

CARR'S KLEE WYCK: THE REAL STORY

Emily Carr was one of the first to blow the whistle on BC's residential schools. But just months after the famed artist and writer died, her words around the topic – and other politically touchy subjects – were summarily erased from her Governor General's Award-winning book, *Klee Wyck*.

To discuss this secret censoring, Royal BC Museum (RBCM) archivist Kathryn Bridge presents a free Live @ Lunch talk titled *The Lost Klee Wyck*, Nov. 4, at noon at the RBCM.

Only a few thousand copies of the book were ever printed as Carr had written them, says Bridge. The first printing, in 1941, sold out within weeks; the second lasted until Carr's death in 1945. After that, every printing of *Klee Wyck* appeared in an abridged form.

"It's not clear why the work was violated or who made the call," says Bridge, who figures it might just have been a few straitlaced editors wanting to present a more puritanical world view than Carr's own. Perhaps they deemed her frank descriptions too juicy: Describe a kindly missionary as "fussy?" Can't have that. And our forefathers' transgressions against First Peoples? Better take that out. Scratch this bit ... omit that part ...

After Carr's death, *Klee Wyck* circulated in the public sphere in this crimped form until Bridge stepped in and singlehandedly changed Canada's written history. When Carr's work came into the public domain 50 years after her death (in 1995), Douglas & McIntyre decided to republish her seminal work. They asked Bridge – an esteemed expert on Emily Carr – to write the introduction. Aware that some parts of *Klee Wyck* had been modified (she's an archivist, after all – she knows the kinds of things people try to sweep under the carpet), Bridge agreed to do it. On one condition – that the newly published text appear in its original, unedited form.

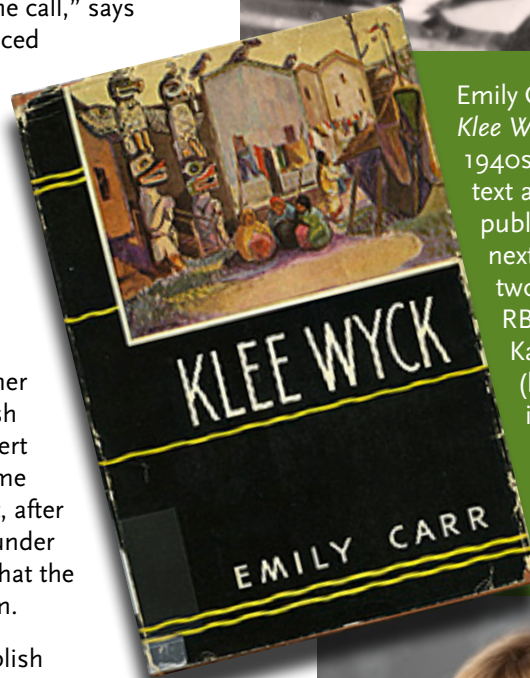
It turns out D&M had no idea they'd been poised to publish a phony text. In titling her intro "The Lost Klee Wyck," Bridge proceeded to unleash the real Carr on the reading public.

To date, the Douglas & McIntyre version is the only unabridged *Klee Wyck* in existence. Comprised of 21 essays wherein Carr relates her adventures as a child, an artist and an itinerant sketcher interacting with First Nations groups, *Klee Wyck* is a lively read, full of vivid descriptions and classically Carr-esque observation.

In Bridge's upcoming Live @ Lunch presentation – a preview of a series of public presentations she's delivering later this month at Missouri Southern State University – she'll share with audiences the lost *Klee Wyck*, as well as her scholarly insights into Carr's life and artistry.



Emily Carr (above) wrote *Klee Wyck* in the early 1940s. But her original text and the one the public read for the next 50 years were two different books. RBCM archivist Kathryn Bridge (below) was instrumental in bringing the real *Klee Wyck* back to bookstore shelves.



COLLECTION COMPLETES PICTURE

After more than 100 years of documenting the history of confinement in British Columbia, the BC Corrections Branch had reached the end of its rope. Or at least, the end of its storage space. Concerned about how to preserve its extensive corrections collection, the agency's history committee turned to the Royal BC Museum last year.

RBCM history curator Lorne Hammond immediately recognized that the collection fit perfectly within the museum's mandate to care for the BC story and recommended it be brought into the provincial collections. This fall, the Royal BC Museum completed the work of sorting, re-numbering and re-packing (five!) truckloads of objects representing the history of corrections in BC.

Sophisticated and rigorously catalogued, the collection reflects the devotion of corrections staff, retired volunteers, anthropology students and, yes, even inmates.

The collection comprises simple yet powerful objects that represent the day-to-day lives of inmates and people working within the system. Sewing machines, soccer uniforms, pages from prisoner registries. "There are stories-within-stories about different programs, all told with an immense sense of respect for the lives connected with these objects," says Hammond, adding that the collection is one of the best he's ever seen. "I know how much work is needed to achieve such a professional standard. It can only be done with careful, patient attention to detail."

The collection complements the museum and archives holdings on law and justice, which include items from judges of the colonial period and the British Columbia Provincial Police. "Together, these collections have the potential to educate the public and present the 'real world' – not the Hollywood story – of our civil society and the decisions we make about how we will live," says Hammond. "I particularly like the corrections collection because I think there are stereotypes in the public's mind about what a corrections officer is or does, and about the lives of the inmates."



History curator Lorne Hammond shows a licence plate made by inmates (above) and a historic law enforcement badge (below) from the BC Corrections collection.



Updates

- On October 27, Royal BC Museum curator of entomology Rob Cannings walked away with the **Bruce Naylor Award** in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the study of museum-based natural history in Canada. Cannings accepted the esteemed award on Parliament Hill, as part of a reception for the Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada.
- She's finally made it into the Senate – and rightly so. Nearly 60 years after her death, Nellie McClung and the rest of the Famous Five have been named honorary Senators. Right on, we say. The Royal BC Museum is proud to hold the largest body of McClung's personal papers. We've been sharing her writings with the world since we first acquired them in 1953.

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