

A New Chapter for the Somenos Lake Farm Property

Summer Intern Dayna Obbema from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario has been working on a research project about the Somenos Lake Farm (SLF) Property – which currently houses the B.C. Forest Discovery Centre. The land is also the unceded traditional territory of the S-amuna' and Kwa'mutsun peoples of the Cowichan Valley. With the arrival of the white settlers in the early 1900s, the Valley saw many changes with the increase in farming and agriculture in the region. The first family to take up residence at the farm was Joseph Roy and his sister Elmire Roy. While the holdings of the farm were initially quite small and the land was cultivated mainly for personal consumption, the arrival of the Windeyer family in the mid 1930s, (Guy Stanley and Irene Noel Windeyer), brought with them further changes to the SLF. After trying their hand at dairy farming, the Windeyer's saw better success from produce-farming as well as the farm stand that was originally located on the side of the Trans Canada highway near the current Ranger Station exhibit.



The farm stand is pictured behind the trailer. To the right, the sign for the farm can be seen. Photo taken at the Windeyer's farm on Somenos Lake. (c. 1968-69). 1990.960.042.

At the farm stand, Irene sold organically grown produce, homemade jellies, jams, breads, and other baked goods. The stand permanently closed in 1975 when the land was purchased by the BC Forest Museum (now called the BC Forest Discovery Centre). Currently, Dayna is working on writing a book about the farming years on the property that will eventually be available for

purchase in the museum giftshop. There is, however, much information still missing. So far Dayna has located the following objects within the museum collection:



A business card from the Windeyer's Somenos Lake Farm stand. (c. 1960s). 1990.980.002.



An envelope with the Windeyer's address for the Somenos Lake Farm stand. The business card was found inside of this envelope. (c.1960s). 1990.980.001.

In addition to these objects, Dayna is also working with a historical report written in the 1990s covering the some of the history of the Somenos Lake Farm. Unfortunately, much of the resources in the report are from interviews with those who have passed, and so far, we have been unable to locate transcripts or recordings.

Dayna is looking for information and resources on the following topics:

- Are there any of Irene Windeyer's original recipes from the farm stand available?
- Does anyone have information on changes to the farm throughout the years? What buildings were added or removed?

- What other connections to the region of the Cowichan Valley did the farm have over the years? Does anyone remember going to the farm stand?
- Are there any photos of the stand or the farm as it was between 1950-1975?
- We would also be interested in seeing any newspaper clippings or articles about the farm from the 1900s
- Any personal stories or connections to the farm would also be useful and interviews could be arranged

About Dayna:

Dayna grew up in London, Ontario and attended Western University for her undergraduate degree in Art History & Museum Studies, and French Translation. After taking a year off from school to travel Europe, she started her master's degree in Art History at Queen's University. Her thesis research is centred around how museums can be made more sustainable and environmentally conscious. Between temporary exhibitions, office work, conservation initiatives, and public events, museums generate a lot of waste. Her research asks, what barriers are preventing museums from taking on sustainable practices? What steps are museums currently undertaking to reduce their impact on the environment? Once her degree is completed, Dayna's goal is to become a sustainability consultant for the arts and culture sector across Canada. In her spare time, Dayna enjoys reading, hiking, running, and baking.

Contact information:

If you have any information on any of the topics listed above, or have questions about the project, please contact Dayna via email at 19dco2@queensu.ca.

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