

G A B R I O L A  
C O M M U N I T Y H A L L  
A U G U S T 2 0 1 8  
Statement of Significance



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## Statement of Significance

### 1. Description of the Historic Place

The Gabriola Community Hall is located in the rural community at the South End of Gabriola Island, in the Nanaimo District of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The existing hall was built in 1982-84, but its property has been used for a community centre for nearly a century. The adjoining South School property is now part of the grounds of the Community Hall.

### 2. Heritage Value

The Gabriola Community Hall is significant because of the use of its property over time, its association with the “Maples”, the traditional Snunéymuxw territory and first island settlers, as well as two pioneering families.

The existing Community Hall is located on the site where the first hall was built in 1917. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1979. The previous Community Hall and the new have continuously served the Gabriola community in providing an assembly space, performance and sport facility, while a venue for numerous other activities. The adjoining property was the location of the first school on Gabriola, built in 1872. A teacher’s residence was also built on the site in 1876, as well as a larger one room school in 1890, accommodating then eighteen pupils. The South School was vacated in 1954 and was then temporarily used by the island Anglican congregation, as the church of St Martin of Tours. It was demolished in 1988. Since the current hall was built, the former school site has been used to accommodate community outdoor activities such as the salmon barbecue, an annual event started in 1955.

The “Maples” is a bygone landing east of the False Narrows, distinctive for a growth of Bigleaf Maples along its shore. A wharf at the “Maples” was popular with the community from the late 1890’s until its removal in the 1950’s. The location of the South School and the Community Hall is often referred to as the “Maples” since the site is adjacent to the historic landing. Several Bigleaf Maples still enhance the existing Community Hall’s grounds.

Gabriola is part of the traditional Snunéymuxw territory. The seasonal village at False Narrows was located in the low land below and west of the Community Hall. Some estimate the population of the Snunéymuxw village to nearly 5,000 people. One of the main reasons the Snunéymuxw people visited the area was to fish the rich waters around False Narrows and Gabriola Passage for salmon and cod. The South End of the island is also the first occupied by European settlers under the pre-emption policy during the mid-nineteenth century. Its shore was easily accessible within a short distance of Nanaimo, south facing and protected from the bad weather by the neighbouring islands.

Alexander Shaw donated part of his land on which the first school on Gabriola was built. Shaw, born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1833, arrived on Gabriola Island with his family in 1879. Shaw was engaged as a teacher at the South School in 1881, the only school on Gabriola at the time. He left the island in 1888. William Nairn Shaw donated two adjacent portions of his land for the purpose of building the first Community Hall, in 1913 and 1914 respectively. Shaw, born in 1862 in Fife Scotland, came to Canada in 1883 and his wife Euphemia, in 1892, shortly after their marriage. Shaw died in 1950 and was buried in the Gabriola cemetery. Although these are probably distant relatives, there is no record indicating that the two above Shaw families were related.

### 3. Character Defining Elements

- Address and relationship of Community Hall to South Road
- Continuous use of the property as a Community Hall, including in-place legal safeguards insuring the property stays in the hands of the community and be used for a community centre in perpetuity
- Mature Bigleaf maple trees on the property
- Institutional character of the current building including a distinct exterior mural: compact massing on the original property, saw-tooth exposure to South Road, multi slope metal roof and horizontal wood siding

Index:

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Page 3)**

- .1 Description of Heritage Site
- .2 Heritage Value
- .3 Character-defining elements

**BACKGROUND RESEARCH:**

**1.0 Preface**

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Content and Methodology
- 1.3 Consultants & Heritage Professional
- 1.4 Source and Documentation

**2.0 Heritage Character**

**2.1 Building Description**

- Exterior and Interiors
- Planning and Zoning

**2.2 Site Archaeology; Historical context and area development**

- Gabriola geography and natural resources
- The Snunéymuxw village at False Narrows
- The first European pioneers
- The Gabriola Island wharves and roads
- The South School
- The first Community Hall
- The First Shaw Family: Alexander, wife and children
- The second Shaw Family; William, Euphemia, and children

**2.3 Building history and chronology:**

- The current Community Hall
- Occupancy and use
- Building transformation

**3.0 Building Heritage Analysis**

**3.1 Building character**

**APPENDIX:**

- 1: 1984, Title transfer between School Board and Community Hall
- 2: 1924, purchase of William Nairn Shaw's land by the Community Hall Trustees for \$1.00
- 3: 1982 Elevations Design Drawing

## I.0 Preface

### I.1 Background



Figure 1: Partial map of Nanaimo District including Gabriola; area of significance shaded in red and Community Hall as a red dot (Google)

Gabriola Island, located offshore from Nanaimo on Vancouver Island in British Columbia is one of the best places to live in Canada, because of its access to the ocean, temperate climate, mild winters, and natural environment. While part of the Regional District of Nanaimo, Gabriola benefits from the custody of the Gulf Islands Trust. Gabriola has a strong community spirit and an intense cultural life. It is home to a great number of artists from a diverse range of disciplines. The area of significance, the subject of this statement, includes from west to east, the False Narrows, the Brickyard Beach, the Community Cemetery, the Community Hall site, the “Maples”, the Fire Hall, the Christ Church, Degnen Bay and the Gabriola Passage.

The south end of Gabriola, or the “Lower Island” as it was called in the late 1800’s, was the first area to develop on the island. It once harboured the largest indigenous community on the island, some evidence dating back 1,500 years. This is also where the first Europeans settled, where the first Gabriola wharf was established, the first school, and a prolific brick manufacturer. Its proximity to Nanaimo, the easy access to the shore, the southern exposure and the protection against bad weather due to surrounding islands, appealed greatly to Gabriola’s pioneers.

The population of Gabriola has maintained a Community Hall in the South End since 1917. The Community Hall is located in the middle of the area of significance, perched on the gentle slope above a low land oceanfront of the False Narrows. The first Hall was built adjacent to the South School at the “Maples”. Since then, the two properties have been joined into the grounds of the Community Hall. The current building was opened in 1984 after a fire completely destroyed the first Community Hall, in 1979. The South School building which had been used as a church since 1954 was demolished in the 1980’s.

*NB: GICHA stands for Gabriola Island Community Hall Association*

## 1.2 Content and Methodology

The Statement of Significance (S.O.S.) is a synopsis of the heritage values of the historic structure. The Conservation Plan, which complements the S.O.S., highlights conservation issues and interventions required to ensure the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and maintenance of the heritage structure. Research and documentation supporting the S.O.S. is included in the background associated with the statement. This document is not an exhaustive assessment of the historic structure, neither is it definitive statement about the heritage building. The S.O.S. is a work in progress which will evolve as more information is gathered by the stakeholders and the community at large. This report aspires to be a framework to compile information and to establish the relationship between history and the conservation strategy for the Heritage Place. The rules used to assess the Heritage value are the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada; Parks Canada 2003 (revised 2010)*. This S.O.S. was prepared according to the Heritage Branch's "Preparing and submitting Records for the BC Register for Historic Places".

## 1.3 Consultant and Heritage Professional

The firm Dewhirst Lessard is a consulting firm specializing in Building Conservation; Barbara Dewhirst and André Lessard have extensive experience as former practicing architects; they have been involved in numerous heritage projects in BC, Alberta and Ontario. André is the writer for the project; he is a heritage professional with experience in planning, design and construction, specializing in building conservation. Formerly an AIBC member, he is currently a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, past-president and secretary of the BC Chapter and former member of the CAHP National Board of directors. He is also a former member of the Vancouver Heritage Commission. André is a LEED accredited professional, including Field Certification experience (BD+C) in 2012. He was lecturing for twelve years in building science for architectural conservation at University of Toronto and Ryerson University.

## 1.4 Source and Documentation:

*The People of Gabriola* by June Lewis-Harrison, 1982 D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd  
*The South Gabriola public hall; 1913–79*, by E. Joyce White, Shale No 22 January 2010  
*Gabriola's Wharves* by Jenni Gehlbach, Shale No. 27 December 2013  
*The four schools of Gabriola* by June Harrison, Shale No 11 May 2005  
*The Snunéymuxw village at False Narrows* by Loraine Littlefield, Shale No 1 November 2000  
*Gabriola's industrial past- the brickyard* by Jenni Gehlbach, Shale No 15 May 2007  
*The Gabriola School District 1872–79* by Barrie Humphrey with Lynda Poulton, Shale 28, June 2014.  
*Island sanctuaries—Early mixed-race settlement on Gabriola and nearby coastal Islands* by Jean Barman, Shale 2, March 2001  
*Zoning Information:* <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/bylaws/>  
*Community Hall Exhibit at the 2017 Salmon BBQ;* provided by Richard Strachan  
*Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data*, by Thomas K. Ovanin 1987  
*Gabriola Island Place Names* by Aula Bell & Neil Aitken, Reflections books Gabriola, BC 1996  
*Island Time Gabriola 1874-1879* by Neil Aitken, Reflections Gabriola 1993  
*Ancestry for W.N. Shaw and A. Shaw* at the Gabriola Vancouver Island Public Library  
*Community Hall documents* provided by Joyce Babula, Gordon & Laurie McDonald, Ute Ewert and Elizabeth Iachelli  
*Gabriola Museum Archives: photos, legal transfers and Kemp family info*, Janet Stobbs, curator  
*Typewritten student thesis at Gabriola Archives: History of Gabriola* by Bell (no other details available)  
*Traveling through time, 2017 Gabriola Historical and Museum Society*, Ivan Bulic editor  
*Topographics Landscape Architecture; Gabriola map* online  
*Nanaimo Archives;* for John Shaw and pre-emp information  
*Gabriola's trees—a brief history*, by N.A. Doe, P. Smith, Shale No 2, March 2001.  
*A glimpse through time*, by Joyce White in *Gabriola Times, 1986-1993*, Gabriola Historical and Museum Society 2018  
*Gabriola Sounder* online, various articles  
*History of Gabriola Community Hall, Early History (Draft) paper* prepared by Owen Friesen, 2016  
*John Shaw obituary*, in *Nanaimo Free Press*, in <http://www.ashlar3.com/john-shaw-1864-1937/>

NB: Please note that selected excerpts from sources below have been copied literally or edited without necessarily further credits.



## 2.0 Heritage Character

### 2.1 Property Description

For the purpose of this report, the “ground floor” of the Community Hall building is referring to the lowest floor and the first floor will be referred as the “main floor”. The “property” is referring to the two adjoining grounds of the Community Hall and the South School. Site photos by dewhirstlessard unless otherwise specified.



Figure 2: Community Hall property looking west from South Road, with Bigleaf Maple tree in the center of the property



Figure 3: Community Hall property looking east from South Road

The Community Hall property is approximately 1.24 acres including the former South School lot, which is now included in the hall's grounds, currently serving as open green space and a parking lot. Two roads, South Road and Garland Avenue, border the three sided property. There are two site entrances straddling a large Maple tree into the parking lot from South Road. A wood frame sign located at the road side in front of the maple tree advertises the current Community Hall events. The building fits neatly its original triangular site with generous setbacks to the adjacent roads. A large circular mural enhances the south façade. A playground occupies a narrow tail of the property on the west side of the building. The playground and co-operative pre-school access are secured with a low chain link fence. A number of coniferous and deciduous trees are located along the edges of the property.

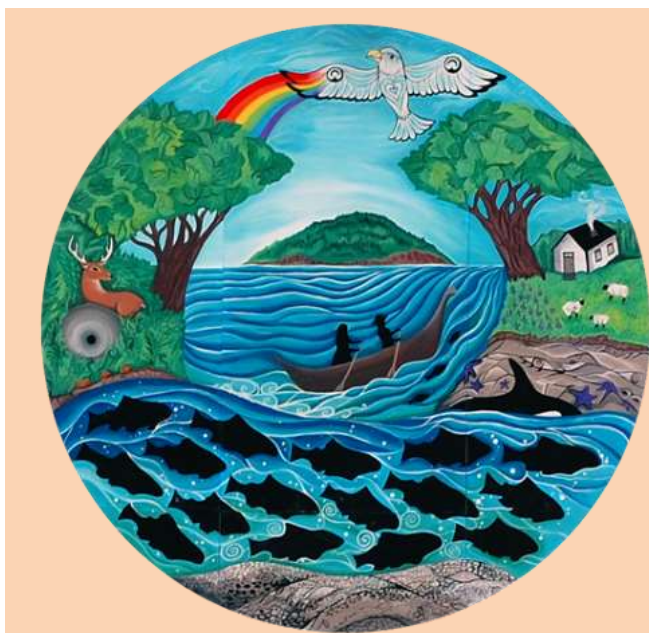
The building has a foot print of approximately 4,000 SF. and a height of two storeys. The building holds a large assembly room with a stage; the room is also used as a gymnasium for a variety of activities. A kitchen and staff washroom is located on the main floor. There are two entrances on the main floor facing the parking, two entrances on the ground floor facing Garland Ave and another access door to the playground facing South Road. A co-operative pre-school with kitchen, administration space and public washrooms are located on the ground floor.

The roof is a combination of a large flat surface and sloping metal roofs. There are large south facing corner windows from the assembly room on the main floor and the administration area on the ground floor. The building shape consists of a box with a saw-tooth edge facing South Road, thus accommodating the triangular lot. The cladding is horizontal wood siding painted a green/ beige color (Similar to historical Vancouver true colour: VC-16 Comox Sage). The metal roofs are salmon red.



Figure 4: On the left original Community Hall property (in red), former School property (in green) and residential parcel (in blue) previously part of the school's sold to the owners of the adjacent property, Alan Darling and Joan Baird

On the right: Site Plan; the current Community Hall property showing existing building in red and approximate location of trees in green. Based on 2016 proposed addition drawings



The Board of the Gabriola Island Community Hall Association (GICHA) unveiled a new mural on the outside of the hall this past Wednesday, May 31, 2017 created by Gabriola artist Hayden Harvey. Hayden has been active in the Gabriola art scene since she was a child

Joyce Babula, GICHA director, said, "It was heartening to see so many community members yesterday as they came to support Hayden's work and the community hall itself. The institution is celebrating 100 years of providing space for Gabriolans to celebrate, exercise and meet. "We will continue to celebrate the hall and Canada's 150 birthday at the Annual Salmon Barbeque"

The mural is entitled Tlaal'twx, which translates as "Rich Place." Harvey's assignment from the Board was to represent Gabriola's history, including both the pioneer and First Nations components of Gabriola's past. The building depicted in the mural is the old school house which stood where the Community Hall property is today. The fish accompanying the mural were made by the participants in this year's Adventure Day Camp through Silva Bay Kayak Adventures. (Gabriola Sounder)

Figure 5: Tlaal'twx, Rich Place Wall mural by Hayden Harvey





Figure 6: Event Sign at South Road



Figure 7: View of building from South Road

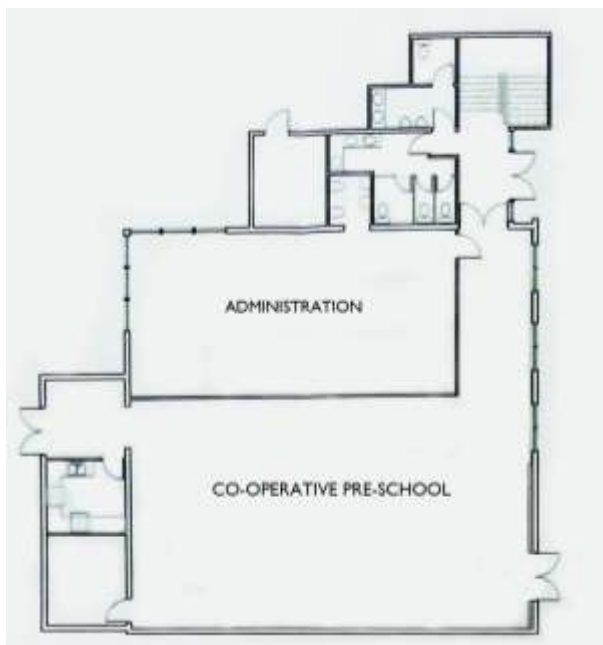


Figure 8: Existing Ground Floor Plan (2016 design dwgs)



Figure 9: Existing Main Floor Plan (2016 design dwgs)



Figure 10: Assembly and gymnasium looking north



Figure 11: Assembly and gymnasium looking north with stage



Figure 12: East Elevation from parking lot



Figure 13: Preschool playground with Community Hall from Garland Rd.



Figure 14: South side of Community Hall looking toward Garland



Figure 15: Community Hall from Garland Road



Figure 16: Entrance facing East with ramp



Figure 17: Main and ground floor South corner



Figure 18: South Rd with maple trees





Figure 19: Intersection of Garland and South Road looking north



Figure 20: Community Hall elevation looking South on Garland Ave



Figure 21: Peripheral Maple trees



Figure 22: Parking lot east of Community Hall with large Maple tree



Figure 23: Private gate across Community Hall with Maple leaf



Figure 24: Original Maples landing with Maple leaf gate

Three of the neighbouring private properties across South Road have metal entrance gates with a large maple leaf representation, thus indicating that these oceanfront properties were historically part of the landing referred as “The Maples”. The wharf at the “Maples” was located in front of those properties.

## Planning and Zoning

The Gabriola community is made up of people of diverse ages, incomes, educational background and national origin. Many creative people have made their home here, and arts and artists are an important part of life on Gabriola. The natural resources of the area support a rural lifestyle and livelihood. A landscape of forests and fields, sheltered bays and remarkable shorelines shapes the beauty and appeal of the Gabriola Planning Area. The area provides habitat for an exceptional variety of species – migratory and resident birds, diverse marine and intertidal life, terrestrial wildlife and vegetation. The distinctive natural setting of the area has drawn generations of people to its shores, providing shelter and sustenance, and its unique appeal will endure long into the future.

This Plan (Gabriola Island Official Community Plan) has been prepared within the following context:

- Almost ten percent of the Gabriola Planning Area is in Public Park and protected area.
- Gabriola has a fragile island and ecosystem which needs to be protected; as such, it is necessary to limit further development.
- The Village Centre is the social business core of the Gabriola community.
- Art and artists are an important part of life on Gabriola.
- Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The zoning district for the area on the south shore east of the False Narrows:

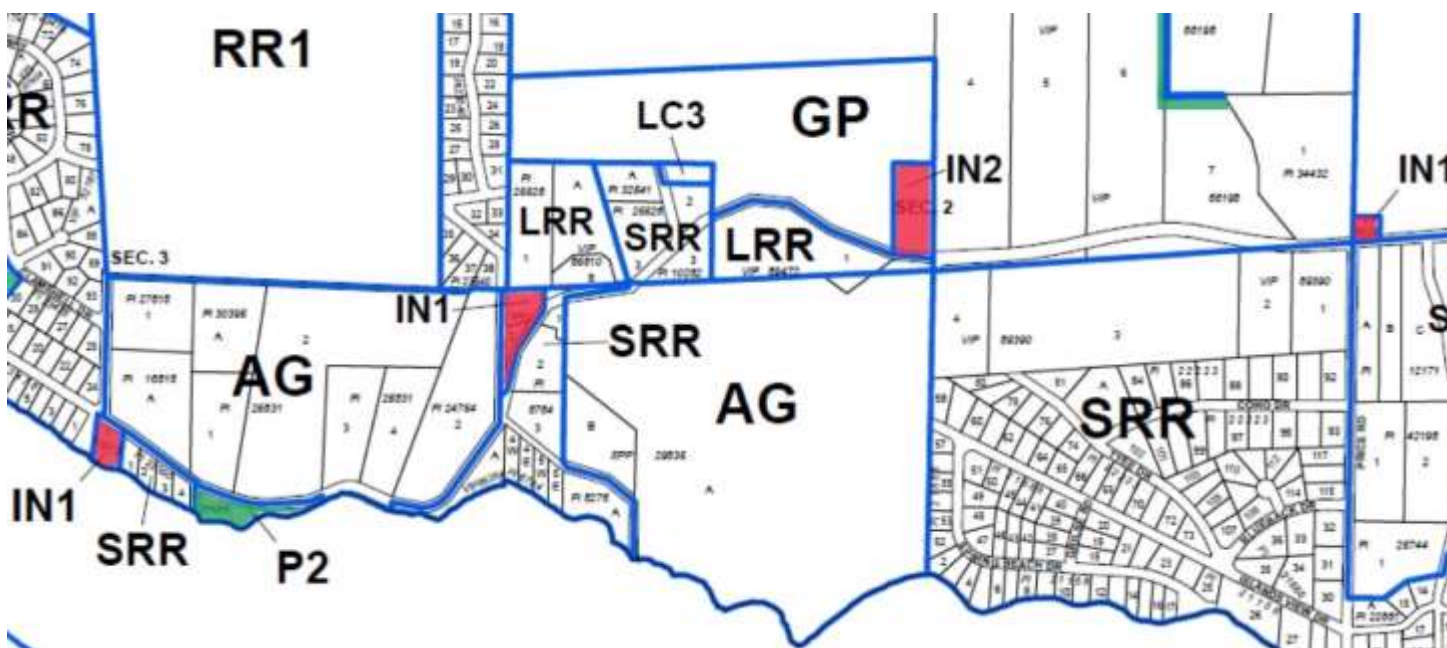


Figure 25: Institutional in red, Public Park in green, AG Agricultural, SRR Small Rural Residential, LRR Large Rural Residential, RR1 Resource Rural. From left to right: Gabriola Cemetery in red, South Road Park in Green, Community Hall and South School behind in red, Fire Hall in red, Petroglyph trail in green and Christ Church (United and Anglican congregation) in red.





Figure 26: Property in red with South Rd on the diagonal, Shaw Rd bottom right and Garland Rd top left (Official Community Plan)



Figure 27: Recent areal of Community Hall in red in relation to South Rd and the Ocean front referred as "The Maples" Google Map

### Social Goals

(excerpt from the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan)  
Consolidated July 9, 2018 prepared by the Island Trust

1. To preserve the rural character and atmosphere of the Gabriola Planning Area and ensure that the community remains a viable, healthful places in which to live, providing for a variety of lifestyles in harmony with the natural environment.
2. To ensure that access and opportunity, now and in the future, are provided for the public to enjoy and appreciate the Gabriola Planning Area in harmony with the natural environment and existing communities.
3. To ensure that options for future generations to make land use decisions are not jeopardized.
4. To encourage gradual and appropriate, rather than rapid, change and growth.
5. To co-operate and communicate with other government agencies, other agencies and First Nations, and to involve the public in the decision-making process to fulfill these goals.
6. To encourage local food systems and community food security.
7. To recognize that small, locally owned and home-based businesses contribute significantly to the character and sustainability of island life.

### Institutional Use

(excerpt from the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan)  
Consolidated July 9, 2018 prepared by the Island Trust

Institutional uses play an important role in the community and in many cases serve as a focal point for community life. For purposes of this plan, Institutional Uses includes facilities, services and uses which are operated by government or a non-profit society and include medical clinics open for community use.

The following facilities are recognized as institutional uses on Gabriola: Agricultural Hall, Women's Institute Hall, Gabriola Community Hall, Seniors' Rollo Centre, Gabriola Recycling Depot, Highway Works Yard, the museum, churches and the cemetery. The following are public institutions on Gabriola which are operated by government: the post office, RCMP station, the Gabriola Elementary School, the north and south fire halls and the ambulance station. The Gabriola Medical and Urgent Care Clinic and the helicopter landing pad are also recognized as institutional uses in the planning area.

### Institutional Use Objectives

1. To provide for institutional uses which meet the needs of the local community;  
and
2. To encourage the creation of recreational facilities for young people.

## 2.2 Site Archaeology

### Gabriola geography and natural resources

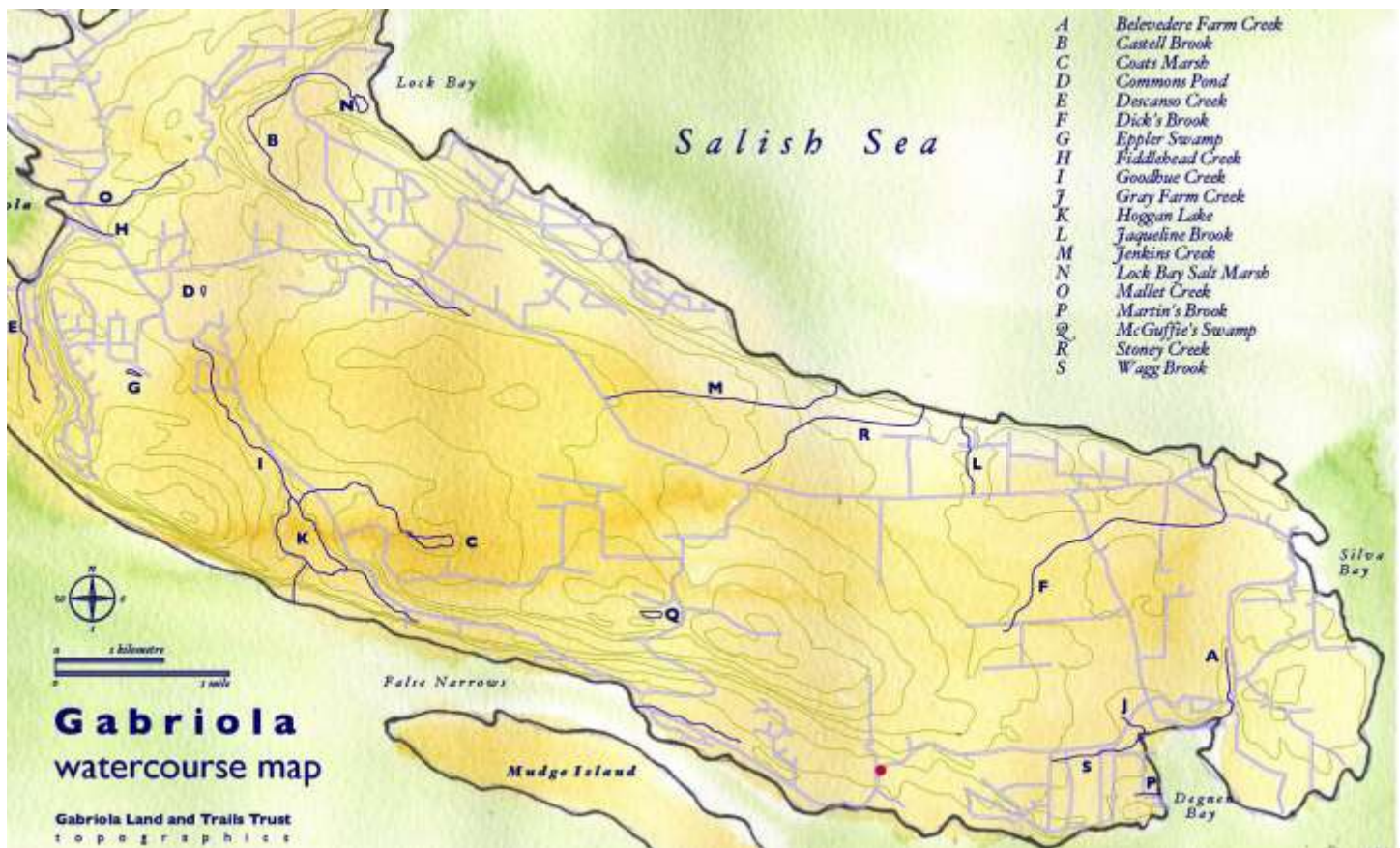


Figure 28: Topography and Watercourse map of Gabriola - Community Hall indicated by a red dot (by Topographics)

One of the determining features of the Community Hall site was described by the settlers in choosing the location of the first schools on the island. A meeting was held on October 3, 1872, and reported as following: "...recognizing the distances between settler families, they had decided they preferred that there be two schoolhouses, one for the north end, and one for the south end. The South-End school would be "at the foot of the Ridge (South side)". The North-end school would be "on the Ridge between the houses of H. Heath and Le Buff [Boeuf]". The "Ridge" was the high ground running slightly south of east from the top of the bluffs at False Narrows toward Thompson Point, so "the foot of the Ridge (south side)" was somewhere near the "Maples"; there is a year-round free-running spring there... But, should only one schoolhouse be built, the majority agreed that it should be erected in "the neighbourhood of Rock Creek" (i.e. Stoney Creek)."

False Narrows was the site of an important seasonal village visited by Snunéymuxw families after their winter stay at Departure Bay and Nanaimo Harbour. One of the principal reasons they visited the area was to fish the rich waters around False Narrows and Gabriola Passage for salmon and cod. The camas bulbs collected during the spring months at False Narrows were an important food for the Snunéymuxw. Common camas, *Camassia quamash*, is a member of the lily family which grows on grassy slopes in meadows at low to middle elevation. Shellfish was another important reason to visit False Narrows. The clam bar there, is one of the largest in the area. The indigenous clams - littleneck, butter clam, horse clam, and cockles, mussels, crabs, moon snails, native oysters, whelks, and sea urchins were plentiful. Ducks and deer were also plentiful in the area. Deer, the most important land animal to the Snunéymuxw, were plentiful on the bluffs behind False Narrows.



Gabriola is rich in natural resources which have prompted several industries to develop in the last 150 years. A sandstone quarry near Descanso Bay supplied dimension stone for major buildings in Victoria and Vancouver. Later in the 20th century, the old sandstone quarry was used to produce millstones for use in pulp mills. There was also a substantial ship-building industry in Silva Bay. Islanders also found employment logging, fishing, and after the ferry service was started in 1931, the tourist industry. Farming and market gardening continued and continues to be a significant part of the island's economy.

The Gabriola Island Shale Product Company located at the east end of False Narrows, manufactured and exported bricks, between the mid 1890's and the early 1950's. A report of the Minister of Mines in 1918 stated that the Gabriola shale deposit being worked at that time belonged to the "bottom part of the Northumberland Formation of the Nanaimo Series". The report notes that shales on Gabriola have been described as "grey, sandy" but that "the shales on the property of the Gabriola Island Company are bluish and brownish in colour and in actual commercial practice show good plasticity..." Besides having suitable clay, it was essential to have a good supply of water. Fortunately, there is a seasonal creek that runs into the sea at Brickyard Beach, and the shale underlying the low-lying surrounding area makes good groundwater aquifers.

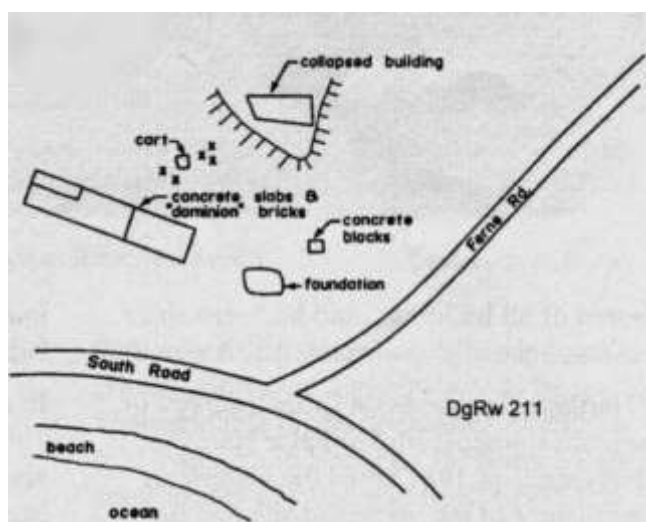


Figure 29: Brickyard site in 1987, Shale 15



Figure 30: Brickyard at Brickyard Beach, Courtesy of Sheila Bradley

### The Snunéymuxw village at False Narrows

Gabriola is part of the traditional territory of the Snunéymuxw First Nation. These Coast Salish people have lived on Gabriola for over 3,000 years and have left more than 100 archaeological sites including shell middens, petroglyphs and burial sites.

There are sites of several villages on the islands, but the site on Gabriola at False Narrows (now El Verano Drive) and on Mudge Island opposite is the site of an especially large and important village.

In historic times, the Snunéymuxw used this village as a seasonal resource site during the early summer months, but archaeological evidence reveals that before contact with Europeans, it was also a more permanent winter village and a burial ground.



Figure 31: 1850's Snunéymuxw people

The place is called Tle:ltxw (rich or special place). The longhouses were right along the beach where the houses are now. Graves were also along the beach. Archaeologists can attest to the significance of this site as a burial site. More than a hundred individuals have been recovered from the area and it is estimated that at least five hundred more people remain buried there. This may be the largest prehistoric burial site in British Columbia. Snunéymuxw Elders remember that in their lifetime burials were visible on one side of False Narrows near Brickyard Beach. Elders also recall the village at False Narrows; when they visited the island during the summer, they stayed in small wooden shacks built amongst the maple trees, or they camped in tents along the beach.

It is difficult to know how many people may have lived in the False Narrows village. Pre-contact population numbers point to 5000 Snunéymuxw people in 1775 as being a reasonable estimate. An early census by the Hudson's Bay Company indicates that the population declined to approximately 1000 people by 1839. In 1876, the Indian Reserve Commission enumerated the Snunéymuxw population at 223. Today the Snunéymuxw First Nation has two reserves on Degnen Bay. Through the signed Protocol Agreement, Snunéymuxw and the Islands Trust have established a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation with respect to planning, land use management and heritage conservation.

### The first European pioneers

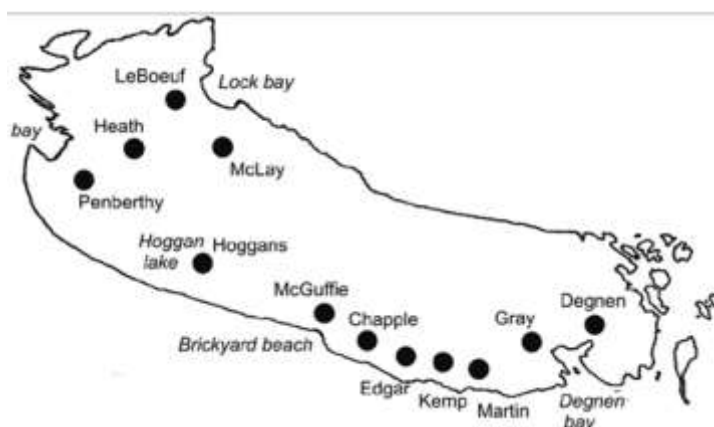


Figure 32: Approximate location of settlers in the 1870's (Shale 28)



Figure 33: Approximate location of settlers before 1900 (Harrison)



Figure 34: South-east Gabriola settlers' map of 1883 with Community Hall indicated with a red dot (Community Hall exhibit)



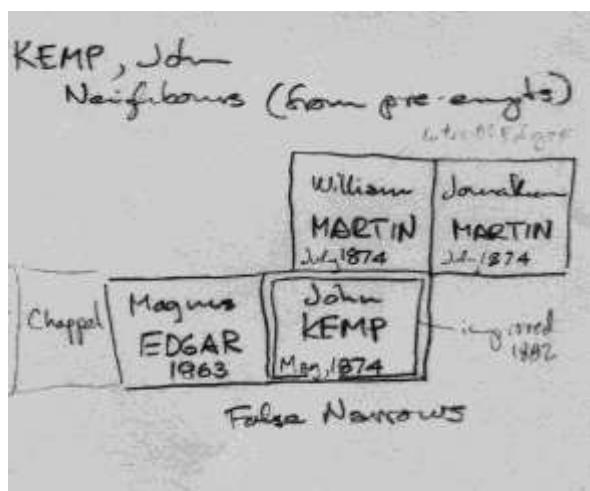


Figure 35: 1874 John Kemp's pre-emption lot (Gabriola Archives)

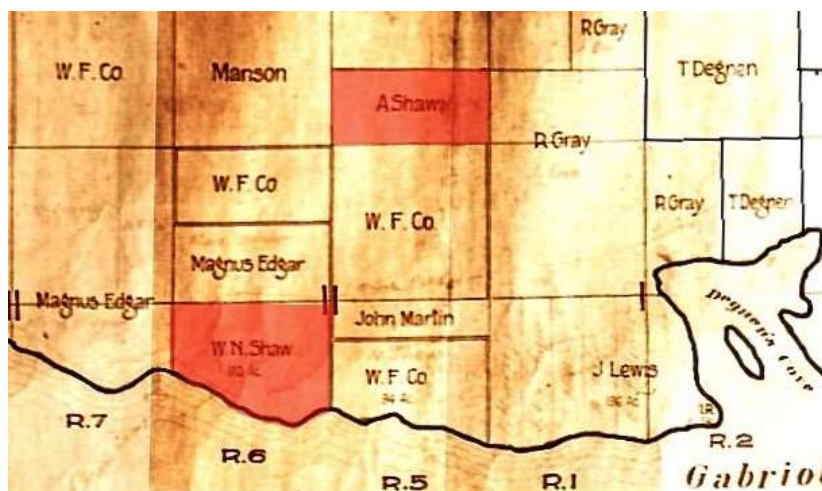


Figure 36: Partial 1880's Settler's pre-emption map showing Alexander Shaw's and William Nairn Shaw's properties (Gabriola Archives)

NB: Please note that John Kemp does not appear on fig. 33 and 34, only on Fig. 32. Neither Alexander nor William Nairn Shaw appear on fig. 32, Alexander appears on fig 34 and one of the Shaw appears on fig. 33. Both William Nairn and Alexander Shaw appear on figure 36 but not Kemp. Alexander Shaw arrived on Gabriola in 1879 and left in 1888.

Alexander Shaw donated the land for the South School but we are not sure when; he arrived on Gabriola in 1879. Forty years later William Nairn gave land for the construction of the Community Hall, part of the same land as that previously owned by Alexander Shaw. The two Community Hall lots are adjacent to each other. The two "Shaw" families were associated with the same piece of land. It appears from Figure 36 that W.N. Shaw owned the land of Alexander Shaw from figure 34, unless it is a recording mistake. The Gabriola Archive's caption of 1880's is probably wrong since W.N. Shaw arrived after 1901; the original copy of this map does not have a date. It is possible that Alexander Shaw on figure 36 was the son of the Shaw senior.

Harrison credits John Kemp as the donor of the school property; according to Jean Barman, Kemp arrived on Gabriola around 1868. Figure 35 indicates that his pre-emp registration was two years after the school was built. It appears that Kemp donated part of his pre-emp option which he may have later owned. John Kemp was born in 1835 in Kent, England and died in 1889; his wife Lucille from Cowichan was born in 1850 and died at the age of 35, in 1882.

Members of the Spanish Navy were the first Europeans to visit Gabriola. In 1791, an expedition led by the young naval officer José Narváez visited the island. The east end of the island was subsequently named "Punta de Gaviola" and this name eventually was applied to the whole island, the "r" being inserted by mistake by a Royal Naval cartographer. The name "Gaviola" is likely in honour of Simón Gaviola y Zabala who was a high-ranking naval administrator and member of the nobility from the Basque country in Spain. The locals of Nanaimo referred to the island as "The Big Island" until the first European arrived here.

Vancouver Island Governor James Douglas introduced the pre-emption process that divided Gabriola into privately owned land holdings. Douglas subsequently introduced a Land Registry Act in 1860 that allowed individuals to pre-empt up to 160 acres of Crown land on Vancouver Island simply by making improvements such as clearing fields or building a cabin. First Nations people, including the Snuneymuxw, were prohibited from applying for pre-emptions. Within a few decades, except for two tiny Snuneymuxw reserves, Gabriola was carved into approximately 100 privately-owned pre-emptions.

The first pioneers settled on Gabriola Island during the 1860s. According to June Harrison's account, Robert Gray and Thomas Degnen had moved to the island from Nanaimo around 1863. They were Irish immigrants determined to leave behind the harsh conditions of coal mining to become farmers. They both settled on the South shore of Gabriola, referred as Lower Island then, on the two sides of Degnen Bay. At about the same time, Richard Chapple came over to pre-empt land. Magnus Edgar and Thomas McGuffie had arrived the previous year, also leaving the mines. Jean Barman estimates that Henry Heath was on the island by 1866, and John Kemp by 1868. All these men married Aboriginal women.

The Nanaimo Free Press of May 9, 1874: “many who see these grey beetling cliffs facing Nanaimo might think it inhospitable, barren island with nothing but gloomy pine trees on its surface. But this is not so, and though not above seven miles on its longest line, two or two and a half on its broadest, there are many patches of rich swamp and alder bottom. It contains no less than nineteen settlers: Messrs. Degnen, Dick, Gray, Martin, Martin, Kemp, Edgar, Chapple, McGuffie, Eastthom, Hoggan, Hoggan, McLay, Hall, LeBoeuf, Goss, Caulfield, White, and Heath...” (Edited from Aitken)

A sure indication of the importance of the “Lower Island” as a community magnet is the location of its cemetery. The Gabriola Cemetery includes the grave of the earliest settlers, such as the Degnen family, the Gray family and many other of the same era. The land for the Cemetery was given by Magnus Edgar. Edgar was born in Tingwall, Shetland, Scotland, in 1837. In 1874, he became a farmer on Gabriola, “acquiring a splendid piece of property” now known as “The Maples”.



Figure 37: Gabriola Cemetery with W.N. Shaw's graves in C5&6



Figure 38: Gabriola Cemetery with oceanfront on False Narrows

For those living in isolated communities, the arrival of the mail was often heralded with excitement. The mail was the living proof that all was well in the outside world. The story has it that Thomas Degnen, one of the early pioneers to settle on the southern shores of Gabriola, brought mail in his canoe from Nanaimo. There were few letters and some newspapers, all welcome news for the settlers. Robert Gray, a stalwart pioneer helped to bring the mail from Nanaimo. He too, with his boat, would carry letters and packages to the neighbours. In 1884, Alexander Shaw Sr. signed a

contract with the Government for the mail service to “Gabriola Island and Wharf”. Shaw would also row to Nanaimo to pick up the mail. The northern end of Gabriola looked after its own mail.

Shaw remained post master until 1886. When he resigned, the contract was passed on to his son Alexander Jr. from 1887 to 1890. James Gray, son of Robert was post master of Gabriola from 1890 until 1895 and from 1907 until 1930.

From 1895 to 1906 James Degnen was duly registered with Canada Post. James Gray would pick up the mail at the Government Wharf from the popular ship, “the Iroquois” and bring it to his house. The Gray’s house was located at what was then the end of the mail route; the intersection of South and Martin Rd is still referred to as the Gossip Corner, for informal gatherings of settlers while waiting for the mail. Mail boxes here served everyone from Degnen bay to Silva Bay.



Figure 39: 1914 Post office at the Gray Home (Courtesy of E. Gray)



Figure 40: Waiting for mail at Gossip Corner, South & Martin Rd

During the 1920s, small lot subdivision activity for cottage sites began on Gabriola. Uncontrolled land subdivision continued until 1969 when the Provincial Government imposed a “10 acre minimum parcel size” on any island in the Strait of Georgia. In 1974, the Islands Trust Act was enacted and in 1977 gave control over land use decisions to locally-elected Island Trustees with the mandate to “preserve and protect” the Trust area.

#### The Gabriola Island wharves and roads



Figure 41: The South end wharves: the Green Wharf, the Maples dock and the Degnen Bay Government Wharf (Shale 21)

Islanders rely on public wharves to travel and move their goods to market. The first public wharf on Gabriola was built on the south side of the island at the Percy Anchorage in the Northumberland Channel, which is at the western entrance to False Narrows. It was known officially as the Gabriola Wharf, but islanders knew it as the Big Wharf, the Government Wharf, or simply The Wharf. Names like Centre Wharf and Green Wharf came later.



Prior to government involvement, the roads connecting the south (east) and north (west) ends of Gabriola and the various private wharves were rough trails. In the 1870s, the scattered residents were seeking government money to improve them.

In 1878 the Land and Works Department invited tenders “up to June 3<sup>rd</sup> for the construction of a wharf on Gabriola Island at the upper end of False Narrows, abreast of Dodd Narrows”. The location of the wharf had no doubt been an attempt to reconcile the conflicting needs of those at the south and north ends of the island, and the need to provide a convenient landing place for mail steamers travelling between Nanaimo and Victoria. The road down to the new wharf was steep and treacherous. Worse, already in 1879, we read in the Nanaimo Free Press that, “the wharf...is reported to be in a very dilapidated condition”.



Figure 42: Green Wharf at False Narrows and view of Mudge Island



Figure 43: Looking west at Coates Wharf and Log Booms

Serious complaints continued about the wharf's state of repair and location for a couple more years, and on September 5, 1883, the Nanaimo Free Press reported: “Mr. Raybould, M.P.P., Mr. Bray (Asst. Commissioner of Lands and Works) and Mr. S. Price (Road Superintendent) visited Gabriola Wharf on Saturday in the steamer Nellie Taylor. They chose as the site for the proposed new wharf, a spot about 200 yards nearer this city than the present location. By this change a better wharf can be constructed and an approach easily made.”

The wharf was quickly built in its new location—well before the specified completion date of November 15, 1883. It is interesting to read the other specifications of the building contract—for one thing, it was to be “300 yards west of the present one”, not 200 yards as reported in the newspaper. It actually ended up being 260 yards [0.24 km] west, with the terrain calling the shots. The relocated wharf quickly developed its own troubles because marine worms rapidly attacked its piles.

Within living memory, Gabriolans and Mudge Islanders have always called the landing in the Northumberland Channel, “Green Wharf” or “Green's landing”. The most likely explanation for the wharf's name is that it took the name of the man who was the province's Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works just after the turn of the century: Robert (Bob) Francis Green (1861–1946).

Since 1978, the Coats family has a significant private wharf a kilometre or so west of Green Wharf, opposite Dodd Narrows, nestled amongst the log booms at the foot of the sandstone cliffs below Hoggan Lake. When the ferry was unavailable for emergency medical transportation to Nanaimo, the Gabriola ambulance often had to use the long rough road down to Coats Wharf before the official emergency dock was built in Descanso Bay.





Figure 44: 1975 map of Lot #1 pre-emption by Thomas Degnen, now Belvedere Farm



Figure 45: 1932 a) Government Wharf, b) Degnen, c) Taylor (Martin), d) Gray e) Lewis

Thomas Degnen was about 30 years old when he came to Gabriola. He and Robert Gray were both Irish immigrants who had rejected the life of coalminers in Nanaimo, and both acquired good farming land with access to the waters of Degnen Bay. Thomas Degnen wasted no time in finding a solid dugout canoe, purchased the worthy craft and brought it to Gabriola. This craft proved to be a boon to the farmers, and Degnen would call along the shore to pick up neighbours and their goods. Much of the shoreline of Degnen Bay is gently sloped and would have allowed easy canoe launch and landing—no need for an elaborate wharf at first. The journey from Nanaimo apparently took 4 or 5 hours.

By 1871, Thomas Degnen had acquired a more substantial boat—the Patsy I. At this time, there were 18 settlers on Gabriola, many with large families, no doubt very grateful for a less precarious mode of transport than canoes and scows; there is evidence that Degnen had a wharf at Degnen Bay. Thomas Degnen's great grandson Gordon McDonald told me that his family's original wharf was tucked into the protected northeast corner of the bay, below their house. He says that the ramp sloped down near the petroglyph carved into the sandstone.

The stories about old mail services indicate that boats were coming into Degnen Bay throughout the 1870s and 80s. It is not clear when public money was first used to build or maintain wharves at Degnen Bay, but there must have been a pretty substantial public wharf there in the mid-1890's. There certainly was a fairly substantial wharf at the Degnen farm end of "Dingman Cove" in the 1930. Steamers sometimes came into Degnen Bay in the 1890s. In 1929, the federal government installed a wharf at the north-easterly end of Degnen Bay, and the road leading to the wharf was upgraded.



Figure 46: Steamers at the Government Wharf, Gab Museum



Figure 47: 1930 waiting for the ferry at Degnen Bay, Gab Museum



Figure 48: Dock at the Maples with Peggy Lewis Imredy's house circa 1930, Community Hall and South School beyond (Shale 21)

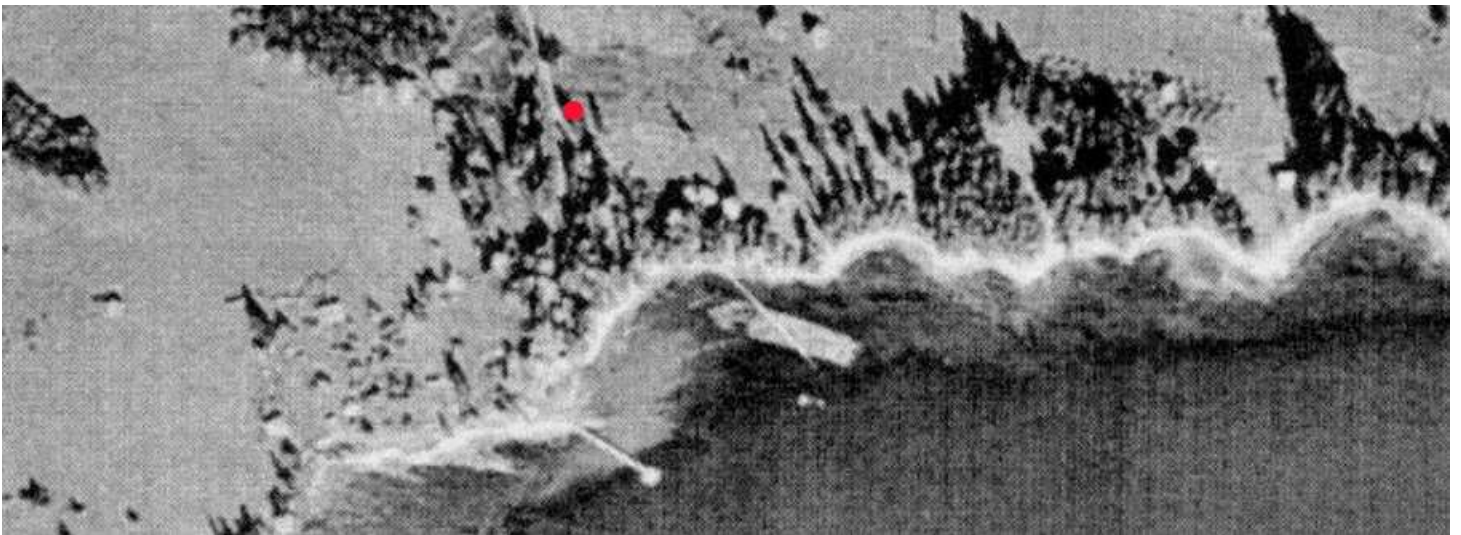


Figure 49: The Maples public dock in 1951, old Community Hall indicated with a red dot (Shale 21)





Figure 50: The "Maples" landing today



Figure 51: The "Maple" landing today

At the southeast end of False Narrows, at the foot of the hill near the Community Hall is a shallow bay locally known as the Maples where a well-used wharf was once located. We don't know when it was first built, but June Harrison writes: "The wharf at the Maples had been discussed as far back as 1894 as a suitable landing and docking area for a larger boat and the ranchers at the south end were anxious that something better be done for their needs."

The area was named for several large maples on the point. Some of the trees now standing may have been growing when the first settlers came. The growth of large maple trees have extended to the Community Hall property and still stand today. The shore there is suitable for wharf construction, so it seems likely that the early landowner would have constructed one; however, the pre-emptor of the land in that area was Magnus Edgar.

In 1891 the Nanaimo Free Press reported: "Picnic on Gabriola at the invitation of the Lower End Settlers, all the settlers of Gabriola Island have been invited to a grand picnic to be given at "The Maples," (Mr. Magnus Edgar) a beautiful spot on the banks of the False Narrows. A gala time is expected, as all are entering into the reunion with earnestness and in a jovial spirit."

#### Bigleaf maple, *Acer macrophyllum*

The largest maple in Canada, reaching heights of 36 metres. When it grows in the forest, it develops a narrow crown that is supported by a stem free of branches for half its length. Those growing in the open have a broad crown which is supported by a few large, spreading limbs. Leaves are deeply five-lobed and are the largest of any maple in Canada, measuring 15 to 30 centimetres across. They are shiny, dark green on top and paler underneath; and turn yellow in the fall.

It is restricted to the southwest corner of British Columbia at low to mid elevations. It commonly occurs in mixed groups of trees with red alder, black cottonwood, Douglas-fir, western red cedar, and western hemlock. Some old trees such as the big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) that now grow in isolation, or in small stands, were also once members of the forests of Gabriola.

Coastal peoples used Bigleaf maple wood to make dishes, pipes and hooks for clothing. Many groups who made paddles out of the wood called it the paddle tree. They used the inner bark to make baskets, rope and whisks for whipping soopolalie berries.





Some of the roads surrounding the Community Hall:

- South Road: There is no record of the naming of South Road. It is the road that skirts the southern side of the island and was the first route on the island, presumably linking the properties of the first settlers at first and then developed as narrow dirt road to eventually becoming the road we know now. .
- Shaw Road: The road was named after Alexander Shaw, early settler and education pioneer. Its intersection with South Road is located south of the Community Hall and runs along the back of the private properties located on the “Maples” landing.
- Degnen Road: This road crosses the island from North Road to South Road near the Community Hall. It is no longer in use. In the early 1900's children used it to get to the South School and as access to logging roads. As the North and South Roads became more organized, and since no one was living in the inner part of the island, it fell into disuse.
- Garland Road (Avenue): Doug and Paloma Garland, of Victoria, bought the last of the Poyner property and subdivided it. This, the main road in the subdivision, is named for them. Garland Ave runs north along the west side of the Community Hall.

### The South School

It was around 1870 that the families on Gabriola first saw the need for a school. On July 1, 1872, the Superintendent of Education visited the island from Victoria and noted that the population of school-age children was fifteen. Shortly after, the Provincial Secretary declared Gabriola and Mudge to be members of a newly-created Gabriola School District. However, because settlements on Gabriola were located at opposite ends of the island, it was difficult to select a site for a school that was convenient for all the children to attend. After much discussion, it was decided to build near the Maples, on the site of the present-day Community Hall, on the south side of Gabriola.

Following the School Act, the Gabriola electors assembled and elected temporary officers. These were Magnus Edgar as Chair and Richard Norris as Secretary. The electors then went on to vote for three trustees. Elected were Thomas Degnen, Thomas McGuffie, and Henry Heath. Of the three, two were from the south end of Gabriola, and the third, Heath, was from the north end.



Figure 52: The enlarged South School built in 1890 as it was shortly before being demolished almost a century later. In the 1970's the building was used as St Martin's Anglican Church (photo Judy Preston)



Figure 53: Children attending the South School in 1908 on the steps of the School with the teacher's residence in the background (Shale 11) Corrected caption

John Kemp donated part of his pre-emption land, which he did not yet own, to build the school. The government then funded the building of the first schoolhouse on Gabriola. It measured 16 by 18 feet, and was made of wood. A teacher could not be found immediately, but on October 1, 1873, an American, John E.L. Seneker, was appointed to the job at a salary of \$50 per month. In the summer of 1876, a teacher's residence was built beside the school and other improvements were made to the school itself; there were seventeen children attending. It is only once the first legal owner of the Kemp parcel that the donation of the school lot was carried through, probably as a condition of Shaw's pre-emption option, sometime after 1879. Alexander Shaw's name appears on legal transfer as the original owner of the School property.

At the start of the new academic year in August 1879, the school failed to open. The South School, and at that time Gabriola's only school, was re-opened in 1881 with Alexander Shaw Sr. engaged as teacher. This extraordinary man owned a farm across the road from the school. One can presume that Mr. Shaw was greatly saddened and disappointed to see the little schoolhouse, which lay in plain view from his farmhouse, sit empty for two years running, while the local children went uneducated. And with nine children of his own, he no doubt had an interest in seeing to their education. Mr. Shaw continued to teach at the school until 1888, occasionally aided by his son, Alexander Jr.

In 1889, the year of the closure of the North School, the South School had an enrolment of eighteen students. The following year, a larger school was erected at the south end. The new school measured 24 by 36 feet, three times as large as the original building! The old school according to a document found in the Gabriola Archives, was turned into a stable for a while but was eventually demolished.

Amalgamation came to the Gabriola schools in 1936. It was decided by the Department of Education that the island would be better off with the higher and lower grades taught at two different schools. The primary grades were taught at the North School and the subsequent grades at the South. In 1954, a new site was chosen for the school. The South School was closed permanently, and 11.2 acres was awarded from the Crown to build a new one-room school at the present site of the Gabriola Elementary School. The South School became St. Martin's Anglican Church.

Records show that as far back as 1900, a Presbyterian minister came from Ladysmith to hold small family services at the school at the south end of the island. In 1912, Mr. James Gray gave a piece of land upon which to build the United Church, where the building still stands today at the South and Thompson Road intersection. As for the Anglican congregation, the South School building which it occupied had no electricity and was costly to heat; it became a difficult building to maintain and was used less and less. By the late 1940's the services of the Anglican Church were held by agreement with the United Church, so that the last Sunday of each month saw Anglican worship at the little United Church at the south end. By 1951 Anglican services were held at the Community Hall and the Agriculture Hall, and then at the Surf Lodge. In 2005, after many years of worshipping in the same building, St. Martin of Tours Anglican and Gabriola United Church became a shared ministry, with a new name, the Christ Church. The South School was demolished in 1988.

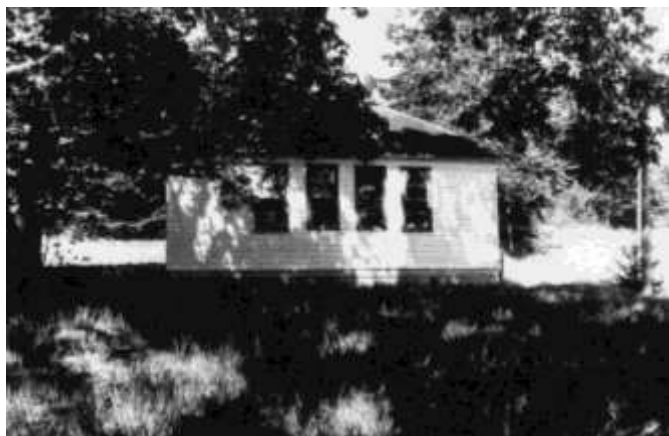


Figure 54: Four windows of the old South School (Gab Museum)

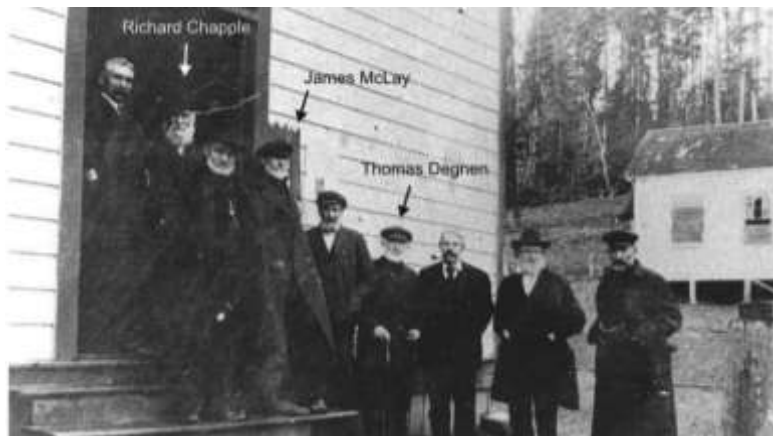


Figure 55: 1909 Election; voters on the steps of the South School with the teacher's residence at the back (Shale 28)

## The first Community Hall 1913-1979

When a group of Gabriola's earliest citizens met at the South School on May 31, 1913, a Gabriola tradition began that is still active to the present day; namely, providing a Community Hall for the island. At the time, the stated purpose of the meeting was to organize a Social Club for "mutual purposes". The representatives elected were J.W. Jolley president, J. Gray vice president, and C.B. Hobson secretary/treasurer. Also elected was a Board of Trustees for a building lot, to be donated by Mr. W.N. Shaw. These were J.W. Jolley, W.N. Shaw, and M. Edgar.

At the meeting of February 10, 1914, there was a proposal to build a hall, 30 x 60 x 16 feet, on land donated by Mr. William Nairn Shaw. This is where the present Community Hall stands today and it adjoins the school property. A building committee was appointed and an estimate was to be presented the following week. Mr. Degnen and Mr. Silva volunteered to bring the required lumber in on the brickyard scow. Mr. Shaw was asked if he was giving land with sufficient room for the building, and, as the remaining three-cornered piece of land was of no use to him, he said he would donate that along with the original parcel. This is where the playground is now located.

When World War I was declared in August 1914, some Gabriola men went overseas to serve. The original Hall was completed approximately in 1917. On November 8, 1919, a committee was appointed to draft a Constitution for the government of the Hall. A Basket Social and Dance was planned for November 1 of that year. This was the first of many dances held over the years. There were also New Year's Eve Dances, Fund Raising Dances, Valentine's Day Dances, Thanksgiving Day Dances, a Masquerade Ball, and a Hayseed Dance, with donations of fruit and vegetables to be sold at auction. In June 1920, permission was sought and granted for use of the Hall for a Schoolchildren's Dance. It was also decided that a social function of one kind or another would be held twice monthly at the now named South Gabriola Public Hall, and that a piano be bought.

Permission was given October 20, 1920, for the Hall to be fixed up for games. It was also suggested that an Athletic Club be formed and, on October 26, a request was granted to the Zig-Zag Sports Club for the use of the Hall, two evenings per week at five dollars per evening. During these years, there were many requests for the rental of the Hall. The Deputy Returning Officer for Gabriola South was granted its use for the December 1, 1920, election, at a cost of five dollars.

In November 1921, a letter was sent to Gabriola Shale Products asking for a donation of bricks for two chimney flues. In his reply, Mr. W.D. Campbell of Gabriola Shale Products stated that the company could not see its way clear to donate sufficient bricks for the erection of two flues until clear deeds were obtained to the parcel of land. Once these were obtained, the Company would be pleased to give the bricks required for the heating system. This was done right away. One dollar was paid to W.N. Shaw for the legal conveyance, and six dollars to the Land Registry Office. Safeguards were built into the deeded land to ensure that it stayed in the hands of the community and be used for a community centre.

In December 1921, the Board discussed "building room for kitchen" and noted, "School Trustees to be asked for use of lumber of the old house (presumably the teacher's residence) on school property". There was a request in December 1925 for use of the hall for the school's Christmas tree and this was granted. During the mid-1930s, the Athletic Club seems to have been the most active group, and the officers of the Athletic Club were adopted as the Executive of the Hall. This continued throughout the rest of the thirties with the Athletic Club holding their badminton nights twice weekly, on Mondays and Thursdays.

In February 1941, a meeting was held to discuss the re-roofing of the Hall. A house-to-house canvass of South Gabriola was made to raise funds so that the roof could be installed in the summer of 1941. At the November 24, 1944, Annual General Meeting, it was moved that a chimney be built on both sides of the Hall. The building was insured Canadian Home Assurance then for \$2000 and the contents for \$300 at a cost of \$41.40 for three years. The insurance was increased in 1952, to \$5000 at a cost of \$90 for three years. In 1946, the hall was used during noon hours by the children to play badminton, on condition that children were supervised, running shoes were worn, and children refrained from touching lamps.



In 1946, it was decided that the Hall Committee purchase an electric light plant. This made it possible to show movies, and these became a regular Thursday night event. In 1952, there was a further advance with the rental of movies in Technicolour. In 1954, there was a discussion about giving the membership and ownership of the South Gabriola Public Hall to all Gabriola residents. A special meeting was to be called to change the constitution.

The role of the Hall within the community was also influenced by a wave of Hippies moving to Gabriola in the 1970's and participating in its activities. The South End was a prime destination for the free spirited crowd, because of modest cost of land and its availability particularly in the Coho Drive neighbourhood. The Hippies involved themselves in the Community Hall at an early stage and continued to do so with the building of the new Hall.

Although the Hall took some preventive measures, it was completely destroyed by fire in June 1979. The investigation into the cause of the fire was inconclusive.



Figure 56: Badminton at old Community Hall Shale 22



Figure 57: 1979 The old Community Hall on South Road (Gab Archives)  
Notice how close to the road the building sits



Figure 58: The South Gabriola School on the left with the old Community Hall on the right., photo taken from teacher's house, Shale 22

## The first Shaw Family: Alexander, wife and children



Figure 59: Alexander Shaw, 1880's

Alexander Shaw was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1833, and was an only child in the Shaw family. He left school when he was fourteen years of age and found a job at one of the warehouses in Manchester City. While very young, he married Ann Royan and within two years had two sons. His interest in education for his children, and for better working opportunities for himself made him restless, and he prepared to leave England. He managed to obtain a passage on a sailing ship bound for Canada in 1870 and eventually arrived in Ontario. He worked on the building of the railroad and followed the rail west. Since arriving, he learned telegraphy and was made operator for the Canadian Pacific Railway in Yale.

Shaw moved with his family and arrived on Gabriola Island in 1879. His family had grown to eight children by then, and another was soon to be born. He set to work in the same dauntless way which was so characteristic of him. The Shaw land, not far from the Edgars and Martins, was cleared and a home built for the family. The farm prospered with beef cattle and pigs being raised and sold to bring in much-needed income for the large family.

Alexander Shaw Sr. donated a part of his land on which the South School of Gabriola was built. He was engaged as teacher at the South School in 1881. He owned a farm across the road from the school. He was farming a 12-hour day when he decided to become a teacher. In 1888, when many of the pioneers on the island were just beginning, Alexander Shaw decided to leave. He moved to Nanaimo and, although reaching toward his middle years, he was looking ahead to new ventures.



Figure 60: John Shaw in 1914, Nanaimo Community Archives

*July 1937 obituary in the Nanaimo Free Press:*

*John Shaw, one of the best known pioneer educationists of British Columbia and former Mayor and alderman of Nanaimo, passed away... The late Mr. Shaw was born in Manchester, England of Scottish parents and would have been 74 years of age on Sunday next. As a young boy Mr. Shaw came to Canada with his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Shaw, where they settled in Ontario for six years, and where Mr. Shaw received his early education. The Shaw family eventually came to settle at Langley Prairie, B.C. in 1878, following a short residence at Yale, B.C.*

*In 1879 the family moved over to Gabriola Island. At this place there were no school facilities for the large family of children and so Mr. Alexander Shaw Sr. educated himself, and in turn passed on his newly acquired knowledge to the children. In 1882 the elder Shaw built a small rowboat and in company with his sons John and Alexander and Mr. James Gray, still residing on Gabriola Island, rowed to Victoria where they all passed their teachers' examinations. In the same year John Shaw started his long career of educational work, at the age of 19 ...*

*The John Shaw High School was named in honor of the late educationist. John Shaw was elected to the aldermanic board of Nanaimo four different terms. In 1912 and 1913 Mr. Shaw was elected Mayor of Nanaimo for two of the most turbulent years in the history of Nanaimo... In Masonic circles the late Mr. Shaw was one of the best known members of the craft. In 1917 and 1918 the highest honor in provincial Masonry was bestowed upon Mr. Shaw when he was elected Grand Master of the B.C. Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M.*

## The second Shaw Family; William Nairn, Euphemia Temple, and children

William Nairn Shaw donated the land to build the Community Hall in 1913 and additionally, he gave the pointed tail of the property, in 1914 for the playground. Shaw was born on May 15, 1862 in Fife Scotland. His father was Joseph Shaw, born in 1831 in Derry, Ireland, and his mother Cecilia Nairn. Shaw arrived in Canada in 1883, and returned to Europe temporarily to marry Euphemia Temple Hunter on March 21, 1892 in Perth, Scotland. He died in Nanaimo in 1950, and was buried on Gabriola. Euphemia was born on January 1859 in Clackmannanshire, Scotland, immigrated to Canada in 1892, shortly after her marriage; she died in Victoria December 9, 1956. They raised three children on the island Cecilia Valence Nairn Shaw (1884-1990), Jean Hunter Leaper Shaw (1896-1960) and Joanna (or Anna) E. Shaw (1899- ). Their second child was born in 1893 and died the same year.

His name and those of his wife and three children appear in the 1901 Census as living in Nanaimo. Shaw and his family eventually settled in the south end of Gabriola. He served on the School Board on Gabriola keeping the school in good order. Shaw also donated the land to build a Community Hall and to this day, the land is referred to as “the old Shaw Estate”. The children went to school here and were regarded as excellent students.

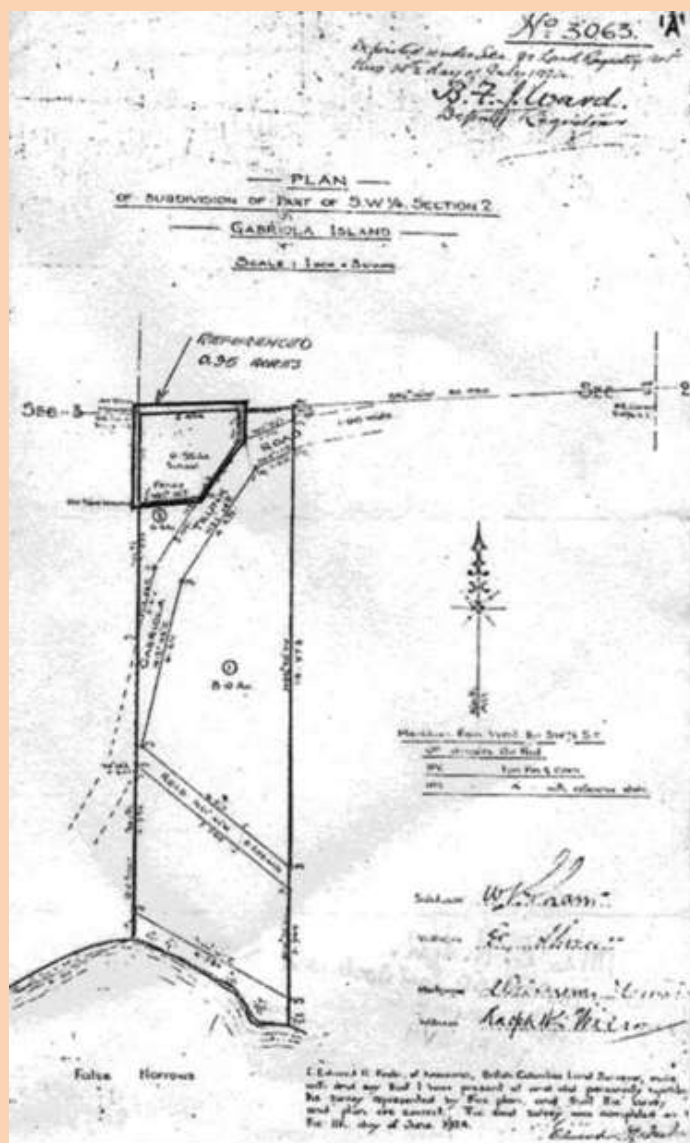


Figure 61: William Nairn and Euphemia Shaw (from June Harrison's)

“As late as 1930, people at the south end were apparently still dependent on the Gray or Deggen families for transportation to and from Nanaimo. In a letter petitioning the authorities for improved boat or ferry service, on February 16, 1930, Mrs. Euphemia Shaw wrote about their difficulties, saying, “we have only one boat a week from this end and that is through the kindness of Mr. James Gray”.

From Jenni Gehlbach's in Shale No 27

Figure 63: Survey of parcel in favour of William Nairn Shaw from 1924. The land was apparently previously occupied by John Kemp, and owned by Alexander Shaw and/or by Alexander Shaw Jr. as well. The school property is clearly identified in the upper left corner of the parcel (thus not included), after William Nairn donated the triangular parcel to the Community Hall in 1913; and before the upper right corner bit of land was zoned residential. South Road is identified as “Gabriola Trunk Road” and Shaw road is not named. Survey map from 2016 Owen Friesen's paper



## 2.3 Building history and chronology:

### The current Community Hall

Immediately after the fire, in July 1979, the Board of Directors convened to discuss rebuilding the Hall. Fundraising to build a new hall began that very summer at the Annual Salmon Barbeque. Public meetings were held to get a feel from the community just what was needed in rebuilding the Hall. Then in 1981, a designer was hired and, using the small amount of money from the insurance claim and money donated by the community, a design that the community could afford was decided upon. Under Bylaw 39, a building permit was granted in March 1981, but there were further obstacles along the way. In the meantime, directors started negotiations with the School Board in February 1980 regarding leasing the adjoining 0.9-acre site. This was ratified in October and the land is now the hall's parking lot and landscaped grounds, leased then at one dollar a year. This area continues to be the site of the annual Salmon Barbecue.

*There are two separate titles forming the Community Hall's grounds*

- *The parcel that the Community Hall is built on was transferred legally to GICHA in 2006 by Paddy Griffith's law office.*
- *The parcel previously owned by the School Board was transferred to GICHA in 1985 by John Ewert's law office with two encumbrances on title, pertaining to the School Board's right of first refusal and the obligation to maintain community use.*

*In order to amalgamate the two parcels, the School Board will have to discharge the two encumbrances so that the property line can be removed. Both parcels are registered in the Victoria Land Title Office and both parcels are registered in GICHA's name. GICHA is the rightful owner of both parcels and GICHA is the registered owner of same at the Victoria Land Title Office.*

*1985 Title Search Print for the school property, requested by David Brown Attorney marked "current information only - no cancelled information shown" under charges, liens, and interests, Alexander Shaw's name appears as the registered owner of the undersurface rights. See Appendix I*



Figure 62: Early 1980's contributions to the construction of the new Community Hall



Figure 63: Construction photos of the current Hall

Final permission to build was not received until September 1982. By October of the same year, pioneer resident Jim Rollo turned the sod to begin rebuilding the Hall for the community. Volunteer workers, funds from a generous estate endowment, money from a Community Recovery grant, and a NEED grant, brought the building to lock-up. From then on the work was done by volunteers and what a heady time that was! Plumbing and electrical work was donated by generous patrons of the hall. The community of Gabriola Island can be proud of the money raised in a door-to-door campaign by Board members to bring the hall to a finishing point.

The opening ceremony took place on August 1984 with Jacqueline Sears cutting the ribbon. She was one of the last members of the Shaw Estate who owned the site and her father had donated the land to be used as a community hall in perpetuity. The usual wonderful Salmon Barbeque followed the opening concert, and a dance ended the evening, christening the beautiful fir floor.

In 1984 a handicapped ramp was added to the front entrance and a kitchen was added on the ground floor of the Community Hall. Also in progress was the completion of the drop-off and parking lot on the newly acquired adjoining school property. Recently a washroom facility for physically challenged patrons was added on the main floor.



Figure 64: 1980's new Hall under construction with adjacent school building, used by the Anglican Church



Figure 65: Summer 1982, Sod turning by resident Jim Rollo

### Occupancy and use

Artists such as Ronnie Hawkins in 1968, and Roy Forbes, in 2000 & 2002, have given concert at the Community Hall; in the old and the new respectively. Personalities like former premier David Barrett in 2005 have made presentations at the Community Hall.

The Gabriola Island Community Hall provides a venue for all kinds of community events and activities: a gathering place for the whole island. Community events include sports and games, dances, concerts, movies, plays, book fairs and assemblies, political or social. In addition, the Community Hall building includes a co-operative pre-school with its associated playground. The Hall has been home to the Gabriola Parent Participation Pre-School since its opening to the present time. The 2,500 square foot main hall has been used for badminton and recreation activities, large meetings, small meetings, Gabriola Choir, theatre and many other community events. Every Gabriolan over 16 years of age is a member of the Community Hall.





Figure 66: Film festival



Figure 67: General Meeting



Figure 68: Family Gathering 2009



Figure 69: Family night out

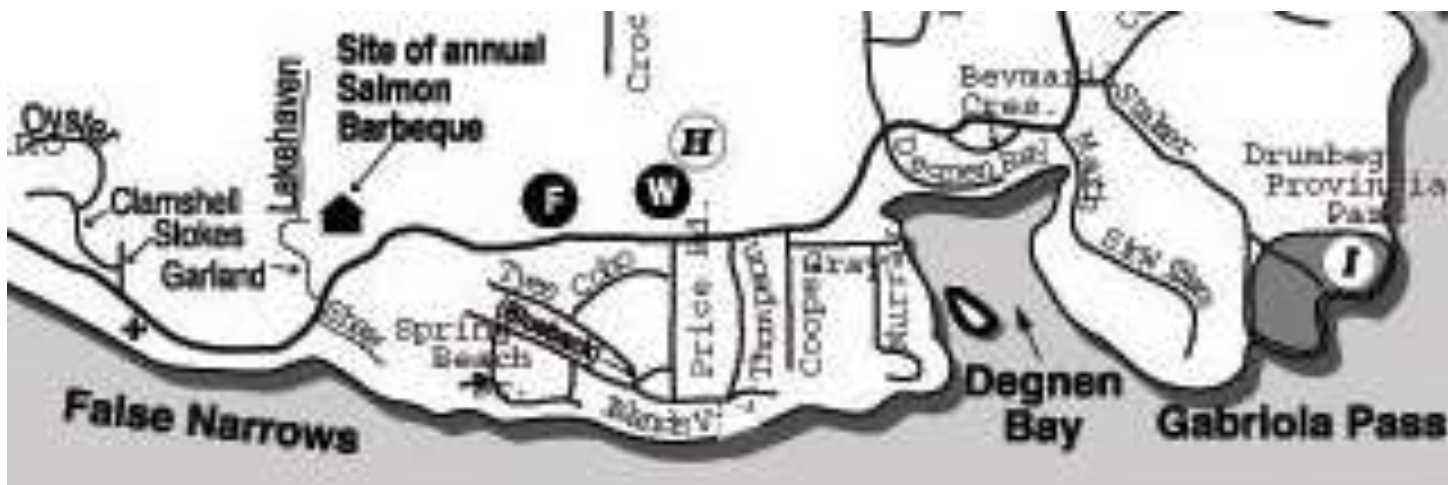


Figure 70: Community Hall indicated as the Site of the annual Salmon Barbeque on the current map in the Gabriola directory

The salmon barbeque is hosted annually by the Community Hall; it has been held every year, since 1955. In 1979, the salmon barbeque was established as the event for fundraising for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Community Hall. Every August, the hall holds its annual salmon barbeque which is its only fund-raiser. The money raised at the barbeque pays the insurance premium for the hall. The board is proud to say that although it isn't rolling in money, the hall is unencumbered as it has been maintained with no support from taxes.





Figure 71: 1965 Salmon Barbeque at Withey's, Silva Bay

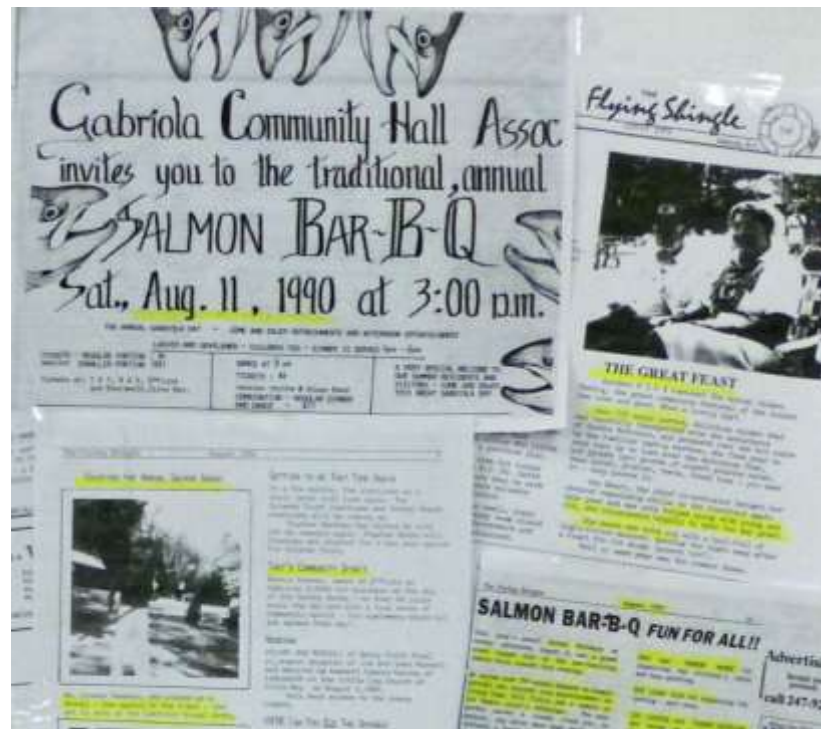


Figure 72: Various Salmon BBQ newspaper articles (CH exhibit)



Figure 73: 2014 Salmon BBQ stage and entertainment



Figure 74: 2014 Cooking the salmon



Figure 75: Salmon BBQ 50th annual and 60th annual T-shirts (Hall exhibit)





Figure 76: Advertising for the 2018 Gabriola Salmon Barbeque, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary

The barbeque was originally held at Page's in an apple orchard. The annual barbeque was then held at Withey's at Silva Bay; the idea was to attract boaters, but eventually, Gabriolans participated in greater numbers and the venue was then moved to the grounds of the school next to the Community Hall, in the early 1970's. During the two years of construction in the early 1980's, the salmon barbeque took place at Twin Beach, in the north end of the island. It has been held at the Community Hall annually ever since the building was completed. In the 1980's a hired band and a popular dance was taking place in the evening following the Salmon Barbeque; logistics put an end to dances in 1989.

Tsiporah Grignon took over managing entertainment at the Barbeque in 2002 for the following thirteen years, seeking to bring more local talent to the event. The Salmon Barbeque music program became a sort of mini music festival, over four hours. Grignon also added a "youth set" bringing family and children performers to the forefront, broadening the base of support for the event.

*The Community Hall buys the filleted fish from Hub City Fisheries in Nanaimo. They are "pinks" which are not on the endangered species list. Gordon McDonald picks up the fish on Friday, the day before the barbecue, in big iced containers, and brines it. This still happens at Somerset Farms as it has for decades; then it arrives at the Hall grounds the next afternoon.*

*Village Foods is a huge contributor to the Barbeque and pretty much supplies all the pickles, potatoes, eggs, veggies and whatever else we need. The new owners of Village Foods have continued with this generous donation. Then the volunteers get together and make potato salad, green salad. Jared Hooper and Simon Brown have been cutting and flipping the fish respectively for at least 20 years and 38 years.*



Figure 77: Joyce Babula

The BC Community Achievement Awards celebrate British Columbians who go above and beyond in their dedication and service to others, and who devote time and energy to making their communities more caring, dynamic, beautiful, healthy and unique. The awards are given annually to people from across the province who inspire by their example.

This year, for the 2018 award, one hundred and fifty nominations were received by the committee, and Gabriola's Joyce Babula was one of twenty-five people chosen to be given this award by the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor, Janet Austin, at Government House on Wednesday.

Babula's contribution has been her support and work with the Gabriola Community Hall Association for over thirty years. The community hall is not funded through the tax base and is run entirely by volunteers. Babula was one of the volunteers who rebuilt the hall in 1984 (following a fire) and since that time has worked tirelessly as the secretary, president and fundraiser.

To cover the annual operational costs there is an annual salmon barbecue in August. This event has been taking place for the last 61 years, and for the past 32 of these, Babula has headed a committee to successfully execute the annual Salmon Barbeque of over 600 people; she was assisted by Ute Ewert for nearly twenty years. Each summer Babula has willingly volunteered her time and energy to make sure that every detail of this event runs smoothly.

Gabriola Sounder, Tuesday, May 1 2018.

### 3.0 Building Heritage Analysis

#### 3.1 Building Style

The existing building was designed by Andy Croft & Associates, Urban Design and Facility Planning, of Vancouver. The style of the building is modern vernacular. A multiple sloped metal roof and horizontal wood siding is characteristic of Vancouver Island and BC in general. The building is modern in the sense that the design does not correspond to any particular traditional style. It is a utilitarian design that responds to its specific program and the constraints of its site.

For instance, the saw-tooth façade of the South Road elevation is a result of the triangular shape property, thus maximising the usable surface of the building in a tight site. The building has very few windows since the main interior space is a large column free space used as an assembly room and gymnasium. The ground floor holds a co-operative preschool and provides easy access to the outdoor and playground.

The style of the building is compatible, but not similar to other structures on the island. Its presence, siting and massing gives the building the appearance of a civic institution, which is appropriate for a public building.

Andy Croft & Associates,

Address at the time of construction: The Lincoln Apartment Building, 1606 Nelson Street #11, Vancouver V6G 1M5

End of Statement of Significance's Background



Appendix I: 1984: Land transfer between Community Hall and School Board

<p>Substitute - Forms 17</p> <p>PARTICULARS</p> <p>APPLICANT: John D. Ewert</p> <p>Address: 87 Wharf Street, Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 2X3</p> <p>Phone No.: 753-6444</p> <p>Solicitor for Transferee</p> <p>Herewith Fees of \$ 53.00</p> <p>Declared Value \$18,000.00</p> <p>Nature of Document/Charge Transfer of an Estate in Fee-Simple</p> <p>_____ Signature of Applicant/Agent</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">P 93252 P 93253</p> <p>Substitute - Forms 17</p> <p>PARTICULARS</p> <p>APPLICANT: John D. Ewert</p> <p>Address: 87 Wharf Street, Nanaimo, B.C. v9R 2X3</p> <p>Phone No.: 753-6444</p> <p>Solicitor for Transferee</p> <p>Declared Value:</p> <p>Nature of Charge/Document: Option to Purchase</p> <p>_____ Signature of Applicant/Agent</p>
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THIS INDENTURE made the 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1984.

BETWEEN:

THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES OF SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 68 (Nanaimo), with its place of business located at 395 Wakesiah Avenue, Nanaimo, British Columbia, V9R 3K6

(hereinafter called the "Transferor") OF THE FIRST PART

AND:

GABRIOLA ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL ASSOCIATION, of Box 205, Gabriola Island, British Columbia, V0R 1X0, incorporated under the Society Act on July 17, 1975 under number 11741;

(hereinafter called the "Transferee") OF THE SECOND PART

WITNESSETH THAT, in consideration of the sum of ONE DOLLAR (\$1.00) of lawful money of Canada, now paid by the Transferee to the Transferor (the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged) the Transferor doth grant unto the Transferee, its heirs and assigns forever, ALL AND SINGULAR that certain portion of that certain parcel or tract of land, lying and being in the Nanaimo Assessment District and Gabriola Fire Protection and Improvement District, in the Province of British Columbia, more particularly known and described as:

That part of the South West Quarter (1/4) of Section Two (2) Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District containing ninety-five hundredths (0.95) acres more or less, as shown on Plan 3063 and Marked "School" thereon,

Subject to: R 78502G in favour of Alexander Shaw

## Appendix 2: 1924, purchase of William Nairn Shaw's land by the Community Hall Trustees for \$1.00

THIS INDENTURE made the 19th. day of July  
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-four:

IN PURSUANCE of the "REAL PROPERTY CONVEYANCE ACT",

BETWEEN:

WILLIAM NAIRN SHAW of Gabriola Island in the  
Province of British Columbia, hereinafter called  
"the Grantor" of the one part,

-and-

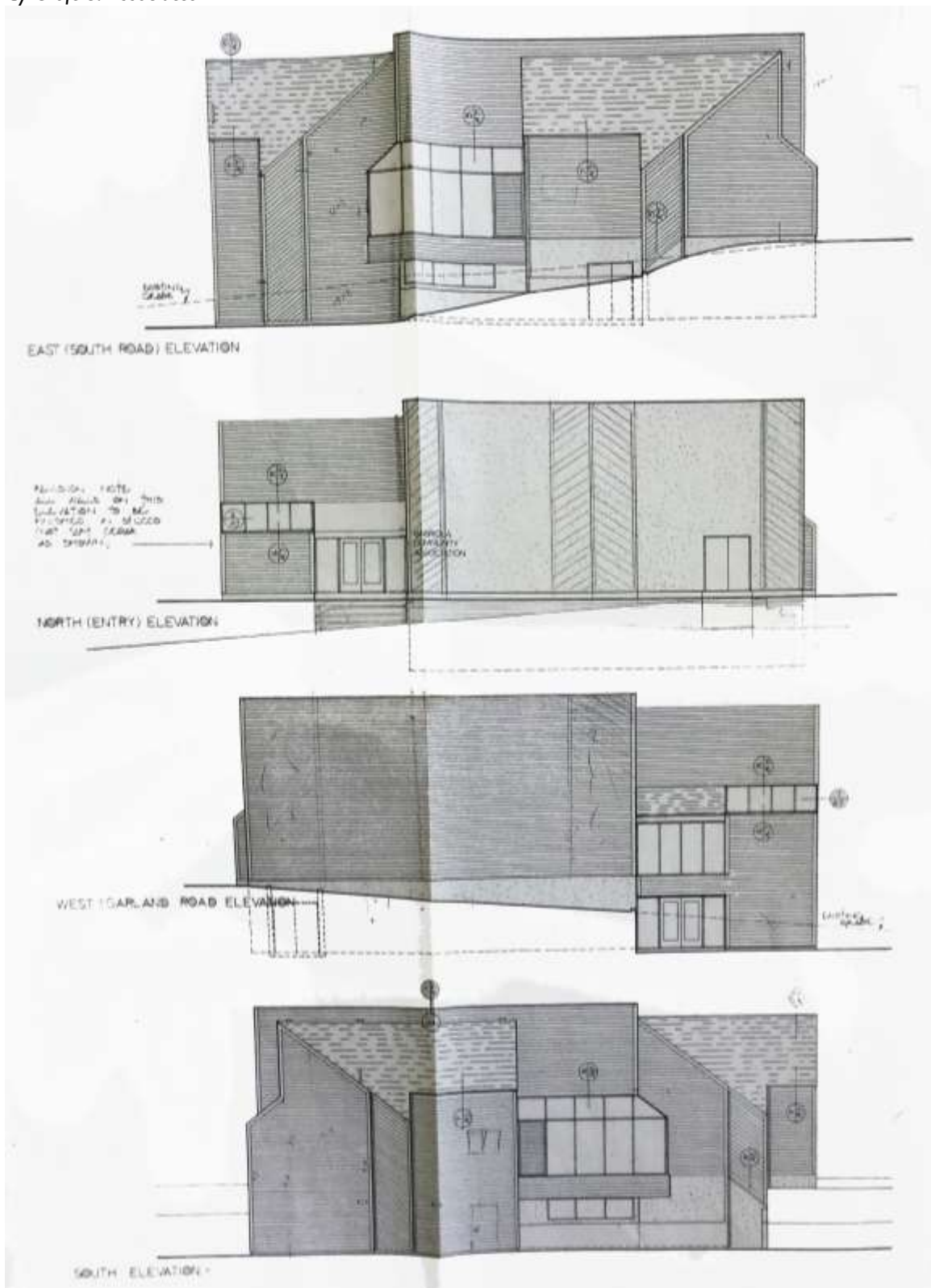
MARK EDGAR, FRANK H. HOLLAND and WILLIAM NAIRN  
SHAW, all of Gabriola Island aforesaid,  
hereinafter called "the Grantees" of the other part:

WITNESSETH that in consideration of the sum of One Dollar  
of lawful money of Canada now paid by the said Grantees to the  
said Grantor (the receipt whereof is hereby by him acknowledged)  
the said Grantor BOTH GRANT unto the said Grantees,

ALL and SINGULAR that certain parcel or tract of land and  
premises situate, lying and being in the Province of British  
Columbia, and being more particularly known and described as  
Block Two (2) of subdivision of the fractional southwest quarter  
of Section Two (2), Gabriola Island, according to a map or plan  
prepared by E. R. Foster, P.L.S., dated 1924, now deposited in the  
Land Registry Office in the City of Victoria; ~~SAVING AND RESERVING~~  
and reserving thereout and therefrom all coal, oil and fire clay  
lying thereunder;

UPON TRUST to hold the said lands hereinbefore described  
and the buildings thereon or hereafter to be erected and constructed  
thereon in substitution or replacement thereof, for the purpose  
of a public community hall for the benefit of actual residents of  
the district of Gabriola Island for the purpose of public assem-

Appendix 3: Elevations Design Drawings circa 1982  
Design by Andy Croft & Associates



*NB: Stucco siding on North side, changed to horizontal Wood Siding*