

THE NELSON MUSEUM

402 ANDERSON STREET, A HISTORY

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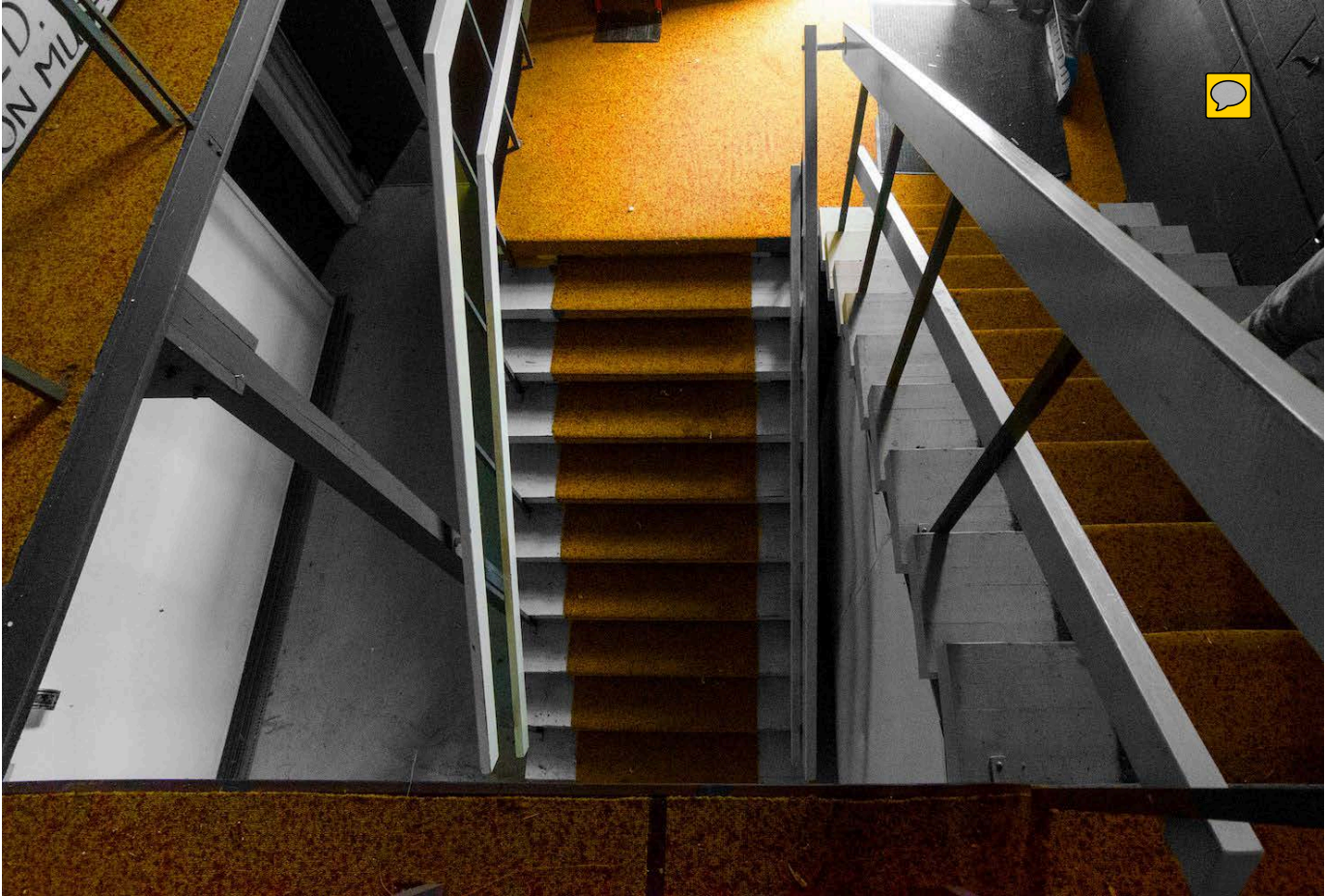
Touchstones Nelson:
Museum of Art and History

502 Vernon Street
Nelson, BC V1L 4E7

www.touchstonesnelson.ca

For Shawn,
for building this community.





402 Anderson Street Stairs to the exhibit.



Foreword

The *402 Anderson St: A History* exhibition is an opportunity to reconsider our past in order to understand how it has shaped our present and future directions—not only for the Museum, but for the community as a whole.

The Nelson and District Museum, Archives, Art Gallery and Historical Society has undergone many evolutions since its inception in 1955. Our 402 Anderson Street location speaks to an important step forward in community, municipal and provincial support, incredible growth, expansion into the realms of art, continued criticality, and crucial historical research and preservation. It is a time in our history that deserves great admiration.

The 402 Anderson Street era is not tied solely to the building. Once the building is demolished, the history, the legacy and the individuals who have created the fabric of the Museum will forever influence and inspire us.

This exhibition and catalogue serve to honour some of the many individuals who have made this organization an incredible cultural hub today. Thank you to our community, staff, volunteers, members, Board, and donors who continue to support the incredible and important work of Nelson's museum, archives and art gallery.

Astrid Heyerdahl
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Introduction

In the spring of 2000, having completed my first year of arts school I approached Shawn hoping that she may know of a job opening that complimented my new career path. Having worked in the forest industry during one of the biggest downturns I was lucky enough to be eligible for retraining funding and allowed myself to dream as big as I could imagine. Little did I know that this retraining would bring me to the Nelson Museum and Shawn would become one of the most important people that I have been lucky enough to know and work with. I started as a summer student working on accessioning artifacts, hanging gallery shows and as the years went by and my confidence grew, I began

scheduling the artists, writing publicity and designing publications. I was able, under Shawn's guidance, to take on new and very different projects that I had only dreamed of when I worked in the bush. Shawn had a gift of bringing out the hidden talents of the people around her and it was usually a very eclectic group that she attracted. From writers to students, to researchers looking for a needle in the haystack of the archives, most left the museum with what they needed and if not, the promise that their request would not go unpursued.

The museum building at 402 Anderson at times left much to be desired for space, lighting, warmth and air quality but all of

its flaws were workable with Shawn at the helm. The money was tight, many supplies came from Shawn's visits to the Sally Ann, but we always had tea and a cookie in the afternoon, a chance to talk about what was happening for everyone, employee, volunteer and visitors as well.

The main museum display was a maze of interesting items and information. Packed into the display space was everything from a chip off of the Berlin Wall to stuffed birds, to early gas-powered irons to a diorama depicting Henry Stevenson's inspiration for jumping out of a tree with his mother's bed sheet and breaking his arm. Every space that was not a display was utilized as storage. Neatly tucked away in every corner and crevice were archival documents, artifacts, photographs and sometimes, office supplies. In the basement, the

washrooms housed the textile collection, the Ladybird room doubled as storage for the extra copies of the newspapers. The Mildred Erb Gallery had challenges as well although it was the one room that had a single purpose. Being that it was in a cinderblock building, hanging rails had to be installed along each wall, which added to the visual clutter. The heater hanging from the ceiling did not add to the ambiance and the lighting was also a challenge. Years of adjusting and re-adjusting the old metal light covers stripped the thumb screws of all usefulness which resulted in inventive and creative ways to secure the light to shine on the artwork displayed. But that was part of the charm, once you set foot inside, it was hard to leave.

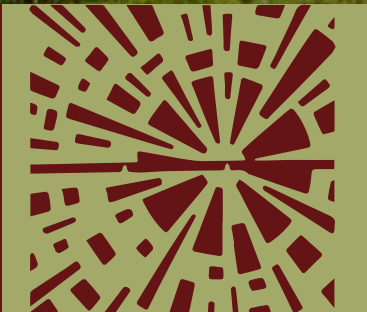
Knowing that the day is coming that the building is no longer part of the Nelson



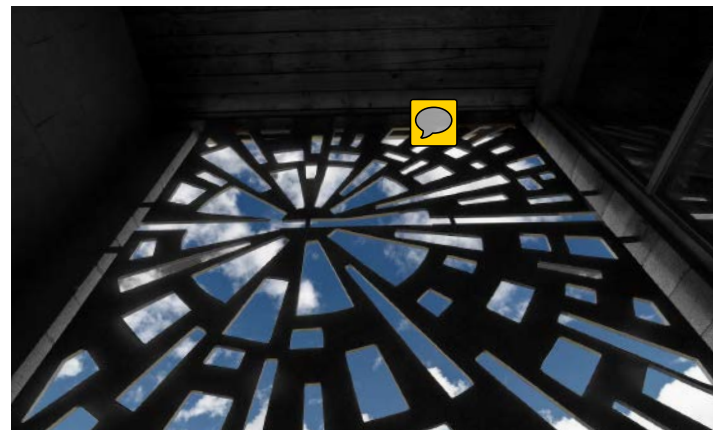
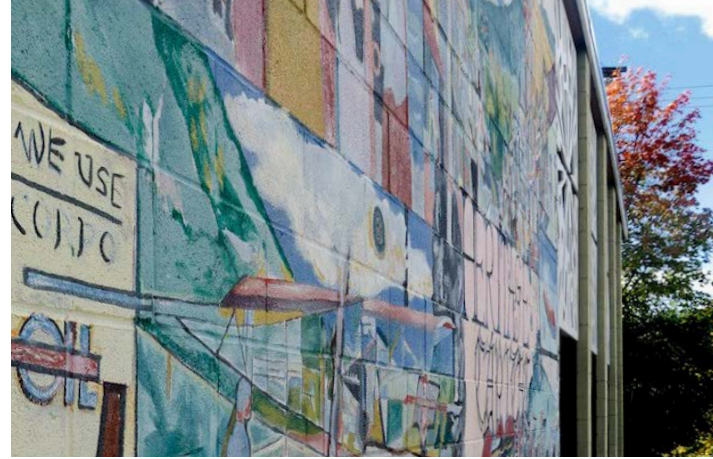
and District Museum Archives, Art Gallery and Historical Society is bittersweet. The new home for the Society and collection provides all of the things the old building wasn't able to do. But the heart of the museum remains. The legacy of 402 Anderson will live on in all of the dedicated members, volunteers and staff who continue to provide inspiration, spark imaginations and answer questions that you never thought could be answered.







THE BUILDING





The Nelson Museum began with the incorporation of the Kootenay Museum Association in 1955, spearheaded by its dynamic first president, Mrs. Mildred Erb. Members of the Nelson Art Club joined with members of the Nelson Oldtimers' Association and others of historical bent to obtain and operate a building in which to exhibit local and traveling art shows, and historical materials of the Kootenays.



From 1956 until 1960 the museum occupied space in the former federal Post Office, the current home to the Society. It moved to the former Kansas City House brothel on Lake Street when the City of Nelson decided to convert the Post Office into City Hall in 1960.

In 1971, a new museum was selected as Nelson’s project to honor the province’s 110th birthday funded by federal, provincial and local grants. There was some reluctance to take on the large task of moving the entire museum collection, but the attraction of a permanent fire-proof and humidity controlled building with workshop and storage space, as well as security for the collection, proved stronger. Nelson’s centennial project became the construction of a museum building.

The original plan, which called for two main display areas, had to be modified because of funding limitations. Built and finished with significant volunteer labour and community support, the substantial building that was finally erected, had only one main display room.

In 1974, 402 Anderson opened. The museum had just become acclimatized to its new home when the heritage restorations of Nelson began, and the steady stream of inquires about the historic buildings, people, boats, waterfront, and industries of old Nelson kept museum staff busy. The museum began year-round operation in 1984 when Shawn Lamb was hired as project director, becoming the first full time Director in 1997.

1931 Formation of the Nelson and District Oldtimers Association – J Fred Hume first President.

1932 Oldtimers Association begin to display historical exhibitions in store windows for annual Fall Fairs and Nelson’s 1947 Jubilee celebrations.

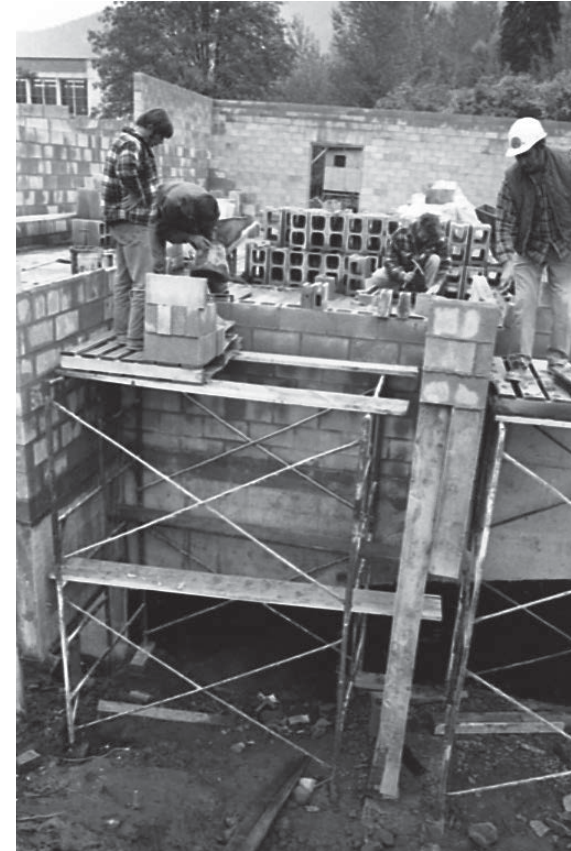
1940 Nelson Art Club formed, sponsoring local and traveling exhibits, while looking for a permanent display space.

1955 Kootenay Museum Association formed by the Nelson Art Club and locals interested in establishing a facility to display fine art and history in Nelson. Mildred Erb first President.



In 1991, the Board of Directors began actively seeking a centrally located, larger, and more suitable premises. It took until 2003, following a tragic fire that resulted in the loss of a major artifact and extensive damage to the building and collection, for that to happen.

LEFT: Nelson Museum at it's Lake Street Location.
RIGHT: 402 under construction.



1955 Temporary Museum display space provided in the Post Office (current location of Touchstones Nelson). Burnie Fetterley President, Alan Ramsden Secretary and Doreen Irving, Treasurer.



1960 Nelson Museum is relocated to the former Kansas City House Brothel on Lake Street after the City of Nelson takes over 502 Vernon as City Hall. Larger display space allows major artifacts to be displayed.

1961 Kootenay Museum Association hosts the BC Museum Association Conference Mr. Fetterley serves as President of the BCMA.



THE FIRE

Late on the pleasant Sunday afternoon of May 4, 2003, young Rami Touffaha glanced up from his workplace at the counter of the Shell Station kitty – corner from the Nelson Museum at 402 Anderson St. Smoke was rising from the back of the cinderblock building. Rami double-checked what he thought he saw and dialed 911. Within five minutes, on-duty fireman Jack Chambers and a truck were on-site. Assessing the situation, Chambers called for backup.

Meanwhile, with the assistance of two neighbourhood boys, Chambers already had water on the spreading flames. Soon professional reinforcements were on hand to tackle the growing blaze and prevent the fire from engulfing the Museum and its precious contents. When the fire

1968 The Ladybird speed boat acquired by the Nelson Museum

1971 The Museum is chosen as Nelson's BC Centennial of Confederation with Canada Project. The project is to be funded through federal, provincial and local grants. A significant amount of volunteer effort constructs the building and finishes the interior.



progressed to the roof of the main building, Fire Chief Ron Stubbs directed his crew into the dark, smoky interior. They spread tarps over as many display cases and artifacts as possible. The firefighters then broke into the roof to assess the penetration of the flames and smoke... all the while directing water onto the fire and battling to bring the flames under control.

Within an hour of the conflagration Nelson's fire brigade had exterior flames under control. However, the City and the citizens were left with the charred remains of several priceless, historic boats that had been outside the building. Inside, irreplaceable artifacts suffered serious smoke and possible water damage.

When the embers cooled, the sobre-faced Directors gathered at a member's home. A Restoration company representative and

the City's insurance adjuster outlined a 30-day relocation of inventory and decontamination program was devised. Every piece of paper, fabric, film and furnishing was to be examined and restored. The building would be repaired, cleaned and painted. A Re-Opening Day was set for August and the theme "Forward to the Past" was adopted to advertise the Society's determination to stay in business.

A talented team of artists, Byron Johnstad, Peter Bartl, Jane Merks and Nicole Tremblay put together a powerful visual and written representation of the events of that pleasant Sunday afternoon in May 2003.

Source: Frances Welwood

1974 Kootenay Museum Association moves into the newly completed building at 402 Anderson Street. The museum is open in the summer with occasional programs in the winter months.

1980 Society name changes to Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society.

1984 Burnie Fetterley retires, Alan Ramsden becomes President of the Board.

1984 David Thompson University Centre and Kootenay School of the Art Gallery closes. Year-round operation begins, Shawn Lamb hired as Project Director.

1984 Temporary exhibit space opens in lower floor of 402 Anderson. Regular exhibitions of art and history begin.



LEFT: 402 under construction.

RIGHT: L.X. Forde creating the iconic mural.

1986 Special exhibit created on the Silver King Mine on its 100th anniversary.

1986 **The Silver King** by Helen Lee published to accompany the exhibit.

1987 Kootenaiana Archival fonds from the David Thompson University Center Library transferred to the Nelson Museum by Ron Welwood.

1987 Nelson Daily News column on historical subjects begins, runs for ten years.

1987 Mural depicting Nelson's firsts, researched and painted on the outside of 402 by artist L.X. Forde to honour Nelson's 90th birthday.



REMEMBERING THE MILDRED ERB GALLERY

The Mildred Erb Gallery had a specific smell of mustiness, an accumulation of dust and artifacts. Some six or so rowing sculls and the Ladybird speedboat almost reached into the gallery space and the ceiling was very low. Lighting—are you kidding me?—no luxury like that. Yes, for sure there were some track lights, and our exhibition committee used them to the best of our abilities. But hey, it was a space to exhibit art in a town, which 20 years ago had just this one room in the basement of 402 Anderson Street as the public art gallery space.

We exhibited art and craft and exhibitions that changed every four to six weeks or so. We wrote curatorial statements and we were ambitious, wanting to make the

best with what we had in a space that was squeezed between two rooms with a staircase coming right into it and measuring less than 200 square feet. The Mildred Erb Gallery gave artists an opportunity to exhibit and connect, and that was of utmost importance to building the artistic community in Nelson. We had tons of fun with the exhibitions and over several years many artists exhibited there such as Bridget Corkery (cerra-colla), David Eustace (“Frozen Book” and video), Jane Merks and Peter Bartl (typographic art and design), Art Joyce (masks and poetry), and painters Miroslav Gabriel, John Cooper, Boujke Elzinga, Peter Velisek, Alf Crossley, and Lx Forde, to name a few.

I recall that we paid a very, very small honorarium to the artists. Money was tight and there were no big grants from



1987 Museum display room named to honour W.A. Fetterley and gallery space named to honour Mildred Erb.

1987 Ladybird room opens to showcase restored historic speedboat.



the Columbia Basin Trust/Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance yet. Shawn Lamb, the director of the Nelson and District Museum, Archives, Art Gallery and Historical Society (MAAG) was excellent in stretching every dollar to its max.

And yes, we always had food at the openings, and a speech and artist's talk. We squeezed the food table between the rowing sculls and the artifacts and all leftovers went home with whoever was in need of food (there was always someone who needed it). Anne DeGrace was working for the Express newspaper back then and she would always review the exhibitions.

Building the arts community and introducing audiences to art was important if we wanted Nelson City Councillors and the City administration to consider the arts as an essential part of community health,

not unlike recreation and hockey. It took several years and a lot of effort for the arts sector to eventually become the fourth pillar in City planning documents. A few years, two referenda and an Economic Impact Study on the Arts in Nelson later the City offered the former City Hall, now Touchstones Museum of Art and History, to the arts to build a combined art gallery, archives and museum facility. The arts community also worked towards the establishment of the City's Cultural Development Committee, a round table of arts administrators and artists that works to ensure that the arts are integral to life in Nelson.

—*Stephanie Fischer, 2018*

Founding member of the Nelson Public Art Gallery Committee, Board Director, Chair of Joint Building Committee, Steering committee member, Project Manager, Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History: Planning, Construction and Relocation, Cultural Development Initiative for the Arts, Culture & Heritage Sector Steering Committee member: only a sample of the many roles Stephanie has played within the Society over the last 20+ years.



LEFT: Shawn Lamb and Steph Fischer at a donor recognition event during the Touchstones relocation.



TOP RIGHT: Brent Bukowsky's Invasive Species Exhibit at the Mildred Erb Gallery.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Bouke Elziga prepping a gallery show.

1988 *Sports History of Nelson* off-site exhibit opens in conjunction with Nelson hosting the BC Winter Games. Exhibition curated by Fran Wallis and Barbara Brown.

1988 *Nelson: The Beginnings* opens in preparation for John Norris' research of Nelson's early history. Exhibition curated by Shawn Lamb and Karen Rymal.

1990 *Women of Nelson: 1880 – 1950* off site exhibit opens. Curated by Brenda Hornby and Yvonne Munro.

1992 *M.V. Amabilis II* acquired by the Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society for restoration





THE COLLECTION





The people, communities and histories of a place are often reflected through the collection of objects at a local museum. At the time that the Nelson Museum's collection expanded, it was common among most small museums to take in just about everything and anything. This resulted in a broad and eclectic array of objects donated from the people who lived here and who continue to call Nelson home.

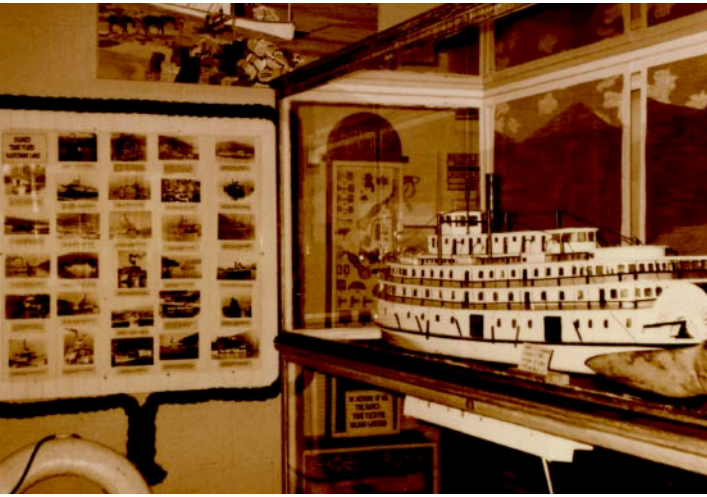
TOP: Panorama of the parlour exhibit.

BOTTOM 

LEFT: Newspapers drying after a spring flood in the Mildred Erb Gallery,

CENTER: Archive collection.

RIGHT: Fruit Ranching exhibit from the collection.



1991 *Following the Muse: History of Arts in Nelson* off-site exhibit opens. Exhibition curated by Nicola Harwood and Sandra Hartline.

1992 *Moccasins to Michelins: History of Roads and Road Transportation* off-site exhibit opens. Exhibition curated by Ron Butler and Alex Forde. Models by Bert Learmonth.

1992 Shaw Cable monthly TV series *Turning back the Clock* hosted by Shawn Lamb begins, runs for 5 years.

1992 M.V. Amabilis II arrives at the Nelson Museum for restoration.



After the fire the collection was transported across town to be cleaned. The elaborate display from the W.A Fetterly Room barely fit into the temporary space, a testament to the skill of the curators to fit as much as possible into the museum.

The exhibit space at 402 Anderson Street was filled with these objects. It included everything you could imagine — stuffed birds, dried leaves of native plants, rocks from all over the place, a collection of dolls that were dressed in period costumes (dating back to medieval times so long before they would have any relevance to Nelson). The motorcycle that was on display for years, even though it didn't belong to the society or have any connection to Nelson, was cool and people gravitated towards it.

Objects in the collection include items documenting everyday life from the beginning of the resource development

of the area such as Silver King assay balance scales (1970.029.004) to childhood toys (Roberta Susan doll from 1885 1960.021.001) to household tools (Handmade bucksaw 1992.094.010) and beyond. The size of the objects in the collection range from so small it was hard to inscribe the catalogue number on it, to large enough they needed a separate building (the MV Amabilis and Ladybird speedboat).

The Nelson Museum became the home to two large boats that had vastly different uses and designs, both impacted the society in deep ways.

1994 West Kootenay Forest History Project adopted resulting in three publications from oral history transcripts: *A Life in the Woods* edited by Peter Chapman (Vol. 1) and Joel Russ (Vol. 2 & 3).

1994 *Nelson: A History in Pictures* edited by Shawn Lamb and published by Nelson Daily News.

1994 Boatshed built of the M.V. Amabilis II behind the museum building.

1994 *Winging It: History of Aviation in and Around Nelson B.C.* off-site exhibit opens. Curated by Henry Stevenson with Judy Mulloy.



THE LADYBIRD SPEEDBOAT

Built in 1922 by Bert Walton at Walton Boat Works, she was known as the “Speed Queen of Kootenay Lake”. Commissioned by Louis Gilbert, a proprietor of a local barbershop, the Ladybird is based on the speedboat design of American marine architect John Hacker, spanning 26 feet in length with a seven foot eight inch beam. In 1922 the Ladybird began racing winning the 20 mile race at the annual Kootenay Lake regatta eight times before earning the silver Patenaude Shield permanently in 1934. Retiring in 1966 after racing for

over 30 years, the speedboat was then donated to the Nelson Museum in 1968.

With the assistance of donors, the B.C. Heritage Trust, and various government employment programs, the Society was able to undertake a restoration project from 1986 to 1987. A team lead by marine mechanic Kenneth J. White worked to disassemble, scrub, and restore the Ladybird to the sleek state she is in today. Evocative of a legendary period in Nelson’s history, the Ladybird is a truly valued artifact held by the Society.

The Ladybird, in it’s prime, and mid-restoration.





MV AMABILIS II

One of the last surviving wooden work boats of Kootenay Lake, the MV Amabilis II was a 40-foot V-bottomed launch built in 1928 for the Forest Service. Among her duties on Kootenay Lake were freighting of equipment and men for firefighting, timber-cruising and construction, delivering hatchery fish, and rescuing stranded travelers and needy settlers around Kootenay Lake. She could carry 20 men and their gear as day passengers on the decks and in the cabin. In 1954 the Amabilis II was retired and then sold to a series of private owners.

The MV Amabilis II was an important artifact which recalled the days before expanded road building and helicopters changed how forestry crews were transported into the mountains around

1995 *Historic Nelson: the Early Years* Vol. 1 by John Norris launched and sponsored by both the City of Nelson and Nelson Museum.


1995 *Loggers, Mill Owners and Communities: Forest History* travelling exhibition curated by Charles Jeanes.



Kootenay Lake. She was also important in the history of many small communities around Kootenay Lake because of her community service under both public and private ownership.

On May 4, 2003 a fire started in the shed housing the MV Amabilis II behind the museum destroying the boat and catching the roof of the museum building on fire. At that time the ship was well on its way to becoming a major artifact for the museum's West Kootenay Forest History Project.

More than \$100,000 worth of funding for the restoration and interpretive work had been put into the M.V Amabilis II. Under shipwright Dick Pollard, a standard of excellence had been set from the first survey of the ship when it was donated to the last nail hammered into it before the fire. It was a significant loss to the Society and the history of forestry in the region.

TIMELINE Centennial  *Nelson Photographers 1850–1950* curated by Fred Rosenberg at the Nelson Centennial Gallery on Baker Street.
Deanne Monroe, Director.



1995 Community Archives Task Force reports on the conservation and condition of local archival heritage held by public institutions and the Museum. Coordinator/ Archivist: Annie Lowrey.

1996 Restoration of the Hull of the M.V. Amabilis II Project manager: Dick Pollard with Bruce Bate, Micah Dance and Patrick Hermary.

1997 *Celebrating the Century a Nelson Centennial exhibition* curated by Shawn Lamb.

1997 *A Perfect Childhood: 100 Years of Heritage Homes in Nelson, B.C.* by Sean Arthur Joyce Nelson Centennial Publications.



LEFT: MV Amabilis II
with crew.

RIGHT: Dick Pollard
works to restore the
Amabilis.



1997 *100 Days, 100 Years*,
by Shawn Lamb,
published with the
Nelson Daily News.

1997 *100 Artists for 100 Years* a celebration of local and
regional artists at Nelson Centennial Gallery, Baker Street
sponsored by the Nelson and District Arts Council and
the Nelson Museum. Foundation for the establishment of
the Nelson Public Art Gallery Committee.

1997 Society hosts B.C. Historical Federation
Annual Conference in Nelson. Partial
operating funding from the City of Nelson
enables the Kootenay Museum Association
and Historical Society to hire Shawn Lamb
as its first full-time Director.



THE PEOPLE



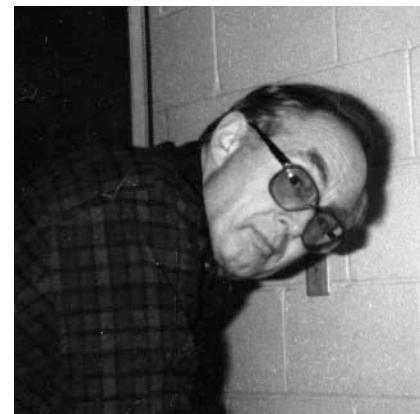
ALAN RAMSDEN

One of the founding members of the Society in 1955, Alan continues to be an active and regular visitor to the Museum to this day. From his role as president, board member, advisor and committee member, his influence is hard to miss. From smaller tasks such as collecting the mail and rescuing frightened and tearful summer students who had set off the alarm, to negotiating land deals and funding contracts, his service to the Society has been unmatched. Alan has seen the museum transform from a temporary exhibit space, through many bumpy and unpredictable years (some of them quite exciting and not always in a good way), through three major facility moves to where it is today. The collection and archives are now home to many of his and his family's memories ensuring that his legacy of devotion to the Society remains.

ANNIE LOWREY

Annie worked as an archive consultant for the Museum and many other archives in the Kootenays for 5 years, arriving in Nelson in 1994. There was no job available at the Nelson Museum, so she funded her own projects by writing grants and finding matching/in-kind donations from local businesses. She also had projects with the Ministry of Forests' Innovative Forests Projects, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, Selkirk College Archives, Greenwood Museum, Rossland Museum, Kootenay Lake Historical Society and the New Denver/Silverton Archives.

"The years I spent working in the Nelson Museum archives proved to be a fertile training ground for my career as an information architect and management consultant in Ottawa. I absolutely loved the archives, and the Kootenay history we helped showcase and promote during my time there."





Alan Ramsden, 1998



BURT LEARMONTH

A meticulous model builder, the North Shore Willow Point resident created some of the most creative items in the Society's collection. Ranging from models of sternwheelers that he recalled from his childhood, to the first hydroelectric plant on Cottonwood Creek and the HMS Formidable aircraft carrier, his models were carefully researched and executed.

BURNIE FETTERLEY

Burnie Fetterley's 27-year association with the Nelson Museum began when Mildred Erb of the Nelson Art Club invited him to join the club's board of directors. He had investigated archeological and historic sites throughout the area since moving to the area in the 1930s. The club

hoped his influence might help them obtain a permanent home for exhibitions of artistic and historical interest.

Fetterley joined the art club, which later became the museum association, and was elected president in 1958 and held office until 1982. He served as museum curator, an unpaid position, for 25 years. The Nelson Museum's main collection area was ~~been~~ named the W.A. Fetterley Room, and he was given the freedom of the city and the title Curator Emeritus for all of his years of service to the Society.



ABOVE: Burnie Fetterley.

LEFT: From left to right: Henry Stevenson, Burt Learmonth, Shawn Lamb, Judy Mulloy




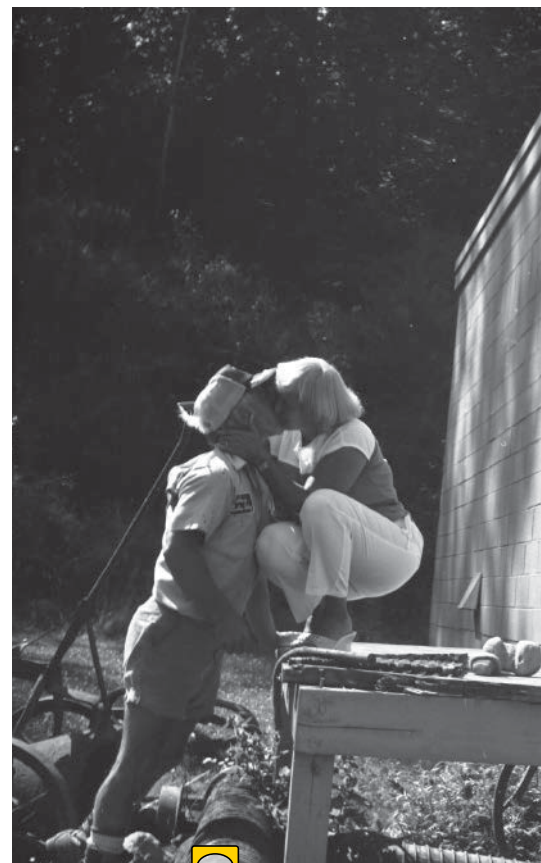
1998 Restoration of the cabin and deck of the M.V. Amabilis II: Dick Pollard, shipwright, Annie Lowrey, researcher.

1998 Nelson component for Canadian Museum of Rail Travel's Crowsnest Rail Line Centennial Exhibition, Katie Livingston, curator, model of C.P.R. Transfer Warf by Bert Learmonth.



DOREEN IRVING

Doreen received the honour of a Lifetime Membership following her many decades as a Board member, volunteer, book-keeper and staff. She  treasurer on the board and began working with Shawn in 1984 in an effort to keep the museum open year-round.



 Doreen and her Husband.

1998 Nelson Public Art Gallery Committee begins to organize a public art gallery exhibition in the Mildred Erb Gallery. The organizing committee; Pauline Dupas, Byron Johnstad, Carol Reynolds, Stephanie Fischer, Deanne Monroe, Gene Leavitt, Brenda Hornby, and others, adjudicated artwork of ten artists per year. Staff over the years: Amber Bear-Robe, Gail Green, Julie Castonguay and Nicole Tremblay.

1998 Arrangements and Description of the Stanley G. Triggs, Kootenay School of the Arts (to 1984) and the N.D.U. Fonds by archivist Anne Lowrey, assistant Lisa Tremblay.

2000 Stewart Enderton, Board of Directors President

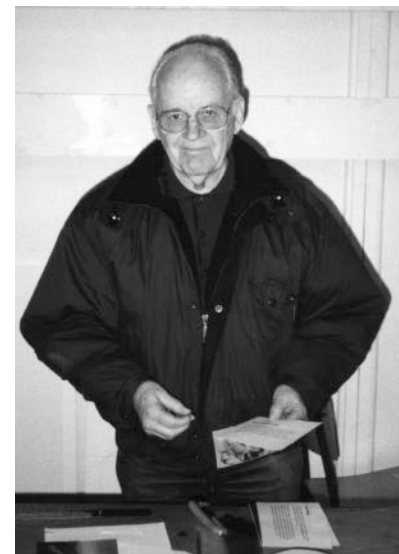


GREG SCOTT

Under the guidance of Shawn Lamb, beginning in 1998, Greg Scott began combing through the newspapers for information on the WWI 54th Battalion as a way to fulfill his father’s advice to find an avocation in retirement. This avocation has evolved into numerous volunteer jobs, including a monthly newspaper article on what people in Nelson were doing in the last century, outreach to seniors’ groups, heritage house tours and the 2017 Nelson Heritage Award.

HENRY STEVENSON

With a twinkle in his eye, Henry would recount one the many daring stories from his youth over afternoon and so would begin one of the highlights of a museum visit. A long-time volunteer, board member and researcher, Henry’s additions to the archives are of continued value. His gift for storytelling and his passion for preserving the history of Nelson made him a superstar at the museum. His knowledge of the Nelson area was diverse and he covered topics as varied as the Nelson Cemetery, early city businesses, early outdoor recreational activities to the wild tales of his childhood adventures.



2000 Name changed to the Nelson & District Museum, Archives, Art Gallery and Historical Society.

2000 Research assistance for the Nelson Millennium Mural by Brian McLachlan.

2001 Restoration of the M. V. Amabilis II pilothouse, Dick Pollard, Shipwright.

2001 Referendum for Community Complex including new Museum, Archives and Art Gallery defeated.



MILDRED ERB

Mildred Erb was the first president of the Kootenay Museum Association. It was formed in 1955 with the goal of finding a permanent home for exhibits of artistic and historical interest. She was a member of the Nelson Art Club, on the executive board of the Nelson Summer School of Fine Arts, a patron of the Nelson Overture Concert Association and a collector of local emerging and established artists. The exhibition gallery was named in her honor in 1985.



RON AND FRANCES WELWOOD

The Welwood's have supported the museum for over 30 years, with the transfer of the Kootenaian fond from DTUC in 1984 by Ron, and Frances serving as a

Board member for 20 years. It continues to this day with committee work, volunteer positions and outreach for the Society resulting in a commendation from the City of Nelson for their many years of support.

SEAN ARTHUR JOYCE

"I started my *Heritage Beat* column for the *Nelson Daily News* in March 1996 so naturally that was when I started showing up on a regular basis at the old Nelson Museum location on Anderson Street. I remember thinking every time I drove or walked up there what a striking building it was with the quasi-psychedelic die-cut wood panels and the mural painted by Alex Forde, a.k.a. 'L.X.' Forde. It redeemed what otherwise might have been a drab, ugly cinderblock structure, even though the exterior decorations gradually became

2002 *Painting our Past* exhibition curated by Shelly Anderson with Debra Bakowsky, Byron Johnstad and many volunteers.

2002 *Discovered* exhibition curated by Debra Bakowsky held at Procter's Storytelling Festival, and at downtown location including new Bert Learmonth model of Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray V.C.'s ship.

2002 Map, glass plate negatives and fine art collection restoration, documentation and storage upgrade project.



more and more dated. Unfortunately it was always a cold place to work thanks to that style of construction, but Shawn’s presence was a ray of sunshine any time you walked through those doors. No matter what she was doing, she always took time to stop and help you out with your inquiries. In five years of writing *Heritage Beat*, I must have spent thousands of hours doing research downstairs in the room next to where the Ladybird speedboat was kept for so many years, poring over the yellowing pages of old newspapers hunting for clues. I remember the photocopier being one of our most used tools—it was almost never silent.

I made it a policy from the beginning of my research to share anything interesting I discovered with Shawn, and to keep files on a wide range of topics not necessarily

related to my column. It was always exciting to discover some new fact about Nelson or West Kootenay history that way. Some of this material was used for the sidebars in my book *Hanging Fire and Heavy Horses*.

Shawn often kept us ‘strays’ going with odd jobs. Living on a reporter’s income is tough at the best of times and there were many weeks I had no money and not much food in my fridge. All I had to do was tell Shawn that and within an hour she’d have cooked up some odd job I could do for a few hours’ pay—raking leaves, collating files, cleaning, whatever. Enough to walk down the road to the Safeway and buy a bag of groceries.

—Sean Arthur Joyce

2003 May 4th, fire destroys M.V. Amabilis II, boat shed, and other boats as well as damage to the museum building. Museum is closed for three months, artifacts removed, cleaned, and building repaired.

2003 August 17 reopened with *Forward to the Past* exhibitions curated by Byron Johnstad, Nicole Tremblay, Peter Bartl and Jane Merks. W.A. Fetterley exhibit space drastically reduced as cleaned and boxed artifacts take up majority of the exhibit room. The Mildred Erb Gallery remains open.

2003 Virtual Museum of the Kootenays launched to provide historical outreach to the public after the partial closure of the W.A. Fetterley Exhibition Room. Developed by Alistair Fraser and Nicole Tremblay.



LEFT: Sean Arthur Joyce at a museum Christmas party.

RIGHT: Shawn enjoying a cup of tea with one of the quieter museum guests (1985).



2003 October, successful RDCK referendum for new leisure facilities. Nelson Museum, Archives and Art Gallery (MAAG) will move to 502 Vernon Street when City Hall moves to an alternate site.

2004 Don Lyon, Board of Directors President.

2004 1st Annual Nelson & District Heritage Fair held at Chahko Mika Mall for Nelson and Area students' grades 4-7. Judy MacPherson, Coordinator with jurors Eileen D. Pearkes, Linda Hoffmann, Al Lynas, Cathy Speirs, Guest artist Ron Mulvey and volunteers.



SHAWN LAMB

Shawn started her career with the Nelson Museum in 1984 as project director following the closure of the David Thompson University Centre. Growing up in Nelson, she was involved in the arts from an early age. She volunteered as a young mother on various boards and committees, cementing her understanding and knowledge of the arts community before starting at the Nelson Museum.

Shawn’s kindness and determination to stretch the limited funds as far and as broadly as possible are legendary. Summer students blossomed under her watch, as she found the talents brimming under the surface and found roles that would bring the confidence needed for

next steps in their career. Many consider Shawn a mentor, with her willingness to share resources and time with those asking question after question was generous especially when it would stretch her days to late hours.

The move to the new building and the change of roles from Director to Collections Manager once Leah Best was hired in 2005, allowed Shawn time to spend with the volunteers in the archives, answering questions and finishing projects that there was never enough time for in the past.

The archives in the new building are named for Shawn, a tribute following her years of dedication and service to the Society, but her legacy and that of

2004 Museum Artifact Documentation and Storage Upgrade Project begins. Staff: Jim Yule, Maureen McEwen with Shirley Reimer, Janet Mulloy, Heidi De Guglielmo, Daniel Trobak, Caitlin O’Connell and Nicole Tremblay.

2004 Stephanie Fischer hired as Project Manager for MAAG transition process. Planning process for move to 502 Vernon Street begins.

2004 Public ‘Open Houses’ held on Baker Street and at the Chahko Mika Mall showcasing the new cultural facility.



the those who came before her, is bigger than a room. Supporting researchers to find their elusive documents or photos, sometimes hanging onto a tidbit of a research request for years until the puzzle was solved. Helping people adjusting to new realities of retirement or a change in employment by finding jobs and tasks for them to do. Many have been touched by the gift that Shawn has for bringing out the best in people. The legacy of 402 Anderson for some is not a building but a feeling of community.



2005 Society holds very successful 'Empty house/Open House' event at 502 Vernon before interior demolition begins.

2005 Executive Director, Leah Best, hired July, 2005. Shawn Lamb becomes Collections Manager.

2005 Society launches *The Silver King – from Discovery to Community*, a Community Memories, Virtual Museum of Canada Exhibit.

2005 50th Anniversary of the MAAG Society celebrated on November 5th at the Hume Hotel.



THE MOTHER SUPERIOR OF THE NELSON MUSEUM

Eminently capable, she kept the museum running on a thin thread and God knows how many grant applications. But what really impressed me was her kindness. I've never seen anyone so gently, generously in charge of anything.

She was Our Lady of Compassion, who could always be counted on for a little extra yard work to keep us young working men and women in groceries or cat food. With a mind for exactly the right historical clue, Shawn could be relied on to guide

me through every research quandary. I was lucky enough to have her as editor for my first book of Kootenay history, *A Perfect Childhood*. She was the ideal collaborator—astute, precise, and with a heart as big as Elephant Mountain.

—Sean Arthur Joyce

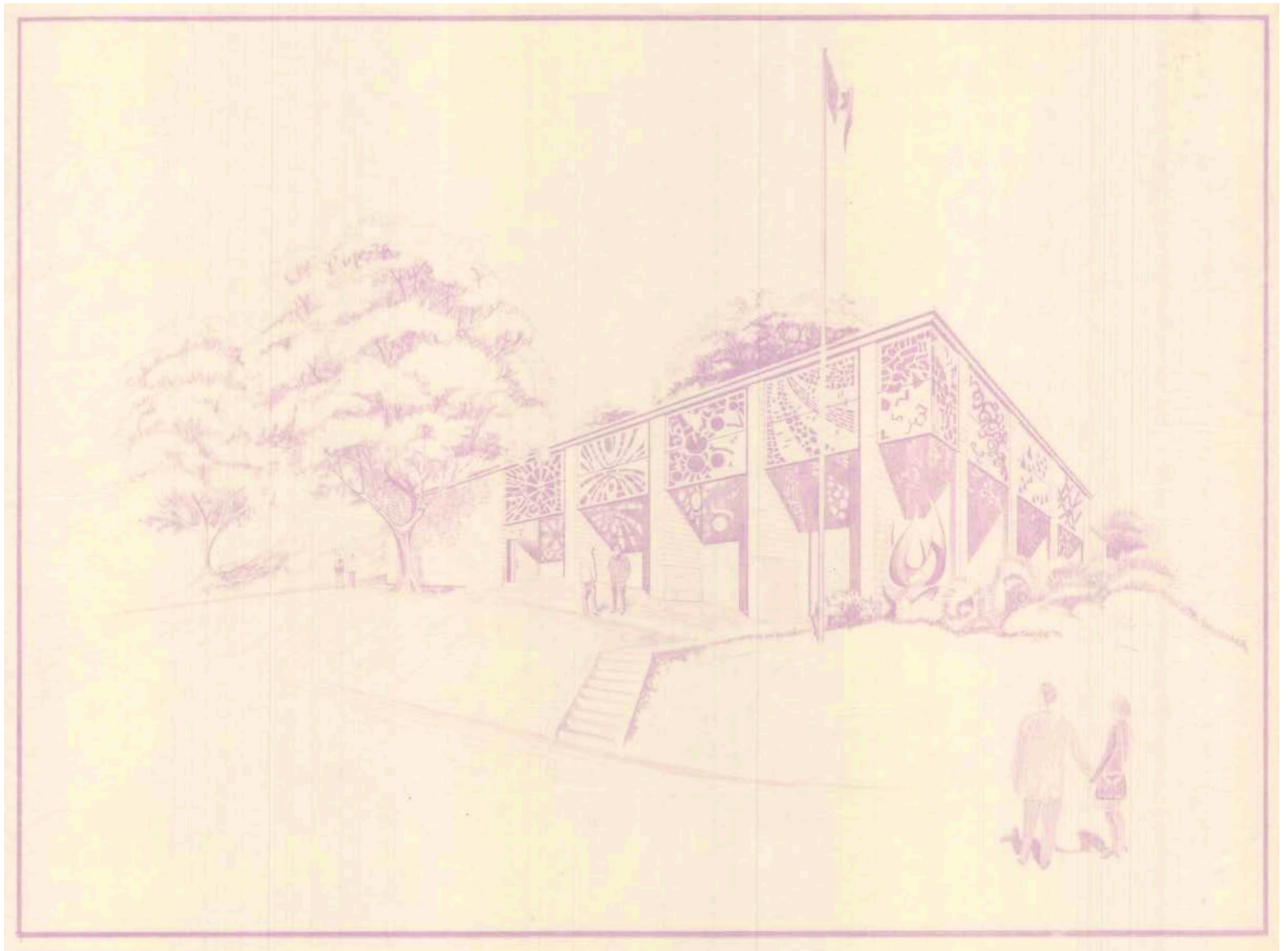
2005 402 Anderson closes to the public after the last show in the Mildred Erb Gallery concludes, *All Over the Map*, curated by Leah Best.

2006 October, Touchstones Nelson opens to the public as the new public entity of the Nelson and District Museum, Archives, Art Gallery and Historical Society, 402 continues to house the majority of the Society's collection.

2018 The collection moves to its new home adjacent to Touchstones with updated climate control, security and easier access by staff.



Shawn Lamb, in the news and working to enrich the Nelson Community.





Acknowledgements

The history and people behind the Nelson Museum began long before the building at 402 Anderson Street came to be. The building itself is just part of the society's story, and we are so grateful to everyone who has contributed to the organization to date. This chapter of the story could not be made possible without the many volunteers, staff, board members, artists, community members, visitors and more. Thank you.

Thank you to the following people for your help getting all of the pieces together:

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As with all publications there is a limit to the pages you can print. We would happily continue to track down people for years to come who have worked for the society as either a volunteer, summer student, contract employee or casual labour but time and resources are finite. If your name is not included in this publication, please know that your contribution has not been forgotten and we would like to hear your stories of 402 Anderson.

