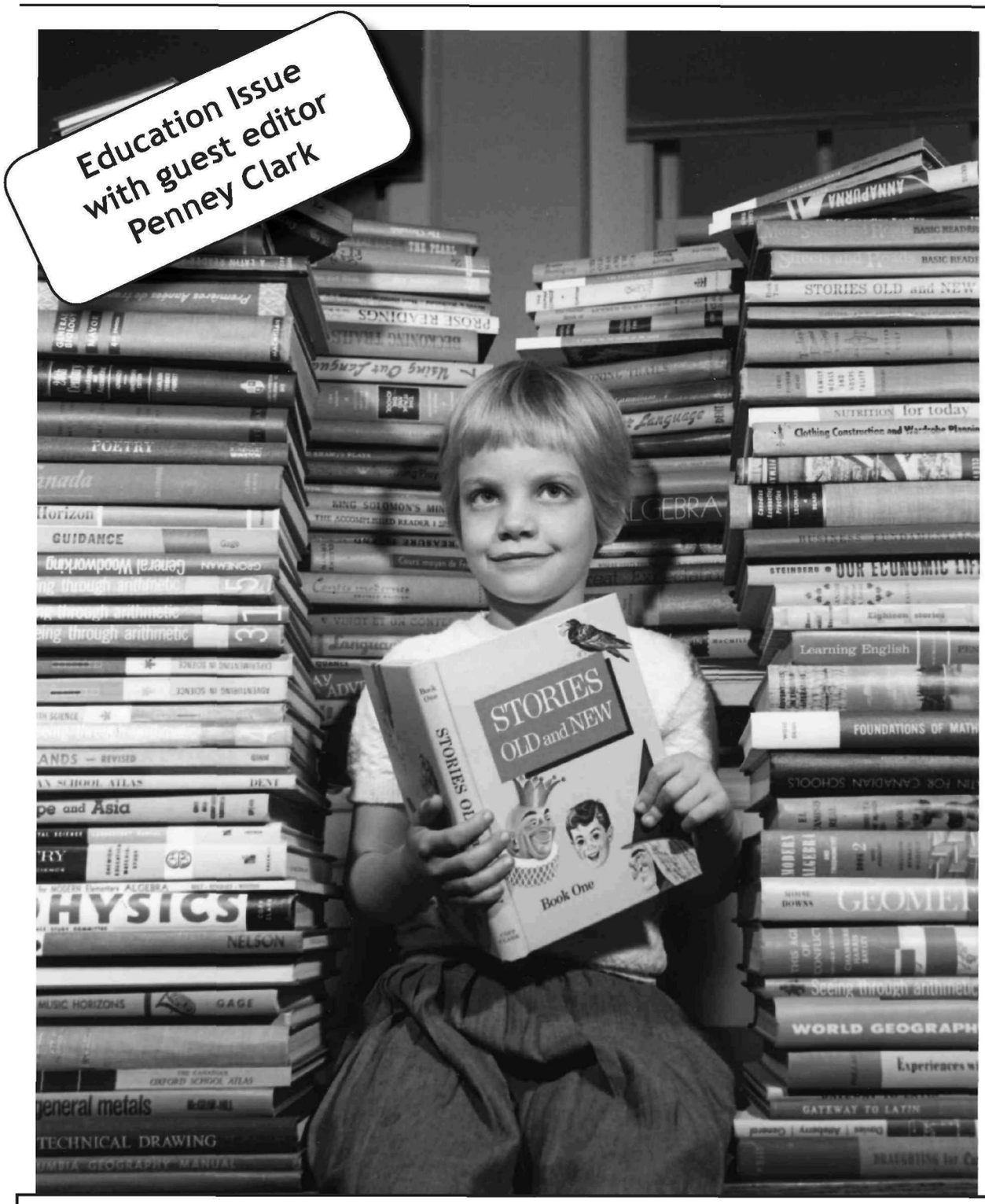
British Columbia HISTORY

Journal of the British Columbia Historical Federation | Spring 2011 | Vol. 44 No. 1 | $7.00



This Issue: May Day | Art Learning | College without Walls| and more

British Columbia **HISTORY**

British Columbia History is published four times per year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by the British Columbia Historical Federation.
ISSN: print 1710-7881 online 1710-792X

Subscriptions: $18.00 per year
USA: $30.00 (US Funds)
International: $42.00 (US Funds)

British Columbia History welcomes stories, studies, and news items dealing with any aspect of the history of British Columbia, and British Columbians.

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Submission guidelines are available at:
bchistory.ca/journal/index.html

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This publication is indexed in the Canadian Magazine Index, published by Micromedia.

ISSN: 1710-7881

Production Mail Registration Number 40025793
Publications Mail Registration No. 09835

We acknowlege the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Canada

British Columbia Historical Federation
A charitable society under the Income Tax Act Organized 31 October 1922

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The Honourable Steven L. Point, OBC
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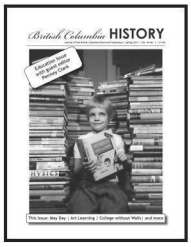
Some yearbook images by Van Tech students were more personal and even humourous as shown by student artist Bob Banks' art of the prospector [1940, multicolour linoblock print]. Read more about art education at Kitsilano and Van Tech on page 42.

IMAGE BY PERMISSION OF BOB BANKS.



Cover Image: Lori Kendall at Henry Hudson School. Photo taken during Education Week, March 8, 1966.

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W. Kaye Lamb, 1937

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Penney Clark is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. She is Director of The History Education Network, a national network intended to promote dialogue among the various constituencies involved in history education; Associate Director of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, UBC, and a board member of the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Project. A former elementary school teacher, she currently teaches graduate courses in the politics, economics, and history of curriculum.

Dr. Clark's history of education articles have appeared in the Journal of Canadian Studies, Canadian Journal of Education, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada, Historical Studies in Education, *and* History of Education *(UK). She contributed pieces on the history of textbook publishing to the* History of the Book in Canada *(University of Toronto Press, 2005, 2007) project. She is co-author of three Canadian history textbooks used at the junior high school level. Her most recent publication is the edited book,* New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada *(UBC Press, 2011).*

Coming in Spring 2012

A multicultural themed Issue of *British Columbia History* is in the works for 2012. Guest editor to be announced.

Manuscripts and images on the history of education in British Columbia are invited by December 1, 2011.

Editor's Note

Introduction

I am delighted to serve as guest editor for this theme issue on education. Since we have all been educated, it is fair to state that this is a theme that touches everyone. However, it may touch me more than most. I do not exaggerate when I say that a highlight of my childhood was the discovery of a well-used textbook, *Learning to Speak and Write*, in the loft of the old farmhouse nestled in the foothills of the Rockies, where my mother grew up. My favourite pastime was playing school with my friend Lavene.

The cover photo, taken in 1966, shows little Lori Kendall sitting in front of an array of textbooks representing every possible subject area at every grade level. It was a promotion for Education Week, at the height of the "back to basics" movement ushered in by the 1960 Chant Report. Ironically, education was on the brink of massive change. Discovery learning was on the horizon and students would soon be encouraged to explore their worlds as mini-scientists, historians, and mathematicians; using kits of scientific apparatus, investigating packages of historical documents, and manipulating cuisenaire rods. Today, no one would think to promote education as something confined between the covers of a textbook, or to be found solely on a computer screen, for that matter.

Topics in this issue range from elementary to postsecondary education, rural to urban settings, curriculum policy to classroom practice, curricular to extracurricular, and public to private. The first four articles look at curricular and extracurricular activities in elementary/middle school education, beginning with a delightful piece by Helen Raptis which enlightens us as to the trials and tribulations of rural schoolteachers who put on Christmas pageants during the Second World War. Her thesis is that Christmas pageants were multidimensional, with religion only one piece of their raison d'être. We then turn to another extracurricular activity, May Day celebrations. Gerald Thomson explores the history of May Day in New Westminster schools, revealing differing views on its relevance. Michael Gurney shows us the provincial heritage fair program through the experiences of one student who investigated the question: was James Francis Edwards the best Canadian fighter pilot in World War II? Mary Leah de Zwart examines the context of the production of *Meet Mr. Coyote*, a book of legends and art by Aboriginal students in a residential school.

Turning to secondary school education, Wendy Stephenson examines student artistic output (both curricular and extracurricular) at Kitsilano and Vancouver Technical schools, following the influential 1925 Putman-Weir Report. The student art from the two schools illuminates student social and vocational aspirations and differing school cultures. Ronald Greene uses coin tokens as the medium through which to consider the commercial course at St. Ann's Academy at the turn of the twentieth century. In her article, Ruth Sandwell describes three real-life unsolved murders, found on the website, *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History*. This teaching resource provides primary evidence which students can use to come to an informed decision as to who committed the murders.

At the level of postsecondary education, Eric Damer explores the establishment of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia and the influence of reformist philosophies on the new program. Anne Russell uses interviews to reveal the challenges and high points of the first years of what is now the University of the Fraser Valley.

Please have a look at the book reviews of publications that may be of interest to *British Columbia History* readers. Cabinets of Curiosities looks at the centenary celebrations of Vancouver's King Edward High School.

I gratefully acknowledge the support of Andrea Lister, Editor of *British Columbia History*; K. Jane Watt, Book Review editor; Sylvia Stopforth, Archives and Archivist editor; and Erica Williams and Cathy Magee proofers/copy editors.

Penney Clark, Guest Editor

Remembering the School Christmas Concert

by Helen Raptis

Helen Raptis is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria who has published widely in the history of education. She is currently researching teaching in British Columbia during World War II, for which she has interviewed two dozen former teachers.

Critics argue that Christmas festivities have no place in secular schools; but even in the early 20th century, Christmas concerts served more secular purposes than religious.

Throughout North America, public observance and celebration of Christmas have become increasingly controversial.[1] In addition, as schools strive to address diversity better, they find themselves mired in the debate over whether secular institutions should celebrate seemingly religious holidays.[2] In this paper I briefly present the experiences of five novice teachers as they negotiated Christmas festivities in rural schools of British Columbia during World War II. I argue that during this time, school-based Christmas activities were not necessarily religious undertakings, but rather took on multiple secular purposes.

In 1939, 19-year-old Ralph Burton left his family in Surrey and began teaching at Kettle Valley Elementary School in a farming community approximately 50 kilometres east of Osoyoos.[3] In the one-room school, he taught ten children in grades one to eight with three students completing grade nine by Correspondence.[4] As was the case for many new teachers, Ralph was slightly apprehensive at the prospect of the school inspector visiting. Beginning in 1887, the provincial government appointed school inspectors whose role it was to visit schools twice a year and to report on such matters as order, discipline, and methods of teaching.[5]

Inspectors in the field furnished the Department of Education with the information needed to "maintain its administrative expertise, and, thereby, its hegemony over the development of the school system."[6]

On 4 December, the Kettle Valley school board secretary marched into Ralph's classroom and announced that they had "to clean out the school… to prepare for the Christmas concert," which required moving all the desks out of the classroom for two weeks. Fearing that the school inspector might visit at any time Ralph protested, to which the secretary apparently replied "well, that's OK, you send [the inspector] over to see me. This is two weeks that the kids have their pre-Christmas holiday … to get all practiced up for their concert because this is a big deal for the area."

Given the community's expectations, Ralph capitulated. All the desks were removed from the schoolhouse and stored in a shed on the school grounds. A mobile stage equipped with a sliding curtain was moved out of the shed and into the classroom. The family that ran the community's telephone exchange transported their piano into the school and assisted Ralph and the children through accompaniment and singing at each day's rehearsal.

When Ralph borrowed a book of plays from the teacher down the road at Rock Creek school, he was unaware that they would both select the same play for their respective Christmas concerts. As a result, community members from a radius of 25-miles "saw these kids performing one week at the Rock Creek school and then the next week they came over and all crowded into the [Kettle Valley] school to go through the same play again!"

In October, the school board secretary had asked Ralph to assign "Dear Santa Claus" letters to the children so that gift orders could be placed through a mail-order catalogue. School board trustees also arranged for the presents to be wrapped and at the concert's conclusion, "Santa Claus" arrived bearing gifts for each child. According to Ralph, the children were thrilled by the festivities, particularly as they watched Santa struggle into the school through a window while holding a pair of skis as well as a sack of toys! People were still celebrating at midnight when Ralph left the schoolhouse. He was relieved that the concert was completed before the local school inspector had a chance to visit.

Not all teachers' experiences were as positive as Ralph's, however. In 1941, Marion Acedo (née Gunn) began her teaching career at Penny, roughly 100 kilometers southeast of Prince George.[7] Born and raised in New Westminster, Marion found it difficult to adjust

to life at Penny, which was more of a logging camp than a town.[8] She did not consider herself to be "an outdoorsy type person" and apparently "was afraid of everything." Furthermore, she disliked having to "shoo" stray cows off the pathway as she made her way to and from school.

Marion's relationship with the community had begun to sour late in October after she traced a large witch against a moon onto the blackboard and carefully coloured it in preparation for Halloween. Since there were no churches in Penny at the time, Catholic, Anglican, and United congregations would meet on alternating weeks in the schoolhouse.[9] Parishioners from one of the denominations found the witch image offensive and covered it with a large piece of brown wrapping paper.

Tension peaked in December when the school trustees expressed their disappointment with how Marion had handled the Christmas concert. "The school was the centre of the community", she recalled.[10]

Traditionally, people would collect a small amount of money for the teacher to purchase Christmas presents for all of Penny's children – not just the 32 enrolled in school! Although Marion could solicit Christmas wish lists from the children in her class, she had no idea what to buy for the others. When she made do with mitts and scarves for the younger children, families protested. In light of this situation, Marion and her employer agreed it was best for her to resign. However, all was not lost. After leaving Penny, Marion successfully taught in Surrey, New Westminster, Cumberland, and later Berkeley, California where she took up permanent residence.[11]

Maneuvering through the mysteries of remote communities presented challenges for many teachers. In 1942, Marjorie King (née Thatcher) arrived at Cassidy, south of Nanaimo to begin teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.[12] Originally established as a coal-mining community, by the time Marjorie arrived the livelihood of most Cassidy residents was farming.[13] Having grown up a few miles north of Cassidy in South Wellington, Marjorie felt confident in her interactions with the children and the community. Thus, when one of the local school trustees offered several times to lend a hand with the Christmas concert, Marjorie politely declined, thinking it was her job to organize it. She planned a program and assigned one of the children to act as master of ceremonies. On the day of the concert, just before the children were to begin performing, Marjorie discovered the tight interconnectedness of schools and communities. The trustee she had inadvertently snubbed came forward and announced that "traditions change" so he would no longer be the master of ceremonies, a role he had filled for many years prior to Marjorie's arrival! Though delivered in a jovial manner, the barb left Marjorie somewhat embarrassed.

Photo courtesy of Jack Boudreau

Penny School. Painted by Arvila Linley, teacher from 1956-68.

Some teachers had more latitude than others in how they managed their school's affairs. One such teacher was Lucy Schorn (née Guidi), a native of Kelowna, who began her teaching career in 1940 at Rock Mountain School near Bridesville.[14] From 1942 to 1944 she taught elementary school at Oliver, a farming and fruit-growing community that developed in the early 1920s when the government implemented large-scale irrigation to convert the area into farmland for returning World War I veterans.[15]

Lucy taught most basic subjects to an intact grade six class in the mornings and art and music to grades three to six in the afternoons.

By the mid-1920s, various elements of progressive education had begun to characterize British Columbia's educational landscape.[16] Although the range of activities that flew

under the progressive banner was wide, one component that was heavily promoted by instructors at the provincial normal schools was the "correlation" or combination of subject matter into "real world" projects that would be personally meaningful to students.[17] Lucy Schorn's memoirs indicate that she made efforts to "correlate" subjects, particular the arts. She believed that the annual Christmas concert was an ideal opportunity to engage learners in meaningful projects and to showcase "how worthwhile [art and music] were." Songs were an integral part of the dramatization and students' artwork constituted the backdrop. In her memoirs, she noted that "the traditional Christmas Concert was a great event and students enjoyed preparing for it;" they "showed great pride in their efforts." Lucy further commented that "art and music were 'correlated' in making the [1943 Oliver] concert unique."

Likewise, Celia Dowding (née Stickney) enjoyed a good deal of autonomy at Tate Creek[18] in the remote Peace River region. She took up her post in 1944 and taught the children of Sudeten German refugees who had fled from Hitler's army as it advanced through western Czechoslavakia in 1939.[19] Although most of the anti-Nazi refugees were tradespeople or professionals, they turned their hands to farming when they arrived in the Peace.[20]

According to Celia, the most memorable event of her year at the settlement was the Christmas concert. She chose to have the students perform Hansel and Gretel since their families would know and understand it even if they didn't speak English well. Celia gave each child a part in the play, a song, or a recitation. By mail, she ordered some records to help students to acquire the tunes and built scenery with the janitor's assistance. One weekend, Celia took "Hansel and Gretel home to her family" in Beaverlodge Alberta "to practice with a neighbour who gave piano lessons." This initiative seems bold by today's standards but illustrates the fluidity of the teacher-student relationship in rural communities in the first half of the twentieth century. Celia and her students walked roughly four miles through the bush to flag down a train that would take them over the border into Alberta. They returned late Sunday with an RCMP officer who was traveling up to Dawson Creek, just north of Tate Creek.

That Celia's mother and sisters attended the concert attests to its importance to the community. "At the end of the concert, people just clapped and clapped and clapped until it was just embarrassing – you know – the enthusiasm just brought the roof down. They were just so pleased to see their children so happy and doing so well." The school concert was indeed a welcome change to the hostilities

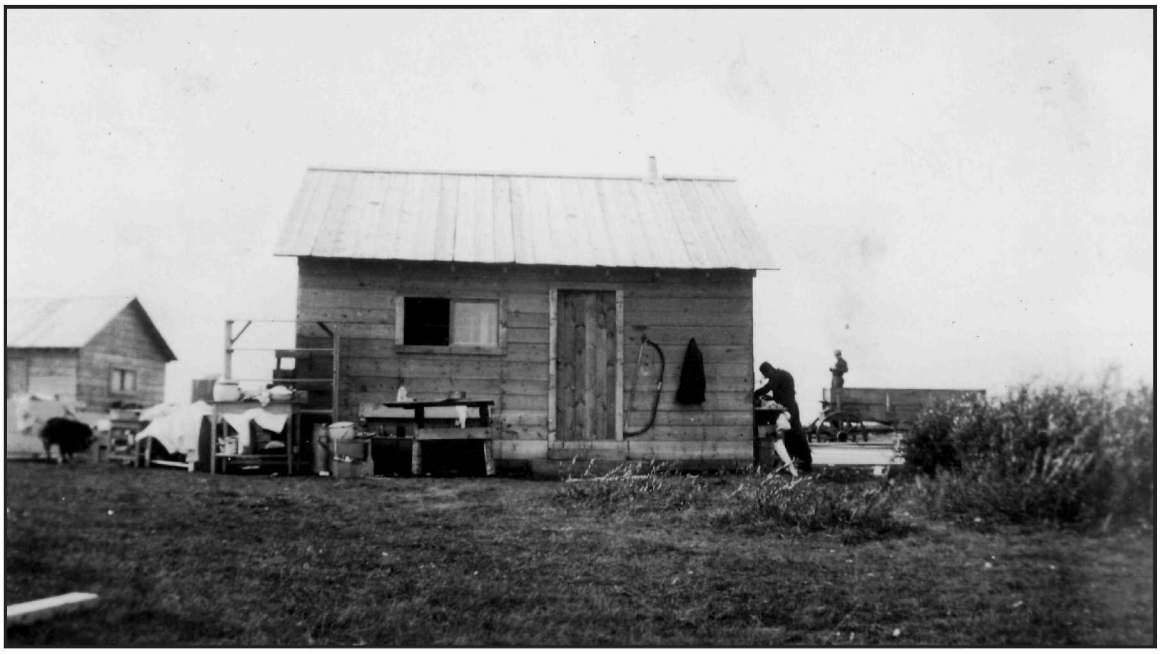


Photo courtesy of Amy Dauphinée

House on Sudeten refugee settlement at Tate Creek, 1939.

Photo courtesy of Amy Dauphinée

Children of Tate Creek School soon after their arrival in 1939

the refugees had experienced before fleeing Czechoslovakia.

These vignettes of five teachers' experiences with Christmas celebrations in some of the province's rural schools during World War II shed an interesting light on a contemporary conflict. Today, critics argue that Christmas festivities rooted in Christianity should have no place in secular schools. Yet, as the experiences of Ralph, Marion, Marjorie, Lucy, and Celia illustrate, even in the early part of the twentieth century, Christmas activities were not merely religious affairs. Instead they served multiple, secular purposes. In particular, they provided a space for parents and children to interact socially in a group setting and cemented the relationship between school and community. In addition, the Christmas concert served as a kind of "accountability" mechanism through which teachers "showcased" their pedagogy as well as their students' skills to the communities' families. This is particularly evident in Lucy's recollections of arts integration at Oliver Elementary School.

Another important function of the Christmas concert was that it enabled community members to assess their teacher's organizational skills. Misunderstandings were inevitable and on the rare occasion it caused teacher and community to part ways — as was the case with Marion. And in communities with non-English-speaking or refugee populations, like Tate Creek, the Christmas concert served as a living illustration of new Canadians' facility with the English language. In the five rural situations examined here, the Christmas concert was not a religious affair. In the polarized terrain of contemporary school politics, the stories of these five teachers remind us that social phenomena are seldom straightforward. Rather, the interaction of children and teachers in rural communities is better characterized as multifaceted and complex.[21] ●

Endnotes

I wish to thank Ralph Burton, Marion Acedo, Celia Dowding, Marjorie Thatcher and Lucy Schorn's granddaughter, Carmel Ecker, for their support and generosity.

1. See "Trimming Christmas from trees stirs debate," *USA Today*, 1 December 2005, www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-12-01-trimming-debate_x.htm (accessed 28 October 2010) and "Premier appeals for tolerance in courthouse Christmas tree debate," *CBC News*, 21 December 2006, www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2006/12/21/xmas-tree.html (accessed 28 October 2010).

2. See "Ottawa cuts song from concert after Christmas controversy," CBC News, 20 December 2007, www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/2007/12/20/ot-christmas-071220.html (accessed 29 October 2010) and Albert J. Menendez, "Christmas in the schools: Can conflicts be avoided?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 76, 3 (November 1994): 239-42; "Christmas holidays in, winter vacation out," *Times Colonist*, 25 November 2010, C3.

3. Kettle Valley School opened in 1910, at which time it was called Rock Creek Lower. Built by Mr. Pawsey, a carpenter who lived in the community, it still stands beside the currently-used school building built in 1947-48. Alice Glanville, Schools of the Boundary: 1891-1991 (Merritt, BC: Sonotek Publishing Ltd., 1991), 106-107. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Ralph comes from interviews undertaken 25 and 28 February 2008.

4. BC Archives, GR-0122, BC Department of Education, School Inspectors Reports, 1939-40, Reel B0678. The BC Department of Education in Victoria had established the Provincial Correspondence School (essentially education "by mail") in 1919. See Patrick A. Dunae, *The School Record* (Victoria, BC: British Columbia Archives, 1992), 73; Belle C. Gibson, *Teacher-Builder: The Life and Work of J. W. Gibson* (Victoria: Privately printed, 1961), 101 - 109.

5. George Hindle, *The Educational System of British Columbia* (Trail, BC: Trail Printing and Publishing Co., 1918), 10.

6. Thomas Fleming, "'Our Boys in the Field': School Inspectors, Superintendents, and the Changing Character of School Leadership in British Columbia," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, David C. Jones (Calgary, AB: Detselig, 1986), 289.

7. Unless otherwise noted, information comes from an interview with Marion Acedo 29 February 2008.

8. As late as 2000, Penny still had no road access. Daniel Francis, ed., *Encyclopedia of British Columbia* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2000), 537.

9. The Penny Reunion Committee, *Penny For Your Thoughts: A History of Penny, British Columbia* (Prince George, BC: Papyrus Printing, 1995), 7.

10. Penny residents did not erect a community hall until mid-December, 1941. The Penny Reunion Committee, *Penny For Your Thoughts: A History of Penny, British Columbia* (Prince George, BC: Papyrus Printing, 1995), 9.

11. Inspector Roy Shields found Marion's work at Lord Kelvin School in New Westminster to be very satisfactory. Marion apparently created a cheerful atmosphere, and gave "much thought to the planning and preparation of daily work". BC Archives, GR-0122, BC Department of Education, School Inspectors Reports, 1940-41, Reel B06681.

12. BC Archives, GR-0122, BC Department of Education, School Inspectors Reports, 1941-42, Reel B06684. Unless otherwise indicated, information about Marjorie is taken from an interview conducted 20 October 2010.

13. In 1918 the Granby Consolidated Mining, Smelting and Power Company established the town of roughly 50 homes for its married employees and a dormitory which housed about 76 single men. Coal-mining operations ceased in 1932 due to dangerous conditions, diminishing resources and the world-wide economic depression. T.W. Paterson, *Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Vancouver Island*, (Langley, BC: Sunfire Publications, 1989), 27.

14. BC Archives, GR-0122, BC Department of Education, School Inspectors Reports, 1940-41, Reel B06681. Unless otherwise indicated, information about Lucy comes from her personal memoirs edited and generously provided to me by her granddaughter Carmel Ecker.

15. Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 241.

16. John H. Putman and George Weir, *Survey of the School System* (Victoria, BC: King's Printer, 1925), 82.

17. See George Tom Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada, 1986), 189-90.

18. The Tate Creek community changed its name to Tomslake in 1948 when it applied for a post office and learned that another community was already named Tate Creek. See Tomslake, BC, Property of discoverthepeacecountry.corp, http://www.discoverthepeacecountry.com/htmlpages/tomslakebc.html (accessed 24 January 2008).

19. Unless noted, information about Celia is derived from two interviews held 11 January 2008 and 11 February 2008. Teachers who preceded Celia included: Eveline Meade, Amy Brown, Lydia Hinke, Millicent Houldcroft, Ruth Sibley.

20. The land at Tate Creek was part of an abandoned ranch known as Gundy Farm. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company had acquired it from the Canadian government as part of a deal to construct the first transnational rail line. Although attempts had been made to farm the land, most residents had abandoned it because it was swampy. See Walter Schoen, *The Tupper Boys: A History of the Sudeten Settlement at Tomslake, BC* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004); J.F. Wagner, "British Columbia's Anti-Nazi Germans: the Tupper Creek Refugees," *BC Studies*, 39 (Autumn 1978) and W. Wanka, "The Sudeten Story" in Lure of the South Peace, ed. L. York (Dawson Creek: Peace River Block News, 1981.

21. See Ruth Sandwell, ed. *Beyond the City limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1999), 6.

140 Years of May Day in New Westminster, 1870-2010

by Gerald Thomson

The May Day fete in New Westminster with its deep historical roots in the community remains both a source of pride and controversy among local teachers and parents.

Dr. Gerald Thomson is a Special Education teacher in School District #36, Surrey. He has taught several courses on the history of education in British Columbia at the University of British Columbia and a course on the history of British Columbia at Kwantlen University. He is a member of the BC Historical Federation and is looking forward to doing more work with the organization when he retires from teaching.

"Who Will Say An Untoward Word"[1]

On the 140th year of the May Day festivities in New Westminster the idea of elementary school children dancing around may poles and a little girl being crowned May Queen in the late spring of each year is facing some serious challenges. The idea of a school holiday to celebrate a Victorian British spring fete with origins dating back to tudor England and roots in the Roman festival of Floralia seems quite absurd in the 21st century.[2] Chair of the New Westminster Parents Advisory Committee Margot Barton states, "I'm not a fan of it" because it takes up "an awful lot of time out of the school year." Local historian Archie Miller believes it is not just a quaint tradition but a "community event" due to the fact the "kids who participate in May Day - either as dancers or in the May Queen suite - enjoy the experience." Member of the legislature for New Westminster, Dawn Black, notes that it is a likeable tradition updated to include boys, but she does acknowledge that her sister in England is surprised it is still celebrated as many in Britain have dropped the tradition.[3] With scarce funds, objections to school resources being devoted to May Day continue to be voiced: "Money raised by school parent advisory councils would be better spent on educational materials than used to help fund May Day."[4]

As a school ritual for children to celebrate Spring with may pole dancing and crowning a May Queen, New Westminster's May Day is the oldest, continuous celebration of its kind in the Commonwealth of former British colonies. Once again May Day was held on May 26, 2010 on the oval green in Queen's Park to the delight of school children and to the relief of elementary school teachers who again put in months of preparation.[5] This article will examine the historical involvement of New Westminster schools in May Day and the historical forces that are embedded in the May Day rituals which the school children perform.

The First May Days

The first May Day in New Westminster was not a school-based activity but rather a social outing organized by disbanded British soldiers longing for the rituals of cultural life from their mother country, England. The Royal Engineers had been sent to British Columbia by Queen Victoria in 1859 to secure her new colony and eventually established its capital in New Westminster, while also building the Cariboo Wagon Road.

The first May Day on Wednesday May 4th, 1870 was organized by the remnants of the Royal Engineers now called "Hyack" firemen, under Colonel J.T. Scott.[6] The decommissioned Royal Engineers divided themselves between a fire brigade (1861) called "Hyacks," a Chinook pidgin word for "quick," and the Westminster Militia (1863).[7] The Hyack's Anvil Battery began saluting Queen Victoria on her birthday by exploding one anvil inverted on another with gunpowder sandwiched in between; a tradition that continues to the present day. Therefore, it was entirely appropriate that they brought the first May Queen to the Sapperton Cricket field to be crowned on their "Fire King" wagon. The centerpiece of the ritual was the may pole decorated by twisted red currant vines and a crown of flowers bearing the cross of St. George. The ceremonial scene in the green glade of a forest had "an appearance of the olden time." The May Queen, Miss Helen McCall, and her Royal Suite were young ladies in their teens. The Queen was escorted by the "oldest bachelor present" while a quadrille was danced with the Maids of Honour. While children danced around the may pole many "gay masquers" in animal garb were "promenading through the midst of the throng" to the "discoursing sweet music."[8] The first May Day was a true

community event in what was a frontier society that wished to celebrate its Englishness. In the crowd with his mother was a baby boy, John Joseph Johnston, who would attend every May Day until his death in 1966.[9]

The May Day celebrations of the late 1880's and early 1900's were more civic fetes than children's holidays. School involvement was occurring but in the local press the efforts of school teachers were largely unmentioned. The force behind May Day celebrations was Hyack Colonel J. T. Scott who was involved in fete organization until his death in 1908.[10] The 1879 May Day was a typically grand civic occasion with a splendid evening ball held at Government House.[11] In 1881 the May Queen had an honour guard of Hyacks and militia men who "formed a very pretty coup d'oeil."[12] However, events in 1883 caused the location of May Day to change from the grounds of Government House to various locales in the area at considerable traveling distance from the populace, causing the fete to lose "the spirit and happy abandon of former days"[13] by 1887.

What set May Day on its path as a major civic event and school holiday was the move of the fete to the Queen's Park oval green in 1890. Also the organization of the May Day Committee under hardware/farm machine businessman T. J. Trapp united local businessmen, Hyack firemen, the militia, civic leaders and school officials into a planning body for an elaborate celebration. The next May Day in 1891 drew people from Vancouver to a parade along Columbia Street that made its way to Queen's Park for an elaborate May Queen crowning ceremony followed by may pole dances, games, races and the distribution of treats to the children. The adult May Day Ball was held in the new Exhibition Hall in Queen's Park built for the Fall Agricultural fair.[14] In 1895, a great crowd of over 1,000 children and adults attended May Day. They came from Vancouver and Burnaby on the new tramway, as well as neighbouring Coquitlam, Surrey, Ladner and Langley.[15] The fete was now a formal school holiday in New Westminster and other neighbouring localities. The fete was also becoming increasingly patriotic in that it responded to such events as the Boer War and other imperial conflicts with overt militia displays. Such sights as the

A souvenir postcard of the 1928 May Day in New Westminster at Queen's Park Stadium. Notice the generous use of hand held Union Jack flags used by the children in the display which would be repeated in the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939.

Courtesy of Mrs. Eileen Thomson

Boys Brigade marching in khaki uniforms with "their soldierly appearance" became more commonplace. Military rituals with soldiers marching, military bands playing and colonels displaying their war medals were the centre of attention in the fete with the May Queen as just a figurehead.[16] By 1910, the fete was clearly losing its original focus as the May Day Committee now under Colonel J. J. Cambridge spoke of reviving "the real old fashion May pole dances." They decided there was a need to train "a number of little girls" in ribbon dances.[17] It was at this point the schools of the city and their teachers became a guiding force behind the culture of May Day in New Westminster.

May Day in the Schools and English Folk Revivalism

School involvement in May Day took the form of voting for the May Queen and her Royal Suite along with practicing and performing the elaborate may pole dances. It is not clear when the schools began to have children vote for May Queen as opposed to the Hyack-directed fete when daughters of prominent citizens were selected for the honour. School balloting was in place after the fete was moved to the Queen's Park oval green, as children would parade into the ceremony under individual school banners. Girls for May Queen could be no more than thirteen years old and by 1917 the ballots were colour coded by city schools. Ballots had to have "the name of the girl voted for," the name of the voter and the voter's teacher.[18] A 1930's description of the voting process relates that each school voted for its most "popular girl" who then became candidates for Queen. "The names of the six winners will be placed in a hat and the May Queen will be drawn." The next two girls were the Queen's Maids of Honour and the rest were "given assisting parts in the ceremonies." The chairman of the May Day Committee drew the names and the ballots were printed by *The British Columbian* newspaper.[19] This system survived intact, although the draw was done by civic/Hyack officials until the 1990's, when boys were included as Royal Knights.[20] Voting by schools helped to generate excitement about the fete among schoolchildren but the main preparation was really the months of practice during school time for the may pole dancing.

The first attempt to organize may pole dancing among schoolchildren was in 1895 under a Professor Francis, as a response to the dancing of 1894, which was described as a "general scramble."[21] The fears of 1910 by the May Day Committee about the need to revive may pole dances were justified as only "twenty maidens" participated in the dancing.[22] In 1913 a Dance Committee was formed by Mr. Hugh Savage of *The Columbian* newspaper and Miss Lena Cotsworth, later the first principal of York House Girls School. With support from School Inspector Margaret Strong, they organized the dancing according to the manuals of the English Folk Song Society.[23] However, despite an impressive dance display in 1913 and 1914, of which a film was made, the Dance Committee floundered in 1915.[24] School Inspector, Strong, asked a local music teacher, Miss Beatrice Cave-Brown-Cave, to work with the schools to mount the may pole dancing. What Cave-Brown-Cave brought to the dances would become fixed even up to the present day.

Beatrice Cave-Brown-Cave came to New Westminster from Bottle, England in 1913 with her mother to join her father and older sister who had come out in 1911. She was a trained music teacher who had attended Maria Grey College in London. In 1910, she went to a folk dance performance by the pupils of Cecil Sharp in Liverpool.[25] This caused her to become a Sharp disciple and in 1911 she became a certified dance instructor of the English Folk Song Society. As late as 1929 Cave-Brown-Cave was still training in London under Sharp while on a brief holiday in England.[26] Sharp's controversial resurrection of English folk culture through dance and music preservation was linked to schools and the promotion of a pan British nationalism. Building upon the English revivalism of John Ruskin, the Victorian art critic and social reformer, Sharp created a cultural program of English folklore for the age of British imperialism.[27] Cave-Brown-Cave observed the practices for the 1914 May Day dancing at the request of School Inspector Strong at the local YMCA; when she asked "the leader" what type of dancing it was he replied, "Canadian." He added you simply "make them up as you do them" in reference to the dance

steps. In 1915, Cave-Brown-Cave took charge, and using the Cecil Sharp dance manuals, she visited schools, instructing teachers and children in dance routines. She trained 144 school children in three dances and one processional march. Cave-Brown-Cave recalls: "I had to insist on keeping to the traditional forms" and "I dictated the costumes."[28] The result was a May Day that the local press called the "Greatest Ever Held in Royal City" and the folk dances especially "attracted a great deal of favourable comments." Full credit was given to Cave-Brown-Cave and the "lady teachers of the city schools." May Day Committee head Mr. C.A. Welsh said that in twenty-five years "this is certainly the largest crowd in my experience." A silver cup for the best performance was given to F.W. Howay school at the May Day Ball.[29] A standard had been set and Cave-Brown-Cave would still be carefully attending to how children conducted their folk dancing at May Day in the late 1980's as an honoured guest.[30]

However, in 1916 it all seemed to fall apart. The dancing was replaced by a patriotic display using local military battalions. The local press referred to the May Day fete of 1916 as full of "military pomp and circumstance."[31] In 1917, the local chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire or I.O.D.E. mounted a return of dancing and wanted Cave-Brown-Cave to again teach the dance routines in the schools.[32] With the support of the I.O.D.E. and a city teacher, Miss Gray, representing the Folk Dance Committee, Cave-Brown-Cave met with the May Day Committee. Cave-Brown-Cave asked for a seventy-five dollar fee for dance instruction services which "would not come to as much as chinamen's wages" for the task.[33] Mr. Wade of the May Day Committee objected to the demand as did other male members, while the teachers supported Cave-Brown-Cave.[34] The 1917 May Day had "scores of little girls, dressed daintily in white, and little boys went through the evolutions upon the green in a manner that won commendation."[35] It was a scene of "charm and unequaled beauty" and "surpassed former festivities."[36] It was due to the efforts of Cave-Brown-Cave that dancing by school children would forever be a part of May Day and city school teachers would have to train their students in the folk rituals of Cecil Sharp.

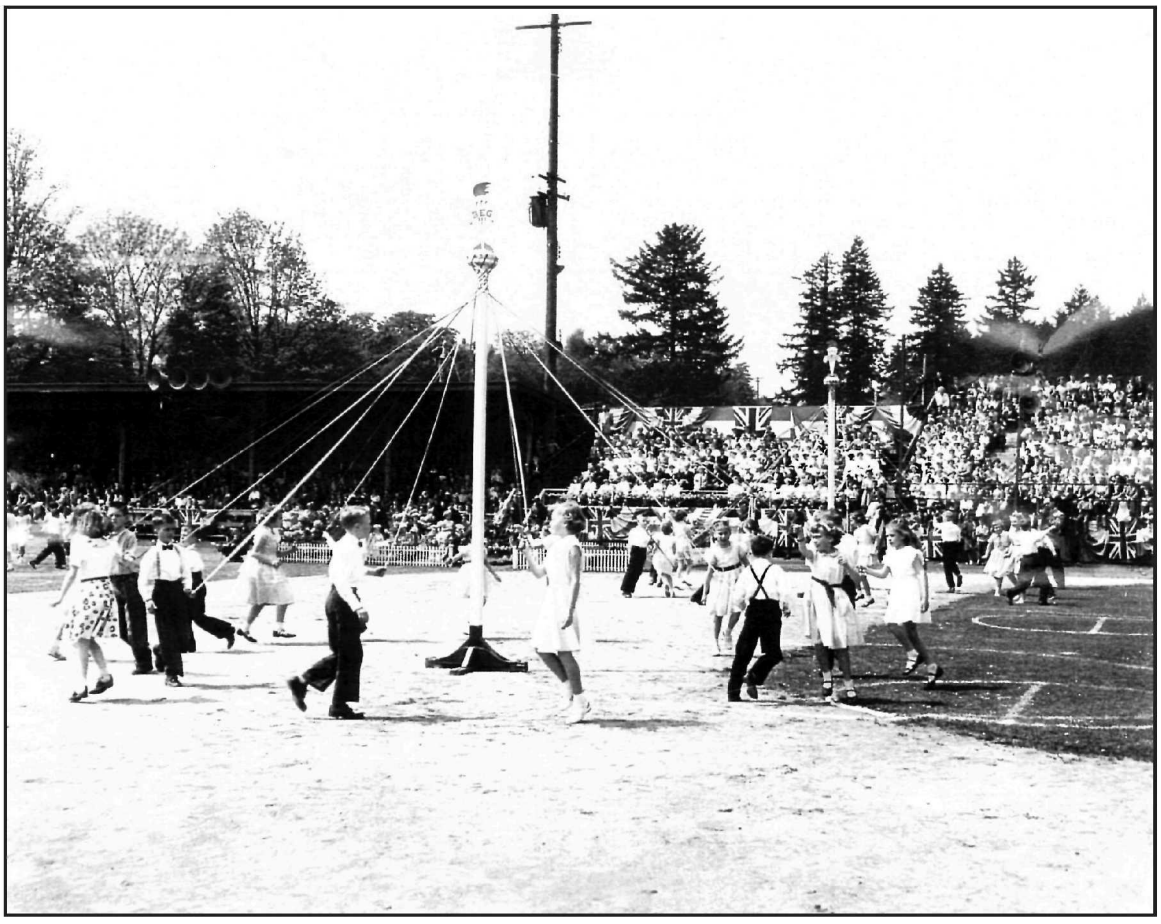
The Public School Holiday, 1920 to 1967

In 1922, a Teacher's Committee took charge of May Day dancing and it was decided that may pole as well as four sets of folk dances would be used.[37] Dancing became very competitive between schools as they vied for a silver dancing cup that Cave-Brown-Cave had instituted in 1915. In 1922, teachers were lauded by the local press as the children's dance performance "denoted some fine training on the part of the school teachers."[38] Individual teachers, such as Miss Turnbull at Lord Lister Elementary who trained 60 folk dancers and 16 may pole dancers, began to be recognized for their efforts.[39] Teachers were becoming the core of the organizers for May Day dancing and the parade of schools into the oval green. The May Day Committee organized the parade along Columbia Street to Queen's Park, the May Queen crowning ceremony, treats distribution and games for the children after the ceremony, as well as hosting the evening May Day Ball. It was a unique New Westminster holiday held on the third Friday in May that remained unchanged from the 1920's until the 1960's.

Evelyn Benson recalls that "every kid in the town from grades two through nine was involved in rehearsals" for folk dancing, gymnastic displays, bicycle drills, square dancing and may pole dancing.[40] At eight o'clock on Friday morning kids all over town strained to hear the cannon firing at Tipperary Park which would signal the start of each May Day. Only rain would cancel May Day until the next Friday. The 8:00 AM cannon firing continued through the 1970's and into the early 1980's. The May Day parade was held along Columbia Street in the morning and the route led directly to Queen's Park where the school children would then perform dances. After the May Queen was crowned the children were allowed to play at the fun fair as well as receive special treats. During the 1960's the parade was separated from the Friday May Day ceremonies for commercial reasons and was made into a Saturday morning civic event. The big evening May Day Ball was held at Queen's Park Arena

and children would dance until 10:30 PM while "grown-ups would make merry" until 1:00 AM.[41] The children's dancing required new clothes and shoes, which pleased local merchants along Columbia Street's shopping district. Evelyn Benson remembers shopping with her mother the Saturday before May Day and getting the dreaded Shirley Temple style "permanent" at Mrs. Bella Sells' Beauty Salon.[42] The May Day Ball always started with the Mayor leading the May Queen in the "Grand March" around the arena, followed by speeches and then the Royal Lancers would dance with the May Queen as well as her Royal Suite. Only after all this would the children's dance finally take place. The author remembers his first attempts at dancing were at the May Day Balls of the early 1960's. The Royal Lancers were prominent men from the community, mostly of British ancestry, who danced quadrille dances; they claimed to have been inspired by the May Day Ball dances of the Royal Engineers. The Lancers disbanded in the mid 1970's.[43]

The decline of May Day can be seen in the end of the May Day Ball and the commercialization of the fete into the Hyack Festival. The face of New Westminster was changing after the Second World War. Italians and later Sikhs moved into the Queensborough district on Lulu Island in sizable numbers, altering the school population. The first non-Anglo May Queen was elected in 1948, young Marcheta de Nevada whose father was from South America. The local press speculated she was "said to be distantly related to the Montezumas . . . south of the Rio Grande."[44] Ethnic minorities would increasingly play a role in May Day, but it was not this factor that altered the fete, but rather pressure from local merchants to commercialize the event. By the 1960's a purpose built May Day float was being sent to American festivals in the Pacific Northwest region and the May Queen made a special trip to Disneyland.[45] In 1965, local merchants and Jaycees wanted to change May Day to a Saturday Spring Fair but "old timers" on the May Day Committee fought back.[46] In 1966, J.J. Johnston died on May 14 just as May Day ceremonies were starting at Queen's Park.[47] In a real sense the May Day fete died with him; a week long May Festival was held and the May Day Ball became a teen dance. Afterward the local press panned the event.[48] In 1968, it was worse, with a Saturday May Day held to accommodate a visit by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, a failed Tommy Hunter concert and automobile show.[49] However, in 1971, a visit by Queen Elizabeth to May Day revived all the old traditions, even the flying of Union



COURTESY OF MRS. DOREEN WILSON

May pole dancing at the 1954 May Day in Queen's Park Stadium. Notice the presence of the Union Jack flags and the insignia "B.G.E." on top of each may pole. This is a reference to the British Empire Games of 1954 held in Vancouver, where Dr. Roger Bannister would run the four minute mile.

Further Information

The Royal Engineers, as led by Colonel Richard Clement Moody, were a group of British gentlemen who attempted to craft an Anglo-based society in the wilderness. Their wooden houses in the city's Sapperton district had Gothic style roofs and their Anglican churches, Holy Trinity and St. Mary's the Virgin, were also Gothic in design. Moody's own residence resembled an English cottage and was positioned within a small park overlooking the Fraser River. Moody's men were dressed in the smart uniforms of gentlemen, wearing red shirts, black pants and black caps. Moody was a romantic devotee of John Ruskin's natural aestheticism, as well as his Gothic Revival of English culture. According to historian, Cole Harris, Moody's view of wilderness and how to reshape it can be linked to his fondness for Ruskin.[1] John Ruskin had also been an influential figure in reviving the May Day ceremony for school children at Whitelands College, Chelsea, a teacher training institution for women, in 1881. He supposedly regarded May Day as one of the "simple and beautiful customs" of England. The principal of Whitelands College, Reverend Faunthorpe, in a speech to his graduates, relayed that "Mr. Ruskin will live in the hearts and homes of England, for these young teachers are sure to keep May-day in their future schools."[2] In the Victorian revival of May Day the ancient ritual of honouring an English spring would be specifically spread by female teachers.

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Jack bunting.[50] In 1972, a civic strike cancelled May Day; so much for tradition.[51] As the 1970's progressed the May Day Committee was replaced by the Hyack Committee and the new Hyack Festival began to resemble other fairs/parades in Washington and Oregon states.[52] In a real sense, teachers and school children, through their dancing, held to fete tradition. The link to the past continued through children and dancing under the ever watchful eyes of Beatrice Cave-Brown-Cave, honoured guest at May Day in 1980 and as late as 1986. She would die in 1987 at age 104 and be remembered as "the lovely lady who introduced the authentic May Day folk dances to New Westminster."[53]

Tension and Tradition

Following the failed attempt to recast May Day as a commercial fair in the mid to late 1960's, the fete eased back into its role as a unique school and local holiday. The mid May appearance of the carnival rides at Queen's Park signals to all the city's school children that their dance training in school gyms does have a pleasant benefit. Forces in the community still want May Day to remain a traditional fete. Mayor Wayne Wright has declared, "May Day is what defines New Westminster as a very special community where we all live", and long time resident, Dolly Gunderson, agrees as she has attended many May Days since 1949.[54] Dorothy Page (nee Hume), even had her role as a May Queen in 1933 featured in her death notice and the fact she had greeted King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on their 1939 visit to the city was a mark of historical distinction.[55] However, the fete remains contentious as was noted at the beginning of this article. In tough economic times school funds and school time devoted to such traditions become a source of controversy especially to those with no historical memory of the fete. It remains to be seen if New Westminster's enduring school ritual can remain active into the mid 21st century. •

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History Comes Alive for a Student with Dreams of Flight

by Michael Gurney

Michael Gurney works in the fields of corporate communications and marketing, and is an alumnus of UBC and the University of King's College, Halifax. He is a committed proponent of heritage education with a keen interest in the convergence of traditional storytelling and new media. Michael is currently the president of the BC Provincial Heritage Fairs Society.

When students gather at BC Heritage Fairs to celebrate history, they do more than show and tell: original research and cultural exchanges are vital parts of these exhibitions.

James Francis "Stocky" Edwards is a retired member of the Royal Canadian Air Force and is recognized as Canada's highest scoring fighter pilot in the North African Campaign of World War II. The 89-year-old veteran, a Member of the Order of Canada, now lives in Comox.

Mark Dhillon is an eleven-year-old student at Abbotsford's King Traditional Elementary School, and lives a couple of kilometres north of the city's airport. Mark is impatiently anticipating his thirteenth birthday and the chance to join the Air Cadets. So when Mark's Grade Five teacher, Brett Kruselnicki, announced that his class would be participating in a school heritage fair, Mark's choice of projects was simple. "I've always been pretty interested in history," he says, "and I knew I wanted to do something on World War II since I already know quite a bit about it and figured I wouldn't have to learn one hundred percent new stuff. Since I knew quite a bit about planes, I figured I might start by typing 'Canadian Fighter Pilots' into Google and see what came up. I couldn't really find any good ones that lived close. But one day my dad was reading an article and Stocky's name happened to appear. My dad told me about him, and I became really interested."

Mark began preparations for his school fair with a strongly-worded thesis: was James Francis Edwards the best Canadian fighter pilot in World War II? "It's important to have a strong topic question," he says, "because if you said something like 'Is James Francis Edwards a good Canadian fighter pilot,' that was obvious because he had so many kills. But if you say he was the best, then you have to compare him to other pilots. It makes you really think."

For his submission to the school heritage fair and the subsequent Abbotsford Regional Fair, the research was routine. Working in the school computer lab, he composed a table of contents, searched for websites, printed pictures, and painted a poster board with green-and-black camouflage. But Mark discovered that for the richest information, he had to dig deep: "Lots of times the articles were a million pages long, and after the fifteenth page you say, 'Oh, I know enough.' But if you keep reading you'll always find something interesting."

And his sources didn't always agree. "I'd read something and it had facts, and then I'd read a different website and it would have different facts. So I had to decide which one had the most reliable facts. You can't always trust the Internet."

During his research, Mark discovered a YouTube interview with Edwards that mentioned he had retired to Comox. "I asked my dad, one day do you think we could go to Comox and visit Stocky? And my grandma, who was alive during World War II, was really interested in him too when I told her about it. I showed her pictures and she asked if she could tag along. She's pretty interested in history stuff."

Meanwhile, Mark had participated in the Abbotsford Regional Heritage Fair. He eagerly waited to learn whether he would be selected to travel to the Provincial Fair in Barkerville. Regardless of the outcome, he wanted to bring his research to the next level and meet his World War II hero. They began corresponding ("Stocky doesn't have email," Mark observes), followed by a phone conversation to arrange a meeting date. As it happened, they agreed to meet on the veteran's birthday, June 5th. "So we arrived at the Comox [Air Force] Museum around seven o'clock-ish," Mark remembers. "We had to catch a ferry around five. It was a pretty early morning but it was fun. And so we picked up my grandma and headed off to Comox."

> *Stocky was surprised we got there so quick. I got a whole bunch of pictures with him and everything. We went down to where the museum has models of the different planes, and Stocky started explaining to us about the different features. By then it was*

45 minutes into the interview, so I got to ask him all these questions. We went down to a building where they're rebuilding Spitfires to flying condition. They weren't supposed to let anybody in, but they let me in to take pictures of Stocky with the nearly-completed Spitfire.

Mark questioned Edwards about his number of documented kills during the North African Campaign. "The Internet says he had 17, but when I asked Stocky himself he said he had 18-plus, around 19-ish. He smoked eleven planes, which means shooting until the engine's pouring with smoke. "By then it was time to go, so I gave Stocky a present — some home-baked cookies that my mom and I made. Before we left we went to the area out back where it has all these different planes and we got to look at modern planes and older planes. It was pretty awesome."

During the interview, the eleven-year-old impressed Edwards with his detailed knowledge. "I researched all my stuff over and over for hours and hours until I knew everything about him. The only question he asked me that I couldn't say I knew -- but it was just on the tip of my tongue -- was his dog's name, Snap. I knew it but I forgot it."

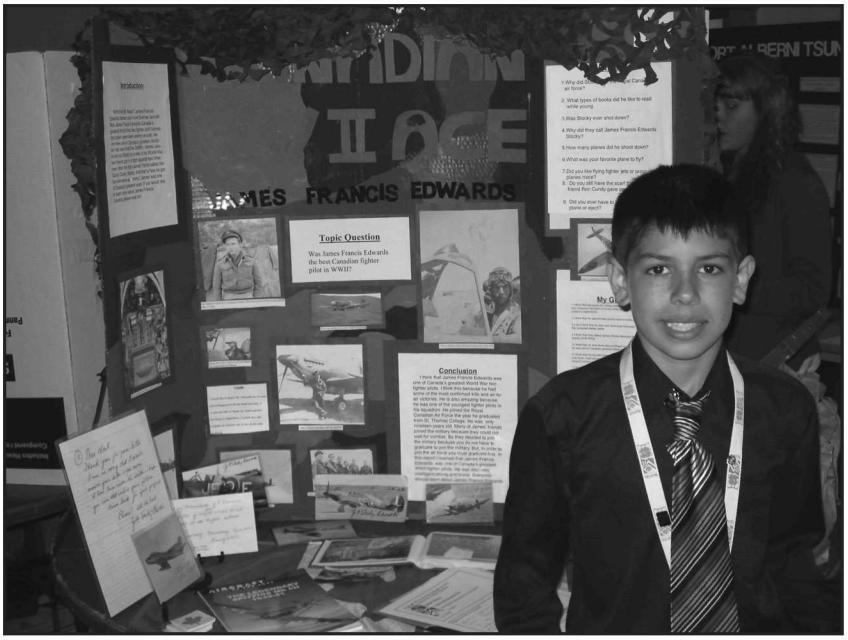
Back home in Abbotsford, the Dhillon family received a call inviting Mark to attend the Provincial Heritage Fair in July. As his father took the call, Mark pressed his head against the receiver to hear the news. "I just really wanted to keep learning about my project," he says. "I wanted to keep researching Edwards and learning more and more . . . just a few kids got chosen to go to Barkerville, and I was so happy that I was one of the chosen ones."

He joined sixty students from around the province at the gold rush town, exhibiting his project there on Canada Day. He was intrigued by another student's project about the Snowbirds Demonstration Team, and interrogated her. She volunteered that she was from Comox. Mark asked if she knew about Edwards. "Oh, Stocky Edwards! I know all about him!' she exclaimed, and started firing questions back at Mark.

The gold-panning exhibit and Cornish water wheel demonstration were impressive, but Mark's most significant memory is the responsibility he felt. "I just really wanted to represent my project and make it look like I cared a lot about my project." He brought a dress shirt and tie to wear on exhibition day. "I wasn't just going there for all the cool stuff. I was really happy I was got to represent Stocky, who was one of Canada's highest-scoring aces. I was happy I got to represent him and his life."●

Top: Edwards and Mark with reconstructed Spitfire

Bottom: Mark Dhillon with project



Meet Mr. Coyote

by Mary Leah de Zwart

Mary Leah de Zwart holds a Ph.D. from UBC and is currently the home economics education coordinator for the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, UBC Faculty of Education. She has a long-standing interest in Alice Ravenhill and women's history.

Did Alice Ravenhill, social reformer, and Noel Stewart, Indian Residential school art teacher, distort aboriginal legends or encourage young artists in "Meet Mr. Coyote"?

For me, as I believe for many Canadians, the history of Indian Residential Schools is shame-and-cringe-inducing. What if there was a true story about residential schools that showed white people not acting badly? Or, as in the case of Alice Ravenhill and Noel Stewart, acting with good intentions within the confines of the system? In December of 1940, Ravenhill wrote a letter to Stewart, a teacher at St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton, B.C. She wanted information about an article in the *Vancouver Daily Province* that had featured a legend of the Animal People by Stewart and artwork by Reynold Smith, an 11-year old student at St. George's.[1] Did Stewart have any more artistically-gifted students?

Alice Ravenhill was a late bloomer when it came to Aboriginal art. English-born in 1859, she had an early life of privilege and private school, followed by a brilliant career as a social reformer in England in the early years of the twentieth century.[2] In 1910, at the age of 52, she immigrated with her sister to Vancouver Island to housekeep for their brother and nephew. Ravenhill expected her sojourn to last for only three or four years, and then she would be free to return to England. The Great War intervened, and she spent the next forty-odd years trying to find her place in Canadian society. In 1926, a request by the British Columbia Women's Institute for hooked rug designs based on native designs led her to the archaeological holdings of the Provincial Museum. Here she spent fourteen years of independent research tutored by W.A. Newcombe, one of the foremost (if unrecognized) experts in the field.[3] In 1939, she and Anthony Walsh, a teacher at the Inkameep Indian Day School, founded the Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts (later renamed the B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society). One of the Society's main aims was the promotion of the "latent artistic talents" of Aboriginal students. Its first project had just been completed, the publication of *The Tale of the Nativity*, written by Walsh's students and illustrated by Francis Jim Baptiste, a twenty-year old former Inkameep student and award-winning artist.[4]

Noel Stewart replied that Reynold Smith was one of six outstanding artists in his class of thirty-four at St. George's, and several stories illustrated by his students had already been published in the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Family Herald* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, as well as the *Province* newspaper. "I am the first teacher to come here that has made any attempt to develop the Indian Art," he wrote, "and it's the first year in the history of our school that any students work has appeared in print."[5] Stewart claimed that he had brought the students' own legends back to them; "They had not known any until I dug them up this fall." Stewart made it clear that he used artistic license in the writing: "I make my characters actually live," he wrote to Ravenhill, "[and] it may reduce the legends' point of view."[6] Stewart indicated that he had read the works of James Teit, an ethnologist who recorded many legends and traditions of the Thompson Band, "We agree quite a lot."[7] The indisputable authorities on the subject, the Nlaka'pamux, were not consulted.

An example of Stewart's interpretation efforts can be seen in a wooden plaque that he sent to Ravenhill with the following description:

> *[The picture] is of Mr. Coyote taking his Sunday Service. Please note how heartily the Coyotes are singing. The choir of 8 golden birds came from Heaven to each meeting. These birds were great singers. They were taught to sing in Heaven and they taught the Animal People on earth. After each service they returned to Heaven.*[8]

Stewart complimented Ravenhill on her recently published school textbook entitled *The Native Tribes of British Columbia*. She lamented to Stewart that she had hit a roadblock with her next project. "I can't get a publisher to issue a collection of the legends of this Province I selected from the hundreds hidden in the

archives."[9] He replied that he and his boys had prepared a booklet of about thirty-five stories on the Animal People in the fall and had sent them to an American publisher.[10] This horrified Ravenhill: "It seems to us a thousand pities to give to wealthy America this early fruit of B.C. Indian art, to which we urgently need to draw attention." Would he be interested, she asked, in a booklet to sell for twenty-five cents in paper cover "with some such title as 'Meet Mr. Coyote'?"[11]

As it happened, the American publisher rejected a story about the purification ceremony of the Thompson tribe. "This is a true enough custom," Stewart wrote to Ravenhill. "Even our old Indians today still believe in a yearly washing of sins. [The publishers] also desire other evidences of which I regard as ridiculous."[12] He put together ten legends and drawings and sent them off to Ravenhill. Thus, *Meet Mr. Coyote* was created.

Ravenhill committed the Indian Arts and Welfare Society to print one thousand copies. At the last moment before publication she informed Stewart that she wanted to omit the names of the five boys who drew the pictures. "The public is so careless in its superficial reading that the names 'Jimmie Johnson', 'Dan Phillips' etc. would be accepted as those of white Canadians."[13]

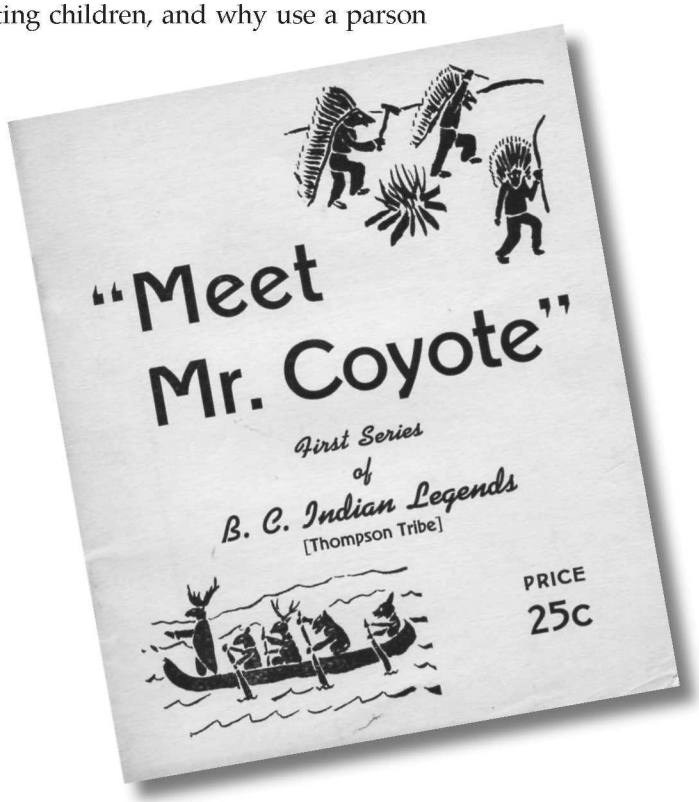
Stewart responded by return mail with the "Indian" names that the boys had immediately chosen for themselves. Jim Johnston became Wah-und ("quick"); Reynold Smith, Moo-mah ("bright"); Joe Dunstan, Sis-malt ("good-looking"); Oliver Stewart, Che-ma ("like a white boy") and Willie Spuzzum, Spup-aza ("old in ways").[14]

The stories presented a kind, gentle Coyote, different from his usual portrayals as a lascivious trickster.[15] The drawings made the book particularly attractive. Who could resist a trio of coyotes sitting around a campfire smoking sacred tobacco, or Mr. and Mrs. Coyote on a friendly walk with Brother and Sister Skunk? "I have very much fallen in love with Mr. Coyote," wrote Anthony Walsh after he received his copy.[16] Stewart personally sold at least 100 copies up and down the Thompson Valley. He was anxious to ensure that his students were recognized for their work and reminded Ravenhill that the book was made more saleable because the boys had a hand in the pie; "In fact so many people have written for more details of these boys. They seem to want to make certain we are not just using the boys [sic] names without justification."[17]

When Noel Stewart first started working on *Meet Mr. Coyote*, the Reverend Adam Ralph Lett was Principal at St. George's. Stewart found Lett to be supportive of his art endeavours, "though of course he doesn't understand 'Art' or delve into the legends as I'd like him too, he says he has no objections to my doing as I desire."[18] When Lett retired in July of 1941, Stewart was appointed Acting Principal and hoped that he might be asked to take over the position. After Dr. Harold McGill, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, visited St. George's in September of 1941, Stewart wrote to Ravenhill, "I have had the place cleaned up really well, and all the rules put into force which in my estimation is the correct ones for running a school."[19]

Stewart's appointment did not happen because the Anglican Church maintained a policy of putting only clergymen into the principalships of residential schools. He didn't like it: "I don't see why these places should have a clerical head anyways. After all we are instructing children, and why use a parson

Meet Mr. Coyote, a Series of B.C. Indian Legends (Thompson Tribe) [First Series] Victoria Branch of the Society for the Furtherance of B. C. Tribal Arts and Crafts, Victoria, Original Illustrations by 'Wah-und', 'Moo-mah', 'Sis-malt', 'Che-ma' and 'Spup-aza' Pupils at the St. George's Indian School at Lytton, B.C., 1941.



Copy of *Meet Mr. Coyote* from Author's Collection

for it. We would not send a white child of 6 to 15 to the parson for all his religious teaching etc."[20]

Reverend Charles Hives was appointed as Principal in October of 1941. Hives came from the well-known Shingwauk Residential School at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and declared that he wanted to replicate it at St. George's.[21] Christmas leave was cancelled for both teachers and students, and animosity began to build. Before long, three teachers and the cook had left. One of the teachers was Edith Walkem, the first Aboriginal person to graduate from Normal School in British Columbia. Hives forbid Stewart to have his students make Christmas cards for sale: "Not one bit of craft work has been done since [Hives] came and he is just in a terrific confusion – blaming everyone but himself."[22]

Finding time to do art in the residential schools was difficult. In keeping with the assimilationist policy of the Indian Affairs Branch, pupils spent only half-days on schoolwork, and the other half doing farm or household chores. Stewart's pupils were only allowed to draw for one hour on Friday afternoons. "How they enjoy it," he wrote to Ravenhill, "They seem to be all doing 'bucking horses' or such."[23]

Noel Stewart considered that he had a special gift for working with his pupils. "I see the good in all," he wrote.[24] When Ravenhill met him after three years of letter writing, she was disappointed to find him high strung, self-conscious and rather plump, but as she wrote to Anthony Walsh, "His heart is in Indian work…. He seems to win Indians' confidence and brings zeal with him; aware how much he can gain as well as give."[25]

Stewart was not the only person who could not get along with Hives. Captain Gerald Barry, the Provincial Inspector of Indian Schools, had visited St. George's shortly after Hives had taken over and the two had definitely not clicked. Barry suggested that Stewart resign in his own best interest and take a position at the Metlakatla Day School, up on the North coast by Prince Rupert. But with *Meet Mr. Coyote* coming out shortly, Stewart couldn't bring himself to do it. "When I asked the boys if I should leave, they all broke down."[26]

The Metlakatla Day School might have been a good idea. Noel Stewart frequently struggled with the constraints of the Residential School system. "I'm only a pivot in a wheel," he wrote. "Res Schools are not the Day Schools."[27] He expressed empathy for his young charges, writing to Ravenhill, "Some of this Res school life is hard on the kiddies (I think). I often wonder how we would re-act if in their shoes."[28] Writing to Alice Ravenhill, Anthony Walsh speculated that the opposition Stewart encountered at St. George's "may be a blessing in disguise, in that he may return to day school work, where he will have much more freedom of action."[29]

In January of 1942, Stewart finally resigned from St. George's and obtained a teaching position in a public school at Spence's Bridge, forty kilometers further up the Thompson valley. He wrote a letter to Ravenhill explaining his reasons for leaving. "The principal of St. George's in my estimation is only a brute and not fit to be in charge of so many fine boys and girls. Whatever the govt. may think of him can only be from the fact they don't really know him. I am truly sorry for the kiddies under his vile leadership."[30] Edith Walkem's brother Clarence had followed Stewart to the school at Spence's Bridge. Stewart considered Clarence Walkem to be the finest student he had ever had, "full of life and humor."[31]

Stewart tried his best with what he called the "wild whites" at Spence's Bridge. "I can still do good," he wrote to Ravenhill. "The Indians of this valley seeing me here keep asking me why did I leave their boys at Lytton and come here. I daren't tell them truth why or they'd probably demand their children from there – like the Walkems did."[32] Stewart wanted to get Reynold Smith out of Lytton School; "He is too fine for Hives," Stewart wrote. Whether that happened or not is unknown. Stewart did not find another group of students with the talents of his St. George's boys. A year later, Ravenhill remarked on Stewart's complete breakdown in health, "I urge him not to give up hope; again and again in my long life I have regained ability to work when doctors told me to the contrary; but I do not know the cause of his ill-health so it behoves [sic] me to be careful in trying to infuse hope."[33]

Meet Mr. Coyote did not have a second printing, although it was distributed to schools and libraries throughout the province. Noel Stewart resurfaced in 1948 to collaborate with Anthony Walsh on a presentation about teaching art to native children at the First Annual Conference on Native Issues at UBC. After that point he vanished from the public record. Alice Ravenhill continued to be involved with the Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts until January of 1944, when she suffered an accident that kept her confined to bed and wheelchair for the last ten years of her life.[34] Although she completed her autobiography in 1951, when she was well over ninety years old, she was unable to bring together any more projects with the pure simplicity of *Meet Mr. Coyote*.

In the 1960s and 1970s St. George's School became infamous for the horrific sex abuse scandals that forced it to close down and eventually caused the Anglican Diocese of the Cariboo to go bankrupt.[35] *Meet Mr. Coyote* was one positive event in a chilling history. Haig-Brown and Nock, in their publication *With Good Intentions*, describe a number of Euro-Canadians who recognized the unfairness and injustices of the treatment of Aboriginal peoples.[36] Viewed from the present day, Ravenhill and Stewart appear naïve in their efforts to encourage Aboriginal art; they held stereotyped opinions and patronizing attitudes; they tromped clumsily around Aboriginal cultures and traditions. Still, working within the constraints of their time, they deserve recognition for their efforts to bring the art of Aboriginal children to the forefront in an unforgiving past. •

Endnotes

1. Noel Stewart, "Days of the Animal People," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 30 November, 1940, 22.

2. Biographical details are from Alice Ravenhill, *Memoirs of an Educational Pioneer* (Toronto and Vancouver: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1951).

3. W.A. Newcombe is better known as Emily Carr's "Man Friday."

4. For more information about Anthony Walsh and Francis Baptiste, see: "Drawing on Identity: Inkameep Day School and Art Collection" http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Inkameep/english/research/index.php

5. Noel Stewart letter to Alice Ravenhill [NS to AR], 15 December, 1940. Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, Provincial Archives of British Columbia [PABC]. Stewart had worked in the residential school system for ten years, on a Blood Reserve in Alberta where he claimed the noted artist Gerald Tailfeathers as one of his students, and also in Northern B.C. Little else is known about him.

6. NS to AR, 7 January, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

7. NS to AR, 9 January, 1942, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

8. The plaque or one very similar to it appeared in Sarah de Leeuw, *Artful Places: Creativity and colonialism in British Columbia's Indian Residential Schools* (Queen's University, 2007). p. 298. Source is listed as the Royal BC Museum Ethnography collection, Accession # 1977 – 20: AM, Catalogue # 15491.

9. Alice Ravenhill to Noel Stewart [AR to NS], 18 December, 1940, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

10. NS to AR, 21 December, 1940, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

11. AR to NS, 3 January, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

12. NS to AR, 7 January, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

13. AR to NS, 6 November, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

14. NS to AR, 7 November, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC.

15. See, for example, Ralph Maud, A Guide to Indian Myth and Legend (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1982).

16. Anthony Walsh letter to Alice Ravenhill [AW to AR], 29 November, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

17. NS to AR, February 28, 1942, Add MS – 116, Box 1, PABC

18. NS to AR, 1 February, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

19. NS to AR, 4 September, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

20. Ibid.

21. NS to AR, 28 October, 1941. The Reverend Charles Hives had mixed reviews from his years at Shingwauk. See http://www.shingwauk.auc.ca/Memories/Sands/Sands_story.html

22. NS to AR, 30 December, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

23. NS to AR, 1 February, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

24. NS to AR, 16 February, 1942, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

25. Alice Ravenhill to Anthony Walsh [AR to AW], 26 October, 1943. Alice Ravenhill fonds. Box 1 - File 8 – University of British Columbia Special Collections [UBCSC].

26. NS to AR, 19 November, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

27. NS to Alice Ravenhill, 21 December, 1940, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

28. NS to AR, 29 December, 1940, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

29. AW to AR, 29 November, 1941, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

30. NS to AR, 6 February, 1942, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

31. NS to AR, 1 February, 1941. Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC Interview with Verna Miller, niece of Clarence Walkem, September 4, 2007. Walkem was also the first Aboriginal person to graduate from UBC, but, according to his niece, Verna Miller, racial stereotyping kept him out of veterinary school.

32. NS to AR, 14 February, 1942, Add. MS - 1116, Box 1, PABC

33. AR to AW, 22 May, 1943, Alice Ravenhill fonds. Box 1 - File 8 – UBCSC.

34. Ravenhill, *Memoirs of an Educational Pioneer*, 218.

35. For information on these and other tragedies of the Indian Residential schools, go to: Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools, http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/rsbib.html

36. Celia Haig-Brown and David Nock, *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Aboriginal Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), introduction.

Art Learning at Van Tech and Kits, 1925–1950

by Wendy Stephenson

Focusing on art education in Vancouver, Wendy Stephenson received her PhD from UBC's Department of Curriculum Studies in 2005. While she has taught at a college and in a corporate setting since then, her favourite pre-occupation has been in writing and taking photographs for a novel set in Vancouver that can be seen online as *Vancouver Memories: My Year Abroad*.

After 1925, art learning at both Kits and Van Tech schools flourished in response to progressivist aims. Why, then, was their student art so different?

This article traces the impact of British Columbia's 1925 Putman-Weir Report on art education in Vancouver Technical School and Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools, institutions that were established in response to the progressivism advocated in the Report.[1] Located on opposite sides of the city, the schools had dissimilar mandates that created different cultures and shaped varied approaches to art learning from 1925 to 1950.[2]

The Putman-Weir Report

Released to the public in May of 1925, this 550-page education report and policy statement by the B.C. government, formally titled *Survey of the School System*, proposed practical and progressive reforms for the province's school system. These included social/administrative efficiency, child-centeredness, and social reconstruction. These aspects of progressivism were not of equal concern to educational experts Harold Putman and George Weir, the authors of the Report. They aligned social efficiency with administrative effectiveness and the production of work-ready graduates. Child-centeredness included learning through doing, rather than just theoretical knowledge or rote learning. Social reconstruction was not a central goal of the Report, as Putman and Weir understood the need to maintain a stable, cheap labour force required by BC's expanding industrial economy.[3]

Putman and Weir proposed, among other points, the expansion of technical education and they originated the concept of the junior high school. These two recommendations were the impetus for the launch of Vancouver Technical School (Van Tech) and Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools (Kits) in their new buildings in 1928 and 1927 respectively.[4]

Vancouver's pioneer high school, Vancouver High School (later King Edward), routinely dispersed parts of its student body to create additional high schools when new populations and new needs were identified and when new funding was committed. Set up to serve specific populations within the city of Vancouver, Van Tech and Kits had unique mandates that created varied school cultures, which in turn encouraged diverse approaches to art learning.

Van Tech High School's Origins and Mandate

Van Tech was, until 1940, an all-boys school serving a large, primarily working-class area, with a relatively diverse student population. The school began during the 1916/17 school term in the basement of King Edward High School at 12th and Oak. The newly-formed technical department was an experiment to offer technical education to high school boys. The principal, J. George Lister, was assisted by James G. Sinclair. As a team, they shaped the school over the next 14 years. This technical department began with 50 boys in one classroom along with a workshop, a forge room, a tin-shop, and a science lab.[5] There was very little equipment. Nevertheless, four teachers guided the boys through their regular high school program augmented with technical math, additional science, the philosophy of technical education, and some basic shop work.[6] Perceived as successful in its first year, this program attracted 150 boys the following school year (1917/18).[7]

Four years later, on March 1st, 1921, the school opened as a separate institution in leased space in downtown Vancouver, in a building at 444 Dunsmuir Street, known as the old Labour Temple. Lister remained principal and Sinclair was vice-principal. There were 14 instructors and 300 students whose attendance was not dependent upon living in the area. Equipment was still minimal and there were no school grounds. But in the nearby armoury, the militia conducted physical training and

athletic activities. Soon after, Sinclair arranged for lacrosse, baseball, football, rifle shooting, and track and field sports.[8] Van Tech students earned honours for their skills in drill, rifle and first aid. Recognizing a need for some culture, Sinclair also initiated the formation of an orchestra and a glee club.[9] Van Tech remained in this downtown location for six years.

Principal George Lister's dream of a Vancouver high school built specifically for technical education was realized in September of 1928. Its mandate was to provide technical education to high school boys "expecting to earn a living in the technical trades."[10] The new facility was to allow for practical and applied knowledge and a hands-on approach in the industrial arts programs.

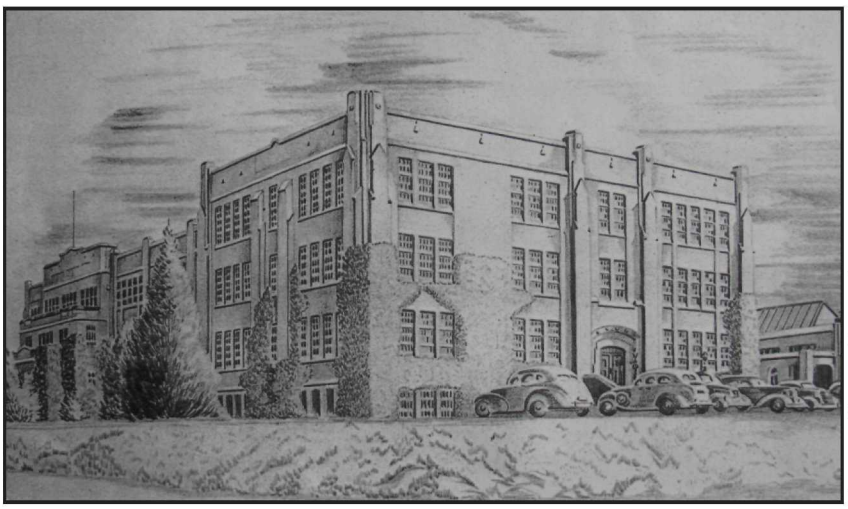
At that time Van Tech moved into its new facilities situated on East Broadway with more than an acre of land. Several buildings housed academic, theatre, and gymnasium facilities, as well as large shops for woodworking, metalworking and printing. There were grounds for track and field. With resources for hands-on learning, practical education was honoured at the school. Learning to do was at least as important as learning to know. The second year (1929/30) the new facility had a staff of 37 for 1,000 boys,[11] slightly fewer students than at Kits.

While Van Tech was on the less affluent side of the city, for many parents, neither money, geography, nor class determined their decisions to send a child there. Rather, they recognized different educational goals for family members.[12] One student, for instance, who subsequently graduated from UBC's faculty of engineering, attended Van Tech as school of choice while his sisters went to Britannia to prepare to become teachers.

Two years after the opening of the new state-of-the-art building, Principal Lister died. The yearbook later acknowledged, "the school is his monument."[13]

Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School's Origins and Mandate

Prior to the Putman-Weir Report, Kitsilano High School served a growing population on the relatively affluent west side of Vancouver, on the southwest shore of False Creek. Its mandate was to be a community high school offering matriculation (completion of Grade 11 as university entrance) and a general graduation course. With the loan of four staff members from King Edward, four classes formed the nucleus of this new school. For the 1917/18 term, Kits students were housed in an elementary school just outside the district. In the second year, the school moved into Henry Hudson Elementary School in Kitsilano, staying there until January, 1920. At that time Kits moved into a newly-constructed, wooden-frame, one-storey building that held four classrooms and an auditorium.[14]

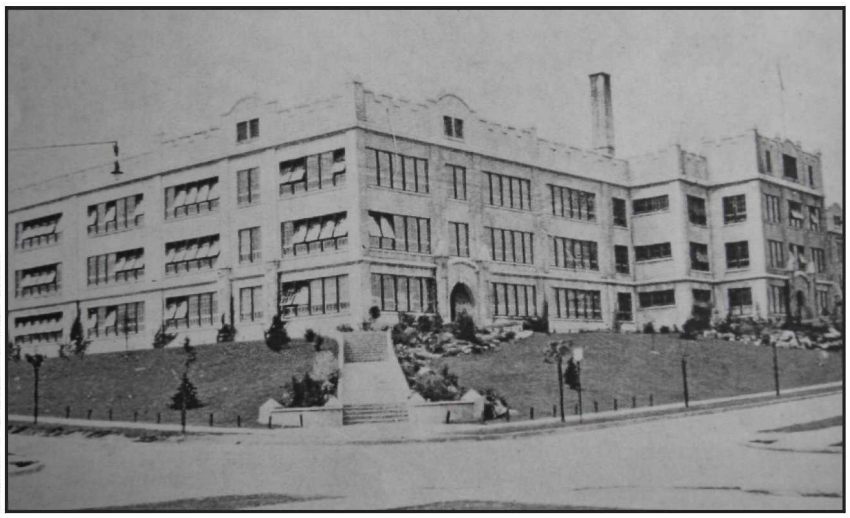


Courtesy of Vancouver Technical School

Vancouver Technical School's newly constructed facility on East Broadway, Vancouver, which opened September, 1928, remains a vital secondary school today. Unsigned drawing of Van Tech from 1947 yearbook.

It was on the south side of the school's current site between 10th and 12th Avenues at Trafalgar. The property was overgrown with willows. Stumps and bog surrounded it. A block-long trail through bush led down to West Broadway, the major east/west corridor of the city, the same one on which Van Tech was to front to the east. By 1922, the school had a staff of twelve.[15] Adding two or three additions per year, the school was under constant construction for about five years. Yet Kits was developing a cohesive student body and establishing a reputation for scholastic and athletic achievements.[16]

The commissioners of the Putman-Weir Report posited that the junior high years should be a time of exploration, rather than just preparation toward further education. Thus, they advocated the administrative change of separating out Grades 7 and 8 from the elementary schools and Grade 9 from the senior high schools. During those grades students were



Courtesy of Kitsilano Secondary School

The new Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School was built in 1927 and exists today as Kitsilano Secondary School. Photo from 1931 yearbook.

to be encouraged to determine their interests and abilities that would direct them to their future.[17] The building of Vancouver's Kitsilano Junior High School was a direct response to this recommendation. It was established in the new three-storey brick structure that opened in September of 1927 with a staff of 42 teachers. Soon some of the senior high students from the site's wooden buildings were being housed in the new building as well; but originally senior students were kept separate on a designated floor.[18] Together the schools became known as Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools.

Built on the more prestigious west side of the city, Kits was a co-ed junior and senior high school in a primarily white, middle class neighbourhood. The school aimed to be a social environment for adolescents. Students' time at the school was to be considered life itself, not just preparation for life.[19] Citizenship was important; preparing students for employment was not a primary goal.

It served boys and girls from Grades 7 to 11 (graduation year) having a total of approximately 1,275 students. About 800 were junior high students. Shortly after moving into the new facility, Kits expanded to include Grade 12, referred to as junior matriculation, and soon after included Grade 13, called senior matriculation.[20]

Kits' new building had shop space for industrial arts courses in woodworking, metalwork, electrical, and mechanical drawing and included designated rooms for home economics and art.[21] Preceding the building of the new Van Tech by one year, Kits did not have such extensive shop space and equipment as Van Tech would.[22] Nevertheless, Kits was soon on the way to nourishing a well-supported arts culture.

Putman-Weir on Art

The Putman-Weir Report (1925) provided few specific directions on art teaching but, at the time of writing, art was a valued part of the curriculum and didn't require defending. The principals supported the art teachers by recognizing art as a necessary part of a well-rounded education.[23] Putman and Weir recommended a mandatory art course in Grades 7 and 8; art for the higher grades was to remain optional. They also supported the new 1924 art education textbook that focused on drawing and design. Teachers were to continue to teach existing art skills but also to stress increased use of colour. This text was written by Charles Scott, William Weston, and Spencer P. Judge, all trained in Great Britain.[24] Tony Rogers, the main art education historian writing on art in B.C. schools for this time period, said they maintained a conservative approach. Considering the influence of this book and the subsequent one authored by Weston alone,[25] Rogers said they had the effect of "freezing" art education of B.C. in an earlier period.[26]

The report also encouraged the study of art history (then perceived as primarily about white, male, European art masters). Adding this theoretical aspect to art classes was surprising as the commissioners were generally against formal learning. But they stated that everyone has some artistic ability, yet even where "this ability is so limited as to make training in expression of doubtful value, there is always the need for training in appreciation."[27] The Report also mentioned that BC's junior high schools were to teach art for economic reasons, to find the talented few with the potential to become commercial artists, and to encourage students to choose artmaking as a constructive, life-long leisure-time activity. Students' knowledge of art was to help make Vancouver a more refined and civilized place.

Definition of Art Learning

The definition of art learning used in this article is inclusive and ignores the boundaries of subject area, classroom, and designations of in-school or after-school activities. From 1925 to the 1950s both Van Tech and Kits tailored art learning by adapting formal curriculum directives and informal approaches according to their different mandates and particular cultures.

Formal art learning refers to the skills and knowledge evident in officially prescribed texts, courses of study, and provincial art exams. Until 1950, such skills and media as drawing, design, painting, hand printing (silkscreen and linoblock printing), applied art, craft, lettering, industrial arts (woodworking, metalworking, drafting, and printing processes), and photography could be included as art learning. At Van Tech aspects of formal art learning were integrated into the industrial arts courses where skills in drawing, design, and lettering were part of each workshop project.

Informal art learning refers to skills that students practised through participation in the schools' extra-curricular activities, most of which were supervised by teachers. Painting sets for a school play, designing a page layout or doing an illustration or cartoon for the yearbook, and making posters to advertise a special event are typical activities offering informal art learning. These involved similar media and skills as those learned in art courses whether the teaching model was Art for Industry, as followed by Van Tech, or Creative Self Expression, Art for Daily Living, and Art for Art's Sake,[28] which guided Kits at the time.

General Aims of Van Tech

In keeping with progressivism, Van Tech's mandate was to prepare students for occupations in the trades and industry. Van Tech's precursor, the technical department at King Edward, stated the goal was to provide students with a regular high school program as well as theoretical and practical knowledge, including "the mechanical, mathematical and scientific principles and laws that underlie all lines of practical work."[29]

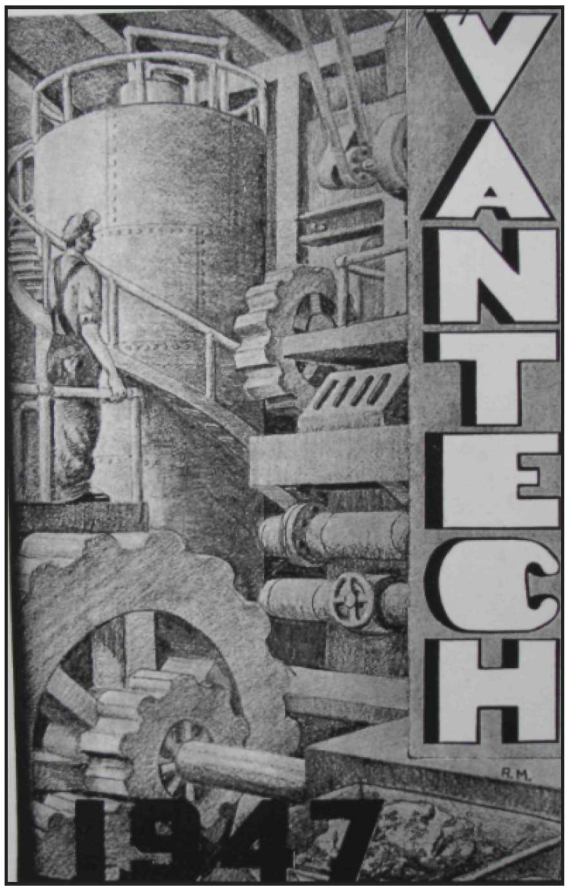
After the school was firmly established, Sinclair addressed students using impersonal terms regarding the social efficiency goal of progressivism: "You are our product and, when we put you on the market, we are anxious to know how you shape up."[30] This work-ready approach required knowledge of drawing and design to be embedded into all technical courses at Van Tech.

Not only was Van Tech perceived as being progressive for its hands-on technical training that prepared students with marketable skills, it also aimed to prepare youth for socially efficient citizenship by producing compliant workers with responsible attitudes.

Aims of Art Learning at Van Tech

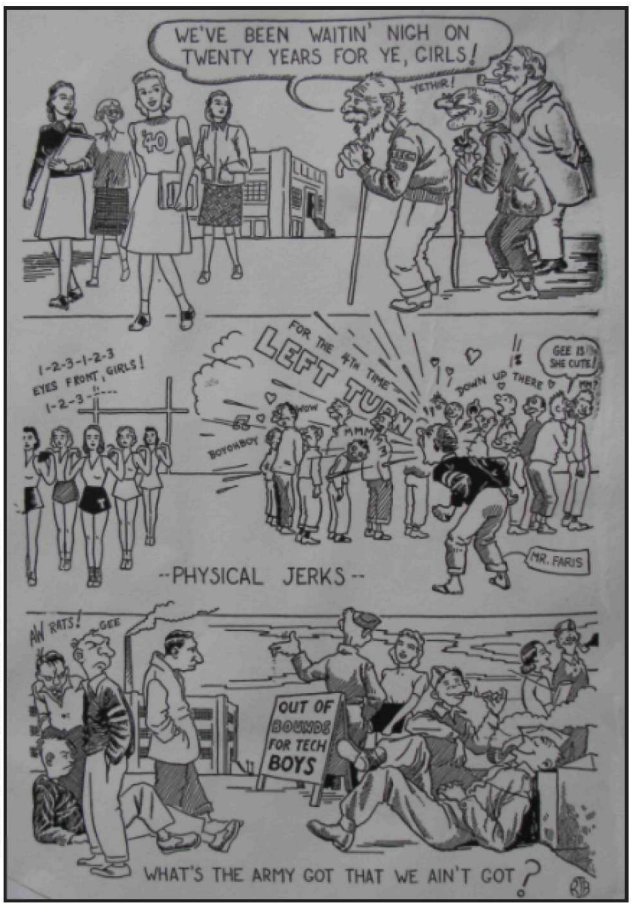
Van Tech had the benefit of having James Sinclair as its in-house art advocate; he had been art master at King Edward since 1910. Sinclair recognized the importance of art in all technical work throughout his long tenure at the school.[31]

My interviews with former Van Tech students revealed their assumptions about the aims of art learning at the school during their attendance. Some of these goals were to develop design capability necessary for a tradesman in metalwork or woodwork to create better Canadian-designed goods, encourage art skills required for the printing industry, teach drafting to be able to do illustrations from blueprints, and provide a grounding in drawing useful for an illustrator. On the arrival of the girls at Van Tech in September of 1940, they learned design, lettering and drawing skills for clothing design to accompany sewing for the



Technical subjects such as this engine room appear in Van Tech student work as in this accomplished pencil drawing signed RM (1947).

Courtesy of Vancouver Technical School



Courtesy of artist (now deceased) and son Rory Banks

In this pen and ink cartoon, Bob Banks reveals boys' attitudes to the arrival at Van Tech of the girls, who were kept isolated from the boys, and compared this approach with that of service personnel sharing space on site at the school during war years.[34]

trades. These skills, central to all art-related curricula, were practiced within their applied arts/fashion design/tailoring courses.

When a course entitled art was provided at Van Tech in 1946, it did not offer students the freedom of a fine arts approach or creative self-expression orientation, despite being taught by artist teacher, J.W.G. MacDonald, who was aware of such art practices.[32] Students used the art skills they learned in a controlled, applied way.[33] However, art done by Van Tech students through extra-curriculum activities, such as illustrations and cartoons for the school annual, could have a more personal and even humourous approach.

General Aims of Kits

The junior high years at Kits provided students with time for exploration while trying to determine their interests and capabilities to guide their future. This approach seemed to have allowed for greater personal freedom than for students at Van Tech. One of the aims of the Putman-Weir Report, which was to encourage students to stay in school longer, helped validate art courses as contributing to this goal, as most students found art enjoyable.

Aims of Art Learning at Kits

During the period of this study (1925 to 1950), art at Kits was deemed to be an important part of a well-balanced liberal education aiming to elevate public taste. Kits' art programs were to produce cultured, refined citizens, as well as to interest students in art as a creative hobby. Generally, art training was for the student's personal enrichment, so art learning did not challenge the status quo. Female students were deemed to be doing art for their own pleasure, rather than learning art skills for a job. However, for male students, Kits' art courses aimed to develop the skills of those with particular talent to qualify for employment as designers and commercial artists; they also encouraged students to become fine artists to create art for galleries.[35]

Determining Differences in Art Learning in Van Tech and Kits

A major factor impacting the art learning at the two schools between 1925 and 1950 was the makeup of the schools' populations. Van Tech started at the Grade 9 level, so art as a separate course was not required. This was in contrast to Kits, initially having 800 Grade 7 and 8 students for whom art was mandatory. Being two-thirds of the population, these lower grade students were taught art by a group of teachers who had the capacity to provide stimulating art classes and engaging extra-curricular art learning.[36]

Kits' art-related clubs and extra-curricular activities, central to the school's culture, reinforced skills and habits taught in art classes. Because these activities occurred across the population of the school, not just within students' own class groups (as at Van Tech), these activities contributed to the school's social environment. These art-related activities involved group cooperation, socialization of the whole person, and "learning by doing," all goals of the Putman-Weir Report.

Because Van Tech was not a neighbourhood school, it wasn't able to be a centre of social life in the way that Kits was. According to my informants, Van Tech's tight-knit class groups of 25 to 30 students, where students spent their entire four years, contributed to isolating students from others in the school.[37]

The Putman-Weir Report's goal to keep students in school longer encouraged

Van Tech's lengthening the time required to prepare students for jobs. The other factor in this decision was the difficulty for students to get jobs during the Depression years. The original three-year industrial arts program was converted into a four-year program in 1933, as schools needed to retain students to avoid potential social unrest of unemployed youth.[38]

Differences in Art Learning in the Two Schools

The primary skills of drawing, design, and lettering that were core to all art learning in both schools were applied to different kinds of projects and to different media. Where Van Tech students might be making a vase or vessel in metal, the same design skills came into play at Kits in the making of a clay pot. The favoured kind of printmaking at Van tech was linocutting, as that could be integrated into work orders produced by commercial printing operations. At Kits, however, silkscreen design/production was featured as being a skill that could be used on the job as a commercial artist. Similarly while lettering in Kits was taught for use as a graphic skill in many contexts including advertising agencies, lettering at Van Tech was learned primarily for labeling drafting plans, sketching preliminary page layouts for printed pages, or for serving other basic forms of visual presentation, including communicating with fellow workers contributing to the same project.

Subject matter in art also differed at the two schools, as is documented in my dissertation.[39] The students routinely revealed aspects of school culture and their social class, as shown by Kits' Blakstad cartoon revealing an embarrassing moment—a teen entering a party underdressed—whereas, a student drawing from Van Tech shows technical subject matter that students were expected to apply in their future jobs in industry.[40]

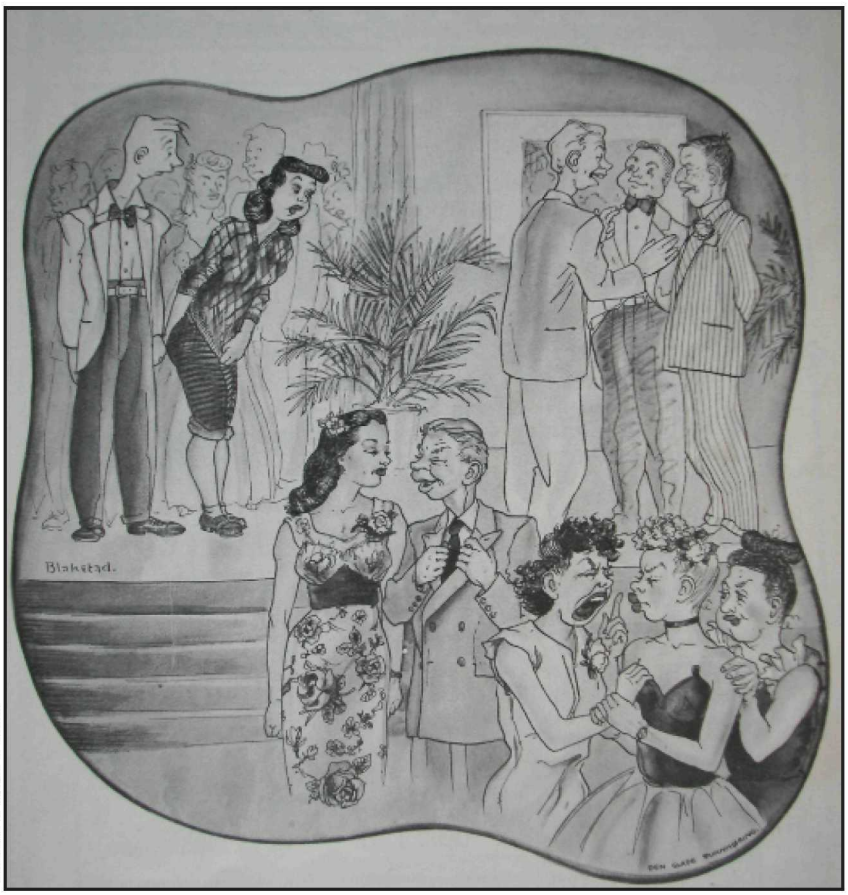
Van Tech and Kits students also seemed to have had different concepts of future jobs for accomplished student artists. A position as a cartoonist/printer seemed to be viewed as the loftiest ambition for a talented artist at Van Tech. And to spend one's career as a draftsman working on preparing plans and illustrations from plans were seen as an honourable occupation for a promising Van Tech student. For most Kits students, however, this likely would have seemed a disappointing use of art talent, as they envisioned becoming a commercial artist working in an advertising agency or a fine artist, whose art would be sold in a gallery.

Social Reconstruction

Social reconstruction, the third strand of progressivism, was not thoroughly discussed in the Putman-Weir Report. The effect of vocational training, in terms of its role in serving social reproduction or social mobility, has been highly contested. Some authors have viewed vocationalism and technical training as attempting to help preserve stratified society by producing compliant workers accepting their place on the lower rungs of the social ladder.[41] But J. D. Wilson has suggested that groups and individuals have strived to fulfill their own aspirations often against the intentions of the school system and its authorities."[42] Jean Barman suggested parents "believed in their children's ability to use education as a liberating experience rather than being conditioned by it into the existing socio-economic order."[43]

At Van Tech, in being taught "to play the game," not to question the rules of the game, nor to try to change them,[44] the students could have been stuck in low-paying, waged jobs all their lives, but this was not the case with my ten interviewees from there. And Van Tech principals, Lister and Sinclair, had optimistic views that vocational training at their school had greater potential for expanding students' opportunities than for limiting them.

The vocational skills offered at Van Tech seemed to be socially liberating rather than socially limiting; without these skills Van Tech's graduates would have had fewer job opportunities, at least in starting out. But a number of additional conditions were at play, immigration being one of them. The Van Tech yearbooks, which were routinely sent to a long list of international technical schools, encouraged immigration by promoting BC, specifically Vancouver, as a good place to live and work. Undoubtedly, staff knew that immigration to the city created technological demands that Van Tech grads could meet, as well as serving to produce social mobility. The



Courtesy of Rolph Blakstad

Cartoon by Kits' student, Rolph Blakstad, shows a teen's embarrassment on entering a party inappropriately dressed.

Second World War also created opportunities for graduates with technological training, as did the free, post-war training, including art school, that some of them received as returned veterans.

While art learning in both schools aimed to find the art-talented few and provide them with job-related design skills, art was also seen as an enjoyable and personally enriching activity, thus helping to keep students in school longer. Also it was generally assumed to be non-threatening to the status quo. The progressive goals that established Vancouver Technical and Kitsilano Schools and that created two different school cultures, produced varied approaches to art learning that affected students in diverse ways, without apparently putting a ceiling on their social standing.●

Endnotes

1. J. Harold Putman, and George M. Weir, *Survey of the School System* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1925) was commonly known as the Putman-Weir Report.

2. This article is based on my PhD dissertation: D. Wendy Stephenson, *Artmaking in Two Vancouver High Schools 1920 to 1950*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2005. The core of my research was based on 34 interviews and conversations primarily with former Kits and Van Tech students who attended during this time period. I also gathered evidence of school culture and art learning from, among other sources, high school yearbooks. The dissertation research was partially supported by a two-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada doctoral fellowship.

3. *Survey*.

4. Kits is referred to in various ways—as Kitsilano High School (prior to 1927), Kitsilano Junior and Senior High School(s) after 1927, and as Kits. Vancouver Technical School is referred to as Van Tech. After 1960 they took the names Kitsilano Secondary School and Vancouver Technical Secondary School, as they exist today.

5. Vancouver Technical School, *The VanTech* (Vancouver: Vancouver Technical School, 1946), n. p. This source is subsequently referred to as *VT*.

6. King Edward High School, *King Edward Matric Annual* (Vancouver: King Edward High School, 1918), 34.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 1930, 31.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 1918, 31.

11. Ibid., 1930, p. 31.

12. Author's interviews with Bob Banks (VT grad of 1941), June 23, 2003; and Bill Wong (VT grad late 1930's) September 7, 2002.

13. *VT*, 1944, 19.

14. K.A.Waites, K.H. McQueen, and T. Pattison, *The First Fifty Years, Vancouver High Schools: 1890–1940* (Vancouver: Vancouver School Board, 1941), 106.

15. Ibid.

16. *Kits Chronicles: The Story of Kitsilano 1917-1949* (Vancouver, B.C.: Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools, 1941), 2. [Available from Special Collections, UBC.]

17. *Survey*, 79-80.

18. Author's interviews with Dorothy Howard (Kits 1927–31), December 5, 1999, and March 11, 2001; and Eve Williamson (Kits grad of 1935), February 6, 2002; and Bill Basil (grad of 1940), March 4, 2003.

19. *The Annual*, Vancouver, B.C.: Kitsilano Junior/ Senior High Schools, 1939, n. p. Note that Kits' yearbooks had various names: *Annual*, 1930/31, 1931, 1939, 1941; *The Cadet*, 1942 to 1945; *The Gosling* (1947); *The Thraex* (1946); *The Haida*, 1936, 1948 and continuing. Hereafter all Kits annuals are referred to as *KH*.

20. Ibid.

21. *KH*, 1931, 40.

22. Viewed from the front, Kits and Van Tech school buildings look remarkably similar. Their mandates were not reflected in their external appearance but rather the buildings revealed current ideas as to how a school should look.

23. J. A. S. (Jim) Macdonald (Kits 1949–51), telephone interview with author February 28, 2002.

24. Charles H. Scott, William P. Weston, & Spencer P. Judge, *Manual of Drawing and Design for Elementary and High Schools: A Teacher's Manual* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1924).

25. William P. Weston, *A Teacher's Manual of Drawing for Elementary and High Schools* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1933).

26. Anthony Rogers, *W. P. Weston, Artist and Educator: The Development of British Ideas in the Art Curriculum of B.C. Public Schools*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1987, 282.

27. *Survey*, 92.

28. I defined seven art models in Chapter 3 of my MA thesis: D. Wendy Stephenson, *Artmaking Materials in the Classroom During the Depression Era and World War II Years as Revealed in Some Art Education Texts for Teachers*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1998.

The four models here are Art for Industry that aimed to train designers to create appealing products in demand as goods; Art for Creative Self Expression that provided students with an artistic outlet for personal expression; Art for Daily Living that offered design and applied art training for managing the appearance of their clothing, their homes, their businesses, or their communities; and Art for Art's Sake involved students in trying to parallel the styles of art in the recognized art world.

29. *VT Matric Annual, 1917*, 40-41.

30. *VT*, 1937, 9.

31. *VT*, 1944, np.

32. Joyce Zemans, Jock Macdonald: *The Inner Landscape* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1981); Joyce Zemans, J. W. G. Macdonald, *Canadian Encyclopedia* (Edmonton, AB: Hurtig, 1985), 1,050.

33. Margaret Strathern, (grad of late-1940s) interview with author, June 27, 2003.

34. *VT*, 1941, 23.

35. Wendy Stephenson, "More than an Improvement in Drawing," *From Drawing to Visual Culture: A History of Art Education in Canada*, ed. Harold Pearse (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 162–199.

36. J.A.S. MacDonald interview.

37. Stephenson, 2005, 34.

38. Ibid., 130.

39. Ibid., Chapter 6.

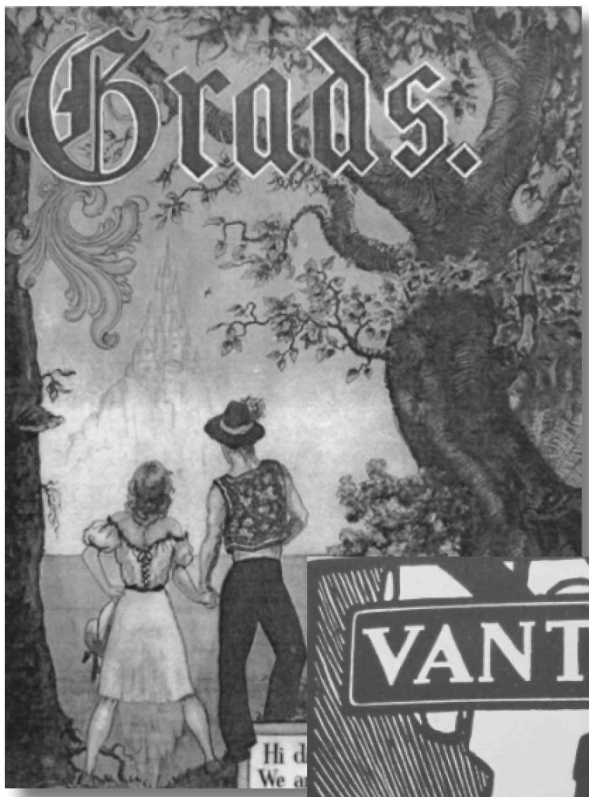
40. Cartoon by Rolph Blakstad, *KH*, 1947, n.p. Drawing by RM, *VT*, 1947.

41. Stephen Petrina and Stephen Dalley, "The Politics of Curriculum Reform in Canada: The Case of Technology Education in British Columbia," *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, 3(1) (2003): 117-144; Timothy Dunn, *Work, Class and Education: Vocationalism in British Columbia's Public Schools, 1900-1929*, Unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1978; R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in 19th Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 23, 287.

42. J.D. Wilson, "Preface," *Exploring our Educational Past: Schooling in the North-West Territories and Alberta*, ed. N. Kach and K. Mazurek (Calgary, AB: Detselig, 1992), 6.

43. Jean Barman, "Knowledge is Essential for Universal Progress but Fatal to Class Privilege: Working People and the Schools in Vancouver During the 1920s," *Labour/Le travail* 22 (1988): 9-66.

44. Stephenson, 2005, 238.



This composite image shows some cultural differences reflected in the art of Kits and Van Tech students. The painting on the left showing the artist's dream of travel is by Kits student Rolph Blakstad from their 1947 yearbook.

COURTESY OF ROLPH BLAKSTAD

COURTESY OF VANCOUVER TECHNICAL SCHOOL

The linoprint image of steel workers on the right is by Van Tech's E.P. Wilson, from their 1938 yearbook.

St. Ann's Commercial Course

by Ronald Greene

Ronald Greene is currently the president of the BC Historical Federation.

Ronald Greene looks at how your mother may have learned to handle money.

The Sisters of St. Ann was established in Lower Canada in 1850. By 1857 it had forty-five members and was established at St. Jacques de l'Achigan. In 1860 the congregation purchased the home of Hudson's Bay Company governor George Simpson and moved to Lachine. Meanwhile in 1857, Bishop Demers, of the See of Oregon, which included Victoria, travelled to Canada seeking recruits to teach and to care for the sick of his diocese. He was directed to the Sisters of St. Ann. The Sisters responded by sending out four nuns to Victoria. The four, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart Valois, Sister Mary Angèle Gauthier, Sister Mary Lumena Brasseur and sister Mary Conception Lane, left Montreal on April 14th, 1858 in the company of five male clergy and a lay helper, Miss Mary Mainville. They travelled by train to New York City, then by ship to Panama, crossed the Isthmus by train, then boarded a ship for San Francisco and finally after two weeks in that city, caught another ship to Victoria where they arrived June 5, 1858. The building that served as their first home and school has survived, although it has been moved to the grounds of the Royal BC Museum, where it sits opposite Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken's house.

The corner stone for St. Ann's school, known today as St. Ann's Academy, was laid on September 13, 1871 and the building was completed by May 1872. A large addition was

Courtesy of Ronald Greene

St. Ann's Academy before the 1910 wing was added [c.1894-1910]. This is the approximate period when the St. Ann's tokens would have been first used.

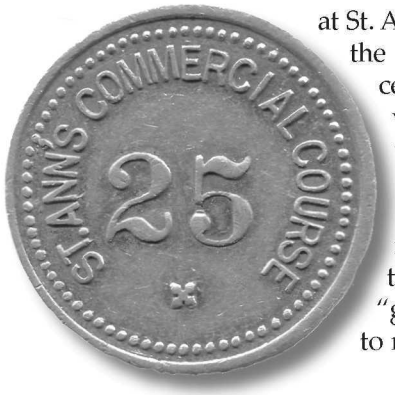
constructed in 1886 and a final wing added in 1910.

In the course of time the Sisters opened other schools and convents through British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska.[1] The provincial government took the building over in 1974 when the Sisters of St. Ann decided to vacate St. Ann's Academy. The building was abandoned in 1982 leading to much debate in the city of Victoria about demolishing or saving it. Finally, in 1995, the Provincial Capital Commission seismically upgraded the building and renovated it into government offices.[2] The original chapel was lovingly restored and today the building is listed as a National Historic Site. But this is all after the fact.

By 1892, the curriculum of St. Ann's had expanded to a full academic course, with a music department, an art department and a commercial school. The commercial school was under the direction of Sister Mary Matthew. She was later responsible for adding commercial departments in Vancouver in 1899, New Westminster in 1907 and Kamloops in 1910. She was also given credit for the preservation of the original log school house from 1858.[3]

In the 19th century and into the 20th century, many of the young girls attending school had little experience with coins or money and one of the features of the early commercial schools was to provide practical experience in additional to the theoretical practices of bookkeeping, by making "deposits" in their "bank." To this end, tokens representing coins and notes were used as teaching aids. When, in 1965, I first came across a 25 cent token (illustrated) I called in at the St. Ann's Academy where I made an enquiry.

Several days later I received a visitor at my office, Sister Mary Patricia. She told me that she had been a student at St. Ann's just after the turn of the century and was later a teacher at the school. She said that she recalled using the tokens and "green-backs"[4] to make practise deposits in the commercial department's "bank," confirming the anticipated usage. She also said that she would look into the matter and provide as much information as she could. Two weeks later she contacted me again to say that she had searched the garret for any remaining tokens or "green-backs" but without success and unfortunately all the other teaching sisters who might have taught when the tokens were in use had passed away, so she could not state precisely when the tokens had been used. Today, some 45 years later only the 5 cent and 25 cent tokens have surfaced, and none of the "green-backs." Since other schools, such as Vogel's Commercial School in Vancouver, used tokens of 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent denominations, I expect that some day other denominations from St. Ann's Commercial School will turn up.●



Courtesy of Ronald Greene

Courtesy of Ronald Greene

Left: The St. Ann's Commercial course 25 cent token. It is bifacial (i.e. both sides the same).

Right: A Vogels College 10 cent token. These were used in Vancouver between 1899 and 1903.

Endnotes

1. Sister Mary Margaret Down, A Century of Service, 1858- 1958: A History of the Sisters of St. Ann and Their Contribution to Education in British Columbia, the Yukon, and Alaska (Victoria: The Sisters of Saint Ann, 1966). There is a listing of 34 schools owned and operated by the Sisters on p. 165.

2. Martin Segger and Douglas Franklin, Exploring Victoria's Architecture (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1996), 29-30.

3. Down, 115.

4. This is an expression initiated in the United States at the time of the Civil War as the United States government notes introduced at the time had green printed backs.

Three British Columbia Mysteries: History Online

by Ruth Sandwell

Ruth Sandwell is a Canadian historian and history educator who teaches in the History and Philosophy of Education Program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Her book, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and the Practices of Settlement, Saltspring Island, British Columbia, 1859-91* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), grew out of her doctoral research. She is the co-director of *The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project*, and is on the Executive Board of The History Education Network/Histoire et Éducation en Réseau (THEN/HiER). Her current research is entitled "Heat, Light and Work in Canadian Homes: A Social History of Fossil Fuels and Hydro-electricity."

Old and young alike are invited to explore British Columbia's thrilling history by 'solving' a series of historical mysteries using hundreds of online historical documents.

Between December 1867 and December 1868, a small rural community in colonial British Columbia was the scene of three brutal, seemingly unconnected murders. All of the victims of these Salt Spring Island murders were members of the island's African-American community, and Aboriginal people were widely blamed for all of the deaths. Members of this African-American community had fled persecution and slavery in California in 1858, but the murders in 1868-9 fractured the community and drove many away. Many of Salt Spring Island's African-American community returned to the United States, which was more congenial to them after the Civil War had brought an end to slavery. Only two of these murders were brought to trial, and only one of them resulted in a conviction. An Aboriginal man, Tschuanahusset, was convicted and hanged for the murder of William Robinson. Did racism make the trial a sham? Or were these murders simply an extension of the squabbles and in-fighting that characterised this island community in the 1860s? Certainly, compelling evidence came to light after the trial suggesting that the man convicted was not the murderer.

History is full of such incidents – where, if any evidence is created at all, it seems so unimportant that neither historians nor anyone else is interested in exploring its significance within the broader, ostensibly more important themes, issues and events that define a nation's history. This article introduces an online history education project, the *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History (GUMICH)*, that provides a remarkable opportunity to look in depth at a number of relatively unknown dramatic mysteries in Canadian history, including three British Columbia mysteries. For a variety of reasons -- because these mysteries have an engaging (not only gory and horrible!) subject matter that deals as well with issues of injustice, because they are easy to access online from around the world, because all materials on the site are presented in both French and English, and because these mystery websites tap into recent trends in history education that focus on 'doing' history rather than simply memorizing it – for all these reasons, the three incidents in British Columbia portrayed on the website have become some of the best known elements of the province's history. Every day, on average, over 2,000 students use the *GUMICH* website [www.canadianmysteries.ca]. Last year there were over 350,000 user sessions (and many more individual 'hits'), primarily in Canada and the United States but also in 50 countries around the world.

"Who Killed William Robinson?"

Everybody loves a mystery. Of all the historical situations researchers and readers encounter, nothing has quite the same impact as discovering someone wrongly hanged, or a guilty person going free. This was the premise behind "Who Killed William Robinson?" the web-based history project that became the pilot project for the award winning history education website, *GUMICH*. This educational website uses the 'hook' of a mystery – typically a gruesome or apparently unjust crime – to lure unsuspecting visitors into an adventure of historical exploration and analysis. Visitors are invited to participate in the minute details of historical research as they examine the wide range of 'real' historical documents available on the site, using this 'evidence' to come to their own conclusions -- not only about a particular incident, such as "Who Killed William Robinson?" but also about the ways that this particular incident can shed some light on some of the big questions about history and social justice: Was justice enacted? Were the wrong people hanged, or did those who were equally 'guilty' go free? What were the social, cultural, political and economic factors that just might have interfered with a system that was supposed to promote social justice? And how do we know what 'really' happened?

"Who Killed William Robinson?" was the first in a series of twelve award-winning on-line, real-life Canadian mysteries. Spearheading the use of 'document based inquiry' to teach history, "Who Killed William Robinson?" was designed to engage website visitors, but most particularly students, in a very different kind of history to that generally found in classrooms or published books. Taking full advantage of the non-linear, interactive and graphic features of the World Wide Web, this history education site draws viewers into the process of historical research and analysis – of doing history -- through the analysis of hundreds of primary documents that have been transcribed or reproduced on the site, from newspaper clippings and photographs, to maps, songs, diaries, paintings and written narratives.

In addition to finding a wide range and large number of historical documents, visitors to the site get some help in solving the mystery from contextual materials written by the historians who created each of the sites. The *GUMICH* website also has a wealth of support for teachers, or for those simply wanting more guidance in 'solving' the mysteries. Detailed teachers' guides provide another more structured approach and background to the materials for each of the mysteries. Interpretive Essays (password protected to prevent students from the temptation of simply reading an expert's opinion) provide full blown interpretations of the evidence. (Details about how to obtain the passwords are available at www.canadianmysteries.ca). Short, user-friendly, student-oriented MysteryQuest lesson plans allow students and viewers alike to work independently, with the help of lots of teacher-created support materials, by focusing typically on just one specific aspect of the mystery and using a small subsection of the documents available. The historical materials provided on each of the sites have been used to teach history at a wide range of levels, from elementary school to graduate school. Whatever the level of historical analysis visitors bring to their investigations, they will find that the site works the same way: it teaches history by encouraging visitors to do history as they solve a mystery through their own analysis of the evidence.

Background to "Who Killed William Robinson?"

The website project grew out of my work and that of John Lutz. In the mid 1990s, we were both graduate students doing research on nineteenth century British Columbia history. I discovered that the seemingly bucolic history of Salt Spring Island (the topic of my dissertation research) and its legendary harmonious racial relations were accompanied by periodic episodes of extreme violence.[1] Particularly, the Island was the scene of three African-American murders within the period of eighteen months in the late 1860s. My research showed that one of these, William Robinson, owned one of the most valuable pieces of land on the island, one of the few sites suitable not only for farming but also for a steamer dock (now the site of the Vesuvius Bay village and Ferry Terminal). When I found that an Aboriginal man was convicted of the murder, I raised the case with John Lutz who was then finishing his doctoral work on Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations in the area of the west coast during the same period.[2] Together we sought out all the evidence we could find that informed the case and colonial society at the time. We were intrigued with the realization that different kinds of documents – court records, First Nations oral histories, and land records in particular – each seemed to point to very different interpretations of what the murder was 'really' about. And these different interpretations of the reason behind

Clark Whims

Image 1994.137.182 Courtesy of Salt Spring Island Archives

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History

www.canadianhistory.ca

1. Where is Vinland?
2. Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal
3. Jerome: the Mystery Man of Baie Sainte-Marie
4. We Do Not Know His Name: Klatsassin and the Chilcotin War
5. Who Killed William Robinson? Race, Justice and Settling the Land
6. Heaven and Hell on Earth: the Massacre of the "Black" Donnellys
7. Who Discovered Klondike Gold?
8. The Redpath Mansion Mystery
9. Death on a Painted Lake: the Tom Thomson Tragedy
10. Aurore! The Mystery of the Martyred Child
11. Explosion on the Kettle Valley Line: the Death of Peter Verigin
12. Death of a Diplomat: Herbert Norman and the Cold War

or social contexts of the violence pointed to very different culprits in the case.

At the same time, we were both teaching for the first time in undergraduate classrooms. We were engaged in lively discussions between ourselves about the differences between the kind of history we were both doing as researchers for our dissertations, and the kind of history we were teaching. We both noticed that the process of historical research – the detective work involved in doing history that made history so engaging and interesting – was largely missing from the history that we presented: typically, we presented students with 'history as completed story' in our classrooms. As part of an exploration of how to convey in the classroom the kind of history that we were each doing as historians, we decided to put together a different kind of scholarly session at the "New Directions in British Columbia History" conference held at the University of Northern British Columbia in 1995. Pulling together the different kinds of documents relevant to the murder of William Robinson, we handed these out to conference attendees in a "History Mystery Evening" that opened the conference. Carefully giving each 'team' of historians a quick overview of historical contexts, and only one kind of document, we invited them to solve the mystery. The session prompted a lively discussion and debate as the teams presented their own best explanation, each differing significantly from that of others because of using different kinds of sources. And, in a theme that we have seen repeated many times as we have built up the *GUMICH* websites, attendees were more that a little frustrated when the hosts of the mystery night refused to 'tell them the answer' at the end of the session….

More important than the memorable conference session, however, was the fact that we were immediately swamped with requests for copies of the historical documents so that the history professors could use them in their own undergraduate classrooms. A small grant from the Teaching Innovation Fund of the provincial government and financial support from the University of Victoria allowed the conversion of these documents to a website in 1997. Much to our surprise, the launch of the website received widespread publicity, including a front page story in the *Globe and Mail*, and extensive media coverage immediately afterward throughout Canada and particularly in British Columbia. Requests for teaching support for high school and even elementary classrooms began pouring in. The *Globe and Mail* again published a full page story about the "Who Killed William Robinson?" site on Saturday June 19th, 2004.

Between 2003 and 2008, we were joined by co-director Dr. Peter Gossage. The project now includes twelve Canadian mysteries, spanning the country from the Viking site in Newfoundland to the Klondike, and from the 9th century to the Cold War.

"Who Killed William Robinson?" is not the only British Columbia mystery on the *GUMICH* website. The second mystery of the project was created by John Lutz, "We do not know his name: Klatassin and the Chilcotin War". Here is how the website introduces this mystery at http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/klatsassin/home/indexen.html

> *The blood of the fourteen men spilled into the Homathco River before dawn on the morning of April 29th, 1864 was only the beginning. By the end of May, 19 road-builders, packers and a farmer would be dead. It was the deadliest attack by Aboriginal people on immigrants in western Canada, before or since. Within six weeks an army of over 100 men was in the field to hunt down the killers.*
>
> *Finding them was not going to be easy. The killings had taken place in a remote triangle in central British Columbia, a country of jagged mountains, torrential rivers, and high plateau, remote from any settlements and inaccessible by road or even a horse trail. The dead had been trying to change that; they all had some connection to the attempt to build a road from the coast to the goldfields of the Cariboo.*
>
> *This was the territory of the Tsilhqot'in people who had lived on the high Chilcotin Plateau for centuries, perhaps for eons. The survivors of the attacks*

identified the principal leader of the more than 20 involved in the killings as a Tsilhqot'in chief, who was called by his people "Klatsassin".

There are many mysteries to solve here. Who were the killers? Six were eventually hanged for the killings but at least one of them killed no one. What was the motive? Was it robbery, revenge, self-defense, or an attempt to block the road and keep Whites out of their territory? Were these murders and therefore criminal matters that should be dealt with by the courts -- or a war with killings on both sides, that should be settled by a peace treaty? If it was a war, who won?

On this website you will find a comprehensive collection of documents, newspapers, paintings, photos, even music, that relates to the events of the 1864 killings and the aftermath. You are invited to become an historian, to study the evidence and come to your own conclusions about the causes, outcomes and guilt. You will find other mysteries here too, not the least of which is, who was Klatsassin? The name means: "we do not know his name".

A third British Columbia mystery is "Explosion on the Kettle Valley Line: The Death of Peter Verigin: Accident or Assassination," a Mystery by Larry Hannant, and introduced here by him http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/verigin/home/indexen.html

Known by the single name "Lordly," he was revered as a semi-deity by Doukhobors. Peter Vasilievich Verigin inspired his Doukhobor followers to build a communal empire that spread over three western provinces in the years after 1899, when they arrived in Canada.

But in the early morning of October 29, 1924, an explosion on the remote Kettle Valley Line in southeastern British Columbia ripped apart Canadian Pacific Railroad Car 1586, killing the 65-year-old Lordly, his 17-year-old female companion and eight others.

UBC Special Collections; Collection or Fond: Jim Hammillection; RBSC_ARC_1230

Freedomites at God's Valley settlement, near Grand Forks

Not everyone mourned his death. Some Western Canadians were jealous of the success of the communal Doukhobors, while others resented their attachment to their culture and language. Could fanatic nativists have killed him? Or was it, as many felt within the Doukhobor community, the work of the Canadian or Russian governments, as each was thought to want to be rid of Verigin?

While loved by most of his faith, even some Doukhobors resented Lordly's heavy hand and had deserted the commune. Others believed Lordly's accommodation to government laws was treason to Doukhobor principles. Some, living under very harsh circumstances, resented his exalted status. Was it fellow Doukhobors who caused his death?

Or could it have been a tragic accident: an explosion of the gas used to light the rail car, or dynamite carelessly transported by prospectors?

Assassination or accident? No one has ever been charged and the case remains open. What shattered Verigin

and the others on that snowy night has remained locked in the lonely Monashee Mountains where they died. Now, with the benefit of access to archives, a reconstruction of the death scene and a modern forensic report, perhaps you can solve this mystery.

Conclusion

The *GUMICH* website is designed to draw in students (and all visitors to the site) with the near universal attraction to the morbid and to injustice. But as we have seen, the mysteries are mere bait to lure the unsuspecting into a much more complex understanding of the whole historical enterprise. Using the features of the internet, this website allows visitors to the site to do history in a manner that has not been widely possible before this. The web allows the placement of a whole archives, often drawn from different archival repositories, at the disposal of students and other viewers, and therefore provides an initial introduction to archival research and archival materials.

Students, like all visitors to the sites may be surprised to find that this site is not designed to provide an absolute answer about "Who Killed William Robinson?" or any of the mysteries. Instead, the *GUMICH* website is designed to provoke questions about how we get to the truth, or truths, about the past. The particular skills it teaches include critical reading, critical analysis/thinking, and the ability to think historically (i.e., to understand how people thought and behaved at different times in the past). The evidence presented about the guilt or innocence of the characters involved is equivocal, even though the site provides a very rich evidentiary base. The historians who created each of these sites have provided more evidence with these case studies than with most micro- or macro-historical questions with which historians routinely deal. Despite this, there is still not enough evidence to convict or exonerate anyone with 100% certainty. But there is enough here to give us more than reasonable doubt about the justice that was meted out. These ambiguities are the sites' greatest strength. As far as the crimes go, visitors are asked to argue for the explanation of events that they find the most convincing, using the evidence provided to build the most convincing explanation of events. The site provides an opportunity for non-historians to be exposed to, get excited about, and confront some of the major questions historians face in their work as they encounter some of the exciting particularities in history.

In summary, *GUMICH* uses the desire on the part of people to solve a mystery to draw them into the work of doing history and learning about such deeper questions as what is the role of race, family, violence, community or justice in Canadian history? Now visitors to the site learn to evaluate evidence by wading through the documents, extracting order and meaning from the (nearly) raw material of history, allowing them the opportunity to use primary documents from history to build a meaningful and reasoned historical interpretation. These sites are, therefore, designed to simulate the kind of critical thinking necessary for primary archival research. It is not written as a "story" with a beginning and end but rather is a collection of documents and images which relate to the social history of British Columbia and Canada. The goal of *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History* is not only to promote a deeper understanding of what happened in history, but, along the way, to promote a deeper understanding of how — the processes by which — we create that history. ●

Endnotes

1 My dissertation research was published in 2005, and includes a chapter on the murder of William Robinson. R.W. Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and the Practices of Settlement, Saltspring Island, British Columbia, 1859-91* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press).

2 John Lutz' dissertation research was published as John Sutton Lutz, *Makuk: New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

Teaching Teachers Revisited

by Eric Damer

UBC's new teacher training programs in the 1920s promised new leadership for BC schools. But what sort of leadership did the provincial university actually provide?

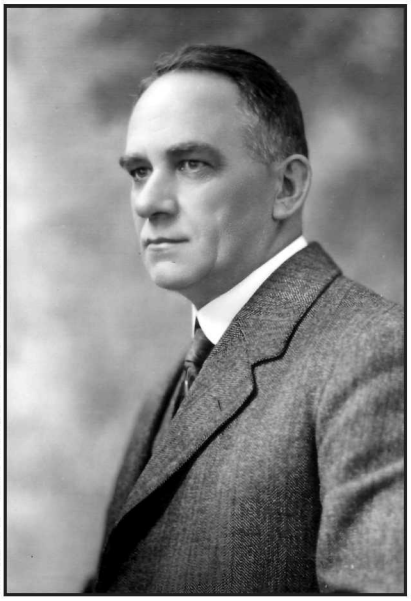
A graduate of the University of Victoria and the University of British Columbia, Eric Damer has studied the history of UBC for some fifteen years. He has authored or co-authored four books, including the recent centenary history of UBC, *UBC: The First 100 Years* (with Herbert Rosengarten), as well as a number of journal articles and web items. He also works more generally as a writer, editor, and educator.

Aspiring school teachers in British Columbia today may look to the University of British Columbia as a natural place to prepare for their careers, and at least for high school teachers, UBC played an early role in teacher training. When UBC opened in temporary quarters in Vancouver in 1915, it had a mandate to provide useful education in whatever professional field there was demand. Thus promoters of occupations in search of professional status looked to the new university, among them teachers and leaders of the province's educational system. When UBC first entered the arena of teacher training in the 1920s, university administrators and faculty made choices about the educational leadership the university would provide. In hindsight, we can see that the road taken was less about preparing teachers to foster the full development of their pupils for a complex society, and more about preparing teachers to sort pupils efficiently. When considered in its social context, UBC's leadership in education was modest at best since it responded to and followed closely dominant trends in educational thought, for better or worse.

In 1919, notes historian John Calam, UBC acquired a president particularly interested in the education of teachers.[1] Leonard Klinck, formerly UBC's Dean of Agriculture, knew that many of UBC's first graduates had become teachers in the rapidly proliferating high schools. By 1920 high school teachers required a university degree and a nine-month term in a local normal school for a first-class permanent certificate. Normal schools reinforced subject-matter knowledge and taught techniques to dispense it effectively, mainly to aspiring elementary teachers. Consequently, the Principals of the Victoria and Vancouver Normal Schools thought that potential high school teachers should have a different program more relevant to their aspirations. The British Columbia School Trustees Association thought that UBC should provide such a program, while teachers themselves were hearing about "the new education," or "progressive education" as it came to be known, and seeking instruction in the latest ideas and practices. As part of their bid for professional status (and with it, improvements to their salaries and working conditions), teachers looked to UBC for their own education.

President Klinck responded in two ways. In 1920, he hired H.T.J. Coleman, a Canadian with a doctorate from Columbia University in New York who had studied with the intellectual leaders of the new educational movements. Following a career as teacher, school administrator, and university professor, Coleman became Dean of Arts and Science at UBC and Professor of Philosophy in a tiny department of two that provided a convenient administrative home to the new fields of education and psychology. Klinck and Coleman then organized a teacher training program, which meant hiring a professor of education – a daunting prospect given the university's meager operating grant. However, the Minister of Education, encouraged by a sympathetic Superintendent of Education (who in those days held a central position of considerable authority in the educational bureaucracy), was uncharacteristically generous.

Calam documents just how carefully Coleman and Klinck reviewed candidates for the position of Professor of Education, seeking a man who was a qualified proponent of the contemporary educational innovations, understood the practical task of teacher training, and was politically acceptable to government and British Columbia's educational establishment. In the fall of 1923, Klinck chose George Weir, Principal of the Saskatoon Normal School, and a well-known "progressive" educator. Beginning in early 1924, Weir taught in UBC's new teacher training program which comprised a term at the normal school and a term at UBC. Weir then took a leave in 1924-25 to conduct the landmark *Survey of the School*



University of British Columbia Archives, Bridgman Studio [UBC 1.1-1328

Leonard Klinck, president of UBC from 1919 to 1944. Formerly Dean of Agriculture, Klinck hired the new education faculty and provided important administrative support.

System, written with Ontario inspector J.H. Putman and other specialists. Although the *Survey* exerted considerable influence in educational circles, Weir's direct involvement in the UBC program did not resume until later in 1925.

Klinck's second but more immediate response to teachers' demands for education courses was to support a summer school at the university. The newly-formed British Columbia Federation of Teachers had asked the UBC Senate for education summer courses in the spring of 1919, but the Senate referred the Federation back to the government's annual Teachers' Institute. The following year, the Senate (which included both the Minister and Superintendent of Education, *ex officio*) approved a syllabus of courses suggested by the Superintendent of Education designed primarily to improve teachers' subject-matter knowledge but also to allow them to improve their teaching credentials. Senate did not feel ready to offer complete university courses, but within a few years the Summer Session (as it was renamed in 1922) allowed teachers to gain university credit and eventually to complete a degree.[2]

Calam is less helpful, however, when it comes to understanding the content of the new teacher training programs and how it related to concerns of the day. He notes new courses in educational philosophy and psychology introduced by Coleman, and subsequent expansion by Weir along similar lines, although admittedly with an emphasis on certain educational ideas. But despite Calam's descriptions of Weir's enthusiasm for and dedication to progressive educational ideals, moral character development, and a free society, he writes little about the curriculum of UBC's early teacher training programs and the implication for the values they conveyed. Not all "progressives" espoused the same values, and not all apostles of progressivism introduced the same reforms to school systems.

Soon after Herbert Coleman arrived at UBC, he introduced several new credit courses: the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant; Philosophical Movements Since Kant; Introduction to Education; Social Psychology; and Educational Psychology.[3] In contrast to an earlier school of educational thought and practice based on Kantian idealism, Coleman required students in his Introduction to Education course to read works by John Dewey and Herbert Spencer, two scientifically- and empirically-minded agnostics. Coleman also referred to other American authors connected to Columbia, as well as several English authors. Coleman used the writings of Stephen Colvin in his educational psychology course, with references to Edward Thorndike, Lewis Terman, Daniel Starch, and Charles Judd, all American proponents of educational testing and measurement, particularly in the new field of intelligence testing. UBC would follow a decidedly American, experimental direction in teacher training.

The courses introduced by Coleman comprised the academic aspect of the teacher training program until 1925-26, although not every course was offered each year. The complete teacher training program included a term of elementary methods instruction provided by the Vancouver Normal School, with observation assignments and practice teaching. Student teachers probably learned the didactic, teacher-centred methods typical of the province's normal schools up until that time. In the second term, students learned high school teaching methods from UBC faculty familiar with large classes in a university chronically short of space. Sixty hours of practice teaching and observation in Vancouver's King Edward High School, with assignments, was also required. Throughout, students took History and Principles of Education, Educational Psychology, and a course entitled School Administration and Law apparently not for regular credit. In 1923-24, thirty-five women and twenty men enrolled in the teacher training program, with comparable numbers enrolling over the next decade.[4]

Summer courses were a similar mix of philosophy, history, psychology, and educational administration mainly using American textbooks. The first Summer School for Teachers in 1920 was taught by UBC subject experts in their respective fields: French, Chemistry, Botany, History, Physics,

Mathematics, English, and Classics, joined in subsequent years by Advanced Commercial Work. Courses in these fields were intended to help teachers improve their science and French, to assist them in qualifying for a First Class Certificate, and to provide additional courses of interest. Joining the UBC instructors was W. Pakenham, Dean of the Faculty of Education in the University of Toronto who, presumably, taught School Administration and Modern Movements in Education.[5]

The next year, 1921, Herbert Coleman taught as a faculty member, along with visitors M.E. Haggerty, Dean of Education at the University of Minnesota, and George Weir, making his first appearance at UBC. Coleman taught his Principles of Education (elementary and advanced courses), while Weir taught Class-Room Methods and Haggerty, Mental Measurement.[6] The 1922 Summer Session was similar. In 1923, Coleman again taught his full-term Principles course and was joined by Peter Sandiford of the University of Toronto, a Columbia-trained psychologist and perhaps Canada's most influential psychometrician, who gave two shorter courses on educational psychology. John Stark, Head of the Public School Employment Service in Pittsburgh, provided two courses on vocational guidance.[7]

The summer of 1924 again saw Coleman as director, that year teaching his course on social psychology. Weir, now on faculty, taught the educational psychology course that emphasized classroom organization and instruction, and the measurement of mental capacity. He also taught a course in the psychology of teaching special subjects. J.H. Putman, Weir's co-author of the *Survey*, taught a course in educational administration intended for school inspectors.[8] Until that year, only Coleman's courses carried credit, but in 1924 Weir's educational psychology course did as well. The curriculum for summer 1925 included these familiar courses taught by Coleman, Weir, and Haggerty.

But then the emphasis changed. The 1926-27 UBC calendar announced a new Department of Education at UBC, with Weir as Professor, and with a new faculty member, Jennie Benson Wyman, an Assistant Professor of Education and of Psychology. Coleman became special lecturer, several UBC department Heads lectured in high school methods, and normal school instructors lectured in elementary methods. The course requirements also shifted. Students enrolling that year took Educational Psychology; School Administration and Law; History and Principles of Education; Educational Tests, Measurements, and Statistics; Psychology of the Elementary School Subjects; Methods in Elementary School Subjects; and Methods in High School Subjects. Observation and practice teaching continued as before, with instruction from UBC department heads, normal school instructors, or other local experts.

University of British Columbia Archives, [Photo 6.174]

Herbert Coleman, Professor of Philosophy and UBC's second Dean of Arts. Coleman initiated UBC's teacher training program and introduced the latest research on "progressive education" to the university.

Educational psychology and testing acquired new importance under Jennie Benson Wyman (later Wyman-Pilcher), a Stanford University graduate hand-picked by leading psychometrician Lewis Terman for research work on his *Genetic Studies of Genius*. Wyman had explored the relationship between personal interest – intellectual, social, and activity – and high intelligence. At UBC, Wyman also taught undergraduate psychology courses outside the education program, again focusing on the concept of intelligence and its measurement and relying on textbooks by proponents of these studies like Terman and Charles Spearman.

The UBC program also shifted to emphasize administrative efficiency. The History and Principles of Education course was taken over by Weir, who introduced the textbook *A Brief History of Education* by Elwood P. Cubberley. As Dean of Education at Stanford, Cubberly was a proponent of administrative centralization and other innovations aimed at efficiency. The School Administration course similarly relied on textbooks by Cubberley and his collaborators, as well as on the Putman and Weir *Survey* which devoted considerable attention to administrative issues.

The summer sessions from 1926 on showed a similar re-orientation in emphasis. Weir and Wyman taught courses related to educational psychology and administration, while Coleman taught Philosophy of

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Education (his Introduction course, renamed) or his course in social psychology. Weir often taught his standard History and Principles of Education, with its emphasis on the evolution of administrative structures. In short, the summer session courses show the same shift toward a concern for educational psychology and administrative efficiency.

The curriculum for the new teacher training program at UBC strongly embraced the empirical and experimental views propounded by American educationalists, particularly "progressive" thinkers at Columbia University (Teachers' College) and Stanford University. But UBC's program embraced a certain flavour of "progressivism." The "new education," as historians Neil Sutherland and George Tomkins suggest, was a conglomerate of diverse reforms. Some reformers sought an active education for the "whole child" that considered the pupil's own inclinations, motivated by the humanitarian concerns of the child-study movement. Such reformers often cited the writings of John Dewey, who saw education as an interactive process for personal growth, social adaptation, and social change. Other reformers were proponents of social efficiency. Historians Timothy Dunn and Gerald Thomson, for example, have emphasized the quest for order and control in an industrializing economy that underlay the early twentieth century school reforms in British Columbia. Schools could be used to sort students and socialize them into vocational roles, at the least possible cost.[9]

The UBC teacher training program from the outset was more closely linked to the latter stream of progressivism. Course topics, textbook content and authors, and the views of instructors all point toward efficient administration and student sorting through testing. Weir strongly supported intelligence testing and economic efficiency, as outlined in the Putman-Weir Survey. Wyman was without question a proponent of intelligence testing, as were visiting instructors: M.E. Haggerty, Peter Sandiford, and British Columbia locals Robert Straight and H.B. King. Haggerty even spoke to Victoria teachers in 1921 on the vital importance to "the civilized world, and to America especially" of sorting students according to IQ.[10]

Herbert Coleman may have been a modest exception, as he regularly referred to John Dewey who was a critic of unrestrained testing, sorting, vocationalism, and mechanistic social efficiency. Coleman's education courses always included Dewey's *Education and Democracy* (or occasionally other works by Dewey) while for several years beginning in 1933-34 he also included Rousseau's *Emile* and Froebel's *The Education of Man*, writers who portrayed education as an organic process of nurtured human development. These authors provided counterpoints to the otherwise wholesale embrace of testing and efficiency by UBC education faculty. Nonetheless, Coleman had certainly introduced UBC to the dominant thinking in education science.

We have some evidence about what education students actually learned. In 1928, one student-teacher noted in her "Report on Practice Teaching and Observation" that, despite her studies, "it was extremely difficult to translate theory into practice."[11] The student appreciated knowing a little child psychology, but stressed practical conclusions about good teacher practice. Using suggestions from sponsoring teachers at two Vancouver schools (an elementary and a junior high school), the student emphasized the importance of "mechanical things" like moving about when in front of the class, giving the children an occasional rest "from the monotony of your voice," and using lively gestures "when your lesson begins to drag." She wrote:

> *I believe the three most important things to be remembered in teaching are the care to be observed in giving orders, the use of silences, and the value to be put on a child's answer. The control of the class, I mean the teacher's ability to feel that she is always master, even though she may be in the background, depends upon what she can do with a simple order. I think that is what children notice, how she gives the order, and the importance she places on prompt obedience.*

She also noted the inescapable necessity of "dull drill" to "make sure that your pupils are <u>learning</u>" [emphasis in original], the overcrowding of classrooms (twenty-five

students would be better), and the difficulty of repeating the same lesson sometimes up to seven times a day.

The last comment provides a mild criticism of her sponsoring school, Kitsilano Junior Secondary, which had recently opened to illustrate the benefit of junior high schools and the "platoon" system of student rotation. Overall, these comments, perhaps typical of beginning teachers, emphasize teacher control over students' perspectives, although some attention was given to valuing a child's answer. Notions of child-centred pedagogy (or the "project method," which Weir promoted in the *Survey*) are absent in the report, despite a positive comment about student self-government. The student, Mollie Cottingham, received a good grade from Weir and began a long and successful career in education.

Statements in the UBC student annual *The Totem* also suggest what education students learned, although the exaggerated and boastful comments must be treated cautiously. From 1924 to 1929, writers for *The Totem* noted the hard work completed by education students under the demanding but kind supervision of Weir and Wyman.[12] Educational psychology and intelligence testing were students' chief concerns, as suggested most vividly in the 1926 *Totem*:

> *The only hope for democracy is in its teachers, that is, in Education '26. This select band...has nobly devoted itself to the task of saving society. This can best be done by measuring its intelligence and plotting it in curves. Our own IQ's. [sic] are a secret, but we can find yours to the nearest decimal point, decide whether you are a moron, an imbecile, or a genius, and whether it is in the best interests of the race to have you hanged or merely segregated in a mental hospital.*

Jocularity aside, such comments point to a preoccupation with mental testing and eugenics, the belief in social progress through controlled human reproduction. To many eugenicists, low IQ contributed to crime, poverty, and violence. Since intelligence was considered heritable, eugenicists often wished to prohibit those with low IQs from reproducing, either through segregation, sterilization, or birth control. Proponents of eugenics often linked intelligence to racial background, ranking British and northern Europeans as inherently more intelligent and moral than people from other ethnic or national backgrounds.[13] Particularly in Canada and the United States, eugenic goals could be served by prohibiting the immigration of the "feebleminded" and undesirable ethnic groups. At UBC, the educational views of Weir, Haggerty, Sandiford, Straight, King, and Wyman were influenced by, if not rooted in, hereditarian eugenic perspectives, as were the textbooks which they used.

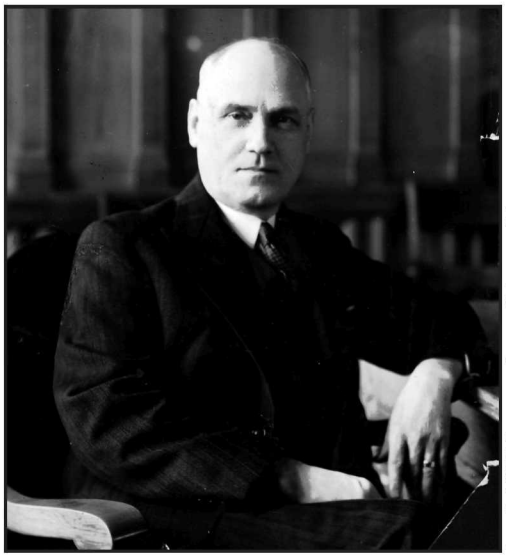
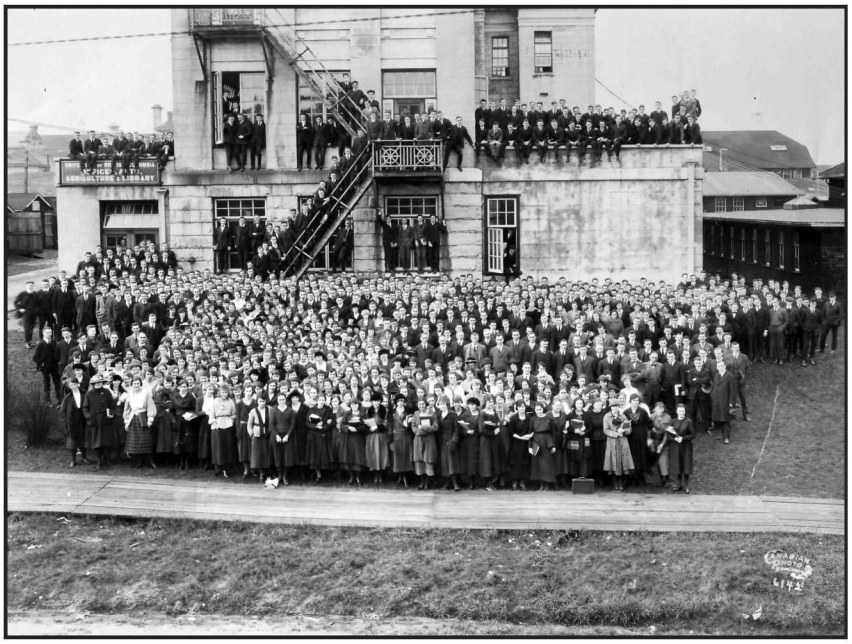


Image B-09209 Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

George M. Weir, UBC's first Professor of Education, expanded the teacher training program to emphasize psychology (especially mental testing) and administrative efficiency. Weir later became Minister of Education, introducing new curricular innovations in the BC school system. Courtesy Royal B.C. Museum, B-09209.

Eugenic ideas were certainly present at UBC. The university's first President, Frank Wesbrook, talked publicly about race improvement and social efficiency, associating physical, moral, and intellectual traits and suggesting that certain classes of people should not be allowed to reproduce.[14] Physicians like Wesbrook were at the forefront of the eugenics movement in Canada. President Klinck — a cereal breeder — was on the board of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene that came to Vancouver in 1919 to assess the mental fitness of local school children. A vehicle for eugenic concerns, the National Committee included many other prominent British Columbians with ties to UBC: Dr. R.E. McKechnie, UBC Chancellor; Rev. W.H. Vance, UBC Senator; Hon. J.D. McLean, UBC Senator (and Minister of Education); Hon. Denis Murphy, UBC Governor; Christopher Spencer, UBC Governor; W.H. Malkin, future UBC Governor; and Dr. H.E. Young, "founder" of UBC while Minister of Education in 1908.[15] Laura Holland, who came to Vancouver in 1927 to reorganize child welfare services, subsequently taught in the social work and nursing programs at UBC while serving on the province's Eugenics Board which, after



University of British Columbia Archives, [Photo 1.1/1375]

Fairview students and faculty. UBC students and faculty posing for a photograph outside the Arts building, Fairview campus, ca. 1915-1920.

enabling legislation in 1933, decided upon sterilization cases.

Students were also familiar with eugenics. The student newspaper during the 1920s embraced the language of eugenics uncritically, although a student debate in 1917 on the relative power of heredity and environment on human character was won by the environmentalist side. Agronomy professor P.A. Boving spoke to the Biological Discussion Club in 1928, comparing poor genetic selection in vegetables with alleged genetic dangers of Jewish/gentile procreation; he then condemned the indiscriminate immigration policies in the United States. Students responded with a "very hearty vote of thanks" for a "most interesting address." The Biological Discussion Club on other occasions discussed "Practical or Applied Genetics and Eugenics," including a program in spring 1927 that considered the breeding of chickens, cattle, wheat, and "The Race Movement of Man." The Biological Discussion Club and student newspaper reported without comment a 1930 public lecture by physician Dr. W.B. Burnett on the sterilization of the feebleminded. The Social Science Club sponsored a talk in 1927 by noted socialist Dr. Lyle Telford, a proponent of birth control for eugenic purposes, while students of a contrasting political view sponsored a talk by the Western Grand Kaliph of the Ku Klux Klan, a group espousing white supremacy allied with the eugenics movement. (Both talks, however, sparked student opposition and official censure but no one commented on the eugenic aspect.)[16] In short, eugenic thinking appears well received at many levels of UBC, from administrators to faculty to students, just as it permeated middle class Anglo-protestant British Columbia more generally.

A discussion of eugenics brings us right back to the launch of UBC's teacher training program. The Minister of Education, J.D. McLean, had strongly supported the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene's provincial survey in 1919. The survey had reported a high degree of "feeble-mindedness" in British Columbia that contributed to poverty, crime, and prostitution. This conclusion fuelled a successful campaign in the province to legalize compulsory sterilization of the mentally unfit who would be identified, in part, through intelligence testing.

McLean's provision of funds for UBC's teacher training program at that time seems more than a coincidence. The UBC program appears to be part of a more general movement not only to create an efficient educational system to help sort students into vocational roles and thus contribute to social and industrial efficiency following post-war social unrest, but also to cull the "feebleminded." UBC's teacher training program supported the prevailing racist attitudes in the province by linking mental capacity with ethnic origin, as did public school textbooks. No wonder the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper in 1921 called on UBC to help with the problem of "saving the white man's civilization."[17]

The educational leadership of Coleman and Weir, as well as Klinck and even Wyman, should be seen against this backdrop of government interests (made more powerful because of UBC's dependency on the government grant), teacher demands, and the attitudes of white, middle-class British Columbians more generally. Members of the Vancouver School Board, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, women's groups, and government all leaned on UBC and President Klinck to provide a program in education that would contribute to their greater concerns. As it happened, UBC was very receptive, providing a program well-suited to please. •

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A College Without Walls Opened Worlds of Opportunity

by Anne Russell

Anne Russell recently marked 20 years as a communicator with the Marketing and Communications department at the University of the Fraser Valley. In this role she has observed and chronicled the institution as it was transformed twice, once from Fraser Valley College into the University College of the Fraser Valley in 1991, and later from UCFV into the University of the Fraser Valley in 2008. Always fascinated with local history, Anne has taken on the very fulfilling project of interviewing the 'pioneers' of UFV and is working on a history of the university. Anne lives in Chilliwack with her husband, three kids, three cats, and dog.

An *instant college* that launched without buildings to call its own in 1974 transformed the educational and cultural landscape of the very staid and traditional Fraser Valley.

These days, the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is a comprehensive university, serving more than 12,000 students and offering 15 bachelor's degrees, more than 80 certificates and diploma programs, and two master's degrees. But in the early 1970s it was an *instant college* proclaimed into existence as Fraser Valley College (FVC) in April 1974 after years of community lobbying. The doors of this *college without walls* opened five months later, and an experiment in grassroots, community education began. Here are some snippets from a history of UFV currently being written.

The Instant College

It was a huge challenge to launch an *instant college*. Eric Woodroff served as a general administrator along with bursar, Bill Sharp, filling in the gap until the first principal, Dr. Larry Blake, arrived in October of 1974. "We were under tremendous pressure to open the college to students in September of 1974, and there were times when we wondered if we would ever achieve this end," recalled Woodroff in a 1983 booklet entitled The Founding of Fraser Valley College. "However, in spite of all the difficulties, the college did begin its programs at the beginning of September, with a full year of university-transfer courses running, and with career, vocational, upgrading and/or general interest courses operating in all five regions (Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Agassiz, and Hope)."

As one way of generating programming, FVC took over continuing education (then also known as night school) courses in the region, which had previously been the responsibility of individual school districts. Frank Dolman was initially charged with the task of organizing the career/vocational programming. He remembers the frenzied build up to the college launch in 1974, and the first few years afterwards, as busy times. "We had to launch programming, find space to offer it in since we were the college without walls, and hire instructors," he recalls. "There were a lot of 18-hour days. We practised what I like to call the art of the possible. If it could be done, we strove to do it."

Dolman had to be resourceful. For example, he knew there was demand for a welding program, but the new college had no facilities. "We heard that the Matsqui prison had a shop, so we struck a deal. After they closed up for the day, we'd bring in non-inmate students at 5 pm. So some of our students got their college experience in prison."

Eventually Dolman moved into continuing education. In those days continuing education planners were open to almost any course that sounded like it might attract students or serve a community need. "We would put on almost everything. People were always dropping in and offering to teach courses. And at one point we had 20,000 registrations a year. A reasonably full class would pay for itself so there wasn't too much risk involved."

In the early years the college could be a hard sell in the western end of the valley. "In a lot of folks' minds the college didn't exist because we had no buildings of our own. People would say, 'where are you?' and I would say 'we're all over the place.' The community was not impressed, unless a person had taken courses from us. Then they knew we were up to something good."

The First Deans Arrive

The idea of helping to start a college from scratch was very appealing to Dick Bate when he heard about opportunities at the new FVC. "I loved the idea of building a college from almost day one," he says. His arrival in the spring of 1975 as the first Dean of Instruction enabled him to have a significant influence on the future of the fledgling college.

Bate's first task was hiring faculty in time for the fall. "April to July was pretty hectic. We

hired more than 20 faculty and support staff." When the college was first created, founding principal Larry Blake's vision was for a 'college without walls' that would be accessible in all the communities it served by using community facilities. "Larry really wanted to live up to the ideal of taking education to the people, but it became obvious that while we could have a decentralized college, we did need some facilities that we could use as a base. And we found that students weren't interested in returning to their high school. They wanted a real college experience," Bate recalls. "The college without walls had to become a college with walls fairly quickly." Thus the college worked toward securing its own leased facilities. For several years it operated out of the Marshall Road campus in Abbotsford and the "motel" building in Chilliwack, which was built as a temporary leased facility meant to be turned into a motel after five years. Both are still in use today.

In its initial years, the college didn't have the facilities to offer a traditional academic timetable, so most day courses were offered under a "modular timetable" whereby students typically took two courses at a time over a six-week period in five consecutive sessions. "While this system offered a temporary solution to a space crunch, it was seen by some as quite innovative and other colleges were intrigued with the idea so we presented it at a conference. And while it solved a problem at the time, it proved unpopular with faculty as they had to cram their course offerings into a much tighter time frame," Bate recalls.

Erling Close also arrived fairly early in the life of FVC, in March of 1975, as the founding Dean of Student Services. Eric Woodroff, who had been at FVC from the start as an administrator, briefed Close on the founding assumptions of FVC. "Eric emphasized to me that it was to be a multicampus institution with an equal presence in Chilliwack and Abbotsford, with satellites elsewhere. There was to be a comprehensive curriculum, including continuing education, adult basic education, university transfer, two-year career programs, and vocational training in a more or less equal balance."

The first home of the Student Services department was in a vacant wing of the then-new WJ Mouat Secondary. Since his family had yet to join him, Close often stayed in his motorhome in the back parking lot. Getting in on the ground floor meant that he was around to witness the hiring of many of the first faculty members. "Our first principal, Larry Blake, was fairly adamant that he did not want to simply hire local secondary teachers because he wanted the new college to be seen as distinctly different than high school. There were a couple of exceptions to that rule, but mostly we were hiring young folks straight out of graduate school."

Development of the Fraser Valley College Culture

The culture that emerged at FVC was quite different from that at most other colleges that were a few years ahead of it in their development. "Because we were small and new, we had the opportunity to do things differently and learn from the experiences of the other colleges," Dick Bate recalls. "Personally, I'd seen a lot of negative attitude and behaviour on both sides of the union and management divide at my previous post, and I was looking forward to creating a place where we could work together rather than having a culture of us versus them. Those of us who were part of FVC from the beginning worked hard to lay the groundwork for a more positive culture. The whole place was very small, and administration, faculty and staff, had the opportunity to help set the tone, to contribute to how the place would operate, how schedules worked etc. Faculty had the freedom to teach, and to develop brand new programs and take on other initiatives. From the outset we all internalized the notion that we were there to support students in their quest for a post-secondary education."

Welcome to Fraser Valley College. Mid-1970s.

Image courtesy of University of the Fraser Valley

Image courtesy of University of the Fraser Valley

FVC Family picnic, circa 1980s.

It was an era when everyone truly knew everyone, and everyone's kids as well. College picnics and Christmas parties brought all the families out. "I think people appreciated that we had an interest in their whole life and wellbeing, not just the time they were at work," says Bate.

Many people have pointed to the early decision by faculty and staff to form one joint union (the Faculty and Staff Association) as pivotal in determining the culture of FVC, and Bate agrees. "I know Larry Blake liked the idea of one union, and I also think it was the right decision. It helped us avoid a lot of potential labour strife," he notes. "There were very few wedge issues between the board or administration and the over the years as a result of this approach. I would say that there was just a lot of goodwill from all sides and that helped us get things done." After a few years, the unique FVC culture began to become known. "People could see that FVC was a little different," recalls Bate. "They'd come back from provincial articulation meetings or conferences and report how good they felt about this place."

Early Instructors

September 1975 was the first fall semester taught by hired, full-time employees. Scott Fast was among those early hires, and was FVC's founding political scientist. It was a time of excitement, exuberance, exhaustion, and opportunity. "I can truly say I never worked harder in my life than when we were starting off, but what a wonderful creative opportunity it was," says Fast. "We were young, had energy, and were excited by the grandness of the task. In many cases, there was only one faculty member in each discipline, so you had a lot of freedom to design the curriculum and courses as you saw fit. It was a fabulous opportunity to invent a new model of education. . . ."

Teaching was the focus at the college in those early days. "My colleagues and I were very excited about teaching and about providing as good as or better classroom experience than we had had ourselves. We must have gotten something right, as when our lower-division students transferred on to upper-division classes at UBC or SFU, they did as well as or better than the students who had started out at those universities. We were always well respected for the quality of student that we sent on to the next level, but we achieved that by forging our own unique path, not by trying to be like every traditional university."

Classes were small, and many of the students were older, bringing life experience into the classroom. The instructors in those days weren't much older than the students. "Those of us who came here in the early days had an incredibly democratic view of education and I think we got it right," Fast says. "We didn't view ourselves as smarter than our students, but rather as people who'd been fortunate enough to get a good education, which we then wanted to pass on. There's no question that in many academic settings faculty can be insecure about their status and feel the need to hold themselves above their students. We created an environment where it was okay to be status secure. We stood at the front of the class in jeans and t-shirts talking to students in jeans and t-shirts."

Being part of an exciting new venture did a lot to forge bonds among the small group of initial FVC employees. So did being dropped into the middle of unfamiliar territory where few had family or social ties. "There were a few who were from the Valley, but the rest of us came from someplace else and for a long time we were our own little society," recalls Fast. "We had our own parties, our own romances and affairs, and passed houses and cars from one to another. We were young — mostly between 26 and 30 when we started — and

the deans weren't much older — around 35. Once people settled down and started having kids their social circles expanded but a lot of us made some very strong friendships in those early years."

Philosopher Paul Herman joined the faculty fulltime for the Fall 1975 semester, and he's been there ever since. "I was quite enthusiastic about coming to teach here," recalls Herman. "I really wanted to teach, and I was quite enthusiastic about being a big frog in a small pond. I quickly realized that we were all big frogs." With relatively few employees and a low-key management style that was present from day one, faculty members like Herman got the opportunity to be key players in developing much of the structure of the new college and in hiring new colleagues.

Pub Nights and Other Fun

Almost everyone was young in those days. There weren't many layers of division between management, faculty, and students. All could be found at weekly student pub nights in the Chilliwack cafeteria on Fridays. Perhaps they should have been called pub afternoons, as they started at 3 or 4 pm and continued on into the evening. Paul Herman recalls: "Chilliwack was the hub of the college. People would come up from Abbotsford for our pub nights. There would be bridge games with principal Larry Blake taking on faculty and students. It would often evolve into dinner out and parties at Cultus Lake, where quite a few people rented housing."

In the 1970s and '80s, everyone knew where they'd be headed for their Friday afternoon beer. They'd even bring their spouses and kids along. "Everybody knew everybody in those days, and we were all very young," recalls Kathie Ramsay, who has taught at UFV since the 1970s. "There was quite the party atmosphere to campus in those days. Even the deans were a part of it, walking down the hall on Friday afternoon where the beer and wine was kept in the fridge that was supposed to store film."

"You certainly knew where to find everyone at 4 pm every Friday," recalls Brian Coulter, one of FVC's first business instructors. "Students would return to campus just for the pub night, and they'd see their instructors and the college administrators there and get to know them."

"You have to recall that the Chilliwack offices were originally situated on top of The Answer disco," notes Erling Close. "We had a built in source of fun right downstairs and that really set the tone."

A Liberating Force

Paul Herman recalls that having a college come to town was very liberating for some of the older women students, many of whom had dropped out of university to marry and raise families. "One woman student in my first course was in her 70s and had been at UBC taking philosophy in the 1930s. Another, very bright woman really enjoyed questioning; in the context of the times and community, she might be termed uppity. She was divorced within two years." Others used the opportunities afforded by having a college in town to launch their education, and then transferred to SFU or UBC to finish their degree or pursue professional studies.

Early FVC student Joe Ogmundson is certain about one thing. Without FVC there's no way he would have forged a successful career as a teacher, high school counsellor, and basketball coach. "I watched my friends head off to UBC to study and I was jealous of them, but there was no way I could afford it," he recalls. "Then my mother showed me an ad

Church basements, including this one at Chilliwack United Church, provided some of the first classrooms. Note the portrait of Jesus, and the "tiny chairs" in the back. Scott Fast recalls that at first, the students had to sit in the "tiny chairs". "This was my first clue that I wasn't at Harvard University."

Including instructor Scott Fast, and students Joe Ogmundson (now a school counsellor and basketball coach at Chilliwack Senior), Randy Huth (now an assistant superintendent at Mission School District), Fred Tossell, Pat Sinclair

Image courtesy of University of the Fraser Valley

she'd clipped out about night school courses being offered by the new college in town, and I thought I could handle a pay-as-you-go plan, going to school at night and working during the day, so I signed up.

"Well, it turned out that I got a far better deal than my friends at UBC. They sat in giant lecture halls with hundreds of other students. Meanwhile, we got access to very dedicated instructors who knew us all by name and made themselves available to us. Our classes were small and intimate and our instructors marked our work in great detail and encouraged us to come back and improve it further.

"It made no difference that the college had no facilities at first and we had to take our courses at the high school or in church basements. What made a difference was that we were being introduced to Siddhartha, Walden, Gorgias, and other great works of literature."

By opening himself up to what his instructors had to offer, Ogmundson broadened his horizons without leaving Chilliwack. "I signed up for what I thought was an English literature class, but it ended up focusing on women's perspectives on literature. Those type of women's studies courses were just starting up back then, and there were only a couple of guys in the class. But the teacher, Esther Robinson, found a way to make us feel welcome and comfortable. It opened up a whole new way of looking at literature for me. We read books I never would have found on my own by authors I'd never heard of, like Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro. Here I was, a 19-year-old guy, thinking 'so that's what 45-year-old women are thinking about.'"

Joe did draw the line, however, at the mandatory hugs. "I had signed up for a psychology class and the male instructor wanted to greet everyone with a hug when we walked through the door. Well, there was no way I was going for that, so I went down the hall to Student Services to ask what else I could get into."

It was an intimate learning environment. Ogmundson feels like he got to know his instructors personally and considers some friends today. "Scott Fast sparked my political consciousness and got me to think things through logically. It was inspiring to see how dedicated the faculty members were to teaching and also to the community. They were living, breathing examples of making a difference in your community, whether it was in politics or the newly emerging environmental movement. "And in many ways it was just what this town needed. It was like the whole world had suddenly come to Chilliwack."

Aboriginal Partnerships

The history of FVC is deeply interwoven with the aboriginal communities situated within its region. There were aboriginal representatives on the first FVC boards, and the Coqualeetza Education Society, itself fairly new in the 1970s, worked with the young college to offer programming on Coqualeetza grounds and on First Nation reserves. (The Coqualeetza grounds in Chilliwack had been a residential school and then a tuberculosis hospital. By the 1970s the Sto:lo people were using the buildings for the education society.)

Heather Stewart (Commodore at the time) was among the first faculty members hired to teach upgrading, and she was assigned to the Coqualeetza grounds. She saw a mix of students in her upgrading programs in those first years. "The older ones had been to residential school and not ended up finishing high school. Some of them were initially very wary of us – understandably. The younger ones had gone to school locally but many didn't have a good experience there."

At Coqualeetza

From FVC: Principal Larry Blake, Betty Urquhart, Val Friesen. Others (identified by Her Honour, Gwen Point): Carl LaRock, Mark, Walter, Keith, and Kevin Point.

Image courtesy of University of the Fraser Valley

Eventually FVC went further afield and started offering programming on reserves such as Chehalis and Kilgaard, and in the communities of Boston Bar, Hope, Abbotsford, and Mission. This led to a need for independent, resourceful instructors. "My first test in a job interview was that I wouldn't provide directions to the interview site," Stewart says. "If they got there that proved they had some resiliency."

Focus on Mature Students

When the early days of Fraser Valley College are evoked, the prototypical "mature student" is often mentioned: the married woman with young kids who yearns for education but can't leave her community because of family obligations. Irene Tisdale is the epitome of that prototype. Now a much beloved and recently retired elementary school teacher with more than two decades of teaching experience behind her, Tisdale was once a young housewife who was curious about education. She heard at church about the new college. "I decided to give it a try and signed up for chemistry class held at night at Chilliwack Senior Secondary. The cost for the course was $20."

Taking one night school course a semester became her weekly night out. "I just loved being a student. That class was the highlight of my week," she recalls. "I decided that I just might be a student forever, which was a good thing since I could only handle one course at a time." One course at a time is how Tisdale managed to accumulate two years' worth of university studies credits – and it took her a dozen years to do so. She found the faculty members to be very supportive and inspiring, but was also very grateful for the help of librarians and support staff. "I wasn't a writer, and I knew nothing about research or libraries. If I had started at one of the big universities right away, there's no way I would have succeeded. Anne Knowlan, the librarian at the Chilliwack campus, helped me so much. Everyone who worked at the college created such an inviting and open atmosphere. I had never expected anything like that. It was so welcoming, it inspired me to keep coming back and taking more courses."

The work wasn't easy, but Tisdale slowly accumulated the skills to succeed as a post-secondary student. "I thought I'd better learn how to write better, so I took Virginia Cooke's English class, and my handwritten essays would come back with red marks all over them, but I wasn't completely discouraged. As hard as it was, the skills and education that my instructors provided opened up doors for me. The really critical learning processes that I went through gave me the steps to move forward with my education.

As she progressed as a student, Irene kept casting her net wider. She slowly accumulated a body of knowledge and transfer credits. She had her thoughts and beliefs challenged and learned to stand up for some, and to question others. "I had a really interesting time taking history with Bob Smith, since he was quite left-leaning and my husband worked in management for the municipality. We'd have these huge conversations and debates in class, and then I'd go home and tell Ted about them, and he'd say, 'well, you tell him such-and-such.' Then I'd go back to class, and Bob would say, 'Well, tell your husband to consider this.' It was an ongoing dialogue and very interesting to be part of it."

Concluding Thoughts

A sign on the admissions and records office from the early days of FVC proudly proclaims that 18 percent of local high school grads were choosing to go there. These days UFV captures more than 70 percent of the local graduating class. "The typical high school graduate did not see post-secondary education as part of their future," Bate recalls. "It always astounded me how little the community leadership of the day understood that education is an investment society must make in order to have productive communities. Rather it was too often viewed more simply as a large expense to the taxpayer. It took a long time for some folks to understand that a sound post-secondary system was critical to the health and growth of the community. UFV has been a major achievement for the Fraser Valley and has had a major impact on the communities it serves." ●

See more historic pictures at:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/ufv/

Archives & Archivists

by Val Patenaude and Sylvia Stopforth; edited by Sylvia Stopforth

Sylvia is a Librarian and Archivist at Norma Marian Alloway Library at Trinity Western University.

Val Patenaude is the director of the Maple Ridge Museum & Community Archives.

Val Patenaude talks about the lack of a mechanism for preserving school records. Sylvia Stopforth highlights some of the records that have been preserved in BC.

School Records—A Fragile Legacy

It doesn't take much time working in a community archives to discover that people are more keenly interested in their own youth, particularly their school years, than any other time in their lives. Therefore it is doubly disturbing to discover that there is no official mechanism for the collecting and preserving of school records. This may vary from school district to school district but it is a pretty safe assumption that there isn't one.

Our experiences with School District 42 have been very enlightening. We all know that schools operate for ten months and then close for two but few of us realize what that means in terms of continuity from one year to the next. There isn't any — and that is the root of the problem. Over the summer, teachers can be assigned to different schools, the students all move up a year or around the district, and parents feed in one end of the school cycle and then fall off the other as their children graduate.

At one point, we had a Museum Club going at one of the older local elementary schools. For two years we did programming with the students while they collected artefacts and photographs and catalogued them all. After the second year, both teachers involved were moved to other duties in different locations and within six months, there was not a person to be found who even knew there had been a Museum Club, never mind where their collections were. They were found on shelves in the back of an over-filled cupboard where we rescued them and transferred all the materials to our archives.

If communities want to preserve school records they have to get active and aggressive about it. If schools have old photos around, its most likely by accident and you're as likely to find them in a shabby box under someone's desk as in some place of honour. We have taken custody of all such materials found – and particularly from schools that were closing – on the understanding that the school would be provided with a listing of their "holdings" in the archives and that they would have the ability to borrow artefacts or get copies of documents for display purposes.

Far from being distressed at our actions, the schools have welcomed us with open arms as a resolution of a problem that many have been aware of but had no means to address.

School Days in BC: Looking Back

Thanks to the tireless efforts of archivists and volunteers throughout our province, some of the unique and irreplaceable materials documenting the history of education in BC have been preserved. These materials - records of school boards, churches, and individuals – provide us with windows into public and private schools of every stripe.

Following is just a sample of archival records whose descriptions can be found through the MemoryBC website (http://www.memorybc.ca/).

For more information, or to access these materials, contact staff at the various repositories directly.

All Hallows' School (Yale, BC) fonds

1899-1920
Anglican Diocese of New Westminster Archives

All Hallows began in 1854 at Shipmeadow, England, as a penitentiary designed to look after what were known as "fallen women". An active religious community of Sisters was formed at All Hallows to run a hospital, a school for girls, as well as to look after visitors.

Three sisters from the All Hallows community arrived in Yale in 1884, using the parsonage adjoining St. John's Church as a school for First Nations girls. Following

negotiations initiated by Bishop Sillitoe, a new school was built in 1888. Given the high quality of the education prevailing in the school, families in New Westminster and other parts of B.C., where at that time no advanced educational facilities existed, began to seek admission for their daughters. In 1890, another wing was added to take care of the needs of the non-Native girls. The fee for entrance into this part of the school was $5, with board and education costing $30 a month. The school possessed spacious playing grounds, with two tennis courts, a basketball court, hockey and croquet grounds.

The school closed its doors in 1916, and the Sisters returned to England in 1920.

The fonds includes: Baptism register (1902-1920); service register (1914-1920); student records of First Nations girls (1910-1922, photocopy); handwritten letters and notes. Includes also printed copies of "All Hallows in the West", a school triennial publication (1899, 1907, 1908, 1919). The Student register of First Nations girls includes also includes names of students admitted at Spuzzum and at St. George's Indian Residential School, Lytton.

Jean McDiarmid fonds

ca. 1920-1979
Delta Museum and Archives

Jean McDiarmid (ca. 1904-1990) was a teacher at the following schools: Crescent Beach School, Inverholme School, Ladner Elementary School. She married Norman Jack Crees (1901-1992), a Minister of Ladner United Church, in 1953.

The fonds includes: photographs of Miss Jean McDiarmid's students at Inverholme School and at Delta Central School, and news clippings from the Delta Optimist of the King George V High School reunion.

Magoichi Odamura fonds

ca. 1942-1946
Japanese Canadian National Museum

Magoichi Odamura was born March 10, 1911; he lived in Steveston, and relocated to Haney ca. 1928. He was later interned at Slocan, B.C.

The fonds consists of photographs of the Japanese Language School in Steveston, as well as images of the internment camp at Slocan.

Peace River Rural School District fonds

1928-1938
South Peace Historical Society Archives

Until the late 1930s each one-room rural school in the Peace River area of British Columbia had its own three-man School Board, built its own school and hired its own teacher. In order for a school to remain open, at least ten students had to be registered, with a daily average of eight or more. While some of these schools did an excellent job of educating the children, others found it increasingly difficult to manage or even to remain in operation. Eventually, many of the schools were placed under the control of an Official Trustee appointed by the Department of Education in Victoria. From there it was a logical — though not universally welcome — step to amalgamate the seventy or more separate districts into one large administrative unit called the Peace River Rural School District.

The fonds includes: administrative records, maps and correspondence related to

Steveston Japanese kindergarten; Steveston, BC. circa 1942-1946

Japanese Canadian National Museum. 1996.178.1.40

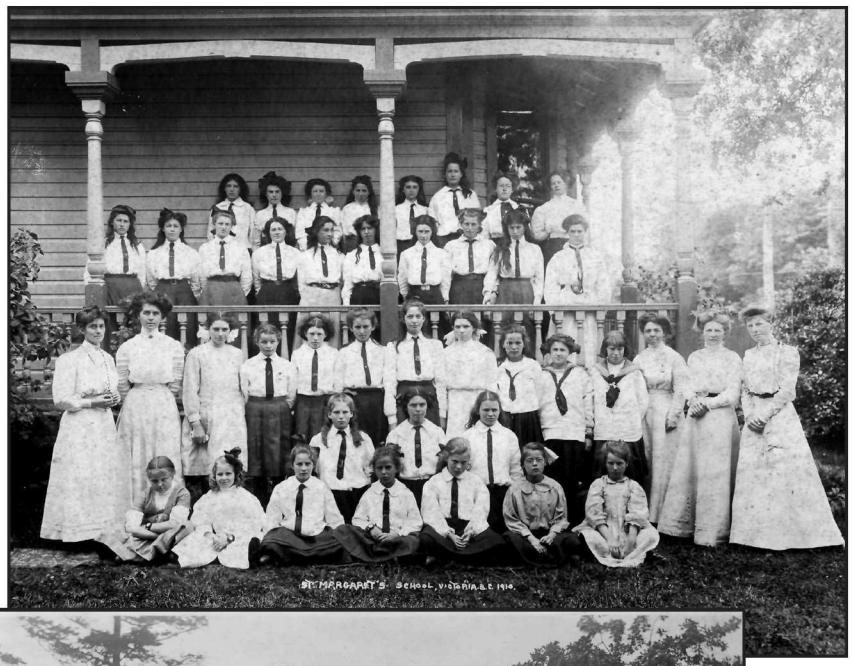
the establishment and operation of some seventy one-room rural schools in the Peace River area between 1928 and 1938.

St. Margaret's School fonds

1908 -
St. Margaret's School Archives

St. Margaret's School for Girls was founded in Victoria in 1908 by Edith and Isabel Fenwick. The school started in a house on Cook Street. When the Fenwick sisters were drowned in a tragic boating accident in 1911, Margaret Barton took over as headmistress; she moved the school to new buildings on a campus at the corner of Fort and Fern Streets in 1912. The school remained there until 1970 when it moved to its present location on Lucas Avenue in Saanich.

The fonds include: prospectuses, address books, report cards, award and trophy records, student records and photographs.●



NUMBER 2004-009/001, ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL, PHOTOGRAPHER: SHAW BROS

NUMBER 2004-009/014, ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL

NUMBER 2004-007/057, ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL

Top: St. Margaret's School students and staff, 1910.

Middle: Pageant of St. Margaret, circa 1913.

Bottom: St. Margaret's School matriculation class, 1924-1925.

From the Book Review Editor's Desk

The Ideals of Penmanship

My neighbour Lenna and her son John came by for lunch the other day. Lenna is a bright and beautiful older woman and John (formerly one of seven Regional Distance Education Principals) an intelligent and hilarious guest who enlivens conversation with his ability to quote at length from an astonishing array of texts.

Lenna was a teacher at Stave Lake school before she married Newell Manly in 1940, and when her kids were grown, she returned to teaching in the Langley School District. On her marriage, she gained a family of teachers with experience first on the prairies of the 1930s and later elsewhere, notably at Langley Secondary School (where both Newell and his brother Harrington, were on staff).

In the almost 140 years of public education in BC, teachers have taught not only in large schools in urban centres, but also in makeshift schools in rural places such as Argenta, Blubber Bay, Rolla, Chezacut, Tachme. They have held classes on barges moving between logging camps and in classrooms so cold the inkwells froze. They have stoked fires, scalded water cups, limed outhouses, hunted nits, organized community concerts, and taught many grades in a single room. Today the challenges are different, but teachers remain the enemies of lice and the mentors of our children.

Much diversity in experience exists in the divide between past and present, but much common ground can be found — and nothing is more pressing in our age of computers than the need for clear communication. In his belief that clear communication — achieved through the standardization of handwriting — was a thread of civility that binds us, one of BC's educational giants, H.B. MacLean, put his mark on education in British Columbia for more than seventy years.

His MacLean Method of Handwriting was used in BC between its development in 1921 and its demise in 1996, and was delivered to teachers with wisdom about classroom management ("enthusiasm begets enthusiasm") and homilies on the aspirations of education.

As a student in the late 1930s at Vancouver Normal School, Lenna fondly remembers both the rigour and kindness of H.B. MacLean. Although she failed her handwriting test on her first attempt, she studied hard, met MacLean's standards, and got her certificate. While observing her nervous performance in a teaching practicum, MacLean took her quietly aside and pointed out that she had misspelled a key word on the blackboard. Although wanting to droop with embarrassment, she did not have to, but simply erased the offending word and carried on. In this interchange, MacLean lived an adage he had recorded in his teachers' guide, "The honest attempt of pupils, no matter how crude, should never be ridiculed."

His actions remind me of those of my beloved photo teacher Mr. Barker, who, with breathtaking deftness — and without a hint of ridicule - dropped my term mark from A to D for lazily coasting on ability. In doing so, Mr. Barker asked that I bring the best of myself to the art of photography and to the classroom every day. His was a powerful lesson.

But isn't this what the best of teachers do? They brim with enthusiasm, model hard work, and teach humility and empathy through their methods. They ask of their students the most they can give. Great teachers help children extend the reach of their intellect and forge connections with the world.

Lenna's lessons from MacLean himself remind us that the ideals of penmanship exceed the act of writing just as my lessons from Mr. Barker remind us that the journey of education exceeds the path of accreditation, the amassing of check marks beside one's name. It must include individual exposure to the ideals of human history. Great teachers know that these ideals exist in their everyday clothes in the classroom. They help kids to see them, and in doing so help kids see their links to the past, to each other, and to the boldness of our common future.

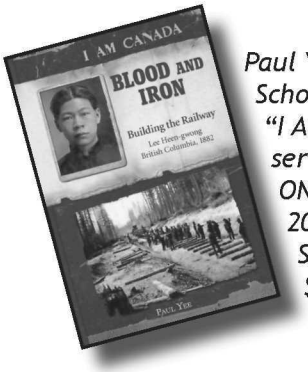
I have taken MacLean's quotes from Shirley Cuthbertson's article called "H.B. MacLean's Method of Writing" in the *BC Historical News* 32.1 (Winter 1998-1999). It is available online at *http:bchistory.library.ubc.ca*. In honour of the readers of the future, I have included reviews of some new books for young adults.

K. Jane Watt, Book Review Editor

Book Reviews

Books for review and book reviews should be sent to:
K. Jane Watt, Book Review Editor, *British Columbia History*
Box 1053, Fort Langley BC V1M 2S4

Blood and Iron: Building the Railway.



Paul Yee. Part of Scholastic Canada's "I Am Canada" series. Markham ON: Scholastic, 2010. 240 pages. Softcover $14.99.

Teen Fiction Teaches Unique Histories of BC

They came from villages in southern China more than a century ago, boarding boats in Hong Kong to travel to British Columbia. In the hands of accomplished author Paul Yee, this immigrant story still offers fresh insights. *Blood and Iron* is part of a series of historical fiction aimed at Canadian youth and focuses on the life and sacrifices of Chinese railway workers as they built a dangerous section of track along the Fraser Canyon.

Blood and Iron is told by Lee Heen-gwong, a teenager who arrives to a new world with his father Ba in 1882. Heen faithfully records his adventures and thoughts in diary form. While Ba gambles away earnings meant for family members back home, Heen questions his father's actions, shifting from a sense of pride to anger. By relying on friendships with the railway work gang, as well as his own strength, Heen is able to survive and accept life's hard lessons. Over time Heen builds an understanding of himself as surely as he helps build the "iron road."

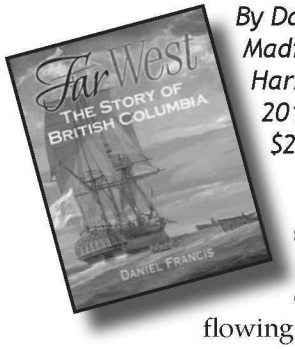
"If the man swung his hammer and missed the drill, then he would shatter his partner's arm," Heen observes. "The bone would explode into a million little splinters and never be healed. Spellbound I watched. It was hard to imagine men working so hard at so ungiving a job. To throw men and axes against giant trees was nothing compared to throwing men and puny little drills against a mountain!"

Living in segregated quarters, Heen deals with the bullying from the "Red Beards," as the Caucasian workers were called by the Chinese. There were other dangers too: "Loud shouting arose from the Red Beards' camp last night," Heen writes. "We heard sharp cracks. In the morning, we learned a bear had been prowling around their camp."

Heen gleans many insights as he moves closer to manhood by story's end. *Blood and Iron* concludes with a historical note by Paul Yee, as well as a glossary, map and archival photographs of Chinese railway gangs. It is an entertaining and educational story, recommended for readers ages 12 and up.

***Janet Nicol** is a Vancouver-based freelance writer, history teacher, and accomplished blogger. See her blog for yourself at http://janetnicol.wordpress.com*

Far West: The Story of British Columbia



By Daniel Francis. Madiera Park: Harbour, Softcover 2010. 175 pages. $22.95.

This new softcover edition is a combination of flowing manuscript, maps, pictures, and historic and recent paintings. Dotted through the pages are pink inserts, "FAST FACTS" and curt biographical notes. Attention-getting statements such as "using a razor-sharp knife a skilled butcher could process 2,000 salmon in a 10 hour working day" or "the first electric streetcar in Victoria could reach a speed of 15 km an hour" leap out of fast fact boxes.

As I leafed through *Far West*, I envisioned the probable reaction of young, sometimes reluctant students: "This book is fun. This book is interesting. There are so many neat facts." To which I add the observation that there are many excellent pictures, some variations of oft-published illustrations. Thanks to Dan Francis, this history for young readers flows from the fur trade and gold rush right through to the 2010 Olympics.

A teacher's guide to *Far West* is available in pdf at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/program.

East Kootenay historian and author of Fort Steele, ***Naomi Miller** is a former editor of* British Columbia History *and is also active in the BC History of Nursing Society.*

Counting on Hope

Sylvia Olsen. Counting on Hope. Winlaw BC: Sono Nis, 2009. 299 pages. Softcover $14.95.

What happens when a twelve year old girl from a First Nations family on a small island off the coast of British Columbia makes friends with a British girl her

own age, recently arrived with her family?

This growing relationship is the premise of *Counting on Hope*, a historical novel by Sylvia Olsen. A writer of modern teen fiction, in this new novel, Olsen explores a cross-cultural friendship in the early days of contact in British Columbia. Hope is a "hwulmuhw" (European newcomer) who settles on Wallace Island with her family, while Letia and the Lamalcha community, living in their summer home on another part of the island, are watchful. Narration alternates between the two young girls as they describe their very different worlds -- Hope's story is shaped in conventional prose while Letia's story uses free verse. The novel's action is slow-moving with lots of descriptive detail as the girls build a friendship.

When Letia gives Hope the gift of a doll, Hope observes that "She smiled and looked pleased that I had expressed delight at the doll." Letia sees in the same incident a different exchange: "Perhaps she did not understand/that I was giving her a gift,/a token of friendship." But eventually Hope does comprehend as the seeking of harmony between the girls stands in contrast to the suspicion and prejudice of their elders.

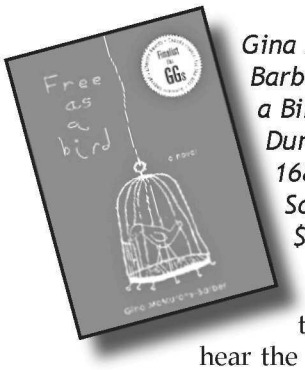
The story culminates in the historical confrontation between the British navy and the residents of Kuper Island in 1863. Hope's family evacuates the island. Letia's people are shattered by the military's assault. But the story's end promises the survival of a special cross-cultural friendship, despite the pressures of the greater community.

Counting on Hope is well-imagined and paints a lush portrait of the little known past of the Gulf Islands, opening the door for readers to a wider perspective of the peoples populating early BC history. This novel is recommended for high school English and Social Studies students.

Sylvia Olsen won the 2010 City of Victoria Bolen Books Children's Book Prize for *Counting on Hope*.

***Janet Nicol** is a Vancouver-based freelance writer, history teacher, and accomplished blogger. See her blog for yourself at http://janetnicol.wordpress.com*

Free as a Bird



Gina McMurchy-Barber. Free as a Bird. Toronto: Dundurn, 2010. 168 pages. Softcover $12.99.

We enter the mind and hear the voice of Ruby Jean Sharp, a girl born in 1957 with Down syndrome. *Free as a Bird* follows her journey from confinement to freedom, from abusive relationships to loving ones. Author Gina McMurchy-Barber, an award-winning writer and educator whose sister was born with Down syndrome, brings a sense of empathy and compassion to the storytelling.

"I growed up in Woodlands School," Ruby recounts on the opening page. From the time of her placement by her mother in "Ward 33" of this controversial mental health treatment centre for children and adults that existed in New Westminster from 1878 to 1996, Ruby reveals her observations about people, including the "uniforms" -- as she calls the staff members. The wisdom Ruby gains here is rarely due to staff or to institutional programs, reflecting the limited help offered the "mentally retarded," as those with intellectual disabilities were called in Ruby's time.

"Sometimes I scratched my hands cause I was angry," Ruby explains. "Sometimes I scratched em on account of I got the jitters. Like the night before when the new uniform dint leave a light on in the hall. But there was lotsa things that made me jittery, like amblances an too many uniforms in my room at one time. But it's the dark that gets me jittery the most."

A few helpful teachers at Woodlands give Ruby the time and attention she needs to grow. She eventually leaves as part of a government initiative to move the disabled in to the community and is placed with a caring older couple in a home where she blossoms. But a misunderstanding leads Ruby to run away and her vulnerability is dramatically exposed as she tries to survive on the streets of downtown Vancouver.

Ruby realises her dream to be "free as a bird" by story's end. This touching and authentic story is followed by an author's note containing a brief history of Woodlands, including mention of patient care issues still lingering today. *Free as a Bird* is highly recommended for mature young readers.

***Janet Nicol** is a Vancouver-based freelance writer, history teacher, and accomplished blogger. See her blog for yourself at http://janetnicol.wordpress.com*

Cabinets of Curiosities

King Edward High School 1923 Song Book

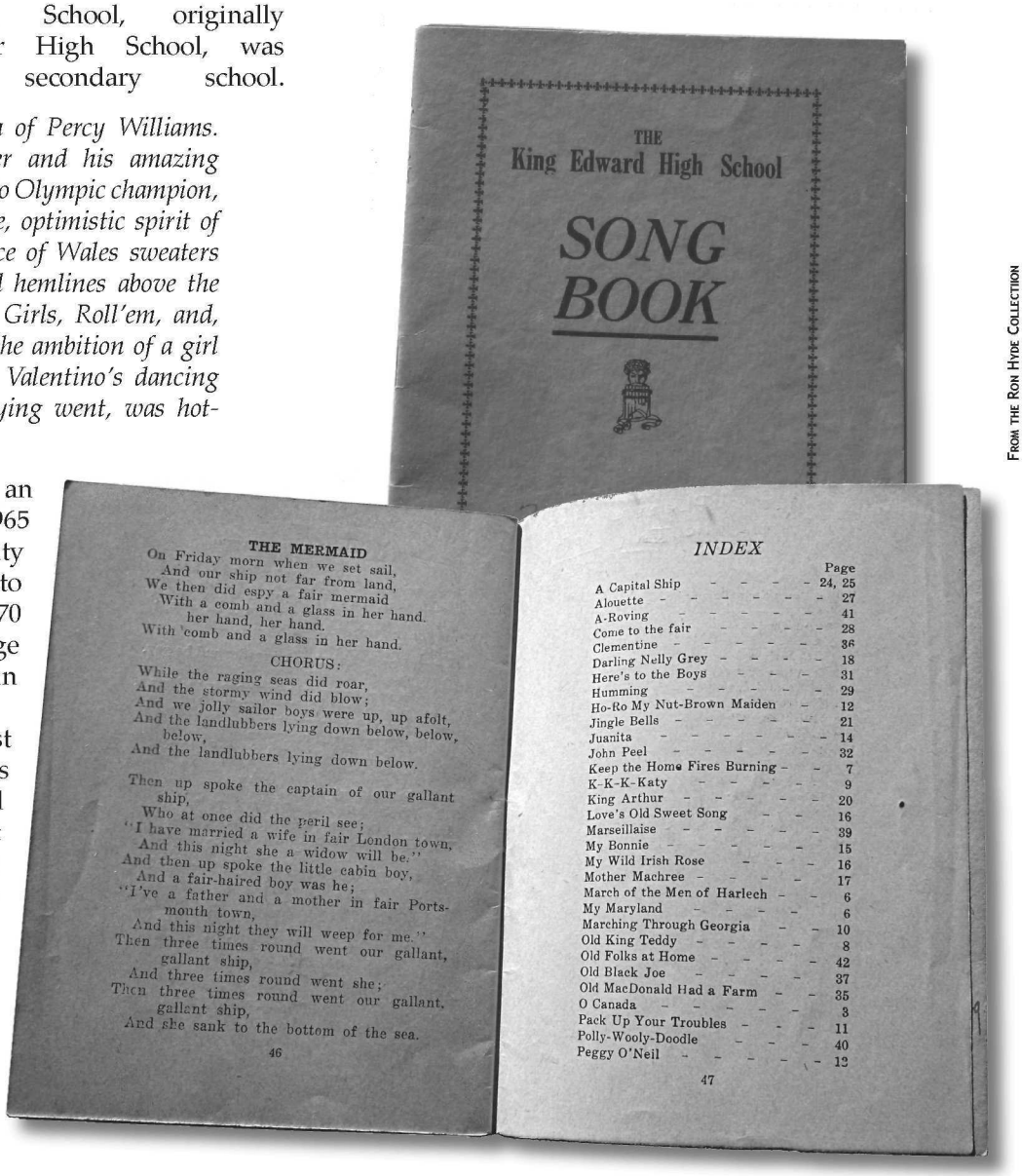
King Edward High School in Vancouver celebrated 100 years in July 2010.

King Edward High School, originally known as Vancouver High School, was Vancouver's first secondary school.

The twenties were the era of Percy Williams. This lithe, clean-cut youngster and his amazing success, from schoolboy runner to Olympic champion, seemed to epitomize the carefree, optimistic spirit of the times. The boys wore Prince of Wales sweaters and plus-fours, the girls raised hemlines above the knee, everybody sang Roll'em, Girls, Roll'em, and, the 1924 matric annual noted the ambition of a girl named Helen Lamb was to be Valentino's dancing partner. Everything, as the saying went, was hot-diggity-dog.[1]

In 1962, the school became an adult education centre and in 1965 it became part of the Vancouver city college complex. The site was sold to Vancouver General Hospital in 1970 although still used by the college until a fire destroyed the building in 1973.

The Oak Street and West 12th Avenue school's graduates include philanthropist Cecil Green, Olympic gold medalist Percy Williams, athlete and doctor Doug Clement, actress Yvonne DeCarlo of The Munsters fame, DJ Red Robinson, journalist Jack Wasserman, politicians Grace McCarthy, Jack Volrich and George Puil, the late B.C. Lions president Bob Ackles, and football player and coach Lorne Cullen.●



From the Ron Hyde Collection

The King Edward High School Song Book, 1923. Cover and inside, page 46 with The Mermaid song and first page of the *index.*

Do you have an object of curiosity in your cabinet?

Send me 300 to 400 words with a high-resolution image of the object, telling me the story of the object. Email your story to: bcheditor@bchistory.ca

1. Ray Gardner, "Portrait of a High School—King Ed," Maclean's, September 12, 1959.

Awards and Scholarship Information

for complete details go to http://bchistory.ca/awards/index.html

W. KAYE LAMB Essay Scholarships

Deadline: May 15

The British Columbia Historical Federation awards two scholarships annually for essays written by students at BC colleges or universities, on a topic relating to British Columbia history. One scholarship ($750) is for an essay written by a student in a first or second year course; the other ($1000) is for an essay written by a student in a third or fourth year course.

To apply for the scholarship all candidates must submit (1) a letter of application and (2) a letter of recommendation from the professor for whom the essay was written. First and second year course essays should be 1,500-3,000 words; third and fourth year,1,500 to 5,000 words. By entering the scholarship competition the student gives the editor of *British Columbia History* the right to edit and publish the essay if it is deemed appropriate for the magazine.

Applications with 3 printed copies of the essay should be submitted to: Marie Elliott, Chair BC Historical Federation Scholarship Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

Anne & Philip Yandle Best Article Award

Deadline: To be eligible, the article must have appeared in the BCHF journal British Columbia History ***for that year.***

A Certificate of merit and $250 will be awarded annually to the author of the article, published in *British Columbia History*, that best enhances knowledge of BC's history and provides reading enjoyment. Judging will be based on subject development, writing skill, freshness of material, and appeal to a general readership interested in all aspects of BC history.

BC History Web Site Prize

Deadline: December 31

The British Columbia Historical Federation and David Mattison are jointly sponsoring a yearly cash award of $250 to recognize Web sites that contribute to the understanding and appreciation of British Columbia's past. The award honours individual initiative in writing and presentation.

Nominations for the BC History Web Site Prize must be made to the British Columbia Historical Federation, Web Site Prize Committee, prior to the 31st of December each year. Web site creators and authors may nominate their own sites. Prize rules and the online nomination form can be found on the British Columbia Historical Federation Web site: http://bchistory.ca/awards/website/index.html

Best Newsletter Award

Deadline: March 1

Newsletters published by member societies are eligible to compete for an annual prize of $250. They will be judged for presentation and content that is interesting, newsy and informative.

- Only member societies of the BCHF are eligible
- Only one issue of a society's newsletter will be evaluated
- Submit three printed copies of this best issue from the previous calendar year
- BCHF reserves the right not to award a prize in a given year should applications not be of sufficient quality

Submit three printed copies of a single newsletter issue to: Barry Gough, BCHF Recognition Committee, P.O. Box 5037, Victoria, BC V8R 6N3

Certificate of Merit

Deadline: March 1

Group or individual who has made a significant contribution to the study, project, or promotion of British Columbia's history.

Certificate of Recognition

Deadline: March 1

Given to individual members or groups of members of BCHF Member Societies who have given exceptional service to their Organization or Community.

Certificate of Appreciation

Deadline: March 1

Individuals who have undertaken ongoing positions, tasks, or projects for BCHF.

Nominations

Any member of BCHF may nominate candidates for Certificates of Appreciation, Certificates of Merit or Certificates of Recognition. Nominations, supported by a letter explaining why the nominee is deserving of a certificate, should be submitted to the Chair of the Recognition Committee by 1 March of each year.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing

Deadline: December 31

Each year, the British Columbia Historical Federation invites submissions for its Annual Historical Writing Competition to authors of BC history; and the winning author is awarded the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing.

Eligibility

- To be eligible, a book must be about BC history and be published within the competition year
- Non-fiction books representing any aspect of BC history are eligible.
- Reprints or revisions of books are not eligible
- Books may be submitted by authors or publishers
- Deadline for submission is December 31 of the year in which the book was published

Submission Requirements

- For information about making submissions contact Lieutenant-Governor's Award for Writing
- Authors/Publishers are required to submit three copies of their book
- Books are to be accompanied by a letter containing the following:
  1. Title of the book submitted
  2. Author's name and contact information
  3. Publisher's name and contact information
  4. Selling price
- Books entered become property of BCHF
- By submitting books for this competition, the authors agree that the BCHF may use their name(s) in press releases and in its publications

Barb Hynek (until May 2011) Email: writing@bchistory.ca Phone: 604-535-9090

Judging Criteria

Judges are looking for quality presentations and fresh material. Submissions will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Scholarship: quality of research and documentation, comprehensiveness, objectivity and accuracy
- Presentation: organization, clarity, illustrations and graphics
- Accessibility: readability and audience appeal

Publicity

All winners will receive publicity and an invitation to the Award's Banquet at the Federation's annual conference in May following the year of publication.

Lieutenant-Governor's Medal and Other Awards

The BC Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing will be awarded together with $600 to the author whose book makes the most significant contribution to the history of British Columbia. The 2nd and 3rd place winners will receive $400 and $200 respectively. Certificates of Honourable Mention may be awarded to other books as recommended by the judges.

Johnson Inc. Scholarship

Deadline: September 15

Canadian residents completing high school and who are beginning post-secondary education. 100 scholarships of $1500 each for Canada.

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Photos from when Marjorie King taught at Waterloo school in Cassidy BC. 1941-42

Courtesy of Marjorie King