

## Newsletter November & December 2016



### MID-WINTER CLOSURES



The Maple Ridge Museum & Archives will close from December 19 to January 3 so that our staff can take some holidays.

Haney House will be closed for all of November and December.

Numbers of visitors are low at that time of year and the house is very dark inside. We are hoping to do some work on the house during this closure.

### NEW HISTORIC RESOURCES



The city has been digitizing council minutes and many are now available on the city website. While not particularly suited for light reading, they are a valuable resource for those seeking information on family activities in particular years.

Interested? Go to the [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca) web site, click the Living Here tab, and look for the History & Heritage page. Look down at the lower right side of the page and you will find a list of PDF files that you can download.

### DARS OPEN HOUSE



The Dewdney Alouette Railway Society will have their December open house on Sunday, December 18th as their regular day falls on Christmas Day.

Come and enjoy the trains and the station dressed for Christmas. If you haven't been for a while, you're in for a great treat as the club has been hard at work adding new buildings and details.

### CONCERT AT THE LITTLE BRICK CHURCH



Laurie Thain and friends bring "A Warm Winter Wish" to our St Andrews Heritage Church Hall on Saturday, December 3rd, at 2pm.

Tickets are \$20 with complimentary coffee, hot chocolate and cookies served. As seating is limited, reservations are recommended at [purepacificmusic@gmail.com](mailto:purepacificmusic@gmail.com) or by phone to Laurie at 604-530-6530.

## SERENDIPITY STRIKES

Mysteries abound in museum work.

Resources often come to us by a circuitous path and along the way, lose details about their origins. So it was with a set of about 200 Abernethy & Lougheed Logging photos that the Dewdney Alouette Railway Society borrowed from the UBC Research Forest in the late 1990s.

At that time, the source of the photo collection had been lost and all that was clear to us was that what they had was a copy set and not the originals. So this is a mystery of long standing.

Last week we received an enquiry about the history of the UBC Research Forest and while checking out our digitized resources, I came across an article that answered the question.

It talks about a Golden Ears Park interpreter, Gail Ross, who was writing a history of logging in the

park and research forest and who was shown a set of photos that had been found in a house on the west side of Maple Ridge that was being demolished. The Research Forest had obtained two sets of copy prints from the finder and gave one set to Ms Ross for Golden Ears Park.

So we have more of the story than we did before but we still don't know what happened to the originals. *vp*



Crossing of the A & L railway line over the CPR main line near Kanaka Creek leading to the log dump on the Fraser River.



This view of Haney House shows it in 1972, five years before it was donated to the community by the Hawley, Haney & Isaac families. In this picture, the roof is duroid shingles. Sometime in the 1979-81 period, the house was reroofed with shingles and now needs roofing again. The roof replacement and the renewing of interior finishes will be based on the recommendations of Don Luxton, architect and heritage building expert, who has done a conservation plan for the building so that it will last many more years.



## HOLIDAY TRAIN

As the *Maple Ridge News* chronicled in December of 1990 when recalling an earlier version of a "Holiday Train":

All through the depression years, jobless men hopped rides on freight trains, searching for work. Many of them found a warm, dry place to sleep in the sheds of the Port Haney Brick Company, where they climbed up on the ledges around the cooling brick kilns to sleep, and made little fires to cook what food they could beg from local merchants.

There was a story of one such gentleman, Dick Thorndyke, who came up with the idea of playing Santa Claus for the children. The local shop owners supported him by donating candies and toys for the children, and advertised his arrival in the Gazette. Each year he would borrow a Santa suit from a Sunday school and climb onto the CPR train in Hammond with his bag of gifts. At Haney, he was greeted by children and would hand out goodies to the visitors. This continued for a few years until Thorndyke drifted out of town again.

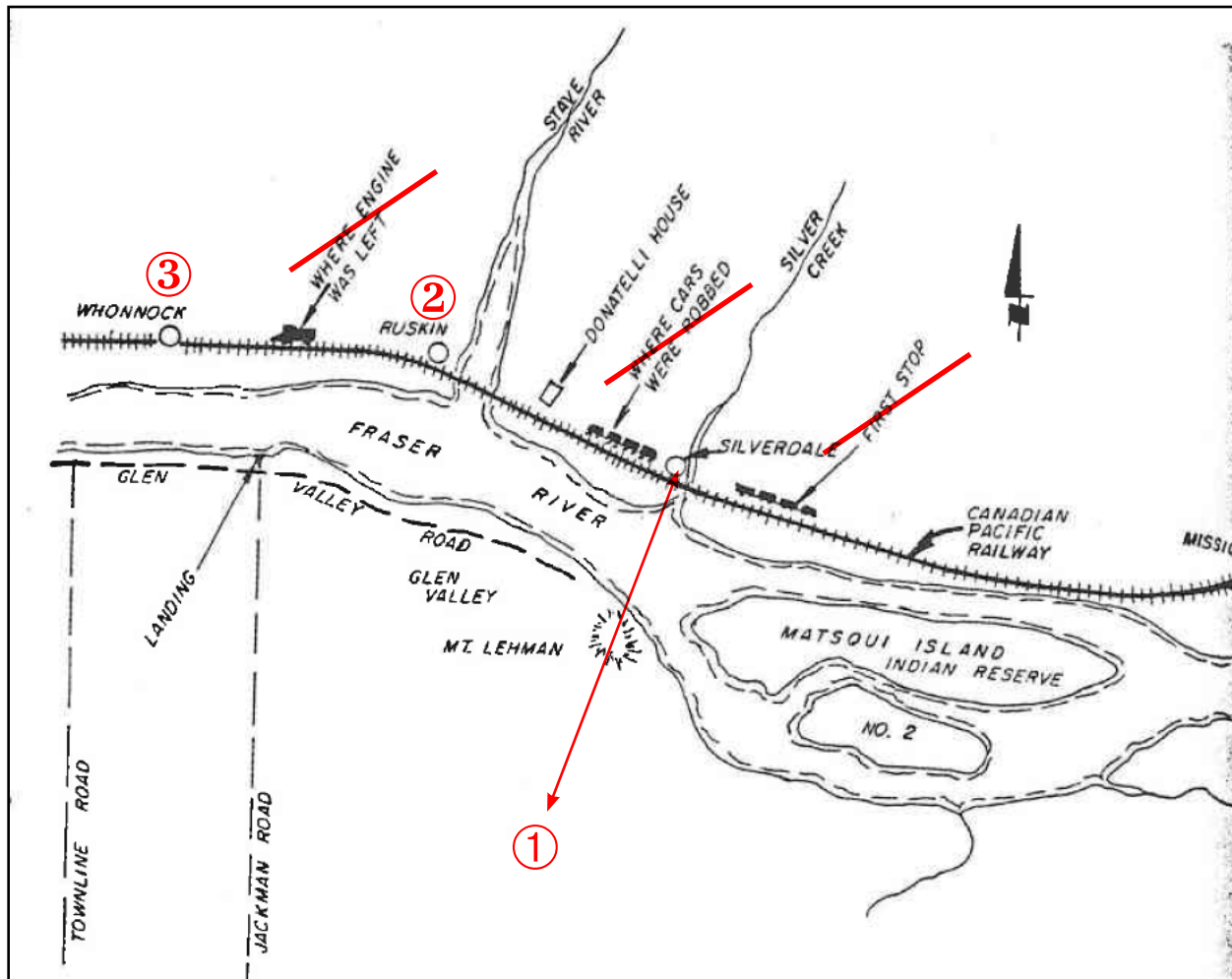


Every year the CPR Holiday Train travels through dozens of communities, providing live entertainment for visitors, while raising food and cash donations for North American food banks. Again this year, the Holiday Train is encouraging people attending events to bring heart-healthy donations. The train is set to arrive at Port Haney Station in Maple Ridge with live music from Dallas Smith and Odds - December 16, 2016 at 7:30pm

Also, if you'd like to know about history on trains and transport in Maple Ridge, during the month of December the Maple Ridge Museum will have two displays in the public library; one on train transport, and another on paddle wheelers. *aw*



A beehive kiln showing the ledges where a cold man could get a warm night's sleep.



## NEW INFORMATION ABOUT BILL MINER'S 1904 TRAIN ROBBERY

Much has been written about Bill Miner's daring deeds, including the historical 1904 holdup of a Canadian Pacific Railway train between Mission and Silverdale, the robbery and the getaway across the Fraser at Whonnock. The published descriptions of the 1904 event are mostly sketchy, based on hearsay, lacking in research. There is one extraordinary exception: the book *Interred with their bones, Bill Miner in Canada*, by the late Peter Grauer, self-published in 2006. However, what escaped the attention of the author is a recently discovered dispatch published in Victoria's *Daily Colonist*. This is an account of the engineer, Nat Scott, given hours after the ill-fated train arrived in Vancouver. It must perhaps be given more credence than other sources.

Above is a copy of a map in the Grauer book. According to Scott's account, ① his first forced stop was exactly at the Silver Creek. "Here the man who did the talking told me to go slow over the bridge and leave the passenger coaches on the east side." The passengers were not molested. ② The actual looting took place near Heaps mill in Ruskin – not on the Donatelli property. There was no railway station in Ruskin yet. ③ From Ruskin, without any wagons attached, the engine sped away to Whonnock. Bill Miner and his friends were dropped off at "the creek just this side of Whonnock siding." That was at Cook Creek, right at the Whonnock wharf. There they "borrowed" a rowboat to cross the Fraser and vanished in the night. fb



Photo by Val Patenaude

In June 2001 Grade 10 students of Maple Ridge Secondary recreated a Billy Miner holdup at the Donatelli farm.

## A YOUNG ADMIRER

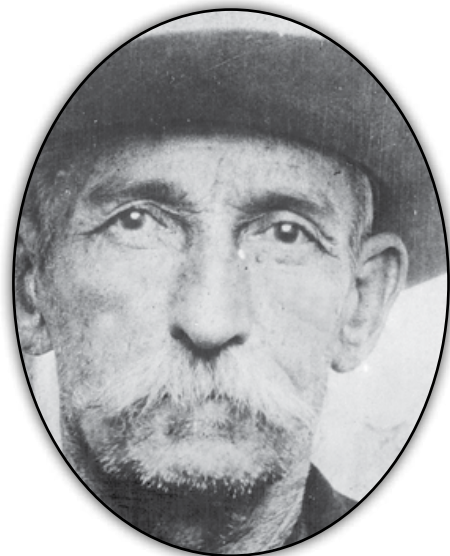
*From a letter by Adele [York] Wilcox to her brother Albert York.*

Bill Miner was a pal of mine when I was eleven & Cora [Williamson, a cousin] 14. We were going up the [rail] track to the school. We met a very genial gentleman who asked us about the store, post office and telegraph office. I told him all and that my dad owned the store and had the post office & telegraph office in the store. He asked who lived next to the school. It was Mr. Lee. And did Mr. Lee have a rowboat? I showed it to him, we could see [the] boat from the track.

He asked about Glen Valley & the hills back of us too. A few nights later, at eleven at night, a knock came to the door. Mother went and there was the C.P.R. conductor. He said, "I must talk to L.C. York." Mother said, "you can't, he is in the bath." But the man persisted & went to the bathroom. The train had been held up & robbed of a goodly sum, just near the school & Mr. Lee's boat was gone. Bill got away & I was glad.

Our place swarmed with police & detectives and the Pinkerton police from the States. I was questioned until I was scared stiff & Cora was horrid & said I'd have to go to court. She upset me so I was sent with her to Regina for some six moths. Bill got across the border at Glen Valley....

*Whonnock Notes* No. 6, "Whonnock 1897: John Williamson's Dairy," p. 56.



DEWDNEY-ALOUETTE



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

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

Info: Dick Sutcliffe at 604-467-4301 or E-Mail: [ras1@uniserve.com](mailto:ras1@uniserve.com)

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

**MAPLE RIDGE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

