



ARCHIVES

Newsletter of the Petroleum History Society

June 2019; Volume XXX, Number 5

P.H.S. Luncheon – Wednesday, June 12, 2019

**IMPERIAL STANDARD:
IMPERIAL OIL, EXXON AND THE CANADIAN OIL INDUSTRY SINCE 1880**

by Dr. Graham Taylor, Professor Emeritus in History, Trent University

Our June luncheon showcases an important new book concerning one of the pillars of the Canadian petroleum industry – Imperial Oil. Its author, Dr. Graham D. Taylor, is Professor Emeritus in History at Trent University in Ontario. His other publications include *Du Pont and the International Chemical Industry* (1984) and *The Rise of Canadian Business* (2009). The University of Calgary Press has just released this book. Our event will constitute its official launch. Copies will be available for purchase and autograph.

Please see page 2 of this issue for the abstract of Dr. Taylor's presentation.

Time:	12 noon, Wednesday, June 12, 2019
Place:	Calgary Petroleum Club 319 - 5 Avenue SW, Calgary; Viking Room (but check marquee). Dress: Business casual.
Cost:	P.H.S. Members and Student Members \$35 and Guests \$40 (most welcome). Only cash or cheque at the door. Payment can be made in advance by credit card or by e-mail. Please advise payment method with reply.
Lunch:	Soup, sandwiches and cookies. Gluten-free? Vegan? Advise with reply.

NOTE: Instructions for registering for the Luncheon:

Reply, if you wish to attend, to: Micky Gulless at 403-283-9268 or micky@petroleumhistory.ca by noon, Monday, June 10, if not sooner.

Those who register but do not come, or cancel after the deadline, will be invoiced.

Those who do not register by the deadline may not get a seat.

The Bull Wheel



Call for contributions and speakers: The Petroleum History Society values your input. If you have an article that you'd like to see in *Archives* or if you have a talk that you'd like to give, please get a hold of us. Contact President Clint Tippett at the address indicated on page 3.

Abstract of June's Luncheon Presentation by Dr. Taylor: For more than 130 years Imperial Oil has dominated Canada's petroleum industry. In Petrolia, Turner Valley, northern Canada and the oil sands – Imperial Oil was there or nearby, ready to exploit developments. Imperial's discovery at Leduc in 1947 transformed the industry and the country. Since 1899, however, two thirds of Imperial Oil stock has been owned by the American giant, Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon Mobil). This connection provided Imperial with capital resources and technology, but sometimes at a cost. During the energy crises of the 1970's-80's Imperial was publicly assailed as the embodiment of foreign control of Canada's natural resources. From that period on, both Exxon and Imperial were faced with challenges arising from wildly fluctuating oil prices and environmental critics who not only questioned the conduct of the companies but the very basis for existence of the industry. *It should be noted that Dr. Taylor was able to access, as a part of his research, a considerable volume of Imperial Oil's archival records and photographs that had been donated by Imperial Oil to the Glenbow Archives about a decade ago.*

Gesner Statue in Nova Scotia: In last month's issue of *Archives* we included a photo of a new statue of Abraham Gesner, the Father of Petroleum, being prepared for installation. That illustration was provided for us by Dr. Grant Wach of Dalhousie University in Halifax. On May 4, 2019 the statue was unveiled on Middle Dyke Road, near Kentville and New Minas in the Annapolis Valley, near Gesner's birthplace. Thanks to Grant for this information.

New links: P.H.S. Director Doug Cass has provided us with two interesting windows into Canadian petroleum history (interestingly both relate to anecdotal "gushers"):
The first relates to "The Shaw Investigation: A Review of Sources to Determine Who Drilled Canada's First Oil Gusher" by Dana Johnson as part of a M.A. in Public History – an Oil Museum of Canada Summer Intern Report (2010) - at:

<http://www.lambtonmuseums.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Shaw-Investigation.pdf>

The second has to do with petroleum exploration in, of all places, Richmond, B.C. – a suburb of Vancouver. It is entitled "The Richmond Oil Boom – In Search of the Steveston Gusher" published on March 21, 2019 in the "Outside the Box – Richmond Archives Blog" at:

<https://richmondarchives.ca/2019/03/21/the-richmond-oil-boom-in-search-of-the-steveston-gusher/>



Author Jacques Poitras poses with his plaque for P.H.S. Book of the Year Award for 2018 "*Pipe Dreams: The Fight for Canada's Energy Future*". Published by Viking Canada, 318 p. and announced at our March 27, 2019 Annual Meeting. Thanks to Jacques for sending this along.

Business booming in oil extraction: An article with this title ran in the April 12, 2019 issue of the National Post. Unfortunately it was about cannabis oil.

Bloopers abound: April 27, 2019 editorial in the Calgary Sun made the following comment about flooding in Eastern Canada: "A number of affected communities have seen their water levels rise above sea level more than they normally do, even at this time of year". Sea Level? These were rivers and lakes. Someone is reading too much climate change literature. Next up – "Large chlorine water spill threatens marine life" in the Calgary Herald, September 22, 2018. This occurred in west-central Alberta. "Marine" refers to the ocean not fresh water. Someone reading too much anti-TransMountain Pipeline coverage? Finally – and most hilarious (or embarrassing) was the page-size ad in the April 13, 2019 Calgary Herald flagged as "Paid Third Party Political Advertising" with the title "The NDP has Failed on Pipelines" and paid for by the Alberta Victory Fund Ltd. Unfortunately the giant colour picture is not of a pipeline but rather of a covered conveyor belt at a mining operation! That's worse than our TV stations always showing a picture of the above-ground TransAlaska Pipeline in all of their pipeline coverage!

Archives is published approximately eight times a year by the Petroleum History Society for Society members.

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Back issues are archived on our website at <http://www.petroleumhistory.ca/>

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REMEMBRANCES

(with thanks to the Calgary Herald and Legacy.com)

EVANS, Faris Dale. Born May 20, 1934 and passed away April 30, 2019. Faris was born in Gainsborough Township (Niagara-on-the Lake), Ontario. As a young man he moved west, working in the petroleum industry his entire career from the exciting early days of oil exploration in 1950's Iraq to retiring as a computer programmer from Digitech Information Services. He loved hiking, cycling, and x-country skiing - solo, with wife Mary, family, or as a member of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers. Hiking meant going far and high - always on a quest for the "spectacular view". He also volunteered many hours with Foothills Search and Rescue. The National Park Warden Service and SaR became very dear to his heart after he was the lucky recipient of a successful rescue operation in 1989. Miraculously found and plucked safely from deep within a crevasse after fifty-five hours entombed in the Crowfoot Glacier, Faris didn't let the experience diminish his love of mountains or adventure. He channelled his considerable energies and talents to support an organization that trains and provides personnel for ground searches. *Anyone who survives 55 hours in a crevasse deserves our recognition.*

NOVAL, Gregory Stephen. Born August 9, 1954 and passed away May 25, 2019. Greg was born in Calgary and grew up in Innisfail where he graduated from high school in 1972. In his youth, Greg enjoyed hockey, curling, skiing, hunting and fishing. He furthered his studies and graduated with Bachelor degrees in Commerce and Economics from the University of Alberta and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Saskatchewan. Greg's love for ranching began at a very early age while working summers and weekends on his grandfather Wilf Edgar's farm west of Innisfail. While attending university, Greg worked the summers at Imperial Oil and Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas in Calgary. Upon graduating with his law degree, Greg started his own oil company in the basement of his grandfather's house, called "The Bull Room". This led to his later founding of Canadian 88 Energy which was eventually sold for more than \$1 billion. Greg was also the founder of Canadian Superior Energy and was active in numerous oil and gas and other business ventures throughout his life. In 1992, Greg acquired his first ranch, the Bar N in the beautiful foothills west of Turner Valley. There he and his wife Valerie raised their young family while building a thriving cattle ranch along with Greg's daily commuting to downtown Calgary to manage his oil company. On the side, he also ran his own business jet charter service. Greg later acquired a second ranch, in the gorgeous Porcupine Hills area west of Granum. He was truly happy working the land and cattle in the Alberta foothills. He took great pride in his work and always strived for perfection in any endeavour.

Greg Noval was what we would today call a "disruptor". He understood the law and the regulations – and the flexibility that he believed they afforded him for his ventures. He took business risks that others avoided. Acreage was acquired, promoted and drilled (often successful) in locations on the fringes of established production in places like Waterton and Caroline – and even in the East Coast Offshore. He somehow picked up the historical "Canadian Superior" company name once the original company (described by recently-deceased P.H.S. Lifetime Member and former Canadian Superior employee (in the original sense) Jack Porter in his book "A Glance Backward") had been folded into Mobil Canada. Perhaps most ironic was that despite being an aggressive operator on other people's acreage, he was well known for refusing to allow oil companies access for seismic or drilling on his own ranch land.

TOURISTS VISIT THE OILFIELDS FOR THE FIRST TIME – IMPRESSED

An article with this title appeared in the local "Flare" newspaper on July 14, 1939 and provides a look at what would have been the early years of the Turner Valley oil boom as sparked by the 1936 discovery - made by R.A. Brown - at the Royalties location on the south end of the field.

Possibly due to the Calgary Stampede and to the time of year, visitors from all over the continent are visiting the oilfield. License plates are observed from as far away as New Orleans. Most of the tourists declare it is the first time they have visited Turner Valley. All say they have heard of it. A few visitors intimate they have shares in companies and wish to see the results of their investment. From a tourist standpoint the visitors all admit, the drive out to the oilfield is well worth it, in spite of the roads which they without hesitation condemn. They all confess surprise at the extent of the field and the vastness of development. The entire picture is different than anything they imagined. Many visitors have taken several days and gone through the field thoroughly. All feel they should spend more than a day in the field and say they consider it a great tourist attraction and wonder why it is not included to a greater extent in tourist information.

Mr. J. Arnold, his wife and family from Sacramento, California, after visiting Banff, spent the weekend driving about the oilfield, before going to the Calgary Stampede. Mr. Arnold told the Flare, he and his wife and family have had a wonderful trip and he wished more of his friends in the States were aware of the natural beauty of Alberta. He said he had seen no tourist advertising of Alberta and he considers this province is making a big mistake in neglecting such a valuable resource. In some parts of the States, Mr. Arnold says, the tourist trade is the largest means of income. Until he got near the line he was unable to obtain any information of routes and attractions in Alberta.

Bud Siesman and his brother know oilfields as they live near Houston, Texas. They heard of Turner Valley and, with a holiday due, hopped in the car to see for themselves. They took two days of sizing up the field and gathering impressions, the most vivid of which goes like this: "I can't see why people in this oilfield are so pessimistic and show such a lack of confidence in the future. You have a great oilfield here that is kicking out millions in production, yet people live in bits of shacks – and talk as tho' they don't know where the next week's meals are coming from. There appears to be no confidence to build good homes as everyone I talk to says the same thing, that they don't know how long they will be working as the whole thing might blow up anytime. It is a point of view that I can't understand, as the world moves on gasoline today and you sure have it here". Bud Siesman has had nothing to do with the operation of other fields and he can't understand burning waste gas. "It looks to me like some form of re-pressuring should be carried out in this field as it has in most fields in the States. I am told it is too expensive but with the present production and the resultant improved oil recovery, it should be possible. Gas pressure comes to an end someday, and most of your oil is still in the ground." According to Siesman, compressed air is forced into depleted structures in the States and more oil is recovered than originally taken out. In the past, oil field history has been that the promoter and exploiter have taken what production they could in the quickest possible time.

Perhaps the conservative attitudes related to the Depression from which recovery was only then occurring. And maybe the lack of individual prosperity had something to do with the corporate control of the field as opposed to the scope afforded to independent operators down south.

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF DON YONT - GEOLOGIST

As initially described in our November 2018 issue, P.H.S. Lifetime Member Don Yont has created a record his formative years in the field during the 1950's. We resume our coverage here with Chapters 3 through 5 of his 1957 summer with California Standard (now Chevron). Field work was an important component of exploration in those days and was often done on horseback. These are fitting stories as we head into the summer and the Calgary Stampede. Thanks again to Don for sharing these with us.

3) Beaver Trips and July 1st weekend in Ft. Nelson, B.C. Hotel

The Cal Std Beaver pilot, Gordon Cameron, was a most interesting person and I recall him teaching me all about clouds. I learned about the fair weather cumulus clouds, the unusual looking mammatus clouds and the dangerous cumulonimbus or anvil-shaped clouds. I helped refuel the Beaver by pumping gas from gas drums at various locations as we visited different base camps. I recall making a refueling stop at Nahanni Butte and then we headed for Ft. Nelson, BC., as I had been instructed to go there check into a hotel and phone Cal Std's head office in Calgary to find out where I should go next.

It was the July 1st holiday weekend when we arrived in Ft. Nelson and the Cal Std Calgary office was closed so I couldn't phone there until Monday. I checked into the Ft. Nelson Hotel and booked a room for the weekend. The rooms in the hotel were very small but crammed into the space was a shower, a sink, a toilet as well as a narrow single bed. It had been a month since I'd had a bath so I undressed and turned on the shower. I was shocked when smelly, brown muskeg water came out of the showerhead but I closed my eyes and stepped into the shower anyways as the hot water felt so good. The next day I walked around town and noted that there was a ball tournament on July 1st which was of some interest but I later found the book "War and Peace" on sale in the hotel lobby so bought it. Once I started to read this book about the Russian aristocracy I became intrigued and spent most of the weekend I was in Ft. Nelson reading this Tolstoy classic. As soon as the holiday weekend was over I phoned the Cal Std Calgary office and they told me I was to join the Walt Koop field party at Larsen Lake.

4) Larsen Lake - Walt Koop Field Party

Larsen Lake is located in the southern Yukon just north of the British Columbia border between Watson Lake on the Alaska Highway on the west and Ft. Liard in the Northwest Territories on the east. I seem to recall when I phoned the Calgary office I was told go to the Ft. Nelson airport and catch the Company Anson which was heading for Watson Lake bringing supplies for Walt Koop's Party. If that was the case the Cal Std Beaver must have then picked me up at Watson Lake and flown me and the camp supplies into Larsen Lake. Walt Koop's field party consisted of himself and geologists Roy Stuart, Mike Chernoff, Bill Cowan, Huon Walton, Wayne Bamber and Ed Klovan. Besides the geologists, there were the usual camp cook and helper plus a helicopter pilot and engineer. There seemed to be lots of geologists in the field party already and with only one helicopter to transport them to the outcrops, I could tell not long after I arrived that Walt Koop was concerned as to where I could fit in.

I remember going with Bill Cowan in the helicopter to measure a section which probably would have been my first helicopter ride ever. The weather was cloudy when we left camp and so the helicopter pilot said he would drop us off at the outcrop but stay around for a bit in case the weather closed in. I don't think we got much work done before the clouds suddenly closed in and we quickly made our way back to the helicopter. We were forced to spend the night sitting in the helicopter with only chocolate bars and raisins to eat, so my second time sitting in a helicopter was a long one. The clouds did clear in the morning and we safely flew back to base camp.

I remember that one day I did accompany Cal Std senior geologist Roy Stuart doing some reconnaissance work that included a stop at what he termed his "secret hot springs" in the Nahanni River valley. I remember that the hot springs had created tufa mounds and were situated in a fairly remote

setting in the wilderness. I have no photos of the hot springs but do have aerial shots taken from a Beaver aircraft of Virginia Falls and Hell's Gate on the Nahanni River next to a photo of Larsen Lake. Perhaps we landed the Beaver on the Nahanni River and walked to the hot springs area. There are several hot springs along the Nahanni River. The Rabbit Kettle Hot Springs, located in Nahanni National Park, may have been the ones we saw as they have a large tufa mound as shown in a photo I found online.

I do recall getting a haircut from the cook's helper at the Larsen Lake base camp and possibly a trim to the beard I was growing. This guy was very personable and had a foreign accent possibly Slavic? I remember him asking me one morning what kind of sandwich meat I preferred for my packed lunch saying: "Do you want some from the salamis?". I enjoyed the camaraderie of the large group of geologists at the Larsen Lake base camp but that was not to last for long, as Walt Koop decided I should join a horse party led by senior geologist Huon Walton and including first year hire or summer student Bill Cowan and myself. The horse party was to start out at the Neighbor's Ranch located west of Mile 147 (Pink Mountain) on the Alaska Highway. The three of us were to assemble our personal gear and drive to that location on the Alaska Highway in a Willys Jeep. I am not sure where we picked up the Jeep but my first photo after Larsen Lake is of Muncho Lake, B.C. located at Mile 462 on the Alaska Highway so we probably started there. It would have been a 315 mile drive south along the mostly gravel highway to Mile 147 so it was a dusty trip but I recall the scenery along the route was spectacular.

5) Horse Party - Cypress Creek, Graham River, Chowade River west of Mile 147 Alaska Highway

We likely did the trip in one day as I recall arriving at Mile 147 at nightfall and being met by Hersh Neighbor who was the outfitter that had been contracted to lead the horse party we were to go on. Hersh was the typical grizzly old cowboy about 50 years old, wearing a cowboy hat, blue jeans and cowboy boots and speaking with a western drawl. When he saw that there were three of us he was a bit taken aback as he only had two horses ready for the trip but he said not to worry as he would do a little horse trading overnight and by morning we should be ready to go. It was raining and getting dark so Hersh suggested we check in at the local motel for the night and said he would meet us at breakfast the next morning.

Hersh stopped by our breakfast table the next morning as planned and said he now had the third horse so we were all set to go. He gave us the directions to the Neighbor Ranch and said if we left shortly we should arrive there around noon. We drove south on the Alaska Highway for a ways then headed west on this narrow muddy road. We had to drive through several mud holes on the road as it had rained heavily the night before but with the 4 wheel drive Willys Jeep we got through them with no problem. Suddenly we came upon a low spot in the road filled with muddy water and to our surprise we got stuck in the middle. Fortunately, the Jeep had a winch on the front so by hooking the winch cable to a nearby tree we were able to haul the Jeep out of the mud hole. We were covered in mud but at least finely able to carry on down the road and finally arrived at the Neighbor's Ranch.

Hersh was waiting to greet us when we drove up to the ranch house and he then asked to come on in and meet his family. He introduced us to his wife Eunice who was in her early 40s and their two daughters who were both in their late teens or early 20s. One daughter was a full figured gorgeous blonde and the other a slimmer dark-haired girl. At any rate for three guys who had spent a couple of months in the bush among men only, they were sure a sight for sore eyes.

Both Huon and Bill who, unlike me, were aware of the plans for the horse party before leaving Calgary and so were already equipped for the venture with cowboy hats and slickers and maybe even cowboy boots. Hersh suggested that if I wanted to buy some appropriate clothing for the trip, we drop by the Bill Beaton ranch nearby as he had a small store there that stocked all kinds of cowboy gear. We headed over there and introduced ourselves saying that Hersh Neighbor had sent us. Bill Beaton was very friendly and most interesting character. He was a WWII veteran of the Italian Campaign and he told us

stories about some of his experiences over there. Apparently, the troops would on occasion storm farm houses and raid the wine cellars stocked with fine Italian wines. They would take as many bottles of wine as they could carry and that evening would get rip roaring drunk, so at least for a short time they were able to forget about the ravages of war. Anyhow, I did buy a good quality felt cowboy hat from Bill Beaton for about \$10 which was an enormous sum in those days. I was assured that it was waterproof and would last a lifetime, which is true as I still have the hat today. At the time, Huon Walton was wearing a white felt cowboy hat secured in place by laces tied under his chin. When Bill Beaton saw Huon's hat he remarked that it was a girl's hat, as guys never tie their hats down with chin straps. After that Huon tucked the tie down laces into his hat so they couldn't be seen. Huon's hat also had a hidden wire sewed in along the edge of the brim to help keep the hat hold its shape. We had a lot of rain during the subsequent horse party and the wire supporting the edge of the brim began to rust creating a brown stain around the edge of the hat. I think Huon said he bought the hat in the Hudson's Bay store in Calgary and the clerk that sold it claimed that it was an authentic cowboy style.

After I was equipped with the proper cowboy attire, we were ready to set off on our big adventure. Hersh, Eunice and the three of us each had our own saddle horses and a string of eleven pack horses also accompanied the expedition to carry the camping gear and food supplies. We were to learn that considerable skill was required to load the pack horses and tie down the load with ropes by throwing a diamond hitch. Hersh and Eunice were used to running pack horse trains as they had been outfitters for big game hunters for many years but our geological field party was a bit of a different experience for them. Hersh looked after the horses and Eunice did the cooking as well as other camp chores.

The Neighbor's Ranch was located on Cypress Creek and on the first day we headed west following a trail along the creek. The Neighbors' blonde daughter accompanied us on the first day of our trip and with her tight jeans and full figure it was a bit distracting at times. After several hours in the saddle we finally reached our first campsite. I recall my shock when I tried to dismount as my legs were numb and felt paralyzed so when I tried to walk it took several steps before the feeling returned to my legs and I could regain my balance. On the days to follow one got more used to horseback riding but on long trips that temporary numbness feeling in the legs when dismounting was always there. The Neighbors' daughter headed back to the ranch after that first day and the next day we then carried on west along Cypress Creek until we finally reached the Moose Horn campsite. During the next few days we started our geological field work in the surrounding mountains and soon settled into a daily routine at the campsite. We slept in sleeping bags on camp cots in our tents and we would start each morning with a delicious breakfast served by Eunice in the big cook tent. After breakfast we would mount our horses and head out toward a particular mountain to do our geological work. Bill Cowan and I were often assigned to work as a team by Huon Walton who was the Senior Geologist and party chief. We would ride to the base of the mountain on horseback and then dismount and tie the horses to a tree. We would then make our way up the mountain through the forest until we reached the tree line and then start our geological work where the rocks first outcropped. We would then continue climbing up the mountain for as far as was necessary to investigate all of the pertinent outcrop section. We would then make our way down the mountain to where the horses were tied and then ride back to camp. After a delicious evening meal prepared by Eunice, we would often sit around a campfire/smudge to keep away the mosquitoes, swapping stories until it was time for bed.

I was to learn that Huon Walton was a Scotsman who had just immigrated to Canada earlier that year. He was hired by Cal Std because of his paleontological expertise and was sent to the field to gain experience in Canadian geology. Huon told us he was married and that his wife and teenage daughter were to arrive in Calgary that fall after he got home from the field party. He had read a lot about the western cowboys and was fascinated by their way of life. He had brought along a Hohner Chromatic Harmonica which he was just learning to play and he also loved to sing cowboy songs. I could play several cowboy tunes on the harmonica such as Red River Valley, Home on the Range, She'll be Comin' round the Mountain, My Darling Clementine, etc. so I would often play Huon's harmonica in the evenings and others would sing along. Huon said he had hoped to rent a horse, get dressed up in western gear

and ride out to meet the plane when his wife and daughter arrived in Calgary that fall. We assured him that it was a nice gesture but wouldn't be possible. Eunice was much more talkative than Hersh and she would relate stories about taking American hunters on expeditions which was their main business as they had been outfitters for many years. They used to live in Tete Jaune Cache, B.C. which she pronounced "Tea John" and just recently moved to the Cypress Creek Ranch location. She spoke of her favorite "dude" who was a big rancher from Texas who came up many years to hunt in Canada. I was glad to hear that story but she called us "dudes" as well which I found a bit insulting at first as I had first ridden a horse when I was 8 or 9 years old and didn't consider myself a "dude". Huon's horse was a rather small black pony named Amos that every once in a while would stop in the middle of small puddle and refuse to move. Huon was a kind and gentle man and didn't want to hurt the animal so he would plead, "Come on Amos, move please". I told Huon animals are sometimes stubborn and you have to firm with them. I would then give old Amos a flick on his backside with the end of my reins and he would then start moving again. Bill Cowan and I had much taller bay-colored saddle horses that were much more obedient to our commands. Bill's horse was called Springer but I can't remember the name of mine.



Bill Cowan had several years of previous experience in doing geological field work in the mountains concerning oil exploration so he was a senior geologist and I was his junior assistant on this field party. He taught me how to measure sections, collect rock samples and make notes describing the various rock types. He also carried the 357 Magnum

revolver holstered on his belt in case we were attacked by grizzly bears. We thought we might have to use the pistol one day when we were working near the top of a mountain and spotted several grizzly bears in the distance far below us. As we watched them we suddenly realized that they were coming up the mountain towards us. Bill said, "Let's get the hell out of here" and we quickly started down the mountain. When he saw how fast the bears were approaching, he stopped and pointing out a rock promontory not far below us. He suggested we hide behind it and maybe they bears wouldn't spot us. We quickly got down behind the rock and, with pistol drawn, watched anxiously as the bears quickly sped up the mountain. In no time at all they had reached our level on the mountain but for some reason they didn't come towards us and instead continued on towards the mountain top. When they were out of sight, Bill said, "Let's start heading down the mountain right now". He added that he had heard bears can't run down a mountain very fast or they lose their balance and tumble forward, so if we left then hopefully we could get away from them. We quickly got to our feet and started off down the mountain moving as fast

as we could. Unfortunately we had to cross a scree slope of slaty flagstones that made a loud clattering noise as we stepped on them, making us concerned that the bears might hear us. I was hustling along on as fast as I could, being careful not to slip on the loose rock fragments, when suddenly Bill grabbed my arm. I stopped quickly and looked up and there not more than a 100 yards away from us were the bears racing down the mountain at breakneck speed. They seemed to just float down the mountain they were going so fast and they didn't even once glance our way. Suddenly we spotted a herd of caribou grazing at the base of the mountain and it was obvious where the bears were headed. We heaved a sigh of relief knowing we were safe but we quickly realized that the story of bears not being able to run down a mountain with any speed to be to be a myth. As we continued on our way down to the horses we had some concern that maybe the bears may have attacked them. Fortunately, they were fine and we were glad to get back in the saddle and ride back to camp.

We were out on the horse party for some 45 days and it rained on 40 of them. Despite the rainy conditions we were able to work on most days because by riding horseback we were able to get to the rock outcrops even though it took some time. It was certainly less efficient than using helicopters that land you right on the outcrops above the tree line but at least we were able to get there even on days with low clouds and poor visibility.

The route we followed on the horse party involved heading west from the Neighbor's Ranch along Cypress Creek as far as Laurier Pass near Mt. Laurier then heading southeast along the Graham River Valley to Christina Falls. We then headed east-northeast to the Chowade River. We then travelled eastward along the Chowade River and eventually crossing it and then north along the Halfway River before arriving back at the Neighbor's Ranch.

Crossing fast-moving mountain rivers was quite the experience in itself. As we entered the stream, the water would suddenly deepen and the current become so strong that the horses had to lean into it to keep their balance. The cold water would be boiling over the saddle and then suddenly when the water got deep enough in the center of river the horses would swim upright for a short time until the water shallowed and they could touch bottom once again. It was such a peaceful feeling in the deep water when the horses were floating but that came to an abrupt end when the horse's feet touched bottom again and they started scrambling up the banks on the far shore.

I did bring my old rod and reel along that I had used at Lac La Ronge the previous summer along with my tackle box filled with an assortment of fishing lures. I didn't think bait casting using plugs or spoons would work very well in mountain streams where fly fishing was more appropriate to catch trout or grayling. I did give it a try one day and to my surprise I caught a nice sized bull trout using a wooden plug that I had actually made myself a few years before. We had a nice taste of fish that evening which was a change from the usual Spam or Burns Chuckwagon dinner. As I recall, I never caught another fish on that horse party even though I tried several times again afterward.

Eunice tried her best to prepare tasty meals each evening during our stint on this horse party but most of the food was canned and after a month or so everything tasted the same. One evening when we sat down for dinner we were shocked when she served us delicious freshly-cooked steaks. Hersh explained that this young moose had suddenly appeared in the camp and ran head-on into a nearby tree. It was so severely injured that he had to shoot it and not wanting to waste the meat he said we might as well eat it. We of course didn't quite believe the story, but we enjoyed tasty roasts and stews each night for the rest of the time on the horse party.

As we rode along the Halfway River on our way back to the Neighbor's Ranch the weather seemed to improve and we were somewhat sad that our cowboy adventure was coming to an end. It was too bad that we had so many rainy days during this expedition but the experience was memorable nevertheless.

(to be continued)