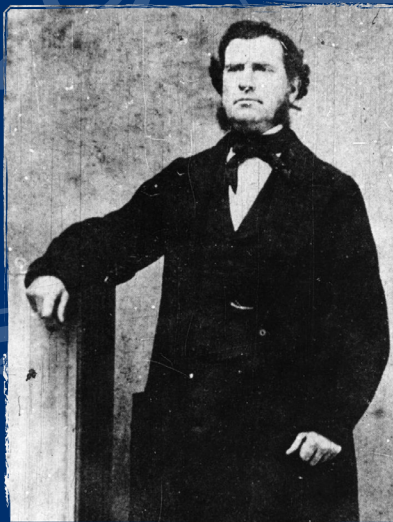
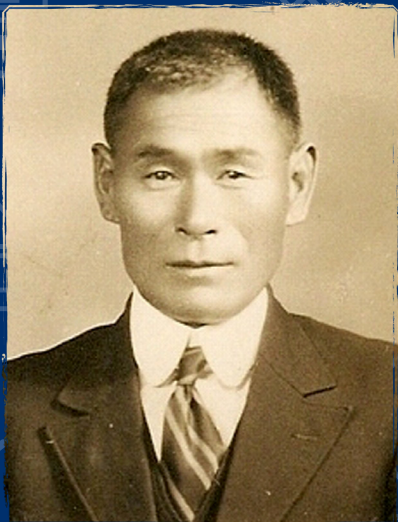


MUDFLATTERS:

Richmond's Pioneer History



Inventory Check List

| ✓ | ✓ | Item | Description |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Teacher's Guide | |
| | | Cotton gloves (white) | 6 pairs |
| | | Pioneer Folders | |
| | | See <i>Pioneer Folders Check List</i> for contents | Otokichi Murakami (Blue Folder) |
| | | | Asayo Murakami (Yellow Folder) |
| | | | Charles London (White Folder) |
| | | | Chung Ling Lam (Purple Folder) |
| | | | Hugh McRoberts (Green Folder) |
| | | | Manoah Steves (Red Folder) |
| | | Objects: Layer #1 | |
| | | <i>Otokichi Murakami & Asayo Murakami</i> | Net Needle |
| | | | Shirt Collar |
| | | | Boatbuilding Hammer |
| | | | Fishing Buoy |
| | | | Flower Seed Packet (loose) |
| | | | Clothes Pegs |
| | | | Salmon Can |
| | | Objects: Layer #2 | |
| | | <i>Charles London & Chung Ling Lam</i> | Hair Crimper |
| | | | Donut Cutter |
| | | | Vegetable Seed Packets |
| | | | Button Hook |
| | | | Chopsticks |
| | | | Calligraphy Brush |
| | | | Cocoa Tin |
| | | Objects: Layer #3 | |
| | | <i>Hugh McRoberts & Manoah Steves</i> | Button Hook |
| | | | Horseshoe |
| | | | Darning Egg |
| | | | Sock Stretcher and Sock (loose) |
| | | | Shirt Collar |
| | | | Milk Bottle |
| | | | Butter Paddle |

Pioneer Folders Check List

| ✓ | ✓ | Item | Description |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Otokichi Murakami (Blue Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Six (6) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | Postcard of Fishing in Steveston |
| | | | <u>Fishing Book</u> |
| | | | <u>Steveston Cannery Row Book</u> |
| | | Asayo Murakami (Yellow Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Violin Sheet Music |
| | | | Six (6) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | <u>Steveston Cannery Row Book</u> |
| | | | <u>Salmon Canning Book</u> |
| | | | <u>Obachan's Garden DVD</u> |
| | | Charles London (White Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Farming Book |
| | | | Seven (7) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | May (London) Mack's Recollections (four pages) |
| | | | Two Postcards of Farming and Baseball |
| | | | <u>Richmond's Agricultural Heritage Book</u> |
| | | Chung Ling Lam (Purple Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Six (6) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | Hong Wo Co. Checklist (four pages) |
| | | | <u>Steveston Cannery Row Book</u> |

| ✓ | ✓ | Item | Description |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | | Hugh McRoberts (Green Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Photograph of Bog Shoe |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Five (5) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | Two Postcards of Farming and Cow |
| | | | <u>Sea Island</u> Book |
| | | | <u>Richmond's Agricultural Heritage</u> Book |
| | | | <u>The Richmond Barn</u> Activity Book |
| | | Manoah Steves (Red Folder) | Pioneer Profile |
| | | | Pioneer Biography |
| | | | Six (6) Photographs |
| | | | Map of the Fraser River Delta |
| | | | Three Postcards of Steveston, Town Hall |
| | | | <u>Richmond's Agricultural Heritage</u> Book |
| | | | <u>Steveston's Cannery Row</u> Book |
| | | | <u>Ida's Farm</u> Historical Colouring Book |

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Introduction

Introduction

Richmond's first pioneers began to arrive in this region in the early 1800s and by the end of that century made up a culturally diverse population that included settlers from Europe and the British Isles (Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England), Eastern Canada, Japan and China. When they arrived on Lulu and Sea Islands, as Richmond was called back then, they found that the low-lying interior land was often boggy. Although there were few trees to clear, the spongy, waterlogged and regularly flooded bog land presented its own challenges. Without roads, walking was difficult, and nearly impossible without high gumboots. Thus, the early pioneers of Lulu and Sea Islands became known as the **mudflatters**.



Photograph shows the spongy, waterlogged and flooded bog land of Lulu Island. Without roads, walking in this was nearly impossible without high gumboots. Thus, early pioneers became known as the mudflatters. *City of Richmond Archives 1977 1 268*

About This Kit

This kit will provide your students with a diverse range of settler experiences, voices and perspectives, which are reflective of Richmond's multicultural community, by focusing on the following individuals and their stories:

- Chung Ling Lam
- Charles London
- Hugh McRoberts
- Asayo Murakami
- Otokichi Murakami
- Manoah Steves

Through a series of lesson plans that use objects, photographs, and historical documents as teaching tools, this education kit will invite students to explore this question:

*How did Richmond's early pioneers meet the **Mudflatters Challenge** of building a new life for themselves and their families?*

The teacher's guide provides background information to the history of Richmond and the six pioneers, general teaching concepts and frameworks, a complete unit plan made up of six lesson plans with complementary blackline masters, and a list of additional resources to take this subject further.

The kit provides all the materials needed to deliver each lesson in the teacher's guide, plus additional materials that may be of interest to the teacher or students.

Historical Background

Richmond's Early History

Richmond's first pioneers began to arrive in this region in the early 1800s and by the end of the century made up a culturally diverse population that included settlers from Europe and the British Isles (Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England), Eastern Canada, Japan and China. These pioneers were in search of a better life for themselves and their families. When they arrived, the local Coast Salish bands had been known to have set up temporary camps to hunt, fish and gather berries, while their permanent villages were located nearby along the Fraser River.



Photograph of Lulu Sweet, an American actress for whom Lulu Island is named.
RCF #31

In the 1860s, the first people to settle on Lulu and Sea Islands, as Richmond was known back then, were European farmers. They settled mainly along the Fraser River, which provided transportation routes that allowed access to the nearby City of New Westminster. When they arrived, they found that the land was often boggy. This caused a significant challenge for them to grow crops and made it necessary for them to clear, drain and dyke the land.

The need to build dykes was an important reason for early settlers to petition the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council to grant status to the area as a municipality. In November 1879, the two islands were incorporated under the name of "Corporation of the Township of Richmond". Once the local government was established, the Corporation provided the resources to develop dykes, roads, bridges and other services that would be maintained.

The abundant natural resources, such as fish, attracted many others to these shores. In the early 1880s numerous fishing canneries began to operate along the Fraser River. The growing cannery and boatbuilding industries brought migrant workers to the area. Among these were Chinese contract workers who originally came to British Columbia to build the railway and Japanese fisherman and boatbuilders. Steveston, in particular, became the centre of the fishing industry, gaining international fame for the quality and bounty of its canned salmon.

The vitality of the early pioneers to Lulu Island and Sea Islands contributed to the richness of the cultural community as a whole. While their lives were filled with hardships and challenges, their strength and endurance has helped build the community of Richmond into what it is today.

Mudflatters

The boggy waterlogged landscape of Lulu and Sea Islands presented challenges to the newly arrived pioneers. Early settlements were built mainly along the water because there were no roads. Most people traveled by row boat, canoe or scow to attend Town Hall meetings, visit markets or travel to nearby City of New Westminster. Settlers laboured for hours and it was impossible for them to keep their clothes or shoes clean. They were known to wear high gumboots and carry their shoes in bags. Once they arrived at their destination, they would switch their footwear. This is why Richmond's settlers became known as "**mudflatters**" and held the reputation among the city dwellers as being plain country folk.

Source: www.richmond.ca/discover/about/history.htm

Pioneer Profiles

Chung Ling Lam



Chung Ling Lam was a Chinese-born entrepreneur who came to Richmond during its early industrial boom in the late 1800s. He became a businessman and owner of the Hong Wo General Store in Steveston.

You will find the complete biography in [BLM 2](#) at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Chopsticks: Chopsticks are a common eating utensil used by the Chinese and many other Asian cultures. They are held in the dominant hand, between the thumb and fingers, and used to pick up pieces of food.



Calligraphy Brush: This brush was a common writing utensil for the Chinese and other cultures. It would have been used by dipping it into ink and writing Chinese characters in a style of writing known as calligraphy. Chung Ling may have used this type of brush when writing receipts, keeping inventory of supplies, or writing letters.



Cocoa Tin: This tin contained cocoa powder, which is used to make hot chocolate or for baking. Tin cans are still used today, although today, the lid is usually made out of plastic. This item was one of many items that would have been sold at the Hong Wo General Store.

Charles London



Charles London was born in Ontario and came to Richmond with his brother, William, in 1881. Charles and William bought farmland in the South Arm district and built a small farmhouse. They also built the first dyke against the Fraser River, a wharf, local school, church, store and boarding house and the post office.

You will find the complete biography in **BLM 2** at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Hair Crimper: This is also known as a curling iron and was used mainly by women and girls to curl hair. It was heated on a stove, which is why some hair crimpers had wooden handles so they were safe to hold without wearing gloves. Charles's wife or daughters would have used hair crimpers to curl their hair before going to church or parties.



Donut Cutter: This is a kitchen tool used for making donuts that are the same shape and size. After preparing the dough, the cutter is used to create round shapes with a hole in the middle. Donuts are then fried and sometimes glazed or rolled in sugar. Charles's wife or daughters would have used this to make donuts.



Button Hook: This was used to help the closing of buttons. This may not seem like a very necessary tool, but in the 1800s, a pair of women's or men's boots could have almost 50 buttons! Clothing could have just as many buttons, and oftentimes had tiny buttons that were best closed using a button hook.



Vegetable Seed Packets: These are packages of seeds for crops that would have been grown in Richmond. These crops were often sold to nearby markets. Before the building of roads, these would travel by boat up the river to the City of New Westminster.

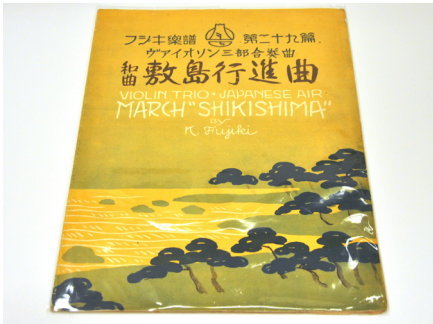
Asayo (Imamoto) Murakami



Asayo Imamoto was born in Hiroshima, Japan and came to Richmond in 1924 as a picture bride. When she arrived, she refused to marry the man she was promised to and worked long hours in the Steveston canneries to pay off her debt. She later married Otokichi Murakami and had many children. The family lived in Steveston until they were forced to move away during the Second World War and never returned.

You will find the complete biography in [BLM 2](#) at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Violin Sheet Music: The violin is a string instrument, usually with four strings. It produces a sound when you draw a bow over one or multiple strings, or when you pluck the string. In the past, it was the wealthy who could afford to own violins and take lessons. That Asayo could play the violin was a symbol of her privileged upbringing. The violin was one of the few things she brought with her from Japan to Canada.



Flower Seed Packets: These flower seed packages represent the garden next to the house that Asayo was devoted to. This garden was also known all around Steveston. Asayo's children picked flowers from this garden to sell.

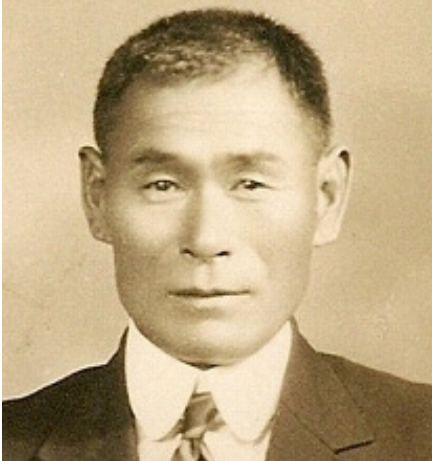


Clothes Pegs: Clothes pegs were used when hanging laundry out to dry on a clothing line. It represents "women's work" since laundry was mainly a chore for Asayo or her daughters.



Salmon Can: In the late 1800s, there seemed to be a never-ending supply of salmon in the Fraser River. Richmond's first cannery was the Phoenix Cannery. Like most canneries, it was a large wooden building extending over the river, and surrounded by wharfs, workers' housing and boats. By the 1900s, there were 49 canneries along the Fraser River, most of them in Steveston. Asayo worked for the Phoenix Cannery and her family rented a house from the cannery.

Otokichi Murakami



Otokichi Murakami was born in Hiroshima, Japan, and traveled to BC when he was 21 years old. He settled first in Nanaimo and later moved to Richmond. Otokichi was a boatbuilder and built about two boats per year. The rest of the year, he worked as a fisherman. He married Asayo Imamoto, who was also from Hiroshima, and they had many children. The family lived in Steveston until they were forced to move away during the Second World War and never returned.

You will find the complete biography in [BLM 2](#) at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Net Needle: This is used to make and repair fishing nets. The cord that is used to make the net is wound around the centre part of the needle. It takes great skill and practice to use the needle and thread it to make a net. As a skilled fisherman, Otokichi would have used a needle like this one to make and repair his fishing nets.



Shirt Collar: This is a detachable collar, separate from the shirt and fastened to it by studs. The collar is usually made of a different material from the shirt and is almost always white. Since it is unattached to the shirt, it can be specially starched to have a hard, cardboard-like texture. This collar demonstrates men's fashion in the past, and is uncommon in the 21st century.

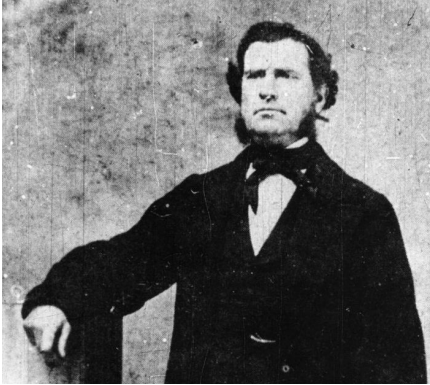


Boatbuilding Hammer: In Japan, boatbuilding was a skill that was passed on from one generation to the next. In Richmond, the Japanese were considered the master boatbuilders and their boats were highly sought after. Otokichi built two boats per year, usually in the winter months outside of the fishing season.



Fishing Buoy: This is a floating device that has many uses. It can be used for seine fishing to mark the anchor position of the net. Seine fishing is a method of fishing that uses a net that hangs vertically in the water, with its bottom edge held down by weights and its top edge held by buoys.

Hugh McRoberts



Hugh McRoberts came to Richmond in 1858 and bought farmland on Sea and Lulu Islands. He dyked, cultivated and harvested wheat and planted orchards. He also had 54 head of cattle. The City of Richmond's name might have come from his farm, also named Richmond.

You will find the complete biography in **BLM 2** at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Photograph of Bog Shoe: This was attached to working animals, such as horses, so that their feet would not sink into soft boggy farmland. Animals were an important source of labour. For example, horses pulled carriages and oxen pulled farm equipment.

Hugh would have had bog shoes made for his working animals to help them work more effectively.



Button Hook: This was used to help the closing of buttons. This may not seem like a very necessary tool, but in the 1800s, a pair of women's or men's boots could have almost 50 buttons! Clothing could have just as many buttons, and oftentimes had tiny buttons that were best closed using a button hook.



Horseshoe: This is usually made out of metal and designed to protect horses' hooves from wear. They are usually nailed through the insensitive hoof wall (like a toenail). The horses that Hugh owned probably all had horseshoes made to protect their hooves.



Darning Egg: Darning is a sewing technique for mending holes in clothing using needle and thread. A darning egg is used for mending socks. It is inserted into the toe or heel to hold it in the proper shape and provide a firm foundation for repairs. When the repairs are finished, the darning egg is removed.

Manoah Steves



In 1878, Manoah Steves moved with his wife, Ida, and their six children from New Brunswick to Richmond. He acquired land on the southwestern tip of Lulu Island. Manoah had a reputation for being fearless, self-reliant and resourceful. He became an influential farmer, both a leader in cultivation and improvement of the land.

You will find the complete biography in **BLM 2** at the back of this manual.

Objects related to this pioneer:



Sock Stretcher and Sock: The sock stretcher was used to stretch out wool socks, which had a tendency to shrink after they were washed and dried. Today, socks are made out of synthetic material, which shrinks less, which made sock stretchers obsolete.



Shirt Collar: This is a detachable collar, separate from the shirt and fastened to it by studs. The collar is usually made of a different material from the shirt and is almost always white. Since it is unattached to the shirt, it can be specially starched to have a hard, cardboard like texture. This collar demonstrates men's fashion in the past, and is uncommon in the 21st century.



Milk Bottle: This glass bottle was used to store milk. Un-refrigerated milk spoils quickly and since many people could not afford a refrigerator, milk was delivered daily. The milk delivery man also picked up used and clean bottles from the day before to be re-used.



Butter Paddle: This is a kitchen tool used for making butter. It takes extra liquid in the butter-making process. It is also used to pack the butter into the common rectangular box shape that butter is often packaged in.

Teaching Strategies

Historical Thinking Concepts

What should students know after 12 years of studying history in school? What should they be able to do with their knowledge? Surely they should have more than an accumulation of memorized facts to show for years of study. Students need to meet the challenge of understanding their own lives in the historical context of past decades, centuries and millennia.

The Historical Thinking Project. www.historicalthinking.ca

The Historical Thinking Project is designed to shift how teachers teach and students learn about history. This approach fosters new ways to approach history through historical thinking, which is a method of history instruction based on recent international research on history learning and current BC social studies curriculum trends.

Historical thinking is closely tied to how students learn science or math and a departure from the memorization of facts and dates. Students are introduced to concepts and instructions that build upon one another, with the goal being that students become competent thinkers in that subject area as they progress. This follows the same creative process that historians experience. However, there are many challenges in “knowing” the past, and the Historical Thinking Project has developed a framework of six historical thinking concepts:

1. **Historical Significance:** How do we decide what is important to learn about in the past?
2. **Evidence:** How do we know what we know about the past?
3. **Continuity and Change:** How can we make sense of the complex flows of history?
4. **Cause and Consequence:** Why do events happen and what are their impacts?
5. **Historical Perspectives:** How can we better understand the people of the past?
6. **The Ethical Dimension:** How can history help us live in the present?

Historical Perspectives:

This kit will focus on **Historical Perspectives** although most of the other concepts can be applied in one way or another. This concept suggests that there are a variety of factors—intellectual, cultural, social, and emotional—that have shaped peoples' lives and prompted their actions in the past. Understanding the complexity of this is the key to understanding historical perspectives.

Guideposts to Historical Perspectives:

Guidepost 1: An ocean of **difference** can lie between current **worldviews** (beliefs, values, and motivations) and those of earlier periods of history.

Guidepost 2: It is important to avoid **presentism**—the imposition of present ideas on actors in the past. Nonetheless, cautious reference to universal human experience can help us relate to the experience of historical actors.

Guidepost 3: The perspectives of historical actors are best understood by considering their **historical context**.

Guidepost 4: Taking the perspective of historical actors means inferring how people felt and thought in the past. It does not mean identifying with those actors. Valid inferences are based on evidence.

Guidepost 5: Different historical actors have **diverse perspectives** on the events in which they are involved. Exploring these is key to understanding historical events.

Source: The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton. Nelson Education. 2013.

Object or Artefact Based Learning

Benefits of using real objects in learning

- They provide a direct link with a topic or 'the past' and can really enhance young people's interest in and understanding of a topic/subject.
- They encourage young people to use all their senses – especially touch, sight and smell.
- They help to develop the important skill of drawing conclusions based on an examination of evidence, together with an understanding of the limitations and reliability of evidence.
- They are ideal for generating group and class discussion.
- They promote the value of museums and encourage young people to visit museums and galleries with their families to further their learning.

Source: UCL Introduction to object based learning. www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/learning-resources/object-based-learning

Framework for investigating objects

These questions can help guide students through analyzing objects. This can be done as a class discussion, small group discussion, or as individual worksheets. Ultimately they should be able to frame their own questions and set about answering them.

History

- Who made it? When? Why? Who has owned it? Has it changed since it was made?
- Is there a story to go along with it and what is the story?

Physical Features

- What is it made of? Describe its shape, size, weight, smell and sound. Is there writing on it?
- Is this a complete object or is it a part of a bigger object?

Construction

- What was it made of? Would it have required special skills or tools to make?
- Could you make one yourself?

Function

- What was it made to do? Does it have a practical function? Is it a toy? A decoration?

Design

- Does it do what it is supposed to do? How well?
- Has the design of similar objects changed or stayed the same over time?

Value

- What is its monetary worth? Who would find it valuable? Has its value changed?
- Does it have sentimental value?

What is an artefact?

An artefact is an object that is made by a human being and is of historical interest or significance. Artefacts must be handled carefully, and usually only by the Museum Curator, who wears special gloves and follows specific techniques. There are over 20,000 artefacts in the Richmond Museum's collection.

This education kit contains objects that are part of the Richmond Museum's education collection, why is why they can be used in the classroom and handled without gloves. That being said, students are expected to handle these objects with care and gloves are provided.

How to handle artefacts

The following are examples of rules followed by museum personnel when handling artefacts. Please go over them with your students prior to handling artefacts:

General Rules

- Notify museum staff immediately of any loss or damage.
- Always use gloves when handling artefacts.
- Cleanliness is essential: do not drink or eat around artefacts.
- Do not use pens or sharp objects around artefacts.

Before you pick up an object

- Are your hands clean?
- Are you wearing gloves?
- Are you wearing any jewelry that could damage the object?
- Examine the object carefully—are there any weaknesses or repairs that you need to be aware of?

When you pick up an object

- Use both hands.
- Never pick it up by the handle, rim or a projecting part.
- Pick it up by its most solid component.
- Handle only one object at a time.
- Never leave artefacts unattended or unsecured.

When you are finished with the objects

- Store artefacts in their places in the kit.
- Please put some thought into storage arrangements so that objects are not leaning against one another or on top of each other.

If students notice the catalogue number on an artefact, take this opportunity to explain how museums look after their artefacts. Each object in the collection receives a unique number. This number identifies the object's date of entry into the collection and is used on all documentation. For example, at the Richmond Museum, 979.1.3. refers to: 979 is 1979, the year the object was accepted; 1 is the first donation of the year and 3 is the third object in that donor's donation.

Classroom Activities

These activities work particularly well for younger students, but will help students of all ages prepare to work with the artefacts in the kit. Use common classroom objects and ask students to bring objects from home.

- **Grouping Skills:** Gather a group of objects and ask students to develop a criteria by which to sort the objects, for example, by colour, size, or type of material.
- **Story/Drama:** Gather a group of objects that illustrate a story or ask students to tell a story using this set of objects.
- **Art:** Use objects as models in an art project. The material, function, decorative motif and so on may be explored in a variety of artistic methods.
- **Cultural Themes:** Look at objects to form cross-cultural comparisons. What do we use instead of this tool/instrument, implement/apparel? Describe differences and similarities—never assume they have the same meaning/significance in each culture.
- **Exhibits:** Ask students to bring in some of their collections from home and create their own display or exhibit. Elements such as as label-writing, graphic interpretation, and mount making can be investigated prior to setting up the exhibit. They can use the rules of handling artefacts when setting up a display of their collections. A visit to the Museum would be beneficial to discuss the conscious choices museums make when constructing an exhibit.
- **Conservation:** How many of us have left our bike out in the rain later to find it rusted? Or left an electronic device in the sun or cold later to find it no longer useful? Use these two examples to begin a discussion around the causes of damage to objects. Make a list of the factors leading to the deterioration of objects. This should include light, heat, and so on.
- **Learning to look (a):** Have students study an object/photograph for 30 seconds. After 30 seconds, they turn their back on it and list what they noticed about it. Share answers and compare what different students noticed.
- **Learning to look (b):** Use a frame or a magnifying glass to encourage looking closely and in different ways. Or cover part of the object and slowly reveal the whole.

Source: Learning From Objects by Gail Durbin, Susan Morris, and Sue Wilkinson. English Heritage. 1990.

Using Primary and Secondary Sources

| Primary Sources: | Secondary Sources: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created at the time of an event, or very soon after it happened.• Created by someone who saw or heard an event themselves.• Often one-of-a-kind, or rare.• Examples: objects, letters, diaries, photos, newspapers and magazines, art, maps, video and film, and sound recordings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created after an event (and after primary sources) and sometimes a long time after something happened.• Often uses primary sources as examples.• Expresses an opinion or an argument about a past event, sometimes called a bias.• Examples: history textbooks, historical movies and biographies, published stories, art, music recordings. |

And now the most important question: Who Cares?

What's the big deal over primary and secondary sources anyway? Why should you care, especially if adults can't even make up their minds which is which?

A German historian, over 100 years ago, said it was important to write about the past, "as it really happened." Most people today agree that it is impossible to know what exactly happened in history. (Most people can't remember exactly what happened last week, let alone a long time ago!) However, if we aren't careful about the facts, we can really make a mess and even create some big lies about the past.

Think of it like playing the telephone game. That's the game where you whisper something in a friend's ear that they have to repeat to another friend, and so on. It works for the first little while, but the chance of someone getting it wrong increases with the number of people who repeat it. Going back to primary sources is like going back to the first person in the telephone game.

Doing research is all about trust. If you trust the person who created a secondary source, then there isn't a problem about using it. However, if you don't trust that person, if you think their version is exaggerated or biased, or if you want to see the original evidence for yourself, then you have to go to the primary sources.

Source: Collections Canada. www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/education/008-3010-e.html

Unit Plan

This unit plan is structured for a class to be divided into six groups and assigned a pioneer to study throughout the unit.

BLM refers to Blackline Masters at the back of this teacher's guide.

Lesson 1: The Journey Begins

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe why these pioneers left their homes or countries of origin.
- Describe why these pioneers chose to settle in Richmond.
- Analyze objects for deeper understanding about Richmond's pioneers.

Students will begin to understand (*Historical Thinking Guidepost 1*): An ocean of **difference** can lie between current **worldviews** (beliefs, values, and motivations) and those of earlier periods of history.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Introduce students to Richmond's pioneer history by reading or referencing *Historical Background: Who Were The First Pioneers of Lulu Island*.

- Brainstorm reasons why early pioneers left their homes or country of origin.
- Record all responses and help students expand on their ideas.

Small Group Work: Divide the class into six groups. Each group will stay together and be assigned the following pioneer to study for the entire unit.

Group 1: Chung Ling Lam

Group 2: Charles London

Group 3: Asayo Murakami

Group 4: Otokichi Murakami

Group 5: Hugh McRoberts

Group 6: Manoah Steves

Distribute the pioneer biography and related object to each group. Refer to *Teaching Strategy: Object or Artefact Based Learning* for general rules for handling objects.

Ask students to:

- Read the pioneer biography. Brainstorm and record why their pioneer left their home or country of origin.
- Examine the object using the *Analyzing Artefacts Worksheet*. Brainstorm and record why their pioneer might have brought this object with them.

Class Debrief: Each group shares three things about their pioneer and explains why their pioneer has their object. Encourage students to use the Pioneer Biography to support their reasons for their object.

Resources

BLM 1: *Historical Background: Who Were The First Pioneers of Lulu Island?*

BLM 2: Pioneer Biographies

- Chung Ling Lam
- Charles London
- Asayo Murakami
- Otokichi Murakami
- Hugh McRoberts
- Manoah Steves

Teaching Strategy: Object or Artefact Based Learning

BLM 3: Analyzing Artefacts Worksheet

6 Objects (in order of pioneers listed above):

- Calligraphy Brush
- Button Hook
- Violin Sheet Music
- Boatbuilding Hammer
- Darning Egg
- Sock & Stretcher

White Gloves (optional)

Lesson 2: Hopes & Dreams

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the challenges that early pioneers faced when they moved to Richmond.
- Analyze photographs for deeper understanding about Richmond's pioneers.

Students will begin to understand (*Historical Thinking Guidepost 2*): It is important to avoid **presentism**—the imposition of present ideas on actors in the past. Nonetheless, cautious reference to universal human experience can help us relate to the experience of historical actors.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Review reasons for why early pioneers left their homes or country of origin. Expand discussion to the challenges that early pioneers encountered when they came to Richmond. *Didn't speak the language. Had no place to live. Had to find work. Prearranged marriage contract was ended. Landscape was too boggy to cultivate crops.*

What challenges do new immigrants encounter today when they come to live in Richmond. Compare and contrast with early pioneers.

Small Group Work: Distribute the pioneer biography and related photograph to each group. Ask students to:

- Examine the photograph and record the answer to the questions below it. Use the pioneer biography as a reference.
- Discuss and record the specific challenges that their pioneer might have faced when they moved to Richmond.

Class Debrief: Each group shares one new thing they learned about their pioneer from the photograph and one specific challenge their pioneer faced. Encourage students to use the Pioneer Biography and photograph to support their answer.

Extension: Distribute a random pioneer photograph to each group and ask students to create a list of questions. Then give the photograph and list of questions to the group who is studying that pioneer to analyze.

Resources

BLM 2: *Pioneer Biographies*

BLM 4: *Analyzing Photographs*

Additional photographs are available in each pioneer's folder.

Lesson 3: A Life of One's Own

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define historical context and describe its importance in understanding the past.
- Write historical fiction using multiple sources: text, photograph and object.

Students will begin to understand (Historical Thinking Guidepost 3): The perspectives of historical actors are best understood by considering their **historical context**.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Write the following statement on the board:

The Murakami girls were not allowed in their father's boatworks shop, but the boys were allowed to help their father build the boats.

Discuss if this would be different today (*gender equality—male nurses, female construction workers*), how the girls might have felt about this back then (*accepted that there are separate male and female roles*), and would their perspective be different from girls today (*maybe, maybe not*)? Point out to students that there are differences between the perspectives of the present and those of the past. This is called “historical context” and it is important to understanding the past.

Individual Assignment: Introduce the concept of historical fiction, using *Writing Historical Fiction* as a guide. Each student will be writing their own historical fiction in the form of a bio-poem.

Read aloud the Sample Bio-Poem for Asayo Murakami. Then distribute the pioneer biography, one related photograph and object, and the *Bio-Poem Worksheet* to each student. Encourage students to incorporate the biography, photograph and object in their bio-poem in order to make accurate inferences about their pioneer's thoughts, feelings, motivations and beliefs.

Small Group Work: Each member of the group shares his or her bio-poem. Or, mix up the groups so that each group has one of each pioneer.

Resources

BLM 5: *Writing Historical Fiction*

BLM 6: *Bio-Poem Worksheet*

BLM 2: *Pioneer Biographies*

BLM 4: *Analyzing Photographs*

Objects related to pioneers

Lesson 4: Primary and Secondary Sources

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of primary and secondary sources.
- Describe how primary and secondary sources work together to tell a story about the past.

Students will begin to understand (Historical Thinking Guidepost 4): Taking the perspective of historical actors means **inferring** how people felt and thought in the past. It does not mean identifying with those actors. Valid inferences are based on **evidence**.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Introduce students to the concept of Primary and Secondary Sources—did they know that they have already been using both types (biographies, objects and photographs)?

Post the Primary and Secondary Sources chart from *Teaching Strategy: Using Primary and Secondary Sources*. Share why it is important to know the difference between the two types of sources.

Small Group Work: Distribute objects, photographs and biographies related to each group's pioneer. Identify which ones are primary sources (*objects and photographs*) and secondary sources (biographies). Explain how each primary source supported the secondary source (*for example, the violin sheet music supported the biography's description of Asayo's love of the violin*).

Extension: Visit a local museum or heritage site. Ask students to record how the displays used a combination of objects, photographs and text to tell a story.

Resources

Teaching Strategy: Using Primary and Secondary Sources

BLM 2: *Pioneer Biographies*

BLM 4: *Analyzing Photographs*

Objects related to pioneers

Additional photographs

Local Museums or Heritage Sites:

- Richmond Museum
- Steveston Museum and Post Office
- Steveston Tram
- London Farm
- Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site
- Gulf of Georgia Cannery

Lesson 5: Hell's Gate Disaster

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the significance of the Hell's Gate Disaster to the town of Steveston.
- Describe the impact of the Hell's Gate Disaster to their pioneer.

Students will begin to understand (Historical Thinking Guidepost 5): Different historical actors have **diverse perspectives** on the events in which they are involved. Exploring these is the key to understanding historical events.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Read *The Hell's Gate Disaster* together. Ask students to consider the impacts of the disaster upon the fishing industry, business community and the town of Steveston. *Canneries closed, people lost their jobs, businesses closed, etc.*

Individual Assignment: Ask students to write a short paragraph and illustration (optional) about the effects of the Hell's Gate Disaster on their pioneer.

Small Group Work: Each member of the group shares his or her paragraph. Or, mix up the groups so that each group has one of each pioneer.

Class Debrief: Compare and contrast the impact of the Hell's Gate Disaster for each pioneer.

Extension: Visit the Britannia Shipyards for the "Inside the Britannia Shipyards Tour" and learn about the connection between the Shipyards and the Hell's Gate Disaster.

Resources

BLM 7: *The Hell's Gate Disaster*

Lesson 6: Tableaux

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Consolidate their knowledge about their pioneer into a succinct dramatic piece.

Classroom Activities

Class Discussion: Explain that each group will prepare a series of tableaux about their pioneer. A tableaux is a group of motionless figures representing a “still life” scene from history.

More info: www.dramaresource.com/strategies/tableaux

Theme suggestions for tableaux scenes:

- Why their pioneer left their home country.
- Why their pioneer chose to settle in Richmond.
- A challenge their pioneer faced in Richmond.
- How their pioneer overcame this challenge.

Other suggestions for tableaux scenes:

- One student can be named the narrator to provide a concise and dramatic explanation of the scene.
- Use photographs as prompts for scenes.
- Have objects be mandatory parts of scenes.
- Ask the rest of the class to guess what is going on in the scene.

Questions for each group to consider when building their scene:

- What values or ideas of the time was this group reflecting?
- What other plausible choices might the characters have made?
- Were any opinions or actions hard to understand?
- What else do we need to learn about in order to understand the perspectives of these characters?
- What does the tableaux activity suggest to you about history?

Extension: Create a Heritage Fair project about the pioneer.

More info: <http://richmondheritagefair.blogspot.ca>

Resources

n/a

Black Line Masters

BLM 1 – Historical Background: Who Were The First Pioneers of Lulu Island?

Richmond's first pioneers began to arrive in the early 1800s, and came from around the world, including Europe and the British Isles (Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England), Eastern Canada, Japan and China. These pioneers were in search of a better life for themselves and their families.



Photograph of Lulu Sweet, an American actress for whom Lulu Island is named.
RCF #31

When they arrived, they would have met the local Coast Salish bands, such as the Musqueam First Nation, who built temporary camps to hunt, fish and gather berries. These groups usually had permanent villages nearby along the Fraser River.

The first people to settle on Lulu and Sea Islands, as Richmond was known back then, were farmers from Europe and Eastern Canada. There were no roads, so they settled along the Fraser River and traveled by boat. The land was very **boggy**, which made it difficult to grow crops so they had to clear, drain and **dyke** the land before they could build their farms.

In the early 1880s, the growing cannery and fishing industries attracted many to Richmond. Many Chinese, who originally came from Southern China to British Columbia to build the railway, came to work in the canneries. The Japanese came to work mainly as fishermen and boatbuilders. Steveston became the centre of the fishing industry and was known around the world for its canned salmon.

Early pioneers to Lulu Island contributed to the richness of the cultural community as a whole. While their lives were filled with hardships and challenges, their strength and endurance has helped build the community of Richmond into what it is today.

Source: www.richmond.ca/discover/about/history.htm

Vocabulary:

boggy: Too wet and muddy to be easily walked on; marshy.

dyke: A natural or man-made slope or wall to regulate water levels.

BLM 2—Pioneer Biographys

Chung Ling Lam



Chung Ling Lam was born in China and moved to Richmond in the late 1800s. He was a businessman and owner of the Hong Wo General Store in Steveston.

The original store was built in 1895 and rebuilt after a fire in 1905. It was well stocked with hardware, clothing, dry goods, vegetables, fruits and meat. It was built on the dyke and had its own wharf, so it served both river traffic and local residents. The business prospered until World War II, when like many other businesses in Steveston such as the canneries, it began to decline. It operated until 1971, and was torn down in 1977.

Chung Ling was a community leader and president of the Chinese Farmers Association. He also helped connect European businessmen to the Chinese community. For example, he would find seasonal Chinese workers for the European-owned canneries, and make sure that these Chinese workers had food and a place to live. He owned two **bunkhouses**, which is where many Chinese men lived while working in the canneries. He also mediated disputes and arranged loans.

When Chung Ling died in 1939, he was the owner of several farms, factories and a house on East Broadway in Vancouver.

Vocabulary:

bunkhouses: Buildings where cannery workers lived, usually made up of bunk-beds and overcrowded.

Charles London



Charles London was born in Brent County, Ontario, in 1861. As a boy, he helped his father on the farm. When he was seventeen years old, he left home with his brother, William, to look for greater opportunities and seek their fortunes. They traveled to California for a year, then came to British Columbia.

When Charles and his brother arrived on Lulu Island, they found that there were only three or four families living there. They liked the area and decided to stay. They bought 200 acres (that's the size of Richmond Nature Park!) for about \$2000 and began to prepare the land for growing crops. They also built a small farmhouse.

Over the years, they developed a small community. They built, by hand, the first dyke against the Fraser River along their property line. They constructed a small wharf, to transport their crops to market, and later the first road, which today is No. 2 Road. This road led to the building of a school, church, store, boarding house and post office. William was the first postmaster.

Charles married Miss Henrietta Dalzell, daughter of Joseph and Greeson Dalzell, and had five children: Edwin, Louis Alexander, Lucy May, May Margaret, and Florence Henrietta.

Asayo (Imamoto) Murakami

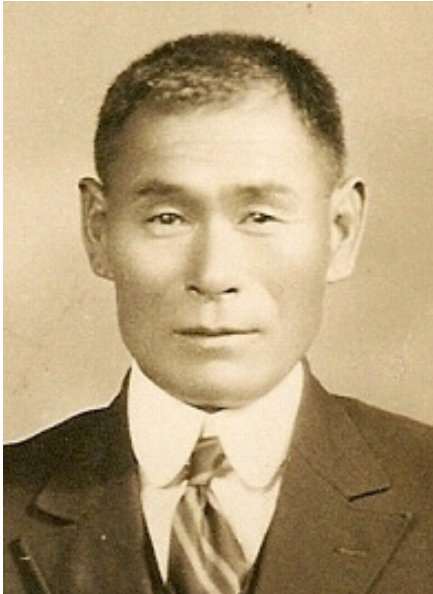


Asayo Imamoto was born in Hiroshima, Japan, in 1898, to a wealthy family. She was educated in the fine arts, her favourite being her violin lessons, and later married a man from an important Hiroshima family and delivered two healthy daughters. In 1921, she gave birth to a son who died shortly afterward. Unfortunately, Japanese customs of that time considered her to be a failure as a woman since she was unable to give birth to a healthy heir. The couple divorced two years later and the daughters were sent away.

In the 1920s, many single Japanese women exchanged photographs with Japanese men in Canada to find a husband. These women were called “picture brides”. Asayo exchanged pictures with a man in Richmond and agreed to marry him. Of the few belongings she brought with her on the journey was her prized violin. When she arrived, she was met by a short man that she was not at all attracted to. She broke her marriage contract and spent the next three years working in a cannery and picking strawberries in order to repay her former husband-to-be for the cost of her voyage.

While working in the cannery, she met a widower, Otokichi Murakami. She married him and became a mother to his two children. They rented a house from the Phoenix Cannery in Steveston and they went on to have eight more children. In 1941, due to government policy during the Second World War, the family was forced to move away from Steveston and the West Coast. This period of time was called the Japanese Internment. Asayo and her family settled first in Manitoba, later moving to Alberta. The family never returned to Richmond.

Otokichi Murakami



In 1908, Otokichi Murakami, already a trained carpenter at age 21, traveled to British Columbia from the small fishing village of Takumaru, Hiroshima, Japan. Settling first in Nanaimo, he later moved to Steveston, where he married and had two children. His wife died during childbirth, and in 1923, he met and married his second wife, Asayo, and had eight more children.

They rented their home from the Phoenix Cannery and he built a boatworks building next-door, where he hand-crafted two gillnetter fishing boats every winter. He launched the completed boats in the river, which was celebrated by the whole family with orange pop and canned pineapple. He also built some of the family furniture, and a Japanese *furo ba*, or hot soaking tub in the rear of the house, which the family enjoyed on a daily basis.

Otokichi was also an excellent duck hunter, which provided much needed food and warm down quilts for bedding. While he was usually a quiet man, he came alive during hunting season. With his dog, Chou, Otokichi took his boat to Ladner Slough where he often bagged two dozen ducks for food and feathers.

In 1941, due to government policy during the Second World War, Otokichi and his family were forced to move away from Steveston and the West Coast. This period of time was called the Japanese Internment. Otokichi and his family settled first in Manitoba, later moving to Alberta. The family never returned to Richmond.

Hugh McRoberts



Hugh McRoberts was born in Ireland and left when he was very young. He first traveled to Australia, then to California and finally to British Columbia, where he took part in the Cariboo Gold Rush. He chose to settle in Richmond and purchased 1550 acres of land, which made him the owner of more than half of Sea Island and some of Lulu Island.

He was the first European settler to build a farm in Richmond. He dyked, cultivated and harvested a field of wheat and planted 650 trees, which included apple and cherry trees for an orchard. He also had 54 head of cattle. While nobody knows the real reason behind Richmond's name, some believe that the city is named after the McRoberts Farm, which he named "Richmond", probably after the farm he lived in when he was in Australia.

Hugh built a house and barn with lumber, which he brought from New Westminster by boat or canoe. The house had two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a stovepipe chimney. Other families soon moved nearby and they began to share resources such as machinery and labour when they harvested crops. Hugh lived in this house with his wife and daughter.

The first church services in Richmond were held in Hugh's home. Reverend John Hall, a Presbyterian missionary from Ireland, traveled from New Westminster to Sea Island to conduct services. In 1886, a Presbyterian church was built on Sea Island.

Hugh later moved to New Westminster, where he owned a milk business for many years.

BLM 2—Pioneer Biography: Manoah Steves



In 1878, Manoah Steves traveled from New Brunswick to British Columbia with his wife, Ida, and their six children: Josephine, William Herbert, Mary Alice, Joseph Moore, Ida and Walter. Arriving in May, he found himself a large piece of land on the southwestern tip of Lulu Island. This land was covered with water throughout the winter months and there were few other settlers in this area.

Manoah imported a herd of Holstein cattle from Oregon in 1889 for dairying, a business which was carried on with great success by his son, Joseph Moore.

Joseph went on to marry Miss Bessy McEllhane, who was also from Nova Scotia, and they had five children together. One of his sons, Harold, has continually served on Richmond's City Council since 1977. From 1973-1975, he served as an M.L.A in the BC Legislature. He was one of the founding members of the Agricultural Land Reserves. Today, he operates the original family farm with his wife, Kathy, breeding Belted Galloway cattle.

One of Manoah's other sons, William Herbert Steves, saw great potential for the small community of Steveston. He felt that it could grow into a large city so purchased the townsite to develop it further. Unfortunately, he died at the age of thirty-nine, disappointed that he did not see his dream come true.

Manoah himself had a reputation for being fearless, self-reliant, resourceful. He became an influential leader in the cultivation and improvement of the land, to which he devoted himself until his death in 1897.

BLM 3—Analyzing Artefacts Worksheet

Name of Artefact: _____

1. History

Who made it? When? Why? Who has owned it? Is there writing on it? Has it been changed since it was made?

2. Physical Features

What is it made of? Describe its shape, size, weight, smell and sound. Is this a complete object or part of one?

3. Construction

How was the object made? Would this have needed special skills or equipment? Describe the materials it is made from.

4. Function

What was it made to do? Does it "do" anything or is it for display?

5. Design

Does it do what it should? How well? Has the design of similar objects changed over time?

6. Value

What is it worth? How do we establish value? Who would find it valuable? Why? Has its value changed? Why? Does it have sentimental value? To whom? Why?

BLM 4—Analyzing Photographs

Chung Ling Lam



Lam House. Photograph of the Lam house, located in East Vancouver. The Lam family, owner of the Hong Wo Store, is standing on the front porch (ca 1914). *City of Richmond Archives 1986 37 1*

1. List ten things you see in the photograph.
2. What does it look like the people are doing?
3. Are the people posing or is this photograph spontaneous? How can you tell?
4. Describe the house. Do you think this family is wealthy or poor? How can you tell?
5. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?
6. Imagine you are there in the photograph. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

Charles London



A Farmer's Residence: Photograph of London Farm and the London Family: from left to right James Gilmore, Nellie Gilmore, Charles London, Edwin London, Henrietta London, Mary Agnes Dalziel and William London (1908). *City of Richmond Archives 1984 17 74*

1. List ten things you see in the photograph.
2. What does it look like the people are doing?
3. Describe the landscape.
4. Describe the house. Do you think this family is wealthy or poor? How can you tell?
5. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?
6. What does the caption tell you about this photograph?
7. Why do you think this photograph was taken?
8. Imagine you are there in the photograph. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

Asayo Murakami



Filling Cans: Photograph of workers filling cans of salmon at a cannery at BC Packers, a fish packing company in Steveston (1930s).
City of Richmond Archives 1985 4 729

1. List ten things you see in the photograph.
2. What does it look like the people are doing?
3. Describe this place. Where do you think this photograph was taken?
4. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?
5. Why do you think this photograph was taken?
6. Imagine you are there in the photograph. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

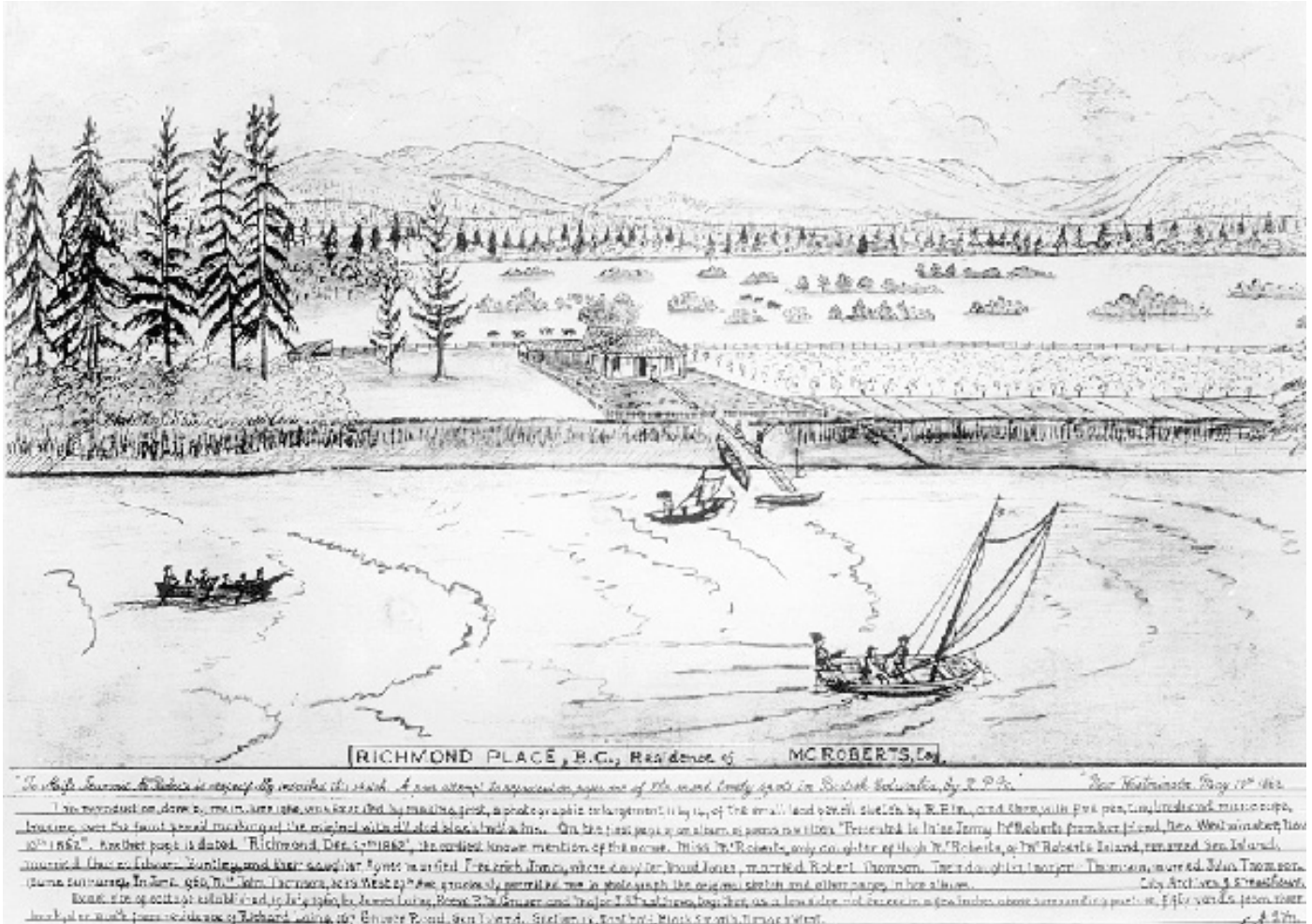
Otokichi Murakami



Duck Hunting: Photograph of Otokichi Murakami during hunting season. *Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society*

1. List ten things you see in the photograph.
2. What does it look like this person is doing?
3. Describe this place. Where do you think this photograph was taken?
4. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?
5. Why do you think this photograph was taken?
6. Imagine you are there in the photograph. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

Hugh McRoberts



McRoberts Farm: Sketch shows small boats on the Fraser River in foreground and the mountains behind (copied 1977). *City of Richmond Archives 1977 3 4*

1. List ten things you see in this sketch.
2. Find the people in the sketch. What does it look like they are doing?
3. Describe this place.
4. What do you think the purpose of this sketch was?
5. What do you think the general mood would be?
6. Imagine you are there in the sketch. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

Manoah Steves



Herbert Steves. Photograph of Herbert Steves and a horse-drawn cart carrying his family (ca 1900). *City of Richmond Archives 1978 9 8*

1. List ten things you see in the photograph.
2. What does it look like the people are doing?
3. Describe this place. Where do you think this photograph was taken?
4. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?
5. Why do you think this photograph was taken?
6. Imagine you are there in the photograph. What sounds would you hear? What smells would be in the air? How would you feel?

BLM 5— Writing Historical Fiction

Ground Rules for Writing Historical Fiction

- Think about the living and working conditions of your pioneer or major events that they have seen or taken part in. Do some research so you can incorporate facts into your story.
- Good historical fiction does more than describe events. Show how your pioneer saw those events at the time through their historical perspectives. Have your pioneer share their feelings.
- Convince the reader that your pioneer is real by giving a lot of details. Give reasons behind their actions or beliefs, even if they are complicated.
- Remember that you do not need to agree with or support your pioneers' beliefs – you just need to give them accurately.

Questions to Think about When Writing Historical Fiction

- How can I use language and dialogue to create an authentic sense of the time and place during which my pioneer lived?
- What evidence do I have that this is what my characters would believe or do?
- What other options might my pioneer have, given this time and setting?
- What is my perspective on the historical event that I'm writing about? From what other point of view could I have told this story?
- How accurate or plausible is my story or poem?
- How does my story or poem help others understand the past in ways that other sources do not?

Adapted from The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton. Nelson Education. 2013.

BLM 6—Bio Poem Worksheet

Name of Pioneer: _____

I am _____ (2 special characteristics you have)

I wonder _____ (something you are curious about)

I hear _____ (an imaginary or real sound)

I see _____ (an imaginary or real sight)

I touch _____ (an imaginary or real touch)

I want _____ (an actual desire)

I am _____ (repeat first line)

I face _____ (a barrier or challenge that you face)

I accept the power of _____ (a force or factor that is beyond my control)

I worry _____ (a worry you have)

I seek the help of _____ (a person or people who help you)

I am inspired by _____ (a person or people who inspire you)

I am _____ (repeat first line)

I understand _____ (something you know to be true)

I say _____ (something you believe in)

I dream _____ (something you actually dream about)

I try _____ (something you really make an effort to do)

I am _____ (repeat first line)

Sample

Name of Pioneer: Asayo Murakami

I am a hard worker and a loving mother (2 special characteristics you have)

I wonder what my children will be when they grow up (something you are curious about)

I hear the machines in the cannery churning (an imaginary or real sound)

I see Otokichi in his boat on the Fraser River (an imaginary or real sight)

I touch the fishing nets as I mend them (an imaginary or real touch)

I want to play my violin instead of mending nets (an actual desire)

I am a hard worker and a loving mother (repeat first line)

I face working ten hours a day in the cannery (a barrier or challenge that you face)

I accept the power of the Lord in my life (a force or factor that is beyond my control)

I worry about my two girls I left behind in Japan (a worry you have)

I seek the help of my neighbour to help me with my 8 children (a person or people who help you)

I am inspired by my flower garden (a person or people who inspire you)

I am a hard worker and a loving mother (repeat first line)

I understand that one day life will be easier (something you know to be true)

I say take one day at a time (something you believe in)

I dream of seeing my two girls in Japan one day (something you actually dream about)

I try to forgive myself for leaving them behind (something you really make an effort to do)

I am a hard worker and a loving mother (repeat first line)

Adapted from *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton. Nelson Education. 2013.

BLM 7 – The Hell's Gate Disaster

There once was a time when the Fraser River was filled with salmon. There were so many salmon that the southeast arm of the Fraser River, where Steveston is, became known as Cannery Channel because of its fifteen salmon canneries.

Tall ships once entered the Steveston harbour to load their ships with canned salmon to be shipped to England. The early canning operations employed a cannery crew of 84 – 140 fisherman. These workers represented a multi-ethnic labour force that included First Nations, Chinese, Japanese and European workers who lived on site in company housing. The canneries provided seasonal employment. For many, this was a time to reunite with friends or make some extra income during the busy fishing season.

This way of life was soon to change. In the spring of 1913, the Great Canadian Northern Railway was constructing the railway on the eastern side of the Hell's Gate Canyon. They were blasting rock and debris to make way for the railway tracks and this debris fell into the river. This careless act caused the river to become blocked when the salmon were returning to their traditional spawning grounds. Their passage was blocked and thousands of salmon died without laying their eggs. They were found dead on the riverbanks of the Fraser River.

This accident was made worse by another accident in 1914, when a massive rockslide instantly narrowed the river to the size of a creek. As a result, the Fraser River salmon run was destroyed and by 1921, the recorded catch had fallen to 6% of its original size. Without the salmon, many canneries closed down and some changed their focus to other industries, for example, ship-building. But Steveston was never the same again.

Resources

Field Trips

London Heritage Farm

Please visit their website for current school programs on offer: stevestonheritage.ca.

Britannia Shipyards, National Historic Site

Please visit their website for current school programs on offer: stevestonheritage.ca.

Gulf of Georgia Cannery, National Historic Site

Please visit their website for current school programs on offer: gulfofgeorgiacannery.org.

In-Class

Richmond Museum

Please visit their website for current education kits on offer: richmondmuseum.ca.

References

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Seixas, P. and T. Morton. *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts*. Nelson Education Ltd. (2013).

Photographs

City of Richmond Archives

City of Richmond Artefact Collection

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