

A volunteer community project operated with the grateful assistance of the Town of Comox; the Government of Canada through Heritage Canada, BC Arts Council, BC 150, BC Gaming Commission, Comox Valley Regional District, Comox Valley Community Foundation, HBC Local History Program, our donors, members and volunteers.



Updates To Museum Lighting, Floors and Displays

CAMs has been fortunate to receive some much needed updates to their interior in the last few months. The floors have been beautifully redone, and new room dividers have been built to allow for rotating exhibits throughout the seasons. There are also plans to update the lighting with track lighting in May 2023 thanks to the Town of Comox.

Baybrook: Life's Best Adventure



Photo credit; Erin Katajamaki

Book Sale day at the Comox Mall in Dec 2022 with Barbara Price (editor) and friend, Carol Harder. 155 copies have sold so far. Only \$20! Available at CAMs, Blue Heron Books and the i-Hos Gallery.

Why are we called The GRAPPLER?

In the autumn of 1862 HMS GRAPPLER sailed from Victoria with settlers for Cowichan, Nanaimo and Comox. Under the command of Lieutenant Edmund Hope Verney RN, the GRAPPLER departed Victoria on 1 October with thirty-five settlers for Comox.



Image used with permission; The Grappler Arrives At Komox; Bill Maximick

GRAPPLER arrived late on the afternoon of 2 October at the mouth of the Courtenay River (now the Puntledge River) and disembarked her passengers.

HMS GRAPPLER was a Albacore Class wooden hull Gun-boat of 232 tons. She was launched 29 March 1856 and served the Royal Navy until 1868 when she was sold and converted to a tug. She was lost in a fire in 1885. As a naval vessel she was armed with 4 guns.

GRAPPLER had a sister-ship also on station on this coast. HMS FORWARD, commanded by Lieutenant Charles G. Nelson RN, served on the Pacific Station until 1869 when she was sold for mercantile service at Esquimalt.

The newsletter name THE GRAPPLER was chosen to link the early settlers of the Comox Valley with the maritime and naval history of our local waters.

An ongoing archival project is the research of the passengers and crew of the 1862 voyage to Comox.

If you want to contribute or participate in this or any other archival or historical projects contact the *Director of Maritime and Naval History* at the CAMS office 250 339 2885.

Memories of Elizabeth "Liz" (Wiggy) Stubbs

Erin Katajamaki, with stories from Andi Davies



Image courtesy of Stubbs private collection

Liz or Granny "Wiggy or Wigs" Stubbs, never Helen Elisabeth which was her real name, was the matriarch of the family according to grand-daughter Andi. She knew everyone in Comox, and didn't hesitate to say exactly what was on her mind, whether you wanted to hear it or not.

Liz immigrated to Comox with the sponsorship of Dusty D'Esterre with her husband, James Stubbs who had visited Dusty and Comox a year prior, after WWII had ended. Elizabeth had served in the Woman's Land Army and met James as a Prisoner of War. They married in 1945 and left Dorset in 1946. Oddly enough, both their parents had roles as headmasters and headmistresses of boarding schools in England.

They bought the former Mack Laing property, Baybrook, after living in Comox for a year and would become longtime friends with Mack. The property would grow to have three cottages, that were rented out to various Comox residents and friends.

Liz was very community involved, as she volunteered with the Comox Valley Therapeutic Riding Society, Filberg Lodge and Park, Meals on Wheels and was an active member of the garden on the 4th floor of Berwick.

Memories of sitting on the front deck of the 'Big House' of Granny and Grandad, shucking shrimp with various members of the family still feels like yesterday to Andi. She remembers picking apples, plums, and walnuts from the trees overlooking the water, all the cousins running around together. It was a place of connection, where family was incredibly important. Liz knew all her grandchildren, and eventually knew her great grandchildren just as well. Family was like a patchwork quilt, all the squares slightly different, but fit together well. They always said goodbye before leaving for a trip, even a short one.

Seafood chowder was often on the menu during Christmas or Boxing Day and her favourite drink was a small scotch or gin and tonic. She did enjoy a Honey brown ale from time to time. She was one of many strong women who are the foundation of Comox and the culture today.

She was a spitfire, a 'woman of the island' west and a force to be reckoned with. She would have loved the ceremony being held for her on Sunday, May 7 at the Filberg Lodge close to the Cutting Garden which has been given her namesake. She will be missed by so many.

New 'Old' Merchandise

Erin Katajamaki

Museum staff have discovered some "long lost" items in storage that are now available for sale at CAMs. Jade jewellery, like some of the necklaces pictured on the left are selling fast.

In addition, there are some fantastic local history book titles for valley research enthusiasts, a wide variety of titles.



In Comox History...

THE BRITISH COLONIST
Thursday Morning, April 2, 1863.
AUCTION SALES TO-DAY.

J. A. McCREA will sell at 11 o'clock A. M., at salesroom on Wharf street, Isthamus Butter, California Hams, Pilot Bread, Candles, Sugars, Paper, Balance of Stock of a Grocery Store, etc.

Comax Settlement.

We have had an interview with a settler from this rising locality, who has come to town for some goods. Before he left home he states that the settlers generally had commenced putting in their crops, and a few had made considerable progress. We find there are fully fifty persons located in the settlement, and fifteen good and substantial houses have been erected, and many more in course of construction. Our informant believes the road from Nanaimo to Comax will be finished in a little more than a month hence, the contractor being somewhat delayed for want of men. The settlers are very desirous of having the road, or a branch, made right through the settlement. Our informant states that great discontent prevails among the residents about the apathy which the Government has displayed towards them in not affording mail communication with this City. For several months during the winter the people have been shut up there without receiving any letters or papers, and some of the inhabitants are so thoroughly disgusted with the treatment, that they are thinking of leaving the place altogether. The store at present in the settlement has been very badly supplied with provisions all winter, and very often the settlers have been put to serious inconvenience thereby. There are at present six yoke of oxen and one horse in the district, and one of the settlers has 13 head of fine cattle, and between 50 and 60 pigs of his own. Our informant assures us that if there were any stated communication with the settlement, by which people could get up goods and letters, and be able to come down here themselves occasionally, that there is little doubt many additional adventurers would take up land and become settlers in the district. There is no doubt whatever, if the Butte Inlet road is carried through to the mines, that land in Comax will become very valuable, situated as it is, within so short a distance of the Inlet. The Government should be in motion in reference to a regular communication with the district, and in some measure make up for their past neglect of this rising and important place.

Source: archive.org; British Colonist; April 2, 1863

The Grappler Editor



Erin Katajamaki has been a volunteer with CAMS since Sept 2022. She has a lifelong interest in history and genealogy that sparked while completing her B.A. in history at STFX University in Nova Scotia. She has a professional background in community engagement and program planning, fund development, social media and marketing for various non profits in both BC and Alberta. If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, email Erin: junipertreeancestry@gmail.com

Drop by the Beaufort Avenue Pub to see other military items and medals on display while you enjoy some homemade food and the cheapest drinks in town!
Friendly service and surrounded by local history, a win for all!



COMOX ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM



FOLLOW THE QR
CODE TO CHECK
OUT THE CAMS
WEBSITE!

Family Day Tactile Event

Erin Katajamaki



Thanks to the dedicated work of Museum staff and Board members, Family Day was acknowledged with items that visitors could touch and interact with. Among the items was a typewriter from the 1930s (that weighed as much as 5 modern day computers), a word processor from the 1980s, old telephones and even an adding machine that one visitor remembered using with her father when she was a little girl.



Staff member, Stephanie ensured there were snacks available for all, between the hours of 12:30 to 3:30 pm. The event was well attended by local families, Board members and their families.



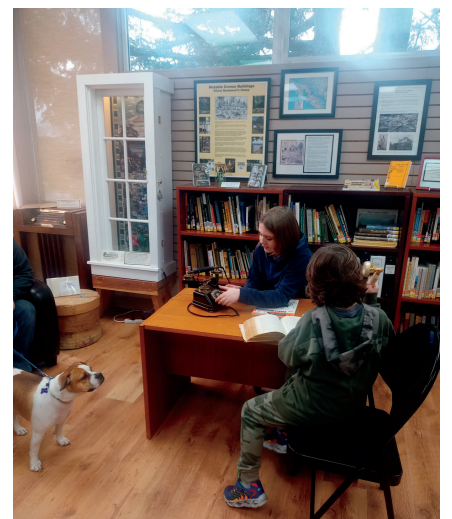
Board member, Steve Cowan was present with educational displays on Heraldry and free colouring books for the kids that helped teach families that anyone can have a crest and that it tells the story of an individual, not a family as many people think.



All photos; credit: Erin Katajamaki



Even our furry friend got in on the action. After some careful deliberation, Thor determined he didn't know what a rotary phone was either!



Betty Emblem's Comox Legacy Becoming Exhibit

Erin Katajamaki



Photo Courtesy of the Emblem family

Betty Emblem (nee Burchell), pictured above, was born at St. Joseph Hospital, Comox.

At 104 years old, (almost 105) Dorothy Kathleen Emblem, who always went by Betty, is an integral part of Comox history.

She was raised on Knight Road and attended Lazo School which was situated on the current Comox Airforce Base.

Betty raised 2 children and worked at St. Joseph Hospital until she retired in 1984. For over 40 years she cut gauze for cancer dressings.

In March 1921 the Lazo Women's League was formed, and Betty would become a child member, along with her mother, who wrote the speech on the 50th anniversary of the Institute, on the following page.

The League, now known as the Lazo Women's Institute has a ninety year history and is an international organization in Canada, the UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

Canadian branches were established in 1897. The Comox Valley branch has been responsible for the building of the Glacier View Lodge, the first seniors' care facility in B.C.

The League also "sold Lazo Hall and with the proceeds, established the Lazo WI Endowment Fund, an annual endowment at North Island College that provides two bursaries (awarded on the basis of financial need) and one scholarship (awarded for academic excellence) annually for NIC students" (excerpt from CV Record online).

She married Richard Emblem, an airforce serviceman, in April 1940 and they occupied the still standing green house located at 458 Anderton Road between Robb Road and Noel. This size of the house is roughly 35 x 35 with two bedrooms, kitchen, and living room on the main floor, with two rooms upstairs. There is also an unfinished full height basement. It sits on an acre of land.



*Photo Credit;
Lyn Sontag*

Betty was also involved in a number of other prominent community organizations, as a charter member of the Pythian Sisters Plateau Temple #7 from 1947 to the present and also a member of Florence Chapter Order of the Eastern Star #53.

After the death of her husband Betty continued to live on Anderton Road beyond her 100th birthday.

She recently moved to an assisted living facility in Victoria, from her home, her cozy house on a parcel of land which is slated for development for the growing Comox Valley. Her story is another example of how a woman helped to shape the Comox Valley culture of giving back, yet there is no one quite like Betty Emblem. For more about Betty, come to CAMs to see the exhibit, launching soon.

With sincere thanks to Jim Whitehead, Terrie Anderson, Pamela Moughton, Robin Russell and Richard Emblem for providing the information for this article.

Alice Burchell's Speech - 50 Yrs of the W.I.

*Transcribed by Erin Katajamaki; amended for layout**

Madam Pres, fellow members & our guests;
This is an evening and gathering of W.I. members that I never expected to live to see when I became a member of the Lazo W.I. 50 years ago in March 1921. Well, it doesn't seem that long really, but it actually has come and I think 50 years for a Women's Organization to keep functioning in a small rural district is really something - Well our beginning came about at the end of the first World War (into 1920). The group of Lazo ladies who worked for the Red X [sic] (in 1915), making hospital garments and baby layettes (a collection of clothes for a newborn), quilts and comforters for bombed out faiber [sic] overseas and also looking after Xmas parcels and comforts for our loved boys who had enlisted and were in France and England. Many hours we spent together working. The time came when war over [sic] and not so much need for Red X [sic] garments. We didn't want to disband entirely and kept together in a social way, but it didn't satisfy us and so looked around for something special. The Women's Institute in Victoria was contacted and the Pro [sic] President, the late Mrs. McLaughlin came up and give us all the details as to the W.I.s ... We finally decided it was quite good as it was for the betterment of Rural women and we were just that. We applied for the Charters and became full fledged members - about 25 on March 9, 1921. It was in the horse and buggy days and we held our monthly afternoon meetings in the original little school house. Most of us had small children which we took with us. The district being scattered about - walking quite a distance for some, but we looked forward to our meetings as it was perhaps the only time we saw one another during that time. Had a cup of tea together and chat afterwards. We had no electricity and to have anything in the evening we brought coal over and gasoline lamps for lighting...*
Of course the solarium was one of our pet projects...*
As we had the one room school quite near, members every year made hot cocoa for the pupils in winter. Summer had gardens which were inspected periodically by Miss Worthington - then in Sept, prayers given.

A valued elderly member taught our girls fancy work stitches, I provided materials. Had flower shows, 1 needlework display, flower shows too for members. Also competed at the R.M.E. our potato growing, we got a first prize, a lovely china tea set which we proudly used for years. We learned many things in handy crafts [sic], made our first attempt at hooked rug in Indian design, etc.

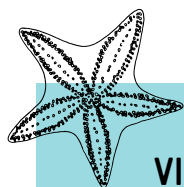


The Little River Institute (1920) is the predecessor of the Lazo Women's Institute

Photo credit; Emblem Private Collection

The Second World War came in 1939 and we again put all our efforts into Red X [sic] work, raising money for materials, etc. comforts for the soldiers, also quilts, comforters, clothes etc. for war torn England and district needs were put on one side. Before the war ended the Dept of Transport were making plans to build the Air Park and were taking quite a large territory. As our hall was in that location we were notified they were taking it over and would be demolished [sic]. So of course we had to find another suitable place. The Dept compensated us with the sum of \$400 which we started to build with on a piece of land donated by Mrs. J. Knight at the corner of Kye Bay Rd. originally owned by our first president, the late Mrs. John Knight. ...*
I'd like to pay tribute to all members past and present for all these years I've been associated with the L.W.I. for their friendship and hpoee the L.W. I. will carry on for many years to come and work for home and country and the good of all mankind. Thank you.
-AB

Unique Volunteer Opportunities



**CAMS HAD 604
VISITORS IN JAN-FEB-MAR**



What better way to contribute to the preservation of our local history for future generations!

Volunteers are essential to the operation and expansion of the Society's activities.

RECORDING ACQUISITIONS

CAMS has gathered LOTS of documents, pictures and artifacts since we opened. Help is needed to record acquisitions , better known as accessioning. Time requirement of 3 hours a week. Computer skills with spreadsheets and data entry are helpful.

INTERPRETERS/DOSENTS

Even if you moved to our famous Comox Valley in recent years you can always learn of our history by having to explain it to others. Historical Interpreters wanted to offer assistance with visitors during our open hours. Time required of 3 hours a week (select your favourite day) and coffee/tea making skills essential!



DISPLAY ARRANGERS

From time to time the museum displays are revised as new items are acquired and display themes developed. Time involved of 4 hours a month or more when special displays are installed. A creative approach is needed to show off our artifacts and records.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

The GRAPPLER is always seeking articles and submissions to publish. it's amazing what historical wonders are out there just wanting to be published and revealed to the waiting public. If you have a subject idea we welcome items for the newsletter. You never know, you could end up developing it into a book and the world first learned of it here!

WEBSITE CONTRIBUTOR

Keeping a website fresh and current is essential to our public image. Time of 2 hours a week should be sufficient.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Family Name:

Postal Code:

First Name or Names if Family Membership:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Town/City:

Province:

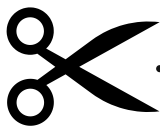
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Fees: \$10 single or \$20 family/organization per calendar year.

Mail form and cheque to:

Comox Museum and Archives
c/o Comox Town Hall
1809 Beaufort Ave, Comox, BC
V9M 1R9

or drop off at CAMS office during open hours.



Hours of Operation
Tuesday to Saturday
12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

Phone: 250 339 2885
Website: comoxmuseum.ca
Email: comoxmuseum@shaw.ca

