

My grandfather George Gilbert Batstone was born in Boston, Mass. on March 27, 1878. He obtained a Journeyman Plumber license in Boston January 1897 working for time in Boston and then wanted to go out West. I will tell you a bit of his story from his own writings he left with us.

“Had I know what to expect I might never have left Boston, Mass. in April 1898 to mine gold on Granite Creek in British Columbia. I was one of a party from New York and Boston engaged to work for the Boston-British Columbia Placer Mining Company. My ideas of the West were of gun-toting cowboys, Indians wearing feathered war bonnets and, as for gold mining-well, one just dug it up with a shovel.

After rattling across the continent on the C.P.R. and unloading at Spence.’s Bridge which looked like a desert, my first shock was to learn that Granite Creek was 150 miles distant, three day’s journey by horse-drawn stage and the charge to carry my trunk would be \$10.00.

Leaving Spence’s Bridge behind a four-horse team (I had never before seen one), the first night stop-over was at Nicola, a small town with a few houses, wooden sidewalks, a hotel, a small town with a blacksmith shop and post office to serve the sparsely settled area. This was a wide valley with rolling bunch-grass hills surrounding the town where cattle grazed and ranch houses were miles apart. After supper several cowboys, knowing we were “green” dared us to ride their horses. They were good sports; the horses they provided were fairly gentle.

From Nicola it was another day-long drive to Thynne’s Ranch in Otter Valley where we stayed the night at Thynne’s Roadhouse. Jack Thynne and his wife had built this roadhouse in 1890 when the wagon road was completed between Nicola and Granite Creek to serve the travelling public of the day before the Kettle Valley Railway was built in 1915. The Thynnes proved to be excellent hosts and after a sumptuous meal served by Mrs. Thynne and her young daughter, we retired to a comfortable sitting room where music was enjoyed and a jolly atmosphere prevailed. Clean rooms provided for the overnight rest and by noon the following day we reached Granite Creek. This was the end of the road.

There was not much at Granite Creek in 1898. The rich shallow placers had been skimmed in 1885 but there was still gold in deep gravels, cut-banks along the creek and the outwash where Granite Creek joined the Tulameen River.

Erecting log buildings was our first job; bunk-houses, cook shack, tool sheds and work shop, a nice cabin for the secretary, etc. Imagine the novelty of axes and cross-cut saws to city boys. But with some local help who knew how, the boys from the East could carry their weight before their hands calloused.”

To learn more about my grandfather’s time in Granite Creek come on the Friends of the Museum trip to Granite Creek on August 6, 2016.

Gampy, as we affectionately called him, lived with my mother and father – George and Mollie Broderick, my great grandmother Mary Elizabeth Thynne, my brother Fred and sister Corinne and myself Tyrill (Skip) Broderick at 1824 Fairford Drive until his passing on September 27, 1967.