

Newsletter April 2013

HISTORY GOES TO MARKET

Join us Saturday, May 25th, in Memorial Peace Park for History Goes to Market. We will have historic displays on four of the original neighbourhoods – Whonnock, Webster’s Corners, Port Hammond, and Ruskin.

We will have representation from the modern communities as well. Look for us on the Bandstand during the Farmer’s Market.

The second History Goes to Market will be on Saturday, September 21st, and will feature Albion, Yennadon, Port Haney, and the Ridge.



HERITAGE SURVEY

If you have not yet done so, please contribute to the municipal Heritage Strategic Plan by responding to the online questionnaire at the address given below.

This is an important step for us as individuals concerned with heritage, our neighbourhoods and our entire community.

We need to let the municipality know what is most important to us.

Here is a link to the heritage survey: <<http://fluid-surveys.com/surveys/dmr/maple-ridge-heritage-plan-questionnaire/>>



MOTHER’S DAY TEA AT HANEY HOUSE

On Sunday, May 12th, Haney House will be hosting our annual Mother’s Day Tea from 11 am to 3 pm. Enjoy tea and treats on the veranda, alongside guided tours of the house.

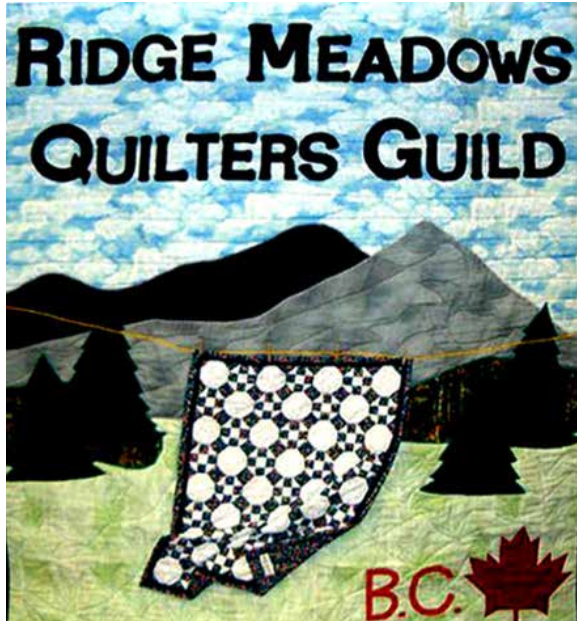
Come and see our new “Anne Haney” display inside the house in honour of Mother’s Day. The display will also showcase activities that were available to pioneer residents during the warm summer months.

Mothers will be able to take some tulip bulbs to plant for the coming year! Admission is \$6. For more information, and to book a reservation please contact Allison at 604-463-5311.



This year’s Heritage Tea was enjoyed by 248 people. Save On Foods made this marvellous cake for us with an edible picture of a Finnish brass band from Webster’s Corners imprinted upon it.

Our numbers were increased by the large 1957–1960 and 1962–1963 MRSS high school reunions. Special thanks are due to Bernice & Don Gehring, Audrey Swain, Linda Raskewitz and Erica Williams for their volunteer efforts.



QUILT STORIES: EVERY QUILT HAS ONE!

On the weekend of May 3 and 4th, the Ridge Meadows Quilters Guild will share their work and their stories with the community.

One of the older examples of thrift and recycling, quilts tell stories about families, places, and the women who make them.

On Friday, May 3, from 10 am to 7 pm and Saturday, May 4, from 10 am to 3 pm, join the crowds at Burnett Fellowship Church at 20639 123rd Ave for a feast of traditional, modern and challenge quilts plus a merchant mall and tea room and a members' boutique.

ST. ANDREW'S RENTAL

The St. Andrew's Heritage Church (1888) now functions as a community hall and is available to rent for weddings, social events, and meetings.

The hall accommodates up to 75 people.

Call Tom Little at Haney House: 604-463-1377.



MEGAN O'CONNOR'S CONSERVATION NOTES

GOT BUGS?

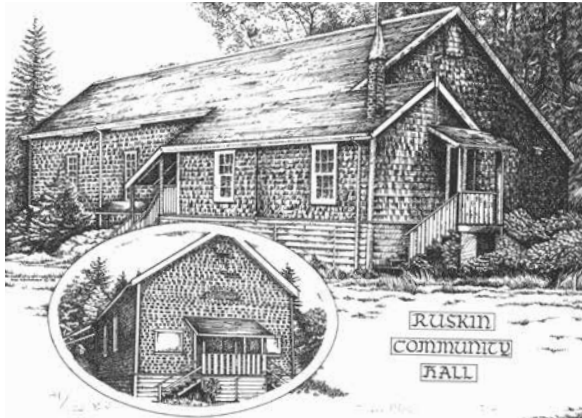
Insect pests are a risk factor for the special heritage objects in your home. They tend to attack objects that contain fur, hair, feathers, wool, silk, paper and wood, for example, clothing, furniture,



carpets, wooden objects, paper and photographs. Common insects such as carpet beetles and clothes moths eat proteins like wool and silk, while silverfish aim for the glue and ink on paper and are known to damage wall paper, labels, postage stamps and paper money. You can avoid a disastrous insect outbreak by implementing a few easy preventive measures.

Insects need warmth and humidity to thrive, so keep your artifacts at a cool temperature between 18-22°C in a dry area. Avoid basements and attics, as unstable temperatures and their usual high moisture levels promote insect activity. Insects thrive in areas that are dusty and dirty, so maintain a clean storage and display area. Avoid placing heritage artifacts in the kitchen, as there are ample food sources in that area of the home.

Inspect your historic items for pest damage regularly: evidence of insect activity can be found in the form of holes and areas of loss on the surface of objects, frass (insect droppings, resembles dust), and dead insect casings. If you suspect that an object is infested, isolate it immediately to prevent the spread of an infestation. Place the object on a sheet of white paper in a zip-lock bag in a cool, dry place away from the rest of your collection for several weeks. Monitor the object for insect activity, checking the paper for fallen casings and frass. If insect activity is detected, keep object isolated during at least a summer season to minimize the risk of infestation. *mo*



AN INVITATION TO CELEBRATE

The Ruskin Hall is having a Historical Celebration on Saturday, May 4 (1 pm to 4 pm). You are invited to come and help the members of the Ruskin Community Hall Association celebrate Ruskin's famous past!

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE: RUSKIN

Before 1896 there were only a handful of white settlers between Whonnock Creek and the Stave River. Having no access to land along the Fraser and the Stave River those few pioneers settled inland to the north. That changed overnight in the fall of 1896, when the Canadian Cooperative Society, established in Mission BC the previous year, built a sawmill and shingle mill at the mouth of Stave River.

A village grew instantly around the Ruskin Mill, accommodating the fifty-odd members of the society. There were enough children to warrant the opening of a school, first called Stave River School. The opening of a post office named Ruskin on New Year's Day 1898 established the community's name for posterity.

Unfortunately the following year the Society failed to meet its financial obligations and disbanded. E.H. Heaps & Co., the Society's main creditor and already a major player in the BC lumber industry, became the new owner of the mill and quickly expanded the capacity of the plant and logging operations to match it.

The school was moved away from the Heaps plant to the location on 96th Avenue at 284th Street, where it stood away from factory noise and on land donated to the Crown for that purpose rather than on company property. For almost on hundred years Ruskin would have its own school until it closed in 1998.

In 1899, the year when Heaps took over the Ruskin mill, the Stave Lake Power Company was formed and subsequently obtained permission from the province to use the water of the river to generate electric power. It took more than a decade to make that a reality. Only in December 1911 did their successor, the Western Canada Power Company, see power starting to flow from the Stave Dam plant.

The Stave Falls Railway, built in 1910, connected the CPR line at Ruskin with the construction site. The traffic generated by the activities around the Stave Falls dam convinced the CPR to approve the building of a rail station at Ruskin that same year – one of the many things by which the residents of Ruskin profited from what happened in their backyard.



It was quite common for lumber mills to suffer damage by fire at one time or another, and E.H. Heaps & Co. was no exception. In 1905 Heaps's Ruskin mill lost two dry kilns to fire, and in the following year their Vancouver mill burned down. In 1910 the Heaps mill at Ruskin went up in flames. Heaps's innovative railroad logging operation continued, and the mill was rebuilt after Heaps signed a mortgage. A substantial extension rumoured in the press in 1912 never materialized, though Heaps was in the process of adding a brick-making plant to their Ruskin lumber operation.

In 1913 the building boom in Vancouver ended and the demand for building materials collapsed. When in 1915 a court ruled in favour of the holders of the mortgage Heaps signed in 1911, all was over for Heaps in Ruskin .

On the shore of the Fraser, across the tracks from the mill there remained for many years the monumental wooden building that had housed the mill office and living quarters of Heaps's managers, lodgings for travellers, as well as Ruskin's store and the post office. The ultimate fate of the Heaps building is not documented. Until 1915 Heaps family members managed both the store and the post office, but it is not clear for how long the building was used after they left. In 1924 the Cash Grocery opened across the tracks nearer to the rail station.

In 1913, when the sun was setting over Heaps's affairs in Ruskin, Stoltze Manufacturing started operating a shingle mill a short distance upstream. Funded with American rather than British capital and with access to the American market, the Stoltze mill worked at full capacity from the start, even adding a dry kiln that year to meet the increase in demand.

There was ample standing timber in the Stave River area, and after 1914, when Abernethy-Lougheed won the contract for 8,000 acres of timber at Stave Lake, Stoltze harvested cedar bolts from the A&L concession land that would be flooded after completion of an increase in the height of the dam.

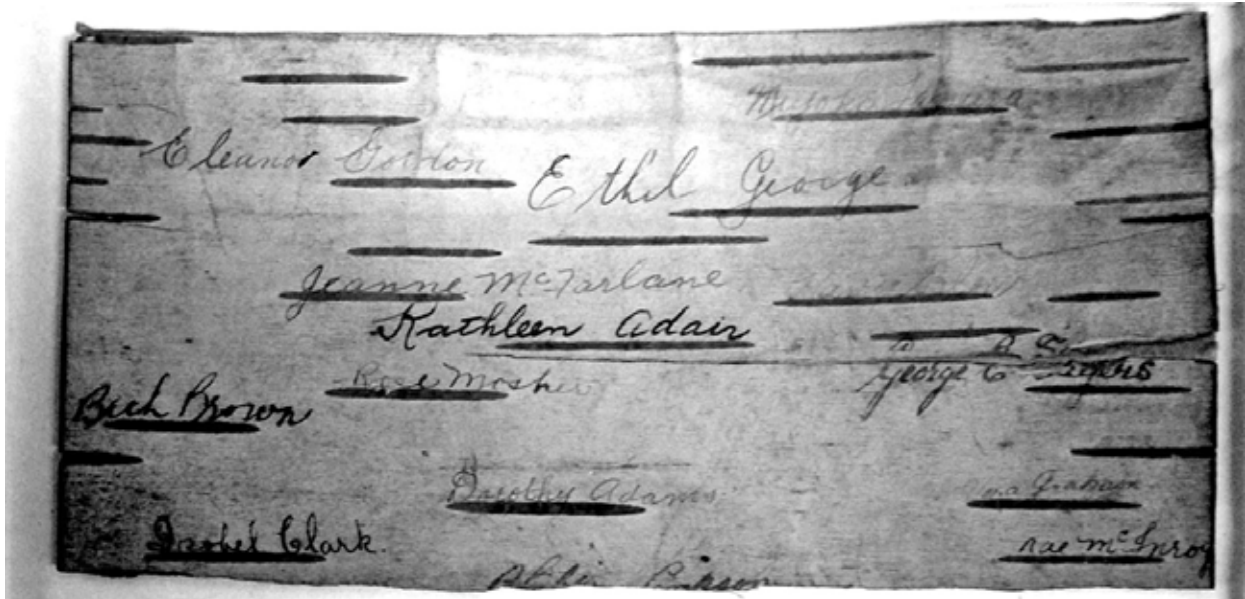
Stoltze reportedly employed hundreds of men for their logging operation and in the mill. Most of the workers were Japanese, many of whom probably had logged for Heaps earlier. In later years Japanese farmers would form a large part of the population of Ruskin, and before their eviction in 1942 they took berry farming to a level never repeated since.

The Heaps building had provided space for social events of the community, but that seems to have ended after Heaps left Ruskin in 1915. It so happened that in 1916 the crowded one-room Ruskin school would be replaced by a two-room building, and the now obsolete old school house was pulled across the road to become the first Ruskin community hall. It burned down in 1922, but a new and much improved building was opened in 1924 – it still stands there today.

In December 1928 the British Columbia Power Corporation decided to build the Ruskin dam and powerhouse at the narrow granite gorge some 6 km downstream of Stave Falls. The work, including a diversion of the Stave River, was completed on schedule in November 1930. At the official opening ceremony two hundred businessmen and politicians dined in the powerhouse, and in the following years thousands of visitors took tours at the facility, solidly putting the name of Ruskin on the map. *fb*



Powerhouse construction in April 1930



One of the two scrolls covered in classmate's names from 1924 MacLean High. The third scroll is a signature scroll for George Sayers alone.

HISTORY UNROLLED!

George Sayers came from England with his family in 1912 and attended school in Haney before heading off to UBC. He lasted one year and could not afford to continue, but he never let that get in the way of his quest for knowledge. He became a most accomplished machinist, inventor, and botanist and was much admired by all who knew him.

After George died in 1987, friends had gathered some of the belongings that had been important to him, and in 2010 they donated that collection to the museum. One item was a cause of puzzlement from the day it arrived. It was a set of three tightly rolled bits of birch bark. The donors said that the bark rolls had been important to George and that something was written on them but they had no idea what it might be.

George had spent a good part of his working life working for Abernethy & Loughheed, and he was the man selected to guide Winston Churchill around the A & L workings in 1929. Was this something written by Churchill or another of A & L's other VIP visitors?

How could we unroll the bark? The rolls languished until this spring, when we hired a recent

graduate of museum and conservation courses to work with us for a few months. Megan, who has been writing conservation notes for this newsletter, worked out what we needed to do, but it involved equipment we didn't have. She contacted several Lower Mainland museums with better equipped facilities and was able to arrange to use the lab at Burnaby Village Museum.

Now lying open and permanently held flat between mylar sheets, the bark has revealed its secrets – sort of. They had nothing to do with the Abernethy & Loughheed years but were covered with signatures of very familiar names – Mus-sallem, Adair, Poole, Aho, Morrison, Charlton, Jackson, Leggatt, Sayers, McFarlane, and Brown. The signers were male and female, some were siblings and clearly, they were from all over the district. There was no date or any reason for their gathering – one mystery replaced by another.

After being steeped in high school memories while preparing for our Heritage Tea, the idea of high school struck me, and I went looking for George Sayers. I struck pure gold in the 1924 MacLean High School annual. Most of the annual is written by and about the members of the MacLean High School Literary and Athletic Club. It appears to have included nearly all of >>>



Megan at Burnaby Village Museum getting ready for the great unrolling.

the school's students, including the six members of that year's graduating class – George Sayers, Kathleen Adair, Nicholas Mussallem, Gerald Charlton, Abner Poole, and Francis Morrison. All the rest of the signatures belong to those in the first and second years of high school, roughly equivalent to grades 10 and 11. MacLean was the first high school in the district, and it had opened in 1922. Its catchment was all of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

It's rare to have all of our mysteries answered in one source. The club being multi-year explained the presence of siblings. The scattering of geographic sources was explained by there only being one high school. The only remaining mystery is how such small and fragile items survived for nearly 90 years. *vp*



A recent addition to our collection is this marble tablet in a wooden frame. It was once attached to a wall in the vestry of the Whonnock United Church. The Ladies Club was formed in 1911 to build the Ladies Hall, completed in 1912 and later known as Whonnock Memorial Hall. Janet Brodie (Dickson was her maiden name) had taken an active part in the affairs of the Ladies Club.

Janet and John Brodie were also a driving force behind the building of what was then the Presbyterian Church of Whonnock, dedicated just a few months before Janet Brodie's death in December of 1914. The couple gave their personal guarantees for the financing of the building of the church and donated the land on which the church stands. When John Brodie died in 1938, he left his house and property adjacent to the church building to the United Church.

Janet was not buried in Whonnock, where John Brodie's grave is, but in Manitoba next to her son John Beatty, assistant stationmaster, who was run over at Shoal Lake, Manitoba, in 1907, while coupling cars.

Later mentions and pictures of a Mrs. Brodie in Whonnock refer to Mrs. James Brodie, John Brodie's widowed sister in law. *fb*

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

