

Lee's Corner

Norman Lee

Norman Lee came over from England and was working for the Hudson Bay Co. when he met Hugh Bayliff, a man with the same dream of starting a ranch. In 1884 they pooled their resources and set about crossing the Fraser River where Bayliff found the property he wanted at Redstone.

Norman Lee eventually found what he wanted just a few miles up from the Hanceville Post Office where he bought a trading post from a Finlander named Dan Nordberg. Lee called his new place the Beaver Ranch and developed it into a cattle ranch as well as trading post.



Miners in the Klondike were desperate for fresh beef at any price so Norman Lee set out with 200 head of choice beef and some cowboys to help him move the cattle. Unfortunately, another herd got ahead of him and took all the best grass, leaving only mud and poisonous plants behind. He started out from the Chilcotin on May 17, 1898, and after months of fighting through mud, false

leads and 'short cuts', flooded rivers that had to be forded, icy mountain passes, shortage of food and terrible weather conditions, by some miracle he made it the 1500 miles to Teslin Lake in September. There, the now skinny cattle had to be slaughtered, barges built, and everything had to be floated down to Dawson City before the ice froze on the lake. As the meat laden rafts were pushed out onto the lake, the weather turned severe, the rafts broke up and everything was lost to the storm.



Lee caught a boat back to Vancouver and it's said he landed there with a dog, a dollar and a blanket. He said he spent the dollar on a drink so as to have "... a fresh start with a clean slate." He took a train to Ashcroft and from there walked a couple hundred miles until he borrowed a horse to complete the journey back to his ranch. It took him until 1902 to become well established ranching again and that fall he took a trip back to England where he met and married his wife Agnes.



Norman and Agnes adopted their son Dan in 1905 and Norman proceeded to expand his efforts with his ranch and trading post, while Agnes learned to speak Chilcotin so that she could talk to the people that came in the store where she worked. After Norman died in 1939 she took over running the store entirely until her death in 1958. The original log store was replaced and that building is still in use as a trading post at Lee's Corner.



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LEE'S CORNER

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