

MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter April 2012



Brian Croft's painting "Passing Woodwards".

APRIL MEETING

On Thursday April 26th at 7:30 pm at St. Andrew's Heritage Church (22279 116th Avenue), Brian Croft will be speaking at our monthly meeting.

Croft is a former fighter pilot with the Canadian Forces. Today he is a widely recognized artist whose work emanates from the beautiful locales surrounding Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

He has introduced a historical and heritage perspective into his work and this has become the focal element and trademark of his various collections.

Brian's presentation will speak of the evolving nature of his work with a special emphasis on the intriguing nature of the historical research required to render each canvas as a legitimate portrayal of our past.

MOTHER'S DAY TEA AT HANEY HOUSE

On Sunday, May 13th, Haney House will be hosting our annual Mother's Day Tea from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Enjoy tea and treats on the veranda, alongside guided tours of the house. Come and see our new display inside the house, showcasing activities that were available to pioneer residents during the warm summer months. Admission is \$6.00. For more information, and to book a reservation please contact Allison at 604-463-5311.



EARTH DAY AND THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RECYCLING SOCIETY

Coming up on April 21 is the Community Earth Day celebration. This year the Ridge Meadows Recycling Society is having a number of events and fund-raisers on and around that day to celebrate their 40th year. Maple Ridge Museum and the Recycling Society have a joint display at the museum which will be in place until the end of April.



MAY MEETING

On Thursday May 24th at 7:30 pm at St. Andrew's Heritage Church, Don Luxton will be speaking at the monthly meeting. The title of his talk: "Bringing Our Ancestors Home: The Nisga'a Museum and an Odyssey of Repatriation in Northern British Columbia."



The Sunday school opened when the church did in 1912, but typical of the multi-denominational congregation, it was organized by a group of Baptist women for the primarily Methodist church.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO WEBSTER'S CORNERS CHURCH

The church was officially opened on Sunday, January 5, 1912, with a grand banquet held the next day. For the early pioneer churches, denomination was not a fixed element. The small communities took whomever they could get in the form of a travelling minister and only hoped that whoever it was would be able to get there at some reasonable time of day. As William Ansell noted: "First we was Anglicans, then we was Presbyterians, then Methodists – it's hard to tell what we be now."

In 1926, church union occurred and this small church on Dewdney Trunk became the Webster's Corners United Church, originally sharing a pastor with Haney and Hammond, but later switching to a relationship with Whonnock United.

Within the past few years, Whonnock United Church has joined with the Webster's Corners congregation. The new name for these two historic churches is Webster's Whonnock United Church. Instead of struggling separately, the two congregations are now happy to be thriving together.

A neighbourhood celebration will be held on Webster's Corners Day on June 23th at the new Webster's Corners community park, adjacent to the school, where the church will have a display table of heritage items and photos along with our museum display of Webster's Corners history.

FAMILY HISTORY SHOW AND SHARE

On April 21, on the upper floor of the Maple Ridge Library, our Family History Group is hosting an event in two parts.

The first part is a pair of workshops in the Library's computer room to introduce beginners to the resources available to family historians on the Internet. They will run from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and you need to register. The workshops are free but space is limited.

The second part (1:00 to 3:00 pm) is a "show & share" opportunity to bring a display of what you have discovered about your family.

If you want to register for a workshop or want to bring a display to the sharing session please contact Annette Fulford at avidgenie@hotmail.com or through the museum at 604-463-5311.

LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS!

We are looking for people with enthusiasm for history to be part of our Program Committee to choose speakers and activities for the coming year. We have a lot of options open to us and just need some fresh eyes to help us find topics that will engage our community. We would also like to add a few more board members, so if you want to gain some experience at board work or want to learn more about how your community museums and archives are run, please give us a call! For both options, contact Val at 604-463-5311.

MUSIC ON THE WHARF

The Maple Ridge Historical Society is looking for musical groups to perform at the Music on the Wharf Concert Series: July 9, 23 and August 13 and 27, 2012. If you are a musician, or know of any artists who would fit the criteria please visit mapleridgemuseum.org for full details on submission guidelines.

Music on the Wharf Concert Series is a unique performance opportunity held on the Port Haney Wharf. In its 16th year, the concert series is well established and well attended.



THE POST OFFICE ON RIVER ROAD – PORT HANEY

In February the Community Heritage Commission conferred a Heritage Building Award on the old Bank of Montreal, presently the Billy Miner Pub, and an adjacent small building on River Road housing a liquor store today.

That last building is known as the “post office building,” although it only housed the post office from 1933 until 1939 when postmaster Storey opened a new post office on Callaghan Avenue (the present preschool).

The postmaster, Mrs. Storey (formerly Mrs. Charlton), built the post office in 1933, after a “fierce blaze” in November 1932 destroyed the buildings at the northwest corner of River Road and Ontario Street including the former Pacific Berry Grower’s building, the post office, and C.P.R. station and freight shed across River Road. The old Bank of Montreal building miraculously survived the fire, but what stood east of it was all gone.



Looking east on River Road before the 1932 fire. Bank of Montreal building (left) was spared but the other buildings burned down.

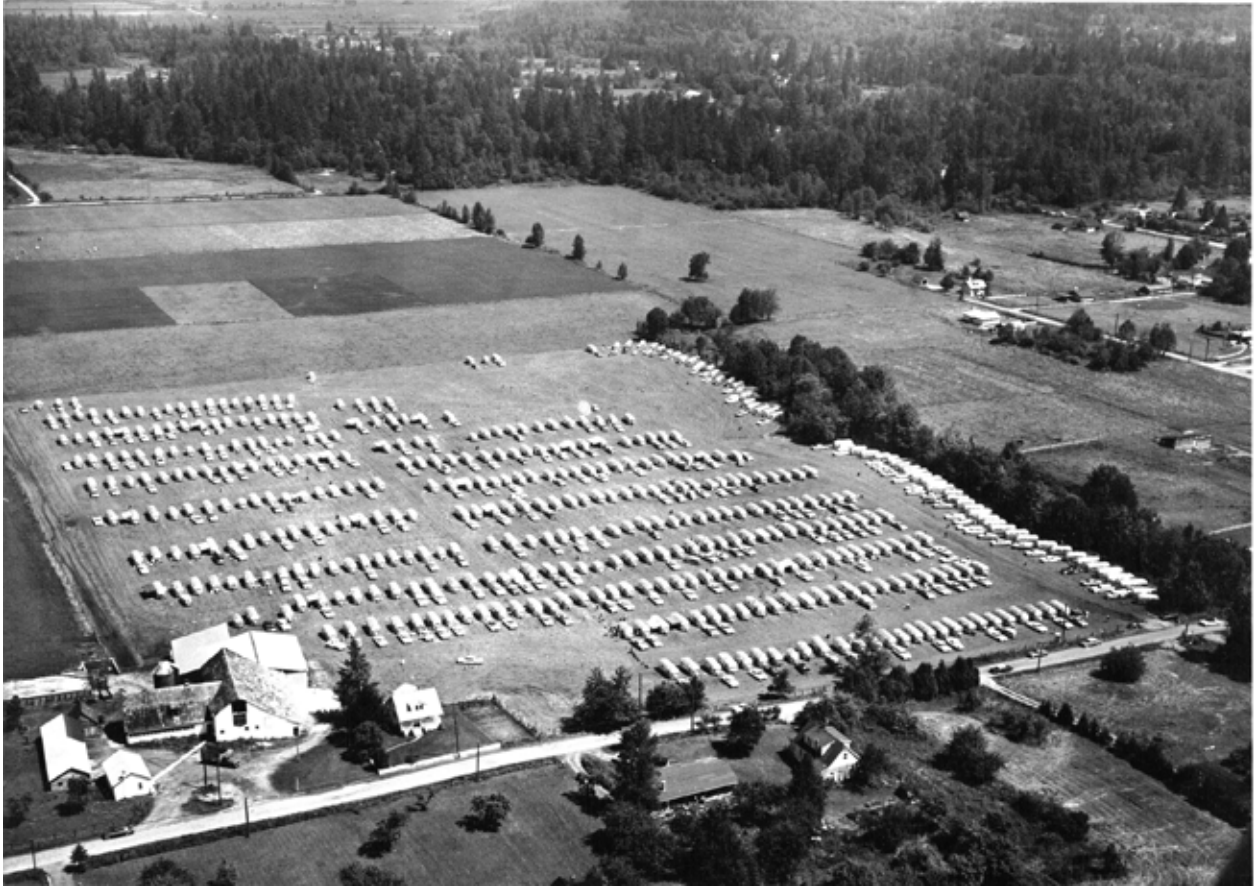
After the fire the post office found a temporary home in the former Fuller Watson building on River Road, where Cordelle’s store had opened its doors recently.

Where was the old post office? Photos taken before the fire show a small building east of the Bank of Montreal where the new post office would be built, but the *Weekly Gazette* informed its readers that the new building was “... around the corner from the one destroyed by fire...” The answer seems to be that the entrance of the old post office was on Ontario Street, opposite the Simister Bakery and Leggatt’s Pool Room.

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The corner of Ontario Street and River Road before the 1932 fire. To the right Legatt’s Pool Hall and Simister’s Bakery (both probably unoccupied at that time). The buildings on the left burned down. The post office (Storey building) is behind the Pacific Berry Growers store.





FIFTY YEARS AGO – WALLY BYAM’S CARAVANS

During the late 1950s and early 1960s the streamlined silvery shape of the Airstream trailer was a common sight on highways in summer. Wally Byam was the man who nearly single-handedly invented the travel trailer industry. He started his Caravan Clubs to promote sales of the Airstream trailers and encourage group touring.

The large group pictured on the Davison Farm was nearly 750 trailers. They stayed in town for a week and were welcomed with open arms. They represented an unprecedented tourist boom for most of the small communities they visited and those communities were highly motivated to provide them with activities to participate in that drew them into town.



DEWDNEY-ALOUETTE



Visit the Dewdney-Alouette Railway Society's diorama in the museum.

On the last Sunday of every month, members of the Dewdney-Alouette Railway Society are present to “talk trains” and operate the Diorama. Model Railroaders are welcome on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings before the last Sunday of the month.

Info: Dick Sutcliffe at 604-467-4301 or E-Mail: ras1@uniserve.com

