

My Adventures with Don Apps by Otto Winning

I first met Don in the early 1960's and we soon became fast friends. Don at that time was extremely interested in the Beaufort mountain range and it was a mutual thing so we started planning trips together right from the very beginning of our friendship. At the time Don owned a small van, it was an english thames, the equivalent of a ford van. Being a good mechanic he always kept it in good running order. During the 1960's the beaufort mountains were much more accessible not like they are today. There were many logging roads and they were all inter connected. Don at that time had another great friend his name was "Pride" a huge friendly saint bernard who would accompany us on many a trip. One trip that stands out in my mind was a hunting trip we went on in an area west of Upper Campbell lake. When we left Courtenay it was raining extremely hard and it never slowed up one bit. By the time we got to our destination it was already dark. We stayed up very late that night and ate lots of good food and shared a bottle of wine together as the rain continued to pound down heavily on the roof of the van. Pride was also very happy as he got lots of fine snacks and dog treats. Later in the night the rain stopped or so we thought. In the morning we woke up to 6 inches of fresh snow. On another of our great

trips we attempted Page (2) to climb Mt Elkhorn with the mountaineering club. On the first day we hiked up very high and set up a base camp hoping to make the peak the next day. That night it turned bitter cold and we were camping on snow. In those days my equipment was not the best by any means and as the night wore on it got progressively colder. I got so cold that I had to wake Don up and we talked things over. Unfortunately I had no air mattress, only a plastic ground sheet on the tent floor and my home made sleeping bag on top of that. Don only had a small 2 ft. x 4 ft. foam mattress. However he quickly turned it sideways so that we could each put our backs on the small area. That's just the way Don was, always quick and willing to share. After that we both fell quickly back to sleep. We never made it to the top of Elkhorn as in the morning a strong storm moved in, a snow storm no less so we had to pack up and head back down. In 1964 we went on another great trip that sticks out in my memory. On labour day weekend of that year we along with the mountaineering club climbed Victoria peak. We flew in by sea plane to Stuart Lake which is located on the head waters of the white river located near Sayward. There were 8 of us in the groupe and we all made it to the top, it was one of those perfect trips, beautiful weather and fantastic views in all directions.

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Another trip that we took together that I remember well was in the Beaufort range and we climbed Mt Apps by moonlight. It was a full moon and very bright out once our eyes adjusted to the moon light going was easy. We also saw some Tarmigan in the moon light on our way to the top.

Another great adventure we had together was in the mid 1960's we took a trip together into the north country up to the Yukon and then on to Fairbanks Alaska. It was in December and it got very cold while we were up there. We rented a small travel trailer in Vancouver and this was our home for over a month. Don also took along his skido which he put in the back of his Ford Bronco and we had some exciting skido trips in the north country under the stars and northern lights. On our way home we stayed at a place called snag, a small village in the Yukon. The thermometer registered -56° below zero Fahrenheit in the morning, that's cold. In later years Don became more and more interested in doing trail work for the club. Don Apps and Ruth Masters were the real work horses of the club when it came to trail building and maintaining trails. When Don drove bus for western mines he would have several hours off during the day waiting for the afternoon shift to end at the mine so he could bus the miners back home. Instead of sitting around doing

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nothing he soon started scouting around the country side and doing some exploring. Soon he was building a real neat trail up to Upper myra falls. Over a period of time he almost built the trail completely by himself. In later years our club would improve the trail and do maintenance work on it. Later he scouted out a route up to Arnica Lake on the way to Philipps ridge. He soon was aggressively building a trail up there as well. We used to camp at Ralf River campsite on a friday night and then would work on the trail all day saturday and most of sunday. Eventually it turned into a great trail which many people use today to climb the very popular golden hinde. There's no doubt that my best friend will be missed by many.