



MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter June 2013



COMING EVENTS

Webster's Corners Day

Saturday, June 22, in Webster's Corners Park [between the school and the Sampo Hall] from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. There will be fun and games for kids, an historic display from the museum and an opportunity to have tea and talk about the old days with long-time residents.

Music on the Wharf Concerts:

July 8 and 22 at 7:30 pm, August 12 at 7:30 pm and August 26 at 7:00 pm.

Back-to-School Tea on the Verandah:

Haney House, August 18, noon to 3:00 pm.

History Goes to Market – part 2

Saturday, September 14, on the Bandstand in Memorial Peace Park from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

SUMMER EXHIBITS

The Maple Ridge Museum and Haney House Museum are getting ready for summer with all new displays.

Haney House will feature a 1950s theme to partner with our "Rock Around the Clock" Canada Day event. On display will be summer fashions and musical instruments from the era.

To tie in with the music, the Maple Ridge Museum will have various instruments on display from July through September. The exhibit "Play it Again" will showcase artists/bands from the area alongside records and other instruments, some of which are hand-carved.



CANADA DAY: ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK AT HANEY HOUSE

Come visit Haney House on Monday, July 1st from 12:00 to 3:00 pm for our Canada Day celebration.

This year our theme is "Rock Around the Clock" and we're embracing the 1950s. Guides will be dressed in 50s attire, and serving up root beer floats along with other goodies.

The house will be open for tours and there are lots of activities for children; from dress-up clothes to a photo-booth with props and crafts.

MEGAN O'CONNOR'S CONSERVATION NOTES

PROTECTING PHOTOGRAPHS

An artifact that is common across almost all households these days are historic photographs. The most common types of historic photographs found in family collections are silver gelatin (black and white) prints popular from the 1890s and still produced today, and chromogenic colour prints popular from the 1940s. Both of these types of prints tend to deteriorate in a characteristic way. Silver gelatin prints contain silver molecules that can migrate over time towards the surface of the image, producing a mirror-



ing affect. This shiny-metallic appearance tends to concentrate in darker areas, such as shadows. Silver-gelatin prints also tend to yellow and lose their highlights over time. Chromogenic colour prints contain three dyes that interact to produce colour images: Cyan, Magenta and Yellow. These dyes are inherently unstable and will change and fade. Cyan tends to deteriorate first, leaving a yellow or red tinge to photographs. The above are all examples of chemical deterioration resulting from reactions that are almost impossible to halt or reverse, but chemical reactions can be slowed down by minimizing exposure to heat, moisture, and light. Keeping your historic photographs in a cool (no attics), dry (no basements), and dark (in a box) environment will do wonders to prolong the life of your special moments captured on film.

Often photographs are kept in frames, albums or scrapbooks for long periods of time. Popular

in the 1970s and 1980s are photo albums with sticky or magnetic pages. These albums can be very detrimental to photographs as the chemicals in the adhesive can interact with the image layer and cause it to discolour or stain. The image layer may also stick to adhesives on the album and peel off when you attempt to remove photos. Archival quality albums where photos slide in and out of the page are the best option for long term preservation. When framing photographs make sure there is a gap between the glass and the image layer, for example use matte board for framing works of art, so the image layer doesn't stick to the glass. Scrapbooking tape or other adhesives are not recommended for use directly on photographic prints, so consider investing in self-adhesive photo corners to hold photographs in place. These can be purchased at most craft supply stores. When shopping for photograph display and storage supplies, look for features like acid-free, archival quality, or inert; these supplies may be a bit more expensive but they will help make your photos last for many generations to appreciate.

For further information on identifying and caring for historic photographs visit the Graphics Atlas, created by the Image Permanence Institute: <<http://www.graphicsatlas.org/>>.

HERITAGE STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The Maple Ridge Community Heritage Commission (CHC) held a public open house on Thursday, June 13th, to present the highlights of the first draft of the Maple Ridge Heritage Plan. Those drafts are available at the link below. The CHC seeks further public input into the preparation of the Heritage Plan draft through a second online questionnaire. We encourage you to provide your input in the following link: <<http://www.mapleridge.ca/EN/main/municipal/728/chc.html>>

If you provide your email address, you will be kept informed of the progress of the Plan, public meetings and the final recommendations.

FAREWELL FROM MEGAN!



Thank you to all my co-workers and new friends at the Maple Ridge Museum and Community Archives for making the last four months such a special time.

I feel very blessed to have been able to work here, and can say that I had a great

time at my first real job after finishing university! I have learned a lot during my time at the Maple Ridge Museum and had the chance to work on a variety of projects: digitizing our historical research files, providing conservation treatment for photographs, paper and birch bark artifacts in the collection, and writing conservation notes for the newsletter.

This summer I am looking forward to working at the Ancient Gournia Archaeological Excavations on the island of Crete in Greece, where I will be helping out with conservation and cataloguing excavated materials, and co-curating an exhibit for the local archaeological museum.

All the best to those I have had the privilege of knowing here at the museum and if you ever need some advice on caring for your own special artifacts you can find my conservation notes on the Maple Ridge Museum Web site.

HISTORY GOES TO MARKET

Our first outing of two was a great success with lots of enthusiasm shown by the Farmer’s Market customers for our displays and for the four community associations who sent representatives to talk to visitors about the modern communities. Thanks to Alvina Tyler from Ruskin, Heather Lee from Webster’s Corners, Cyndy Johnson-McCormick for Port Hammond and the CHC, and Fred & Helmi Braches for Whonnock.

We will be doing part 2 of our year’s focus on neighbourhoods on September 14 with Albion, Yennadon, Port Haney, and the Ridge. Please mark that date on your calendars now as the September newsletter won’t arrive until later.



Dick Sutcliffe caught behind bars.



Alvina Tyler (Ruskin) and Heather Lee (Webster’s Corners) having a historic chat during a quiet phase.



Great interest in our displays by citizens of all ages.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FOCUS: WEBSTER'S CORNERS

James Murray Webster was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1833. He later moved to Glasgow, but he was very unhappy there so he ran away and joined a ship's company and set out to sea.

Webster eventually made his way to Orangeville, Ontario, where he met his wife-to-be Annie Worling. They married and started their large family there before coming to BC to homestead at what would become "Webster's Corners." We don't know what prompted this move. We do know that he took up a 160 acre homestead east of Marten's Road [256th] and south of the Dewdney Trunk Road (which was more properly referred to as a path at the time) all the way to the present 116th Ave.

James came alone to establish his homestead in 1882 and was joined by his wife and eight children two years later. The family and their belongings were brought from Haney to Webster's Corners by "stone boat," a large, heavy wooden sleigh dragged behind oxen. These stone boats could be dragged over holes and across soft spots that would have defeated a horse and wagon. What a ride that must have been! Many years later, Annie Webster's obituary refers to her early isolation and hardships – probably an understatement.

The family built their first house near the 256th/116th corner. A later, somewhat larger house was built at the corner of 256th and Dewdney Trunk after 1900 when Dewdney had become a true road. The first Webster's Corners Elementary School became part of that second house. The one-room 1896 school had been outgrown with the arrival of the Finnish families in 1905, so James bought the building from the community, dragged it across the street, and joined it to his home, where, for the first time, he had a proper post office.

On January 1, 1905, the first Finnish settlers had arrived in Webster's Corners to take over a single bolt operation that had been abandoned by a Chinese crew because of the dismal camp and



James Murray Webster posed proudly in front of his home and post office in about 1915. As James and Annie had three more children after arriving at the homestead, this was home to 13 people. Mr. Webster passed away in 1923 at the age of 91.

poor wages. It is hard to see this grim job as what "attracted" this Finnish group to Webster's Corners, but they were desperate.

They had just come from a logging and farming venture at Sointula on Malcolm Island off of the north coast of BC. Started by the charismatic socialist visionary Matti Kurikka, after a similar venture failed in Australia, Sointula was to be an ideal community based on the founding epic of the Finnish people – the Kalevala.

Overcome by bad weather, poor soil and other difficulties and debt, Kurikka resigned from the leadership at Sointula and assembled his few remaining followers on a leaky scow [as later described by Arvo Skytte] and set off for Vancouver. The group survived on land-clearing contracts until Kurikka heard of the opening at Webster's Corners.

As an ideal socialist community, its philosophy was based on the Marxist maxim of "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need."

As the community started to thrive, needs changed. Peoples' ideals shifted as they had families to look out for and the whole "socialist commune" idea started to chafe. After seven years of communal living, internal disputes led to the disbanding of the commune. One acre of the original farm was set aside for a communal hall



The original Sampola Farm commune in 1910, showing L to R, the house that was later owned by the Bell family; the swing with two adults and two children; a combination mess hall and sauna (behind the slope of land); a cottage. The woman holding her baby daughter Sylvia is Mrs. Mini Teppo. The other woman is her sister Mrs. Hilja Toikka. Note the Sunday attire - white shirts for the men and light clothing for the women.

– the Sampo Hall –, which was built in 1915. The remaining 158 acres was subdivided among the members and the “Sammon Takojat” dissolved.

Rather than discouraging the Finnish community, the dissolution of the commune restored everyone’s spirits and they actually got along better by living separately. More Finns arrived – particularly in the 1920s and ’30s until they formed a majority in the area. Over time, there has been intermarriage and some families have moved away but there is still a substantial Finnish presence in Webster’s Corners.

It should be noted that the final “S” on Webster’s Corners is significant. In those days, public roads were simple tracks leading off into the wilder-

ness. Such a road might include a “dogleg” or 90 degree corner where the road followed homestead boundary lines. That sort of feature would usually earn the right of the nearest resident to name his own “corner.” However, in the case of Webster’s Corners, there was an actual intersection with four corners, which was unusual, and apparently a source of pride to Mr. Webster. Marten’s road (256th Street) was an early plank road developed to serve a couple of small mills in the area and for Mr. Origen Marten and his old horse Bill to get to their ginseng farm north of Kanaka Creek. The crossing of Marten’s Road and the Dewdney Trunk wasn’t much by modern standards but it was a real intersection, nonetheless.

vp

This issue of the newsletter was prepared by Fred Braches with contributions from Megan O’Connor, Val Patenaude and Allison White.

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

