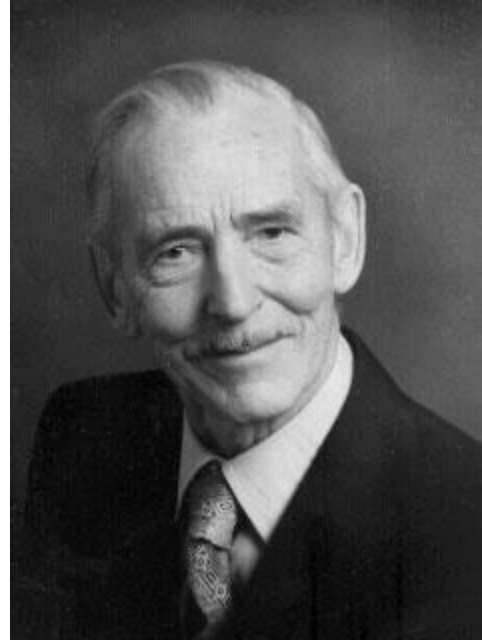


John Douglas "Jack" Gregson (1910 - 2006)

Jack was born in Blackfalds, Alberta and attended a one-room school to Grade 7. The family moved to Courtenay when he was in his teens. There his interest in 'bugs' established his lifelong association with nature. He was a world-renowned scientist, a naturalist, artist, poet, musician, author, photographer, gardener, traveler and most of all, a family man. He eschewed the trappings of the rich and famous and reveled in the bounties of nature.

He received an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from UBC in 1934, a Masters Degree in Medical Entomology from the University of Alberta in 1936 and was honoured with a Doctorate of Letters from the UCC in 2000. Jack moved to Kamloops in 1936 where he wooed and wed Barbara Claxton, his wife and soul mate of sixtyseven years. It was there he embarked on a career with the Canada Department of Agriculture to study insects injurious to man and animal. He specialized in the study of wood ticks and was recognized globally for his scientific contributions. This resulted in many trips throughout the world, often accompanied by Barbara and whetted their appetite for further travels after retirement. The author of more than 80 scientific publications, he named three species of ticks, discovered and had a stonefly (*Capnia gregsoni*) named for him, as well as a new species of tick, *Ixodes (Pholeoixodes) gregsoni*. They managed as well to raise five children and create their lovely heritage garden, Grenehalghe, which became a source of enjoyment for many beside themselves.



Jack was a true naturalist and environmentalist. In 1936, he established the Kamloops Outdoor Club, better to share his appreciation of nature with others. The highlight of many years was the week long 'Alpine Trip' to some of the remote areas of the province that he recorded on film and in paint. His patience was rewarded with many exquisite photos, or 'slides' that captured the highlights of his trips to the mountains and around the world. Some of these he transferred, with 'artistic license', to canvas. He said "I've moved trees, and sometimes mountains, but always have had a high regard for Nature's beauty and composition." Some of these paintings have hung in the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Kamloops Art Gallery, but for the most part are still in the family homes.

During his 70 years in Kamloops Jack was an outspoken environmental advocate. He is also credited with founding the Kamloops and District Garden Club (1950) and the Kamloops Naturalist Club (1970). He received many awards for his efforts but his greatest reward was the recognition of and appreciation shown for the environment that his efforts generated. Among them was the Waterway Park at McArthur Island, the Butterfly Gardens at Riverside Park and McArthur Island, and the bicycle /footpath east of his property on the South Thompson River. He received the Grassroots Award for beautification and protection of Kamloops' natural landscape, BC Federation of Naturalists Club service award, the Kobayashi Award for best-landscaped property and was made a Freeman of the City of Kamloops in 1990.

Jack loved music and played the cornet in high school. He was an accomplished harmonica player, but any thoughts of a professional career were thwarted by his non-union status and his performance on the CBC show Klahanee was short lived. He was a romantic and never failed to remember Barbara's birthday and their anniversaries with special poems he wrote for the occasions.

His own birthday was always recognized with a home baked strawberry shortcake and an ever expanding coterie of family and friends. Jack and Barbara's urge to travel waned as they grew older and their interests centered around garden, family and friends. He was very proud of the oasis they created out of a patch of tumbleweed acquired in 1946.

— John Gregson