



MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



"The Café"

**The flame that
drove change...**

A recent research request has brought interest in the once overlooked "Café" of historic Port Haney. The main drag of town, River Road, was once host to all the main businesses in town, including the bank, general store, hotel, post office, and of course restaurant. Situated on the southeast corner of the Pacific Berry Growers building, it was a simple good place to get a bite to eat. But by 1925 the glamorous and glitzy 1920's had hit Port Haney. A 1925 Gazette article proudly boasts the coming of a modern stylish café to humble little Port Haney. Until this moment "Mr. W.A. Knox was satisfied with conducting a good restaurant, but is now determined on having a veritable City Café." The article details what customers will expect from a trip to the newly refinished Knox Café, being treated to gold leaf printed signs,

columns that resembled marble, finished ceilings, beautifully designed linoleum floors, and counter-tops made of the finest mahogany. Ladies were especially encouraged to visit the café with their "women's groups." This acted as a means of encouraging women to settle in Maple Ridge, hence the extensive newspaper coverage. The biggest selling point of course was the bright and flashy lighting fixtures on the latest electrical lines, a gramophone, radio, refrigerator unit, and a soda fountain. This café was a marvel for the paper and presumably for the people of Maple Ridge, who would have needed to go into New Westminster or Vancouver for such quality prior to the new Knox Café. While the café changed hands several times over the next seven years, it would retain the name and glamour. Besides the impact this Café would have on the dining of local residents, its own hubris would be its undoing, and the undoing of Port Haney itself. On November 30, 1932 at 3:00am, the proprietor of the Knox Café was woken by the sound of an explosion and the smell of smoke. The motor on the café refrigerator unit had exploded and soon the entire building was up in flames. By the time fire crews arrived all they could do was try to contain the fire, which they successfully did, saving the Bank of Montreal. All together the town lost the doctor's office, Knox Café, Pool Room, Barber Shop, Post Office, a private home, freight shed, and the C.P.R. train station. Thankfully no one was hurt but the fire caused \$25,000 (\$500,000 today) in damage and really was the final nail in the coffin of old Port Haney. A year prior, Lougheed Highway was completed and some businesses, like Fuller-Watson, had already moved to the "upper town" along the main road. With this fire, the rest of the Port Haney businesses would follow. This truly does show that every building, every person, every piece of Maple Ridge history has a story to tell.



Val's retirement

The end of an era

After 27 years working for the Maple Ridge Historical society, our fearless leader Val Patenaude is taking a well deserved retirement. Val began working at the museum in 1993 after getting involved volunteering with the community heritage commission. An archaeologist by profession, Val brought her knowledge of object collections and lab techniques to the museum. For years she has worked adding to the collections, archives, research databases and general knowledge of our local history. Tens of thousands of artifacts and archival records later, Val is responsible for an amazing amount of growth within the collection and organisation itself. The museum would not be what it is today without her.

Likewise, Val has touched the lives of dozens of full time and student employees who wouldn't be where they are today without her leadership and guidance in the museum and archaeological field. As we look towards the future, Val's absence will be deeply felt by those still here. Val's legacy will now be carried on by a new team, who will never forget her years of hard work and dedication.



Dr. Shea Henry

Shea Henry, the curator of the last three years, has humbly taken on the role of Executive Director. With 15 years of experience in the museum, historical archaeology, and heritage fields, Shea is eager to bring her passion for community heritage and public education to the executive director role. She is excitedly looking towards the future of the Historical Society and Museum in Maple Ridge.



Melissa Rollit

Melissa Rollit steps into the role of Curator after over a year as the Community Engagement Coordinator. With a master's in Museum Studies and a background in archaeology, Melissa is excited to bring her five years of experience in the museum field to the role. She is most looking forward to developing new exhibits and engaging in small scale interventions to improve the quality of collections care at the museum.

Upcoming Events and Programs

Trivia Night

February 17 - 7:00pm

Its time to put your knowledge of Maple Ridge history to the test! Join the museum on Wednesday February 17th as part of heritage week for a virtual game of trivia. Compete with your neighbours for prize packs and most importantly to be crowned the Maple Ridge history champion! Sign up on Eventbrite, suggested donation of \$10 but all donations are welcome.

Virtual Presentations

Beginning January 2021

*Do you want a local historian from the museum to present a local history topic to your group over Zoom? Great news! We are offering presentation over Zoom. Presentation lengths vary and can be tailored to the group or class. Check out our website for a list of presentation topics. \$50 per group (\$40 for members) presentation up to 100 Zoom viewers.
<http://mapleridgemuseum.org/virtual-presentations/>*

History Experiments Videos

*Have you checked out our History Experiments videos yet? If you are looking for some historical crafts or experiments to do at home, check out how they are done, tips, tricks, and have a laugh along the way. Check out our page to watch our "History Experiments" and "Fireside Reads" videos.
<https://www.facebook.com/mapleridgemuseum/videos>*

Virtual Museum Tour

*Do you miss coming to the museum and wish you could explore from the safety of home? Well we have just the activity for you, check out our new virtual tour of the museum on our website. See the displays, read the labels and get the whole virtual experience of the museum from your couch!
<https://mapleridgemuseum.github.io/museum/tour/1/index.html>*

MAPLE RIDGE MUSEUM & COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

February 17, 2021, 7:00pm

BLAST FROM THE PAST TRIVIA NIGHT

TEST YOUR MAPLE RIDGE KNOWLEDGE AT THIS ONLINE EVENT



Front corner showing the building's evolution of old, and more recent logs and modern foundation

Historic Cabin Demolished

In November, the Maple Ridge Historical Society was informed that an unprotected heritage building would be coming down as part of a new construction. We were able to send representatives to document the building with a set of photos that will now live in the archives. This log cabin, built in Albion in the early 1900's was likely one of the first buildings on that plot of land.

These old cabins were built by many early settlers in the area as temporary housing until they were able to build a more permanent home, and worked towards clearing the land. After that many were either demolished or repurposed as sheds or storage spaces. This cabin managed to survive through generations of use, and the evidence is all over the building. The inside shows the hand hewn logs fitted together in the corners, and is the oldest part. But that first build is only the beginning of the story for this little building.

While this property has been owned by many people over the last 120 years, this building has been maintained, added to, and appreciated. At some point it was placed on top of a concrete base, it has been continuously levelled with cinder blocks, had tar shingles installed, and it has had rotten beams replaced with modern ones. Looking at these close details, it is clear to see that it has been loved and appreciated over the many years.

It is sad when we lose these old buildings. When they are no longer here to offer us a visual reminder of our past and there are very few provincial protections for historic buildings. However, this building, and these old cabins were never meant to last forever, and with the lines of communication open between the society, the city, and contractors, we now have a record of the building permanently in the archives.



Front view of the cabin



Inside of the cabin showing the hand hewn logs



Initials "WL" carved into inside of the cabin

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. Note that the DARS train days are cancelled due to Covid-19 for the foreseeable future.

Info: Dick Sutcliffe at 604-467-4301 or

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