



Double or Nothing: The Flying Fur Buyer of Anahim Lake

Darcy Christensen

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Life has always been a bit of a gamble for Darcy Christensen. Born in Ocean Falls in 1929, he was raised in Bella Coola Valley and Anahim Lake on the Chilcotin Plateau. The Christensen family were among the earliest white settlers on the Central Coast and West Chilcotin and his maternal grandfather, John Clayton, was the Hudson's Bay Company's last trading post factor in Bella Coola. For over thirty years Darcy ran the general store in Anahim Lake that had been operated by his family for more than a century.

In the 1970s Christensen bought a plane and took some flying lessons. Using his bush plane equipped with skis he delivered groceries to people living in the outlying area and purchased furs from trappers as far north as Babine and Takla Lake. In no time, he gained acclaim as the "Flying Fur Buyer" of the Cariboo Chilcotin. Christensen says, "All anyone had to do was wave a mink pelt at me and I'd land and buy their fur."

Whether it was playing poker as a youngster with the ranch hands on the Cless Pocket Ranch, doing stunts with his airplane, or flipping double or nothing with customers for a grocery order in his store, Darcy has always had a penchant for gambling. He says his jousts with Lady Luck helped break the boredom and monotony of life on the frontier.

Double or Nothing is a journey into the West Chilcotin where Christensen describes his raw and adventurous life and his friendship and encounters with such legends as Pan Phillips, Lester Dorsey, Mickey Dorsey, Domas Squinas, Fred Engebretson and Clayton Mack.

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