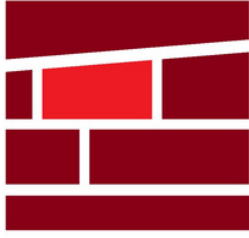


MARCH - APRIL 2022



# MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *The Archives is Open!*

For the first time in our long history, the Maple Ridge Historical Society has opened a publicly accessible archives space. For the past several months the Maple Ridge Museum staff has been hard at work converting the existing Brickyard Office Building at the museum site from a cluttered storage space to a functional archives. In the past those who wanted to access our extensive community archives could only do so through museum employees as there was no space to allow for visitors and hands on research. Now, community members who would like to search our research collection, archival collections, photographs, and collection of community newspapers can do so themselves with the assistance of museum staff. To aid in the growth of our archives space we also hope to be welcoming on board a dedicated archivist to our team in the near future.

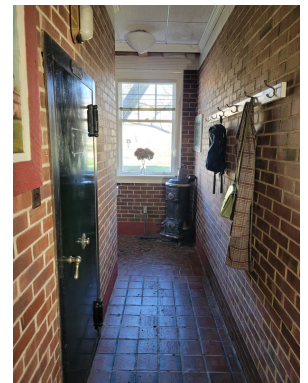


The Maple Ridge Historical Society was founded in 1956 and since then its members, volunteers, and staff have created an archives filled with thousands of records. As a community archives we have collected the history of the people, families, groups, clubs, businesses, etc. from the last nearly 150 years.

The Brickyard Office Building was completed in 1935 as the office space for Haney Brick and Tile Company. It was building using the different types of brick produced at the brickyard as an advertising showcase to potential buyers. Over the years the building had been used by different organizations, updates were added, and eventually it passed to the Historical Society. For years it was used to store the archives and other collections items of the Museum.

While we are excited for this step, we are still working on our goal of getting a larger and more appropriate space for our archives. The Brickyard Office Building, while beautiful, is still too small to house our entire archives. At the moment only about 70% of the archives fits in the building. The rest is in permanent storage, and that is not including the Whonnock archives that lives in Mission. Those archives materials will eventually come back to Maple Ridge when we have the space for it.

At the moment the archives will be open on Sundays from 10am-4pm, but due to the small space in the building only two community members at a time can be inside to maintain social distancing. We are excited to welcome the community to our new and beautiful archives space!





## ***Coming Soon!***

*New exhibit  
on Webster's  
Corners Finn's*

*Sisu: Finnish Resilience in Webster's Corners* is a new exciting exhibit that will be available to the public starting in April and running through until the end of August 2022. Sisu (pronounced - see'-soo) is the Finnish word for determination and resilience in the face of adversity, an attitude that Maple Ridge's Finnish community embodied.

This exhibit will take a look at how the Finns maintained their cultural traditions, enabling them to create a strong tight knit community that could weather the obstacles inherent to pioneer life and immigration in the early 20th century. From commune to community, the story of the Webster's Corners Finns is one of resilience, warmth, and good humour.

## ***A warm farewell to Shannon***

*And welcome to our  
new Community  
Engagement  
Coordinator*



If you have been to the museum or attended one of our many exciting events over the past year, you've likely met Shannon, our Community Engagement Coordinator. As Shannon embarks on a new chapter in her life, we've had to say a bittersweet goodbye to her... at least for the time being! In her place, the very capable Abby Lizée will be taking over the position. Abby previously worked at Coquitlam Heritage. With a passion for programming and years of experience to back it up, we are very excited to have her on board.



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## **Upcoming Events & Programs**

### ***Spring Break 2022***



1965, Maple Ridge. Students are seated in classroom.  
(class details unknown)

Looking for things to do with the kids this spring break?

#### **JOIN US AT THE MUSEUM FOR SOME CRAFTS & FAMILY FUN!**

Thursday thru Sunday, March 24 - 27

More information and registration here:  
[www.mapleridgemuseum.org/springbreak2022](http://www.mapleridgemuseum.org/springbreak2022)

Also, last year's online exploration activities remain on our website. Ten downloadable lessons with outdoor challenges to get to know our city! (suitable for all ages)  
[www.mapleridgemuseum.org/spring-break-2021/](http://www.mapleridgemuseum.org/spring-break-2021/)

### ***Art Show Fundraiser***

Join local historians and paranormal researchers Gina Armstrong and Victoria Vancek of Haunted History BC for Supernatural British Columbia: an exciting art exhibit and sale featuring their captivating photography! The sister team are writers, paranormal researchers and avid photographers. Come see enchanting photos of historic and natural sites they have visited while documenting local history, legends and folklore.

**Saturday, April 9th: 11am to 4pm. St. Andrews Church**  
<http://mapleridgemuseum.org/artshow2022/>



### ***Earth Day 2022***

DO ONE THING THEN DO ANOTHER

**Earthday 2022**

**PATHWAYS TO A BETTER NORMAL**

ENERGY, WATER, TRANSPORTATION, OUTDOORS, COMMUNITY

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Saturday April 23, 2022 10am-2pm  
[www.mrearthday.ca](http://www.mrearthday.ca)

Celebrating 50 Years of Recycling in our Community



## ***Tales from Sampola- Part 4***

### *From Sampola to Sointula*

This week we continue with our forth, and final, instalment of our series on the Websters Corners Finnish community formerly known as Sampola. This vibrant and active community that blossomed in Maple Ridge is a huge part of our local history and holds many many tales far beyond the scope of this newsletter serial. But today, we are going to be leaving Websters Corners and taking a trip back to the origins of Sampola, a trip both historically, and physically, to Sointula, British Columbia. To learn about the connection between Sointula and Websters Corners, head back to the Tales from Sampola Part 1 in the Sept-Oct 2021 MRHS newsletter.

After the donation of the Sampo Hall Mural, it became clear that the two communities of Sointula and Websters Corners had a long lasting connection beyond the founding members. Given that, it seemed a trip to Sointula and their museum was in order. In August 2021 Director Shea got in touch with the curator of the Sointula History Museum and set up a time to meet and view their records associated with Sampola and the Websters Corners Finnish community.

On taking the ferry from Port McNeill to Sointula, you get the impression of stepping of the edge the world and setting foot on the other side. A small island off the coast of Vancouver Island, Malcolm Island, and the town of Sointula, today is a destination for artists, outdoor enthusiasts and those looking for the quite life. In the end, those who seek to live or even visit the island for a day trip are seeking the same thing the founders of the original Finnish commune were, something different. And the island does not disappoint.

The history of Sointula is evident from the moment the buildings are spotted from the ferry. The same historic buildings, barns, homes, community centre, church, schools that were built by the Finnish Settlers still stand, many of which serving the original purpose for which they were built. The community centre still hosts events and plays the same as it has for 100 years.

At the Sointula Museum, a team of volunteers, including their volunteer curator, manage and preserve the town history. The museum acts prominently as a centre for family research for Finnish descendants not just from Sointula but all of BC and even Canada. They have easily accessible historical materials, artifacts, stories, and videos all on display. But possibly the best piece strikes you immediately upon entering, a twin mural to our own painted by none other than Toivo Aro himself.



The community of Sointula from the dock around 1920.



Sointula seen from the incoming ferry, Summer 2021.



Traditional Finnish Dresses on display at the Sointula Museum (Left) and Maple Ridge Museum (Right)



Detail of houses from the Sointula Mural (Left) and Sampo Hall Mural (Right) both by Toivo Aro





Sointula mural painted by Toivo Aro before he left for Maple Ridge to paint the Sampo Hall Mural.

The Sointula mural has many of the same elements as the Sampo Hall mural, including similar idyllic backgrounds and little houses. For the Sointula mural however Toivo included a powerful political message. A Lady Liberty figure wearing the symbolic red dress stands steadfast in the foreground leading the Finnish people away from the modern industrial factories, and the Russian empire, and into the liberty of the countryside and a return to traditional life. It was a particularly powerful message at the that time in Finnish history and represents the ideals of the original Finnish settlers to Sointula, and to Websters Corners. While the Sampo Hall mural lacks this overt political message, Toivo Aro's ideals of the quite countryside existence are evident. These two mural, like the Sointula and Websters Corners themselves, stand as twin representatives of a people who made an everlasting impact on our connected history.

While the Sampo Hall mural has been identified by museum staff as a repurposed sail made into a mural, the Sointula mural is painted on denim and has that characteristic blue background behind the paint and in the corners. And unlike the Sampo Hall mural, the backside is also painted with a mural. With this, the community hall in Sointula had a mural that could be switched for two different backdrops in one. It is unclear why Toivo Aro only painted the one side of the Sampo Hall mural but we are grateful that he did because it allowed community members the blank space to sign their names to the future.

To complete her trip to Sointula, Director Shea exchanged some copies of archival records with the curator of the Sointula museum, keeping our sister communities connected in the present, like they were in the past.

If you are interested in learning more about Finnish History and the history of the Finnish community in Maple Ridge, make sure to check out our temporary exhibits at the Maple Ridge Library as well as the new temporary exhibit at the Maple Ridge Museum all about the lives of these Finnish settlers.

#### 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 would host visitors 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)