

# HISTORIANA

Fall/Winter 2012 The Newsletter of the Bowen Island Museum & Archives Volume 19, Number 3

## An Artifact Mystery for the Museum

CURATOR'S NOTE | Heather Joan Tam

*"Bowen Island / Aug 1902"*

When Museum & Archives Board member Rob Forbes saw these words engraved on a silver-plated, bowl-shaped object on eBay, he couldn't pass up the chance to study it in person. What special event did this object commemorate?

Is the engraved letter "W" in the emblem the initial of an individual, a family name, or the name of a company who once hosted a picnic on Bowen Island?

The object was advertised online as a pierced floral centerpiece, and indeed it appears to be a cachepot, 5 ½" tall, adorned with swirling accents and ornamental scrolls.

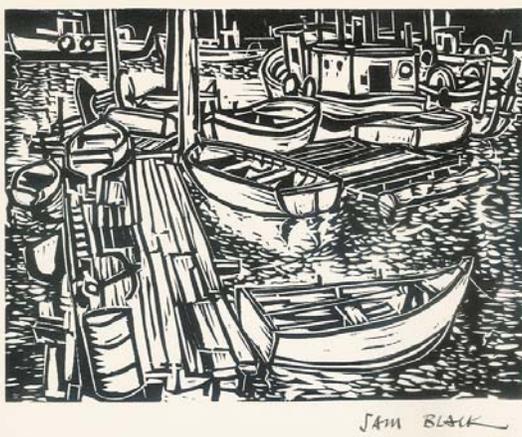
But what happened in August of 1902 on Bowen Island? We've been trying to play detective, searching through the BC Vital Statistics Registry, our biographical database, reference files, and photographs, but we still have no solid clues about what this cachepot commemorated.



*Who or what was W? If you can help us solve the mystery of this Bowen Island cachepot commemorating something that occurred in August 1902, please get in touch with us.*

*Continued on page 3*

On Remembrance Day, the museum opened its doors to the public after the ceremony at the Cenotaph for a slideshow presentation of photographs and records from past wars. Thank you for joining us in honouring those whose lives have been touched by war. ☼



### Call for Participation

#### Summer Exhibit 2013: The History of Art on Bowen Island

Calling all visual artists, art collectors, gallerists, co-operatives, and arts advocates: The Bowen Island Museum & Archives is working on an exhibit on the history of art on Bowen Island. We'd love to have you in the exhibit. Please contact Heather Joan Tam by phone at (604) 946-2655 or e-mail at [bihistorians@telus.net](mailto:bihistorians@telus.net) and we can arrange a meeting to discuss your work. Meetings will take place from January through April 2013.

*Left: A woodblock print by artist and art educator Sam Black. Bowen Island Museum collection M2012.06.1*



# Bowen Island Museum and Archives

## The Archives seeks volunteers for Interviewing Team

Researching the 1970s on Bowen Island

Our team of interviewers is growing, but we still need your help to collect the stories of Bowen Islanders. Do you have an interest in history? Do you enjoy meeting new people? Does the idea of researching local topics interest you? If so, the Museum &



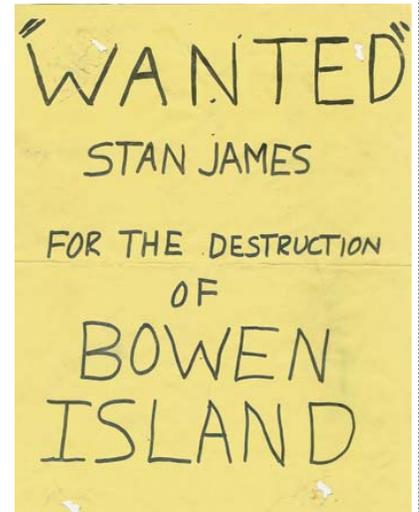
*Kay Simpson and Helen Holte standing outside the Bow-Mart, c.1971. Bowen Island Archives collection (1939)*

Archives would love to have you on our Interviewing Team. You can work around your schedule and choose your own topics to investigate.

When the founding members of the Bowen Island Historians first convened in 1967, they were concerned about the stories of early Bowen settlers being lost as they aged and passed on. Together, they reached out

to these islanders and collected the history of the island as they had lived it. The collected records were then given to author Irene Howard, who, after conducting further research, wrote the first book of Bowen history, *Bowen Island: 1872-1972*.

To continue where the early Historians left off, we are now collecting important information about the 1970s, including interviews with people prominent during that time. To join us, please contact Lois Meyers-Carter at (604) 947-2440 or by email at [lbcarter@shaw.ca](mailto:lbcarter@shaw.ca). ☼



*A hand-written flyer holding Union Steamships Ltd President and developer Stan James responsible for "the destruction of Bowen Island". c.1967. Bowen Island Archives collection.*

## Snapshots from the Seventies

This was the decade that saw a successful campaign by the Bowen Island Park and Store Use Society to save the Old General Store (now the Bowen Island Public Library) from demolition, the opening of the iconic Bow Mart diner and grocery by Helen and Ralph Holte, and the publication of the first *Undercurrent* when it was a two-page, legal-sized, stapled community bulletin founded by Pat Weaver, peppered with jokes and insights from editor Larry Reid.

It was also during the 1970s that Union Steamships Ltd President and developer Stan James proposed to build a golf course in Snug Cove, as well as 2,000 housing units on the



*Students are excited to see Santa Claus, played by Larry Reid, visit them at school. 1970. Bowen Island Archives collection (2138)*

island to sell at half the price of comparable Lower Mainland homes; there was to be 24-hour-a-day, 20-minute hovercraft service between Bowen and downtown Vancouver for \$1.00 round-trip.

His proposal was approved by the Greater Vancouver Regional District, but met with vociferous opposition from many islanders. Though plans were halted, and the island's population never reached the 50,000 that islander Ted Rogers suggested might be possible by the year 2000 through staged growth, the number of permanent residents did increase from approximately 300 in 1970 to 1,125 in 1981.

- Heather Joan Tam



# Bowen Island Museum and Archives

## The Art of Oral History as Conversation

An oral history workshop

*The Bowen Island Museum & Archives is pleased to host a workshop on oral history by Willeen Keough, Chair of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. Space is limited to 15 people, so please register with the Museum & Archives by phone or e-mail to reserve your spot. Participation in the workshop is by donation.*

*Professor Keough provides some background on what to expect at the workshop.*

As a conversation about the past, oral history has existed as long as people have shared and interpreted their individual and group memories through the spoken word. Since the 1960s, it has become a primary means of gaining insight into the experiences of those who have been left out of written records because of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and region. Some oral history interviews serve to heal and empower. Others may bring unfamiliar, disturbing shapes to pasts that we had thought were comfortably settled in our memories. But all good oral history interviews will be based on a fully engaged dialogue between interviewer and narrator.

Please join us on the last Sunday of January to discuss the art of creating oral history conversations. We will talk about putting our narrators at ease and sharing authority between interviewer and narrator. We'll examine the connections between history, memory, and identity. We'll think carefully about ethical questions, such as how to respect our narrators' best interests as they share their experiences with us. We'll explore ideas about different ways to bring oral histories to life for other audiences. And we'll practice interviewing each other so that we can appreciate how it feels to be both interviewer and interviewee.



*Photo courtesy of Willeen Keough*

**Place:** Bowen Island Museum and Archives

**Date:** Sunday, 27 January 2013

**Time:** 1:00 – 4:00

**Homework:** Please write a paragraph about your full name (e.g., its origins, how you felt about it growing up, nicknames) Some audio recorders will be available, but bring one along if you have one.

## ARTIFACT MYSTERY

*Continued from page 1*



*A close-up of the engraving on the cachepot, which reads "Bowen Island / Aug 1902" with a letter W in script surrounded by acanthus scrolls.*

We have a few guesses about what it might have been. The SS *Britannia* first began bringing day-trippers to Captain Cates' Terminal Steamships grounds on Bowen Island in July 1902, a month before the date etched on the pot. Could it have been a souvenir from a company picnic? A prize for the winner of a race? Perhaps a gift for a member of a bridal party, or a christening memento?

What we do know from the etching on the bottom is that it was manufactured by Wilcox Silverplate Co. in Meriden, Connecticut. The serial number 3027 doesn't tell us much, nor can we contact Wilcox since the company went out of business in 1898. The corrosion leads us to believe that it was used as a vase, holding water that eventually wore away the material. Three small holes in the body suggest the possibility of a missing ornament or handle—or they may just be areas worn through time.

It seems we have hit a dead end in our search so any insight into this object or "W" is appreciated. Please write, phone, or e-mail us if you know something we don't. ☀



# Bowen Island Museum and Archives



## IN MEMORIAM

We salute these islanders who were part of the Bowen community and who have recently disappeared from our lives. Their legacy is everywhere and Bowen is grateful for their contributions. The Archive maintains a biographical database plus other biographical files concerning Bowen residents. Additional material relating to these Islanders or others is always welcome. Contact Lois Meyers-Carter at lbmcarter@shaw.ca.

Peter Drake (June)  
Dick Van Aelst (June)  
Rob Wright (July)  
Teal Ander (July)  
Ruth Fortune (July)  
Harold Fraser (August)  
Marjorie Manders "Bee" Barker (September)  
Pamela Marak (October)  
Hank Strubin (October)  
Gordon Elliott (November)  
Bruce McArthur (November)  
Peter Granger (November)



**Bowen Island  
Museum & Archives**  
Box 97, 1014 Miller Rd  
Bowen Island BC V0N 1G0  
604.947.2655

bihistorians@telus.net

Website: www.bowenhistory.ca

Fall Hours: Sunday & Monday 10—3:30

Closed December 19—29, 2012

### Board of Directors

President: Beverly Underhill  
Treasurer: Joan Wood  
Recording Secretary: Marlene Mather  
Directors: Rob Forbes  
Jack Little  
Dan Parkin  
Mike Shields  
Ron Woodall

Layout & Editing: Heather Joan Tam  
For future issues, send submissions to:  
bihistorians@telus.net



*Rosa Helenius with her children Georg and Bob outside their home on Harding Road, taken during winter 1963-64. By March of 1964, 104 inches of snow had fallen, the most in 20 years. Bowen Island Archives collection (4321).*

**Welcome New Members** Elizabeth M. Jones

**Thank You For Your Membership and Donations** Terence McKeown and Lisa Avery • Patty and Erwen Smith • Ingeborg Fretwurst • Elizabeth M. Jones • Paul and Sue Jance • John and Josephine Riley • Isbel Otter and Neil Boyd • Jean Cleator • Anne and John Ayre • John and Jocelyn Willis • Lois Meyers-Carter • Joan Wood • Anne Thompson • Ian and Jane Strang • Maureen Armstrong • Irene Wanless • Dorothy and Eric Lawson • Dorothy Mills • Terry Rollins • James and Jane Gray • Bruce and Dorene Russell • Jonathan and Gillian Bennett • Beverly Underhill • Joan Ford • Leila Sinanan • Jill Purdy • Ross Hodges and Becky West • Andrew and Joan Grant • Bonny Brokenshire • Eva Donnelly • Margaret Howarth • Richard and Lana Underhill • April and Gerry Sear • Marguerite and Denys Ford • David Malkin • Dee McCarthy and Jeff Derbyshire



*Barbara Bird, left, and her sister Betty Bird in front of the counter inside the Union Steamships General Store, 1925. The store is festively decorated with cedar boughs, and jars and cans arranged in the shape of Christmas trees. Barbara and Betty's father, Percy O. Bird, was the store manager. Bowen Island Archives collection (5192)*

