



MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tales from Sampola - Part 2

The Sampo Hall

We pick up our story with the reserving of one acre of land from the original and now defunct Sampola Finnish Commune for the building of a community hall. With the population growing, Websters Corners was in need of a community gathering place, other than the school. So community members got to work planning and laying the groundwork. They spent three years accumulating materials and fundraising. Construction finally began in 1915 using entirely volunteer labour by the whole of the Finnish community including men,

women, and children. It truly was a community born effort from start to finish. When the hall opened in 1916 it was to great fanfare and production of the Finnish epic "Karkurit" (The Fugitives or The Runaways). The hall quickly became the centre of the community at Websters Corners, and in large part it was a gathering space for people across the neighbourhoods of Maple Ridge throughout the 20th century.

Sampo Hall acted as the headquarters for a variety of Finnish community groups including youth gymnastics, the adult theatre troupe, Finnish language school, and the local library. Dances and musical performances were a staple of the building, drawing crowds not just from the Websters Corners Finnish community but from throughout Maple Ridge. It was a well-known and highly anticipated Saturday night activity for youth and adults alike to visit Sampo Hall from Haney, Hammond, or every other Maple Ridge neighbourhood. The hall was witness to over 100 years of community life, culture, and even funerals and celebrations of life. Sampo Hall was everything a historic and even modern community centre was meant to be, a cultural gathering space for everyone.

The hall operated as a community centre from 1916 - 1984 closing only briefly during World War II after it was shut down by the RCMP for being a suspected gathering place for communists. At the start of the war the national government put a ban on several Finnish political groups suspected of communist activity. Any gathering or gathering place suspected of harbouring meetings of these groups was shut down, including Sampo Hall. The

wartime order was rescinded in 1943 and according to the local Gazette, in July of 1943 Sampo Hall was returned to the community and aloud to reopen.

However, the war took its toll, after this the hall never again saw the activity it had in the previous decades and it slowly fell out of use by the community. It was sold in 1984 to a local couple who used the hall as a daycare for many years. Eventually the building was again sold and fell into disrepair. Sampo Hall was demolished in the Fall of 2019. But wait, the story does not end there.

Join us again for the next instalment of **Tales from Sampola** to learn how Sampo Hall and those who visited there still live on in a recently donated and rather extraordinary artifact.



Sampo Hall in Websters Corners c. 1930



Members of the Finnish Women's Club on the front Steps of Sampo Hall in the 1920's

Fall 2021 Events Recap

After being forced to suspend our in person programs last year due to the ongoing pandemic, we were thrilled to keep up the momentum from this summer's activities and continue into fall with even more exciting (but covid-safe) events and programs!

HANDS UP! The Billy Miner Experience

Thanks to the talent and creativity of the 'Sea to Sky Immersive' team, we were proud to present the world premiere of this innovative audio-visual experience to 340 people over 9 show dates in September. 80% of these patrons had never been to the museum before!

Historic Cemetery Walking Tours

For the first time in over 2 years, MRHS president Erica Williams led walking tours of the Maple Ridge Cemetery. Both October dates filled up rapidly, with many requests to continue these tours throughout the winter.

Paranormal Night fundraisers

Thanks to the generosity of 'Cornerstone Supernatural', two sold out events at the Haney House were hosted for 130 curious community members. 100% of the \$2500 raised goes to support our museums.

Halloween Family Fun!

Inspired by the donation of 50 pumpkins, 2 beautiful gift baskets, and some programming supplies from 'Haunted History BC', we hosted two dozen families over Halloween weekend for games, crafts, and pumpkin carving! It was so much fun to welcome young kids back to the museum!



MRHS board member, Ross Dunning, played the role of a train conductor for the Hands Up! museum-theatre experience for 3 weekends in September.



On Halloween weekend, a mother and son dressed as wizards pick out a pumpkin to carve during our Family Fun activities.



Mid-Winter Closure

The museum will be closed from December 20th to January 6th for mid-winter break. We will be excited to welcome everyone back for a new year in 2022! We hope everyone has a safe and cozy holiday season!



1920's Exhibit Closing

It is now your last chance to see **The Bee's Knees: Dressing Up in 1920's Maple Ridge!** The exhibit which is on now at the ACT Art Gallery closes on November 20th, so make sure to stop by to see the looks and fashions of Maple Ridge in the 1920's.

Haney House is reopening!

After nearly two years of being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Haney House will soon be open to the public once more. The long awaited return will be celebrated with the opening of a new exhibit, **Cherishing Noble Ambitions**, dedicated to the women of Haney. Haney House is scheduled to reopen January 9, 2022.



Meet our newest staff members

Get to know our wonderful new Museum Assistants!



Kate Li

A familiar face from last summer, Kate has been working in exhibits and with collections. She is completing her final year at SFU with a major in Archaeology. Some of her favorite artifacts at the museum are our colourful hat pins and adorable finger purses..



Gordana Dimovska

Gordana began volunteering in the archives two years ago and now continues her work as part of our team. She is in the last year of her Masters of Archival Studies/Masters of Library and Information Studies program. Her interests lie in ancient and medieval history, as well as finding out what makes a society function.



Camryn Page

Camryn has been working on all things related to events and programming, after a summer spent restoring farming artifacts at the Pitt Meadows Museum. She is currently completing her final year of her undergraduate at Simon Fraser University where she majors in philosophy.



Membership Renewal

Tis' the Season

It is that time of year where we once again ask for your continued support of the Maple Ridge Historical Society. It has been a whirlwind of a last two years but we have come through it stronger than ever. We have had lots of changes, new beginnings, and adapting to a new and changing world. Last year the Historical Society and Museums faced these challenges head on by adapting our

programming to virtual and online platforms. This year, we continue to reach people virtually but have thought up innovative ways of getting community members safely back into the museums and engaging with history in new and exciting ways. With new events like the immersive theatrical experience of Hands Up: The Billy Miner Experience, here at the museum and continuing programs like the Paranormal fundraiser at Haney House we will continue to adapt to changing times, reach new audiences, and continue to be a place that fosters learning and preservation of our dynamic local history. We look forward to your renewed support in years to come! As always memberships can be renewed by filling out the [Membership Renewal Form](#) under the memberships tab on our website, or by mail.

FROM THE CITY OF MAPLE RIDGE

Heritage Plan Review and Update

The Community Heritage Commission (CHC) is updating the City of Maple Ridge's Heritage Plan to guide the heritage program and initiatives for the next 10 years. The CHC is seeking feedback on what heritage initiatives should be prioritized and what areas of the heritage program can be improved to better conserve our heritage resources into the future. There are two ways you can provide feedback and input:

1. Completing the survey by November 21 at midnight. The survey can be found at <https://www.mapleridge.ca/2582>
2. Contacting Krista Gowan, Community Planner at the City of Maple Ridge, by either by phone or by email at: heritage@mapleridge.ca or 604-467-7402.

Heritage Awards Nominations Now Open!

Do you know an individual or group that has contributed to the heritage and / or history of Maple Ridge? Nominate them for a Heritage Award! Nominees may be proposed for their long-term dedication to heritage, for a single effort that made a notable difference, for leadership and vision in educating the public, or for a project or action that had a positive outcome for built heritage in Maple Ridge.

To make a nomination, or for more information, please visit: <https://www.mapleridge.ca/240/Heritage-Awards>

For any questions regarding the heritage plan review or awards nominations contact Krista Gowan, Community Planner at the City of Maple Ridge at: heritage@mapleridge.ca or 604-467-7402

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

E-Mail: ras1@uniserve.com