

HISTORICAL
THINKING AT
THE REACH GALLERY
MUSEUM ABBOTSFORD
Voices of the Valley



Teacher Package

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- Analyzing Sources
- Discussion
- Action

- Sharing
- Reflection

- Resources
- Build Your Own

Historical Thinking

What is Historical Thinking?

The goal of historical thinking is to help students approach any task, problem, or questions in an open-minded way, and prepare them with the necessary tools to make discoveries and come to conclusions based on information they are given. They will be able to look at the various options and reach reasonable conclusions based on careful assessment of the relevant factors.

Helping students to think critically involved inviting them to assess the merits of various options before them based on certain details. Students learn to look for specifics and ask themselves and/or their peers open-ended questions to spark discussion and push them toward discovery. From this they will gain the information necessary to form hypotheses about the historical object, event, or individual.

The learning experience is enhanced because the student gains not only an understanding of historical events being studied, but as well they gain the ability to make discoveries on their own, using their new-found critical thinking skills. With the success of personal discovery of information, students are more likely to do additional research beyond what is expected of them.

The activities in this package introduce students to historical thinking, offering them engaging activities that work with the information provided in the Voices of the Valley exhibition. Through these activities they develop problem-solving skills, research abilities, and experience peer discussion and the sharing of ideas.

How can I get started?

As historians here at the reach, there are six different concepts that will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of historical events and processes. We will discover these concepts through active learning and engagement with historical sources and artifacts. To think historically, we must:

- Establish **historical significance**
- Use **primary source evidence**
- Analyze **continuity and change**
- Identifying **cause and consequence**
- Take **historical perspective**
- Understand the **ethical dimensions** of historical interpretation

Throughout this package you will find a variety of activities that engage students through hands-on participation, personal discovery, and classroom group activities. As they make their way through this package and through the exhibition *Voices of the Valley*, students will discover how to research and discover historical information about their hometown, school, and community.



P28498, context: A close-up view of an upside-down sign

HISTORICAL THINKING

Historical Significance

Resulting in change: The event, person or development had deep consequences, for many people, over a long period of time.

Revealing
The event, person or development sheds light on enduring or emerging issues in history and contemporary life.

Event /development/ person occupies a **meaningful place** in a narrative.

Primary Sources

Good questions are necessary in order to turn a source into evidence, the first question being, “what is it?”

Authorship: The position of the author(s) is a key consideration.

Primary sources may reveal information about the (conscious) purposes of the author as well as the (unconscious) values and world view of the author.

A source should be read in view of its historical background.

Analysis of the source should also provide new evidence about its historical setting.

Continuity and Change

Continuity and change are **interrelated**: processes of change are usually continuous, not isolated into a series of discrete events.

Some aspects of life change **more quickly** in some periods than others. Turning points help to locate change.

Progress and decline are fundamental ways of evaluating change over time.

Chronology and periodization can help to organize our understanding of continuity and change.

at The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford

Cause and Consequence

Historical Actors or Agents are people (individuals, or groups) who cause historical change.

They do so in social, political, economical, historical contexts that impose limits on change.

Actions often have unintended consequences.

Historical Perspective

Taking the **perspective of historical actors** depends upon evidence for inferences about how people felt and thought.

It is important to avoid **presentism**—the unwarranted imposition of present ideas on actors in the past.

Historical events or situations involve people who may have **diverse perspectives** on it. Exploring these is a key to understanding the event.

Taking the perspective of a historical actor does not mean **identifying** with that actor.

Ethical Dimensions

All meaningful historical accounts involve **implicit or explicit** ethical judgment.

In making ethical judgments of past actions, we always risk imposing our own standards of **“right” and “wrong”** on the past.

How to look at historical photographs...

When analyzing a historical photograph we must think about many different things. First, unlike diaries or oral history resources, a photograph captures reality as it is, unaltered. When a camera snaps a picture, it does not choose what details to include or leave out. Second, remember that every photograph has a photographer, a person who has influenced not only what to photograph, but when and from what perspective. Though a camera takes frozen images of reality, the photograph can still have a message, point of view, or bias.

What is a bias?

Noun

A particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned: illegal bias against older job applicants; the magazine's bias toward art rather than photography;

Our strong bias in favor of the idea.

When a photograph has a bias, it does not make the source unreliable or unimportant, The bias will ultimately affect the information you take from the photograph, but as long as you take into account the biased perspective, the photograph may teach you even more about the time period, the people, or the events happening at the time the photograph was taken.

1. To analyze a photograph, we must first identify the details we see. Use the below chart to organize your ideas.

What do you notice about the people?

What do you notice about the setting?

What do you notice about other objects or details?

How to look at historical artefacts...

Analyzing historical artifacts is an important part of a historian's job. It is an opportunity for the historian to study an object and reveal historical secrets. Physical objects remind us of the reality of the past, and bring history off the pages into our lives.

1. To analyze an artifact, we must first begin posing questions. When we first look at any object that we do not recognize, there are questions that come to mind. These questions will allow us to understand what is the most important missing information. Divide these questions into the following categories:

Questions about what the object looks like...

Questions about where the object came from...

Questions about what it is for...

How to study oral histories...

When listening to an oral history you must look for details with your ears. When studying at a photograph we can discover things about it by looking at it very closely and pulling out details. When you study an artifact you use a combination of looking and touching to discover what you can about the object. Now when we study an oral history, we will use our ears to not only listen to the story, but to discover details about the speaker, the words, and what was happening when it was recorded.

1. To analyze an oral history, we must first identify the details we see. Use the below chart to organize your ideas.

What do you notice about the oral history? Is it a transcript, video, or audio recording?

What do you notice about the story?

What else do you notice about the oral history?

Establishing Historical Significance

As historians, we must make decision about what is most important to remember and to study. Significant events are those that fall under certain criteria.

Firstly, if the event resulted in change over a long period of time for a large number of people. For example, the drainage of

Sumas Lake passes this test as it affected a lot of people in Abbotsford, and created great change for many groups of people in the area. Both negative and positive change resulted from this event.

Secondly, an event, individual, or story can be significant because they were revealing. These portions of history offer us a window into the past and allows us to learn about the people and events that took place. For example, the story of a Clayburn mine worker may seem insignificant in the sense that the life may not have resulted in great change or affected a great deal of people. However, the story of this miner from the Clayburn clay mines reveals to us information about life as a miner, working conditions, and early life in Abbotsford. The “insignificant” life reveals something to us that is historically significant.



P4356 The Reach Online Photo Archives

THEN AND NOW

Looking at artefacts to establish historical significance

1. To analyze an artefact, we must first begin posing questions. When we first look at any object that we do not recognise, there are questions that come to mind. These questions will allow us to understand what is the most important missing information. Divide these questions into the following categories:

Questions about what the object looks like...

Questions about where the object came from...

Questions about what it is for...

2. How might you find the answers to these questions? If someone who knows about the object is present, can you ask them questions? Write your ideas below.

its all in a NAME

A brief history of interesting names of communities throughout Abbotsford

Abbotsford

On early British Columbia survey maps, the location of Abbotsford is simply identified as S.W. ½ of Section 22, Township 16. The first known European settler was a Mr. Freeman, who famously lived in a tree stump and resisted all efforts at modernization or relocation.

It was Charles C. Maclure (1831-1907) who is credited with laying out the initial 160 acre plot that was to become Abbotsford. In anticipating a Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) spur line from Mission to the US border, Maclure, purchased 160 acres of undeveloped land from the government at \$2.50 an acre. He then ceded right of way for the railway on condition that a station be built on the land. He named the station “Abbotsford” in honour of Henry Abbott, Pacific Division Superintendent for the C.P.R., and brother of Canadian Prime Minister, Sir John Abbott. Consequently, the first local post office, and later the B.C. Electric station were spelled “Abbotsford.”

In time controversy developed over the spelling of the new town site. During the 1920s a group of local residents successfully petitioned the Geographic Board of B.C. to change the spelling to “Abbotsford,” after its namesake in Scotland.

The village of Abbotsford was incorporated in February 1924. However, growth and development in the first decades of the 20th

century were slow. By 1956 the population of Abbotsford numbered no more than 830. Following a 1993 referendum, Clearbrook and Abbotsford were officially amalgamated on 1 January 1995, as the city of Abbotsford, with George Ferguson as mayor. Now at the beginning of the 21st century, Abbotsford has become one of the fastest growing communities in B.C.

Clayburn

In the early 20th century Clayburn became the center of a thriving brick-making industry. The site was so named by the Maclures (see entry on the Maclures), one of Abbotsford’s premier pioneering families. Around 1904 John Maclure discovered a particularly fire-resistant, blue-grey clay on Sumas Mountain. Soon after his son Charles found backers to establish a commercial brick making operation and was “the key figure in establishing the village of Clayburn and its brickyard.” By the 1920s Clayburn had become a bustling town with a population of approximately 300 residents, and the leading brick manufacturer in British Columbia. The ovens used to fire the bricks were called “kins” or “kills.” Mr. Maclure called this new plant “Kilnguard,” now spelled Kilgard.

Kilgard Road

Kilgard Road led to the Kilgard settlement and brick factory for which it is named (in the early days it was often spelled Kilgaard). The road used to run from the old Trans-Canada

Highway to the village. Today, it runs northwest from Eldridge Road and intersecting with the south end of Sumas Mountain Road just north of Highway 1. The Kilgard brick factory started production in 1910, though it was not formally registered until 1913. It was named by its promoters, Charles and Fred Maclure, who explained the name as partly because of the kilns, and also because “it had a good hard firebrick sound.” The little community was mostly composed of Kilgard’s brick workers and their families, but it boasted a store, post office, school, and two churches.

Mill Lake

Mill Lake has been variously named. According to Margaret Weir it was first known as Bais Lake, so named after a pioneer farmer by that name. The idyllic location prompted Weir to observe that “Life in Abbotsford was 10 acres, a cow, a vegetable garden and a job at the Mill.”

In time Bais Lake became known as Abbotsford Lake since it was located close to the Village of Abbotsford. Owing to the prominence of logging in the early 20th century, the entire site was called Milltown, and hence Mill Lake became its permanent designation. Bruce Dixon, an engineer with the Sumas Lake Dyking Commission, noted that the lake is fed by underground springs.

The first saw mill on the lake was owned by Charles Hill-Tout, who managed to negotiate a contract for 50,000 railway ties with the CPR in order to supplement his income.

The four Trethewey brothers, Joe, Arthur, Sam, Bill purchased the mill in 1903, with Joseph as the principal shareholder and Richard as its president. In 1912 their enterprise was called the Abbotsford Timber and Trading Company. To harvest the timber, the company built a system of rail tracks

throughout the Abbotsford area, including a spur west to Mt. Lehman, and east over to Hazel Street where it connected to the CPR in downtown Abbotsford. Riggins states that “The Company jointly owned a saw mill, planning mill, shingle mill, logging camp and a private logging railroad.” Employees were among the highest paid in the industry at that time. The payroll for January 1930 included “129 whites, 24 Chinese, 9 Sikhs, and 25 Japanese, the average wage being around 45 cents an hour.”

The shortage of residential accommodation meant that the company built several boarding houses along the lake. However, company policy was that White, Indo-Canadian and Japanese workers were separately housed. In 1911 the company donated the lumber that was used to build the first Sikh Temple in Abbotsford.

In 1919 the Abbotsford Lumber Company became the Abbotsford Lumber, Mining and Development Company with Joseph Trethewey as President and Richard Trethewey as Manager. The mill was in its zenith during the 1920s producing some 20 million board feet of lumber and 15 million shingles annually, making it one of the biggest employers in the province.

By the 1930s local forests had been depleted resulting in the closure of the mill. The Tretheweys shut down their business in 1934. In the 1940s the Abbotsford Lions Club purchased the site as a community facility. With the assistance of the District of Matsqui the old equipment was removed, sand brought in to build beaches and grass planted in the playground area.

The near-by Centennial Swimming Pool was opened in 1958 to commemorate the hundredths birthday of the Province.

Sumas Way

The name “Sumas” is derived from the Halkomelem language, meaning “a big level opening.” The name was first recorded by the explorer Simon Fraser when he canoed down the river that bears his name in 1808.

In 1971 the Sumas Council decided that “C” Street was to be renamed Sumas Road. Mayor Kenneth Thompson suggested that since C Street connected Sumas Municipality with Sumas, Washington across the Sumas Prairie, the road ought also to be known by that name.

The name “C” originated from the town-site of Huntingdon which had designated street names according to the alphabet.

Trethewey Street

The entrepreneurial Tretheweys have indelibly placed their stamp on the City of Abbotsford. The name Trethewey, according to Daphne Sleight, is of Celtic origins, with “tre” being derivative from the Latin, “terre” or land; and “thewey” a corruption of David. The Abbotsford Tretheweys trace their lineage to an engineer, Samuel Trethewey, born in Cornwall, England in 1794, and credited with designing an internal combustion engine. Legend has it that when Samuel’s sons inspected land they had preempted sight-unseen in Canada, they were shocked to discover that it was covered with nothing except trees.

Janet Vickers may well be correct when she states that the Trethewey men were inclined to marry spirited women, creating a gene pool marked by a pioneering offspring. William Griffith Trethewey made his wealth in mining, operating the Cobalt mine in Ontario. Joseph Trethewey became a rancher (purchasing the large Chilco ranch in 1910; and hotelier with businesses in Vancouver, Mission and Harrison

Lake. In the early 1890s James Trethewey with his sons Joseph Ogle and Richard Arthur began various mining and lumbering operations in the British Columbia.

It was with the purchase of the Abbotsford Lumber Company on April 2, 1909 that the Trethewey family secured a legacy in the development of Abbotsford. When Arthur and Susan Trethewey moved to Abbotsford a year later, their home at once became the center of local social life. That they were community-minded people, there can be no doubt. In addition to being the largest employer in the district, Arthur became a school trustee, while Susan developed a reputation as “a tower of strength in any emergency.” (Sleight, p. 100)

The renamed the operation, The Abbotsford Timber and Trading Company, became a flourishing enterprise. By 1920 the workforce numbered some 260 employees, including many Sikhs, Japanese and Chinese. With vintage Trethewey management savvy, the company grew to include a sawmill, planing mill, shingle mill, dry kiln, logging camp and private logging railway. Until the early 1930s Abbotsford was known as a mill town, so much so that “almost every job in the Village of Abbotsford was either directly or indirectly dependent on the mill and its prosperity.” (Sleight, p. 106)

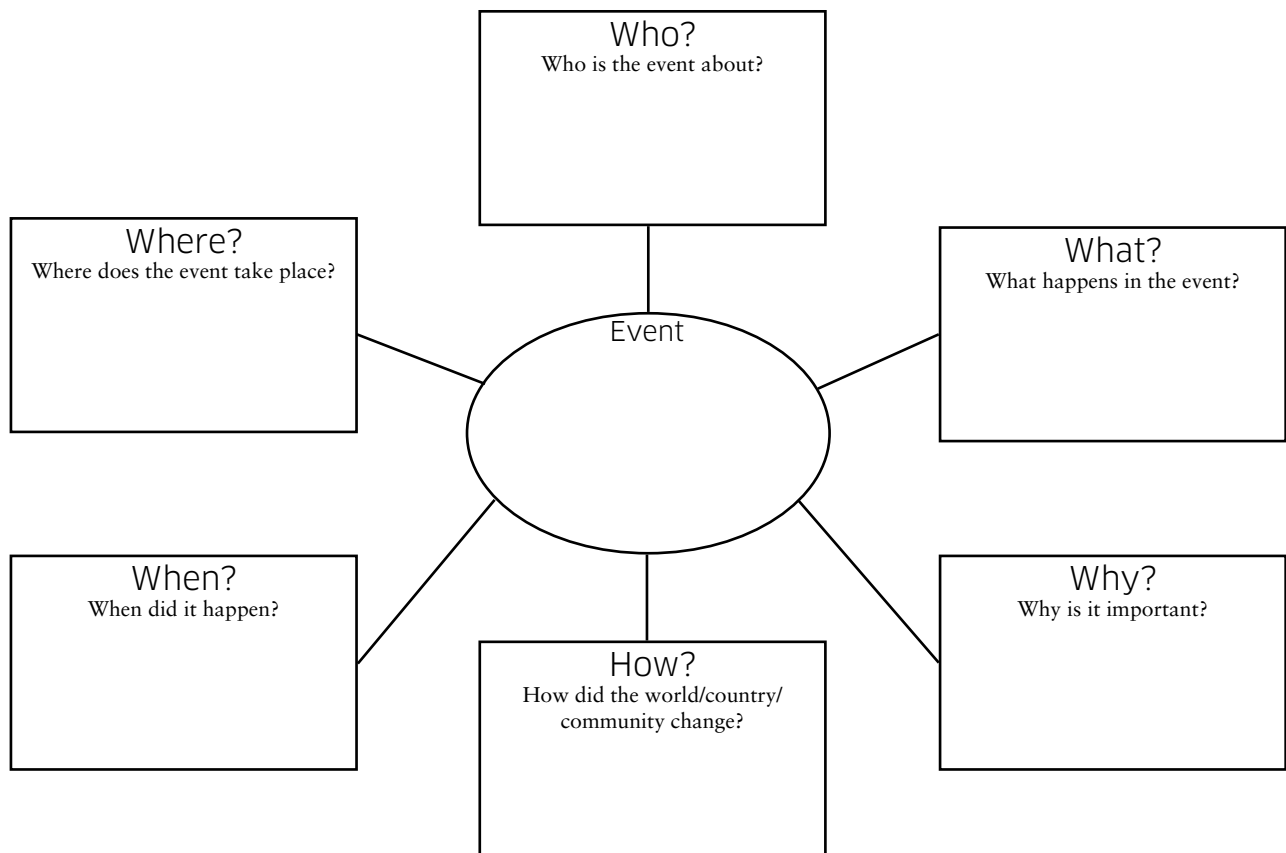
With the decline of Arthur’s health, Joseph Ogle Trethewey took over the operation. It was Joseph who built the “Trethewey House” now a civically recognized heritage building. The Trethewey legacy continues to benefit the citizens of Abbotsford. On the death of Allen on August 10, 2007, the Abbotsford News noted that this successful businessman and entrepreneur, had also been a founding member of the Abbotsford Foundation, and a generous initial contributor.

See more history of names in Abbotsford in Alphabetically Abbotsford!

USE THE NEWS

1. You are a historian in the year 2116, one hundred years from now. You must discover which were the most significant events from 2016.

2. Pick a current event and, using the criteria for establishing historical significance, determine if the event was significant and in what way. Think about what views you would have about what we see as significant today.



3. Read Margaret Weir’s journal entry on the next page. Is the event being described historically significant? Did it impact the world/country/community in a large way? Was it revealing? Do you think it was significant to her when she wrote it?

PANTS

A journal entry by Margaret Weir

I get so wearied of seeing women wearing pants. I only use them on cold days while out and take them off as soon as coming in, for they make one's limbs even more sensitive to the cold. I must maintain I was the first girl to wear them in Abbotsford.

We picked berries in Mr. David Nelson's fields in the summer, this way earning not only school books for the fall term but a winter coat and a holiday. Jean, Grace and I took such a holiday to Vancouver, staying at the Abbotsford Hotel and going on boat trips when I was sixteen, Jean was nine and Grace, six.

Well, while kneeling in the strawberry field and trailing dresses in the dust, I announced to the group that this was foolish. Pants would be more practical. Horror struck the women. "You wouldn't dare wear men's pants, would you?" and Mr. Nelson's sister-in-law was the most shocked as she trailed her long skirts in the dust.

Next morning I appeared in my brother's overalls. They were sure I would not do this terrible thing. All day I picked in comfort and ease.

The crowd then said, "I bet you wouldn't dare walk down into Abbotsford." "We'll pay you a dollar if you'll dare." Well, I had no need to walk into town on a dare. I wasn't wearing them for a dare but because they were the most sensible garment in a field.

My, how things have changed but women do lose something when they turn from their femininity.



Margaret Hutchison, May 8th, 1918, her 18th birthday., The Reach P8,275

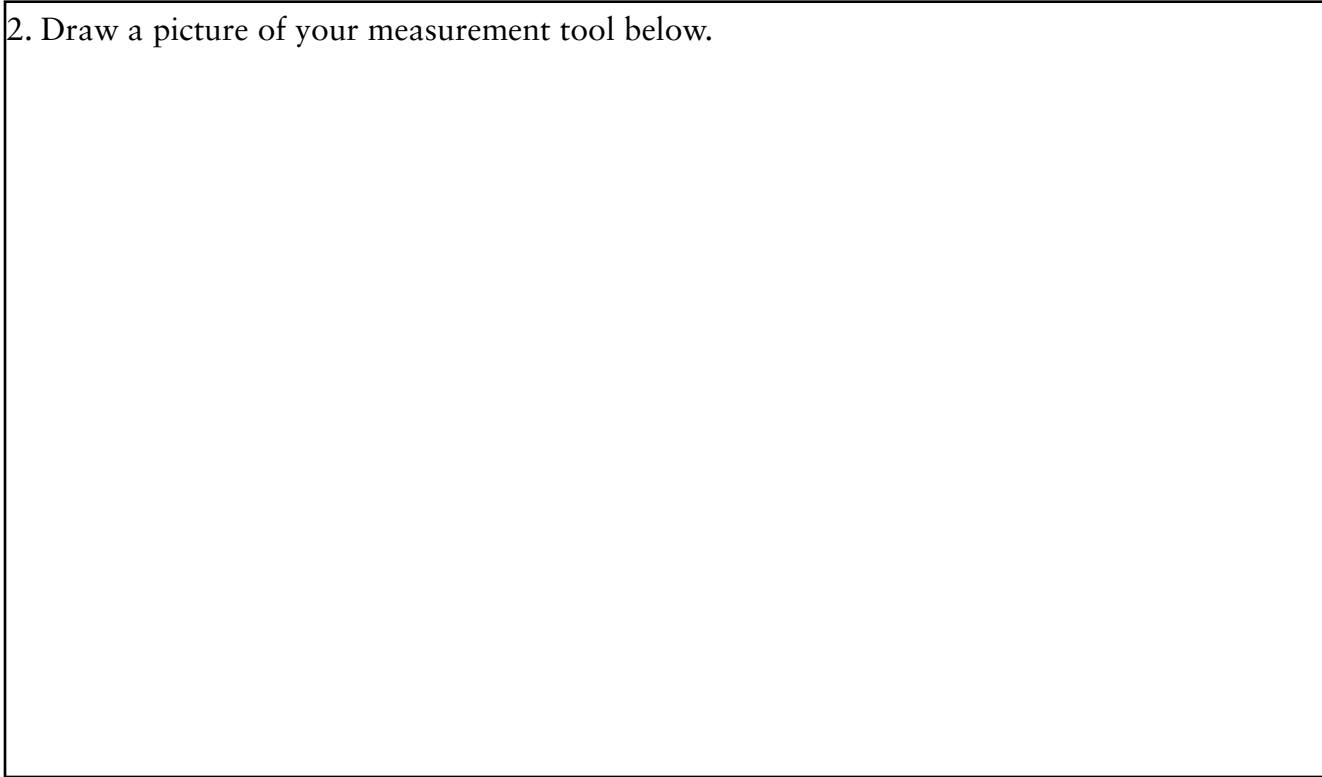
GUNTER'S CHAIN

In 1851 The Gunter's Chain unit of measurement was introduced. Previously, two incompatible systems of measurement were used: English measurements based on the number 4 and the newly introduced decimal system based on the number 10. An acre measures 10 square chains in the Gunter Chain system, so any measurements taken could be converted to acres by dividing by 10.

For a picture, see the following page.

1. Invent your own unit of measurement. What is it called? What kind of tool would you use to measure something? What would you measure with it?

2. Draw a picture of your measurement tool below.



Measurements to Remember:

1 Link = 7.92 Inches

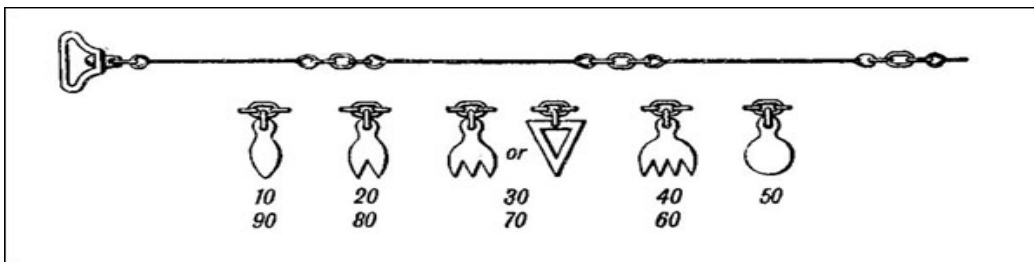
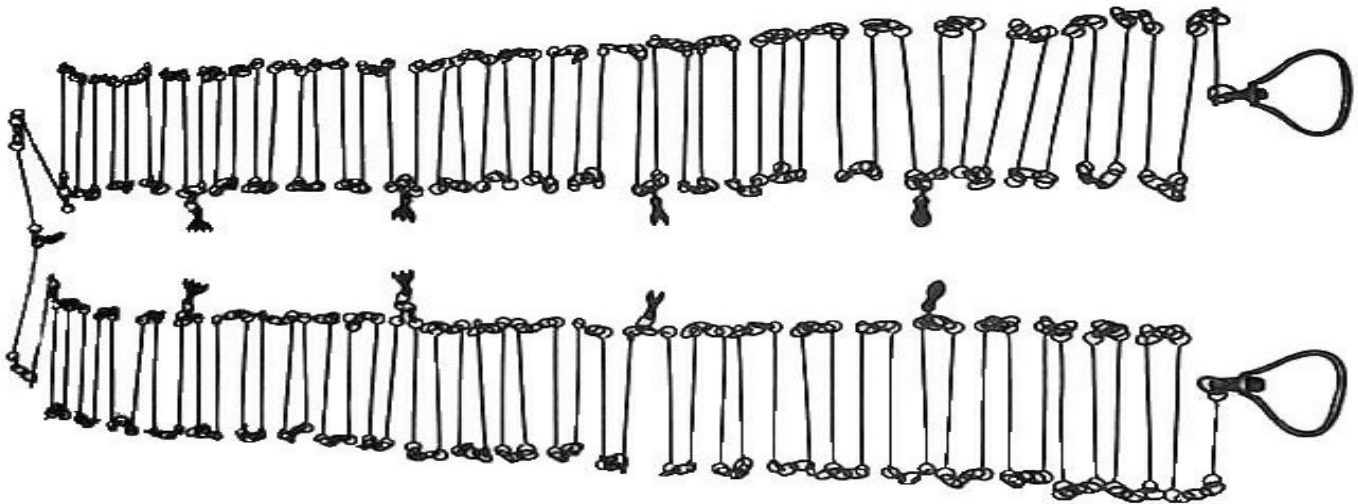
25 Links = 16 1/2 Feet (1 Rod, Pole or Perch)

100 Links = 66 Feet (1 Chain)

10 Chains = 220 Yards (1 Furlong)

80 Chains = 5280 Feet (1 Mile)

10 Square Chains = 1 Acre



Using Primary Source Evidence

The “litter” of history –letters, documents, records, diaries, drawings, newspaper accounts, etc. –left by those from the past are treasures to a historian. These are primary sources that can give up the secrets of the past.

Firsthand accounts of events, life stories, and experiences tell us more about the past than a textbook could. Learning to use these primary sources will allow you to study any piece of evidence of history and gain from it an understanding of the lives it touched and the experiences it affected.

When looking at a primary source for evidence, you have to look at it a certain way, a way that is different from when you are looking for information. When looking at a source for information, like a phone book, we take it for what it is, and we do not wonder about where it came from or how it came to be. We find our piece of information needed and we move on. However when we look at a source as evidence, like a clue in a crime scene, we question each aspect of it. When we discover a piece of information about an event, experience, or person, we question whether or not it is reliable, and what it could mean in relation to anything else we already know about the period of history.



P20604 The Reach Online Photo Archives

HISTORY OUT LOUD

You are a historian in the year 2116, one hundred years from now. You must discover which were the most significant events from 2016. Using the oral history provided, listen and begin to analyze it.

When listening to an oral history you must look for details with your ears. When studying at a photograph we can discover things about it by looking at it very closely and pulling out details. When you study an artifact you use a combination of looking and touching to discover what you can about the object. Now when we study an oral history, we will use our ears to not only listen to the story, but to discover details about the speaker, the words, and what was happening when it was recorded.

1. To analyze an oral history, we must first identify the details we see. Use the below chart to organize your ideas.

What do you notice about the oral history? Is it a transcript, video, or audio recording?

What do you notice about the story?

What else do you notice about the oral history?

Picture This

When analyzing a historical photograph we must think about many different things. First, unlike diaries or oral history resources, a photograph captures reality as it is, unaltered. When a camera snaps a picture, it does not choose what details to include or leave out. Second, remember that every photograph has a photographer, a person who has influenced not only what to photograph, but when and from what perspective. Though a camera takes frozen images of reality, the photograph can still have a message, point of view, or bias.

What is a bias?

Noun

A particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned: illegal bias against older job applicants; the magazine's bias toward art rather than photography;

Our strong bias in favor of the idea.

When a photograph has a bias, it does not make the source unreliable or unimportant, The bias will ultimately affect the information you take from the photograph, but as long as you take into account the biased perspective, the photograph may teach you even more about the time period, the people, or the events happening at the time the photograph was taken.

1. To analyze a photograph, we must first identify the details we see. Choose a photo from The Reach's Online Photo Archives and begin looking for information. Use the below chart to organize your ideas.

What do you notice about the people?

What do you notice about the setting?

What do you notice about other objects or details?

Analyzing Continuity and Change

History is often misunderstood as a list of events, with nothing overlapping in time. History should instead be seen as a mix of continuity and change, which will give us a completely different sense of the past.

Lots of things were happening all at one time all over the world, just like there are many things happening in many parts of the world today. Some decades changed rapidly, while others stayed continuous.

One of the keys to continuity and change is looking for change where common sense says there has been none, and continuities where there was change. Making observations of continuity and change can be made by comparing two points in time, such as before and after a significant event. We evaluate change over time using the ideas of progress and decline.



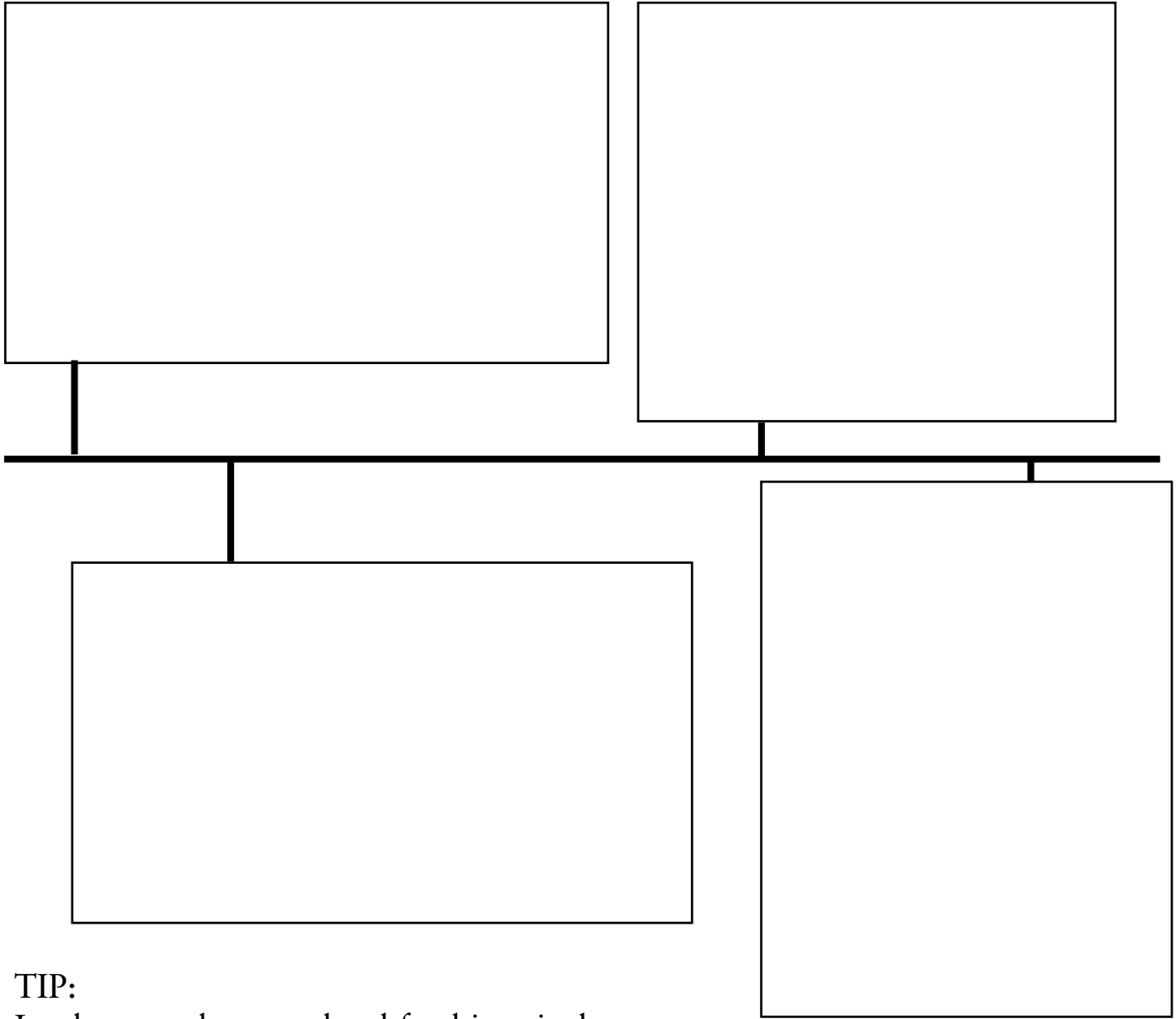
P28047 The Reach Online Photo Archives

Create a Timeline

How much history does your school or community have?

The diagram consists of a central horizontal line. From this line, four vertical lines extend upwards and downwards to connect to four empty rectangular boxes. Two boxes are positioned above the horizontal line, and two are positioned below it. The boxes are arranged in a staggered fashion along the timeline.

Create a time-line using The Reach's on-line photo archives! Focus your time-line on the history of your community or school. The on-line archives feature a variety of search options to help you narrow down your search. Fill the spaces with a sketch or description of the photo.



TIP:
Look around your school for historical photographs, books, old school newspapers, or other pieces of historical evidence that could help you put your time-line together! Once you're finished, share it with the rest of the students in your school by displaying it in the hallways!

The Daily News

Create your own newspaper article using an event or individual from the past. Using The Reach's on-line photo archives, choose a photograph that looks like there is a story behind it. Try doing research to figure out what that story might be, and then fill in the blanks with your own ideas. Don't worry if there isn't much information about your photograph!

HINT: Try using your new photo analyzing skills to get a good idea of what is happening in the picture. Look at the people, the location, and what is happening in the picture. Try to imagine what happened before and after the photo was taken!

Don't forget to add your date and city/location in Abbotsford on the newspaper!



P12345 The Reach Online Photo Archives

The Daily News

DATE:

City:

HEADLINE

PHOTO

Identifying Cause and Consequence

When looking at events in history, both tragedies and accomplishments, we are usually interested in the how and why. These questions start the search for causes (what were the actions, beliefs, and circumstances) that led to these consequences?

In history we have to pay attention to the part humans play in the promoting, shaping, and resisting change. People have motivation or reasons for taking action, or for sitting out, but causes go beyond this.

Causes are multiple and layered, involving both long-term ideologies, institutions and conditions, and short-term motivations, actions and events. We start by looking at the consequences that have resulted, and look backward to the possible causes. Looking at the time period, societal and cultural values at the time, and the political state of the area can help us determine the causes of an event.



P8175 The Reach Online Photo Archives

TALK ABOUT IT

Have a discussion with your classmates.

Was a lake teeming with fish, home to vast flocks of wildfowl, which provided a transportation corridor and respite from plagues of hungry mosquitoes “unusable”? For the Sumas First Nations, the lake was larder, thoroughfare and home. It provided amply for all the community’s needs. The lake and the fertility of the land surrounding it drew settlers to Sumas. When settlers discovered that the lake often ate up all the surrounding arable land during almost every spring freshet it became an inconvenience and barrier to agricultural development. Plans to control the lake’s changing shoreline became a plan to eliminate the lake completely.

Sumas Lake
To Drain or Not To Drain?

To Drain

OR

Not To Drain



“By today’s standards Sumas Lake would not have been drained. The people who decided to drain the lake were working with the current knowledge and technology of the day and were probably unaware of the interconnectedness of the resources involved.

The community gained 30,000 acres of prime agricultural land but the draining of the lake began the demise of

salmon fishing on the river. Today the wetlands act as a nutrient resource for the river; provides a habitat for the fish as they grow en route to the river. However, when you remove the wetlands the river speeds up creating sandbars which in turn have an effect on the fish population in the river.”

What was lost was the sustainability of the fishing industry while we gained short term productivity for farmers that will probably last for another 2 to 3 generations due to the pollution of the aquifer. As we move more and more into industrial agriculture, greenhouses, we become less dependent on the soil. Much of the soil that was gained is now being used to grow grass, i.e.: turf farms. In future this land may be needed for crops to feed the community. It is questionable if more was gained than lost with draining of the lake.”

John Visser, local environmentalist

“It was lovely. Holidaying in the summertime we swan before breakfast and we swam before lunch and again in the afternoon and again before we went to bed. There was usually four swims a day. And some of the uncles would always go the beach with us. It was really a holiday time.”

Myrtle Ferguson, AH 96

“Ducks and geese inhabited the region by millions and every shrub hid a deer.”

Recollections of Tom York, Abbotsford, Sumas & Matsqui News; Nov. 15, 1950:

“Fishing was not fishing. You just tied up boat up and throwed your line in and you couldn’t pull them out fast enough.”

David Mathers, AH 1

“Mrs. Campbell recalls her father angling for the family dinner in the waters of the kitchen floor.”

Sumas Prairie’s First White Woman Tells of Conditions Over Half a Century Ago, Abbotsford, Sumas & Matsqui News, May 20, 1926



P17600 The Reach Online Photo Archives



P24831

context: Two unidentified children play in the sand on the beach at Mill Lake.
The Reach Online Archives

Taking a Historical Perspective

The past is very foreign to us. It is filled with old versions of items we have today, plus things we haven't ever heard of. People had different views about what was happening at the time. Sometimes this makes it difficult for us to understand it.

What could it have been like to travel to the past, when Abbotsford was only just beginning to be settled? Can we imagine what it would be like to travel across kilometers of untouched land just to get to a neighbour's home? What are the limits to our imagination?

Understanding the foreignness of the past is a huge challenge. Discovering it shows us the range of human behaviour, beliefs, and social arrangements. It offers surprising alternatives to the taken-for-granted, conventional wisdom, and opens a wider perspective from which to evaluate our present life.

Taking historical perspective means understanding the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional settings that shaped people's lives and actions in the past. They acted on existing beliefs and ideologies. Because of this, we must have good comprehension of the vast differences between us in the present and those in the past.



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HISTORY IS ALIVE!

Using one of the attached historical stories, recreate one of the stories into a skit.

Delve into your **CHARACTER**

Who are they? What kind of interests do they have? What do they do in a typical day? Do you have anything in common with your character?

Look at the **SETTING**

What is the setting? Is it inside or outside? Is there one scene or does the story move? How can we make a setting that helps tell the story?

Add to the **STORY**

Try to follow the storyline but add your own details. Try sharing ideas with the group. Is there anything you think is missing from the story? Does it have an ending? Maybe you want to add a different ending.

TIP

Try adding costumes, props, and a background to help your audience better understand the story. You can even try recording the performance with a video camera and sharing it with the rest of your school!

Call “Central”

A journal entry by Margaret Weir

One of the first switchboards was in a little building on Essendene, and Blanche McCallum Kerr worked there. Then a “proper” office was built on Gladys and at first one girl at a time was on duty before the board she pushed the plugs in to make the connection.

The telephone service was special in those days, really personal. One person called to ask, “What time is the 4:10 getting in?” If watches stopped, you asked Central for the time. I knew one family that didn’t have a clock. They said, “Oh, we just phone Central.”

So often Claude would be working under a car, had to answer a ring, only to find someone was asking some stupid thing. Once when he got up from under a messy job, it was Central saying, “Mr. Weir, will you look up and down the street to see if you can spot Mr. Webster? His wife is looking for him.”

Central seemed to know all that was going on. If you rang and rang a number and got no answer, the operator would cut in to say, “Oh, Mrs. So-and-so is not home today. She went off on the 8:50 tram to Vancouver this morning and won’t be back until the 7:10 tonight.”

Now that is real service.



Telephone Company office, ASM News – July 2, 1958

The Abbotsford Hotel Fire

A journal entry by Margaret Weir

Before the 1920s and long after that, the only way of fighting fire in the village of Abbotsford, was with a bucket brigade. A little stream crossed the road on Montrose, in from the dairy, and from this stream buckets were dropped and handed from one to another to the base of the fire and thrown on. It was too far to carry water when the big, old wooden hotel with its upstairs veranda took on fire.

Claude and I had not long been married when we were awakened in our apartment above the old garage on Essendene. We awakened to hear the fire alarm go off. A fire alarm in the form of a triangle that hung above a little red shed lined with buckets and a ladder. The buckets had rounded bottoms so that if stolen, they were of no use to the person.

We heard this wild clanging, knew what it meant, jumped to the window and in the moonlight were able to see a little figure – Bud Haddrell, about nine years old, in his B.V.D.'s. There stood this little boy, pounding with all his strength and then he rushed down the street to the burning hotel. It wasn't long before Claude and I were dressed and down there too.

Having feeble ways of saving buildings in those days, we had lots of fires that burned all night and the citizens spent the night on the street watching it. It was really funny. Women with heads in curlers would put a dressing gown on and watch the fire for hours while the men tried to save things from burning. The night Knoll's Hardware burnt down was memorable for the fact that ammunition



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started popping and none of us street watchers knew whether we were safe or not, so crowded behind telephone poles thinking we were safe there.

When Claude and I got to the fire, there was smoke billowing out of the front door and Annie Haddrell coming out of it with arms full of things she must save. She kept going in and out this way until we were terrified for her. As calm as can be, she walked like a zombie in and out and in and out. Mrs. Haddrell was a

big woman and wore her hair in a bun on top like Mrs. Katzenjammer in the funny papers of that day. The men coming to the rescue did what they could but the time soon passed when they felt it was safe to go in and get things out. Besides, in the smoke they didn't know what to do but Annie did and she kept this salvaging up until the place got red-hot.

Next to the hotel on the west side was a driveway and then another group of businesses; Eric Weir's Drug Store, Dr. Quinn's dentist office and Mr. Johnston's pool hall. These could not be saved but we were all for helping Eric to get things out. Eric explained that his stock was well covered by insurance so no use confusing the policy by saving some, but Claude paid little attention. He got in the back door and hauled in to his little truck piles of chocolates and cosmetics. Claude and I had fun eating chocolates for a long time. On the street stood Eric and the rest of us and it hurt us to know all those cameras and showcases of gift items had to go up in smoke.

What Eric did not think of, though there was an hour in which to do it, was that all the family records were in his office; the family Bible, birth certificates, the medal that Kenneth Weir won in France for crawling out over no-man's-land and dragging his officer to safety, family pictures and all of Dad Weir's little treasures. Dad wasn't there to think of this, and after the fire, he just went to pieces and never was quite the same. Eric's store caught and we moved on with interest to Dr. Quinn's office. Gilfillan and Claude and I got in. I busied myself with gathering up his instruments and as we got things together Claude hauled them out to his waiting truck and saved them for dear Dr. Quinn. Gilfillan unscrewed the dentist chair. What do you suppose Dr. Quinn was busy doing? In great excitement, he was unscrewing the telephone off the wall and "saving" it. He was so taken up with what he was doing we let him go to it,

for the other three could manage to clean out his office before the fire took the building. I have often heard of strange things people do at fires and this was an example for us to witness.

Mr. Alanson had a fire in his big hardware store away back about 1918. In those days if your insurance lapsed and you had a big fire the next day, you were just out of luck. Mr. Alanson's two-storey building stood on the property next to the Royal Bank. It was Christmas and in the rush he had forgotten the policy should be renewed and the insurance man didn't bother in those days to keep you straight. Well, the day after it lapsed the hardware took on fire. Everything was lost and not a cent of insurance.

When we lived above the garage we had a very nice four - room place. All the walls of it and every house in the district had walls of V-joint, cedar V-joint, and most people had them stained brown. I disliked this in all the mill houses around the Mill Lake but Claude had ours nicely painted in grays and cream. A stair went up the outside of the building and a long stretch of work shop was built at the back of the house. The frightening thing was that in those days gasoline came in barrels that were stored at the foot of the steps. Claude was always aware of their danger and when we had our two little girls and I was alone so many nights, I never slipped in to sleep without going through my mind, a fire drill. I figured I'd drop all the bedding I could and clothes over the front windows on the street and then lower the babies down to that, but I never needed to put this in to practice.

We did have a memorable fire. The tire shop next door, well stocked with tires and the things to repair them, burned. What a long lasting fire that was, and so terribly hot. Claude was there with fire extinguishers and I on the street watching. I kept asking if it was time to get the two sleeping babies out

and he said he'd let me know when to get going. Mr. Webster and other sightseers in their nightgowns and dressing gowns and hair curlers, kept saying, "Oh, those babies. Get them out." When the signal came, someone helped me carry two sleeping little babies and their bedding up to Mr. and Mrs. Barrett's who lived up above the post office that was then on Montrose and Essendene. Mrs. Barrett minded them all night.

I was so prepared with my fire drill and people were so willing to help, I handed things to them and they were carried to the Walters' house up the street. The last thing I carried out was a hundred year old cup and saucer. We had the house so denuded that when Mr. Barrett and Claude decided to spend the night watching that the fire did not start up again, the men were unable to find anything but a silence cloth off the dining room table with which to cover themselves. We did not take out furniture as that was well insured.

To fight the fire on our wall, the bucket brigade had to carry water up the stairs, through a hall and across our kitchen floor and then pour it down over the burning wall. The windows were all broken with the heat, so you can imagine the mess the floors were in after that deluge! I spent the night with the babies at Mrs. Barrett's and the next day she minded them when I returned to the dirty empty house. The night before there had been heaps of people to take things out. The next day there was no one to take them back in. One of the loveliest and kindest things that ever happened to me took place while I stood in the mess. Mrs. Albert Lee arrived at the door with a bucket and cleaning cloths and said "I've come to wash your floors for you. This happened to me once so I know what it is like." And, no one helped her. She swept and scrubbed and at 11:30, with the job finished, went back across the street to make dinner for her family.

That is one of the loveliest things anyone has ever done for me.

Laundry

A journal entry by Margaret Weir

It seems the duty of taking care of the family task of clean clothing and clean linens has been thought to be the work of the lady of the house. And this it has been from the time she took the garments to the stream and rubbed them on stones, up through the advent of the washboard and of late the automatic washer and dryer, for that has been a new household help. Think of the thousands of years women have lifted and carried water, scrubbed and rinsed and found a place to dry, be it a fence, tree branches or best of all, laying them on the grass to bleach while drying. One had to remember to bring the laundry in just as the dew was falling and they'd be perfect for ironing.

It is still a lovely sight to see a long line of clean clothes blowing in the wind, but there are few now. One of the funniest sights to behold in my childhood, was to see, blowing on a line, the long-johns of the man of the house. Clothespinned from the shoulders and the wind filling the garment was a comical sight like the headless form of a man dancing in the wind.

There was an art in hanging clothes. Yes, an art, one that the neighbours judged you by. In a city it was quite a sight to look out the back window all down the block and see clothes on the lines. You could judge a housewife's methods of running her house by her clothesline. If she were late in getting it out on Monday morning, she was thought to be lazy. If she didn't arrange them in proper sequence, she was untidy.

One hung sheets first, nicely stretched. Then came the pillow slips, arranged so the air billowed them. Then the towels, large first down to dish towels and wash cloths. White

shirts next, pinned by the tail so they could billow out. The coloured things last and in the shade if one could find it so they would not fade. The socks were last, pinned from their toes so they would stretch not shrink. Last of all, the cloths for washing floors and maybe a door rug.

It is amusing and unbelievable, but there was a competition in some households over who was going to have their clothes out first on Monday morning. The Vanetta family and the Taylor family next door had such a feud. Jack Vanetta told me of how his wife tried and tried to beat the Taylors next door. Jack and his wife decided he would help her with the wash on Sunday evening and they'd get up early and beat the Taylors. To their horror, when they went to put their washed things out, the Taylors had beaten them. How did they do it?!

Some women delighted in the results of their wash day and of their ironing. I remember a lady who hung all the garments around the living room for days so she and all who came her way would marvel at her abilities. The amount of articles she had done that week she would list off for you and you were supposed to find this a delight and a great credit to her.

Here could be written a long story of the various washing machines we women were given to help in this constant task but the first I saw was Mother's, brought from our home on 7th Avenue in 1912. It was one that had a handle on the side and one stood and turned the tub by this handle for twenty or more minutes then run the dirty water out and put in fresh. Attached to the side was a wringer, a great invention. If you had a proper stand at the side, you could wring the articles out of the soiled water, in to a tub of clean and then

back again in to a second rinsing and bluing. Bluing! I wonder when that went out of style? Some people were too generous with it and almost dyed the white things.

In Abbotsford, all Mother had was the machine and ringer. No water pumped in to the kitchen and no way of getting rid of any washing water but taking it out a north door of three steps, generally slippery with moss because of its position.

Water had to be pumped in the back yard. Good water but an iron arm pumped it up. One had to be careful in winter not to grab it with a bare hand or you'd stick to it. Pail full by pail full had to be carried in and put on the kitchen range and the tank at the end of the range filled. From that the hot water had to be carried across the floor and poured in to the tub. Mother shaved Sunlight, good old Sunlight, the yellow bar we used for all cleaning and washing our faces. We had a neighbour, a widower keeping house for his two children, who prided himself on his soap making. To add to his art, he put some pink colouring in and gave Mother a present of his lovely soap which she put in the washing machine, only to find her sheets and towels came out pink!

When Claude and I were married he thought about this washing business and gave it the modern touch. He saw no need of buying us a washing machine since we could have ten pounds of laundry done "rough dry" for one dollar. All I had to do was tie it all up in a sheet and then get it to the drug store where all bundles were picked up and taken to New Westminster for washing and drying. One could have it ironed. I think shirts were ten cents each but the rough dry was cheaper. The thing was getting it up and down if Claude wouldn't take it. When pregnant, I paid some little boy to do it for ten cents. Lorne Vanetta reminded me "I often took your washing to the drug store for you." The returned bundle called for picking up also. Each article was

very rumpled and took a lot of ironing, but they were clean and not expensive. Not expensive until money got scarce and I started doing as much as I could at home and over a wash tub.

There was not room for a large bathtub in our bathroom, so Claude had a metal lined tray built and a shower head. Standing inside the shower he put two little sawhorses. Across this a grated top and on it stood a galvanized wash tub and ringer, a tub that was in constant use, especially when we had two babies in diapers. Claude liked a clean outfit every day and used often up to six white linen handkerchiefs a day. I got that down to a science. I had him put them in a white enamel pail then I'd boil them in soapy water, often a couple of times before rinsing. This way I didn't mind the job. He used them to wipe his face when working. Those men that didn't use something clean to wipe with had bad skin but Claude's face was always nice looking.

Masquerades

A journal entry by Margaret Weir

In the 1920's and into the depression years of the 1930's, the big event of the year was the Annual Masquerade, generally in November and put on by the Legion. Claude and I were married in 1922 and Claude never went to any evening affair, but in those days one could fit in with the crowd and go to a masquerade on one's own, meeting all your friends there.

I preferred creating an Oriental costume and held its cost down to one dollar, as a rule, excepting one year when Ray and I went together and made ourselves old fashioned ladies and gent's outfits. I purchased six yards of brown velvet for mine and later used the yardage to make Jean and Margaret dresses with big round lace collars. I borrowed some brocade Eric had bought for cushions and used it for a large panel down the front of my dress. Ray made all his by hand of white brocade and dyed lace a golden colour. It was very lovely. We have a picture of it. We went as a pair but only I won the prize for fancy dress. It wasn't right. In the following year, Dr. McDiarmid borrowed Ray's outfit and won first prize, much to Ray's annoyance. We made an elegant colonial couple.

Once I took three yards of white cotton down to the A.S.M News office and had them run it through the press with that week's news printed on it and made a straight dress. I made a headdress of folded newspaper and carried a bundle of that week's edition under my arm, giving papers away.

When I decided to go as "radio," I made a full white cotton skirt and in strong black lettering, painted all the call letters we could think of. I took a Japanese orange box and removed the top and bottom, painted the rest black to be fitted around my waist and on the front of it arranged tuning knobs and attached them to wires that went to an antenna on my head. On my back was a sign

that read "Dr. Swift's Radio," for he was the keen enthusiast in town.

One of my originals was a totem pole. From stiff sheeting I sewed a pajama type suit with wide sleeves, then Pete Peters, a sign painter, painted it to look like a totem when I stood up straight. The arms were the big wings and I made a headdress that I could see through. It rose above my head with the Raven's huge bill standing far out in front. It was all very real like. Another I liked was my "taxes" outfit. I made a full white skirt and over it Claude painted all the various taxes demanded of us in those years. There would be a lot more now, but there were an alarming number then. I topped it off with a black velvet tight fitting bodice and all around my shoulders and the skirt, wrapped red tape. I took white tape and dyed it. Then my headdress was a high helmet and the word "taxes" spelt out with carpet tacks glued on.

Once, when held in the Alexander Hall that stood on the corner of Railway and Essendene, until it burned down, I've forgotten what I wore but Pete Peters came and dressed for it from our apartment on Essendene, and he had fixed a cave man's outfit. All he wore was an animal's skin caught at one shoulder. He made shoes from animal skins tied around the ankle, his hairy legs and breast in full view. I think he had a bandeau of skins around his head and he carried a huge club. He'd go roaring across the floor and grab a partner by the hair and haul her onto the dance floor. All took it in good part.

I remember Bill Hill-Tout wearing full evening attire, all but the pants, which he carried over his arm. He had white shorts on, black socks held up with garters, I think they called them Paris garters, a tall beaver hat and carried a cane. His sign on the back I think said "Absent Minded Professor." One of the neatest dresses to remember, was worn by Mrs. Onions. Her evening dress was long and

neat and very black and decorated with strings of tiny onions. Her beads were long strings of these tiny onions. Her bracelet and a headdress like a crown done with onions. Since that was her name it was more than suitable.

There was a Mrs. Kelly in Abbotsford who fixed herself up many different costumes, one of which was a stove. She had a big tin stove in which she sat and smoked so that plenty of smoke went up from the stove pipe above her. She sat there all evening but after that I decided all costumes must be those one could dance in with ease, not just sit.

Some people rented fancy costumes from the city making it a very beautiful affair, but the time came that fewer people made the effort to dress and more and more went just to look at the costumed patrons and dance. I don't remember when it dribbled out of existence, but it was fun while it lasted.

fakebook

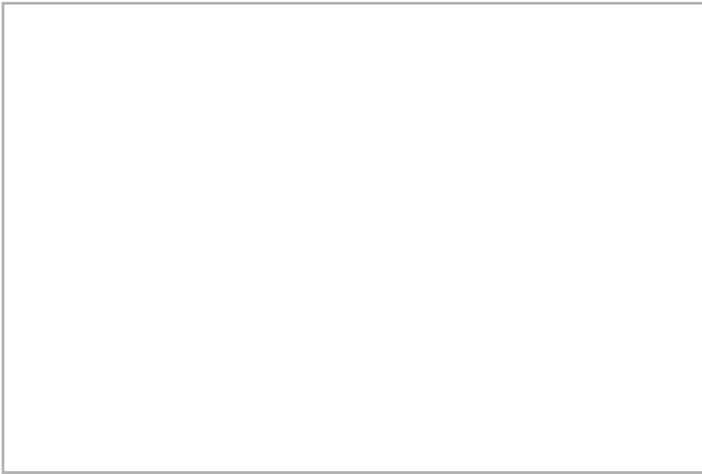
create a fake facebook page for an interesting historical individual

For this activity, you will need to choose a historical individual from either the exhibition or one of the information sheets or historical stories in this package. Once you have chosen your character, you will need to brainstorm what kind of information would be on their facebook page, if facebook existed in their time.

Possible pieces of information on their page:

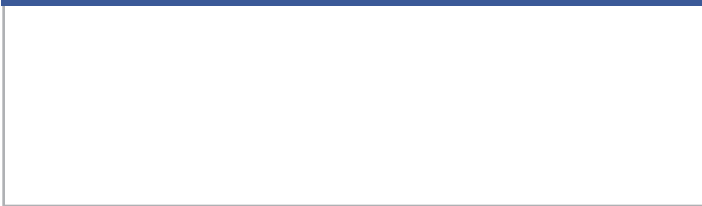
- A Profile Picture (you will need to draw one!)
- About Me
- Interests
- Status Update
- Their Wall (things others have posted or shared to their wall)
- Friends
- Groups
- Education and Work (What is their career or school they attend?)
- Sponsors (Make up or use a product that you know existed at the time, and create an ad for it.)

Once you have brainstormed, use the template on the next page to put together your social media page for a historical individual!

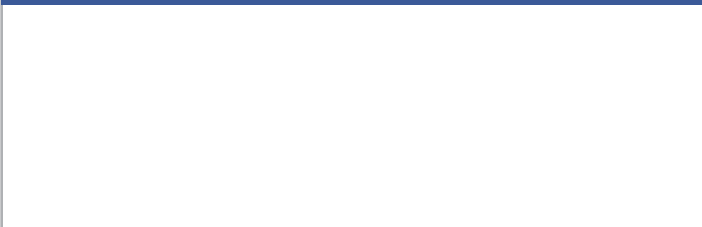


Profile Picture

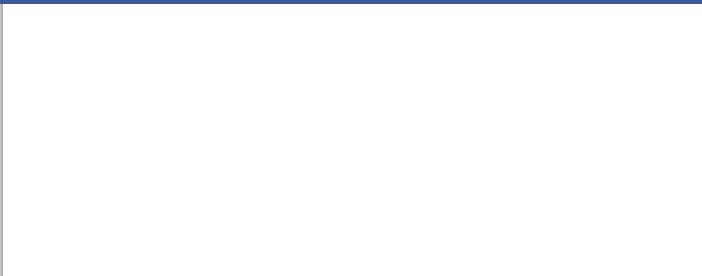
Personal Interests



Friends



Groups



Sponsors



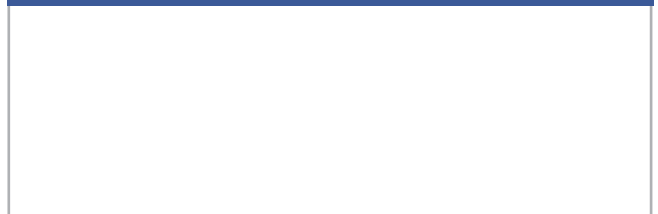
About Me



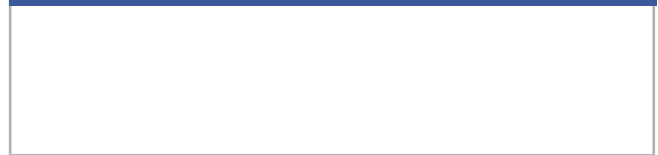
Status Update



Wall



Education and Work



Understanding the Ethical Dimensions of Historical Interpretation

What responsibilities do historical crimes and sacrifices impose upon us today?

Historical crimes of the past do affect us in the present, as we are often expected to reconcile with those who were mistreated, despite us today having nothing to do with the initial crime.

One part of this is about historical crimes, but as well another part has to do with the ethical judgments we make today about historical actions. The actions of those in the past are often judged using our contemporary views of right and wrong, taking into account our own societal values and progressive nature. However, to truly understand the events of the past, we need to think about the societal and cultural values of the time, and to use those when making judgments about the actions of our historical figures.

Taking historical perspective helps us understand the differences between our ethical universe and those in bygone societies. We should expect to learn something from the past that helps us face the ethical issues of today.



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In-Class Debate

Pick a side:

1. Take on the role of a Japanese-Canadian person after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Think about why it would be scary or unfair to be put in an internment camp, or monitored day and night, and having your personal property (land/house/belongings) taken from you. Consider that many of these people had been born in Canada and living there their whole lives. How would you respond?

2. Take on the role of the Canadian Government in the middle of World War II. The Canadian Government was in the midst of a huge war, with a recent attack on an ally happening close to home. The government took actions to protect the country from potential threats. How would you respond?

Work with your team to think of some arguments that support your side. Is it fair to make assumptions about a group of people without more definite grounds? Do you think there is anything else either of these sides could have done to avoid such harsh measures?

2. Now, think about what is happening in current events. Is there anything taking place that resembles the Japanese Internment camps? What can we do differently this time to guarantee everyone is safe and treated humanely and fair?

Mail It in

Create your own postage stamp!

