family moved there too; both his parents and his siblings. On his prospecting trip to BC in 1897 we see his two brothers accompany him there. When Robinson quit the mining venture and started the land development scheme in Peachland it seems that his family moved there as well. His father passed away in 1903 in Peachland, soon after the family's relocation to the Okanagan. Robinson's mother survived a further 22 years and lived in Summerland with a son, William James Robinson. In order of age, J M Robinson's siblings are as follows:

Margaret Elizabeth Robinson - Robinson's sister was the second oldest sibling and came to Peachland in 1898 with her five children. Her husband, Archibald, had died in 1896 in Manitoba. She was a clerk in the Peachland Post Office and took on the role of Postmaster. She was succeeded in it by her son Archie and he by his sister, Candace, all of whom lived in Peachland until their passing.

Ellen Candace Robinson - The next sibling in line also came to BC and married George Gray in Vancouver in 1896. Her brother W J was a witness at her wedding and his residence was Nanaimo, so at least some of the family preceded J M Robinson to BC. Ellen was in the real estate business with J M. She died in Summerland.

William James Robinson - WJ met up with the prospecting party in Rossland in the summer of 1897. Clearly, he had interests in BC as he lived in Nanaimo at that time. One of these interests was as a shareholder and director in the Canadian-American Gold Mining and Development Co presided over by J M. He did not finish the trip due to other responsibilities. W J married twice. His first wife was Catharine McRitchie with whom he had five children of which only one, Bill, survived into adulthood. In fact, he was 98 when he died in Naramata in 1996. He came to Naramata to run the Naramata Supply Co. for Robinson. WJ's second wife was Evelyn Peacock and the couple had four children. W J was in the real estate and insurance business in Summerland and died in Vancouver.

Arthur Thomas Robinson - Robinson's brother, AT, became a travelling preacher until he too died in Summerland in 1941. In 1909 he married an Australian named Ada Louise Adolphus Murcott in Vancouver. She was a dynamic speaker and spoke strongly in favour of the temperance movement and womens' suffrage. AT's focus appears to be on tithing to the church. He maintained an orchard in Summerland despite all the travelling he did. Louise died in St Louis, Missouri in 1926.

Marie Anne Robinson - Robinson's sister Marie married Thomas John (TJ) Smith of Peachland. TJ was an early pioneer in Peachland, responsible for building the pier that serviced the town. The couple later lived in Vancouver until their passing.

Zella Baright Robinson - Zella too moved to Vancouver and was a lodger in the home of George Gray, her brother-in-law, in 1901. She married a medical doctor, William McKechnie of Vancouver. The wedding was in Peachland. They had at least one son who also became a medical doctor.

Robert Campbell Lipsett - Lily's brother, Robert, was a veterinary surgeon and accompanied the prospecting

THE ROBINSON NEWS

Published in the Interests of the Investor

My Business Policy

Recognizing the fact that time is not cash in a day, also that a business cannot be built up on the same rate, I have tried to lay the foundation of my business as they will stand the test of time and public opinion. I have always tried to make my clients feel that their interests are my interests. In my spare time I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing. I have friends who write to me and say that as an insurance agent, I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing. I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing. I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing.

The Chance of your Lifetime

Something Good

I have a business for sale that I would consider a splendid proposition. The owner would sell outright, but prefers to sell only half interest. The business is paying a handsome dividend. Includes a good salary \$10,000.00 per year. The business is in the way of writing and lecturing. I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing. I have done a great deal of work in the way of writing and lecturing.

For a Short Time Only

A very fine extra, planned. Lots of interesting facts. You know you will be interested. Price \$100.00. Write to J. W. Robinson, Summerland, B. C.

Orchards

1. \$12,000.00 - splendid 10 acre lot unimproved. This is well situated and a good buy.

2. \$750.00 - two 8 acre orchards, 1/2 acre planted with fruit and chicken house.

3. \$1,200.00 - 1/2 acre alongside Mainland Park, unimproved. nice view, looking through it there could be used for business purposes.

4. \$2,500.00 - 10 acres, 100 bearing peach trees, alongside Mainland Park, unimproved. well situated and close to town. 1/2 acre of Lake. 10 acre apple trees and bearing grape yard.

5. \$2,000.00 - 10 acres all planted with 6 year old trees, ground, poultry, beautiful view of Lake.

6. \$8,000.00 - 10 acres all planted with 7 and 8 year old trees, beautiful view of Lake, orchard in dry state sleep.

7. \$15,000.00 - 20 acres, 10 acre planted with 4 to 8 year old trees, view of Mainland Park, ground, poultry, nice view of Lake, beautiful view of Lake.

8. \$20,000.00 - 20 acres, 10 acre planted with 4 to 8 year old trees, view of Mainland Park, ground, poultry, nice view of Lake, beautiful view of Lake.

9. \$20,000.00 - 20 acres, 10 acre planted with 4 to 8 year old trees, view of Mainland Park, ground, poultry, nice view of Lake, beautiful view of Lake.

10. \$20,000.00 - 20 acres, 10 acre planted with 4 to 8 year old trees, view of Mainland Park, ground, poultry, nice view of Lake, beautiful view of Lake.

11. \$20,000.00 - 20 acres, 10 acre planted with 4 to 8 year old trees, view of Mainland Park, ground, poultry, nice view of Lake, beautiful view of Lake.

Maples Ranch

By way of encouragement to the Fruit Grower or prospective Fruit Grower, I might just say that from the above named ranch, which is my own, during the year, Sept. 1, 1911, to Sept. 1, 1912, I received an average from the trees which I have planted \$10,000.00. This was well over an extra amounting.

Another Good One

First come and first served. Two very nice, well situated and desirable plots of land, each 10 acres, containing all the necessary buildings, water, gas, and electricity. Price \$10,000.00. Write to J. W. Robinson, Summerland, B. C.

Real Estate Wanted

Do It Now!

If interested fill in coupon below and mail to me.

Mr. W. J. Robinson, Summerland, B. C.

Dear Sir:—

Would you kindly send me further information regarding _____ as advertised, or other land that you may have available for _____ and other _____.

Yours truly,

Name and address _____

Land for dairying and hog raising

My raising and dairying are one of the problems that have to be met in British Columbia. We all know how high the cost of such a dairy products, and the one who goes into this business (and has a knowledge of it) is sure to make a success. I have for sale 200 acres of the Mainland Valley, near to the town of Summerland, B. C. This is a beautiful valley, with a view of the Mainland Mountains. It is well suited for dairying and hog raising. I have a fine view of the Mainland Mountains, 4 miles long, 10 acres fenced and cleared. I have a nice view of the Mainland Mountains, 4 miles long, 10 acres fenced and cleared. I have a nice view of the Mainland Mountains, 4 miles long, 10 acres fenced and cleared. I have a nice view of the Mainland Mountains, 4 miles long, 10 acres fenced and cleared.

W. J. ROBINSON

Real Estate and Insurance Summerland, British Columbia

Robinson, John Moore

party on the 1897 trip. He continued to tie his fortunes to JM during the mining attempt in Peachland. In August 1898, he married Anna Anderson, the spiritualist medium who had accompanied the prospecting party the previous summer. She passed away in 1902 in Peachland. She was a widow from Norway and had a daughter, Inga Meastad, who was living in Peachland at the time.

Robert's second wife was Rachell Louise Bulyea. She was born in New Brunswick but her family was prominent in the west. The couple don't seem to have had children together. Rachell died in Summerland in 1938 and RC Lipsett died in 1947.

JM and Lily's children were as follows:

William Lipsett Robinson, B.A., M.B., F.R.C.S.(C.) - The oldest son of J M and Lily became a medical doctor in Toronto where he rose to the position of Head of Pathology at Toronto General Hospital. He married Mary Isabella Estabrook in Toronto and the couple had at least one child. He died in Toronto in 1954.



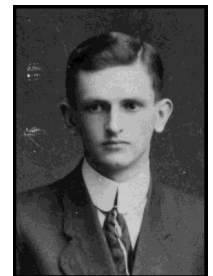
John Othmar Robinson (Attorney) - The second son, 'Jack', became a barrister and moved to the USA where, in 1917, he was drafted. He died in Los Angeles in 1948 and it seems he never married or had children.



Florence Gwendolyn Robinson - 'Gwen' married in 1925. Her husband, G P Hayman, died in 1926. They had no children. Gwendolyn Street in Naramata is named after her. She died at Naramata in 1976.



Robert Campbell Robinson - When 'Cam' died in Los Angeles in 1939, he was living with his brother 'Jack'. Cam married Georgina Logie in Summerland and the couple had two children together before divorcing.

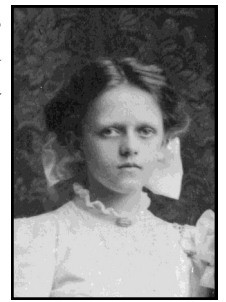


Gladys Catherine Robinson - Gladys married Fred Mathers of Vancouver and the couple made that city their home. They had two children together one of whom, Gretchen Mathers, was very attached to Naramata and helped in the founding of the Naramata Museum Society. Gladys Avenue in Naramata is named after her.



Robinson, John Moore

Kathleen Marjorie Robinson - Kathleen, for whom the Kathleen mine near Peachland is named, remained in Naramata where Kathleen Street is named after her. She never married and lived in the family home in Naramata (the hotel) where the family operated the Naramata School for Girls in the 1940s. Kathleen died in Penticton in 1956.



Evangeline Dorothy Robinson - Dorothy Avenue in Naramata is named after her. She never married and died in 1979 in Penticton. She was headmistress at the Naramata School for Girls which operated in the 1940s from the Robinson home which by that time had ceased to be a hotel.

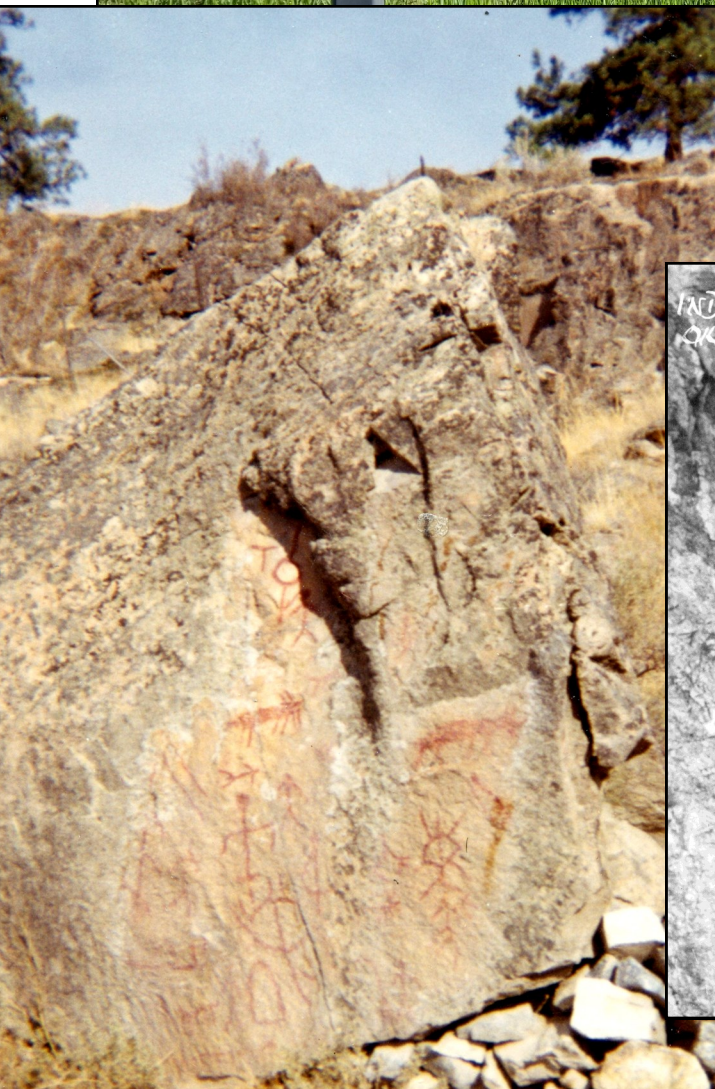


Marguerite Candace Robinson - Marguerite married John Stuart Leckie and the couple had three children. She died in Vancouver in 1949.



Robinson Family circa 1900. Photo courtesy of the Summerland Museum

Indigenous Naramata - Citxws Paqelqyn



Little representation remains of the pre-contact culture around Naramata although the area was used for gathering food and medicines. The story of the lake monster made a big impact on first settlers and remains popular, although it has nothing in common with the original. Naramata Museum Photos.



THE MONSTER ISLAND, OKANAGON LAKE

Situated in the beautiful Lake Okanagon, about twenty or twenty-five distant from Pen-tic-ton lies a small Island. Insignificant and barren although picturesque, this islet would fail to attract the attention of an ordinary observer, but for the aborigines it possesses in horrible fascination. It is, or was formerly thought to be the home of the monster of the Okanagon Lake and while eyeing it with dread interest none of the natives ever dared to approach or attempt to land there.

The Indians aver that in passing this islet they have frequently seen the blood bones and fat of the victims strewed on the rocky shore. It is impossible to ascertain the exact nature of this monster, but it is amphibious. The Indians evidently think it partakes of the nature of the species of devil sometimes benevolent sometimes malevolent, in this case always malevolent.

In crossing the Okanagon Lake during stormy weather, the Indians used always to carry a pup, a pig or even a chicken to throw overboard when in the middle of the lake to appease the fury of the monster.

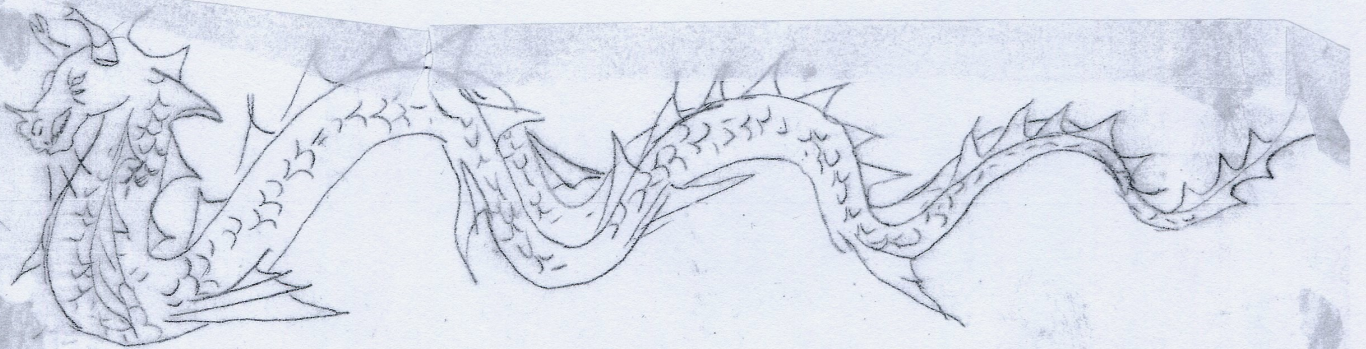
The monster was supposed chiefly to frequent the waters between his favorite island and the Mission Valley though often making excursions to both the head and foot of the lake. Some of the early white settlers believe that they have seen this strange creature, and describe it as resembling a large log or canoe turned upside down floating on the surface of the lake in stormy weather, and they would have thought it really was something of the kind had it not been moving up the lake against the wind and waves.

As lately as eighteen years ago, a half breed was swimming across the lake at the Narrows with a team of horses, when one of the horses suddenly sank, drawn under by an unseen force. The half breed was compelled to let go the rope with which he was guiding the horse lest he too should be dragged to the bottom of the lake. Nothing could convince that half breed that this was not the work of the monster as these same horses had often swam the lake at this point.

This was written in the year 1875 by Mrs Allison the first white woman to settle on the west side of Okanagon Lake. She also wrote a poem in the same year which she called "A legend of the monster of Okanagon Lake".

(perhaps Georgina Robinson's (née Logie) handwriting)

Donated by Anne Logie



A LEGEND OF THE MONSTER OF THE OKANAGON LAKE

The Lake is like a mirror.
The bright stars in the sky
Are reflected in its waters
Where the shadowy mountains lie.

Not a shimmer on the water;
Not a stir in the warm air,
Not an insect murmur,
Not a sign of life is there.

In the midst of the bright waters,
Where it scarcely seems to float
Between two starry heavens
Lies a little fishing boat.

Miles to eastward from the narrows,
Where the cliffs are high and white,
Dark and stern the shadows,
Cast by their fearful height.

Miles to westward lies an island,
An Island all men dread,
A rocky barren island,
Where a monster makes his bed.

But the night's so calm and pleasant.
All fears are laid to rest,
For how could evil lurk beneath
The lake's placid breast.

According to Native legend, the serpent N'ha-a-itk (Ogopogo) lives in cave in the area around Squally Point across the lake from Peachland. Ogopogo is said to have killed Chief Timbasket and his family when they canoed too close to his lair. [Poem is at the Naramata Museum Archives]



Regattas

Regatta Day was a big event in the lakeside communities on Okanagan Lake, including at Naramata. One event, a young man missed the boat in Summerland and opted to swim to Naramata rather than miss it.

The trophies shown are sponsored by JM Robinson and the ticket shown below was for entry to the viewing gallery, the pilings for which are still evident where the structure once stood.

Photos: Naramata Museum



Robinson, John Moore

A reproduction of the regatta poster adorns the west wall of the Naramata Museum. Superimposed is the image of the war canoe race taken at Penticton (below).

Bottom: the viewing gallery located at the shoreline south of the Hotel Naramata.

Photos: Naramata Museum

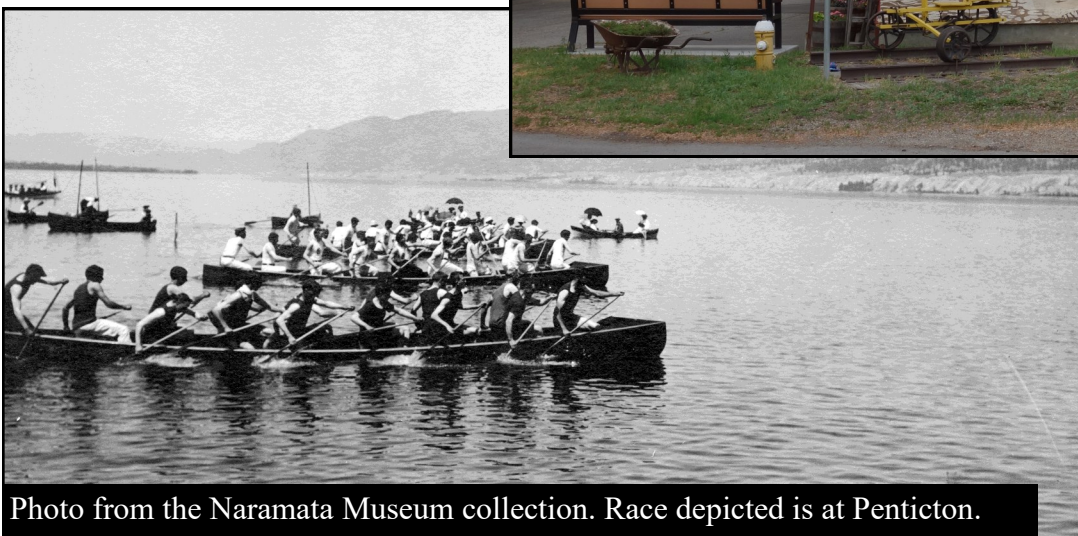


Photo from the Naramata Museum collection. Race depicted is at Penticton.



Regatta at Naramata - 1912. Naramata Museum Photo

Robinson, John Moore



Standing l to r: unknown male, unknown sister, WJ Robinson, unknown sister, unknown male
Sitting l to r: unknown sister, AT Robinson, JM Robinson, TJ Smith, unknown sister
Below: Robinson Family outing on *Lily of the Valley*
Photos courtesy of Summerland Museum. No dates available.



Robinson, John Moore



Above: The Robinsons of Naramata circa 1910. l to r: Kathleen, Dorothy, Jack, Lily, Cam, William, Gwendolyn, JM and Gladys. Marguerite sitting. Below: The Robinson residence in Naramata was also a hotel. Photos: the Naramata Museum Archives.



The Kettle Valley Railroad

From The Penticton Herald, June 3, 1915:

'The first regular passenger train on the Kettle Valley line pulled into Penticton from the west at 4:30 pm Monday, May 31. It comprised a baggage car, a first class coach and a sleeper. When it arrived at the wharf station it was greeted in clamorous welcome by a great crowd of citizens gathered upon the platform.'

A similar welcome was accorded the first train from the east which arrived at 10:15 pm. Many of the passengers on those first two trains had been invited to attend a banquet held in the Incola Hotel to commemorate the historic occasion. The banquet started at 11 pm . . . and did not break up until after 4:00 am the next morning.'

Although it is not in the scope of this story to provide a lot of information about the KVR, it is interesting to include here the fact that one of the last speakers at the banquet was J M Robinson.

'Just as Mr. Robinson was speaking, it being then about 3:30 in the morning, the dawn came slipping over the hills, and likely thinking its shift was over the electric light plant shut down, the lights in the banquet hall went out and the speaker finished in comparative darkness.'

'Reeve Conklin was able to find the remainder of the names on the toast list by industriously scratching a few matches.'



Patriotism

On display in the Naramata Museum is a World War I German machine gun, the most incongruous artifact that one would expect to find in a museum featuring a pioneering agricultural community of south-central British Columbia. For this we have JM Robinson to thank as it was he who contributed generously to Canada's war effort through means of War Bonds.

It is said that by Nov. 2nd 1917 the war had cost Canada almost \$700,000,000.00 in both Canadian costs and in support for Great Britain. To help pay down this huge debt the country became engaged in a patriotic War Bond drive. To stimulate giving, every community was provided with a flag and for each donation of \$1,000.00 a crown was mounted on the flag. Though Naramata had only been founded in 1907 and its fruit trees were just beginning to earn a profit during the years of World War I, JM Robinson personally contributed \$15,000.00 (approx. \$355,000.00 in today's money) to the War Bond effort. (*My Naramata* Sept 2, 2013)

These WW I machine guns have gained significance because during WW II 80% of Canada's trophy weapons were turned in and melted down to contribute to the new war effort. Why Naramata's guns didn't suffer the same fate remains a mystery, but possibly they lay forgotten in some out of the way storage at the Hotel Naramata. One would assume that had JM been alive at the time he would have turned them in when urged to do so in support of the war.



Summary

A lot has been said and written about JM Robinson over the years. Like most, he would have had some faults and bad days and if looked at from the point of view of the land buyer who felt he had got a poor deal on his orchard land, then to him Robinson was a shyster. Indeed, one such person sued Robinson (unsuccessfully) so that when he arrived in London for a visit, he was promptly arrested and brought before a magistrate [citation needed]. There was gossip about that suggests he had a weakness for whiskey. Would that make him the first Irishman who liked to imbibe? Of course not. No evidence was brought to light in our research to suggest that he was anything but an upstanding citizen with the welfare of his family and, indeed, humanity at large, foremost in mind. Society shuns the wicked and it is clear that Robinson was not subject to disparaging remarks in print and enjoyed the respect of his fellow citizens until he died. Certainly, his passing made headlines in the Okanagan Valley.

JM Robinson's Funeral Held At Naramata on Last Sunday Afternoon

Builder of the West Has Passed On

Okanagan Valley Suffers Loss in Robinson's Death

Death of JM Robinson Casts Gloom Over Gathering At Summerland

Historical Society Dedicates Plaque



“And now that the storm is over and that the change of the Okanagan from a cattle country to fruit farming with A HUNDRED FAMILIES WHERE THERE WAS ONE twenty-five years ago, I call my job finished.”

JM Robinson, 1926

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My Naramata ([Machine Gun Story Link](#))