

TWO SCHOOL PROJECTS - 100 YEARS APART!

A group of “early Van Anda citizens” appeared at the Texada Elementary School year-end concert this June. In their old-style costumes the Grade 3 to 7 students brought the past to life as they read their compositions “in character”, each person taking on a pioneer role. It was the culmination of a class language arts/local history project in conjunction with the Texada Museum.

We heard from a Marble Bay Hotel maid, the postmistress, a Union Steamship captain, a teacher, miner, shopkeeper, assayer, farmer, seamstress, blacksmith, doctor, logger and carpenter. The amount of historical information researched by the students was impressive and represented significant learning about our island’s heritage.

Copies of the letters have been donated (thank-you!) to the museum and are available to read this summer.

By coincidence we recently discovered in the museum archives another school project - this one from before 1928! Written by Blubber Bay resident little Robert Maylor (in his best handwriting), the booklet gives us a child’s view of the town as it was almost 90 years ago:

Pacific Lime Company owns nearly all the land and operates a sawmill, a quarry and five lime kilns.

On the southeast side of the bay there is a nice place to swim in the summer ... the settlement on the west side [is] where the families live and there is a large boarding house too ... Some of the gardens are very beautiful with different kinds of flowers ... There are three Chinese bunkhouses ... [they] used to get cordwood from the bush ... as many as four teams hauling it in ...



The mail boat calls for the mail three times a week ...the small fishing boats bring in fish and put it in boxes and ship it to Vancouver ...

The pastimes of Blubber Bay are tennis, touring, shooting and bathing. Grown-ups are having whist-drives and dances in the winter evenings. Every Wednesday Mr. Eastman holds a picture show and sometimes a travelling troupe calls in and gives a performance.

A plank road ... leads to Van Anda ...[and to] some beautiful lakes on the island where people go fishing for trout.

These two school projects, separated by 90 years, somehow give us a sense of shared experience and bring the past closer.