SPRING BREAK
challenge #7

During Spring Break, we challenge you to get out and explore Maple Ridge with your families! Every day, we will share a local historic location for you to discover, along with some great discussion and learning points to engage with local history.

We encourage you to print off pages 2 & 3 for your kids (or save this document to a mobile device), and go on a new adventure every day during Spring Break.

While you're out and about, check out the local EARTH DAY initiative at www.mrearthday.ca with dozens of other challenges and local gems to visit! Be sure to snap a pho-to during your adventures and share it on social media with #emergeMR for a chance to win some great prizes!

MAPLE RIDGE MUSEUM
& COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

Where's Whonnock??

P13295 - Main street Whonnock (River Road) in 1935

Unless you live on the eastern side of Maple Ridge, you may have not even heard of the community of Whonnock... "Whonnock Lake" may sound familiar, but did you know that the village of Whonnock is one of the original townsites that now make up the City of Maple Ridge?

In 1860, a young man named Robert Robertson was the first European to settle this area. Originally from Scotland, he spent time working as a labourer with the Hudson's Bay Company before deciding to build a homestead in what is now the Whonnock area. The word "Whonnock" comes from the Həńq̓əmińəm̓ word to mean "place of the humpback salmon". As you know, the region of Maple Ridge developed on Katzie and Kwantlen territories which influenced our shared history.

The townsite of Whonnock really came alive with the introduction of the railroad. Once it was selected as a railway stop for the first transcontinental railway, it became a very desirable place to settle in. A post office, general store, and school were built around the same time as the construction of the original railway station. The settlers were primarily British, but a number of Norwegians decided to call this area home as well.

In 1912, the women of Whonnock built 'The Ladies Club'; a society that became the social centre of many of the neighbouring communities! Parties, picnics, dances, and other events were often the highlight of life in Whonnock.

Futhermore, between the two World Wars, a surge of Japanese immigrants to the regions of Whonnock and Ruskin lead to an incredible berry farming industry and the main source of agriculture in the area.

Today's Challenge

P00417 Showler's Red & White Store and Post Office, River Road, 1927

The history of the Whonnock post office and store goes all the way back to 1885. It was built by Oliver Noble, the first postmaster for the developing community. After it burnt down in 1916, a new post office was born in a small building just beside the original store location. Today's challenge is to take a drive to Whonnock and discover that building.

Before you leave home, take some time to write a letter to a friend or relative that you have not seen in a long time. Tell them about your favourite Spring Break memory so far and share with them a fact that you learnt recently about Maple Ridge. Take that letter with you as you discover the area of Whonnock and the historic post office!

Today: the rebuilt store is now McFli's Feed Supply. The Post Office still operates in the tiny 100 year old building next door!

Learn more about Whonnock:

A short history of Whonnock: http://mapleridgemuseum.org/whonnock/   &   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whonnock

The Whonnock cemetary: http://mapleridgemuseum.org/whonnock-cemetery/

The Whonnock post office: https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=1870

Whonnock & Ruskin history (a mini online encyclopedia of community facts, resources, and stories!)
www.whonnock.ca/whonnock-history

For a searchable online database of Maple Ridge history and lots of other great learning resources, visit us here! http://mapleridgemuseum.org/