

The History of Rainbow Ranche

Challenge Grant Project 2003

Submitted by Susan Funk to the Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society "A very different place from the original as seen by myself in 1893, bare burnt up ground. It is rather hard to realise the difference in a few short years."

- Northcote H. Caesar, page 40, The Story of a Life, 1940.

To hear the name "Rainbow Ranche" or "the Rainbow" mentioned in casual conversation among the long-time residents of the small community of Okanagan Centre is nothing out of the ordinary. Perhaps the reason for this is that "Rainbow Ranche" has played a significant role in the community for over one hundred years. Since its modest beginning as "Rainbow Ranche", in 1893, the Rainbow has changed and grown with the cultural and economic evolution of the community that surrounds it. It has had numerous owners and gone through various transformations although it has continued to remain an "anchor" and a joy to visit for those acquainted with it. The Ranche land, which once measured over five hundred acres, contains a history not to be overlooked. Those who are familiar with Rainbow Ranche would agree that the community of Okanagan Centre, its history and its industries would not have become what they are today without the existence of "The Rainbow".

The Barr Brothers were the first to see a future in the large plot of treeless acreage at the south end of the Commonage, known today as Rainbow Ranche. They bought it in 1893 at a land-auction in Vernon and christened it "Rainbow Ranche", on account of the rainbows that frequently spanned the acreage. As records regarding the Barr Brothers are scarce, it is understood that they did not do much developing of the land but quickly caught gold fever. In 1896 they sold the Ranche to Northcote H. Caesar and his business partner T. F. Valentine and took off for the Klondike.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> MacDonnell, Nancy. Personal interview. 9 July 2003.

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"We had no money and the price was \$2000.00, half cash." Caesar and Valentine gave notes for one thousand dollars which they hoped to make by cutting logs and by the sale of wheat and



Northcote H. Caesar Photo taken in 1953.

hay. They secured the remainder of the moneys owing, by mortgage, on which they paid 12% interest.3 The two men had a difficult time securing a mortgage with a decent interest rate because the land was looked upon as valueless at the time. It was called a "dry ranch,"4 as irrigation was not yet available. Caesar described the land as having "A few scattered pines... [and] scattered patches of buck brush on practically bare ground."5 As it was, wheat and hay were planted and a few sheep and a team of horses were kept on the Ranche. But the men found that growing wheat was much too uncertain and that the climate was too hot and dry to be able to depend on good crops. Furthermore, they found that "the cattle were quite a trial as a good patch of green wheat was very inviting to them.\*6 Caesar recalls that

the bulls would walk right through the log fences that had been constructed, "And as there were about 1000 head on the other side of the fence they made quite a mess of the wheat when they did get through."7 Instead, Caesar and Valentine relied on making money by doing odd jobs with the boat they had built, the S. S. Wanderer. They did such jobs as transporting dynamite to Penticton, hauling ore from the Morning Glory Mine to the Stamp Mill and towing logs to the Kelowna Saw Mill. Eventually, the men managed to change mortgage companies and reduce the

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6 Caesar, Northcote H. The Story of a Life. 1940: 31

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Caesar, Northcote H. The Story of a Life 1940: 27
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interest rate to 8% although the interest was all they could ever afford to pay. Caesar and Valentine eventually dissolved their partnership in 1899, leaving Caesar as the sole owner of Rainbow Ranche.

From 1896 until 1902 Caesar rented Rainbow Ranche to J. Grady and Frank Bouvette. During that time he adventured to the Big Bend Country to clear a mine site, returning to Okanagan Centre periodically. In 1898,



while Caesar was away, a small shack was built on the Ranche, near the lakeshore, Caesar later added a very small house to the front of the existing shack in 1900. Take note that the shack, and later the house that was added, were built near the lakeshore because the lake was the main mode of transportation in the early 1900's. Furthermore, it was a secure water source for the Ranche inhabitants as well as the animals. When Caesar returned from the Big Bend Country, in 1902, he was finally able to clear what debt remained on the Ranche. He had acquired a twelfth part share in the mine he had worked on in the Big Bend Country and when the owner sold it, Caesar was able to use this profit to pay off his debts.8 Perhaps it was this moment of wealth that prompted Caesar to return for a visit to his hometown of Downton, England.

Northcote H. Caesar had arrived in Canada in 1883, young and in search of adventure. Having been busy farming on the prairies and later working on and buying land in the Okanagan, he had not yet returned to see his family. When he finally returned to England on Christmas Eve, 1902, he was pleased to see his family and friends, but Northcote quickly found himself

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homesick and with little to do. He explained "... I had been out of England too long to be able to work there so decided to take another chance at Canada."9 He returned to Okanagan Centre in March and started to seed the Rainbow Ranche to wheat. He also bought 70 sheep, two cows and a team of horses and soon added a six-foot addition to the south end of the Rainbow Ranche house. But, as Caesar recalls in his autobiography, he was feeling restless and "unsettled" when he returned to the Rainbow. Caesar, therefore, hired Mr. and Mrs. F. Pow to look after the Ranche knowing full well that he would not be able to make a profit after paying their wages. That explains why, in 1905, "when F. Pow offered [him] \$10,000 for the place, [Caesar] accepted, reserving only [his] horse Jim, some furniture and 18 acres in the south west corner."10 The corner Caesar kept for himself was named "Sundial Ranch", and became his permanent residence with his wife. Miss Rosalie Mable (nee) Ching and later his only child, a daughter, named Winna.

When F. Pow bought Rainbow Ranche no moneys could be paid to Caesar right away although Caesar was just happy to get the Ranche off his hands. Pow's purchase included the Ranche complete and ready to carry on, 3 horses, 2 cows and some calves, pigs, sheep and much farming equipment. When he sold the ranch in 1906 to J. E. McAllister and Fank Hewer, Pow was able to clear his debt with Northcote H. Caesar. With these two new owners, McAllister and Hewer, a new chapter began in the evolution of Rainbow Ranche.

J. E. McAllister and Frank Hewer planted the first orchard, not only on Rainbow Ranche, but, in the entire region. It was the first large acreage of fruit to be planted in the Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre area. 11 Jack O'Mahoney and Bob Girsewold marked out the orchard and planted the trees. Many, including Northcote H. Caesar, were skeptical that the trees would grow, as irrigation was still not available. It was Northcote H. Caesar who wrote, in his

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autobiography, that in 1908 McAllister and Hewer secured water from the Maddock Brothers Irrigation scheme. 12 Other records imply that it was not until 1909 that irrigation was available from the Okanagan Valley Land Company, who used ditches and later sprinklers to transport the water. Either way, the planting of the orchard at Rainbow Ranche marked the beginning of what was soon to become the Okanagan's chief industry - fruit growing.

In 1908 Robert S. Dormer bought one half of Frank Hewer's half share of the Ranche and



later, in 1909, James Goldie purchased the other half. The division of ownership was such: J. E. McAllister owned one half share of Rainbow Ranche and Dormer and Goldie each owned a quarter share. The three owners officially formed the "Rainbow Ranche Company Ltd." in 1909 and, as McAllister lived in Toronto and Dormer's home was in England, it was decided that James Goldie would live at the Rainbow and be the Ranche manager. It has been said that James Goldie was the man "who had the greatest impact on the Ranche."13

James Goldie was an ambitious and hard working man. He grew up in the small town of Ayr, Ontario and, as a young man, found he was headed for a career in the family milling business. He tried his hand at being a traveling salesman in the Maritimes, promoting the family business, but his health condition did not agree with the damp eastern climate. He began to look for an alternate career path and became eager to explore the rest of the country. Heeding



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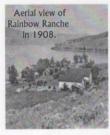
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the expression "Go West Young Man," he traveled to Calgary, Vancouver, Prince Rupert and finally to the Okanagan valley. The dry Okanagan climate and the availability of land caught his attention and so he took a look around. He arrived in the town of Okanagan Centre, in 1908, aboard the SS Okanagan. During that first summer he worked for Frank Hewer on Rainbow Ranche. That fall he worked for Val Haynes of Penticton and rode in one of the last cattle drives over the Dewdney Trail. It is said that Goldie met McAllister on this cattle drive and was invited by McAllister to come have a look at Rainbow Ranche to give a report on its progress. James Goldie must have seen potential in the Ranche because in the spring of 1909 he returned to Okanagan Centre and purchased a quarter share of Rainbow Ranche from Frank Hewer. James quickly settled in as manager and consequently managed Rainbow Ranche for 40 years. His family became very connected with the Ranche and the tale of his meeting his future wife is one to be recounted.



When James Goldie moved into the large Ranche house, in 1909, he was still a bachelor. The Ranche house had grown substantially since its beginning as a small shack; Frank Hewer had added the south wing to the Ranche house before selling out, in 1907, and, in 1908, R. S. Dormer added the north wing. The house was quite large for just one man but it was not long before James met the woman he would marry, Jessie Ross.

In the summer of 1912, James' sister "Tib" (Theresa Goldie) came to the Ranche for a visit and brought her friend Jessie Ross, of Toronto. James and Jessie must have truly hit it off because when the summer visit came to an end, James accompanied Tib and Jessie to Calgary. the expression "Go West Young Man," he traveled to Calgary, Vancouver, Prince Rupert and finally to the Okanagan valley. The dry Okanagan climate and the availability of land caught his attention and so he took a look around. He arrived in the town of Okanagan Centre, in 1908, aboard the SS Okanagan. During that first summer he worked for Frank Hewer on Rainbow Ranche. That fall he worked for Val Haynes of Penticton and rode in one of the last cattle drives over the Dewdney Trail. It is said that Goldie met McAllister on this cattle drive and was invited by McAllister to come have a look at Rainbow Ranche to give a report on its progress. James Goldie must have seen potential in the Ranche because in the spring of 1909 he returned to Okanagan Centre and purchased a quarter share of Rainbow Ranche from Frank Hewer. James quickly settled in as manager and consequently managed Rainbow Ranche for 40 years. His family became very connected with the Ranche and the talk of his meeting his future wife is one to be recounted.

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It was in Calgary, at the first ever Calgary Stampede, that Jessie and James became engaged.14 They were married the following February 1913, in Toronto and they quickly returned to the Rainbow. Their first child, Anne (Land), was born in May 20th 1914 at Vernon Hospital. One year later Nancy (McDonnell) was born and later. Robert was born. The young family lived happily in the North wing of the Ranche house

The north wing was referred to as "the other end" by the Goldie family and was separated from the rest of the house by a veranda. Anne Land (nee Goldie) can remember having to open the door of the south wing and go outside, "go down a few steps" 15, and then through the door of the north wing. When the children were young the water for the house had to be hand pumped from the lake into a huge tank. The tank was kept in the kitchen and Anne and Nancy can also remember that there was also a large bucket of water near the back door. It had a tin dipper and everyone used the same dipper to drink from. The uneasiness that exists today, surrounding the idea of germs and diseases, was not a concern then. The Ranche proved to be a wonderful environment in which to raise a family and the Goldie children were happy with so much room

The Goldie children recall their childhood with fond memories; Anne describes it as "idyllic". Their mother, Jessie, made a point of enriching their childhood with fun games and a great deal of reading. Jessie had considerable time to spend with her children as the Ranche had a Chinese cook named Wong Bing. Although he was the cook for the Ranche, he cooked and did the laundry for the Goldie family as well. Jessie often declared that Wong Bing was one of her best friends. 16 Wong Bing cooked for the men who worked on the Ranche. They would eat most of their main meals in the lean-to that was attached to the kitchen of the house.

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Madsen, Margaret. "Idylic childhood by the lake...". The Calendar. 1 June 1994: 11.
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Madsen, Margaret. "Idylic childhood by the lake...". The Calendar. 1 June 1994: 11. <sup>15</sup> Land, Anne. Personal interview. 9 July 2003. <sup>16</sup> Land, Anne. Personal interview. 9 July, 2003.

Among the men who worked on the Rainbow were a few well-known local figures. Bob Wentworth, who was a foreman for many years, Tom Collinson, Cecil, Harry and Alan Gibbons, Brian Cooeny and countless others worked on the Ranche at one time or another. Anne (Land) and Nancy (McDonnell) can also remember university boys coming out from England in the summer to work on the Ranche. These "Oxford" and "Cambridge" types enjoyed experiencing the "country life." These men stayed in the bunkhouse near the lake and ate at the house, as they did not have any cooking facilities in the bunkhouse. In 1919 though, the workers had to make arrangements to cook for themselves in the old granary. The Ranche house was being renovated so that the growing Goldie family could have use of the entire house.

During the winter of 1919 the Goldie family went back to Toronto for Christmas. The house was in need of renovations, and so it was planned, that while the family was away, Mr. Teddy Hare would do the work. He moved the stairway and added a second story bedroom above the lean-to kitchen that had been added to the back in 1903. He added two small rooms on the first floor, one to be a bathroom and the other to be an office. He also built a fireplace in the sitting room, surrounded it with bookshelves and enlarged the windows. The Goldie family returned to a new-fashioned house and Anne and Nancy can remember that they began to eat dinner in the new dining room, as a family. James Goldie did all of the book keeping for the Ranche in the new office built near the front door of the house.



Rainbow Ranche began to prosper with the availability of irrigation and, eventually, about 125 acres of fruit trees, mostly apple, were planted. There were also 400 acres of rangeland, as well Among the men who worked on the Rainbow were a few well-known local figures. Bob Wentworth, who was a foreman for many years, Tom Collinson, Cecil, Harry and Alan Gibbons, Brian Cooney and countless others worked on the Ranche at one time or another. Anne (Land) and Nancy (McDonnell) can also remember university boys coming out from England in the summer to work on the Ranche. These "Oxford" and "Cambridge" types enjoyed experiencing the "country life." These men stayed in the bunkhouse near the lake and ate at the house, as they did not have any cooking facilities in the bunkhouse. In 1919 though, the workers had to make arrangements to cook for themselves in the old granary. The Ranche house was being renovated so that the growing Goldie family could have use of the entire house.

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as pasture and nearly 50 head of cattle. At the height of its productivity, "there were five teams of horses to work the Ranche with three of those teams in use at any one time."17 A large wharf was built at the Ranche, which was important for the transport of goods, and the original pipe for the water district was landed on this wharf. The old SS Aberdeen used to make regular calls to the wharf, "Rainbow Landing", and the Ranche had its own individual box on the boat addressed "Rainbow Landing, Okanagan Lake, BC" 18 In the early days of the Ranche, two long chicken houses were built at the south end of the property. With time, the Ranche boasted a bunkhouse, a stable, a sheep pen, a hay barn, a granary and a large log corral, all of which were built north of the Ranche house, near the lake. To preserve the food that the Goldie family needed, James dug a root cellar into the bank behind the southeast corner of the Ranche house, which served as a means of keeping the food cool all year long. The Ranche was fully equipped with all of the essentials and soon the focus was put on the growing of fruit.

As it took close to ten years for the fruit trees to produce a crop, potatoes as well as other vegetables were planted in between the rows of trees. At one time Rainbow Ranche grew one-pound potatoes for the CPR dining cars. This type of



additional farming was done to ensure some kind of income while waiting for the fruit trees to grow. When the first crop of fruit was finally ready, it was packed in a shed near the "Rainbow

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 McDonnell, Nancy. <u>Rainbow House and Garden. Photo Album.</u>

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The Japanese workers at Rainbow Ranche lived on the Rainbow, in a "camp" on the north edge of the property next to the rangeland. They were known to be very hardworking and

loyal and they mostly kept to themselves. Their camp was selfsufficient; the Japanese had hunkhouses, a kitchen and their own tennis court. They were skilled laborers and other than working in the packinghouse, they pruned, thinned, picked in the orchard and drove teams.



Those who worked in the orchard could make 17 or 18 cents an hour. The first foreman of the Japanese crew was Teddy Sawa followed by Sam Hikichi who was the foreman until the Rainbow was subdivided in 1949. These men directed the Japanese worker and kept track of the workers' hours. It was said that Sam Hikichi was Goldie's "right hand man."20 The two men, Goldie and Hikichi, worked well together and managed to operate the packinghouse at Rainbow Ranche with success.

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McDonnell, Nancy. <u>Rainbow House and Garden. Photo Album</u> McDonnell, Nancy. Personal interview. 16 July 2003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> McDonnell, Nancy. Rainbow House and Garden. Photo Album. <sup>20</sup> McDonnell, Nancy. Personal interview. 36 July 2003.

The fruit growing and packing process was quite an operation. The apples were picked into "orchard boxes" which were picked up by a team and wagon and taken to the Rainbow's packinghouse. There, they were sorted



and packed into boxes, all of which required skilled workers as everything was manual. The boxes that the apples were packed into were constructed right on the premises of Rainbow Ranche and were said to inspire great competitions between the men. Making an apple box was a real art and the men would compete "at lightning speed." Tom Collinson was famous for a period of time for his box construction, as were many other men along the way. From the Rainbow packinghouse, the boxes of fruit were hauled to the wharf at Okanagan Centre by a team and a large platform wagon to be picked up by the S. S. Okanagan or the S. S. Sicamous. After the Second World War bins and forklifts came into use which helped to speed up the process. Around this time, the packinghouse in Okanagan Centre and the packinghouse at the Rainbow closed down and the fruit was transported to the Vernon Fruit Union Packinghouse in Winfield, (now known as North Okanagan Packinghouse). In the early days Mr. Henry Macfarlene, one of the local teamsters, used to haul the fruit and later Mr. Tocher sped up the process with his truck. The Rainbow had evolved quite rapidly from its beginning as a wheat farm, into a successful orchard. The success of the Ranche, the large role it played in the community and the warmth of the Goldie family made the Ranche a welcoming place for others.

The Ranche was transforming into a major hub in the community and the house became a frequent guesthouse for important figures visiting the area. "Some very interesting people came

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> McDonnell, Nancy. Personal interview. 16 July 2003.

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to the house and on occasion stayed, "22 according to Anne Land (nee Goldie). The Okanagan Centre Women's Institute often brought people in to give talks and they would be housed at the Rainbow. Anne remembers that lectures were even given at the Ranche sometimes. R. S. Dormer used to come to Rainbow Ranche every summer. He came to visit the Goldies and

stayed in a small cabin everyone called "Dormer's Tent."23 He would come up to the house for meals and he was also a source of entertainment for the family. He often brought many books for Jessie and the children from England. Beyond that, numerous social events were hosted by the Goldies at the Ranche. During the twenties, the annual garden "Fêtes" at Rainbow Ranche were very popular and people came from miles around to attend24. Church services were even held at the Ranche sometimes. Eventually, the Goldies owned one of the first automobiles in the community and James was often booked up with planned trips to the Vernon Jubilee Hospital, taking Okanagan Centre's expectant mothers for appointments. It must have been quite a busy life for James and the family, on the Ranche.



James managed the Ranche for forty years. During that time he became very involved in the fruit growing industry and worked very hard for the central selling concept. James Goldie was closely connected to the community of Okanagan Centre and he contributed a tremendous amount of his time to the development of the fruit industry in the Okanagan. For many years he served on the board of the Vernon Fruit Union, the BC Fruit Growers Association, the BC Tree

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Land, Anne. Personal interview. 9 July 2003.
 Land, Anne. Personal interview. 16 July 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Land, Anne. Personal interview. 9 July 2003. 23 Land, Anne. Personal interview. 16 July 2003.

Fruits as well as the Winfield Okanagan Centre Irrigation District. In the early days, he was a school trustee and a member of the cemetery board. James was a successful Ranche manager as well as husband and father and in 1948 it was time to retire.

In 1949 Goldie, McAllister and Dormer decided to sell the Ranche. They advertised the sale of the entire Ranche, excluding the Ranche house, in the New York Times. When no interest was shown, Jessie made the sacrifice and allowed the house and the lakeshore property, which were in her name, to be included in the ad. Despite the addition of the house and lakeshore to the ad, no serious buyers inquired and subdividing the property seemed the best alternative. The Goldie family ended up keeping the large plot of land that included the Ranche house and some lakeshore, and sold the rest of the land off in ten and twelve acre lots.



James and Jessie lived at the Rainbow for 57 years25 and hosted many family gatherings there along the way. Anne, Nancy and Bob grew up, left home and started families of their own although they returned often, with their children, to the Rainbow. Jessie died July 22, 1970 and James died less than a year later on June 22, 1971. The Rainbow was left to their James Goldie in 1965 daughter Nancy and in 1974 it officially became the residence of

Mr. and Mrs. Peter McDonnell (nee Nancy Goldie).

The house and property appears to have changed little since the renovations in 1920 and Nancy is careful to continue with Rainbow traditions and maintain the Ranche as her parents would have liked. The huge stumps in front of the house are remnants of the large acacias that had been planted by James in 1910. The trees grew so large that they became unsafe although they can be seen in many of the photos of the house. The road that once ran in front of the

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Wilson, Brian. K. Lakokum. Win Valley Crafters. 1976: 28.
MacCrimmon. Sonia. "Rainbow Ranche, 1909-1997", The MAGAZINE. 11 Dec. 1997: 3.

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Rainbow house was re-routed in the 1970's and now runs behind the house. The gardens are still beautiful and well kept, as Nancy is an enthusiastic gardener. Anne, who still lives in Okanagan Centre, visits Nancy frequently. Bob comes out to visit the Rainbow once a year, from Salt Spring Island, BC. The Goldie children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are all drawn to the beautiful and peaceful setting of the Rainbow and visit as often as they can. For those lucky enough to be acquainted with it, the history and traditions of Rainbow Ranche will never be forgotten.



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### Acknowledgements

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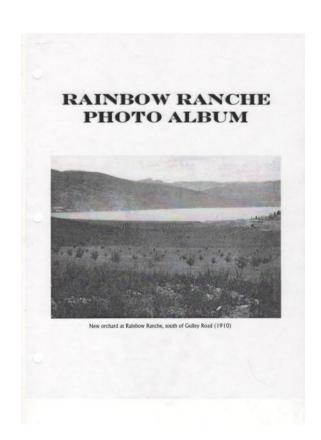
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RAINBOW RANCHE PHOTO ALBUM

# In the beginning...



Northcote H. Caesar Photo taken in 1953.



First house built at Rainbow Ranche. It was built by Northcote H. Caesar in 1900



In 1902 Northcote returned from Big Bend Country and added a six foot addition to the south end of the Rainbow Ranche hous



View of the Rainbow Ranche buildings. Notice the back addition of the house which was added in 1903.

February-06-12 5:16 PM

The interior of the Rainbow house, 1900. Possibly a bedroom through doorway.



### Pictures from Caesar's Photo Album



View of Rainbow house livingroom when owned by Northcote Caesar in 1900.

Close-up picture of the Rainbow Ranche house between 1900 and 1902.



### The Rainbow Ranche House



The house in 1907 when south wing was added by Hewe



Rainbow house is 1908 when Dormer added the north wing



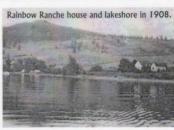
Rainbow house in 1910. As it was when James Goldie arrived.

Note the size of the windows on south wing of house.

Aerial view of Rainbow Ranche in 1908.



Jim Goldie in chaps (his working attire) in 1913. James owned a quarter share of Rainbow Ranche and was the Ranche manager from 1909 until 1948.





Bob Dormer owned a quarter share of Rainbow Ranche. He used to come out from England to visit the Ranche during the summers. This photo of him was taken in 1928.



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> Map of the Rainbow Ranche buildings in 1909. Note the Rainbow Ranche Ltd. letterhead.





This photo of the new orchard at Rainbow Ranche is from the original Okanagan Valley Land Company bochure. It was taken in 1909 and Mr. Frank Hewer is the man in the foreground.



## James Goldie and Jessie Ross met in 1912 and were married in 1913.



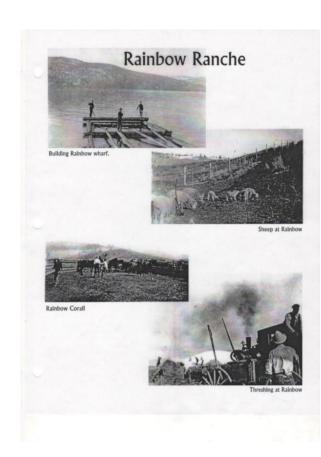
Jessie Ross in 1912.



James Goldie in 1913



Jessie Ross and Tib Goldie on horses above Gibsons "Eversley" in the summer of 1912.

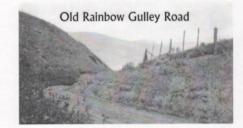


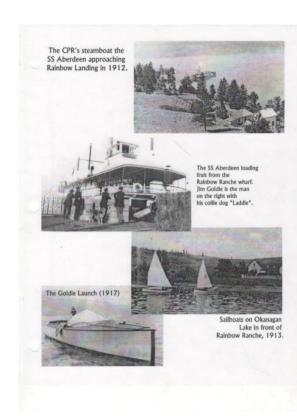


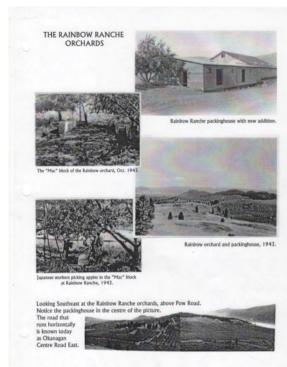
Rainbow Ranche crew bagging potatoes in 1912.



Hereford cattle in a cattlelot at Rainbow Ranche, 1910.







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Horse-drawn wagon with crates on back at Rainbow Ranche, circa 1912.

The Japanese pioneers of Okanagan Centre and Winfield, taken at Rainbow Ranche in the 1920's. Rear left to right — Messers Toda, Alzawa, Kikushima and Sawa. Front — Messers Koyama, Oka, Kobayashi, Ito and Kolde.



February-06-12 5:16 PM

Rainbow Ranche house in 1963. Note the enlarged windows of the south wing.



The acacias trees that once towered over the front of the house can be seen here. They were planted in 1910 by James Goldie.



The road that once crossed in front of the house is also visible in this photo.

Rainbow Ranche house in July, 2003. The stumps are all that is left of the acacias trees. Nancy still lives here.



# THE GOLDIE CHILDREN TODAY PHOTOS TAKEN JULY 2003



Bob Goldie, Nancy McDonnell (nee Goldie) and Anne Land (nee Goldie).



Nancy (88), Bob (86) and Anne (89).