

Omineca Guide & Outfitters

Canada Moose, Black Bear and Wolf Hunting in North Central, British Columbia, Canada



**Herbert Badey
1934— 2024**

**Our father Herb
Badey, passed away
on September 17th,
2024.**

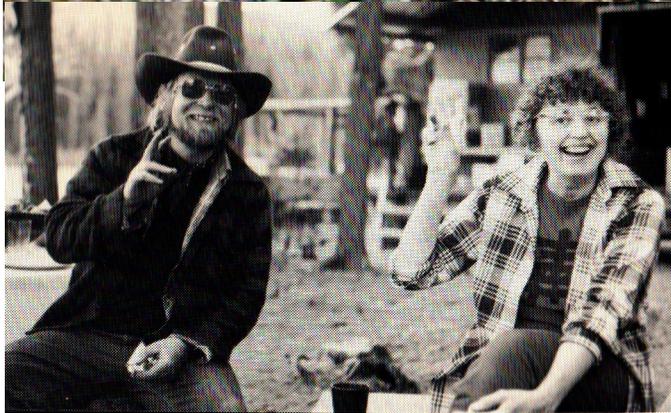


Herb immigrated to Canada in 1957 with his future wife Elisabeth. They eventually settled in Prince George, BC and raised their family there. Pictured below on a family trip to Jasper in the mid-70's. Myself, Frank, sister Christine, Mom Elisabeth, Dad and sister, Marian.

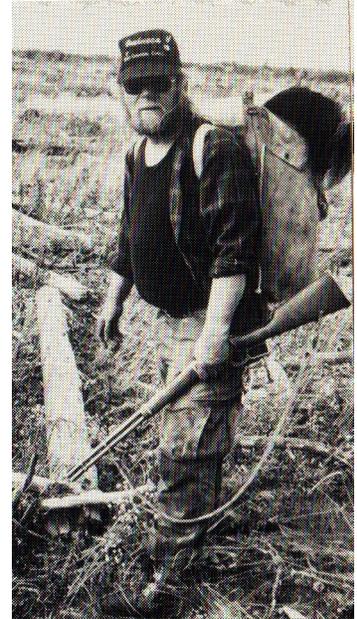


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In 1980, Herb bought Omineca Guide and Outfitters, a guide territory in the Fort St. James area. He became the outfitter and ran the business with help of the whole family. The business became the center of our lives and the camp, our home away from home.

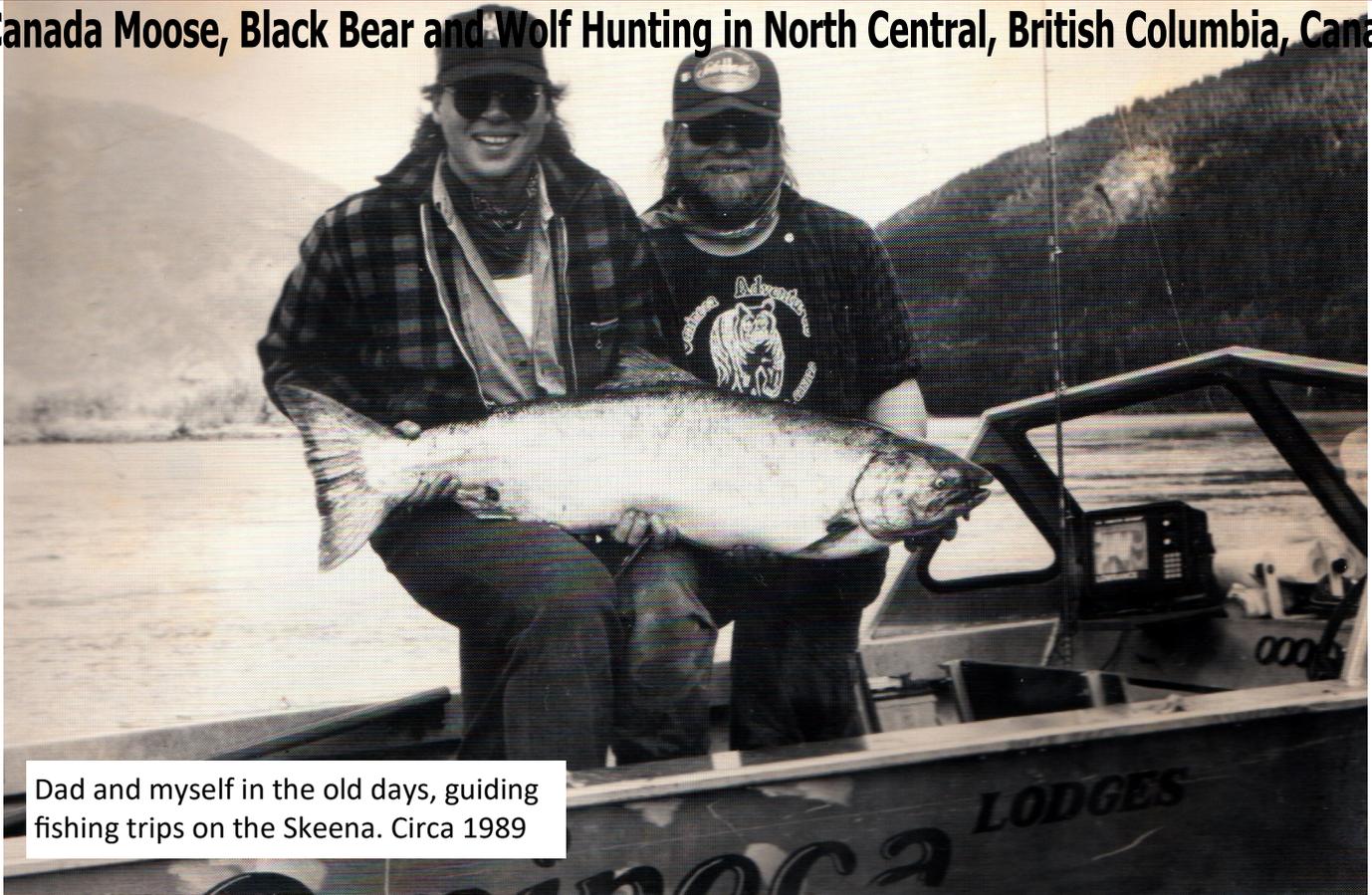


Above: Herb in his pre-outfitter days. Left: Opa Herb and his grandsons, Harrison and Sebastian



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Dad and myself in the old days, guiding fishing trips on the Skeena. Circa 1989

The following is a combination obituary for our father and history of Omineca and our family.

Herb was 11 years old at the end of World War 2. He grew up in Oberhausen, Germany in the Ruhr Valley, an industrial and mining center that endured sometimes nightly bombing raids over the course of the war and eventual occupation by the US military after the war. Along with much of the population of Europe, Herb's family of mother, father and four siblings experienced a hardscrabble life in those postwar years. He and his father worked in local coalmines, other family members did factory work. In his free time, Herb devoured books about the American West and North American history and studied English, already somehow planning a new life.

Unknown to him at the time our mother, Elisabeth and her family who had lived in a refugee camp in Austria during the war had been resettled after the war in a town called Mayen, not far from the Ruhr Valley. Her people were Romanian German farmers expelled from Molodia, now part of Ukraine.

Much of Europe was struggling in the 1950's and still had rather stratified societies. Immigration to North America was an opportunity for individuals and families to build a better life. That's how our mother, Elisabeth and father, Herb came meet in 1957 on a ship, named the Skaubryn as it made it's way across the Atlantic bringing immigrants to Montreal.

Elisabeth and her brother, Erich settled in Regina and Herb on his own went to New Westminister and struggled to find work. He traveled the west working odd jobs and eventually found steady work in Uranium City, Saskatchewan. Being in Saskatchewan brought Herb closer to Regina, where Elisabeth was working in a bank. The two of them had kept in contact and in 1960 together they drove to Kitimat, where Herb got a job at Alcan. After about a year and the birth of their son they moved from Kitimat to Calgary where they married, had two daughters, Marian and Christine. Working with a friend in Calgary, Herb learned the trade of floor layer which was his career for almost 20 years.

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While living in Calgary he was able to pursue his interest in hunting. And in those years he had his first hunting successes harvesting mountain goat and elk. This was a new passion that would eventually lead to life as an outfitter.

In the spring of 1965, looking for new opportunities, Herb, Elisabeth and their young family moved to Prince George, a booming center of the BC forest industry. Within a year, they had a house in Spruceland, one of the new suburbs off Prince George and Herb was working as a manager/installer for Linden Floors.

In Prince George, Herb found a community of friends and fellow hunters and began "outfitting" on group mountain hunting trips. He organized trips for a rotating group of friends and took charge of booking the floatplane, arranging gear and food for flyouts into the mountains north of Prince George. Redfern Lake became the destination of many of their trips. The floatplane would drop the group and gear off on the shore of Redfern where they would set up a base camp and hunt the surrounding mountains for moose, grizzly, caribou and sheep.

During this time, Herb got deeper into his interest in photography, creating slideshows of hunting and family trips and branching out into Super8 and 16mm films. He originally dreamt of becoming a professional photographer, not an easy thing to do with a mortgage and a family. But by the mid-1970's, taking time off from laying floors, he was guiding fishing and photography trips for German tourists. His passions for hunting, fishing and photography and connections with German tourists let him begin to imagine the possibility of becoming a fulltime outfitter.

The gateway to become an outfitter was to work as a hunting guide for a licensed outfitter. In the late 70's Herb started working as a hunting guide for Darwin Watson of Christina Falls Outfitters. Having contacts with German hunters, he was a booking agent, translator and guide on these mountain hunting trips for Darwin.

After taking the BC outfitter test and becoming a licensed outfitter himself, Herb bought Omineca Guide and Outfitters in 1980. The guide territory included in the business was an area of rolling hills of old growth spruce surrounding Shass Mountain and bordering Stuart Lake. The original outfitter, George Lutkehaus had accessed the area only by floatplane. Guiding moose hunts, George and his son, Gale started operating the business in 1964 and by the time they sold it, the territory was being logged by road. The road accesses and logging created varied habitats which started to support populations of black bear, wolf, deer, grizzly, as well as moose.

Outfitting has always been a family business. Although the outfitter is the driving force and the boss of the operation, he can't do it by himself. In the early years of operating the business, the Omineca team consisted of Herb (unquestionably the boss), son Frank, wife Elisabeth (cook, organizer and heart of the camp) and a crew of rotating friends and compatriots. And over the years other family members, daughters Marian and Christine and later Christine's husband Peter helped to keep the show afloat.



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Hunting black bear in the spring and moose, grizzly, and wolf in the fall was the many stay in of the business. In the early years, hunters came from Europe (mostly Germany and Austria) and the United States. Taking advantage of the trout fishing in the area, in the following years, the business expanded to include fishing trips (especially fly-fishing). Eventually guests came from all over the world; Holland, Britain, France, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand. In 1984, a TV crew from Japan came to film a show about fly-fishing in the area, with Japan's most famous fishing presenter and writer, Tetsu Nishiyama. The popularity of the first and following TV programs in Japan resulted in busy summers of many Japanese anglers coming to Omineca in the 80's and 90's.

In the meantime, black bear and moose hunting remained the main stay of the operation. Herb's interest photography and new technology drew him into the world of video, recording hunts and camp life. And it was not uncommon that during the hunt and after dinner, Herb would set up a video monitor to show everyone the "dailies" of video taken over that day's hunt. The first computer (an Amiga) was purchased in the late 80's to answer guest inquiries and build promotional materials. So winter's were spent editing and producing video and creating newsletters.

The business stayed steady in the following years and to keep it going, there was always a need to find new customers but the core of the business was a group of guests that returned year after year. And rather than expanding, the goal was to keep the business professional but family oriented. And to focus giving guests a comfortable wilderness experience

In September of 2001, in the most traumatic event to effect the family, Elisabeth, Herb's wife and partner for over 40 years passed away after a 6 month battle with cancer. Elisabeth's death caused Herb to re-assess his life. This started a process of him letting go of the business he had built. Although he still participated in Omineca Guide and Outfitters for the next ten years, he didn't have the passion for guiding that he had in the past.

In 2005, he married Janice, a retired teacher from Vancouver. Together Herb and Janice built a new life, moving to Courtenay on Vancouver Island. He had never really liked the name Herb (mostly because how it was pronounced in English), so he took the last half of his given name Herbert and became known as Bert. Janice and Bert enjoyed life and got involved in the community. Together they joined their local photography and Rod and Gun Clubs. Taking up archery, fly fishing and volunteering with the local theatre group and the provincial Liberal party. Bert came back around to his love of nature, art and photography and in his final years and created art prints of his photography which he gifted and sometimes sold.

Bert was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2019. And taking the old saying "you can't take it with you to heart", Bert started to financial help out various family members and donated to charities, his local hospital and the Guide Outfitter Association of BC.

Herb was pre-deceased by his wife Elisabeth and is remembered by me, his daughter Marian, daughter Christine, son-in-law Peter, grandsons Harrison, Sebastian and his wife Lina and Bert's wife Janice



As Bert's health was failing and the end seemed near he was known to say the when he left this world he'd be: "Fly-fishing in Valhalla"