

SALT SPRING ISLAND

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

Amazing Women of Salt Spring Island



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*Amazing Women
of
Salt Spring Island*

Salt Spring Island Historical Society

We applied for the grant-- and won! At this point, we would like to thank everyone for their work and support in applying for the grant. It takes a lot of effort to put together a successful application. We would also like to thank SWOVA, the Canadian Federation of University Women of Salt Spring Island and the Farmer's Institute for their letters of support towards our grant application.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of healthy Living and Sport, and the assistance of the British Columbia Museums Association in making this presentation possible.

We entitled our presentation Amazing Women of Salt Spring Island, in recognition of the fact that although all of the women highlighted today were influential in some way, they were not the only women who were; they are only a fraction of the many amazing women who have made a difference in our community.

Presented by:

Barbara Aust

Barbara DuMoulin

Susan Good

Emily Hepburn

Sue Mouat

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Maria (Mar-Rye-ah) Mahoi (Douglas, Fisher) 1855-1936 **Kanaka Matriarch**

Maria Mahoi epitomizes the strength, independence, resilience and resourcefulness of the hard-working pioneer women of the Gulf Islands. Maria was born in 1855 to William Mahoya, a Kanaka (Hawaiian) and his first nation wife. William was contracted to the Hudson Bay Company during the fur trade.

Little is known about her early life until 1870 and her first relationship, with Captain Abel Douglas from Maine, an American of Scottish descent, who came up to BC via the California Gold Rush. Maria went on to have 13 children

by two fathers, the first seven by Douglas and the second six by George Fisher. In 1890, Douglas disappeared out of her life. In 1900, she went on to marry the well-educated George, who was born on nearby Piers Island. He was also of mixed race, his father English and his mother from the Cowichan tribe. Although illiterate, herself, Maria recognized the value and importance of an education for all of her children, including her girls.



Maria was proud of her Hawaiian heritage. She worked hard to cope with prejudice on the island. Her children blended into island society— the girls by marriage and



the sons through their Douglas family ties.

In 1902, the Fishers moved to Russell Island, located just south of Fulford Harbour. Russell Island had originally been granted in 1886 to a Kanaka named William Haumea. An astute, tenacious and resourceful woman, Maria, with the help of family and neighbours in Fulford, successfully claimed her rights to the island as Haumea's heir.

Her home on Russell Island became a focal point for the largely mixed community of Kanaka (Hawaiian) and aboriginal descendants. She lived there until her death in 1936. Russell Island is now part of the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve and Maria's farmhouse is under the stewardship of Parks Canada.

For more information see the Kanaka collection of <http://saltspringarchives.com/> and also read:

Jean Barman, *Maria Mahoi of the Islands*.

Charles Kahn, *Salt Spring, The Story of an Island*.

Tom Koppel, *Kanaka, The Untold Story of Hawaiian Pioneers in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest*.





**Mary Ann (Tuwa'hwiye Tusium Gosselim) Gyves
c. 1854-1941**

Mary Ann was a much loved and hard working pioneer and midwife, who was known for her adaptability in all situations and who maintained great inner strength and determination. Her birth date is not recorded but she was born Tuwa'H Wiye Gosselem around 1854. She was one of three children born to Cowichan First Nation Chieftain, "George" Tusilum and his wife Taltunaat, of the Clem-Clemelutz Clan.

Her marriage to Michael Gyves (c. 1840 - 1941) is registered on

11 July 1886 at Cowichan. She was about 17; he was 46. Michael and Mary Ann had three children: Ellen (m. Ted Akerman), Michael (m. Caroline Cotsford) and Mary Katherine (m. Ernie Brenton)

Mary Ann helped Michael clear their homestead - she drove the oxen and he drove the plow. They lived in a windowless shack at the foot of the mountain until Michael could build a more comfortable home, which still stands adjacent to the Fulford Fire Hall. A true pioneer woman, her husband claimed cougars were more afraid of Granny's stick than his gun!



Mary Ann was a midwife. She received her healing knowledge from her Cowichan family. This skill was much appreciated by all who benefited from her medical treatment and assistance at births. She is credited with bringing many of the south end babies into the world.

A devoted grandmother, Mary Ann moved into Ganges during the school week to keep house so her grandchildren could attend high school. This enabled the children to get their diplomas. The girls went on to nursing careers, thanks to Granny's sacrifice.



Sylvia Stark (nee Estes) 1839-1944

Sylvia Stark was born in Clay County, Missouri in 1839, to Hannah and Howard Estes. In 1851, the Estes family moved to California, hoping to find greater freedom. There, in 1859, she married farmer Louis Stark. Disappointed by life in California, they moved north to BC, when Sir James Douglas granted pre-emption rights to African Americans.





In 1860, Louis, Sylvia, their two children, and 15 dairy cows traveled by sloop to Saltspring, settling first in the Vesuvius/Central area. They later moved to the northeast shore of Ganges Harbour, across from Goat Island. They encountered many hardships: murders of neighbours and frightening encounters with aboriginal ‘visitors’. Their farm tools were all made by hand, even the plough. They used a team of

oxen to pull the plough through the fields and planted an extensive orchard, which still exists today.

Sylvia’s husband Louis left in 1875 to live in Nanaimo, but Sylvia stayed on Saltspring Island to manage the farm. She died in 1944, at the age of 105, and lies buried in the Central cemetery.

Want more information? Go to the Saltspring Archives website for photos, Provincial Archives website for



history, and Charles Kahn’s book—*Salt Spring, The Story of an Island*.

Bertha Trage Daykin 1884-1960

Bertha Trage Daykin was a much loved and respected educator on Saltspring Island, who applied her skills and talents to all aspects of her life. The daughter of Theodore Trage (1835—1902) and Susannah George (1842—1932), she was born on April 4, 1884 at Beaver Point.



Bertha attended Beaver Point School. After finishing school herself, Bertha used her inheritance money to further her own education and become a teacher. She taught at Beaver Point School, taught 10 children at Robert McBride's private school in Fulford Harbour, and worked as a substitute teacher at the Burgoyne

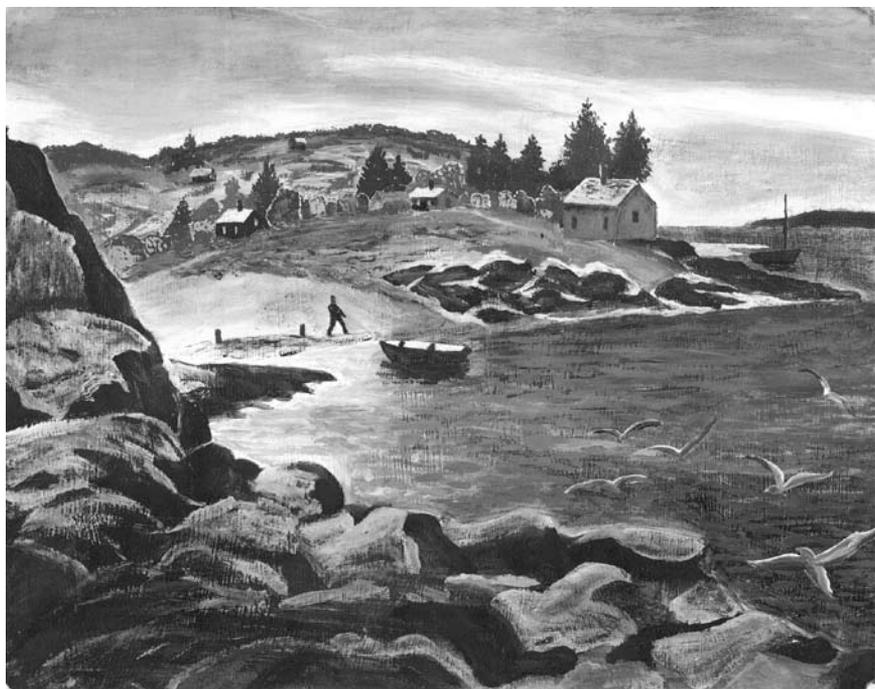




Valley School.

B e r t h a married boat builder Roby Daykin in October 1912, at the age of 27. They lived on Morningside Road by Stowel Creek on land acquired from her sister, Clara. They had 5 children: Alan

(1913—1940), Helen (1915—2006), Cora (1917—1969), Cecil (1919—1993), and Rexford (1921—1983).



Kate Furness (Lloyd) 1876-1955

Kate Furness was born in Nanaimo on September 14, 1876. She was registered as KATE on her birth certificate, but was listed as KATIE in both the 1881 census and Reverend Wilson's Parish and Home magazine.

The Furness family moved to farm in the Burgoyne Valley. In 1881, at the age of 5, Katie began attending Burgoyne Bay School. She showed great potential and later qualified as a teacher, on July 28, 1893, at the age of

16. She later upgraded her certificates, in 1895 and 1901. She taught first at Beaver Point School, from the latter part of 1892 to 1894. Later, in 1896-97, she taught at North End School. In January 1896,



the Saltspring Island Parish and Home reported, “A very enjoyable Christmas tree entertainment was held at North End, Friday, December 20th. Nearly 100 were present, and the schoolroom crowded. Miss Furness has been a most successful teacher.” Quotes like this highlight her popularity in the community.



In December 1898, Katie resigned from North End School, due to the death of her father and reports of ill health. Later, she returned to teaching, obtaining a teaching certificate from Normal School in the summer of 1899 (according to Reverend Wilson in Saltspring Parish and Home, January 1900.) Katie then taught at Burgoyne Bay School from 1899 to 1902/03.

In 1905, Katie moved to Kamloops to teach at Stuart Wood School. She later married and had four sons, but continued teaching for many years.



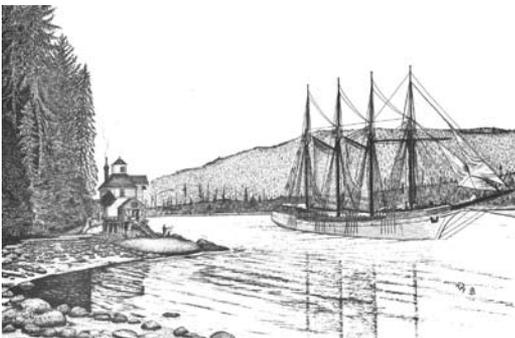
Florence Grove Hepburn 1910-2002



A long time educator on Saltspring Island, Florence Grove Hepburn was known for her commitment to helping each student achieve a well-rounded education. Born August 31, 1910, to ship's carpenter John Grove and his wife, Florence Burns, she spent much of her childhood at the lighthouse at Prospect Point in Vancouver. She trekked across Stanley Park every day to attend school.

Florence was one of the first women to graduate from UBC with a degree in Science. In 1933 she began her teaching career on Saltspring Island. While stories abound of her strict discipline, an equal number of stories from former students praise her and are grateful for her positive influence in their lives.

Florence married Arthur Hepburn (1901–1973) a telephone lineman and farmer. They lived on the Hepburn farm with Arthur's mother Jane Hepburn, one of the few people who ever intimidated



Florence! They raised two children, Mhora and Duncan.

Upon retiring from teaching, Florence tutored students and taught correspondence courses.

She traveled with retired teachers to China, to advise villagers on economic development. She volunteered with Meals-on-Wheels and Seniors-for-Seniors on Saltspring. In her later years in Greenwood, she worked in the laundry room, taking on the folding of the laundry with the same dedication that she had applied to her teaching career.

Florence Hepburn's legacy can be seen in the achievements of her many students, who went on to careers they had never dreamed possible.



Miss Olivia “Olive” Mouat 1908-2003



Miss Olive Mouat spent her life in service to the classroom, church, air force and the community!

The granddaughter of Saltspring pioneer Thomas Mouat, she was an ardent student and the winner of the Governor-General's Award for academic excellence. Olive was an assistant in the Department of Classics at UBC, from 1929-30 and participated in the Classics Club. She completed her BA and teacher training in 1930.

Miss Mouat, as she was always known, first taught in a rural school in McBride, B.C. She then taught in Maple Ridge, B.C. in 1939. Joining the Air Force in 1943, she became a wireless operator for the duration of the war.

In 1945, Olive moved to Saltspring Island and taught at the Consolidated Elementary School and later at the Secondary School. She





retired in 1964 after 34 years of teaching. Known for her empathy and care for students, she was, in turn, well loved by them.

Miss Mouat was involved in the local United Church, where she supported the food bank, a shelter, a summer camp and the Open Door. A member of the United Church Women, she worked on the World Development Tea and Operation Eyesight.

Polite and somewhat reserved, Miss Mouat was called by her surname and she always called others by theirs. She was “a whole Christian person—joyful, generous and caring for others with never an unkind word...”

For more information see the article in *The Driftwood*, Jan 26, 1994, on Olive Mouat’s 85th birthday



Jane (Granny) Manson Mouat 1859-1935



Jane Manson Mouat was born in 1859 in the Shetland Islands. She and her husband, Thomas, immigrated to Saltspring via Nanaimo in 1884. They left Nanaimo because of the coal dust and sought a place with purer air.

In 1885, they bought a farm from the Copeland family on Tripp Rd. and pre-empted 153 acres on St Mary's Lake and began their life on Saltspring Island. Unfortunately, Thomas died in 1888, leaving Jane with 11 children to raise. She continued to farm the land

with the help of her older children for another two decades and then in 1907, the farm was rented out. It was eventually sold after World War I.





Jane became the postmistress in 1907 and continued in this role until her death. In 1907, she and her son, Gilbert James, bought the Malcolm and Purvis Company and renamed it G.J. Mouat and Co. They continued in the old store until a new one was built in 1911-1912. At the same time, Jane ran the Ganges Inn, also known as Granny's Boarding House, which was housed in the original Mouat's Store.

A community-minded woman, she recognized the need for a Methodist Church in the north end and, in those early days, drove up and down the island in her horse and buggy to raise \$650 toward its construction.

Granny Mouat's legacy has lived on and the Mouat name and family store has continued on the island for over a century.

For more information see the Saltspring Archives website or read Charles Kahn's books:

Salt Spring, The Story of an Island
Mouat's, The First Hundred Years



Sophie King 1880-1975

Sophie Purser was born to an English father and aboriginal mother in 1880 at Beaver Point. She never knew her father and, at age three, she was placed with the Sisters of St. Ann at Cowichan. Sophie said she loved living with the nuns and that she had a good life there. She didn't meet her older brothers until she was a young adult of 17.



Sophie Purser married Leon King about 1900 and they had six children. Leon, a horse logger, and Sophie worked side by side. Together, they built their own home and boats.



While boatbuilding, Sophie learned to carve and whittle. With time on her hands at age 61, Sophie began carving pieces of driftwood that she collected from her beach. Most of her carvings were of animals. Sophie searched the beach for pieces of driftwood that had natural crooks that could easily be carved into the shape of a particular bird or animal.



Tourists would travel for miles to search out Sophie and her carvings. She was begged over and over to sell them, but she said she didn't have the heart to let them go.

At age 84, Sophie sold her home and her collection of carvings to Bob Akerman, to be held until he built his South End museum. Her carvings are there today.

Sophie and her husband are buried at St. Paul's cemetery.



Kimiko Murakami 1904-1997

Kimiko Okano, born in Steveston, was the daughter of Kumanosuke and Riyo Okano. She moved to Saltspring from Steveston at the age of five. After a series of family tragedies, the Okano family visited Japan in 1911. Mr. Okano returned to B.C. after six months and Mrs. Okano stayed behind in Japan to give birth. After her child was born, she returned to Canada, but left Kimiko and her sister behind in Japan with their grandmother.



Kimiko rejoined her family on Saltspring in 1919. There, she joined her parents to farm on Sharp Road. Kimiko was the first woman driver in Ganges, and she drove from the family farm to Mouat's Store in town to sell eggs.

In 1925, Kimiko returned to Japan to attend her grandmother's eighty-eighth birthday. It was here she met and married Katsuyori Murakami. They returned to Canada in 1932 and purchased a farm on Sharp Road. The Murakamis were well known for their extremely high quality produce, which was sold regularly to the famous Empress Hotel in Victoria.



Horribly, the War Measures' Act was passed on February 26, 1942. This act ordered the relocation of Japanese Canadians to the BC Interior, after initial interment at the Hastings Park Exhibition grounds. Then they were sent on to Alberta, where they farmed sugar beets and



later opened a restaurant.

In 1954, the Murakami family returned to Saltspring. Upon their return, they discovered that all of their land and possessions had been sold and that they were discriminated against. Despite the odds, they stayed and reestablished themselves by farming the land and selling vegetables. Today, Kimiko's descendants remain on the family land on Rainbow Road and make amazing contributions to the community of Saltspring.



Anne Stevens 1837-1913





Anne and Henry Stevens were from Devonshire, England, and came to BC on construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

They arrived on Saltspring in 1884, and first settled at Ganges Harbour. Later they moved to Central Settlement to the home that still exists next to St. Mark's Anglican Church on North End Road. They donated a 1/2 acre of land to build St Mark's, which was consecrated in 1892. Their farm later became known as Church Hill Farm.

Anne and her husband adopted one son, Walter, and one daughter, Eva Jenkins. Walter and Eva later married and had a large family.

Mrs. Stevens had run a railhead camp for the CPR, which gave her good experience for running a boarding house. She opened the Stevens Boarding House and charged her boarders \$1 a day or \$5 per week. Mrs. Stevens was a good cook, and all the young men went there for dinner on Sundays at a cost of 25 cents for their meal. In 1892, Reverend Wilson called the place "roomy and home-like with accommodation for twelve guests".

Mrs. Stevens was known as "Aunty". Raffles Purdy, who taught at Vesuvius (later Central) School from 1885 to 1897, roomed with the Stevens until he bought land. Harry Bullock rented two rooms for five years while his large house was being built.

Mary Amanda Broadwell 1835-1901

Mrs. Broadwell, an American, arrived on Saltspring in 1882 with her husband Joel, an Englishman, and their two children, Joel Jr. and Anna Laura. They bought a large farm that extended from the west side of St. Mary Lake to Channel Ridge (formerly called Broadwell's Mountain.)

In 1892, the Broadwells created the largest store on Saltspring in their Central Settlement home. By 1894, the Broadwells were Saltspring's largest landowners, with 1260 acres, including a market garden and a sheep ranch on Broadwell's Mountain. Mary Amanda and Joel were an important part of the social, fraternal and commercial associations of the north end.

Mrs. Broadwell ran the store until her health failed in the late





1890's, but Joel continued as the island's second postmaster. In 1900, they opened a second store.

Mary Amanda Broadwell died in 1901. Joel moved to Vancouver. Anna Laura married Henry Caldwell and stayed on Saltspring. Joel Sr. and Joel Jr. both died in 1909 and are buried at the cemetery in Central, as is Mary Amanda.





Frances Nona Crofton 1879-1951

Frances Nona Crofton was born in 1879 in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, to Edward Francis and Elizabeth Frances Wilson. She was one of 10 children: 5 boys and 5 girls. She arrived on Saltspring Island in 1895 or 96 with her mother and siblings. They came to join her father, who was the first resident Anglican minister. As one of the five Wilson daughters, she was a welcome addition to Saltspring society.



In 1903, Nona married Alfred (Fred) Crofton, who had recently purchased Jack Scovell's Ganges area farm. She gave birth to the first of her seven children in 1904. The names of all seven children began with a "D". In the early days Mrs. Crofton did the cooking, gardening, preserving and sewing of most of the family's clothes.



In 1916, when Fred went to war, she and her brother Norman converted their home, called “Harbour House”, into a guesthouse. The management of Harbour House was a family affair, with Mrs. Crofton at the helm to direct her family, the staff and the resources required. Home-style hospitality was offered to people from all over the world and the Harbour House’s reputation grew. Rooms rented for



\$2.50 per night while tents went for \$16 per week. Between the first and second world wars, Harbour House was the centre of social and recreational activities for Saltspring Island.

Frances Nona Crofton died in 1951 at the age of 72.



Emily Adelaide Beddis 1852-1919

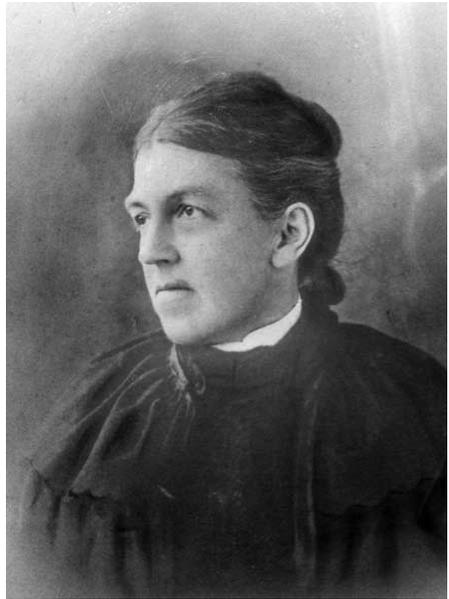
Born Emily Adelaide Purdy in the United Kingdom in 1852, she married Samuel John Beddis in 1871. In 1872 they traveled to Nebraska, USA to farm. Raffles Purdy, Emily's brother and a teacher, joined them there. They went west to San Francisco, and then north to Victoria, British Columbia. It was here that they met Henry Ruckle selling eggs in Saanich. He suggested they consider Saltspring as a place to settle. They decided to give it a try.

In 1884 the Beddis' pre-empted a quarter section of

land south of Ganges. Here they lived in a tent until their house was built. They cleared the land without horses or oxen. By 1890, they had a well-established orchard with 40 varieties of apples, grown from cuttings embedded in potatoes and mailed from Ireland.

Emily bore 5 sons and 3 daughters, two of who died in infancy. She adopted one daughter, Myrtle. The children went to Beaver Point School, which was built by Samuel and their oldest son, Charles.

Samuel Beddis died of



pneumonia in 1893, one month before their last son was born. Widowed, Emily now had to care for seven children and the farm (called "The Wilderness"). In 1900, her sons built her a bigger house. When they left home, Emily started an early guesthouse.

Emily was a skilled midwife and passed on her skills to her daughter Boadecia. Emily died at The Wilderness in 1919, at the age of 75.



Chantelu Sisters
Simone 1907-2003
Paulette 1907-
1986

Twin sisters Simone and Paulette Chantelu were born in 1907 in France. Their parents had always dreamed of owning some farmland. In 1910, Francois Chantelu and his brother-in-law, Paul Bion, arrived on Saltspring to fulfill their dream. They bought 160 acres at the North End of the island.

At the age of 4, Simone and Paulette, along with their brother Johnny, came to Saltspring. Their mother died in 1911 and they were adopted and raised by their uncle, Paul Bion and his wife.



The family ran Dogwood Poultry Farm until well into the 1990's. The farm produced eggs, dressed chickens, and sold fruits and vegetables locally.

Simone nursed her Uncle Paul until his death in 1938.



The farm was left to Paul's sons, with the express desire that Simone and Paulette be allowed to live out their days on the land. Simone took care of the chickens and

the selling of the eggs. Paulette, confined to a wheelchair as a result of polio, did the bookkeeping for the farm. At the age of 90, Simone Chantelu still kept 90 chickens and continued to sell their eggs.



Gwen Ruckle 1931-2006

Gordon and Lotus Ruckle moved into the old Ruckle Farmhouse at Beaver Point in 1930. Their daughter, Gwen, was born in 1932. She attended the Beaver Point one room school at the south end and took a great interest in the natural world around her.

Gwen worked on the family farm and learned all about the history, the way the buildings were built, the natural landscape and the vegetation of the farm. She became an accomplished painter, and a knitter of sweaters, using Ruckle Farm wool that was spun by her mother.

Gwen and her parents moved into the Queen Anne house on the farm in 1967. In 1973, the farm became a B.C.



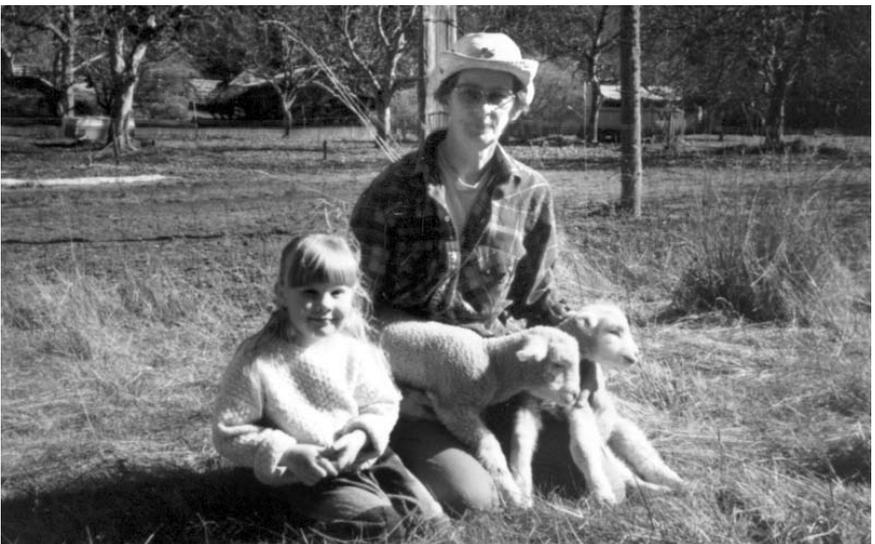
Provincial Park. The land was donated to the province with a lifelong tenancy for a number of members of the Ruckle family. Gwen's amazing knowledge of the





land and its history were most evident in the government research and planning that was done for the handover of the farm. Gwen shared this knowledge with many visitors over the ensuing years.

For more information about Ruckle Farm and Park see: www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/Public/PubDocs/bcdocs/375075/ruckle_mp.pdf



Miss Annie R. Calhoun 1876-1956

Miss Annie Calhoun was born in Londonderry, North Ireland in 1876. She came to Canada in 1911. She became the Matron of the Lady Minto Hospital and was one of only two staff members there in 1914. Miss Calhoun nursed and cared for patients on long shifts. In addition to her medical duties, she had to:

- trim the wicks and clean the chimneys of the oil lamps
- feed wood into the furnace
- cook the meals for the patients
- wash the dishes
- take care of the wood stove in the kitchen, and
- scrub the hospital floor

Miss Calhoun left Lady Minto Hospital in 1915 to serve in the Armed Forces. She was wounded when the hospital where she was stationed (Aolonika Hospital) was bombed. She was the most decorated islander in World War I: she received the Military Medal, Croix de Guerre, Serbian Medal, and 2 service medals. At the end of the war, she married Frank Crofton in England and they returned to live on Saltspring.

For more information read *Lady Minto Gulf Islands Hospital, a Salt Spring Island History*, by Charles Kahn and Sue Mouat.





Dr. Eva Sutherland 1870-1964

Dr. Eva Sutherland was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. She married her classmate, Dr. Thomas Cavanaugh, and they set up a joint practice in Liverpool, England. But Dr. Cavanaugh suffered from ill health, so they moved to Bella Coola, British Columbia.

When Dr. Cavanaugh died in 1913, Eva took over his practice. She remarried and moved to Saltspring in 1918 with her new husband, Bill Sutherland. She became the resident doctor at Lady Minto Gulf Islands Hospital.

Dr. Sutherland lived and practiced at the corner of Charlesworth and Fulford-Ganges Road, just up from the old hospital. Her husband operated a launch and took her to the outer islands to do medical visits, as all of the Southern Gulf Islands were her responsibility.

Dr. Sutherland gave up her practice in 1930 as a result of severe deafness that impacted on her work. She left the island and died at age 94 in Langford, B.C.

Dr. Sutherland is pictured here with the nurses at the hospital; back row, upper left side

For more information read *Lady Minto Gulf Islands Hospital, a Salt Spring Island History* by Charles Kahn and Sue Mouat.

Boadecia Beddis 1883-1964



In August 1884, one-year-old Boadecia and her family (Emily and Samuel John Beddis and their sons) arrived on Saltspring Island. During the first summer on Saltspring, after the Beddis' had established a garden, Emily was horrified to discover Indians eating her carrots and peas. Decie, who must have been a very young child, ran out and started to kick the

leader's shins, terrifying her mother to no end! However, the leader thought it a great joke and laughed at Decie's behaviour. At that, the Indian party returned to their canoes and paddled away

Decie's father died at age 42, leaving her mother, Emily, to raise her young family on her own. When Decie finished school, she moved to Victoria and began nursing training at the Royal Jubilee Hospital. It was here that she became a full-fledged nurse. The training took 2 1/2 years to complete at that time.

After graduating, Decie did nursing on Saltspring and the other Gulf Islands. Often it was necessary for her to travel by rowboat, canoe or saddle horse, depending upon the distance and the terrain.

Decie was well known as a midwife in the Gulf Islands and she took great delight in watching her "babies" grow up. In an interview



with Winnie Watmough in 1959, Decie said that she found great pleasure in tending the sick and enjoyed her experiences under Dr. R.B. Robertson and other early Victoria doctors. Her nursing career was somewhat curtailed in 1919, when her mother passed away, and it became almost a full time occupation to run the homestead. Decie remained unmarried and died in 1964 on the Beddis homestead.



Barbara Hastings 19-- -1988



Barbara and her husband, Warren, came to Saltspring Island from England. They built what is now Hastings House Hotel next to Moby's Pub. They designed and built it in the style of home they had left behind in England.

Mrs.

Hastings was appointed to a special committee to plan for the new Lady Minto Hospital building. She was elected to the Board of Management and, in 1958, was elected Board Chair. Barbara campaigned vigorously on all islands to secure the vote for the new hospital. She met fierce, often hostile, opposition but, in July 1956, the referendum passed. A vote of 69.76% agreed to build the new hospital.

Mrs. Hastings was forced to leave the Board due to bylaw changes. However, she came back, was re-elected, served another 9 years, and was named an honorary life member of the Lady Minto Hospital Board.

Interested in more details? Check the audiotape section of the Saltspring Archives website and listen to Jonathan Yardley's talk on Hastings House; read *Lady Minto Gulf Islands Hospital, A Salt Spring Island History* by Charles Kahn and Sue Mouat.

Bessie Dane 1903-1984

Bessie Dane moved to Canada from England at the age of 17. She trained to be a nurse and found work doing this. When she and her husband, Doug, retired, they moved to Saltspring Island and spent 30 years in Fulford, taking care of sick neighbours—doing whatever was needed.

After her death in 1984, Bessie's friends started a hospice organization in her name, to continue the work she had started. The Bessie Dane Hospice Foundation of Saltspring Island provides support to patients recently diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, to those with a chronic or terminal illness, to their families, friends and other caregivers, and to persons recently bereaved.

Want more information on the Bessie Dane Foundation and Hospice? Call 250-537-2770.





Lassie Dodds 1914-2000

Lassie Dodds was a familiar face around Ganges. She started at the old hospital on the Ganges Hill by doing split shifts. In between morning and afternoon shifts, Lassie delivered the paper on horseback.

When she was hired in 1941, many concerns were expressed about Lassie's capacity to split wood, stoke the furnace and take bodies to the morgue. She proved them wrong on all accounts! Lassie's duties grew along with the hospital; she went from janitor, to general helper in the garden and then moved onto the wards. In 1958, Lassie became a nurse's aid. In all, she worked for 37 years at Lady Minto Hospital, retiring in 1978. In 1984, Betty Drummond, long time volunteer and supporter of community endeavours, said of her, "Lassie Dodds is the best thing that ever happened to Lady Minto Hospital."

Want more information? Read *Lady Minto Hospital a Salt Spring Island History* by Charles Kahn and Sue Mouat.

Molly Akerman 1919-1999

Twin sisters Molly and Betty Morrison were born on the mainland. The two girls came to Saltspring for a holiday while their dad was building a cabin on Scott Road. It was here that Molly met the young Bob Akerman. Molly and Bob started building their house in 1938 and were married in 1939, in the little stone church in Fulford.

Between 1940 and 1958, Molly was VERY busy raising 11 children! This did not stop her from taking part in sports in the community. In the mid 1950's, Molly organized a married ladies' softball team. She played for the Fulford Ladies' team until well into her 70's. At the age of 71, Molly was named the Most Sportsmanlike Player and Best Pitcher in the B.C. Recreation League.

Molly began a doll collection later in her life and, by the time she passed away in 1999, had over 1000 dolls in her "doll museum". Viewing Molly's doll collection became a popular field trip for local school children.

Want more information? Read the *Akerman Story* by Bob Akerman and *Salt Spring, the Story of an Island* by Charles Kahn. Also, visit the Saltspring Archives Website.



Yvette Valcourt 1929-2004

Yvette was born in 1929 in the Peace River district of Alberta into a French-speaking family of nine girls and eight boys. She trained as a nurse in a convent school and it was here that she first set eyes on her future husband.

Yvette married Philias Valcourt and moved to Langford in 1948. While Philias worked in logging and sawmills,

Yvette worked hard raising ten natural children and one adopted child. Philias often worked for private landowners on Saltspring and in 1964, the family moved here to join Phil, who had moved to Saltspring in 1959.

At first, the Valcourts lived at Mansell Farm and worked in the Fulford Valley, but later they moved to their home on Park Drive, just below the Upper Village Centre, formerly known as the Valcourt Centre.

The Valcourts built a lumberyard and hardware store, developed the Upper Village Centre and started the complex where the Village Market now stands.

However, Yvette is most well known for her foray into local politics. From 1979 to 1983, Yvette was the Regional Director for Saltspring Island. She used her position to fight the sewer system proposed for the village of Ganges. No matter which side of the sewer debate one sat on, Yvette Valcourt was recognized as a person who never backed down and who was never shy about speaking her mind.



Margaret Cunningham 1913-1999

Margaret Cunningham was born on Saltspring Island in 1913. Her father was Raffles Purdy, an early teacher on the island. Margaret was the niece of Samuel and Emily Beddis and she was raised on the family farm on Beddis Road.

After finishing high school, Margaret went to Victoria Business College. There she qualified to be a stenographer and taught shorthand at the young age of 16! She returned to the island for the summer in the early 1930's, to keep her sister company while their mother went to England. Margaret offered her services to Mouat's store for two months for free and was subsequently hired by them. She worked there for three years until her marriage to Guy Cunningham in 1936. Margaret raised her family in the home they bought, which was the old Stevens Boarding House just past Central.

Later in life, when Central Hall became the movie theatre, Margaret would walk to the hall and play the piano for the patrons before the movie and during the changing of the reel, halfway through the movie. Great cheers and clapping would acknowledge her performances and she would graciously bow to the cheering crowd before walking on home.

Want more information? Go to the Saltspring Archives website.



Winnie Watmough (Horel/Lautman) 1895-1975

Winnie Watmough moved to Saltspring with her Saltspring-born husband, Howard Horel, in 1924. Together, they operated a logging outfit. Although standing under 5 feet tall and weighing less than 100 pounds, Winnie nonetheless often took one end of a cross cut saw or cut cedar shakes. She certainly did her fair share of the work! In the 1920's Winnie could be seen driving logging trucks around the island. She could size up a 200-foot tree and estimate its value, footage, quality and age as competently as any male scaler!

In the 1930's, Winnie worked as a warden on Piers Island, where a group of Doukhobors was imprisoned.

She built what could have been termed the first “affordable housing” on Saltspring—cabins on her Cusheon Lake property, which she rented to war veterans on low pensions.

Want to know more? Read Charles Kahn's book *Salt Spring, The Story of an Island* and see the video clip on the Saltspring Archives website.



Dedicated to all the Amazing Women of Salt Spring Island past, present and future and the amazing men who encouraged and supported them

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