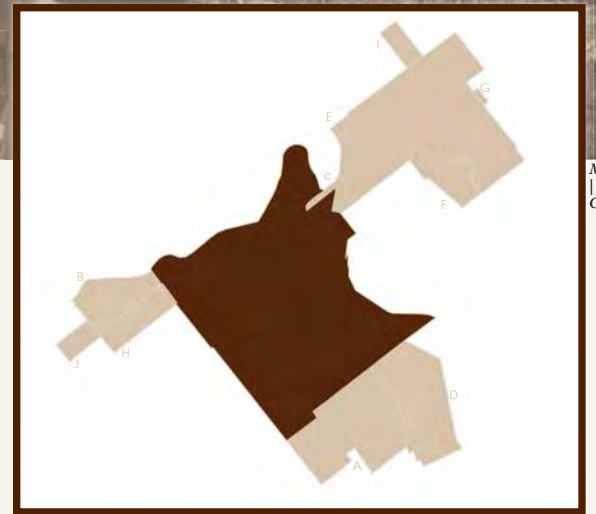


A walk through time... 1966-1975

Courtenay Expands. Not only did Courtenay grow significantly in land area between 1966 and 1975, there was an expansion of culture, arts and recreation as well as a growing concern for social issues.

In 1967, the Vancouver Junior Symphony held their first camp at Puntledge School. It was such a success it grew into the Courtenay Youth Music Camp. That same year, Kath Kirk planted her "Mile of Flowers" in celebration of the centennial - a community tradition that continues today. During this time the Comox Valley Sports Centre opened with an indoor pool and skating rink, and a new Civic Theatre that provided theatrical space and gave the Senior Citizens their own centre which opened out onto the new plaza. School District 71 opened a Special Education Annex at G.P Vanier School and the Comox Valley Day Care Society and Big Brothers organizations were formed.



Mile of Flowers
City of Courtenay

Population: 7,152 (in 1971)

Map: Dark brown areas represent the City boundary as it was in 1965. Lighter shaded areas show areas that were added to the City between 1966 and 1975.



"The Wall at the Riverside Hotel (corner of 5th St. & Cliffe Ave.) became as famous as the Great Wall of China. Courtenay's wall was the fountain of wisdom, the pedestal of politics and the judges stand for rating the passing ladies. The Old Timers who used it regularly were characters in themselves. They seemed immune to weather or time. Their sage remarks, sarcastic comments and colourful language were accepted as long as they sat on the wall. Fire and time has erased an institution."
- The Land of Plenty by Isenor, McInnis, Stephens, and Watson

THE LOSS OF THE RIVERSIDE HOTEL & THE CREATION OF THE CIVIC SQUARE

The Riverside Hotel was constructed around 1890, at the corner of 5th St. and Cliffe Ave and it underwent numerous upgrades and additions over the years. It survived several fires and the massive earthquake of 1946, but on January 2, 1968 it succumbed to a devastating fire, despite the heroic efforts of local firefighters. Thankfully, there was no loss of life, and the fire did not spread to the adjacent Bickle Theatre constructed in 1935.

In 1968, Mayor George Hobson had negotiated a deal with Crown Zellerbach Logging for the City to purchase the logging railway right-of-way from the Puntledge River to the Royston Boom Camp. A portion of this right-of-way ran adjacent to the theatre and hotel property, and later became a much needed parking area for the adjacent civic facilities.

This central corner in downtown Courtenay sat empty, with no apparent development in sight. Once again, Mayor George Hobson and Council, in consultation with Downtown Businessmen, devised an energetic plan, which they entitled "Total Community Participation." (TCP). The Plan was to purchase the vacant hotel property and the run-down partially empty Bickle Theatre, for \$200,000.00 and to construct what we now know as the Civic Centre. A Seniors Centre was to be constructed adjacent to the theatre at the plaza level, with funding from the Provincial Government. The TCP project swung into action, following a promotional breakfast, with the selling of "No Interest Bearing Bonds", to be paid back as money became available. In Mayor Hobson's words "when completed, the Civic Square will belong to the people of Courtenay. It will be part of the Park & Recreation program right in the centre of Courtenay".

The new complex was opened by Premier W.A.C. Bennett on September 13, 1971. Today, the Civic Centre stands as a monument to the leadership of Mayor G. Hobson, and the support of the citizens of the city and surrounding area. Local businesses & tradesmen were most generous, and valley students were active in the project.



CRA Swim Club c1966 | Courtesy of B. Lund
The swim team was based out of the Outdoor Pool and travelled to competitions around BC and the US.

TUCKY SCHELLINCK

If you want something done, ask a busy person. And that person was Teresa "Tucky" Schellinck who while raising 7 children always had time in need. When her husband, Henry "Hank" Schellinck, became chairman of St. Joseph's Hospital Board, and Tucky was Social Convener for the Catholic Woman's League she began to make weekly hospital visits carrying a little basket with Life Savers and magazines. Patients said her "friendly smile" was the best medicine anyone could receive. Tucky soon realized that patients have needs after they leave hospital. When she learnt that some would not have Christmas dinner, she reached out with a hamper. Tucky learnt that need does not have a "season" so her helping hand was there throughout the year. In 1970, the work she was doing out of the Schellinck home became an official organization, "The Friendly Visitors" with a Board of Directors. It is estimated that one year 800 Christmas Hampers left the basement of their home. Before her death in 1994, Tucky would be honoured with Citizen of the Year, Freeman of the City of Courtenay, a Papal Medal, and in 1988, became a Member of Order of Canada.



Tucky Schellinck | Contributed by C. Schellinck

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Between 1966 and 1971 Courtenay would celebrate three Centennials with Myrtle Vickberg serving as chairman for each Centennial Committee.

In 1866 the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia had joined to become the Colony of British Columbia. Courtenay honoured the event with the creation of Puntledge Park officially opened on 13 August 1966, by Lieutenant-Governor George Pearkes. As the official party approached the bridge to the park, they were greeted with a sign reading, "Never Worry, Never Fear, Myrtle Vickberg has crossed here" causing the Lt. Gov to roar with laughter. The sign was erected by Mayor Bill Moore.

During the 1967 Canadian Centennial Celebrations, many events were shows which traveled across the country such as the R.C.M.P. Musical Ride, the Centennial Coach, and the Barkerville Review with Sid Williams. The Armed Forces Motorcycle Show and a Centennial Caravan also made stops here. On July 1st, an historic "inner tube race" down the Courtenay River was won by Myrtle. Her challengers were the Honourable Dan Campbell, MLA and Minister of Municipal Affairs and C.F.B. Base Commander, Group Captain K.C. Lett.

To celebrate the 1971 Centennial of British Columbia joining Canada, Mayor George Hobson spearheaded the renovation of the corner of 5th and Cliffe.



LEFT: Opening of Civic Square | Comox District Free Press Collection at Courtenay & District Museum. CENTRE: Kath Kirk and the 'Mile of Flowers' | Comox District Free Press Collection at Courtenay & District Museum. RIGHT: Lake Trail School Track Team, c1966. CRA in Background | Courtesy of B. Lund

