

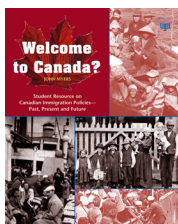
Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.



What's new with THEN/HiER?

* **THEN/HiER Website.** We have recently posted new videos and podcasts related to history and history education on our website. They include videos of a panel on using historical thinking concepts in the classroom, *New Opportunities for Encouraging Historical Thinking in Canadian Classrooms*, and of a workshop titled *The Personal Side of a Country at War*, on new curriculum materials being developed to complement *The Canadian Letters and Images Project*, both from the November 2010 ACS/OHASSTA conference; videos of a talk given by Executive Board member Jocelyn Létourneau on the *Canadians and Their Pasts* project, *Histoire et vivre-ensemble*, and of two commentators (in French); and a podcast of Executive Board member Peter Seixas talking about the *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking* project.

* ***Approaching the Past. Experiencing History with Bob Henderson January 27, 2011.*** Thirty-one Toronto-area teacher candidates; graduate students in history, education, and museum studies; and museum and non-profit sector professionals attended the latest workshop in this series at High Park's Grenadier Café. Experiential educator Bob Henderson, recently retired from the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University, led a hands-on workshop focused on experiential methods of teaching and learning history. Activities included a mock trial, scripted by former students, based on the journals of explorer Leonidas Hubbard and his fateful expedition to Labrador's Ungava Peninsula. Other activities focused on attaching narrative elements to geographical representations. Participants worked together (in the small space we created between restaurant tables – Bob usually works with a space the size of a volleyball court!) to create an outline of the boundaries of Canada and its seven largest rivers using a length of climbing rope. We then built in narrative elements with brief readings outlining the nature and excerpts from the histories of these rivers. A similar activity mapped out the *Toronto Carrying Place Trail*, an aboriginal portage route, and significant places and stories along its length. Bob Henderson has authored and edited three books: *Every Trail has a Story: Heritage Travel in Canada*; *Nature First: Outdoor Life in the Friluftsliv Way*; and *Pike's Portage: Stories of a Distinguished Place*. A smaller group of workshop participants took advantage of a free guided tour of Colborne Lodge, a city museum in High Park. The lodge tells the story of the creation of High Park and the original 19th-century land holders Jemima and John Howard. Thanks to museum program officer Philip Cheong and director Cheryl Hart for adding this opportunity to our evening program. The next workshop, *Teaching the War of 1812*, will be held at Fort York on April 27. *Jennifer Bonnell*



* **THEN/HiER member John Myers** has recently published a curriculum resource that explores issues involving Canada's relationships with the world and its diverse, pluralistic, multicultural society. *Welcome to Canada?* (the question mark is deliberate) looks critically at Canada's restrictive wartime immigration policies, with a focus on the St. Louis tragedy. It was funded through the federal government's Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) and includes a Student Resource and Teacher's Manual. If you would like to receive copies of these resources for your school, please email your request with your name, school name and mailing address to Tema Smith, Project Coordinator. [Read more here.](#)

* **THEN/HiER member Eric Damer** will be teaching a course at Simon Fraser University this spring titled *Writing Local History*. Students will consider how to add significance to a research project while enriching their own "historical consciousness" through collecting documentary and oral evidence, shaping it into something meaningful, and putting words on paper (or screen). Read more about Dr. Damer in his *Research Snapshot* on page 3.

What's new with our partners?

* **Benchmarks of Historical Thinking National Meeting.** Sixty participants attended the national meeting of the Benchmarks Project from February 10 to 12 in Toronto. Participants heard from a variety of presenters from different education sectors who shared how historical thinking has been incorporated into their particular area of work. This included Brock University Professor Kevin Kee's work on historical thinking and computer gaming, Toronto District School Board teachers Myra Partridge and Janice Slaght's student work for



Carla Peck, Peter Seixas, and Penney Clark



Heritage Fairs, and Calgary Board of Education representative Dr. Craig Harding's research on historical thinking and interpretive maps. Recommendations from the meeting will help to inform the major priorities for the Benchmarks Project over the next two years. As well, a set of 12 classroom posters was unveiled at the meeting. Six posters in English and six in French explore the six historical thinking concepts in a provocative, thoughtful manner. The posters, which are available to all free of charge, will be widely distributed over the next year. *Jill Colyer*

* **THEN/HiER Network Manager Anne Marie Goodfellow** was part of the **Canadian Museums Association** jury for the CMA's Museums and Schools Partnership Award. This annual award is given to what jurors deem to be the best collaborative project developed through a partnership between an elementary or secondary school and a museum. The winner will be announced, along with other CMA award winners, at its upcoming annual conference, *Evolve or Die!*, April 11 to 15 in London, Ontario.



* **The Begbie Contest Society.** The deadline for entries for the 2011 contest is March 10, and the contest itself will take place on April 13. See the Begbie Contest website for more details and an application form. The 2010 Begbie Contest winners are Gregory Bailey (English) and Eden Nzeyimana (French). Read more in the "Prizes" section.



Graduate Student Committees

The anglophone graduate student committee has been busy over the last month with two new initiatives. The new THEN/HiER blog, *Teaching the Past*, was launched, which features weekly posts on topics related to teaching history in schools, universities, museums and other venues. The committee has also been involved in the development of a collection of pedagogical resources for teaching assistants of undergraduate history classes which will appear on the THEN/HiER website in mid-March. If you would like to participate in the blog, or are an existing or former history TA interested in contributing to the resource compilation project, please contact Jennifer Bonnell. Finally, visit the THEN/HiER site to listen to featured interviews conducted by graduate student committee members: Cynthia Wallace-Casey speaks with Canadian historian Margaret Conrad on Atlantic Canadians and their pasts, and Lindsay Gibson sits down with history education scholar Peter Seixas to discuss history education and the growth of the Benchmarks project. Read more here.



Jennifer Bonnell



Catherine Duquette

The francophone graduate student committee has initiated several projects since January. One is a series of podcast interviews that have been completed and will be available soon on the THEN/HiER website. Guests include Stéphanie Lanthier, historian and documentary film producer for the National Film Board, and Pauline Beaudin, coordinator of the Centre muséopédagogique at the Musée de la civilisation de Québec. The francophone committee would also like to become more active within THEN/HiER. Our current committee members are the coordinator Catherine Duquette, Université Laval; Viateur Karwera, Université de Montréal; Ariane Bigras, University of Ottawa; and Julie Ratté, Université de Sherbrooke. We invite other francophone graduate students to join the committee. If you are interested, please contact Catherine Duquette. Read more here.

Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

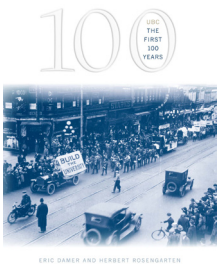
Eric Damer, Ph. D.
Independent Scholar, Museum Educator



History of Education in British Columbia

Although I had worked as an historical interpreter in park and museum settings for many years, my “historical consciousness” came a little later in life. As a graduate student in the 1990s, I had no money for research, so I opted to delve into the nearby archives at the University of British Columbia. What followed was a sort of epiphany. In piecing together my first real history paper based on primary sources, I realized that history was not about “one damn thing after another” but an argument about who did what, why, and with what consequences. Since I was studying the institution in which I was currently a student, I discovered that the history of education was not about what had happened to someone else, but about what had happened to me. My doctoral work, which also researched an aspect of UBC, furthered my personal interest when I inadvertently discovered some information about my father, an alumnus. More specifically, I began to see just how family background played a role in one’s own educational history.

Since those years as a student, I have continued researching the history of education in British Columbia, with a special interest in the history of UBC. People are often amused – or amazed – when I tell them that I am a “free-lance historian,” but this is true! Although I also research, write, and edit for a range of clients in other subject areas, I remain a student of educational history.



My interest in UBC has had a couple of major emphases. The first is to tie the university to the broader social history of British Columbia more generally. If nothing else, the university is a creature of the province, subject to the predilections of the government in power and its supporters. The second is to show that UBC (like other universities, of course) is no simple input-output institution that produces well-educated graduates on command. Rather, the academy is a complex, political environment that can produce successes, failures, heroes, victims, and everything in between. What goes on at UBC and other universities should interest us all. While preparing the recently released centenary history of UBC, I found it particularly satisfying to revise the university’s fiftieth anniversary history (published in 1958) by adding some sober perspectives to its triumphalist rhetoric.

After teaching educational history a few times at UBC to aspiring teachers, I noticed that there was relatively little published work on the influence the university has had on the wider school system. As an interim measure, I recently wrote a short piece outlining how UBC’s early teacher training program fit the “progressive” educational reforms of the 1920s. The paper, due for publication in *British Columbia History*, edited by THEN/HiER Director Penney Clark, clearly places the new program in line with the efficiency-minded reformers who wished to use schools to create a well-ordered, differentiated, and deferential workforce for social and economic prosperity, devoid of the “feble-minded.” Another ongoing project of mine (with a colleague) is to fill in another gap in our understanding of higher education in British Columbia by researching more thoroughly an early college in New Westminster.

My interest in education and history is coming together in a new way for me this March. Through Simon Fraser University Continuing Studies, I will be facilitating a course in *Writing Local History*. The course name and the term “facilitating” were deliberately chosen to emphasize the practical nature of the course to encourage people to create their own evidence-based history. It will be less about learning what others have said about the past – although some amount of this cannot be avoided – and more about what course participants think about an aspect of the past. We’ll look at sources of evidence and ways to organize it, common explanatory categories, possible theoretical perspectives and debates, and tips for putting words on paper or screen. It is my hope that people will leave not only with a good start on their own research, but also a healthy appreciation for history as relevant to the present and future. I am not aware of any similar programs offered in the Metro Vancouver area that are quite like this; it will be an interesting experiment!

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**