Appendix 1 Biography of Wilmer Gold Lesson: Wilmer Gold

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Yarding Operation with a steam driven “Donkey” engine in the background

photo courtesy of Kaatsa Station Museum & Archives *KSM-A-N00893-nd-NIS*

**Wilmer Gold** was born in Victoria, B.C. in 1893 but was raised in Alberta. He was bitten by the photography bug at a very early age, his first photo was taken at the age of 9! As a young man, he eventually apprenticed as a photographer in Edmonton.

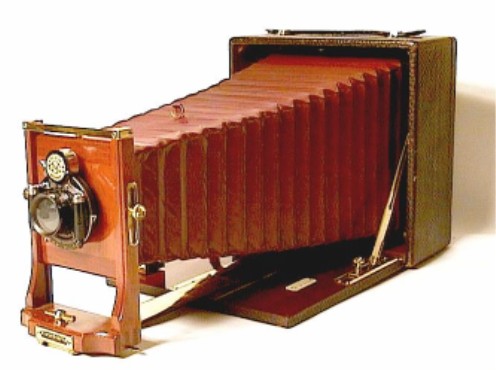
In 1915, he moved to Banff where he met his future wife Margaret. While living in the Canadian Rockies they also had a son, Holt. In 1934, at the age of 41, Wilmer, along with his family, moved to Vancouver Island and settled in Youbou, on Cowichan Lake, where he continued as a professional photographer focusing on the logging industry of Vancouver Island.

**Wilmer’s Two Cameras:**

Manufactured in the early 1900s by Century Camera Company of Rochester, NY, this camera took photographs on glass plates measuring 5 by 7 inches. The camera itself is 8 1/2 inches tall & wide, and 12 inches long.

Beautifully constructed of wood, leather, brass and glass, this style of camera is often termed *self-casing*.  This is because the entire mechanism folds into a protective and compact box that is easy to carry.  Other terms used to describe cameras of this design are *field, view*and*folding.* *Folding*makes sense - because the camera folds up.  The term *field* is used to describe a large format camera made to be easily carried outdoors for use in the *field*.  *View* refers to a camera where the lens and/or back can be adjusted from parallel dead-center allowing the photographer to vary the scene's perspective. This Field Camera is actually very heavy, and was usually used on a tripod.

Composition and focusing was usually performed by viewing the subject on the ground glass at the back of the camera. However it was also possible to frame the scene in the waist-level optical viewfinder on the camera bed. In that case, focusing could be set by aligning a pointer to a focusing scale mounted on the front bed. The distance would need to be measured or guessed.

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Waist-level optical view finder

Camera back open to show glass focusing screen

Century 5x7 Glass Plate Field Camera

Image source- http://www.vintagephoto.tv/century43.shtml

**Graflex “Speed Graphic” Field Camera**

The Speed Graphic camera has two shutters - focal plane and in-lens; three viewfinders - optical, wire frame and ground glass. It came with interchangeable lenses, and could close up its front for portability. The bellows acted as an additional zoom function. Its patented focal plane shutter and reflex focusing were so successful as a press camera that the Graflex company marketed this camera specifically for the emerging ``press'' photographer.

http://collectionsonline.nmsi.ac.uk/browser.php?m=objects&kv=15087&i=114584

**The Significance of Wilmer’s Photos**

C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Desktop\WILMER PHOTOS\KSM_A-N00656-nd-NIS.tifWilmer Gold used the latest equipment available at the time, and carried his equipment with him. Along with cameras, he also carried a tripod, light meter, focusing cloth, sensitized plates, plenty of film and developing chemicals. When the first compact camera arrived he bought a Rolieflex and used it for years. He had a portable developing lab custom built from a Willys' Overland car chassis which he towed from place to place behind his car. This trailer has been restored and now forms part of the Kaatsa Station Museum collection.

Wilmer Gold would later go home, develop his photos then trudge back to sell them to the individuals or companies that he had photographed. He would also capture less scripted moments that reflected the working life of the loggers themselves.

His work appeared in ***Time,*** ***Life***, ***Look*** and ***Maclean'***s magazines. He also authored the book "***Logging As It Was***" (1985), containing many of his photographs, which traced the lives of the loggers and evolution of logging on Vancouver Island.

Photo courtesy of Kaatsa Station Museum & Archives *KSM-A-N00656-nd-NIS*

Wilmer died on April 14, 1992, just a few weeks short of his 99th birthday. Wilmer Gold’s photo collection is believed to be the largest logging and saw milling photo collection in BC. The Wilmer Gold Photo Collection, housed in the Kaatsa Station Museum, contains approximately 1000 photographic negatives. The Kaatsa Station Museum has the goal to digitize all the images to make it easier to view the collection, while preserving the negatives—many of which are on glass.

After his death, Lucille Smith, a former Youbou resident, recalled that when her family moved to Camp 6 (many decades prior), Gold came and stayed with them for a month to take pictures of logging and community life.

C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Desktop\WILMER PHOTOS\KSM_A-N00887-nd-NIS.tif “Every day, he headed out to the bush, riding on logs when there was no crummy (bus) and walking long distances, all the while taking pictures of logging and anything associated that was happening in the area” -- **Lucille Smith**

Photo courtesy of Kaatsa Station Museum & Archives *KSM-A-N00887-nd-NIS*

**KSM&A-N00673-nd-NIS.tif**“In his lifetime he saw the world go from horse and buggy to space travel. With his photography he created an invaluable record of the world and especially of the people around him.” -- **Lucille Smith**

**SOURCES:**

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Photo courtesy of Kaatsa Station Museum & Archives KSM&A-N00673-nd-NIS.tif

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